

An Open Letter to Rick Warren

August 14, 2008

Dear Dr. Warren,

You have been given a wonderful opportunity to provide Americans with the ability to place a well-informed vote on Election Day. Millions of Christians will be watching the upcoming forum at Saddleback, waiting for you to pose questions that will reveal what the candidates truly believe.

We ask, on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of youth we lead and represent, that you will not ignore the crucial issue of abortion as you face Senators Obama and McCain. For many Americans, a candidate's position on abortion will determine their vote. We have a right to know the truth about the candidates' abortion positions, and you have a responsibility to share that truth.

According to James 1:27, "Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world."

The global AIDS crisis has created millions of orphans. Poverty worldwide has added its own millions. Photographs of starving and sick children are displayed prominently in Christian magazines, urging the godly man and woman to give. Give of their time, their resources, their hearts.

Christians should not ignore the pleas for help. We are called to respond to the needs of orphans and widows, those who are in distress.

However, the Christian church must not pick and choose which orphans to help based upon the popularity of the cause. While 300,000 children die annually from AIDS, 40 million children have died in the past year alone due to abortion. [1, 2] But the worldwide church remains silent, for the most part. It is popular and trendy to jump on the AIDS bandwagon, and everyone wants to stop genocide in Darfur. But what about the genocide here on American soil?

American Christians have enough money and influence to move mountains. We donate millions of dollars to outreaches across the world, and spend thousands of hours serving the poor in our hometowns. Why aren't we treating abortion in America with the same sense of urgency as poverty or AIDS, especially when we have the ability to see a change?

It's not enough to build a crisis pregnancy center or offer post-abortion counseling to women. Those are simply Band-aids on a gaping wound.

The AIDS crisis is urgent. As we write, people are dying. We should be coming to their aid. We should keep the photographs of hurting children in the open to remind our nation's leaders that millions of people need us.

The abortion crisis is also urgent. Millions of children die each year worldwide, and their parents hurt too. We should also be coming to their aid. But whether deliberately or not, the orphans of abortion are passed by in favor of the orphans we can see. Their pain and their need is largely ignored by the Church.

When compared simply by numbers, the abortion crisis in America and worldwide is deserving of the same level of attention as AIDS or poverty. Who are we as Christians to decide the children killed by abortion deserve less help than the children in Africa?

[1] <http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/HIVData/EpiUpdate/EpiUpdArchive/2007/default.asp>

[2] http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/fb_LAW.html

As Christians, our first goal when we vote for a president or any other elected official should be to glorify Christ and further His kingdom as best we can through our vote. Our concern over property taxes and the right to bear arms should pale in comparison to our godly concern for the orphans and widows of the world.

A presidential candidate's position on abortion should be a deciding factor for Christian voters. We are required by God to care for the needy, and to ignore the issue of abortion when we vote is to ignore our Christian faith.

Both Senator Obama and Senator McCain have openly stated their position on abortion, whether through word or deed. Neither man is blameless; both candidates have shunned the pre-born children in favor of political gain. Many Americans understand that, but they may not realize the extent of each candidate's history on the issue.

We are the product of a post-Roe v. Wade generation. We have known no other America than the one afflicted by abortion, and we believe the future of America rests upon our country's return to respect for human life. Over 50 million members of our generation have died from abortion, and millions more are facing a horrific death. What kind of America will we have in four years if the truth of the candidates' abortion positions remains in the shadows?

Should you choose to pose abortion-related questions to the candidates, we humbly request that you present their history as it factually stands. To do otherwise is to deceive millions of American Christians - people who trust you to represent their interests. You have a weighty responsibility with the position God has granted to you.

Senator Obama has a 100% rating by NARAL Pro-Choice America and a 0% rating by the National Right to Life Committee. Senator McCain has a 75% rating by the National Right to Life Committee and a 0% rating by NARAL Pro-Choice America. These ratings alone speak volumes. Any question posed about abortion during the civil forum at Saddleback will not be "outing" either candidate - their records speak for themselves.

May we suggest honest questions that provide Americans with factual information and simultaneously offer the candidates an opportunity to respond?

For example:

Senator Obama - *NARAL Pro-Choice America, formerly known as the National Abortion Rights Action League, has given you a 100% rating for your support of unrestricted abortion on demand. And NRTL has given you a 0% rating for supporting right to life causes. You have described yourself as a pro-choice candidate. Many people of faith believe personhood begins at conception, and science continues to provide increasing proof that embryos and fetuses are living human beings the same as you or I. How can you reconcile your pro-abortion position with your desire to "make real the promise of opportunity and equality for every citizen"?*

Senator McCain - *The National Right to Life Committee has given you a 75% rating, while NARAL Pro-Choice America has given you a 0% rating. You claim to be a pro-life candidate but you have a less-than-perfect rating by the NRTL Committee, partially due to your past support of embryonic stem cell research. How do you reconcile that decision with your claim that we must "refus[e] to sacrifice moral values and ethical principles for the sake of scientific progress"?*

Ultimately, we understand the decision of whether or not to include abortion in the Saddleback civil forum is one which you alone must make. However, we challenge you to respond to God's call to visit the orphans and widows in their distress by giving the American people the information they need on the crucial issue of abortion. Your decision will have both earthly and eternal consequences.

Thank you for your time, and may God bless you.


For the voiceless,



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