



National Pro-Life Religious Council, Inc.

PO Box 61838, Staten Island, NY 10306



Uniting for Life

Spring 2008

United Methodist Church Agencies Should Withdraw from RCRC

By Rev. Paul T. Stallworth, *Lifewatch*, March, 2008

The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (RCRC) is dedicated to preserving the right to obtain an abortion. According to RCRC's president and CEO, The Reverend Carlton W. Veazey, "RCRC was founded in 1973 to safeguard the newly won constitutional right to abortion." (www.rcrc.org/about/index.cfm, 12/10/06) Theologically, morally, politically, and legally, RCRC works to maintain abortion rights.

Consider this picture. A facility that provides abortions goes about its business, day after day. RCRC works to help make sure this facility stays open so that abortion services are available to those who would desire them. Theologically, RCRC strives to assure the religious community that abortion rights are ecumenically and interreligiously supported. That is, RCRC provides theological and religious legitimization and cover for abortion rights. ...RCRC instructs that [adult] agency or decision-making authority can and

should override any concern for the unborn child. Politically, RCRC lobbies for pro-abortion legislation and against pro-life legislation. Also, politically speaking, RCRC advances the notion of the "naked public square," by attempting to rule out-of-bounds the public expression of religiously grounded and motivated pro-life claims. Legally, RCRC submits briefs that encourage courts to decide for abortion rights. Again, consider the picture. In part because of RCRC's labors, the abortion-providing facility continues its work, day after day.

Because the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Rights does what it does, United Methodist institutions—namely, the General Board of Church and Society and the Women's Division of the General Board of Global Ministries—should be withdrawn from it. May God grant General Conference 2008 the moral clarity and strength to withdraw our agencies from RCRC.

Changing America...one heart at a time NRLC 2008

36th annual National Right to Life Convention

Celebrate 4th of July in the nation's capitol!

Washington, DC July 3-5, 2008
Hyatt Regency Crystal City 2799 Jefferson Davis Hwy,
Arlington, VA 22202
Call (703) 418-1234 for reservations.

Banquet speaker: Reverend Richard John Neuhaus, President of The Institute on Religion and Public Life; Editor-in-chief of *First Things* magazine

Thursday evening General Session speaker is Michael Clancy (the photographer who took the photo of baby Samuel, hand reaching up out of the womb). See: www.michaelclancy.com

4 General Sessions Prayer Breakfast Banquet Teens Convention
More than 75 workshops!

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National Pro-Life Religious Council, PO Box 61838, Staten Island, NY 10306
website: www.nprcouncil.org e-mail: mail@nprcouncil.org

Photo Courtesy of LifeNews.com

National Pro-Life Religious Council

The National Pro-Life Religious Council (NPRC) is a Christian coalition which acknowledges Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and works to encourage every Christian denomination to affirm and witness to the biblical standard of the value, dignity and sanctity of human life, and to foster ministry to those vulnerable to the violence of abortion or euthanasia.

Anglicans for Life

Common Good

Conservative Congregational Christian Conference (CCCC)

International Communion of the Charismatic Episcopal Church (CEC for Life)

Life Education and Resource Network (LEARN)

Lutherans for Life (LFL)

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS)

National Clergy Council (NCC)

National Pro-Life Action Center

Presbyterians Pro-Life (PPL)

Priests for Life (PFL)

Religious Outreach, National Right to Life Committee

Taskforce of United Methodists on Abortion and Sexuality (TUMAS)/Lifewatch

United Friends for Life (UFL)

Woman to woman: Personally opposed, but...

by Marie Bowen

I am sometimes amazed at the responses I receive from complete strangers when they learn that I work for "Presbyterians Pro-Life." Extremely private stories—pregnancy outside marriage, rape, incest, spousal abuse, infertility, adoption, and abortion—experienced by those with whom I am speaking or someone close to them are openly shared with me, a complete stranger. It is a wonderful privilege and an awesome responsibility.

Some individuals correctly assume that I am 100% pro-life and inform me of their own position. Those who disagree with me often will say something like, "I'm personally opposed to abortion. I would never have one (or I would not want my wife or daughter to have one), BUT I think a woman should be able to make her own choice...." To brutally take the life of her unborn child, I want to add.

There is so much I want to say...where to start? So many questions I want to ask:

Have you considered God's rights as creator, owner, author of life?

Have you weighed the teaching of scripture that it is wrong to kill, especially wrong when the victim is the most vulnerable and weak among us?

Have you contemplated the consequences for the woman's soul and her eternal spirit?



Marie Bowen

What are the unintended consequences of ending a life planned and purposed by God to accomplish his will and work in the world?

Have you asked God how he regards your position on abortion?

I want to ask, "Why?" Why would you want a woman to have the choice to abort her child? Why should a woman be legally permitted to choose to have her child torn limb from limb inside her womb

without the benefit of anesthesia? Why should she lie bleeding afterward in pain and tears knowing that she has just permitted her own child to be killed inside her own body—in the very place designed by God to protect and nurture the unborn child while it grows and develops. Why would you want a woman to have THAT choice? Shouldn't we just yell, "Stop!"?

My 25 year old son is engaged to a lovely Christian young woman and he is attending seminary. He is poised to impact countless lives for eternity as a future pastor. When he was age 3, he escaped through the patio door of our apartment to the outside world without my knowledge. A neighbor alerted me to the fact that he was outside alone. When he saw me coming he ran straight toward a busy street. I did not offer him ANY choices. I ran. I screamed, "Sean, STOP!" WHY? Love. Love does not offer choices when a life is imperiled. Love screams, "STOP!" He listened. He did stop!

Priests for Life Seeks to Bridge Life-Justice Gap

Representing Priests for Life, the NPRC President, Fr. Frank Pavone, participated in the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace conference at Rome in November 2007, hosted by its President, Cardinal Renato Martino, Priests for Life Advisory Board member

The conference met for three days and focused on various aspects of human rights and development. In its *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace points out that at the very heart of social justice is the right to life, which is the first human right, and the foundation and

condition for all the others.

In the group discussions at the conference, Fr. Frank again pointed to this basic truth and thanked the participants for their important role in bridging the false gap that sometimes exists between those who work for social justice and those who work to restore justice for the unborn. Fr. Frank's concrete recommendation was to bring together on a local level the individuals involved in these efforts, and by fostering mutual relations, prayer, and dialogue, to help them understand the deep unity of their respective causes, which really comprise one single cause for human dignity.

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News from Presbyterians Pro-Life

John Sheldon Elected New PPL President

Presbyterians Pro-Life is pleased to announce the election of The Rev. John S. Sheldon, Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Ocean City, New Jersey, to the position of President of the Presbyterians Pro-Life Board of Directors.

John is the second Sheldon to serve PPL in this capacity. His father, The Rev. Benjamin Sheldon served as president of PPL for 11 years from the mid-80s to the mid-90s. He continues to serve on the PPL Board of Directors as President Emeritus.

John's involvement with the PPL board is also long-standing, beginning as early as 1989. He has served as Senior Vice-President of PPL since 1995 and has been an integral part of PPL's General Assembly team.

John and his wife, Laurie, have 9 wonderful children (below). Both generations of Sheldons view children as "a heritage from the Lord," (Psa. 127:3). Both have been faithful in their witness within the PC(USA) to the truth that God cherishes every human life and calls us to protect and nurture especially the most vulnerable, those waiting to be born.

We will stay and witness!

It is a season of change in the PC(USA). At their October 2007 meeting, PPL's Board of Directors wrestled with how to respond faithfully in a time of transition. The board prayerfully answered this challenge by unanimously reaffirming PPL's stated purpose: "to be a prophetic voice in the PC(USA), upholding the sacred value of human life and the family."

PPL's call to the PC(USA) remains clear and we have answered: "We will stay and witness."

For more than 30 years Presbyterians Pro-Life has been a voice for life at every General Assembly, calling the PC(USA) to cherish human



The John Sheldon Family, 2006

PPL Launches Partners for Life Program

PPL's Board of Directors would like to extend an invitation to you and your church to join in a special partnership with Presbyterians Pro-Life. We hope that by joining hands and forming deeper relationships with pro-life churches we can find ways to enhance our mutual work for the protection of innocent human life.

For 30 years, PPL has raised a prophetic witness in the PC(USA), calling our denomination to return to a biblical stand against abortion and to protect every human life, born and unborn. At the same time PPL has been pro-active in providing educational and ministry resources to help pastors and churches cherish life and provide tangible care and ministry to women and families facing difficult pregnancies. It is time to "kick it up" to a new level of commitment and forge strong partnerships

life in accordance with the teaching of Scripture as created, loved, and called by God from within the wombs of our mothers.

PPL diligently teaches a biblical perspective on life issues through our newsletter, publications, and our website. We seek to equip churches and individuals for ministry, helping them to establish Alternatives to Abortion Resources Centers, to work with local pregnancy care centers, and to care for those experiencing crises in pregnancy in their own congregations. We work to train pastors and lay leaders to minister grace, healing, and forgiveness to those who have experienced abortion and to comfort those who grieve pregnancy loss and stillbirth. We assist churches and individuals seeking to write pro-life statements, initiate overtures, and request Relief of Conscience through the Board of Pensions.

We are not done yet!

We are still burdened by our denomination's acceptance and approval of abortion. We continue to call the PC(USA) to repentance and to return to a biblical position on abortion, euthanasia, stem cell research and all the life issues.

Presbyterians Pro-Life will again have a presence at the 218th General Assembly to be held in San Jose, California, June 21-28, 2008. Our PPL GA team will be an active witness: giving testimony in committees, passing out our Daily Delivery newsletter to commissioners, assisting commissioners and advisory delegates with the GA processes, and calling the church to take a biblical stand on issues dealing with life, family, and sexuality.

We will be launching a Partners for Life program for churches in the coming months and we invite your church to join hands with us in nurturing and protecting the unborn and vulnerable in your community as well as bringing a witness to God's involvement and care for each human life as reflected in Scripture to the whole denomination.

Please contact us any time for resources and information on how you can be involved in bringing a return to pro-life policies in the PC(USA): www.ppl.org

"Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate." Psalm 127:2-5

with churches like yours.

Download our Partners for Life brochure (<http://www.ppl.org/PFLbrochure.pdf>) and share it with the leadership of your church. We particularly encourage Presbyterian Church (USA) congregations to take the steps outlined in the brochure to become a PPL Partner and to allow us the opportunity to clasp hands with you in a new way in this important work! Churches from other denominations may also find a partnership with PPL to be valuable in strengthening your pro-life work in your own community.

If you have any questions, call Marie Bowen, Executive Director or Lauren Bodnar, Associate Director, at the PPL office (412)-487-1990. We hope to hear from you soon!



John Sheldon

LCMS Tackles Complex Problem of Abortion in Asia

By Maggie Karner, Director of Life Ministries for Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod World Relief and Human Care and Darin Storkson, Asia regional director for LCMS World Relief

In America we are often so busy fighting the plague of abortion within our borders that we forget that abortion and its aftereffects are a global plague. Internationally, World Relief and Human Care has been able to do some amazing things by creating hands-on, pro-active opportunities for women and families to choose life for their children. Now there are new opportunities to extend the Word of God into the life issues in other parts of the world. But more on that later; first let's see why this need is so great.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Asia accounts for 59 percent of the world's abortions. North America, by comparison, accounts for only 3 percent. It is estimated that at least 25 million unborn babies are unceremoniously killed in clinics and shacks across Asia every year. That is a rate of almost 50 preborn Asian babies killed per minute.

The reasons for this daily campaign of killing in Asia are as varied as the contexts found in the various countries. In Vietnam, for example, where abortion is freely available and sometimes even encouraged by the government in a macabre effort at population control, the abortion rate is the highest in the world. Nationwide, roughly one abortion is performed for every live birth in the country. Taking about 90 minutes to perform and costing only about US\$4.35 in a government clinic, abortion has become an easy and attractive option to end unwanted pregnancies.

Other Asian countries where abortion is available "on request" include China, North Korea, Mongolia, Cambodia, and Singapore. As the world's most populous country and having a liberal abortion policy, China has the most abortions in absolute terms—an estimated nine million per year. Official government population control policies in China contribute heavily to the abortion trend there. Chinese mothers often abort female babies—a practice known as female feticide—in an effort to produce a boy baby in a subsequent pregnancy. As in Vietnam, abortion is often encouraged, and sometimes mandated, by Chinese government authorities in order to end "unauthorized" or "improper" pregnancies.

In India, the world's second most populous country, abortion laws are only slightly less liberal, resulting in an estimated seven million abortions per year. Female feticide in favor of boys for cultural reasons is believed to be one of the leading causes of abortion. Although no longer legal in India, the payment of dowries to marry off daughters is still common practice. As a result, female children potentially pose a serious financial burden to poor parents. Boys, on the other hand, are more likely to bring in resources and, of course, dowries of their own when they marry.

In many other Asian countries, abortion laws are far more restrictive. Illegal—and generally unsafe—abortions still take place at alarming rates. In Indonesia, for example, abortion is only legal in cases of extreme medical necessity. Indonesian government authorities, however, estimate that around 30 percent of teenage Indonesian girls have had an illegal abortion.

While it is common to draw links between abortion and poverty in developing countries, the Asian context just described is more complex. Children are generally seen as an asset and not a financial burden to poor families in Asia, who normally welcome children and raise them in the expectation

that they will work and support the family. India is an exception to this rule when it comes to girls because of the dowry system described previously. **In most other Asian countries, children provide social security to the family while the government does not. It is misleading, therefore, to simply blame poverty for the abortion problem in Asia.**

Unfortunately, in most Asian countries abortion is readily available, whether legally or illegally. As a result, it has become a seemingly easy and routine way out of a difficult or unwanted situation for many Asians. The reality, however, is that abortion is neither easy nor routine; it kills babies and leaves long-term emotional scars in most of the women who experience it. Abortion leads to a cheapening of the value of life in the eyes of the men and women who see it as a solution to an unwanted pregnancy, and can often leave Asian girls and women confused and scared, with deep psychological trauma and guilt.

In addition to this grim scenario, crisis pregnancy centers are rare in countries in Asia, and Christian centers are almost unheard of. Asian girls and women often feel they have no options and no place to go for help. But, there is hope: Christian Salvation Service in Taiwan, started nearly 25 years ago with assistance from LCMS World Relief and Human Care, has helped thousands of women from a Christian perspective, and arranged well over 1,000 adoptions for beautiful children who might otherwise have been killed.

In the three minutes it takes most people to read this article, another 150 Asian babies will be killed. The need for Christ-centered crisis pregnancy outreach in Asia is huge. Asian women and girls desperately need Gospel-oriented ministry. Buoyed by the success of the pregnancy resource centers in Russia, LCMS World Relief and Human Care is embarking upon an ambitious plan to replicate the Russian model by developing similar centers in Asia.

We are now in the process of designing project goals and strategies for collaboration with our partner churches in Asia. Once our funding for the first center becomes secure, we will begin the process of choosing a targeted location from among our partner grant applications.... As part of the living body of Christ, we are called to stand alongside women and children in these lands who live so far away geographically, yet so close in spirit. Your prayers will help support this exciting ministry opportunity.

Associate Membership Application

Yes, I would like to become an Associate Member of the National Pro-Life Religious Council, Inc.

Enclosed is my fee of \$25.00 for membership as:
___ an individual ___ a church ___ a group

I would like to make a tax deductible donation of
\$ ___ to help NPRC with its important work.

Mail to: NPRC c/o Development Office,
PO Box 61838, Staten Island, NY 10306-9811

Contact Person _____

Church or Group _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Denomination _____

Phone (h) (____) _____ (w) (____) _____

E-mail _____