

EMILY CRİKELAIR UPDATE

Undergirded by the amazing grace of God, Emily Crikelair is progressing in her recovery. In mid-July, she began displaying an ability to move her legs for the first time since the lightning strike. Her rehab visits continue in earnest. Thank you for keeping Emily and the Crikelair family in your congregational and personal prayers.

—Rev. Paul R. Crikelair

WALKER PERCY TO THE TIMES

On January 22, 1988, Walker Percy (1916-1990), an American physician-novelist, composed a letter to the editor on abortion and mailed it to The New York Times. Percy's letter was never published in the Times, and receipt of the letter was never acknowledged by the newspaper. His letter, in full, follows. (Editor)

Dear Sir:

The fifteenth anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision of the Supreme Court seems as good an occasion as any to call attention to an aspect of the abortion issue which is generally overlooked.

The battle lines between the “pro-life” and the “pro-choice” advocates are so fixed, the arguments so well known, indeed so often repeated, that it hardly seems worth the time to enter the controversy on the present terms. Thus, while it may indeed be argued that in terms of Judeo-Christian values individual human life is sacred and may not be destroyed, and while it is also true that modern medical evidence shows ever more clearly that there is no qualitative difference between an unborn human infant and a born human infant, the argument is persuasive only to those who accept such values and such evidence. Absent these latter, one can at least understand the familiar arguments for a “woman’s rights over her own body,” including “the products of conception.”

The issue, then, seems presently frozen between the “religious” and the “secular” positions, with the latter apparently prevailing in the opinion polls and the media. [That, thanks be to God, is no longer the case. See below.]

Rather than enter the fray with one or another argument, which, whether true or not, seems to be unavailing, I should like to call attention to certain

social and historical consequences which may be less well known—call the attention, that is, of certain well-known and honorable institutions such as The New York Times, the United States Supreme Court, the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Organization [for] Women, and suchlike who, while distinguished in their defense of human rights, may not accept the premise of the sacred provenance of human life.

In a word, certain consequences, perhaps unforeseen, follow upon the acceptance of the principle of the destruction of human life for what may appear to be the most admirable social reasons.

One does not have to look back very far in history for an example of such consequences. Take democratic Germany in the 1920s. Perhaps the most influential book published in German in the first quarter of this century was entitled The Justification of the Destruction of Life Devoid of Value. Its co-authors were the distinguished jurist Karl Binding and the prominent psychiatrist Alfred Hoche. Neither Binding nor Hoche had ever heard of Hitler or the Nazis. Nor, in all likelihood, did Hitler ever read the book. He didn’t have to.

The point is that the ideas expressed in the book and the policies advocated were the product not of Nazi ideology but rather of the best minds of the pre-Nazi Weimar Republic—physicians, social scientists, jurists, and the like, who with the best secular intentions wished to improve the lot, socially and genetically, of the German people—by getting rid of the unfit and the unwanted.

It is hardly necessary to say what use the Nazis made of these ideas.

I would not wish to be understood as implying that the respected American institutions I have named are similar to corresponding pre-Nazi institutions.

But I do suggest that once the line is crossed, once the principle gains acceptance—juridically, medically, socially—innocent human life can be destroyed for whatever reason, for the most admirable socioeconomic, medical, or social reasons—then it does not take a prophet to predict what will happen next, or if not next, then sooner or later. At any rate, a warning is in order. Depending on the disposition of the majority and the opinion polls—now in favor of

allowing women to get rid of unborn and unwanted babies—it is not difficult to imagine an electorate or a court ten years, fifty years from now, who would favor getting rid of useless old people, retarded children, anti-social blacks, illegal Hispanics, gypsies, Jews...

Why not?—if that is what is wanted by the majority, the polled opinion, the polity of the time.

Sincerely yours,
Walker Percy

([Signposts in a Strange Land](#) [The Noonday Press, 1992], pp. 349-351) ♥

RANDOM RAMBLINGS ON ABORTION AND THE GOSPEL

Abortion is the public issue, in American society, that stubbornly refuses to go away. To be sure, there are other issues that seem to get more attention for a season. The war against terrorism. The economy. The federal budget. The federal deficit. Health care legislation. Same-sex “marriage.” Global warming. The death of Michael Jackson. The antics of other celebrities. And on and on. They all get media attention, lots of it, for a season. Then they fade and, in time, are forgotten. But the issue of abortion stays, prominently or not, in place. Since the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decisions—[Roe v. Wade](#) and [Doe v. Bolton](#)—abortion has remained an issue consistently in front of the American people.

Over the last several months, the abortion issue reappeared again and again. It was discussed during the political campaigns of 2008. It became a major concern during the early days of the Obama Administration, due to certain of the administration’s pro-choice executive orders. It sparked a controversy at the University of Notre Dame, as many questioned that Catholic university’s honoring of President Obama. Then there was the murder of Dr. George Tiller, the late-term abortion provider. That was followed by the news that most Americans, according to polls, consider themselves “pro-life.” Again, this is the issue that will not go away.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ISSUE

Stop for a minute to consider how legalized abortion has influenced, more or less, several of the key institutions of American society. American churches have had to deal with countless arguments over abortion at all levels of their structures. The American legal profession has had to do some serious soul-searching about the purposes and ends of the law and the courts. American medicine has seemed, on occasion, to have lost its moral footing. American politics has undergone party realignment(s). American media, of the mainstream variety, have come under serious charges of bias, and they are suffering from the rise of alternative sources of information. American culture has become the main location for the rise and unfolding of the culture wars, which have spread so relentlessly and so widely. American education has

“The Gospel of Life ... places obligations on the articulate to speak for the voiceless, on the strong to protect the weak, on the well placed to aid the vulnerable.”

become a source of constant concern because of its underachievement. American entertainment has become coarser with each passing year. The American family has been destabilized. And American society, taken as a whole, has lost a public philosophy that is shared by most of the citizenry and that can assist in guiding public life.

The problem of abortion, by itself, has not caused all of this confusion. But the deaths of more than 50,000,000 unborn children, the harm done to their mothers, and the countless ways taken to protect the continuance of this sad state of affairs have played a significant role in this turmoil throughout the society.

DEALING WITH THIS ISSUE TODAY

So, how is The United Methodist Church dealing with the abortion issue at the present time? Two main strategies seem to have emerged.

The first and most common strategy is silence. Many United Methodist leaders prefer to ignore the issue. Pleased with the Obama Administration and its politics, some simply do not bring it up. Fearful of the fallout that might result in their local churches, many do not bring it up. They assert their main concern is preaching the Gospel and making disciples of Jesus Christ. But that is exactly what many church leaders in Germany, during the Third Reich, said, as they remained silent and inactive about the plight of the European Jews.

A second strategy is emerging. Call it the strategy of bridge building. Some prominent United Methodists want to reach out to all sides of the abortion controversy. So they engage in conversation with those on the pro-choice side. Then they speak with those on the pro-life side. In doing so, they strive to reach a middle ground that will please the greatest number of church members. However, there is a problem with the bridge-building strategy: the bridge builders tend not to listen to the Church’s Great Tradition, the Church’s historic faith, which through the ages has been consistently protective of the unborn child and mother. The bridge builders, it seems, are so busy reaching out to both sides, so busy listening to both sides, so busy searching for compromises and common ground, that they forget the teaching office of the Church and what should be regularly taught. So they actually forget about the truth of Church teaching.

Using silence, an edited Gospel, or well intentioned bridge building—all of which avoid the truth about life and abortion—might be understood as behavior unbecoming of the clergy and the bishops.

IN TIME

The time is coming when The United Methodist Church—her bishops, clergy, and laity—will rediscover that the Gospel is the Gospel of Life. The Gospel of Life. There is no other true Gospel than the Gospel of Life. The Gospel of Life is for the weakest, the least significant, the helpless, among us. That Gospel places obligations on the articulate to speak for the voiceless, on the strong to protect the weak, on the well placed to aid the vulnerable. That Gospel inspires the willingness to act for the sake of the little one in the womb and for the sake of his/her mother. (PTS) ♥

AN ECUMENICAL DECLARATION FOR LIFE

The 2009 National Right to Life Convention took place in Charlotte, NC during the month of June. At the convention on June 20, the National Pro-Life Religious Council put on its traditional “We Are the Sheep... Where Are the Shepherds?” workshop. What follows is a version of the presentation offered by the Lifewatch representative. Pastors and lay leaders are encouraged to consider distributing “An Ecumenical Declaration for Life” in their churches. (Editor)

Introduction

“A new Gallup Poll, conducted May 7-10, finds 51% of Americans calling themselves ‘pro-life’ on the issue of abortion and 42% ‘pro-choice.’ This is the first time a majority of U.S. adults have identified themselves as pro-life since Gallup began asking this question in 1995.

“The new results, obtained from Gallup’s annual Values and Beliefs survey, represent a significant shift from a year ago, when 50% were pro-choice and 44% pro-life. Prior to now, the highest percentage identifying as pro-life was 46%, in both August 2001 and May 2002.” (Gallup Poll)

This is very welcome news to the Church, clergy and laity, in the United States. But it is because of God’s Word and grace (and not because of positive results from the latest opinion poll from Gallup), that the Church should teach truthfully and minister mercifully, “in season and out of season” (II Timothy 4:2, RSV here and following), with regard to abortion and other life issues. To assist the Church in that task, the following simple, ecumenical declaration is offered.

A Declaration for Life

We believe in the one, true, living, loving Triune God, who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This God reveals Himself in history—through encounter with Israel, most fully through His Son Jesus Christ, and

through the Church’s Word and Sacraments. This God speaks and acts.

God is not the creation of humanity’s pious imagination or spiritual enthusiasms.

We believe that God the Father is the Creator of humanity—that is, of each and every human person. “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” (Genesis 1:27)

People are not just products of biological processes.

We believe that God the Son, Jesus Christ, is the Redeemer of the world. “[I]n Christ God was reconciling the world to himself...” (II Corinthians 5:19)

Because of the Redeemer Jesus Christ’s death and resurrection for all, no person in this world is without hope. Even those who have participated in abortion, in any way, are lavished with divine forgiveness upon repentance.

We believe that God the Spirit gathers the Church to teach God’s truth and to minister God’s mercy. “[S]peaking the truth in love...” (Ephesians 4:15) “Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25:40)

The Church should neither develop her own teaching, nor initiate her own ministries, apart from God’s Word and will.

We believe that God commands the Church universal, for the sake of justice, to protect and defend the unborn child and mother from abortion. This divine command has been heard and understood since the earliest days of the apostolic Church. “You shall not kill.” (Exodus 20:13)

In a society that now hosts 1,200,000 abortions a year, in a society that convinces many of its citizens that a U.S. Supreme Court decision that permits abortion also moralizes abortion, in a society that seduces some churches to forget and/or resist God’s Word about life, the Church’s message and ministry on life will often be rejected.

We believe that God calls the Church to be public about her position on life and abortion. “You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world.” (Matthew 5:13-14)

When the Church is silent or inactive on abortion, she rebels against the Lord of Life and the Gospel of Life.

We believe that God, in The End of History, “will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.” (Revelation 21:4) Then and only then will abortion be completely eliminated.

Until The End, the Church will neither grow weary nor pause for rest in asserting and serving the Gospel of Life. (Paul T. Stallsworth) ♥

ON THE MURDER OF DR. TILLER

On the morning of May 31, the Day of Pentecost, Dr. George Tiller, the late-term-abortion provider, was murdered at Reformation Lutheran Church in Wichita, KS. Within a couple of days, the following statement was posted on the Lifewatch Website.

Lifewatch (or the Taskforce of United Methodists on Abortion and Sexuality) is deeply disturbed by the tragic death of Dr. George Tiller. We pray God's mercies upon Dr. Tiller and those whom he leaves behind—his wife, his children, his grandchildren, his larger family, and his congregation.

The murder of Dr. Tiller deserves nothing but condemnation. After all, the murderous violence against Dr. Tiller violated the God-given dignity of his humanity, breached the moral law to which all persons are called to account, broke criminal statutes of Kansas and the United States, and undermined the movement for advancing protections of the most vulnerable human beings in society.

Furthermore, the murder of Dr. Tiller cries out for justice for the murderer.

Lifewatch, from its beginnings, has rigorously opposed all threats, and all uses, of violence. Truth and love are embodied in Jesus Christ, and are practiced in the Church and in society. Truth and love are the means by which the God-given dignity of each and every human person—unborn child and mother, pro-choicer and pro-lifer, abortion provider and abortion protester, atheist and Christian, and all others—is to be recognized, defended, and advanced. Truth and love oppose not only the violence of abortion but also violence against abortion providers.

—Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth, President

Lifewatch/Taskforce of United Methodists on Abortion and Sexuality

First Tuesday after Pentecost

02 June 2009 ♥

THE MURDER OF ABORTION-PROVIDERS CONSIDERED

The repulsive murder of Dr. George Tiller—in a church building, no less—caused us to ask, How many abortion providers have been murdered since 1973, the year of the United States Supreme Court handed down Roe v. Wade?

Thanks to research conducted by Mrs. Cindy Evans, we discovered these five abortion providers who had been murdered in the United States since 1973:

*Dr. David Gunn, on March 10, 1993, in Pensacola, FL;

*Dr. George Patterson, on August 21, 1993, in Mobile, AL (though it is unclear that this murder was occupationally related);

*Dr. John Britton, on July 29, 1994, in Pensacola, FL;

*Dr. Barnett Slepian, on October 23, 1998, in Amherst, NY; and

*Dr. George Tiller, on May 31, 2009, in Wichita, KS.

Each of these killings is a moral outrage. No question. No qualification. As are all instances, and threats, of violence against abortion providers and their staffs and their facilities.

Given the temptation to fight violence with violence, and given the fact that over 50,000,000 abortions have been performed in the United States since 1973, the miracle is that more violence has not been committed against the abortion-providing community. After all, as abortionists advance the reach of the Culture of Death and abortion totals mount, a few in society are likely to become angrily frustrated, tempted to take justice into their own hands, and willing to try to stop abortions, even with violent means. The lesson is this: those who contribute to the Culture of Death are themselves exposed to harm from it. "The Boy in Striped Pajamas," the recent movie about the friendship of a Nazi officer's son and a concentration-camp boy, illustrates the point. Again, the miracle is that more violence has not been committed against abortion providers.

And by the way, those who engage in violent acts against abortionists, their staffs, and their facilities are, by definition, not members of the pro-life community. (PTS) ♥

ARE THE PRO-CHOICE WELCOME?

"I believe in a woman's right to choose. Would I be welcome even so?" That was the email sent by a person then not known by this pastor. The following is the pastor's response. It resulted in a very engaging conversation over coffee. (Editor)

01 June 2009

Dear...

Pentecost grace and peace to you.

Thank you for your brief email of May 30. I first read your note on Sunday, May 31, which turned out to be a memorable day to this pastor for four reasons. First, May 31 was Pentecost Day, the day Christians around the world celebrate God the Father's gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church and to the world. Second, May 31 marked the fifth anniversary of our daughter's death. Paige, 21 in 2004, died in our Lord after a twenty-year fight with cancer. May our beloved one rest in our Lord's peace. Third, on the morning of the day in question, Dr. George Tiller, the noted abortion provider in Wichita, KS, was shot to death. I pray God's mercy upon Dr. Tiller, and God's peace upon the Tiller family and Reformation Lutheran Church, where the murder occurred. And may the murderer be brought

to justice. Fourth, on May 31, your brief and provocative email—"I believe in a woman's right to choose. Would I be welcome even so?"—was opened and read.

In the few lines that follow, I will try to respond to your note.

When you wrote "Would I be welcome even so?," I assume that you are asking if you would be welcome at St. Peter's United Methodist Church in Morehead City, the congregation I am appointed to pastor.

The answer to your question is: Yes, you would be welcome. All—and I do mean all!—are welcome to St. Peter's United Methodist Church. All who visit our church will find God's love ready to reach them through an extraordinarily loving congregation. As St. Peter's Church and her pastor are radically open to new people, I trust that the new people who visit are radically open to the practices, preaching, and teaching of the Church catholic. At St. Peter's Church, we try—and the operative word is try!—to present and serve the truth of orthodox Christianity. In other words, we do not attempt to make up the Christian faith—or its particular claims—as we go along. In addition, questions about and dissent against the Church's faith are welcome—if those raising the questions and offering the dissent are willing to engage in loving, truth-sharing encounters, which can be challenging but rewarding...

Know that I do not particularly care for using email as a way to communicate. Methinks conversation over coffee/Coke much preferable. Any chance we could do that?

Again, thanks for the initial email.

Sincerely,
Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth
St. Peter's United Methodist Church
Morehead City, NC ♥

HILLARY CLINTON, MARGARET SANGER, AND THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Hillary Clinton is the U.S. Secretary of State. Margaret Sanger (1883-1966) was a pro-eugenics activist (e.g., her "Negro Project" aimed to reduce birth among blacks), whose work and vision led to the establishment of Planned Parenthood and its various divisions. The United Methodist Church has new teaching on eugenics, which was adopted at the 2008 General Conference, in "Repentance for Support of Eugenics" (The Book of Resolutions, 2008, pp. 340-346).

Secretary Clinton recently received the 2009 Margaret Sanger Award from Planned Parenthood. While some individual United Methodists most certainly applauded Secretary Clinton, a fellow United Methodist, for receiving this award, her church (officially speaking) did not. After all, the

aforementioned resolution commits the denomination to repenting for its past pro-eugenics involvements. The resolution's last paragraph reads: "The United Methodist General Conference formally apologizes for Methodist leaders and Methodist bodies who in the past supported eugenics as sound science and sound theology. We lament the ways eugenics was used to justify the sterilization of persons deemed less worthy. We lament that Methodist support of eugenics was used to keep persons of different races from marrying and forming legally recognized families. We are especially grieved that the politics of eugenics led to the extermination of millions of people by the Nazi government and continues today as 'ethnic cleansing' around the world." (p. 346)

Again, since Margaret Sanger was once a primary player in the worldwide eugenics movement, The United Methodist Church, because of its current teaching on eugenics, should not support what is done in Margaret Sanger's name. That would include the 2009 Margaret Sanger Award and Planned Parenthood giving it to Hillary Clinton, even though she happens to be a prominent United Methodist.

Let's think together. Should someone representing The United Methodist Church, in an official capacity, express grave concern that a well known United Methodist received, with enthusiasm, the 2009 Margaret Sanger Award? Just wondering.

(And by the way, Planned Parenthood [PP] is just as morally problematic as Margaret Sanger. For your information, PP performed 305,310 abortions over twelve months in the United States in 2007-2008—up from 289,750 in 2006. Also, you should know that PP's total annual revenue was recently more than \$1.038 billion, and its total assets are around \$1.014 billion [News Brief, Anglicans for Life, April 2009]. Also, PP concentrates its abortion clinics in ethnic-minority neighborhoods; therefore it can abort black babies at a genocidal rate. Needless to say, The United Methodist Church, in its official teaching on abortion, has some "issues" with Planned Parenthood as well.) (Paul T. Stallsworth) ♥

LIFEWATCH PREACHERS AND SERMONS 1989-2009

1989 Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth/"The Woman at the Well"
1990 Rev. Joyce Bryson/"To Fulfill the Law"
1991 Mr. Steven Paul Wissler/"Men of the City"
1992 Rev. Connie Alt/"The Mother of All Battles"
1993 Rev. Paul R. Crikelair/"New Vision"
1994 Dr. Michael J. Gorman/"Who Is My Neighbor?"
1995 Rev. John Brown/"Keeping Our Balance"
1996 Mrs. Marilyn N. Anderes/"A Meditation"
1997 Rev. Bill Hughes/"Who Will Speak Up for the Little Ones?"
1998 Rev. Marc Rogers/"Bobbi & Kenny/Mary & Joseph"

- 1999 Rev. Dan White/"Being the Good Samaritan to the Mother and the Child"
- 2000 Rev. Paul R. Crikelair/"Who Are You?"
- 2001 Rev. Harold D. Lewis, Sr./"I'm a Miracle, Not a Mistake"
- 2002 Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth/"Called to Be Saints Together"
- 2003 Dr. Sondra Wheeler/"Fighting Like Christians"
- 2004 Dr. Leicester R. Longden/"Complaint, Confession, and Confidence"
- 2005 Bishop Timothy W. Whitaker/"Do No Harm!"
- 2006 Dr. R. Kendall Soulen/"Election, Not Selection"
- 2007 Dr. William J. Abraham/"Striving for Holiness and Peace in a World of Abortions"
- 2008 Bishop William H. Willimon/"The Pointlessness of Lifewatch"
- 2009 Dr. Amy Laura Hall/"God's Mischief" ♥

YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT

- Today please send a gift to Lifewatch/P.O. Box 306/Cottleville, MO 63338. You can also give to Lifewatch through PayPal on our homepage at www.lifewatch.org. In addition, by donating stocks, you can support Lifewatch's mission and ministry. For more information, simply contact Cindy Evans at the Lifewatch office.

- The May 21st Theology of the Body Seminar—which was sponsored by the New Bern District of The United Methodist Church, Transforming Congregations, and Lifewatch—went swimmingly well. Dr. Paul J. Griffiths, who holds the Warren Chair of Catholic Theology at Duke Divinity School, engagingly taught the forty or so Roman Catholics and United Methodists who attended. It was a great and memorable day of Christian teaching.

Now, the results of the seminar are available. Please go to www.lifewatch.org and click on "Theology of the Body" to obtain a PDF summary version of Dr. Griffiths' teaching. Your reading and studying of this text will be rewarded many times over for years to come. Also, if you would like a DVD of the event, please send \$10.00 to Lifewatch/P.O. Box 306/Cottleville, MO 63338.

Here is a sample from the text of Dr. Griffiths' presentation: "John Paul II places much emphasis upon the fact that in Genesis the Lord is depicted as having from the beginning created human beings as spirit-breathed and sexed bodies. He also recalls that, in his response to the pharisaic question about divorce, Jesus himself takes up again this theme of the originary creation of human beings as sexed bodies. The fundamental meaning of the sexed body is, for humans, that we are oriented physically toward other human beings. We certainly all—or almost all—actively seek physical intimacy with others; and that intimacy is

always to some degree sexual. This is what the Pope means by the spousal nature of the body: we are made for sexual union with those of the opposite sex—male if we are female; female if we are male.... This readiness for and ordering toward sexual union does not mean that all adult human beings do or should find and be a spouse; neither does it mean that there is anything lesser or imperfect about those who live some or all of their adult lives as celibates. What it means most essentially is that it is a fact about our bodiliness that it is created for such a spousal union, and that this fact is evident (even if not unambiguously) in the complementary physical differences between males and females." (2.1. The Spousal Body, "Theology of the Body," pp. 4-5)

Thanks, in advance, for going to the entire text and/or ordering the DVD.

- Question: Why did the June 2009 issue of Lifewatch include that short essay with the long title ("The Nicene Creed and the Constitutional Amendments on the Worldwide Nature of The United Methodist Church")? What does that editorial have to do with life, abortion, and sexuality?

Answer: The more that The United Methodist Church, its laity, and its clergy attempt to live up to The Nicene Creed—that is, strive to be participant in "the one holy catholic and apostolic [C]hurch" (The United Methodist Hymnal, 880)—the more faithful our teaching on life, abortion, and human sexuality will be. In other words, the more faithful the church in faith and order, the more faithful the church in moral teaching and practice.

- In the midst of the Obama-at-Notre-Dame debate, The Reverend Dr. Donald Charles Lacy, a United Methodist who is deeply committed to ecumenism, sent a thoughtful letter to the University of Notre Dame's President, Father John I. Jenkins. Dr. Lacy wrote: "I have been a United Methodist clergyman in several churches across the State of Indiana for 50 years. During that time I have also been actively involved in writing and ecumenism. The central figure in my ecumenical commitment is the Blessed Virgin Mary. She has been a spiritual presence in my life for many years, and I have often sought to honor her by building bridges between Roman Catholics and Protestants.

"The invitation of President Obama to give the commencement address [and be honored with a medal] must surely dismay and hurt the majority of Roman Catholics. In fact, it causes me to hang my head in sorrow. I believe Our Lady, the Blessed Mother of all Christians, has begun to weep at the prospect of this event. Surely there must be some other way for Notre Dame to find a basis for dialogue and positive engagement..."

A fine example of writing the truth in love.

- "Following their spring meeting in San Antonio last week, the U.S. [Catholic] bishops today [June 22, 2009] issued a statement of support for Fort Wayne-South Bend Bishop John D'Arcy's 'pastoral concern' for the

University of Notre Dame. The bishop made national and international headlines earlier this year after he publicly rebuked Notre Dame's decision to honor President Obama [in spite of his pro-choice policies on abortion]...

"Although the bishops were ultimately unsuccessful in convincing Notre Dame to back down from their decision, Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York said the bishops' response may have gained ground in establishing an authoritative voice for the U.S. Catholic Church.

"As far as authority and power go, it may look like a defeat," said Dolan. "But in terms of a recovery of episcopal voice and muscle, it may have succeeded."

"Twenty-five years from now, when somebody's doing a master's thesis on all of this, it could be a chapter where the bishops came together and said, 'This is a moment when we need to exercise some teaching authority.'"

"Dolan continued, 'We kitchen-tabled an issue. In normal Catholic homes throughout the country, people are talking about this. Granted, there might not be unanimity, but there's recognition that the bishops have something to say, they need to say it, and they ought to say it.'" (LifeSiteNews.com, June 22, 2009)

United Methodist bishops, please take note.

- At the 2009 Session of the North Carolina Annual Conference a hand-written note was left on the Lifewatch table. Addressed to Paul Stallworth and Lifewatch, it reads: "Stop enabling those who kill in the name of life by your silence and your rhetoric. If you truly stand for life, denounce these extremists!"

You have the right to witness, but not to demonize those you disagree with. A man was shot in church; does that not convict you to publicly say that you condemn such action?" [unsigned]

Copies of Lifewatch's statement on the death of Dr. George Tiller, the text of which can be read above, were available on the Lifewatch table. Evidently, they were neither seen nor read by the anonymous writer of this note.

- During the 2009 National Right to Life Convention in Charlotte, on June 20 (Saturday), two worship services took place at the same time. A Catholic Mass was celebrated in one area of the convention center, and a Protestant Service in another area. Your editor had the high privilege of leading the Protestant Service. Like last year, after concluding the service, we joined the Catholics for a common prayer. It was another memorable ecumenical moment for all involved, Protestants and Catholics. The Gospel of Life, which stands for the God-given dignity of each person, is indeed for the whole Church.

- At the National Right to Life Convention, the National Pro-Life Religious Council presented the workshop entitled "We Are the Sheep...Where Are the Shepherds?." Father Frank A. Pavone, who is the national director of Priests for Life and who is perhaps the most articulate pro-life advocate in our society, served as the workshop's moderator. Contributions from Anglican, Charismatic Episcopalian, Conservative Congregational, Lutheran, National Right to Life, Orthodox, Presbyterian, UCC, and United Methodist participants were offered. It was a truly

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Lifewatch
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09/01/09

* Hillary Clinton, Margaret Sanger,
and the UMC

* On the Murder of Dr. Tiller

* Theology of the Body Seminar

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outstanding workshop. For your CD of the event, send an \$8.00 check, payable to NRLC 2009, to NRLC 2009/512 10th Street NW/Washington, DC 20004. You will not be disappointed.

- For some solid, pro-life preaching suggestions for each Sunday of the Christian Year, go to www.nprcouncil.org/preaching/. These suggestions follow the Common Lectionary.
- “Lord God, I thank you today for the gift of my life, and for the lives of all my brothers and sisters. I know there is nothing that destroys more life than abortion, yet I rejoice that you have conquered death by the Resurrection of Your Son. I am ready to do my part in ending abortion. Today I commit myself never to be silent, never to be passive, never to be forgetful of the unborn. I commit myself to be active in the pro-life movement, and never to stop defending life until all my brothers and sisters are protected, and our nation once again becomes a nation with liberty and justice not just for some, but for all. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.” You can pledge to pray this prayer each day by going to www.nprcouncil.org/prayercampaign/ and by completing the brief form. Thank you for signing up and for praying daily.
- Does your state offer “Choose Life” license plates? If so, make sure that you purchase one. And when you do, the fee you pay will most likely support pregnancy centers in your state that minister mightily to mothers and their unborn children.
- The health care reform proposal now before Congress has two very serious flaws, or so this editor contends. First, it mandates the government funding of abortions. Second, it involves health care rationing, which would most certainly be harmful (if not deadly) to many of the most vulnerable among us. Contact your U.S. Representative’s office and your U.S. Senators’ offices, and express your disapproval of this legislation.
- Dr. Sam Wells is the Dean of Duke Chapel and a Research Professor of Christian Ethics at Duke

Divinity School. In a brief article entitled “God Only Knows,” he lists several “key unknowns” that are likely to shape the character of religion in 2034. Among the unknowns is this one: “Whether mainline Christianity, so entangled in Europe with secularity and in America with cultural dominance, will lose its doctrinal and ethical identity in the West and dissolve into a mass of symbols with no content, therapies with no center, and rhetoric with no handle on truth.” (*Duke Magazine*, May-June 2009) Powerfully put, Dr. Wells!

- Bishop Will Willimon wrote a hymn for the Commissioning Service at the 2009 Session of the North Alabama Annual Conference. Its fourth verse goes like this: “God speaks to us God’s own Son./ Salvation preached for all to see./When truth is told, God’s victory,/God’s Word made flesh, God’s will is done.” ([no-reply@northalabamaumc.org](mailto:reply@northalabamaumc.org)) Amen!
- *Magna est veritas, et prevalebit.* “Truth is most powerful, and will ultimately prevail.” (*Dictionary of [Classical] Quotations*, Sixth Edition) ♥

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