

Gregg L. Cunningham, Executive Director

August 2010

Dear Pro-Life Supporter,

On July 1, 2010, a volunteer working out of our CBR British office approached a couple as they arrived at the Wiston abortion clinic in Brighton, England. The mother was nine weeks' pregnant and scheduled to abort. Our volunteer gave them prenatal development information which amazed them both. They disclosed that the clinic staff had not allowed them to view their ultrasound scan on their first visit and had told them their baby's heart wouldn't begin to beat until six months. Our volunteer countered that a baby's heart is beating by three weeks and showed them one of our eight-week aborted baby photos. They were shocked and decided to question the clinic staff about what we had shown and told them. Abortion advocates accuse pro-lifers of misrepresenting prenatal development and abortion when it is they who distort the facts.

A short time later the couple emerged and revealed that the clinic staff "had been uncaring and didn't want to discuss the situation." Our volunteer reported that the young father admitted "... the picture of the aborted baby had made up his mind about not wanting his girlfriend to go through with it ...." Our volunteer also "made up her mind" about the importance of photos: She said, "This is the first time I have actually shown the picture of an aborted baby but I [now] realize the power in that."

Had she not showed them the terrible truth about abortion, this pair could have repeated the tragic mistake made by the forty-nine-year-old woman from Manchester, England, from whom we received an email message on August 22, 2010. She had just seen our abortion photos and said: "[I] had an abortion eighteen years ago at fourteen weeks ... [and I] never got over [it]. [I] had virtually no counseling and [was] ... totally unaware of how [well] formed my baby was. [I am] still grieving [and] horrified at what is done. [I] bitterly regret it and feel hurt and angry." She added: "I wish I could hold my child and hear their voice. Abortion is brutal [and] unnecessary and harms not just the unborn but also the expectant mother."

But her most poignant lament affirmed the pivotal power of pictures. "I was so close to not having an abortion. [I] should have had an [ultrasound] scan ... but did not. Had I seen my baby it would have made it all the more real." Large numbers of Christians applaud us when we save babies by displaying abortion photos outside abortion clinics. Many also cheer us when we save babies by displaying abortion photos on university campuses, to engage women before they reach the abortion clinic or, more ideally, before they even become pregnant. But strangely, when we save babies by displaying abortion photos outside a worship service, many Christians change the rules and condemn us. We recently received notice, for example, from one of our supporters who said she ... wanted to be removed from our mailing list because "... your attitude is wrong in attacking the churches and threatening them" with the display of abortion photos.

But we never "attack" anyone. And the only thing we "threaten" is abortion. If it is a good thing when we hold up an abortion photo outside a classroom whose professor is covering up the horror of abortion, how can it be a bad thing when we hold up an abortion photo outside a church whose pastor is covering up the horror of abortion? Does she think "Christians" aren't killing their children too? Perhaps this dear woman believes God wants us to save the babies of pagan students but abandon the babies of professing Christians.

Why would one group of Christians (CBR) disturb another group of Christians (outside a worship service) with truly horrifying abortion pictures? The answer is, because too few Christians are truly horrified by abortion. That is why too many “Christians” are having abortions, too many “Christians” are rationalizing past abortions of which they should be repenting, and why too few “Christians” are helping to outlaw abortion. And we know from experience that most people who see an abortion are much less likely to have a future abortion; much more likely to repent of a past abortion; and much more likely to fight abortion.

That is why we spent three days outside this August’s Harvest Crusade at Angel Stadium in Anaheim, CA. We were not there to conduct a protest but to express a cry for help. We admire Harvest Church, the event’s sponsor, and our presence at their huge evangelistic crusade was generally accepted by the forty to fifty thousand people who attended the event each day. But Harvest Crusade pastors and staff harshly opposed our outreach the entire time we were there. One pastor immediately insisted that we stop distributing our pamphlets and warned that our large abortion photo signs would embarrass and discredit the entire church.

The real embarrassment, however, isn’t Christians lawfully, politely displaying abortion photos on public property outside Christian gatherings. The real embarrassment is that nearly every church would rather surrender than fight the demonic terror of legal abortion. The real embarrassment is that the Harvest staff fought us harder than they have ever fought abortion. When we explained that we were on public property and had a Biblical responsibility and a constitutional right to be there, they pressured security personnel to threaten us with arrest if we refused to move away from the crowds and withdraw to a distant parking lot. This happened repeatedly. When we tactfully declined to depart, security radioed the police. We informed the police that we would sue the City of Anaheim if we were forced to move. We then appealed to the police supervisor, who finally agreed that we were breaking no laws and could stay where we were.

In a fit of anger, a Harvest staff member later pushed one of our signs out into the street and shoved one of our most gentle volunteers physically away from the crowds. He didn’t seem to realize that it was he who was embarrassing the church because he also threatened others of us physically.

Another Harvest pastor complained that our large abortion photo signs would drive unbelievers away from salvation. I reminded him that in Mark 10:17-30 Jesus intentionally drove a rich, young ruler away from salvation by confronting him with the one sin He knew would keep him out of the Kingdom. If Jesus was right to insist that this unbeliever deal with the greed which was blocking his path to salvation, are we wrong to urge unbelievers to deal with abortions which may be blocking theirs? Mark 10 teaches that sinners who aren’t fully ready to repent aren’t fully ready to be saved. Jesus taught that offers of salvation must be preceded by conviction of sin. Should we trick abortion sympathizers into false professions of faith by hiding the fact that Jesus hates baby-killing? Are they advocating fraud as a strategy for evangelism? Do Harvest pastors think their crusade is the only time and place at which seekers will ever be able to hear the Gospel? America is awash in ministries offering seekers a chance to learn the Truth which can save their souls, but our signs could be a seeker’s only chance to learn the truth which can save her baby’s life.

When the Guttmacher Institute was still reporting the abortion rate among “born again” Christians, one study found that nearly one in five American abortions were performed on women claiming to be “born again.” That same study asserted that professing Catholics were as likely to abort as women in the population at large. Hosea 4:6 warns “... My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as my priests; because you have ignored the law of your God, I also will ignore your children.”

Harvest staff also chided us for tormenting post-abortive women. But we were actually offering post-abortive women a toll-free phone number through which they could arrange confidential post-abortion counseling without charge. Almost half of all abortions are performed on women who have already had one or more previous abortions. Post-abortive women are the women most likely to abort and therefore the

women we most need to confront in love. Hiding the full truth from them is an act of cruelty, not an act of compassion. In fact, one post-abortive woman who recently saw our shocking photos told us, “If I had seen this, then I would have never had an abortion.” She also said that “Looking at ... [these pictures] has in some way helped me to grieve my loss.”

The Harvest staff then criticized us for upsetting children. We had brought parental warning signs to display at the entrances to the Anaheim Stadium parking lot but we never had enough volunteers to use them. It turned out, however, that the vast majority of those attending the crusade were adults. Most of the children who did attend were either too young to notice the signs or old enough to have abortions themselves. In three days I did not see a single child who was visibly distressed. Tragically, in this country, even a pregnant nine-year-old girl can be taken for an abortion by a school nurse who easily finds a pro-abortion judge who will authorize the “procedure” without parental permission or even provide parental notice. CBR thinks students who are old enough to have abortions are also old enough to see abortions. Christians are more open to the truth about abortion than are unbelievers and had our photos not been there, we would have lost our best chance to save many savable preborn children.

Planned Parenthood doesn’t want the public to see what they do to preborn children so they suppress abortion photos by arguing that their display will disturb born children and post-abortive women. Many pastors don’t want to divide their congregations on the issue so they also suppress abortion photos by arguing that their use will disturb born children and post-abortive women. Planned Parenthood hides behind women and children to facilitate the doing of evil. Many pastors hide behind women and children to evade their obligation to do good. Planned Parenthood doesn’t really care about women and children. Most pastors do care but they care too much about sparing feelings and too little about sparing lives. The BBC reported a conceptually similar story Feb. 17, 2010 headlined “Afghanistan Taliban ‘using human shields’ – general.” The lead paragraph reads, “Gen. Mohiudin Ghori said his soldiers had seen Taliban fighters placing women and children on the roofs of buildings and firing from behind them.”

The overreaction of Harvest pastors reminded me of our difficult experience displaying abortion photos outside an earlier Franklin Graham crusade in Kansas. The sponsoring pastors were made aware of our intentions and immediately demanded that we attend an emergency meeting to which they brought their lawyer. Not realizing that I too was a lawyer, theirs hinted that he would sue us unless we stayed away from their event. By the end of a long and contentious debate, one of the sponsoring pastors refused to shake my hand. I am a fan of Franklin Graham’s ministry but when I later met him for the first time, he expressed disapproval for the public display of abortion photos. I asked him why. He didn’t seem to really know.

The featured speaker on the third night of the Harvest Crusade was Focus on the Family’s James Dobson. Ironically, we had displayed these same abortion photos some years ago at a series of Focus on the Family’s women’s conferences. They didn’t threaten us with arrest but Focus was not happy to see us. They also seemed more concerned with keeping registrants happy than keeping babies alive. We respect Focus, but one of their vice presidents came close to hanging up on me when I asked him if abortion would be on the conference agenda. He said “no” and eventually admitted that Focus didn’t want to drive women away from the conference. I told him if Focus wouldn’t put abortion on the agenda, we would. One of the most bizarre complaints we heard from Focus staff members was that our pictures would elicit more grief than their on-scene counselors could handle. Instead of seeing an outpouring of grief as a ministry opportunity they could accommodate by simply adding more counselors, they scolded us for being “insensitive.”

A woman came up to me outside their San Antonio conference. She looked at a ten-week aborted baby photo, and with tears in her eyes, said, “My baby was ten weeks.” She added, “I wish I had seen this sooner.”

Perhaps her church tried to keep her from seeing it at all. Most pro-family and pro-life groups joined in the cover-up. Many Christians think hiding abortion is an act of charity. We think it is an act of violence. If we can't stop the killing in the church, we have no hope of stopping it in the secular culture. If we can't get pastors to lead, we will lead for them. For forty years much of the pro-life movement has hidden the horror of abortion and then wondered why almost no one is horrified by abortion. At the same time, the pro-life movement tried virtually every imaginable approach to persuade pastors to engage on this issue. Nothing worked. The pictures are the only thing we haven't tried. That is about to change.

We ask pastors to imagine the worst thing which could possibly happen if abortion photos were shown at their church. Then we ask them if God hates that bad thing deeply enough to allow a baby to die as a means of avoiding it -- because when pastors cover up the horror of abortion, savable babies die in large numbers.

In the early 1940s, in Nazi-occupied France, members of a small church in a village named Le Chambon risked their lives to save the lives of Jews whom many other Frenchmen were willing to betray to the Gestapo. In their book *Deep Memory, Exuberant Hope*, Brueggemann & Miller, Fortress Press (2000), the authors say that a Jewish survivor later returned to Le Chambon to ask why the evangelical community, under the leadership of Huguenot pastor André Trocmé (for which he would later be imprisoned and a member of his family murdered by the Gestapo) had been willing to take such terrible risks to hide Jews from marauding Nazis. They said, "We did it because it did not occur to us that we should not."

Wikipedia.com reports that "... Trocmé and other area ministers serving other parishes encouraged their congregations to shelter 'the people of the Bible.' Trocmé was a catalyst whose efforts led to Le Chambon and surrounding villages becoming a unique haven in Nazi-occupied France." Pastor Trocmé said he was guided by Deuteronomy 19:2-10, which quotes God's command to the Israelites that they set up sanctuary cities to shelter those "... who did not deserve to die..." This command was given "... lest innocent blood be shed in your land ..." This passage says the Israelites were warned that if they failed to shelter the innocent, "... the guilt of the bloodshed be upon you."

It was the pastor's courageous leadership which inspired his church. His church responded by setting a brave example which motivated surrounding churches. Courage is contagious. Here was the church being the church. It is a model which could end legal abortion in America – the church as a "unique haven" for the preborn. We have no hope of victory without the church entering this fight. But a fight is the very thing most pastors are trying to avoid over abortion. That is why pastors are fighting us instead of Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood isn't bothering them. We are. The abortion industry understands and fears the potential power of the church. They try to not provoke pastors. Pastors try to not provoke pro-aborts. So we have decided that if pastors won't bring their church to the abortion wars, we will bring the abortion wars to their church – in the same spirit in which the friends of Lazarus brought the beggar to the rich man's gate. Ann, do you have a better idea? If so, please share it. If not, please help us.

Lord bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregg Cunningham', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Gregg Cunningham  
Executive Director