



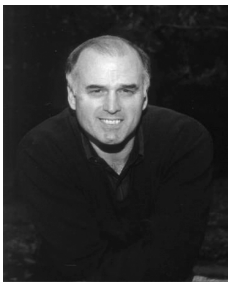
A Time to Speak

By Dr. Laurence White

Laurence White has been pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church for more than 20 years. He is a highly sought after public speaker and national co-chairman of Vision America.

Wise Solomon has noted that "There is a time to be silent and a time to speak." (Ecc. 3:7) The difficulty most often lies in determining which situation prevails at any given moment. That difficulty increases in direct proportion to the importance of the issue. The dilemma becomes all the more

pronounced when the matter at hand is of profound moral significance. Abortion is the great moral issue of our age. There is none other like it. The resolution of this issue will determine whether millions of little boys and girls will live or die. The future of this culture and this country (cont'd. on pg. 2)



Climbing Mountains

by Dr. Rick Scarborough

Psalm 37 has become very special to the Scarborough household during the past six months. I recommend it to you and your loved ones as you move through this new year.

On June 23, 2002 I preached my last sermon to the family of Believers known as First Baptist Church Pearland whom I had served as under shepherd for twelve wonderful years. The years that I served as their Pastor were not wonderful because there were no difficulties or trials. Quite the opposite. It seemed we moved from one major trial to the next and often faced spiritual warfare on multiple fronts simultaneously. Yet, as I reflect back, it was through the trials that I learned the greatest lessons. God taught Tommie, my soul mate for over 32 years, and me that He is faithful and able to sustain us and deliver us, regardless.

Now, as we move into 2003 in a faith ministry with no assurances of the future and no certainties that we will even be able to pay the bills

required to maintain the ministry, Psalm 37 continually comforts us. Over and over, God says to the Psalmist, and to us today, "Do not fret." We particularly love the third and fourth verses: "Trust in the Lord and do good, dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart."

What do you need in 2003? What do you desire? We humans are prone to fret and worry as we look into the future, but our Father, who loves us infinitely more than we love our own children (see Matthew 7:11-12) has promised to give us the desires of our hearts...if we learn to (1) trust Him, (2) do good and (3) delight ourselves in Him (Ps. 37:3-4).

Psalm 37:8-9 speaks very directly to me: "Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret, (cont'd. on pg. 2)

PRAYER NEEDS

- Pray for Congressman Jones as he fights to get HR 35 passed (see inside story).
- Pray for funding for Vision America as we move into 2003.
- Pray for launch of national radio ministry on February 1.

When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people mourn.
Proverbs 29:2

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literally depends upon the outcome of the abortion debate. In the thirty years which have passed since the U.S. Supreme Court legalized this monstrous evil, tens of millions of innocent unborn children have been brutally done to death. And yet the nation is no closer to consensus on the question of abortion than it was in 1973. Instead we have grown weary of the debate. We don't want to hear about it. We don't want to talk about it. We just want to get on with our lives. Unfortunately that weariness perpetuates the status quo and allows the killing to continue. Our silence becomes a cloak which covers evil.

St. Ambrose of Milan was renown in the early church for his fearless denunciation of the sins of the emperor and his court. He rebuked Emperor Theodosius in 370 A.D. for a brutal massacre in Thessalonica and compelled the most powerful ruler in the world to do public penance for his sins. Ambrose recognized a truth that many Christians and leaders of the church today have conveniently chosen to forget. We will answer to God not only for the times when we speak, but also for the times when we are silent. The courageous bishop of Milan said it this way: "Not only for every idle word, but for every idle silence must man render an account." In the language of theology we might say it this way—sins of omission are every

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bit as damnable as sins of commission.

The failure to speak out against wickedness and evil empowers that evil and enables it to continue. Silence in the face of evil always aids the oppressor and penalizes the victims. The great reformer Martin Luther clearly recognized this grim reality. In his commentary on the Old Testament book of Psalms, Luther declares that the Christian pastor who fails to rebuke the sins of the leaders of the government—"strengthens the wickedness of the tyrants, becomes a partaker in it, and bears responsibility for it." Note well those stern words of warning! We are responsible for what we fail to do: responsible not only for our words but also for our silence. Eivind Berggrav, the Lutheran Bishop of Norway during the dark days of his country's occupation by the Nazis, said it even more strongly: "If the state sins, then God's church must fight...He who keeps silent and consents becomes the tool of Satan."

The battle over abortion in America has been difficult and long. As the years have passed we have become accustomed to the killing. The dumpsters full of ravaged babies' bodies don't bother us anymore. We have gradually learned to look the other way. The majority of our people and our pastors don't want to get involved and are unwilling to speak out on such a controversial issue. As you decide whether this is time to be silent or time to speak, remember Martin Luther's warning. Do not allow your "idle silence" to make you a "partaker" in this great wickedness. Let us stand together as Christians in defense of the innocent unborn and perhaps God in His mercy will still save America.

Climbing Mountains (cont'd. from pg. 1)

it leads only to evil. For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land." Until I began meditating on this passage, I never considered how offensive fretting and worrying is to our heavenly Father. "Do not fret—it leads only to evil...for evil men will be cut off." I have always justified worry as being responsible, but God calls it evil and evil men will be cut off. The rest of the verse reminds us that those who hope in the Lord will inherit the land. Have you considered that hope and worry are mutually ex-

clusive? When you're full of hope you have no place in your heart for worry...and when you're full of worry you have no place in your heart for hope.

God has given Vision America an awesome task. Our mission is to discover and mobilize 7000 pastors across America to take this nation back for Christ. There is no way that we can accomplish this assignment...but He can, and I am choosing to rest in the promise that He will. There is such peace in that.

The Houses of Worship Free Speech Restoration Act (HR 35)

Dr. Rick Scarborough was invited by North Carolina Congressman Walter Jones to attend a meeting with Jay Lefkowitz, Chief Domestic Policy Advisor to the President. This meeting took place on January 8 in the West Wing of the White House. Dr. Scarborough and Congressman Jones were granted the audience with Mr. Lefkowitz to discuss the merits of HR 35, first introduced to the House in the last legislative session. Though the measure was defeated, it garnered bi-partisan support and ignited a national discussion of why pastors are not allowed the privilege of speaking to political issues from their pulpits without the threat of litigation and the loss of their church's tax-exempt status.



Congressman Walter Jones and Dr. Scarborough standing in front of the West Wing of the White House

Vision America has witnessed the chilling effect that threat places on many pastors who assume that the Constitution forbids their participation in any activity that smacks of politics. They are often shocked to discover that historically, up until 1954 Pastors were often the chief source of information at election time for their parishioners regarding the moral character of the candidates for office as well as how to vote on any number of important issues that would impact their lives.

In 1954 Lyndon B. Johnson attached a rider to an Appropriations Bill that was never discussed, which for the first time in American history made it illegal for a Pastor to exercise his free speech rights from the pulpit without the threat of being hauled into a court of law. Adding insult to

injury, today the law is not equally enforced. Because it is virtually impossible to monitor every Pastor in America, the IRS depends on third party enforcement, meaning they only investigate when a complaint has been filed.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State, a very liberal ally of the left has taken it upon themselves to monitor the activities of conservative churches and routinely files complaints when anything they deem has political overtones is done in a conservative church. This will help you understand why it seems people like the Reverend Jesse Jackson can stand in liberal leaning churches and conduct political rallies for his favorite causes and never be investigated or filed upon.

Our position is he should be free under the First Amendment to do so if he chooses, but so should those holding conservative views. HR 35 would level the playing field if passed. We do not advocate that Pastors should turn their churches into Political machines, but we do advocate that Pastors should be free to discuss anything they feel led to discuss without fear of reprisal.

Vision America will be working with Congressman Jones throughout the year in his effort to get HR 35 passed. We will give you updates, as they are available including a growing list of cosponsors in the House of Representatives. Let's make this bill a regular part of our prayer lives.

Vision America Presents

During the recent election cycle, Vision America partnered with American Family Radio and the U.S.A. Network, providing programming for both networks. Vision Texas aired on 33 American Family Radio stations across Texas the U.S.A. Network carried two-minute commentaries on 103 of their 178 affiliates, featuring Dr. Laurence White and Dr. Rick Scarborough.

The response to our two radio programs was so encouraging that the Board of Directors voted unanimously in December to allocate funding for "Vision America Presents," a thirty-minute radio broadcast, which will begin

airing five days a week over sixteen stations in early February, featuring Dr. Scarborough and Dr. White. Details are still being negotiated at press time. Specific stations, locales and broadcast details will be listed in our next newsletter. As soon as they become available they will be listed on our Website at www.visionamerica.org. Please keep this dynamic opportunity before the Lord.

"Vision America Presents" is a 30 minute broadcast featuring Dr. Scarborough and Dr. White that will begin airing 5 days a week on sixteen stations in early February.

Vision America

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Your Gifts Make it All Possible...

Vision America is a non-profit, tax exempt organization, dedicating to encouraging Pastors and people of faith to become actively involved in restoring America to the original vision of our Founding Fathers. Our mission is to educate and motivate Pastors, and through them their congregants, to be salt and light, standing for Biblical morality in the public square.

We are completely depend-

ent on God's people giving generously to support our endeavors. The salaries of the staff are set by the elected Board of Directors and each dollar given is carefully and prayerfully accounted for. Please consider making Vision America a regular part of your giving each month. Thank you for partnering with us.

The Mission of Vision America...

To inform, encourage and mobilize pastors and their congregations to be proactive in restoring Judeo-Christian values into the culture and civil institutions of our nation.