Community motivated to take united stand against pornography

By Rev. Bill Mullis
Waycross, Georgia AFA

Editors note: Rev. Bill Mullis recently organized a local chapter of AFA in his hometown of Waycross, Georgia. The initial meeting was such a success we asked him to share with our readers how he did it. We encourage our readers to help organize a local AFA chapter in their community. For information on how to begin, contact: Bill Swindell, AFA Coordinator for Local Chapters, P.O. Drawer 2440, Tupelo, MS 38803 or call Bill at 601-844-5036.

On March 2, 1992, we had our organizational meeting for a local chapter of the American Family Association. We had over 800 concerned citizens in the audience, plus 60 pastors and about 15 local dignitaries including the mayor, sheriff, chief of police, chairman of the county commissioners, school superintendent, and publisher of the newspaper. Two television stations covered the rally. The manifest presence of God filled the auditorium as there was a united stand for righteousness and morality in our community.

That wonderful night was a culmination of fervent prayer and hard work by many. As a Primitive Baptist preacher for the past 17 years, I have tried to uphold God's standard of righteousness. About three months ago, after feeling burdened to do more than just preach against immorality, I called about forty preachers in our community, explaining my burden and vision of us all working together to stand against pornography, abortion, homosexuality, and the state lottery which is to be on the ballot in November. Twenty-six preachers came together. In the beginning, we acknowledged that though we all differed in our understanding and interpretation of many things in the Scriptures, we were all in harmony about God's basic standard of righteousness required of a nation. We covenanted together to restore and re-establish the moral standard upon which our forefathers founded this nation upon God's Holy word.

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For about two years, I had been reading the *AFA Journal*. It is the most informative and educational tool I have ever seen to give specific direction to concerned citizens. In the meeting with 26 preachers, we agreed to attempt to establish a local chapter of the American Family Association.

A steering committee of four preachers and a layman was asked to gather more information and begin working toward an organizational meeting. First, we needed some money for purchase of materials from the national AFA office in Tupelo. Each of the five agreed to either personally bring $100 or ask for donations from others by the next week; $500 was our beginning.

Much of our success in organizing a local chapter was due to the wisdom, work, and influence of Robert Hendrix, Associate Pastor of Trinity United Methodist, a member of the board of education and a school teacher for many years. He also wrote a number of individuals who were financially able to make contributions of $100 each. Some of them responded.

I went to Brantley Printing Company, explained my desire and burden to the owner, and he agreed to do all of our printing free until we could get organized. Letters and fliers were sent to over 150 preachers in our area requesting a meeting of all ministers on February 19, and telling about our organizational meeting at the Waycross High School Auditorium on March 2.

We began visiting community leaders, explaining our goals and asking them to stand with us in opposing pornography. They all agreed to be with the ministers on the stage to show the community we were all united in our stand for a return to morality.

Churches were given "sign-up" pads and fliers for congregations to sign and return, thus giving us hundreds of names and phone numbers to call the weekend before our organizational meeting.

Associational meetings, denominational meetings, and revival meetings allowed me to speak five minutes to congregations about our upcoming organizational meeting set for March 2. Unity and zeal were abounding. There seemed to be a major spiritual awakening. Genuine love for God and His people flowed across denominational boundaries. Jealousy (even among pastors) melted away. The Lord was blessing beyond measure!

We needed many more materials, advertising, and money for renting the auditorium, etc. We asked for churches, businesses, and individuals to be sponsors by contributing $100. We explained we would have a full-page ad in the newspaper on Saturday, February 29, announcing our meeting on Monday, March 2. All sponsors could be listed in this ad. Much needed income came flowing in again.

Bill Swindell, National AFA Coordinator for Local Chapters, helped immeasurably as we needed continuous advice on what materials to order as well as what to say in the ads, fliers, letters, and radio public service announcements. As I kept ordering more and more materials which we were distributing all over town, he asked how many we were expecting at our first meeting. Though it looked like 2,000 would come, I knew many would have "something else" to interfere, but I felt sure we would have 1,000 people present. The State Director of AFA, Nolen Cox, had come to our meeting of ministers, and had also been talking with the national office about the excellent community response and cooperation of ministers in our efforts.

About 10 days before our organizational meeting, Mr. Swindell told me he felt there was a good possibility Dr. Donald Wildmon may come to our meeting. That just added fuel to the fire, and made us all rejoice. Flight arrangements were made immediately.

A special banquet was quickly planned for all ministers and wives as well as local leaders to have an opportunity to meet Dr. Wildmon and have him give us suggestions and direction, as well as share his experience with us. The banquet was held at The Ware Hotel at 5:00 P.M. before our Registration and Program at 7:00 P.M. By 9:30 P.M., March 2, Dr. Wildmon was on his way back to Mississippi, and almost 900 people were rejoicing in a wonderful organizational meeting of the Waycross Area Chapter of the American Family Association.

The past month had been days packed full of work, as well as many "short" nights of sleep. Everyone was exhausted! But since that organizational meeting, things have been even more busy as we march onward in our battle, fighting the good fight of faith. "We've only just begun."

The rhythm of life

By Felicia Day
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"Do you have a baby-sitter?" Shari Richard asks the pregnant woman sitting in the waiting room, two toddlers in tow. Doing an ultrasound examination with a 3-year-old and his 18-month brother running around will be a challenge.

"No, I'm sorry," the woman replies.

"We'll manage," Shari says. "Bring them in." She helps the woman lie on the couch and gently places gel on the woman's abdomen. "I'm sorry," Shari apologizes, "this is cold." Next, she attaches the simple equipment that will create the ultrasound image of the woman's 14-week-old baby.

To help set the woman at ease, she explains that the high-frequency sound waves she uses are safe for mothers and their babies. As the image on the monitor comes into focus, arms and legs are clearly discernible and moving.

"Mommy!" the 3-year-old exclaims, pointing to the monitor. "Look at the baby!"

Shari glances at the mother, who is crying, and asks her, "Would you like a picture of your baby?" When she returns with the picture, the woman is sobbing.

"Are you OK?" Shari asks gently.

"I want to thank you," the woman replies. "I was scheduled for an abortion tomorrow, but I had no idea my baby was so much alive. If it wasn't for you, I would have killed him."

Incidents like this make Shari grateful she's an ultrasound technologist. "It's rewarding to introduce babies to their parents this way," she says. "Often, a natural bonding develops immediately when a mother and a father first see this life within the womb."

When pregnant women come for sonograms—common procedure for women seeking an abortion—Shari doesn't turn the monitor away as she was taught. Instead, the mothers see the life they're carrying.

"Women have a right to be informed about the facts," she says. "I want to get the word out to mothers and would-be mothers: abortion destroys living babies, not 'blobs' or 'products of conception'"—terms used by pro-abortion groups such as Planned Parenthood.

Years of tears

But Shari hasn't always been a pro-life advocate.

In 1974, at 18, right after **Roe v. Wade** legalized abortion, she entered college and left behind her strict Christian upbringing. She sought popularity by imitating some of her peers—going to bars and partying. She got pregnant, and wanted an abortion.

"I was working in a hospital between classes, and went to a doctor's office on my lunch hour," she says. "He said I was pregnant, and could take care of it right then. When I asked him if it was a baby, he said it was only a blob of tissue.

Shari doesn't turn the monitor away as she was taught. Instead, the mothers see the life they're carrying.

"It was the most painful experience in my life," she says. "It took three nurses to hold me down. I had no painkillers, as the doctor literally sucked out the contents of my uterus."

The ordeal left her with a severe infection, bleeding and vomiting. Finally her roommate called an ambulance, which returned her to the hospital. "The same doctor put me through the same procedure," Shari says. He'd failed to remove all the body parts the first time.

But the experience didn't alter her life style, and she found herself pregnant two years later. She went to an abortion clinic and left minus her baby, with reassurances there would be no complications.

For more information on available videotapes, write Sound Wave Images, 2422 Harness, W. Bloomfield, MI 48324; or telephone 313-360-0743.

There were. Shari developed a growth that suddenly ruptured two years later while she was working part-time at the hospital. She was rushed to surgery in time to save her life.

"Those were the years I really wanted to change my life style, and wondered if I could have children again," Shari says. At the same time, she enrolled in an ultrasound program—which proved a turning point. "That's when I first saw active little babies with fingers and toes, and realized they weren't just 'blobs of tissue.'" She was overwhelmed with guilt over her two abortions.

"At work each day I was vividly reminded of how my own babies had looked," she says. When Shari sought help from her church, she found that it wasn't equipped to counsel women suffering from post-abortion syndrome.

During this time she met her future husband. They married and moved to Michigan where, for five years, they tried without success to have a baby. "I was so overcome with guilt I jumped from church to church, pastor to pastor, trying to seek counseling," she says.

The worst part was thinking she'd aborted the only two babies she would ever conceive. None of the counseling met her needs. Even her friends didn't seem to understand her guilt. But her problem lay deeper.

In desperation, Shari unburdened her heart to God. "I cried years of tears that wouldn't stop." she says. "I cried out to God, and asked him to forgive me. I asked Jesus to take over my life. Then I asked him to heal my womb so that I could conceive again. After that, I wanted him to use me to help other women."

That same month, part of Shari's prayer was answered when she conceived the first of her three sons.

Seeing the truth

Shari determined to put her ultrasound skills to work in a ministry helping pregnant women. "Most women who come to me for a sonogram before an abortion change their minds once they see their fully formed baby," she says.

Technological advances have made the difference. She thinks one reason pro-abortionists call the unborn baby a "blob of tissue" is because of old technology. "In the mid-1970's, all the ultrasound showed was the position of the fetus," she says, using the medical term **fetus** for the unborn baby." At seven weeks it