

Contact: Gloria Allred
(323) 653-6530
E-mail: gallred@amglaw

On January 6, 2009, I sent a letter by mail and Federal Express to Pastor Rick Warren of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California, inviting him to open a dialogue with gay and lesbian families on January 18, 2009 at his church.

Pastor Warren has been in the news because he has been selected by President-elect Barack Obama to give the invocation at the Inauguration in Washington D.C. on January 20. The selection of Pastor Warren to receive this honor has been very controversial in the gay and lesbian community, because Pastor Warren was vocal in support of Prop 8 which took away the right to marry from same sex couples in California after these couples won that right in the California Supreme Court.

At the request of John Ireland, the producer of new television commercials showing gay and lesbian families. I sent the following letter to Pastor Warren:

VIA U.S. MAIL & FEDERAL EXPRESS

January 6, 2009

Rev. Rick Warren
Saddleback Church
1 Saddleback Pkwy
Lake Forest, CA

92630

RE: Opening a Dialogue with Gay and Lesbian Families on January 18, 2009 at Saddleback Church

Dear Rick,

I want to share with you what I think will be an excellent opportunity to connect with each other on an issue that has for too long divided our communities. As you know, I have been involved with efforts to establish marriage equality for gays and lesbians in California. I know that you have been just as passionate on the other side of the issue.

The fact is that friends, family, colleagues and neighbors will disagree on the issue. Despite our differences, we are all Californians and we owe it to each other to get to know each other better.

To accomplish that goal, I propose that we spend an hour together with your congregation on Sunday, January 18, 2009 just before you head to Washington to participate in the Presidential Inauguration. During that hour, I ask that you consider providing a forum for the advance screening of a public service announcement (PSA) of gay and lesbian families who feel their stories have not been told. These five families, each headed by a gay or lesbian couple, are placing the images of their families on television so that their fellow Californians can get to know them. Their campaign is called GetToKnowUsFirst.org

I would love to present the five 30-second commercials which will be shown on television and then engage in a dialogue with you and your congregation about the elements that make their relationship and their marriages strong. I would be more than happy to bring the five families profiled in the spots:

Sonia & Gina are raising their 6-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter.

Michael & Xavier have five children ranging in age from 6 to 25 years old.

Robin & Diane met 35 years ago and have built a happy life together.

John & Duncan fostered and then adopted their 3-year old son.

Miguel & Ru just celebrated the 1st birthday of their triplets! These families are living the American dream—experiencing the joys and challenges of supporting each other and raising the next generation. I think that you will find them to be rooted in faith, generous in spirit and responsible members of our community.

I believe that your church would benefit from this educational opportunity in many ways, not the least of which is that it would give your congregation an opportunity to fight the public perception that they would not be open to a message of the importance marriage plays for families

that may look different from theirs.

After we air these commercials I would also be happy to answer questions from you in the presence of your congregation regarding why I believe in marriage equality for same gender couples. As you may have heard, I am also debating this issue at Town Hall Los Angeles on January 14, 2009.

Now that the campaign signs are packed away and the legal briefs are filed, we must recommit ourselves to put our differences aside and get to know each other. Please contact me a.s.a.p. at (323) 653-6530 or by email to work out the specifics. I look forward to thanking you in person for your openness to welcoming these families and engaging in this dialogue.

Very truly yours,

GLORIA ALLRED

P.S.— A few years ago, you were kind enough to write to me with supportive comments about my book-"Fight Back and Win - My Thirty Year Fight Against Injustice and How You Can Win Your Own Battles". I very much appreciated your thoughtfulness in having taken time out of your very busy schedule to write to me. In addition you sent a copy of your book for my client Amber Frey. She appreciated your gesture and enjoyed your book a great deal!

cc: Bonnie Taylor, Community Events

On Monday of this week, having received no reply I contacted Bonnie Taylor at the Saddleback Church who told me she had forwarded my e-mail to Pastor Warren's Office. I then communicated with Pastor Warren's Chief of Staff, David Chrzan. I told Mr. Chrzan that I needed an answer by noon Wednesday, January 14. I also left a message for Pastor Warren. To date, Pastor Warren has still not

accepted our invitation. Stalling us, however, does not stop us.

We wonder if Pastor Warren is afraid to let his congregation see the commercials showing 5 gay and lesbian families.

Is he concerned that if his congregation sees them and meets these families in person that some of his congregants may decide to change their mind and support marriage equality for these couples?

4 of the 5 families in the commercials have children. Doesn't Pastor Warren support responsible parents who provide love and support to their children?

Our invitation to Pastor Warren remains open. We are also purpose driven and our purpose is to educate and provide equal rights for lesbians and gays.

These commercials will be broadcast on Inauguration Day next week in 47 counties in California.

We think the public will want to see, what Pastor Warren did not permit his congregation to view.

This issue will be before the California Supreme Court again this year. With or without Pastor Warren's support we will continue to work to win the hearts and minds of Californians in support of marriage equality for lesbian and gay families.

Gloria Allred

Attorney at Law
January 15, 2009