

## **How to Increase Life Chain Attendance**

Royce Dunn, National Director of Life Chain

**The Problem:** “Royce, our Life Chain attendance continues to decline, from 1,255 in our first year down to 287 in our ninth year. What can we do?”

**The Solution:** Announce your 2007 Life Chain through a “PASTORAL LETTER.” The letter draft below is based on p. 32 of your Life Chain Manual at [www.NationalLifeChain.org](http://www.NationalLifeChain.org). If you’ve already sent out a personal letter to pastors, no problem. Simply follow it with a Pastoral Letter that you hand deliver, if at all possible. You may deliver the same Pastoral Letter a second or even third time, if needed, in coming months.

Prepare a neat Pastoral Letter (see draft below) on plain paper, without a letterhead. Then recruit a goodly number of influential “Lead Pastors” to sign the letter. Use a second page for their church names, phone numbers, and signatures. Then duplicate both pages and deliver a copy to each of the other pastors in your area. Hand delivery says to pastors that you care deeply about your Life Chain’s mission and that you are asking them to care deeply, also.

Do not omit the Pastoral Letter. It will increase pastoral support for your Chain. Catholic Coordinators who struggle to gain Protestant participation will find a Pastoral Letter signed by influential Protestant pastors to be a dynamic helper, and the same will be true for Protestant Coordinators who struggle with Catholic attendance. While, at minimum, the “Lead Pastors” (who sign your Pastoral Letter) will attend and help promote your Chain, their influence will inspire other pastors to do the same. Omission of a Pastoral Letter is a primary reason for low Life Chain attendance.

If you have held a Chain previously, your Pastoral Letter for 2007 might read as follows:

Dear Pastor Owens:

As long as preborn children from our community and nation fall victim to the abortionists’ cruel instruments, we who know Christ must not slight or betray our youngest fellow citizens and neighbors. Let us in 2007 commit to prayer as never before and mark our calendars for October 7, 2:30 - 3:30 p.m., when National Life Chain Sunday 2007 calls us to an hour of intercession on our local sidewalks. Let us provide God a large assembly of true Believers to witness through, as He wills, to save lives and change hearts in our local area and beyond.

As your fellow pastors who are committed to this prayerful October 7 witness, we respectfully urge you and your body of worshipers to join with us. Please know, Life Chain is not a calloused in-your-face public demonstration. Instead, our first mission will be to allow God to minister to us the Church, in all humility. If we welcome the ministry our Lord has for us, He will surely anoint our witness to the general public, as we stand

humbly yet boldly to plead the case of our nation's most innocent and most voiceless citizens. To succeed, our Life Chain must be a true prayer chain, where socializing, idle chatter, and interaction with motorists are withheld. Therefore, as pastors, let us equip our Church families as best we can for a full hour of prayer and earnest reflection. The attached materials are intended for your assistance.

We thank you sincerely for considering our request. Kindly direct your reply to Life Chain Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_, address \_\_\_\_\_ (Phone \_\_\_\_\_ and email \_\_\_\_\_). Feel free to contact any pastor whose signature appears below, and you may also contact the Coordinator with any question or concern. The Coordinator will be updating each of us from time to time.

Meanwhile, dear friend in Christ, we pray for God's abundant blessing on you and your ministry.

If you desire help with your Pastoral Letter, kindly call me at 530-674-5068 or email me at Royce@NationalLifeChain.org.

Attach to your Pastoral Letter a quality piece of pro-life literature. You may also want to attach an information sheet on Life Chain and a copy of the National Life Chain Sunday 2006 press release, which is posted at [www.NationalLifeChain.org](http://www.NationalLifeChain.org). The press release will set a tone and will help pastors relate to last year's National Life Chain Sunday.

NOTE: Every Life Chain is valuable. To build strong attendance requires special ministry.

"We've held a Life Chain for 11 years, and our numbers keep declining. We began with 725 participants and are down to 293. We send out letters, call the pastors, promote Life Chain at ministerial meetings, and run an ad in our local newspaper. Only 6 pastors out of 60 attended last year. What are we doing wrong?"

### **I. Why does Life Chain attendance decline?**

#### A. One group of reasons includes:

1. The national director has not sufficiently assisted Coordinators.
2. An historic spiritual stronghold blinds and binds the clergy, like unto America's slavery era (Ephesians 6), thus prolife is led and supported largely by laity.
3. Today's Church knows abortion as an "issue" but has never known the victims.

#### B. Another group of reasons includes:

1. A late start (is fatal to attendance). It minimizes Life Chain's importance.
2. Loss or lack of passion (starves a Life Chain). Passion has no substitute.
3. Reliance on previous year's promotion (is costly). Life Chain does not coast.

4. Neglect of Life Chain Manual and 15 Steps for Building a Strong LIFE CHAIN.

**II. The key to attendance is pastor support. *Life Chain is “church oriented and pastor focused.”***

- A. Someone must minister to and bond with the pastors, individually, if at all possible.
  1. To help them value the innocent blood crying out to the Church for justice and love.
  2. To help them discern the Church’s passive stand against legalized abortion—the chief patron of homosexuality, sexual addiction, cohabitation, pornography, etc.
  3. To help them realize that the Church, not government, must “plead the case of the fatherless to win it [Jeremiah5:28]” and break abortion’s curse.
  4. To help them examine their inaction, using Scripture and Biblical principles. *Pray for the Holy Spirit to go with you to the churches. Pray for and with the pastors. Welcome tears of passion. Be humble and gentle yet be bold! Defend the babies!*
- B. Further steps toward winning local pastors and building attendance at your Life Chain:
  1. Shun discouragement and regard persecution as a badge of honor. Battling Satan is standard Christian duty. Heaven weeps when the Church yields to détente.
  2. Use the Pastoral Letter provided you in February, rather than p. 32 in your manual. The Pastoral Letter is truly essential, and you have sufficient time to utilize it fully.
  3. Boldly recruit a strong Life Chain Committee. There’s power in a devoted group.
  4. Boldly recruit a Contact Person for each church. That can revolutionize attendance.

**Esteemed missionary R. Arthur Matthews wrote in *Born for Battle*: “We should be ware of activities that do not bring us to grips with the enemy. Everywhere Paul went his activities stirred up the enemy and brought him into action like a roaring lion.... The history of the saints in every age is one of conflict. The pathway the disciple treads as he follows his Lord is one of certain warfare.”**

Fellow Coordinator, I know your job is not easy. Thank you for pressing on. If I can help with your Pastoral Letter or another way, contact me:  
Royce@NationalLifeChain.org or 530-674-5068, day or evening.

## Ministering to Pastors

Satan has targeted our nation's pastors, to keep them occupied with "church growth," budgets, and other duties beneath the priority of massive child killing. Most pastors do not comprehend the toll of legalized abortion unless someone, usually a layperson, witnesses to them, to help them discern the gravest curse and destroyer ever to invade our country and neutralize the Church. Pastors assume they are "prolife" and lead "pro-life" churches, which Satan quietly accepts as victory. How tragic the current spiritual stronghold!

As most Coordinators know, I experienced failure early in prolife. Not one of the 82 pastors I wrote a passionate three-page letter regarding six local abortionists (in 1985) responded initially to our small ministry's plea for help. Astounded, I went out to talk with the clergy, usually without appointments, and within 18 months each of the 82 pastors, plus others, had signed a letter supportive of our mission. Not all of the pastors were firmly committed to Life, but all did sign a letter, and about half of them attended our first Life Chain in 1987. By 1991, the six local abortionists had either closed their abortion practices or moved (two of them) from our bi-county area.

What did I learn while meeting with the pastors? That they do not realize the gravity of abortion on demand and the Church's drift into détente. Yet, I also learned that pastors are willing to listen and receive ministry from passionate lay people. As a result, my mission was mainly a reply to pastors' unexamined reasons for not joining the abortion battle. Some of their reasons are entered below, with my responses. Be encouraged that a single response may win a pastor's support for your Life Chain.

### Pastors' Reasons for Inaction and Coordinator's Responses

**1) Pastor: My brother, God has called you to prolife, but He has called me to soul winning.**

Royce: Pastor, God has called each of His sons and daughters to join you in winning souls—and, similarly, He has called each of us to be a good neighbor, to aid those in urgent need, and to embrace what He called "undefiled religion"—caring for orphans and widows. Inasmuch as fathers have no legal voice to prevent abortions, preborn Americans have no father defender and are legal orphans, with only the Church, you and me, to look to for a defense. Thousands of them, the most innocent of our fellow citizens, die daily, and what is our response to their silent screams? Is not their blood crying out to us, as innocent blood cried out to Biblical Israel? On our soil, what was God's eventual solution when the Church refused to expose and confront institutional slavery? A catastrophic Civil War ended that evil practice. [*Today, brutal terrorists from the same region that subdued ancient Israel and (later) Judah may inflict unspeakable suffering and loss on our nation. Has not America, on our watch, become a violent, terrorist nation against the unborn?*]

Thus, what duties do we have, Pastor, that are more compelling than our firm resolve to end the most evil and deadly siege our nation has faced? How can we hope for revival in the Church if we do not strive to “rescue those led away to slaughter”? Will not God strengthen our evangelistic labors if we have heart for the defenseless unborn and their mothers? The churchmen on the Samaritan road, who passed on the other side, were unmindful of God’s priority. Are we not committing the same spiritual blunder?

**2) Pastor: Mr. Dunn, we’re a praying church, and we believe prayer, rather than public demonstrations, is the solution to legalized abortion. Don’t you agree?**

Royce: Pastor, kindly permit me to disagree. Would God use our prayers to feed our starving neighbors when we have the food but will not deliver it? In fact, given our record of apathy, God may already deem our prayers a stench in His nostrils, much as He did Israel and Judah’s prayers, as related to us by the prophets. If we care to know where unwanted local children are killed, we can go to the death centers and see the mothers enter and then exist in despair, without their babies. Across our nation, the killing centers are often within earshot of multiple churches, yet few pastors have gone or asked their people to go to the centers to pray and counsel.

Truly prayer is vital to Christian living. Christ, our divine model, prayed all night. We are to “pray without ceasing.” Moses prayed and fasted 40 days. But prayer cannot substitute for action God requires of us. You know the 25th Chapter of Matthew, Pastor. Christ will one day judge the nations and separate the sheep from the goats. By what criteria will He distinguish a sheep from a goat? Important as prayer is, it is not referenced in Matthew 25. Rather, Christ tells us, “*I was hungry and you fed me. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you invited me in. I was naked and you clothed me.*” The sheep give heart to urgent human needs, to loving their neighbors as themselves, as did the Good Samaritan. Thus, we who endeavor to follow Christ are defined most not by what we say but by what we do. Proverbs, as you recall, commands us to “rescue those led away to slaughter” and cautions us not to say we did not know about their oppression, else God will repay each of us according to what we have done. We must not “pass by on the other side.” Please stand with us the laity. Your pastoral leadership is desperately needed.

**3) Pastor: Royce, we’re just a small church, and we can’t do everything a large church can do. We’re with you in spirit and we’ll pray for you, but we can’t take on more tasks at this time.**

Royce: Pastor, another minister told me last week that because his church was large and growing rapidly that he could not possibly add abortion to his duties. Are we talking here about church size or about church purity? Did not Gideon consider his clan too weak and small to achieve a great victory for God? Did God adopt Israel because of her population and might? “*Can any good come out of Nazareth?*” Who can know how God wants to use you and your congregation to be a giant killer. “*Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit,*” says the Lord Almighty.” God may choose one of your members to turn an abortionist away from his savage practice. He may use you to reach other pastors and,

ultimately, to liberate a nation from legalized abortion. The fact that you pastor a small church may prompt you to rely firmly on Christ and be a man He can use mightily. Please join the battle with us and urge other pastors to join with you. The killing must end in Yuba-Sutter.

**In closing:** Dear friend, I too must meet with more pastors this year, and while doing so, my responses will differ to yours because we are different individuals. Fortunately, the Holy Spirit knows our personality, our emotions, and the guidance we each need. Let us read God's Word, commit it to our lives, and be assured God will accompany us to the churches. Yes, we pro-life activists face strong opposition, but our salvation purposed us to battle Satan's forces, as Arthur Matthews reminds us. Today, our culture faces formidable enemies, both spiritual and physical. Our children, grandchildren, and friends are at serious risk. Let's do all we can to awaken the Church and preserve hope.

With that commitment, we rejoice that our sins are forgiven and that God has graced to us a desire to serve Him and persevere. What greater blessings could we seek or receive?

Most gratefully,  
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