



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on May 7, 2012

Presbyterian-USA Seminary Honors Planned Parenthood Officials

A seminary with the Presbyterian Church-USA recently honored two high-level officers of Planned Parenthood, America's premier abortion provider and promoter, with its "Lives of Commitment" Award. The award, given by [Auburn Seminary of New York](#), was presented to Planned Parenthood's president, [Cecile Richards](#), along with the abortion group's chairman, [Cecilia Guthrie Boone](#), at a special breakfast May 3 that also honored other women "who bridge religious divides, build community, and pursue justice," according to the seminary's [award web page](#).



"Like the millions of people who support Planned Parenthood's mission," explained a seminary statement about the award, "Auburn recognizes Cecile Richards and Cecilia Boone as champions for reproductive health care, education, and women's health."

Sadly, Auburn Seminary's blatant endorsement of Planned Parenthood does not surprise some pro-life activists within the denomination. After all, the mainline PCUSA has been on a liberal plummet for years. Marie Bowman, head of [Presbyterians Pro-Life](#) (PPL) and an active PCUSA member, said that it is a clear departure from Scripture "to involve clergy in activism that advocates for abortion rights. The fact is the right we're talking about is the right to kill an unborn child." She added that "no human being has that right. God does not give us that right."

PPL notes on its website that the PCUSA "currently has a policy on abortion which states that Presbyterians hold a variety of viewpoints about abortion and that there is disagreement among Presbyterians about when a human life begins. Like most mainline Protestant denominations, our denomination actively engages in abortion rights advocacy and is a member of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice."

By contrast, PPL, which is not officially recognized by the denomination, identifies itself as a group of PCUSA members and pastors who comprise "a voice for renewal in our denomination." The group notes that as with "the Christian Church throughout history, we believe that God, who made us in His own image, has forbidden us to shed innocent blood. PPL is committed to strengthening the bonds of family love and nurture, and to protecting innocent life."

That a seminary charged with training PCUSA clergy would honor a group committed to killing babies is not surprising given the denomination's position on the unborn, accepted at its 217th General Assembly a few years ago. "We affirm that the lives of viable unborn babies — those well-developed enough to survive outside the womb if delivered — ought to be preserved and cared for and not aborted," the denomination's assembled delegates declared. The PCUSA's official position goes on to read that when "late-term pregnancies must be terminated, we urge decisions intended to deliver the



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baby alive. We look to our churches to provide pastoral and tangible support to women in problem pregnancies and to surround these families with a community of care." Such pastoral support would, apparently, be infused by the same spirit that prompted Auburn Seminary to honor Planned Parenthood.

How different from the voices that the PPL group has heard from over the years of its existence. Among the esteemed Christians and other leaders who have spoken at PPL events are Mother Teresa, Richard Neuhaus, Cardinal O'Connor, Dr. Bernard Nathanson, and Charles Colson.

Representative of the counsel offered by these pro-life individuals are the comments of Mother Teresa, who spoke to a PPL gathering in 1988. "Neither Christians nor non-Christians have the right to destroy life," the pro-life Christian once said. "It doesn't matter what kind of child it is. It is a child of God created for greater things; to love and be loved."

Mother Teresa, who most likely would never have been considered for Auburn Seminary's "Lives of Commitment Award," noted that "the little unborn child in the womb of the mother is special to our Lord. For that little one God has died on the cross to redeem that child. And for us who know what that crucifixion means it should increase in us the desire and the determination to save that unborn child."

Photo: Cecile Richards, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, addresses the Democratic National Convention in Denver, Aug. 26, 2008: AP Images



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