



Executive Committee
Southern Baptist Convention

MORRIS H. CHAPMAN, D.Min.
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

D. AUGUST BOTO

GENERAL COUNSEL AND VICE PRESIDENT FOR CONVENTION POLICY

September 29, 2006

David Clohessy
Christa Brown
Mike Coode
Miguel Prats
SNAP (Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests and other Clergy)
P. O. Box 6416
Chicago, IL 60680

Dear Mr. Clohessy, et al,

I am in recent receipt of a copy of your letter of September 26 addressed to Drs. Chapman, Land, and Page, in whose joint behalf I make this reply.

I regret that our communications are not accomplishing what either of us intend. That is unfortunate, for I believe our ultimate goals to be similar with regard to the issue of sexual abuse – namely, to eradicate it in a church context (and even more broadly, if possible).

The use of hyperbole, argumentative language, strident tones, or pejorative adjectives is not necessary, and disservices the victims you are seeking to help by alienating those with whom you profess to desire to collaborate, and from whom you are requesting assistance. Your staging of a ten-minute, photo-op mock demonstration in front of our building in an attempt to direct press attention to shortcomings you perceive to exist in the Southern Baptist Convention is certainly not a backdrop conducive to the continued dialogue and joint working relationship you expressed as a desire in the letter you hand-delivered at that time. And your use of examples which are inaccurate or which have no relevance is also unhelpful.

Obviously, there may be some ways the Southern Baptist Convention can improve awareness of and protection from the problem of sexual abuse, and we will be both responsive to our constituency and exhortive toward that end, perhaps using portions of your suggestions which find support among rank and file Southern Baptists, and which seem workable and beneficial under our polity. Nevertheless, the adversarial posture which you have assumed is one of several factors leading me to believe that continued discourse between us will not be positive or fruitful.

Sincerely,

D. August Boto

cc: Dr. Morris H. Chapman
Dr. Frank S. Page
Dr. Richard D. Land

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