

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

BARRY H. COREY



August 20, 2013

Dear Friends in the Pro-Life Movement,

Greetings from Biola University.

In May we had a moment on campus when a Biola student in good standing, Diana Jimenez, was asked to remove graphic depictions of aborted babies. The encounter, which was preceded by numerous conversations with Diana, was captured in part on video that was edited and then posted on the Internet. Since that time I have heard from many friends of Biola who are leaders and voices in the pro-life community asking for perspective on the video and offering help, knowing we are allies for the sanctity of human life.

To them as well as to anyone of interest, I want to acknowledge publicly that there were missteps made in our response to Diana. For this we apologize to the public as I have privately to Diana. In the days and weeks following this incident, we have thought about where and how we could have and should have done things differently. In turn, we have taken corrective steps. Diana's passion for the unborn was not the reason she was asked to remove the photographs. For actions on our part that were perceived to be heavy-handed and retaliatory, I have apologized to her and stand by this apology publicly. I acknowledge and regret our errors, and steps have been taken to correct them. As a result, the leadership of Biola is addressing our policies and procedures to avoid a reoccurrence of this type of situation.

In so many ways, Diana is the kind of student with the deep Christian convictions I hoped to see when I came to Biola six years ago. In her convictions about saving the unborn, she represents what Biola is about—the desire to speak up against injustices that break the heart of God. Like Diana, Biola is and has been passionately pro-life.

We have had this year and will have in years to come pro-life events and speakers on campus. We have a pro-life group led by students. We have in our theological statement approved by the board and updated in the past year a statement relative to the sanctity of life: "The Bible is clear in its teaching on the sanctity of life. Life begins at conception. We abhor the destruction of innocent human life through abortion on demand, infanticide or euthanasia as unbiblical and contrary to God's will. Life is precious and in God's hands." All Biola faculty and trustees affirm this statement. We are one of a handful of American colleges or universities filing suit against the federal government for mandating contraceptive coverage in our health plan to include drugs like the

morning-after pill and the week-after pill. Simply, we are allies with the pro-life community on behalf of the unborn.

We will continue moving forward on our time-honored commitment to holding high the value of human life and confronting the tragedy of abortion.

1. **Communication:** In September, I will communicate to the Biola community through *The Chimes*, our student newspaper, and through other venues Biola's current and historic position on the sanctity of life as well as provide a context for the important nature of showing disturbing images portraying victims of injustice. This fall, I, along with a team from Biola (such as spiritual life, students and faculty), will preview the way in which images could and should be used in a Biola chapel service. Through my message and the previewing of a chapel service, we will be reinforcing Biola's core mission to raise up graduates equipped with moral courage and intellectual competence who can impact the larger culture.
2. **Instruction:** As in years past and in years to come, this year we will again sponsor a pro-life chapel. The presenters we invite will demonstrate the use of images compassionately, ethically and effectively. The sanctity of human life is more than mere words affirmed by administration and faculty, but a teaching tool to equip our students with the knowledge necessary to become culture-changing leaders. Disturbing images of injustice certainly prick our consciences deeply and uncomfortably, but historically images have been effective ways of awakening our souls to these injustices and to activism.
3. **Policy:** Biola has not had a specific policy regarding the use of graphic or disturbing images on campus, leading to the kind of situation experienced by Diana. By the end of the fall semester, Biola will have a clear policy supporting the ethical and compassionate use of graphic images in places trafficked by students. As a Christ-centered, biblically grounded community, we need to understand the role graphic images should play in communicating our convictions as Christians. In the meantime, we are committed to finding ways and appointing times and places on campus where information, including photographs of victims of injustice, will be displayed.
4. **Leadership:** This year we are accelerating our work and adding leadership to our academic team for the specific purpose of making sure our stated values and theological convictions are evident in our curriculum and learning outcomes and of making changes where we see learning outcomes are not evident. This relates to the sanctity of life, as it is one of our six theological distinctives. We desire that each student graduating from Biola understands and can articulate the biblical message of the sanctity of human life, so that students demonstrate these values in their own communities.
5. **Continuing Our Commitment:** We will continue and advance our advocacy for life and in support of the unborn through our chapels, our student groups, our theological distinctives, our classrooms and curriculum, and through our legal action. We have begun to consider additional ways to emphasize the tragedy and trauma of abortion so that our students not

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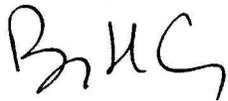
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only embrace the convictions those like Diana champion but also understand there's help for them in times when they need it.

Again, we are sorry for our missteps and for whatever divisions within the Christian community that have ensued. Our aim is to reaffirm our position of leadership and advocacy for life.

Please be in prayer, above all, that we will have wisdom and will be reminded through these conversations that what is most at stake is not Biola's reputation but rather the unspoken voices of the unborn children, the Gospel of Jesus Christ and his exaltation as the risen Savior and reigning King.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "BHC", written in a cursive style.

Barry H. Corey
President