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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE TO:
Political and Religion Editors

THE KIND OF LEADER AMERICA NEEDS: Pastor Rick Warren's Sunday Sermon Defines the Most Important Characteristics of Leadership in the Upcoming Elections

LAKE FOREST, Calif., Aug. 17, 2008 – On the heels of the Saddleback Civil Forum on the Presidency the night before, Dr. Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church, today preached a Sunday morning sermon to his congregation and uplinked to the nation entitled, “The Type of Leader America Needs.”

“I am not an expert on politics, but I know a lot about leadership,” Warren said. “The guidelines for choosing a leader our nation needs and that God blesses are based on biblical qualities found in Proverbs.”

Warren dug deep into the Book of Wisdom, providing numerous Scripture references describing how God blesses leaders who “live with integrity, serve with humility and share with generosity,” pulling from his experience in training more than 500,000 pastoral leaders around the world.

“Today, most leaders are interested in image – what people think they are; but true leadership involves integrity, based on character and confidence, which is the number one need for leaders in America,” Warren said. “Integrity doesn’t mean perfection – no one is perfect – but it does mean being honest, which leads to credibility and trust.”

According to Warren, the second biblical quality for leadership is humility, which is marked by service to others. “True leaders are known by how they serve, not how many serve them,” he said. “Too many leaders start out in service that quickly evolves into ‘serve us.’ Humility doesn’t mean denying one’s strengths, but rather being honest about one’s weaknesses. Humility is not thinking less of oneself, it is thinking less about oneself, and the way to do that is to think of other people.

“The worst sin one can have is pride, which makes us enemies of God,” Warren added. “Humility is a declaration of dependence. Our president needs to be humble, and we should look for leaders who admit their dependence on God.”

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With music intermixed between Warren's points, multi-Grammy and Dove Award winning singer Michael W. Smith gave a warm praise anthem, "I'm Deep in Love With You Lord," further centering the congregation's focus on how to apply this morning's sermon in their lives.

According to Warren, the third characteristic for a leader of influence is generosity. "Generosity is love in action," he said. "You can give without loving, but you can't love without giving; it is important that a leader give both his time and his money for others."

Warren also noted that generosity involves compassion, and urged his audience to look at a leader's compassion for others. "America is one of the most blessed nations in the world, and we need to be a blessing to others," he said. "In a leader you are looking for someone who will speak up for those who can't speak for themselves."

The purpose of Warren's sermon wasn't to tell his congregants how to vote, but to provide them guidance from a biblical foundation in considering candidates for office – not just the presidency, but also senators, congressman, governors on down to electing local officials.

Warren then challenged congregants on things they can do between now and the election in November. "First pray – for the candidates, for yourself and for wisdom," he said. "Second, check the candidates out – not just their position on issues, but also their character and competence. Third, register to vote. Fourth, and above all, vote.

"If you are saying, 'I don't like either candidate, maybe I won't vote,' then I say you need to move to another country," Warren concluded. "Because if you don't, you are giving up a privilege which people died to make possible."

Founded in 1980 by the Warrens, Saddleback Church is located in Orange County, Calif. With an average weekly attendance of 22,000, it is one of the five largest churches in America.

For more information about the Saddleback Civil Forum or Saddleback Church, visit www.Saddlebackcivilforum.com or www.Saddleback.com.