

Unificationists Join Citizen Protests of Sex Industry Billboard in Philadelphia

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Unificationists in Pennsylvania and others are expressing outrage and concern about a billboard along the interstate highway near Philadelphia that promotes adultery.

“Thou Shalt Commit Adultery” screams the scarlet letters of a billboard on the northbound lane of I-95 before the Allegheny Avenue exit outside Northeast Philadelphia. The image of porn actress Brie Olson fills the upper right corner of the board, which advertises a business called Arrangementfinders.com.

According to Rev. Shota Iwasaki, the state pastor for Unification communities in Pennsylvania and Delaware, the billboard has been up since mid-January. Rev. Iwasaki tells Unification News that he made it his mission to find out the name of outdoor advertising company supporting the ad, which is not mentioned on the billboard itself. He says he contacted Steen Outdoor Advertising, which has a contract with the company promoting adultery and demanded that the advertisement be taken down. An employee at Steen has said the billboard will stay up until the end of the first week of February, according to Rev. Iwasaki. Calls to Steen by reporters at Unificationnews.com were unreturned. “The message of the advertisement mocks Christianity and twists the commandment against adultery that has served as a cornerstone for civilization for 4,000 years,” says Rev. Iwasaki. He added: “The website sponsoring the advertisement, featuring the name and image of a porn star, appears to be promoting prostitution by mocking the Biblical injunction against adultery. This message is promoting destruction of family openly and shamelessly. I have requested that the billboard be removed and that no further contracts be signed with pro-prostitution advertisers.”

Fox News reported on January 29, 2012, a protest effort against the billboards by a third-grade teacher and her students in Philadelphia's Port Richmond neighborhood. The St. George Catholic School teacher, Rita Ann Ezzai, asked her kids, "How can you raise the standards in your own community?" as she led them in a letter writing campaign to push for removal of the billboard.

"I say, take it down, because that is very offensive," third grader Donald "Dusty" Grauber told Fox 29's Bruce Gordon at the St. George Catholic School, not far from the billboard.

According to the Fox News story, the Toronto-based online dating site caters to older men looking for younger women for what the site calls “mutually beneficial arrangements.”

Lourdes Swarts, president of the Pennsylvania Family Coalition (www.pafamilies.org), a non-profit education organization working to strengthen the nuclear family, sent the following statement to Unificationnews.com: "The Pennsylvania Family Coalition calls for an immediate take-down of the offensive and hateful billboard posted by Steen Outdoor Advertising on Interstate 95 that promotes adultery and mocks the Biblical commandment, "Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery." She continued: "The fact that the billboard has been allowed to stand for weeks without outcry from Philadelphia leaders speaks volumes about the marriage meltdown in the United States and the aggressive campaign of the sex industry to mainstream prostitution."

Dr. Richard Panzer, president of Unification Theological Seminary and author of the book, *The War on Intimacy*, sent the following statement responding to the billboard:

"First, this billboard is somewhat clever, but part of a general trend mocking people with values. Honestly, the joke is on the people who believe that uncommitted sex will make them happy. It's simply not true, and it's sad. It's sad that our media and culture are not telling people the truth about sex and love.

"Second, I see this as part of a larger attack on religious values in our country, as well as a cultural assault on people who have traditional values about sex and marriage. People who think this way are really very ignorant about who's having the best sex in America – that is, married people who are faithful to each other. If you look at TV shows and movies these days, they portray married people as miserable because they're not having any sex and they portray all these unmarried people hooking up in passionate ways. The media peddles a kind of anti-marriage, pro-casual sex culture, and this billboard is in the same spirit.

"What's really sad is that people who push this point of view are ignorant about research that shows that married people have more sex than unmarried people, and that they enjoy it more, physically and emotionally. Married people who are faithful to each other report the most enjoyment of sex. Married people who engage in adultery are the least fulfilled, sexually or otherwise. (Source: National Sex Survey, the largest survey ever conducted in the United States, published by the University of Chicago in 1994)

"The culture promotes casual sex, but do people know that men who have pre-marital sex with someone other than their wives are 37 percent more likely to get divorced? Or that women who have pre-marital sex with someone other than their husbands are 24 percent more likely to get divorced? The more sexual partners you have before you get married, the more likely you are to be unfaithful in marriage and eventually divorced.

"I think that most people aspire to have great sex in a truly loving, committed, intimate marriage, but our culture is trying to persuade people that experimenting and hooking up and having one-night stands is okay and will not damage your chances of a truly loving marriage, even when the research shows that that's not true!"