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WHEN HOMEMAKERS ROAR

A Homemaker Takes On A Multi-Billionaire—And Wins

PART 1: BUILDING AN UNLIKELY ARMY

by **Cindy Coughlon**

Most housewives juggling the demands of family and a small home-based business would not consider themselves likely candidates for pro-life activism. While we can usually be counted on to provide a proven recipe for perfect chocolate chip cookies, our hectic schedules and family focus often leave us sorely lacking in knowledge of the latest news and political insight. Nonetheless, we believe it greatly pleased God to raise an army of stay-at-home moms to take on the second wealthiest man in the world and one of the abortion industry's top backers.

Since acquiring The Pampered Chef (TPC) last October, Berkshire Hathaway's (BH) chief executive officer, Warren Buffett, has faced stiff resistance from a group of Pampered Chef (PC) consultants who have hung up their aprons rather than sell a product that supports abortion. And these women were not afraid to tell the world why. How did God move these women out of the kitchen and into the sphere of pro-life activism? Perhaps my personal journey can provide some insight.

In The Beginning

The first PC party I attended was when my first child was barely a year old. The mood was relaxed and I was captivated by the friendly consultant who dished up cooking tips and techniques, while wowing us with a sampling of delicious treats that she had effortlessly prepared before our very eyes with an array of specialized kitchen tools. When she pulled out this crazy looking contraption and peeled, cored and sliced an apple in mere seconds, I was hooked. Although I loved to play in the kitchen, I had neither the tools nor the techniques to garner more than an occasional success. And with an active toddler underfoot, I had convinced myself that there was simply no time to bake the homemade apple pie I knew my husband dreamed of.

As I watched the consultant I became convinced that with the right tools and a little know-how I could transform our family mealtime. Unfortunately, in the early years of our marriage, we did not have "two nickels to rub together." I realized that if I wanted to become the "pampered chef" of my dreams, I was going to have to sell the products. After talking with the consultant, I was convinced that with the right tools, I could cook for an audience. Before the week was out, I had signed up to become the newest PC Independent Kitchen Consultant.

Although my business was an instant success, I certainly cannot claim all of the credit. The PC formula is brilliant and perfectly suited to the stay-at-home mom. Founded more than 20 years ago by Doris K. Christopher, TPC seemed a heaven-sent answer to the problem of finding a business that would allow her to stay at home with her two young daughters while she utilized her knowledge of home economics. Christopher gathered together a few friends, demonstrated her kitchen tools and served up tasty treats made with her products. The party was a hit and TPC was born. The formula has resonated with women throughout the United States and Canada, growing TPC into a \$700 million a year business that is driven by over 70,000 consultants.

The package is especially attractive for the Christian stay-at-home mom. A professing Christian, Christopher reportedly welcomes prayer at business meetings and conferences. She openly acknowledges God in TPC's mission statement: "We are committed to providing opportunities for individuals to develop their God-given talents and skills to their fullest potential for the benefit of themselves, their families, our customers and the company..." While not a "Christian business" per sé, many Christian consultants have proudly pointed to the way Christopher's faith has shaped the corporate climate. Indeed, it would not be unfair to suggest that many consultants consider their business a type of ministry wherein they promote family mealtime and mentor other women who desire to contribute to the family income while staying at home with their children.

My active relationship with TPC lasted for just over a year, after which time the demands of a growing family forced me to temporarily lay down my business. My plan was to take a year off to care for my new son and then jump back in on a limited basis. One year stretched into two, and two children soon became three. Our finances improved and my schedule became fuller with each passing year. I found myself thinking less about a business and more about a ministry.

Capturing The Heart

If there was one issue that had really captured my heart it was the plight of the preborn child. However, having made the commitment to home school my children, time to get involved in the Pro-Life Movement was rather limited, but I helped where I could.

It was in preparation for our crisis pregnancy center's annual charity walk that God moved on my heart. As the event coordinators shared abortion statistics, I remember crying in horror at the staggering death toll. I was frustrated by the belief that I could do nothing significant to make a difference. I cried out to the Lord in prayer, asking Him, in His own time and way, to give me a greater role in this fight for the lives of His preborn children. I knew that God always answers prayer, but I also knew what my calendar looked like. I assumed that this was one of those "long-term" items—something for the wait list. Little did I know that He had already set a plan in motion.

In the summer of 2002, as our family traveled to California to spend Labor Day weekend with the grandparents, my husband surprised me by asking whether I had ever thought about selling again for TPC. I am not sure what was more surprising—his question or my response. In spite of myself, I eagerly answered, "Yes!" Something inside me just leaped at the prospect.

My eagerness to sell again, along with that of my husband, was more than a little surprising and made me consider two important questions: Was this the right thing for my family? Was this in keeping with God's plan for me? Although nothing seemed to add up, I was undeniably excited about the open door to resume my PC career. I could hardly sleep that night—so I prayed. I prayed in general and I prayed specifically. I prayed that God would bless my business and make it His own, to do with as He pleased. Other than for my own family and my nation, I have never prayed so hard over anything. When I awoke the next morning I felt very much at peace with the idea of donning my apron once again.

A Troublesome Education

When word came that BH had acquired TPC, I was totally excited. As I told my whole family, "Warren

Buffett is a financial genius!" This had been proven time and time again.

It was an evening in early December when I sat down to read the January edition of *Citizen*. I cannot describe the shock I received when I opened to an article entitled, "Buffett, You're Killing Your Business." Holding my breath, I read the article. I handed the Focus on the Family magazine to my husband and said, "I cannot sell."

After a long night of searching the Internet, it became clear that the truth was worse than I had first thought. Warren Buffett is not your average pro-abortion supporter. He is passionately committed to fighting the perceived threat of overpopulation. In his zeal to prevent the births of "too many" children, Buffett not only funds some of the most controversial projects and groups, he has also arranged to donate over 90 percent of his personal wealth (currently valued in excess of \$30 billion) to the Buffett Foundation.

The Buffett Foundation is a private philanthropic entity dedicated to funding, almost exclusively, projects and groups that promote abortion and so-called reproductive freedom. The level of financial commitment that Buffett has made to the Foundation is simply unprecedented in the history of legalized abortion. Buffett is waiting until he dies to donate the vast majority of his personal wealth. He is aggressively making and saving billions of dollars, believing that holding the funds until his death will yield the greatest return. Unless Buffett's will is changed before his death, the Buffett Foundation is positioned to become the largest abortion-supporting endowment in the world.

A sketch of the types of projects supported by Buffett and his foundation reveal a desire to curb reproduction by any means, no matter how distasteful. His five year, \$20 million gift to International Projects Assistance Services (IPAS) allowed it to double the capacity for producing manual vacuum aspirators—portable, handheld suction pumps used throughout lesser developed countries to provide first-trimester abortions. Two million dollars went toward the development of quinacrine hydrochloride—a highly controversial acid that is used to chemically burn the lining of a woman's uterus, rendering her sterile. Although the use and distribution of quinacrine is illegal in the United States, it has recently been used in South Vietnam and India—often without the woman's consent. Buffett also bankrolled over two-thirds of the first year clinical trials of Mifepristone (formerly called "RU 486") in the United States. And, of course, he is a faithful supporter of Planned Parenthood.

Buffett's influence has left its mark on BH's corporate contributions. As chairman and primary-shareholder, Buffett instituted a unique corporate donations policy

that allowed him to support pro-abortion groups that might not be funded by a typical contributions management board. According to research conducted by Focus on the Family, well over half of BH's 2001 corporate contributions went to the Buffett Foundation, which in turn distributed at least \$11 million to pro-abortion groups in 2002 alone. The research points to one inescapable conclusion: *To sell for TPC is tantamount to fund-raising for the abortion industry.*

Making A Decision

After learning more about BH and Warren Buffett, I became firmly resolved in my decision to end my PC career. I called every hostess and my one recruit to inform them of my decision—and the reason behind it. I gave each hostess the option of rescheduling with another consultant. No one wanted to reschedule. The reaction of my customers and recruit brought to light an important insight—there are many pro-life consultants and customers who, like me, would disassociate from TPC if they knew the truth. Everyone I had contacted decided that their love for the unborn far outweighed their “love” for TPC.

Several women I had worked with expressed shock that Doris Christopher would sell her company to a man such as Warren Buffett. I wondered if it was possible that she was unaware of Buffett's support for abortion. Was TPC taking steps to correct the situation? A call to its home office confirmed that management not only knew about Buffett's philanthropy, but they had no intention of publicly sharing this information. I was appalled. It seemed to me unconscionable that a company with such a strong reputation for integrity and customer service would intentionally suppress information that they knew would affect the decisions of their associates and customers. I was shocked and hurt that the company that I loved was demonstrating such an appalling disregard for the moral convictions of the literally thousands of pro-life and Christian consultants who had so loyally served and patronized TPC.

Giving Faith Hands And Feet

After discussing the situation with my husband and pastor, I decided to draft a petition that would serve a two-fold purpose: 1) to tell PC consultants and customers that profits from TPC would be used to support abortion; and 2) to respectfully ask Warren Buffett to cease his and BH's support of abortion and population control. It was never my intention to tell people what to do with the information they received, but I strongly believe that the associates and customers of TPC should have an opportunity to obtain accurate information so they may make their own informed decision. For that purpose, I left the closing paragraph of the petition open-ended so the sender could include a personal response to the situ-

ation. My plan was to send the petition to everyone in my address book and see where it went.

In the first few weeks after I sent the petition, the response was small and often negative. I was challenged in having to write several kind and loving letters to those who had not given me the same courtesy. Nonetheless, word continued to spread, largely due to the publicity given to us by Life Decisions International. Before long, a growing number of consultants had banded together to support one another in the struggle to distribute accurate information.

The courage displayed by many consultants is truly inspiring. Several of them stopped selling immediately upon receiving the news, putting their finances completely into God's hands. I think of the woman on the east coast who gave up her directorship (and a nice paycheck, as well as a family vacation to Hawaii she had earned), despite the fact that her PC business was the sole means of support for her family. Another director dropped her business, abruptly cutting the family income in half. Women like these have had to make some tough sacrifices, but they are happy to have been given the opportunity to take a stand for the unborn. An opportunity is exactly what we had been given. Networked and with large customer bases, informed consultants had been given the opportunity to educate the public on the activities of and means of support for the abortion industry.

As a group we were receiving a crash course in life issues. Before the sale of TPC to BH, most of us had no idea that LDI existed or that boycotts really worked. We were not aware of the volume of pro-life legislation being introduced on Capitol Hill. Nor did we understand the science behind such issues as embryonic stem cell experimentation and cloning. And we certainly did not comprehend the enormous role that money plays in fueling the abortion industry or the extent to which the Pro-Abortion Movement has infiltrated our international and domestic policies.

We are quickly learning and as we do action follows. One tool that we used to keep ourselves motivated and focused was *Bitty Bites*—a biweekly electronic newsletter that provided consultants with updates, pro-life news and resources, action items and prayer requests. *Bitty Bites* also afforded concerned consultants the opportunity to arm themselves against corporate “spin.”

Corporate Excuses

While TPC intended to remain silent on the link between its profits and abortion, the loud and growing protest placed management in a precarious position. Having already erred in choosing to place financial concerns above integrity, TPC found itself having to defend the indefensible—a task that has only further eroded its

already damaged credibility. To do so, it seemed TPC had lifted a move straight out of BH's playbook—take a wrong action and make it look “rational and fair.” For years BH has successfully employed this strategy in defending its corporate support of abortion. BH refused to even use the word “corporate” when discussing charitable contributions in its 2001 *Annual Report*. BH chose to frame the discussion in terms of shareholder designations: “Shareholders name the charity; Berkshire writes the check.” The report pointedly addressed complaints about the company's funding of Planned Parenthood:

I get a few letters every week criticizing Berkshire for contributing to Planned Parenthood. These letters are usually prompted by an organization [LDI] that wishes to see boycotts of Berkshire products. The letters are invariably polite and sincere, but their writers are unaware of a key point: It's not Berkshire, but rather its owners who are making charitable decisions, and these owners are about as diverse in their opinions as you can imagine.

In making this statement BH is appealing to our sense of fairness to obscure the obvious point: regardless of how the decisions are made, it was BH—not the shareholders—that had given more than 50 percent of its corporate contributions to pro-abortion groups. The strategy worked very well—so well, in fact, that TPC employed its own version of the “spin” to defend its sale to BH.

How does TPC take a wrong and try to make it look right? Corporate spokesmen repeatedly claimed that TPC had not contributed to any pro-abortion groups, but rather distributed all corporate donations to one of three charities: The American Cancer Society (which supports embryonic stem cell experimentation and has links to Planned Parenthood), America's Second Harvest, and TPC Family Resiliency Program at the University of Illinois. While this statement is true, the point is moot because TPC no longer controls its profits. Whether or not TPC writes the check, the money still winds up in the hands of abortionists. Moreover, it is unworthy of TPC's reputation for business ethics to attempt to argue that the corporate support of evil is acceptable so long as some measure of good is also being done.

Initially TPC management had pointedly defended—if not lauded—BH's charitable contributions policy. In a talking-points memo distributed to all upper-level directors, Jean Jonas, senior vice president of sales, stated that BH's charitable donations policy “allows individual shareholders to decide where their money is donated.” Again, this is just clever and deceptive spin. It is *not* shareholder money; it is BH's corporate money. The shareholders simply have some say in where it goes.

In a March letter to all active consultants, Christopher unleashed an even stronger defense of BH's practice:

In the history of our nation, there has probably never been a greater need for the mealtime message of The Pampered Chef. Tonight, gathered around tables across this land, are families and friends who, because of your work, are turning off the news even for a little while, sharing a meal and reassuring one another. At this time, let us not forget those who are serving our nation both here and in far away lands. At The Pampered Chef, we're family. Perhaps that's why I feel I can talk to you as though you were sitting across the table from me.

In recent weeks, there have been expressions of concern from a relatively small, yet important, number of Kitchen Consultants who strongly disagree with Berkshire Hathaway's and Warren Buffet's charitable giving. They question whether our new parent company has influenced our own Pampered Chef giving. In some cases, they have even questioned my own personal faith as a Christian. You may have heard some of these questions, have some of your own, or this may be brand new news to you. I would like to share with you what is in my heart on these matters. Please feel free to share this letter with others to help answer any questions that may come your way.

In a nutshell, the question is this: do profits from The Pampered Chef support pro-choice organizations such as Planned Parenthood? The question arises because of Mr. Buffet's well-known personal giving choices and because of Berkshire Hathaway's uniquely democratic system of allowing each of its shareholders to vote their share of profits to the charitable organization of their choice. We know that The Pampered Chef has been added to the boycott lists of some pro-life organizations, joining the names of all other Berkshire Hathaway companies. So, it is possible that Pampered Chef profits could benefit either pro-life or pro-choice organizations. Let me tell you how that might happen.

The Berkshire Hathaway giving strategy works in the following way; Each Berkshire Hathaway shareholder may name up to three nonprofit organizations where they would like funds related to their ownership of Berkshire Hathaway shares to go. The organization(s) they choose must be a legal, nonprofit organization. Last year, Berkshire Hathaway's shareholders supported more than 3,500 charities, including 437 different churches and synagogues. Among these thousands of charities, donations were made to both pro-life and pro-choice organizations. Shareholders are not questioned by Berkshire Hathaway about their choice or their own personal belief system. They are invited to vote their conscience as to where they want their share to go.

As a Berkshire shareholder, I, too, vote my conscience and give my dollars to the churches, univer-

sities and causes of my choice. Neither Warren Buffet nor Berkshire Hathaway influence my choice or ask me how I have designated my funds.

Now, let's talk about The Pampered Chef profit. Here is how the profit from our company sales are prioritized. First and foremost, as they always have been, they're invested into building and growing this company. Second, they are donated to the three charitable giving programs developed by The Pampered Chef. Third, they go to Berkshire Hathaway, which distributes dividends to its shareholders. Fourth, they are given to charities by shareholder designation in the way I mentioned above. So it is possible that profit from The Pampered Chef could be used to support many and varied charities, people, organizations, institutions and causes.

Our corporate giving policies have not and will not change.

You are the largest corporate cash donors to America's Second Harvest feeding America's hungry through our Roundup from the Heart campaign. That will not change. You serve women by helping them to understand the value of early detection in the fight against breast cancer, through our Help Whip Cancer campaign in partnership with The American Cancer Society. And, you serve families through The Pampered Chef Family Resiliency program at the University of Illinois. None of this has or will change!

As to what Mr. Buffet does with his profits from Berkshire Hathaway? Truly, it is not my place to ask or to judge. Obviously, my personal views on some issues differ from Warren Buffet's. Despite this difference in opinion, he and I share a common belief...that each person is entitled to his or her own opinions. Warren Buffet respects my right to my opinions, and I respect his right to his. Further, I respect him as a businessperson and as an individual of stature and high business ethics.

As a Christian, a mother, a businesswoman, and an American, I believe in welcoming everyone to the table. That will never change. I believe that The Pampered Chef is a large and diverse family committed to the goals of doing good by being good to the best of our ability. I truly believe our conscientious work will continue, as will our success. At The Pampered Chef table—as in this strong nation itself—we welcome both Kitchen Consultants and co-workers from every land, every color, and every creed. When a new Consultant looks to our opportunity we would never consider asking them for the name of their church or synagogue or where their charitable dollars go. This is what America is all about!

I am resolved in the decision made to align The Pampered Chef with Berkshire Hathaway. We are very proud to be part of the Berkshire Hathaway family. It is the right place for this company to be able to grow and flourish so that we can forward our mission of serving America's families and provide a secure future for all who choose to be involved with our company.

Christopher actually described the philanthropic program as "uniquely democratic." She characterized it as one in which "shareholders are not questioned by BH about their choice or their own personal belief system. They are invited to vote their conscience as to where they want their share to go." Well, who wants to criticize democracy? Judging from the letters I have received, many consultants were persuaded to continue selling based upon this particular argument. The problem is that the system is not even remotely democratic; it is pure relativism. In a democracy everyone gets one vote, despite their power or wealth, and the side with the most votes wins. When BH distributes the funds, no votes are taken. Distribution is made according to the number of shares an individual holds (the more shares you have the more funds you get to direct). This is precisely why the policy works to Buffett's advantage. BH's top three shareholders are Warren Buffett, his wife, and Buffett's partner, Charlie Munger—all of whom are zealous pro-abortion activists. Together, these three shareholders are largely responsible for the fact that more than half of BH's corporate contributions fund pro-abortion groups.

While Christopher attempted to appease her conscience and those of her consultants with the notion that she is being fair and democratic, the fact remains that profits from the sale of PC products were being used—corporately and privately—to kill the innocent. It is amazing that Christopher's sense of fairness stopped conveniently short of telling her associates and customers that their sales and purchases may very well violate their strongly held moral convictions.

It is difficult to assess how much damage Jonas' memo and Christopher's letter did to the effort to provide accurate information. I received letters on a weekly basis from consultants who have read Christopher's letter and were left with the impression that there was "nothing much to worry about." Other concerned consultants report receiving letters from their directors that were lifted straight out of Jonas' memo. On the other hand, the obvious manipulation and obfuscation displayed in both correspondences have shown many consultants that despite management's insistence that the sale to BH has not altered TPC's corporate culture, things have taken a turn for the worse. The weakening of TPC's business ethic is particularly ironic given that TPC points to BH's

“hands-off” management style as a primary factor in the decision to sell to BH. Unfortunately, management is quickly realizing that despite an innate desire for autonomy, the child’s identity is never entirely separate from that of its parent.

Weakened Ethics

From a business perspective, the sale of TPC to BH makes good sense. TPC’s strong financial record and growth make it a welcome addition. And BH’s commitment to allowing its subsidiaries to maintain their unique management structures provides TPC with the freedom it needs to continue appealing to a sector that operates outside the norms of “business as usual.” However, the abortion scandal has revealed how Buffett’s hands-off, relativistic policies fly in the face of a business climate shaped and sustained by Judeo-Christian ethics. Moreover, the corporate and private activities of TPC’s new owner and chief-shareholder are in direct opposition to much of the associate and customer base that has made TPC what it is today.

Many people have asked, “How did this happen?” None of the possible answers are particularly satisfying. Doris Christopher is too savvy a businesswoman not to have done her research. It is also hard to believe that she simply “sold out” for the money. Many have speculated, but nobody has an answer that really makes sense. I cannot help but wonder if God used a business like TPC “for such a time as this.” Where else could you find such a large group of organized, networked and God-fearing housewives? What better way to stir up their hearts than by corrupting something that is precious to them? What more effective education in the relationship between business and abortion than by attacking their own businesses? These women are motivated, networked and on-fire to spread the truth.

The Hand of God

Despite the corporate spin machine and the Goliath-sized adversary, God continued to work through average women to call His people to take a closer look at their spending habits and make a commitment to God-centered financial stewardship. Committed consultants and customers throughout the country continue to spread the word by contacting friends, family, churches and the media as opportunities present themselves. In addition to the generous support of LDI in sharing our story and hosting our web page, other pro-family organizations stepped forward in support of our protest. The American Family Association, Focus on the Family, the American Life League, and others have covered this story. Several radio stations conducted interviews on this subject. With every bit of coverage we were joined by more consultants and customers who stood up and declared that they

would not send their money to a man who is committed to death.

A question that invariably arises at the end of every interview was: “What would you say to the consultant or customer who is receiving this information and doesn’t know how she should respond?” Our Lord has already given the answer: “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (*Matthew 6:33a*).

There is simply no question that God hates the murder of the innocent. Nor is there any question that purchasing products by TPC or any other BH subsidiary will result in the death of preborn babies. As consultants, hosts and customers of TPC we had been given a wonderful opportunity—as well as a test of our faith—to stand up for the things of God and uncompromisingly go about the work of establishing God’s kingdom here on earth, just as it is in heaven. My response to the customer or consultant who is sitting on the fence is really very simple: “God is raising an army of the faithful to stand tall against Warren Buffett and those legions who seek to destroy His children. Are you available? Are you listening and open to His call?”

Just as I could have never imagined how God would answer my prayer to be more involved in the fight for the preborn, I have no idea where God will take this battle. Will Warren Buffett have a change of heart? Will TPC suffer serious financial losses? Or is this simply God’s way of commissioning a fresh group of pro-life activists? I cannot say. What I do know is that regardless of the outcome we are each individually responsible for how we respond to God’s call to holiness and a life lived in accordance with His will.

Cindy Coughlon is a homemaker and home-schooling mother of three children. She resides in Peoria, Arizona, with her husband and their father, Rob.

PART 2: THE REWARD OF FAITH AND COMMITMENT **by Douglas R. Scott**

Shortly after submitting the above article for publication, Cindy Coughlon learned that BH was going to end the program that gave corporate money to Planned Parenthood. The news came from the website of Reuters:

July 3...Berkshire Hathaway Inc....said it [has] ended a program started in 1981 which allowed shareholders to choose charities for the company to contribute to, because some donations sparked criticism against a subsidiary.

The holding company controlled by billionaire investor Warren Buffett said the program had contributed \$197 million to charities, regardless of whether they were controversial, since its founding.

Under the program, Berkshire's Class A shareholders could choose up to three charities for Berkshire to contribute to, with the size of the donation based on how many shares the holder owned.

Buffett touted the program for giving stockholders more control over the company's charitable donations than at typical corporations.

But in a statement released Thursday by Berkshire, the company said that criticism stemming from certain donations, including some made by Buffett himself, harmed its Pampered Chef kitchenware business, which it acquired last October.

"The independent consultants that serve The Pampered Chef have no responsibility for what Berkshire Hathaway shareholders do, yet the careers of many of these consultants are now suffering because of the contributions program," the company said.

Response to the corporation's decision was swift, even though the announcement was made less than 24 hours before Independence Day. Coughlon, who had so bravely fought against those who others would never dream of taking on, issued a press release soon after the BH announcement:

In response to the protest of hundreds of Pampered Chef consultants and customers, Berkshire Hathaway has ended its corporate support of abortion and population control. In October 2002, Berkshire Hathaway acquired The Pampered Chef. Long known for its family-friendly message, The Pampered Chef soon found itself embroiled in a conflict over the long-standing financial support of pro-abortion organizations by Berkshire Hathaway and its chairman, Warren Buffett.

Cindy Coughlon, Pampered Chef consultant and founder of PC4Life, was unhappy with the sale. Coughlon immediately stopped selling and drafted an electronic petition in protest of Berkshire Hathaway's support of abortion. She was soon joined by hundreds of concerned consultants and customers. According to Coughlon, "The news was having a devastating effect on Pampered Chef's business."

Warren Buffett agreed. In a press release dated July 3, 2003, Berkshire Hathaway announced that "contrary to all that Berkshire has experienced in the past, its ownership is now harming a new subsidiary." The same day The Pampered Chef's founder and chairwoman, Doris Christopher, announced that, "Effective immediately, Berkshire Hathaway will cease all corporate contributions of any kind to any non-profit organization."

Pro-life advocates like Wendy Wright of Concerned Women for America are celebrating the news. In a statement made to Focus on the Family, Wright said, "Hurray for these ladies! What an incredible impact they had on an empire!" According to Wright, "It usual-

ly takes years and years of effort and it is not always successful."

Douglas R. Scott, president of Life Decisions International (LDI), expressed similar enthusiasm. For over ten years LDI has led the organized boycott of corporations supporting Planned Parenthood. Berkshire Hathaway has long been a boycott target of LDI and considered by many to be the least likely corporation to reverse its philanthropic practice. "Cindy Coughlon is proof that one person who decides to make changing corporate behavior a personal goal can mean all the difference in the world," Scott said. "This definitely put our long-time boycott right back into Warren Buffett's lap."

LDI will continue to monitor Berkshire Hathaway's philanthropic activities to ensure that it does not resume funding Planned Parenthood or any other pro-abortion entity. In the more than ten years that LDI has been leading the boycott, 92 corporations have ceased their funding to Planned Parenthood.

Not everyone is happy with the decision. Not only has corporate funding been pulled from pro-abortion organizations such as Planned Parenthood and the Buffett Foundation, but all organizations previously funded by Berkshire Hathaway will have to seek support elsewhere. Berkshire offered no explanation for this broad decision, which effectively defunded hundreds of schools and other non-controversial organizations. "It is unfortunate that Mr. Buffett made such a sweeping decision," said Coughlon. "It demonstrates that we still have a way to go in changing his heart."

A change of heart may very well be required to finally bring this controversy to rest. Mr. Buffett, who is worth an estimated \$30 billion, reportedly plans to donate over 90 percent of his private fortune to pro-abortion and pro-population control groups. Despite assurances by Doris Christopher that "there will be no possibility of any Pampered Chef profits being donated to any cause other than we [Pampered Chef] initiate," the fact remains that there is nothing preventing Buffett from donating his share of the profits toward abortion. According to Coughlon, "Consultants and customers will have to sort out fact from fiction. The truth is that Mr. Buffett plans to spend his money according to his heart—and his heart is one that is still bent on death." Scott pointed out that one can never control what a person does with his personal money, but the general public can have a big say about how a corporation spends corporate money.

Still, Coughlon said she couldn't be happier with this decision. "I am absolutely thrilled! The message could not be any clearer: there are simply no excuses for the pro-life community not to stand up and make its voice heard."

Spin

On the heels of the announcement by BH, Doris Christopher began backtracking from her previous avid defense of the company's giving program. She sent a message to all PC associates:

I have shared with you my pride in being a part of the Berkshire Hathaway family of businesses. I knew that this was the kind of family where The Pampered Chef would thrive and grow for years to come. I have also shared with you my feelings of respect for Warren Buffett.

Today, I am even more proud to call Warren my mentor, leader and friend.

This week I went to Warren with a heavy heart. I told him that many of our Kitchen Consultants were concerned and troubled with Berkshire Hathaway's donation policies—specifically the contributions to pro-choice organizations and to the Buffett Foundation. I knew that I could speak with Warren frankly and that he would want to hear of the issues impacting your business.

It troubled him deeply that charitable donations from Berkshire Hathaway were causing you difficulty. He listened to me carefully and with great compassion. He understands that as his family of Berkshire companies expands, it becomes more diverse, and there are opinions and concerns that need to be taken into consideration. Warren Buffett made a landmark decision regarding the long-standing corporate giving policies of Berkshire Hathaway. His decision was this:

Effective immediately, Berkshire Hathaway will cease all corporate contributions of any kind to any non-profit organization. This means there will be no donations from Berkshire Hathaway to the Buffett Foundation. Let me be clear, there will be no possibility of any Pampered Chef profits being donated to any cause other than those we initiate, including our three current charitable giving programs: Round-Up from the Heart, Help Whip Cancer and the Family Resiliency Program.

Warren Buffett made his landmark decision after hearing what was in my heart and in yours. I believe that Kitchen Consultants, hosts and customers are a diverse group of individuals with different opinions and beliefs. Our business is built on trust and on personal relationships. Warren understands our business and wants you to be successful in every way, able to do business with people of all backgrounds and beliefs.

I admire Warren Buffett for his heart and his insight. He is a wise leader!

While we wonder if a “wise leader” would have placed TPC in this position in the first place, it is hard to listen to the world's primary abortion financier praised in such glowing terms as “mentor,” “leader” and “friend” with-

out noting Buffett's rabid pro-abortion philosophy. It is particularly unfortunate that the praise is coming from a woman who is known for her Christian convictions.

LDI received an email from a PC associate, Shelly Wilson, who said Christopher should be given the credit for Buffett's action:

Excuse me, but you've left out a very important person in your acknowledgement of those who helped to end the Berkshire Hathaway corporate giving to non-profit organizations. Doris Christopher...personally contacted Warren Buffet and told him of her concern for the livelihood of many consultants who are making decisions to quit Pampered Chef largely due to the ruckus Cindy [Coughlon] was causing...Doris talked to Mr. Buffet and explained to him the situation and she called him her friend. Because of this action on Doris' part, he changed not only the profit spending of Pampered Chef, but many other corporations. I'm sure he will continue to invest and donate where he sees fit, but if anyone has been a testimony of the love and grace of Christ, and showed a true heart of humility, it was Doris Christopher, not Cindy or the Christian media. And look at the result. It would have taken thousands of dollars of donations to your organization (by Christians I'm assuming) to do what Doris did with probably a phone call or two. It may have been Cindy and many others who needlessly quit PC to make their point and be accusatory, but it was the respect, professionalism and grace of Doris Christopher who put a very large fire out.

Having worked with Doris and PC for twelve years, I am not in the least bit [sic] surprised. I suspect those who started this media ruckus didn't really know Doris, and therefore, assumed throwing a fit would get the results they were looking for. They got attention, but unfortunately, didn't do anything positive in bringing this to a conclusion...

Let us remember that Christopher initially and *avidly* defended Buffett and BH's giving program—a program that gave millions of dollars to Planned Parenthood. Christopher had no intention of approaching Buffett to seek a change in a program that she did not view as flawed. Without Cindy Coughlon offering to take on BH, the selfless PC associates who put their livelihoods on the line, the unselfish help of the Christian media and groups like Focus on the Family, American Family Association, American Life League, along with many others, Christopher would have never been “nudged” to approach her boss about that which was becoming a growing problem. The people and groups were the key factor in bringing about this long-desired change. Those PC associates and others who made excuses for BH and TPC to avoid facing what was happening and making any personal sacrifices selfishly hindered our efforts.

We do not know where Christopher personally stands on the issue of abortion or how important the killing of unborn children is to her. But one would have hoped that she would speak out against the funding of Planned Parenthood by anyone. One would also hope that Christopher would make it her personal mission to educate Buffett on such critical issues. We pray that she is a willing vessel for God to use in Buffett's life.

The innate malice of Buffett's far-reaching action is truly unfortunate. By terminating the whole giving program rather than ending funding of abortion groups with corporate dollars, many charities that are not controversial will be penalized. The program itself was innovative but it needed some parameters. Yet Buffett chose to cut off his corporate nose to spite his corporate face. It is as if he were saying, "If we aren't going to fund abortion we aren't going to fund anything!" Is Buffett so committed to the Pro-Abortion Movement that he would really go to such an extreme? All he had to do was make pro-abortion groups ineligible for selection by shareholders, as many other corporations have done, but he stubbornly and almost childishly refused to take that simple step. Had Buffett done so, badly needed funds would have continued to flow to worthy charities. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to suggest that Christopher tried to influence Buffett to keep the program but make pro-abortion groups ineligible.

It is hard to see how Buffett's action shows "his heart and his insight." Then again, maybe it does just that.

Douglas R. Scott is president of Life Decisions International and founder of the Corporate Funding Project.

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