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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE TO:

Political and Religion Editors

PRESUMED PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES MCCAIN AND OBAMA TO MAKE FIRST JOINT CAMPAIGN APPEARANCE ON AUGUST 16 AT SADDLEBACK CHURCH; Pastor Rick Warren to Host Saddleback Civil Forum on Leadership and Compassion and Question Candidates on Faith and the Common Good

LAKE FOREST, Calif., July 21 – Sens. John McCain and Barack Obama, respective presumed Republican and Democratic presidential nominees, will end the primary season by making their first joint appearance of the 2008 campaign at Saddleback Church on Saturday, Aug.16 at the Saddleback Civil Forum on Leadership and Compassion. Dr. Rick Warren, founding pastor of the 22,000-member Orange County, Calif. mega church and moderator for the event, made the announcement today upon confirmation by both campaigns.

“We’re honored that the candidates chose The Saddleback Civil Forum on Leadership and Compassion for their first joint appearance, an unprecedented opportunity for America to hear both men back-to-back on the same platform,” Warren said. “This is a critical time for our nation and the American people deserve to hear both candidates speak from the heart – without interruption – in a civil and thoughtful format absent the partisan ‘gotcha’ questions that typically produce heat instead of light.

“The primaries proved that Americans care deeply about the faith, values, character and leadership convictions of candidates as much as they do about the issues. While I know both men as friends and they recognize I will be frank, but fair, they also know I will be raising questions in these four areas beyond what political reporters typically ask. This includes pressing issues that are bridging divides in our nation, such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, climate and human rights.”

Warren confirmed that, at the candidates’ request, this two-hour event from 5-7 p.m. (PDT) will be held in a non-debate format and open to all media. Both candidates also requested that questions be posed exclusively by Warren, instead of a panel or members of the audience. Each will converse separately with Warren for approximately one-hour, beginning with Sen. Obama as determined by a coin toss. This historic forum will be the only joint campaign event prior to each party’s national convention.

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“While debates typically focus primarily on the candidates’ positions and only secondarily on how they’d lead and make decisions, this Saddleback Civil Forum will reverse that ratio,” Warren continued. “Since the oath of the President is a commitment to protect the Constitution, it’s critical to know how each candidate interprets the nature of its principles. Leadership involves far more than promoting programs and making speeches, and since no one can predict what crises will happen over the next four years, it is vital to know the decision capacity and process of each man.”

Warren has known each candidate prior to their run for national office. Both men recorded video messages to attendees at Saddleback’s annual Global Summit on AIDS and The Church last November. Along with other national and international leaders, each has also endorsed Warren’s vision of the P.E.A.C.E. Plan, a 50-year strategy to mobilize millions of local churches around the world to address five global problems: spiritual emptiness, corrupt leadership, poverty, disease and illiteracy. After four years of testing prototypes of the P.E.A.C.E. Plan in 68 countries, the P.E.A.C.E. Coalition, involving business, church and government partnerships, was launched in April.

In conjunction with the Civil Forum event, Warren will convene an interfaith meeting at the church for approximately 30 Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders to discuss cooperation in projects for the common good of all Americans. Members of the P.E.A.C.E. Coalition Leadership Council will also fly in for weekend events.

On Sunday, Aug. 17, Warren will deliver a special sermon entitled, “Making Up Your Mind: Questions to Consider before the Election,” which will be streamed live on the church Web site, www.saddleback.com, and made available for use in small group discussions within churches across the country.

The Saddleback Civil Forum was established to promote civil discourse and the common good of all. The first forum, held during Passover week this year, featured five Jewish World War II Holocaust survivors sharing their stories. The next Saddleback Civil Forum in September will feature former British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

“In addition to my primary calling to proclaim the Gospel Truth of salvation in Jesus Christ, these Civil Forums further three other life goals: helping individuals accept responsibility, helping the Church regain credibility and encouraging our society to return to civility,” Warren added.

Saddleback Church has invited Faith in Public Life, which hosted a Compassion Forum at Messiah College in Pennsylvania last April, to co-sponsor this special Saddleback Civil Forum on Leadership and Compassion. Approximately 6,500 tickets to the event will be allotted for seating in six different venues throughout the 120-acre Saddleback campus.