

Plan to End Abortion

(We invite the input of pro-life leaders and activists in regard to this outline of a plan to end abortion, so that together we can put together a comprehensive approach to achieve our goal once and for all. Please share your comments at www.ProLifeStrategy.com – Fr. Frank Pavone, National Director, Priests for Life)

Introduction

On the day after Roe vs. Wade (1973) no child in the womb had legal protection from abortion. In 2008, no child in the womb has legal protection from abortion. While there has been some movement of public opinion in our direction, we are in the midst of a long deadlock in the attitudes of the American people, which can best be described as "conflicted."

Many strategies have been developed, and a multitude of projects have been implemented, but the overall effect has been less than the sum of the parts, either because the strategies are not comprehensive enough to take account of the many dynamics at work in the abortion movement and the pro-life movement, or because the implementation does not coordinate the various aspects of the movement, or simply because sufficient resources of people and money are lacking.

An overall, comprehensive plan is needed for the pro-life movement. This is not the same as a merger of groups or having one group in charge. Rather, it is an effort to map the dynamics of the pro-life movement, to identify those activities which have the best strategic effect, to describe how the various activities interrelate with one another, and to obtain the funds and personnel necessary for those activities.

Summary of Strategic Elements

In order to bring about an end to abortion in this country, three things are needed: 1) an overall strategy backed up by research and experience; 2) a detailed plan which transforms the strategy into concrete steps with goals and deadlines; and 3) the resources to implement that plan.

The strategic plan described here takes account of 1) the laws of supply and demand as they apply to the business of abortion, 2) what research reveals about the current conflicted attitude of the American people regarding abortion, and 3)

the many and varied activities of the pro-life movement with a view toward what seems to be working and what elements of the movement can support other elements, while avoiding artificial "mergers" of groups.

Abortion continues because of a) *supply*: the existence of a half-billion dollar a year industry providing abortions, b) *demand*: some 3500 requests daily for legal abortions, and c) *license*: the fact that this activity is legally permitted and protected, reinforced by various laws and court decisions not only allowing abortion but introducing obstacles to those who try to stop it.

These three aspects are closely related, and one key manner in which they are related is that the money obtained by the abortionist is in large measure directed toward the efforts to keep it legal and to produce the propaganda of the "prochoice" movement. A significant "momentum" is thus generated in terms of the flow of money and the influence it produces in the realms of government, media, and education. To slow this momentum, the source of its power needs to be cut off, namely, the incredibly high *numbers of abortions*. Only after the actual numbers are brought down can the fundamental *license* of abortion be changed.

The pro-life movement from the beginning has primarily sought to change the laws. While that is always an essential aspect of the task at hand, primary attention needs to be directed to the ways in which abortions can be stopped *before the law changes*. Moreover, the pro-life movement needs to use its strengths against the abortion industry's weaknesses. Those weaknesses are primarily in the area of *supply* and the manner in which abortions are carried out.

The goal of the pro-life movement is not simply to make abortion illegal. That is one aspect of the whole effort. The goal is to make it *unavailable, unnecessary, and unthinkable*. This requires drying up the supply of abortionists, strengthening the effectiveness of alternatives to abortion, and resolving the conflict in the attitudes of the American people, many of whom admit that abortion is murder but believe it needs to be available anyway.

Strategic Elements of Plan to End Abortion

1. Supply (Abortionists and Abortion Mills)

This is the weak spot of the abortion industry, in terms of the number of people we are dealing with and the vulnerability of those people. Numerous admissions by

the abortion industry indicate that it cannot carry out its work because of "a turn-off of physicians coming into this field" (*Abortionist Ed Boaz, speaking on ABC World News Tonight, January 16, 1998*).

The number of abortion facilities in the US has decreased by over 50% since the early '90's. It is further evident that when women do not have easy access to abortion, they tend to bring the child to birth rather than undergo difficult measures to obtain an abortion elsewhere. In short, fewer abortionists means fewer abortions, and this creates a more realistic situation for changing the laws.

We can contribute to the "supply" problem by playing up the incurable stigma of "abortion" and "abortionists", exposing the corrupt practices within the industry, and using legal and judicial recourse to force places closed and abortionists out of business.

The bottom line is that the abortion-supporters may be left with a nation in which the act of abortion is fully supported by the government, but there is nobody to perform the procedure.

Specific Initiatives:

- **Abortion Malpractice Litigation:** Abortion is legal but malpractice is not. Within abortion clinics nationwide, not only is there rampant medical malpractice, but there are many other violations of the law that have been uncovered, ranging from sexual abuse to failure to report statutory rape to violation of OSHA standards. Through education of law enforcement, legislators, and the general public on the violations that occur in these clinics can bring about action to shut them down, even as abortion remains legal all the while.
- Legislation aimed at making it harder for abortions to stay in business needs to be passed. Proposals can be accepted and pursued strictly on the basis of ensuring the rights, health, and safety of women, which is the very basis on which "pro-choice" advocates claim to stand, and increasing the *accountability of abortionists for their actions*, an accountability explicitly referred to by *Roe vs. Wade*.. These proposals create significant opportunities for advances in public relations, and a dilemma for abortion supporters, who have to now choose between their support for the abortion industry and their support for women (which they usually present as one and the same). States that have passed regulations for abortion facilities have been largely successful in their efforts to defend those laws in court challenges.
- Constant presence at the mills, and at homes and businesses of the providers. This presence reinforces the stigma attached to abortion. This stigma needs to

be used to keep medical students out of the abortion business and to pressure second and third-level abortionists to leave the industry.

- Legal assistance for those who engage in the peaceful activity, and not allowing the "false target" strategy of the pro-aborts keep people from doing what the courts explicitly allow. The "false target" strategy is that by which pro-abortion forces accuse peaceful protestors of doing what they never did, and hence tainting their image in the public mind, so that people do not want to join them even for constitutionally protected activities.
- Dialogue and Reconciliation. Besides pushing the abortionists out by means of lawsuits and other pressure, we need to provide them a place to land, as well as use the approach of dialogue to persuade them to stop. Along these lines, efforts of dialogue and friendship have proven fruitful and should be promoted, with appropriate training programs. Thousands are leaving or on the brink of leaving the abortion industry. The Society of Centurions has been established, both nationally and internationally. This group, for former providers, both assists people to come out of the industry, and to find healing once they have come out. It is an effort that should likewise be made known and strengthened.

2. Demand (Abortion-minded women and men)

In regard to "demand", alternatives to abortion have to be strengthened, in terms of the quality of the help offered and our ability to get the message out. Women do not get abortions because of "freedom of choice," but precisely because they feel they have no freedom and no choice. Many women, when presented with real alternatives, will choose life for their children.

Others, despite the presence of help to get through a pregnancy, are only interested in help to get *out of* the pregnancy. They too need to be reached and shown that abortion is far more horrifying than any of their fears about the alternatives.

The current number of abortions is largely explained by the fact that the abortion industry is reaching these women before the pro-life movement has a chance to alert them to the horrors of -- and the alternatives to -- abortion.

It is noteworthy that in 1992, when the Supreme Court reaffirmed *Roe vs. Wade* by the *Planned Parenthood vs. Casey* decision, the Court essentially said that even if *Roe* was wrongly decided, so many women have abortions that it is unrealistic to put a stop to it now. This, along with the reasoning of many legislators, reinforces the need to *bring the numbers down before changing the law*. This involves reaching the abortion-minded woman.

Efforts which can correct this situation and which need to be strengthened and publicized include the following:

- **Gabriel Project:** This is an effort to fully activate Churches of all denominations to a) announce to the community that alternatives to abortion are available through the local congregation; and b) mobilize a team of volunteers to coordinate the concrete response of that congregation to women who come forward for assistance. This effort works hand-in-hand with pregnancy assistance centers, rather than replacing them. Effort is successful in several parts of the nation but not yet widely known.
- **Media campaigns:** Groups such as the Caring Foundation and others have developed a set of professional television ads that make use of important marketing research and expertise, and appeal to the experience of the woman who is tempted to have an abortion or has already had one, and to the conflicted attitudes of most of the American people on this subject. Studies done in the communities where these ads have aired show a consistent and significant reduction in the numbers of abortions and a shift in public opinion on the issue.
- **Upgrade CPCs to Pregnancy Assistance Medical Clinics.** While there are more pregnancy assistance centers in the nation than there are abortion facilities, they are often unable to attract abortion-minded women because they are unable to offer medical diagnoses. The National Institute for Family and Life Advocates (NIFLA), however, has studied, developed, and implemented the task of upgrading centers to the status of medical clinics. Evidence indicates that this effort brings more abortion-minded women to these facilities, and hence uses their resources for the primary goal of reducing the numbers of abortions.
- **Increase funding for Pregnancy Assistance Centers.** Planned Parenthood, the largest single abortion-provider in the US, receives one-third of its total revenue from government grants and contracts. At the same time, however, the nation's crisis pregnancy centers, maternity homes, and adoption agencies rely on contributions from concerned citizens to run their shoe-string budgets. Various bills have been introduced to begin directing funding to the pregnancy centers. The pro-life movement needs to continue and publicize such legislative initiatives.
- **Sharing the testimonies of women.** Pro-abortion forces have always made use of the testimonies of those who claim to "need" abortion for their emotionally wrenching circumstances. Yet testimonies of those who suffer from a past abortion are far more plentiful. The Silent No More Awareness Campaign and Operation Outcry are the two major avenues by which such testimonies are shared in public, organized ways. Such testimonies can be used for educational material, speakers' bureaus, and legislative initiatives. The work of gathering this information needs immediate and sustained assistance.

- Strengthen presence at the mills: It is one thing to go to abortion mills to reach out to women on their way in; it is quite another to receive effective training in the methods that work best. A number of initiatives are assisting to both bring out large numbers of people to abortion mills, and to train them to carry out that presence effectively. The 40 Days for Life Campaigns have done this with great success. Likewise, the Helpers of God's Precious Infants consistently attract large crowds at abortion mills.
- Legislative effort on state levels that place Court-sanctioned curbs on abortion. Initiatives like this have mushroomed in recent years because they enjoy wide popular support, and they lead to a decrease in the numbers of abortion. This includes efforts such as parental involvement laws, informed consent, and waiting periods. There is real momentum on the state level, and it is growing every year. Moreover, formal studies have demonstrated how state legislation has been a key factor in the reduction of the overall numbers of abortions in America.

3. License (The abortion procedure is legal in our nation.)

To effect change in this area requires reaching and persuading many more people than do the previous two areas. To change the law, abortion has to become less common (as explained above) and less socially acceptable. The following section deals with strategies and activities for changing the public opinion about abortion.

Opinion polls of the American people on abortion show a deep conflict. The picture is captured by a CBS/NY Times poll which asked, "Is abortion the same thing as murdering a child...?", to which 50% of the respondents said YES. Of this group, the question was then asked, "Do you agree or disagree that abortion is sometimes the best course in a bad situation?" Those who said yes were 32%.

A growing number of people call abortion murder but think it should still be available. They have heard the message from both sides: the pro-life movement has convinced them that the child is a child and that abortion destroys that child. The pro-choice movement has convinced them that such destruction is a necessary evil. Both sides have won, but on different battlegrounds. It is time for the pro-life movement to take and win the battleground on which the pro-choice movement stands.

We cannot presume that the conclusion, "Abortion is murder," automatically leads people to say, "Well, then, it can't be permitted." Rather than the *end point* of the moral analysis, the conclusion "Abortion is murder" is for many people only the *first step* of a moral analysis that involves the *weighing of values: i.e. the value of the unborn child and the values at stake for the pregnant mother.*

The reason many think abortion, though murder, needs to be kept legal and available is that they believe a) there are no alternatives, and b) the abortion provides a benefit to the mother.

The pro-life movement must therefore stress a) the existence of the alternatives, and the fact that the pro-life movement consists primarily in the effort to develop and provide those alternatives; b) the growing evidence that what harms the baby *always* harms the mother as well.

This does not mean we stop working to persuade the people that abortion is the killing of a child. It means, rather, that we show the full truth of the evil of abortion, that it harms both mother and child, and that we re-frame the question as "Why can't we love them both?"

A further revelation from opinion studies shows that many people are uncomfortable with the *timing* and the ease (legally speaking) with which abortions can be obtained. We should obviously, therefore, be focusing on this theme in our educational efforts.

A key factor in molding public opinion, furthermore, is the image most people have of the pro-life and pro-abortion movements.

The *image* of the pro-life movement certainly needs to be changed.

- Publicizing the alternatives to abortion
- Publicizing the fact that healing and forgiveness are available to all who have been involved in any way in an abortion
- Fostering dialogue
- Allowing the voices of abortion survivors and former abortion providers to be heard
- Promoting a wider spectrum of voices, such as Democrats for Life, Feminists for Life, and the many non-religious groups
- Professionalizing the movement: instituting deadlines, upgrading the quality of materials, and using good business practices

Likewise, the *image* of the abortion industry has to be changed.

- Expose its corrupt practices and point out how far its positions are from those of most Americans

Practical programs that can implement the above points include the following:

- *Post abortion Ministry (Rachel's Vineyard, Project Rachel, and numerous other ministries)*

The post-abortion aspects of pro-life work strengthen all of the above in a number of ways.

- 1) They show the public that abortion is not the benefit for women or society that they thought it was.
- 2) They strengthen the stigma of abortion and challenge the notion that providers may have that they are helping women.
- 3) They speak directly to abortion-minded people about what they are getting into.
- 4) They call out for better regulation of the abortion industry.

Specific post-abortion areas to strengthen include:

- Fund more research so that we can scientifically measure and defend what we already know to be happening, and present it through the academic, media, educational, and government channels...
- Legal challenges to Roe based on the harm done to women.
- Public relations efforts to invite post-abortive women to repentance and healing. These are occasionally conducted in various cities already.

Other points of implementation for public education include:

- The lessons taught by laws already passed like the Unborn Victims of Violence Act , and laws not passed, like the Unborn Child Pain Awareness Act increase the "cognitive dissonance" in the public mind regarding the status of the unborn child.
- The Endowment for Human Development (www.ehd.org) has produced a DVD that has been adopted by National Geographic with the most striking video footage in existence of the first trimester unborn child, along with the most carefully researched and up to date medical commentary on the imagery. The plan for the distribution of this material to our school systems deserves support.
- D and E educational campaign -- Just as images of partial-birth abortion moved public opinion away from support of abortion-on-demand, so now similar images of D&E will likewise continue to affect public opinion. The visual depiction of violence of abortion in images and videos is unparalleled in its power to awaken the conscience.
- Educational campaign simply on the reasons abortions are performed (using pro-abortion sources).

- Large momentum of *state-level* activity, putting various publicly favored restrictions on abortion that actually bring the numbers down.

Training

A lot of information and good advice exists for would-be pro-life activists. This info needs to be more systematically presented in good training seminars that are not limited to the interests of one or another particular group. The development of online training is critical.

4. Activation of the Churches for all of the above

After summarizing the work he and his colleagues did to launch the abortion industry, Dr. Bernard Nathanson has said to the clergy, "We would never have gotten away with what we did if *you* had been united, purposeful, and strong." The pro-abortion forces still know that the biggest obstacle in their way is the Church of Jesus Christ. Only the Church has the *Divine guarantee* that it will conquer the Culture of Death.

Given its vast system of communication, and the fact that those attending church regularly are statistically the most likely to be pro-life and therefore to *do something* about it, on a natural level alone it is evident that all that the pro-life movement wants to do will benefit, and in fact stands in need of, the resources that can be generated from the members of the Church.

Combining this with the supernatural gifts of truth and grace which belong to the Church, it is clear that the full activation of the Church is a critical step for ending abortion. This does not primarily mean creating new structures. It simply means infusing the existing structure with greater vigor and effectiveness.

Specific Initiatives to focus on:

Seminars for Clergy, seminarians, and pastoral ministers presented by specially trained clergy who travel to parishes, schools, and pro-life groups throughout the nation. (This is the main work being done by Priests for Life.)

Similar activity can be done in other Christian denominations through fostering the growth of the National Pro-life Religious Council.

-end-