

PRO-LIFE STORM CLOUDS

Forewarned is Forearmed

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One of history's most consistent lessons is that nations can defeat enemy after enemy on the battlefield, and then collapse from the inside due to forces they didn't even know existed. It is also a reality that this potential is present in every arena of human interaction including socio-political movements.

Today, there are powerful indications that such a cancer is spreading rapidly within the pro-life movement. If we ignore this threat or fail to take it seriously, any potential for protecting the unborn and their moms will come to an end and over four decades of pro-life effort will be wasted.

Mission Drift

During the years when things were going badly for the pro-life movement, a significant number of our people came to believe that the odds against us were so overwhelming we could never win. Eventually, this perception became so widespread that it created a bunker mentality in which crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) and sidewalk counseling appeared to be the only avenues open to us.

As a result, there has been a massive diversion of pro-life resources away from traditional pro-life efforts and toward CPCs and sidewalk counseling.

Let us make it clear that the authors of this report have always been, and will always be, unwavering supporters of these two efforts. We have spoken at their events and helped them raise the funds necessary to do the noble and difficult work God has called them to. But the pro-life movement needs to recognize that the mission of CPCs and sidewalk counselors is to stop *abortions* not abortion. And that is a distinction with major ramifications.

Consider the Underground Railroad in 19th century America. This was a system of secret routes and safe houses designed to help slaves escape to places where slavery was not permitted. It was a completely unselfish effort operated by people who were willing to risk their own lives to help others. But it did not address the underlying issue of legalized slavery and if the battle against slavery had become focused on the Underground Railroad, slavery would still be legal today. That same dynamic applies to the pro-life effort.

The important thing to understand is that sidewalk counseling and CPCs are the pro-life movement's equivalent of the Underground Railroad. This characterization does not diminish their importance in any way, it is simply an acknowledgement that they were not designed to end this holocaust and they are not capable of doing so. Remember, the pro-life movement's ultimate goal is to see that the life of every unborn child is protected by law. And the harsh reality is, even if we had the ability to open a CPC on every street corner and put dozens of sidewalk counselors in front of every abortion clinic, that would not provide legal protection to even one unborn child. The result would be that hundreds-of-thousands of them would still be killed every year.

So even though we have a moral obligation to support the heroic work of the CPCs and sidewalk counselors, their efforts to prevent individual abortions must not come at the expense of the larger effort to end abortion. In practical terms, the work done by sidewalk counselors and CPCs is an invaluable addition to the pro-life effort, but if we allow it to become a substitute for it, this battle will never end and the unborn will never be legally protected.

The Millennial Conundrum

In America today, teenagers and young adults who self-identify as pro-life outnumber those who self-identify as pro-choice, and the gap appears to be growing. This represents a dramatic reversal from the past and the pro-life movement is justifiably encouraged by this. However, there is a serious problem associated with this phenomenon that is hiding beneath the surface.

Most of these young people are very bright and very energetic about the pro-life cause, but in the majority of cases they have been grossly undereducated about it. As a result, they are low-information believers and, as such, they can be easily swayed. This is especially troubling given that the abortion lobby is on high school and college campuses all over the country with aggressive programs specifically designed to pick these kids off.

The current leadership of the pro-life movement needs to accept that when the time comes for us to pass the baton of leadership to this next generation, if they are not prepared to receive it, that failure will be ours not theirs. And as much as we may not like hearing it, as it stands now the overwhelming majority of these young people have not been prepared for the challenges they will face.

The clock is ticking on this situation and we had better make *their* education *our* priority and we had better start doing so immediately. At this point, our most

pressing responsibility is to make sure that they understand the uncompromised pro-life position and know how to defend it. They also need to learn the movement's history and the dynamics of the battle. Our successes and failures are their starting point, so they need to be aware of the ideas, strategies and tactics that have already been tried, which ones worked, which ones didn't, and why. They must also be shown that pro-life education is not a destination but is, instead, a never-ending journey. People who are effective in this battle never stop learning whether they've been involved for 30 minutes or 30 years.

Finally, we cannot pass the baton to this next generation until we have made certain they fully recognize what's at stake. This is not a game, it is a life and death struggle. No one gets a participation trophy and there is no such thing as a moral victory. There is winning and there is losing. That's it.

Internal Sabotage

Socio-political movements are always vulnerable to being undermined by people who appear to be allies but are, instead, guided by either stupidity or hidden agendas. That situation currently exists in the pro-life movement and it is causing us to be poisoned from within by four classes of people: Grandstanders, Neofems, Oblivious, and Defectors.

When evaluating this threat, it is not necessary to think that the damage these people cause is always intentional or driven by malice. In some cases it is and in others it isn't. But regardless of its motivation, internal subversion has a greater capacity to destroy the pro-life effort than any of our external enemies.

In any environment, including the pro-life movement, the first line of defense against internal sabotage is to recognize the forces behind it.

Grandstanders are people who show up in the pro-life movement from time to time to proclaim that their convictions are more pure than anyone else's and their commitment to the cause is more sincere. Armed with an inexhaustible supply of self-righteousness, they will readily accuse those who've been on the front lines for decades of not being truly pro-life, not having any idea what they are doing, and only being involved in the pro-life effort for fame and fortune. Among the current crop of Grandstanders, some have actually stated that their intent is to destroy the existing pro-life movement.

The bottom line to Grandstanders is that they are obsessed with the need to feel superior to the traditional pro-life movement. This, combined with the fact they have anointed themselves as the patent-holders of all truth, makes them virtually impossible to reason with.

Neofems are people who would be a part of the hard-Left's feminist cartel if it were not for that cartel's myopic fixation with legalized abortion. So by default, they became part of the pro-life movement – a group they don't really like or trust and with whom they have almost nothing else in common. This has left many of them with a level of frustration that tends to manifest itself as anger and bitterness.

Long before the Neofems came along, there was already a feminist presence within the pro-life movement – primarily Feminists for Life. Although people in this organization generally embrace the same Leftist political ideology as the Neofems, they have been able to maintain their commitment to those positions without compromising their commitment to the unborn. This is a talent the Neofems do not have and appear to have no interest in acquiring.

The most important thing to understand about Neofems is that they make unreliable allies. Their overriding loyalty is to feminism and whenever that

ideology conflicts with their pro-life sentiments – as it often does – it is the unborn they will abandon. When push comes to shove, these people are always more feminist than pro-life.

The Oblivious is a group of people that promotes itself as the new and future face of the pro-life movement, even though they have no skins on the wall that would justify such a claim. We characterize them as the Oblivious because, in most cases, they are frighteningly ignorant of the issues surrounding abortion or the history of the battle to end it. To put it bluntly, this is a group of people who don't know what they don't know and act as if ignorance expressed loudly enough is a substitute for knowledge.

As an example of this, consider that in the early 1990s the American abortion rate was over 1.7 million a year; there were more than 2100 free-standing abortion clinics in the country; and polls were finding overwhelming public support for the pro-choice position. Today, the abortion rate is less than one million per year despite a much larger population; there are about 70% fewer abortion clinics in the country and the rate at which they are closing is accelerating; and for the first time, more Americans label themselves pro-life than pro-choice. The problem is, even among the Oblivious who are aware of this, most have no clue how it was accomplished, no interest in learning how it was accomplished, and no respect for those who accomplished it.

Defectors are people who once worked in the abortion industry but have now come over to the pro-life side. Obviously, such conversions could be a major asset for the pro-life movement if they were properly handled. Unfortunately, that is seldom what happens. Instead, our tradition is to put these people on public display and parade them around the country like trophies, while we simultaneously install them in positions of national pro-life leadership.

To appreciate the sheer idiocy of this, imagine that an al-Qaeda or ISIS soldier defected and said he wanted to join the United States in its fight against Islamic terrorism. There is no doubt that our government would – and should – collect whatever intelligence they could get from him. But regardless of how sincere they believed his conversion to be, they would never make him a leader in the Department of Homeland Security, nor would he ever be allowed to sit in on high-level counter-terrorism strategy sessions with the FBI or CIA.

But in the pro-life community, we operate on this bizarre concept that when someone defects from the abortion industry, he or she is instantly transformed into some sort of pro-life guru who should be blindly trusted to make pro-life policy, lead pro-life organizations, and map out national pro-life strategies. It sounds preposterous, but the reality is that someone can be butchering babies at any abortion clinic in America today, and three months from now be a rock star in the pro-life movement with an almost cult-like following.

Of course, we always claim to have the purest of motives for doing this, when the truth is that we do it because it feeds our egos and is a fundraising bonanza. But from the standpoint of accomplishing pro-life objectives, it is a naïve and potentially self-destructive practice that dramatically increases our movement's vulnerability to infiltration and sabotage.

So yes, we should rejoice in the conversion of people who worked in the abortion industry and welcome them with outstretched arms. And yes, we should use whatever verifiable information they provide. And yes, we should help them recover from the psychological and emotional damage they sustained from having worked in the abortion business. But before that healing process is complete – and that could take years if it ever happens – they should not be put into positions of pro-life leadership. Instead, we should promote from within among qualified people who have been with us all along. There are plenty of

these people to choose from and to leap-frog abortion industry defectors over them is, at best, counterproductive and, at worst, a symptom of insanity.

Internal Sabotage Threat Assessment

The most significant problem created by Grandstanders is the infighting they inevitably create within the movement. In the past, this has often caused years of pro-life work and millions of pro-life dollars to be flushed down the toilet.

Fortunately, what we have seen in the past is that Grandstanders cannot get the power that leads to this sort of destruction unless they have credibility with the rank and file pro-life community, and the only way they can get that credibility is by luring the mainstream pro-life leadership into publically engaging them as equals. As long as we resist that temptation, they will remain isolated and eventually flame out. For that reason, our strategy should be to focus on minimizing the damage they do until that time comes.

The Neofems, the Oblivious, and the Defectors (NODs) are another story, and a much more dangerous one. While it is true that there are still relatively few of them, they are gaining influence far beyond their numbers because they are willing to let themselves be exploited by the secular media.

What we are seeing today is that NODs are attacking the mainstream pro-life community with the same lies and distortions abortion apologists have always used. In fact, NODs direct more of their venom at the pro-life movement than they do at the abortion lobby. When the media saw this happening, they recognized that it could inflict serious damage to the pro-life cause, so they immediately began to portray NODs as this enlightened and idealistic group of pro-lifers who are heroically trying to push back against the “knuckle-draggers and Bible-thumpers” that have always dominated the pro-life movement.

Every NOD knows this narrative is a lie, and some of them are even bright enough to have figured out that they are being played by the media. But they go along with it because it creates an image they want the public to have. They also reinforce this image by including issues under their definition of pro-life that have no connection to ending abortion but are “near and dear” to the liberal establishment and their media lapdogs. For example, many NODs now openly contend that being pro-life requires supporting socialized medicine, raising the minimum wage, restricting or banning gun ownership, cutting military spending, demanding free government child care, forcing employers to provide paid maternity leave, and a catalogue of other “social justice” initiatives.

In effect, what the NODs are saying is that the pro-life movement should fight this war on multiple fronts. This means they are either (a) ignorant of the fact that this is a proven formula for defeat, or (b) their real agenda is not about protecting the unborn. It is also revealing that some NODs are now openly recommending that the pro-life movement should back away from trying to make abortion illegal and, instead, use its time and resources to support government programs that reduce the “need” for abortion. This rhetoric is straight out of the abortion lobby’s handbook and makes it undeniable that NODs are less interested in protecting the unborn than they are in sucking up to the liberal media and making friends within the pro-choice crowd.

No rational person would deny that other social problems are legitimate subjects for discussion. But when a group of people suggest that there is some moral equivalence between these other issues and the mass executions of unborn children, or that the fate of the unborn should be tied to these other issues, those people have surrendered any right to call themselves pro-life.

We should not overlook the fact that equating abortion with these other issues is a strategy that the abortion lobby and the media has always used to neutralize the abortion issue. Now, it is being used by pro-life frauds who are looking for an excuse to support pro-abortion political candidates. So when a Hillary Clinton says she will work for federal legislation that requires McDonald's to pay its 16-year-old counter help \$15 an hour, these people can champion her as pro-life despite her stated commitment to keep abortion-on-demand legal right up to the moment of birth and paid for with tax dollars.

The Final Analysis

By their nature, internal subversives present a classic “good news / bad news” scenario. The bad news is that, when undetected, they can destroy any entity in which they are found. The good news is, the instant they are exposed, their power begins to evaporate. In this case, the Grandstanders and the NODs cannot survive within an informed pro-life community. That makes our course of action obvious, but to carry it out we have to acknowledge five realities.

First, what the Grandstanders and NODs are attempting is a hostile takeover of the pro-life movement and, regardless of what they claim, a significant percentage of them are not pro-life. Grandstanders are not trying to save babies they're trying to save themselves, and NODs are attempting to emasculate the pro-life movement so they can convert it into a social service agency. If either group accomplishes their objective, any meaningful effort to legally protect the unborn and their moms will be over.

Second, we must demonstrate the will and the discipline to expose any individual or organization within the movement whose actions and/or rhetoric indicate that defending the absolute right-to-life of the unborn is not their sole mission. Remember, this is not a war between the pro-abortion forces and the

pro-life forces. It is a war between the pro-abortion forces and the unborn. Given that reality, we cannot allow this conflict to be ruled by personalities or by who seems to be a nice person and who doesn't. The stakes are too high.

Third, those of us in the current pro-life movement have to accept some responsibility for the environment that gave rise to these subversives. There have been times when we became so caught up in the day-to-day conduct of the battle that we lost sight of what the battle is about, and that opened the door for Grandstanders and NODs to creep in. To prevent that in the future, we need to routinely stop and remember our commitment to the principle that human life begins at the moment of fertilization and that the life of every unborn child – under all circumstances and at every stage of development – is entitled to the same legal protections as every other living human being. The moment that ceases to animate everything we do, we become part of the problem.

Fourth, our failure to educate and equip the new people coming into the movement has made them sitting ducks for both the abortion lobby and the subversives who have invaded the pro-life movement. As stated earlier, our efforts to correct this situation must begin immediately. Otherwise, the influence of the Grandstanders and NODs on this next generation – combined with the abortion lobby's campus campaign – will devastate the pro-life effort.

Finally, we must recognize that purging the movement of the cancers outlined in this report is not just our right – it is our duty. If the current leadership of the pro-life movement leaves these problems for the next generation to solve, history will one day look back and say that we presided over the beginning of its end. The question each of us must ask ourselves is, did we really come all this way over all these years, to end up with that on our headstones?