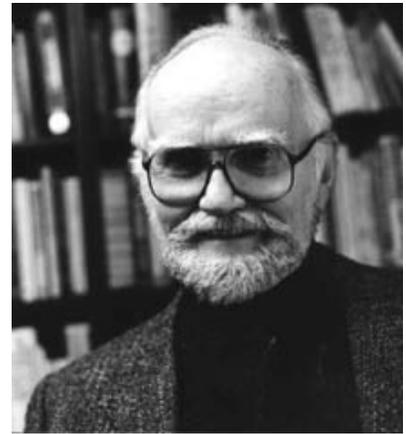


*Campaign for Life*

# *Building a Pro-Life Majority*



**By Dennis Howard**

Fifty-four million abortions are an unforgivable waste of human lives. And yet, for lack of a broad moral consensus, the banal evil of abortion continues.

Currently, the number of abortions is declining by about 1% a year, which simply reflects a 1% a year decline in births 30 years ago. Fewer births then, fewer abortions now. Real progress in the fight against abortion remains agonizingly slow.

***One reason for this lack of progress is that we have yet to build a genuine pro-life majority. Until we do, any realistic hope for ending abortion is remote.***

Unfortunately, America is deeply divided with a loud vocal minority on the left, a great many people in the "mushy middle" (with values drawn from Hollywood and Madison Avenue) and a wide variety of conservatives on the right -- from staunchly religious to secular libertarian.

Building a pro-life majority in such an environment is a formidable task. If your views are faith-based, they are often dismissed out of hand. That's why we need to find common ground with movements like the Tea Party based on a shared faith in freedom and personal responsibility.

Unfortunately, the pro-life movement itself is made up of literally thousands of groups all over the country, plus a core group of national organizations with varied agendas. As a result, pro-life unity and solidarity are often at a premium except on that one big day each year -- the March for Life in Washington. Every day is a new test of *e pluribus unum* -- unity out of many.

From the beginning, we at the Movement for a Better America have sought common ground by appealing to themes that affect the vast majority of Americans -- regardless of their politics, or even their moral and religious views. Whatever our beliefs, we are all profoundly affected by realities like the economic and other consequences of abortion.

***We were the first to warn of a coming economic crisis and to foresee that it could last from 2000 through 2010 and even 2020. Now we see that it could last even longer. Yet few economists acknowledge the devastating impact of 54 million abortions and a 43% decline in birth rates since 1960. They'd rather talk about consequences -- like jobs, interest rates and taxes -- than fundamental causes.***

Our original Campaign for Life ads sought to raise the economic impact of abortion to the level of a national issue. Some pro-life critics dismissed them by telling us that "no one ever voted based on the economic impact of abortion." Thank God, the ads proved them wrong.

The first three ads brought replies from 350 people in all 50 states and from as far away as Moscow, Rome, and Australia. They also opened doors in unexpected places. A State Department officer sent a \$100 donation from Moscow. A USAID worker on her way to Madagascar did the same. She also shared her own tragic experience with abortion.

### ***Who knew we had friends like that within the government?***

The ads also resonated with conservative speakers like Ollie North and Michael Schwartz. The late Congressman Henry Hyde freely quoted one of our headlines in his speeches. I made two guest appearances on NET with economist Dan Mitchell to discuss the issue. I also contacted C-Span several times, but to no avail. Their pro-choice bias was clear.

***However, I really knew the ads were hitting home when President Clinton and Kate Michelman of NARAL made clear references in major speeches to issues discussed in the ads -- within days after they appeared. That's how you know your ads are working. You hear noises from the opposition.***

### ***Why did the ads work so well?***

- ◆ **They made news.** They were the first to correctly warn of a coming economic crisis and the role played by the shocking abortion toll.
- ◆ **They hit people where it hurts: jobs, taxes, and the economy.** Fifty-four million abortions means a loss of an estimated 1.4 million fewer businesses and 21 million fewer jobs.
- ◆ **They identified a problem that affects everyone.** If you want to build a majority, you have to talk to everyone. Preaching to the choir will never get you there.
- ◆ **People are afraid to discuss abortion, but no one is afraid to talk about the economy.** Suddenly, talking about the "A" word became acceptable in the context of the economy.
- ◆ **The ads had a powerful appeal to both men and women,** including business people, entrepreneurs, and ordinary working families often ignored in the pro-life dialogue.
- ◆ **They highlighted the effect on the younger generation.** Preventive education begins with the young. The under-45 generation is abortion's #1 victim. We must reach them.
- ◆ **They moved people to action, reinforcing arguments from principle.** It may make us feel good to know we are on the side of right, but unless we take action, nothing happens.
- ◆ **By magnifying cognitive dissonance about abortion,** they undercut the "feel good" political correctness of the media. You can't deny the law of gravity after you hit the ground.

***Later, we brought a similar approach to pregnancy center ads that encouraged women with problem pregnancies to contact local pregnancy centers.*** Working with Caring Pregnancy Center in Boulder, CO, we tested these ads in a local newspaper and a campus daily. The local newspaper response was poor, but the same ads in the campus daily produced a steady flow of appointments. They were far more cost effective than comparable television ads.

This confirmed our argument that pro-life advertising can be done cost effectively. Our cost per response for our Campaign for Life ads was 40 times better than a pro-life television campaign. Both were excellent from a creative point of view, but there were major differences in the marketing and media strategies used by each. There lies the key to cost-effective pro-life advertising.

In his book, "Managing the Non-Profit Corporation," Peter Drucker warned against confusing moral and economic causes. Just because your cause is right doesn't mean that the world is going to beat a path to your door. That's why Drucker insisted on asking the question:

***"Is this the best application of our scarce resources? There is so much work to be done. Lets put our resources where the results are."***

That's a question pro-lifers must ask and answer every day. The question we must ask is not "Can we afford victory?" but "What can we do make victory more effective and affordable?"

If victory is what we want, then like David, we must choose our weapons wisely. David's army couldn't defeat the Philistines, but David could kill Goliath with a slingshot. He couldn't outfight them, so he had to outsmart them. With today's anti-life enemies, we have to do the same.

***That's also why we can't afford to spend most of our resources talking to narrow market segments, but have to start talking in terms that make a difference to the vast majority of Americans who have never had an abortion, and never considered having one. We can't afford to dismiss "the mushy middle" or pro-choice folks whose minds can be changed.***

A great example of this comes from our Celebrate Life seminars for teens, which resulted in a 75% increase among teens who are strongly pro-life, and a 40% overall increase in those who identify as pro-life. Those are stunning results. We began by making clear that everyone was welcome to the table.

***The amazing thing is that the major source of these gains were teens in the so-called "mushy middle." That group declined by 33.5%. Moderate pro-choice teens declined by 19.3% --still a substantial change. Over 1,000 teens were surveyed before and after each seminar, and the results remained consistent throughout.***

We concluded: Yes, we need to "preach to the choir" as a way of developing informed young leaders who can defend their views among their peers, but if we really want to build a pro-life majority, we have to talk to everyone. Divisive approaches may rally your base, but they don't convert many others.

As a journalist and creative marketer, I also knew that if you want to change people's minds, your first task is to lower their resistance to your message. You need to be engaging and disarming. So we began our seminars by simply asking, "OK, who here is pro-choice?" A few hands would go up, and we'd be off and running on an in-depth 3-hour discussion that cleared the air for everyone.

Our ads tried to accomplish the same thing, but in print, with attention-getting headlines like "Can America Survive the Abortion Boom?", "We Have a Cure for the Leading Cause of Death in America," or "Let's Kiss the Bloodiest Century in History Goodbye."

***We don't have fat budgets, so we have to make every dollar count. That's a good buy for our donors, too. Whether you're talking about print ads or talk show appearances, we estimate that it costs us about a penny to reach a household, a dime to get a reader, and \$1 to change a mind. It's the biggest pro-life education bargain around.***

We have also found that preventive education is much more efficient than trying to change someone's mind after they have already made an appointment at an abortion clinic. Only 1 in 15,000 women fall into that category on any given day. Trying to reach them is like searching for a needle in a haystack. That's why so many pastors are frustrated in their efforts at intervention. The answer: talk to everyone.

In fact, preventive education can reach many times more women in their child-bearing years and insulate them against abortion long before they even become pregnant. Ditto for teens before they become sexually active. At the same time, you can help build that vital pro-life majority by reaching other people who are not currently at risk. All at no extra cost.

***Just \$1 to change a mind about abortion is dirt cheap when you consider that every child born today will contribute \$25 million in future GDP within a working lifetime. Even if it costs \$100 to prevent one abortion, that is still an incredible return on investment -- morally, spiritually, and financially. By contrast, the cost of abortion is devastating to all of us.***

Currently, the U.S. government subsidizes Planned Parenthood to the tune of \$1100 for every abortion PPF performs. In GDP terms, the feds are willing to pay \$1100 for each \$25 million in future GDP that PPF eliminates -- or roughly \$8 trillion in future GDP every single year. Such expenditures are literally destroying our economy and our country, too.

**Worse yet, the feds plan to compound that by spending \$4 billion a year to provide free birth control to every American woman. That could easily reduce births by another 1 to 2 million more a year! But the ultimate cost in lost GDP would be \$25 to \$50 trillion for every year that program runs. It is totally suicidal.**

The choice we face is not just whether we can avoid paying the taxes for this insanity, but whether we are willing to sacrifice to help build the kind of pro-life majority we absolutely need to stop it.

*If we do nothing, you can be sure the Planned Parenthood lobby will do everything in their power to implement this program.*

**That's why we're inviting you to join us an active member of the Movement for a Better America. The annual donation is just \$25 -- far less than the federal government is already taxing you to fund these destructive programs.**

**We promise you that every dime of your donation will go to help build a genuine pro-life majority through our Campaign for Life in print and on talk radio.**

That \$25 is peanuts compared to the trillions in lost GDP that our current population policies have already imposed on us. The cumulative GDP loss already exceeds \$42 trillion -- and is climbing steadily by another \$2.5 trillion every year. Consider your \$25 a small investment in your children's future and in the future of the country.

**Right now, the only thing that stands between us and working for ultimate victory is your help. If we can meet our goal of growing by 20% a month over the next 18 months, we can stop this modern Goliath in its tracks. But we need your help today to do that.**

Like David, your \$25 donation may seem like just a small stone in a slingshot, but like him, if we take deadly aim, victory over Goliath -- with the help of God -- is assured.

The important thing is to act now. To join MBA, receive our Campaign for Life Action Newsletter, and participate in our Campaign for Life, simply return the coupon below.

**Make your voice heard  
by joining MBA's Campaign for Life!**

**Movement for a Better America, Inc.**

**PO Box 472, Mt. Freedom, NJ 07970-0472**

*(MBA, Inc is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. All donations are tax deductible)*

- Yes, I want to help build a genuine pro-life majority. I enclose my tax-deductible contribution for:*

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- Check here for information about inviting Dennis Howard as a speaker.*