

A Time of Hope and Healing . . .

By Dennis Howard

It has been 26 years since I interviewed the late John Cardinal O'Connor on the theme, "A Nation in Need of Healing." In our interview, he warned prophetically: "I firmly believe that we will either be a free people without abortion or we will be a slave people, slaves to this violence against human life. We will have no end to war, to hatred, to divisiveness until we generate a new respect for human life."

He talked about the growing fear among ordinary people. "It is fear of what the political system is capable of doing, fear of the kind of laws legislators are capable of passing, fear of what people in government will do to get elected. And always I think . . . the fear is for their own lives."



O'Connor also saw hope in the fact that "today there are far more people who recognize perversity as perversity, who recognize evil as evil. They're frustrated and angry. I haven't lost hope because that frustration is there. People still have a spark of life, a spark of fire."

Sadly, the abortion toll in the United States has doubled since that interview, climbing from 31.6 million 26 years ago to an estimated 63.6 million today. It's as if our top 100 cities were destroyed in a nuclear attack with a 100% fatality rate. And nothing can bring them back.

There is also a growing "echo effect" – millions of babies who will never be born because their parents were aborted. At a 1.8 total fertility rate, that means 57.2 million fewer births by 2040. Already the combined toll of our "lost" American population is over 100 million and climbing. If not for this, our economy would be 30% stronger than it is today.

Paradoxically, bad news is often good news. This population decline has produced a dramatic shortage of labor contributing to record low unemployment rates among Black and Hispanic communities, creating an illusion of prosperity. Right now, there are 1 million more jobs available than there are people to fill them, and the skills gap only tightens the market further.

That, plus lower taxes, less regulation, and new trade deals has given rise to the widely hailed "Trump economy." However, if not for abortion and its echo effect, the size of our economy would 30% bigger than it is today and the Dow Jones Industrial Average might well be pushing 40,000 instead of 29,000.

In other words, abortion and its echo effect remain the biggest drag on the U.S. and the world economy today. Unless U.S. birth rates reverse their precipitous decline in the near future, we're pushing it as far as real growth is concerned. Family-centered, prenatal policies – combined with an end to abortion on demand – remain America's best hope for future prosperity.

What hope is there of that kind of change in our culture and our policies?

Again, bad news may be good news. There is hope, for example, in the growing distress among the millions of men and women who suffer long term effects from past abortions. These include: infertility,

breast cancer, drug and alcohol addiction, depression, and higher rates of suicide. Some 70% of women who have had abortions suffer long term physical and/or psychological trauma.

These are abortion's walking wounded. We need to recognize that they present a unique opportunity for healing, forgiveness and repentance. Tabitha Lavender and her book, "*Forgiven,*" represent the cries for hope and healing from post-abortive women and men across America.

Like others in recovery, their distress is often so great as to make letting go and letting God their last, best chance for a full and happy life. We are planning to address this problem in the coming year with a new program called Healing Anonymous based on the experience of my own 50 year spiritual journey in AA -- working with people like Tabitha and others experienced in post-abortion healing. Our approach will be based on the famous 12 Steps of AA, which have helped millions find hope and healing.

I vividly recall my own withdrawal from alcohol 50 years ago when my last best hope was surrendering completely to God as I understood Him. In all that time, I have personally seen more miracles of grace in the basements of churches than I have seen almost anywhere else. It is now time to offer this same message of hope and healing to millions still suffering from post-abortion trauma.

A great many are already familiar with AA. Hopefully, Healing Anonymous can lead to a new era of healing and forgiveness and help build support for restoring the right to life to America.

We ask your prayers this coming year for this new beginning. Like the first Christmas, it is something the world may little note, but with God's amazing grace, it can change the world.

For information, write to Healing Anonymous, PO Box 472, Mt. Freedom, NJ 07970

The Twelve Steps of Healing Anonymous

1. We admitted that our lives have been wounded and that we cannot achieve healing on our own.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves can heal and restore us and that we can find that healing power in Jesus Christ.
3. We made a decision to turn our life and our will over to the care of God in the Person of Jesus Christ, our healer and savior.
4. We made a searching and fearless inventory of our lives.
5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We became entirely ready to have God heal and remove all these defects of character.
7. We humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, including ourselves, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take a daily personal inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
- 12.** Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in our daily lives.