

Let's Save Lives in 2017—Not Just 'Sing a Little Louder,' Says Pro-Life OB-GYN

A story set during World War II has great relevance to us today. It concerns a small Christian church in Germany immediately adjacent to a set of railroad tracks—whose ultimate end was the death camp at Auschwitz.

Every Sunday morning, with typical German punctuality, a train would roll by the church: cattle cars filled with Jewish men, women and children destined for the gas chambers at Auschwitz. As the train rolled by the church during services, churchgoers in their Sunday best could hear the cries of the Jews imprisoned in those cattle cars.

One man, who was a little boy at the time, tells this story and said that the cries of the Jews were so distressing that the churchgoers couldn't stand to listen. But instead of doing anything meaningful, those attending Sunday services at this small church chose to "sing a little louder" so that the cries of the innocents destined for slaughter could not be heard so loudly.

Today in America, we can hear the cries of those headed to their demise in abortion clinics. Not literally—for they have no audible voice. We hear their cries as we watch the video revelations that document Planned Parenthood's atrocities. We see their distress as we view images of aborted babies.

We hear the distress in the voices of the women who have been victimized by abortion and whose lives have been shattered. Like the German churchgoers, we no longer have an excuse. We can no longer say we did not know.

No More Excuses, No More "Show Votes"

This past Friday at 11 p.m., few Americans know the U.S. Senate was up late voting on its latest \$1.1 trillion continuing resolution—a short-term way to fund the government that goes around the normal process. Yet Congress has used this budget Band-aid every year for the past 20 years, rather than doing the difficult work of rooting out waste and setting priorities.

This means the U.S. government has once again handed over millions in taxpayer dollars to Planned Parenthood. The new budget resolution will expire on April 28, 2017—just prior to President Trump marking 100 days in office. Congress clearly wants to make their next budget a capstone of the new president's initial policy agenda. And this time, they will have no excuses.

In the wake of the revelations about Planned Parenthood, a bill advanced by Congresswoman Diane Black from my home state of Tennessee would have stripped funding from the organization. The problem with that bill is that Congresswoman Black publicly admitted it had no chance of passing the Senate and being signed by the president. She turned out to be correct; it did not pass.

She went further and said elevating the Planned Parenthood funding issue to the level of a battle over a continuing resolution is not something she would support. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said trying to de-fund Planned Parenthood at that time was an “exercise in futility.”

The leadership in the House and the Senate was unwilling this past Friday, as at numerous points over the past few years, to stand firm for the unborn and de-fund Planned Parenthood.

They decided it was better for Planned Parenthood to continue to receive public funding—1.4 million dollars daily from the federal government—than to risk a political fight. They chose to sing louder rather than do anything meaningful.

It is important that everyone understands this issue. The House has the power to draft a budget and appropriation bills that provide no funds for Planned Parenthood or other abortion providers—instead shifting that \$553.7 million annually to women's health programs in existing community health programs.

Things will be different with the next budget legislation. Next month will see a pro-life administration take office. Perhaps it is the better part of valor that Congress has given President-elect Trump an opportunity to work with them on the budget priorities of our nation and unveil that plan in his first 100 days.

Innocent as Doves, Wise as Serpents

The left has a saying—"Never let a crisis go to waste." That strategy is valid now, on the issue of abortion, for the pro-life movement. The conscience of America was pricked by the video revelations of last year. The level of awareness and the level of indignant outrage has never been so high.

Now, the new Congress that will take office on January 3, 2017 has majorities in both House and Senate held by a party whose platform is pro-life. We also have an incoming president who has pledged to be pro-life and who has promised to nominate Supreme Court Judges who will uphold the Constitution including the right to life.

There has not been a moment like this for the pro-life community since Roe v. Wade more than 40 years ago. Now is the time for action. Now is the time for all who have been disturbed by what they now know to step up, speak up and be heard.

The Bible quotes God as saying that "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos. 4:6a). In America, nearly 60 million babies have perished due to our lack of knowledge. By and large, those who identify as pro-life haven't known the

whole truth, and they haven't been sufficiently well-informed to speak on the subject. We haven't known what we can do.

It is past time for that to change. The Bible also tells us to be wise to the strategies of the enemy. When individuals in the pro-life community understand the issues and know what to expect, then we can become wise to the strategies of the enemy. Make no mistake: the world's largest abortion provider is not an enterprise any moral citizen should support.

As an OB-GYN, I know the abortion industry offers substandard care.

In any given year, 98 percent of American women never set foot in a Planned Parenthood facility. The services provided by Planned Parenthood are actually very limited when compared to what is available in a regular doctor's office, the health department, the clinic on most college campuses or at any of thousands of federally qualified health centers all across the country.

Planned Parenthood provides Pap smears, STD screenings, breast exams and abortions. They do not provide mammograms—and as far as breast cancer screenings go, their performance is dismal.

Blue Cross Blue Shield requires my gynecology office to exceed certain standards in terms of the number of women who come to my office who receive appropriate breast cancer screening. If I fall below a very high threshold, I am financially penalized. That threshold is above 80 percent.

The number of women receiving services at Planned Parenthood who receive appropriate breast cancer screening is as low as 17 percent. Planned Parenthood tries to make the case that they need federal funds to help women who otherwise might have difficulty gaining access to necessary health screenings.

Those uninsured women who visit Planned Parenthood never get the needed breast exam and mammogram combination. Everything a

woman can get at Planned Parenthood can be obtained in a more effective, more accessible and less costly way at federally qualified community health centers.

While there are approximately 700 Planned Parenthood facilities in America, there are over 13,000 federally qualified health centers. In addition to that, almost every county has a public health department and physicians who accept Medicaid. Those facilities do far more for women and families than the Planned Parenthood facilities.

When this abortion-driven group and its defenders say that millions of women will lose access to care if Planned Parenthood is de-funded, they lie. When they say that no federal dollars are used for abortion, it is simply not true.

According to Planned Parenthood's latest annual report, the group receives \$553,700,000 in taxpayer funds—primarily through Medicaid and Title X grants. An understanding of the economics of Planned Parenthood shows this funding absolutely goes to support the infrastructure of their abortion apparatus.

An Action Plan for Life in 2017

As this latest battle unfolds in Washington, it is our duty as pro-life citizens to follow the money. We must contact our legislators and insist that any government spending prohibits the funding of abortion services, the funding of abortion providers and the promotion of abortion internationally.

The real issue is whether or not those members of Congress who call themselves pro-life will actually have the bravery and the wisdom to engage in this battle. If we see that they do not, then we know that they have made a choice—a choice to regard their own political futures as more worthy of protection than the precious lives lost every day to abortion.

In 2017, it will be more important than ever that we know and contact our members in House and the Senate and make it clear to them that we expect them to defend life. If they refuse to do so, then all their other efforts amount to nothing more than “singing a little louder.”

When the new Congress takes office on January 3, followed by President Trump’s inauguration on January 20, our elected officials will no longer have the government-shutdown bogeyman to blame.

Any new budget reconciliation bill must include U.S. taxpayers being fully separated from funding any abortion provider, most infamously Planned Parenthood which ends nearly 900 American babies’ lives every day (and, tragically, thousands more overseas). It will only happen with each of us staying engaged and communicating with Congress.

They were elected in part because of their promises to be pro-life; it is past time for them to step up to the plate—doing exactly this and no less. They no longer have an excuse for failing to do the right thing. Now is the time to defend innocent lives in the womb. {eo}

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