NOEL Takes Pro-Life Message to Episcopal Church Convention

by Georgette Forney, Executive Director of NOEL

Noel News, July 24, 2006: As Sheila Bracken, NOEL’s administrative director, and I drove to General Convention (GC) on Sunday, June 11th, we prayed for courage to uphold the sanctity of life in the midst of many who believe in a woman’s right to abort her unborn baby. Each day in the exhibit booth we faced people who glanced at us and then looked away with disgust, often rolling their eyes and moving to the far side of the aisle. But many people did visit with us, taking literature and signing up to receive our informative newsletter, the NOEL News. There were also a number of people who didn’t stop to visit but gave us a thumbs-up and said they were glad we were there.

Our booth featured two rocking chairs, lots of great information, and literature including a poster with beautiful drawings of the monthly stages of a baby’s development in the womb. We gave away hundreds of the matching brochure. We featured two posters: one that highlighted the Episcopal Church’s pro-abortion/choice position and another that noted that racism comes in many forms (a very important GC issue). The text explained that since 1973 abortion killed more African Americans than violent crimes, heart disease, AIDS, accidents and cancer combined.

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Sheila, speaking for the first time before a GC legislative committee said “RCRC does not encourage parental involvement in the issue of abortion. They encourage girls to seek truth from within. This is out of alignment with both society and the Episcopal Church as a recent Zogby poll showed that 69% of Americans support parental notification of abortion and Resolution A094 affirms the role of God, parents, and spiritual advisers to guide a woman before considering abortion.”

I also addressed B026, stating “establishing policies that have benchmarks and procedures to guide entities has become common management practices for those who seek to be the ‘best.’ As the Episcopal Church, it should always be our goal to adopt the ‘best’ management practices that serve all those in the Church. This resolution gives the Church the opportunity to adopt a best practice policy in relation to how we as the ‘church’ approve affiliation with other organizations.”

On Tuesday, I was advised that both B026 and D063 were sent to the House of Bishops (HoB). Bp. Ackerman, Bp. Mathes and Bp. Packard spoke in support of B026 but when the ballots were counted it lost by 5 votes. Bp. Lipscomb, Bp. Herzog, Bp. Little, Bp. Bedworth, and Bp. Horlbeck urged the HoB to support D063, and rescind the Church’s RCRC membership but a motion to take it passed and the opportunity for the Church to uphold the sanctity of life died because of the choice made by the majority of bishops. Co47 and Co48 were both discharged, for procedural reasons.

As I reflect back on our prayer at the beginning of GC, I praise God for answering it. We spoke boldly and tirelessly to everyone we could about the importance of protecting the right to life. The women who were present loved the literature we offered them. We handed out baby picture cards and information about the pro-life movement. We encouraged our viewers to urge their elected officials to vote for pro-life legislation. Each day in the exhibit booth we faced people who glanced at us and then looked away with disgust, often rolling their eyes and moving to the far side of the aisle. But many people did visit with us, taking literature and signing up to receive our informative newsletter, the NOEL News. There were also a number of people who didn’t stop to visit but gave us a thumbs-up and said they were glad we were there.

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Is Pro-Abortion Charity? by Dennis DiMauro, Lutherans for Life

“I’d be happy to contribute to the organization, but I need to make sure that the charity is pro-choice.”

This was a comment I received at my telecommunications workplace after a coworker read a flier that I had posted in the office’s pantry. The flier solicited pledges for a local pregnancy center’s fundraising “walk-a-thon,” which helped raise thousands of dollars that year to help women in crisis pregnancies.

Caught somewhat aback by the question, I began to explain why my coworker should give to the organization even though it was not “pro-choice”: “I explained how women would be nurtured by caring counselors, how they would be provided with financial and medical support if needed, and how these women would be given a real alternative to having an abortion. But this explanation went nowhere.”

How do we show pastors that their role goes beyond telling the congregation that abortion or euthanasia.

Secondly, rather that liberating women, abortion is definitely not good for women. And not only that, abortion was liberating for women. Abortion was the ticket to a woman’s freedom: you see, my coworker had teenage daughters, and he could not imagine them living in a society where they would not have the unimpeded liberty to dispose of an unwanted child. Such a society might limit the potential of a woman to reach her career goals. After all, my coworker was a strong supporter of women’s rights, how could he even think of supporting an organization that might want to convince a woman not to exercise her freedom to abort? No, not him, not my coworker.

However, as we all know, my coworker did not have all the facts. Abortion is definitely not good for women. First of all, abortion kills a growing child (not a blob of tissue as my coworker thinks), but a child. Secondly, rather that liberating women, it imprisons them in a web of guilt and sadness. There is something inherently unnatural about abortion, and any post-abortion counselor can see the tell-tale signs of its devastating emotional effects even years after the abortion has occurred. Thirdly, abortion has many possible physical consequences to include: excessive bleeding, emergency hysterectomies, lifelong infertility, and a greater occurrence of future breast cancer.

But my coworker has never heard any of these negative consequences, because she lives in a world where all the information she receives is pro-abortion. His daily newspaper is pro-abortion, his 7PM news is pro-abortion, the public school where his children attend is pro-abortion, his circle of friends are all pro-abortion, and his church is either pro-abortion or simply ignores the topic. And what’s worse, any woman or man that he knows who has been negatively touched by abortion are too ashamed to discuss it with him. So my coworker drifts along in ignorance about the true world of abortion, and it is an ignorance, by the way, in which he feels quite comfortable.

That is why I was so excited to read about a study on the causes of premature births recently conducted by the National Academies of Science. Premature births have a much greater likelihood for complications, including neurological disabilities such as cerebral palsy. The study said that the third most common reason for a premature birth is a previous trimester abortion. This study finally backs up with legitimate scientific data what the pro-life community has known for years: abortion is bad for women and their “reproductive health,” and not the other way around.

So how can we change the minds of our coworkers to let them know what we pro-lifers have known for thirty years? Well first off, all we need to admit that people like my coworker are in our churches. In fact, I think that many in our churches share most of the opinions of my coworker. So where does that leave us? It means that we have some teaching to do.

1) We need to instruct the faithful about these legitimate medical studies which show the dangers of abortion. They won’t read about them in the Washington Post, so it is up to us to sound the alarm about the harmful effects abortion has on women. We also need to show them how a child develops in the womb, and how developed a child is during a typical abortion (6-12 weeks). Alexander Tiaiana’s book, From Conception to Birth: A Life Unfolded is an excellent secular resource in this regard. I never give a pro-life talk without showing the beautiful development pictures in this book. They say that a picture says a thousand words, but it does better than that, it cuts through all the abortion rhetoric as well.

2) We need to instruct our fellow parishioners about God’s views on the sanctity of life. One great resource that has come available is the NPRC’s new devotional, 90 Days for Life. This devotional, written by the board members of the NPRC, has some outstanding insights into many familiar pro-life Bible verses. [See ad on left.] My denomination’s pro-life chapter has even given the devotional away for free to those churches that desire it.

National Pro-Life Religious Council Offers New Pro-Life Devotional

A booklet of 90 days worth of Scriptures, meditations and prayers on pro-life themes has been compiled and created by members of the National Pro-Life Religious Council.

To order copies of this devotional, contact:
National Pro-Life Religious Council, Orders Department
PO Box 61838 Staten Island, NY 10306
mail@nprcouncil.org