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A Focus On Hope

How Emphasizing Declining Abortion Rates Enhances Pro-Life Educational Efforts

Rachel M. McNair, Ph.D.

Is it just a coincidence that abortion rates have been on the decline during the same period of time that there has been increasing public awareness of post-abortion trauma? Or are the millions of women who have had abortions, and years later suffered from the delayed guilt and regret that is typical of post-abortion syndrome, now quietly discouraging their sisters, daughters, and co-workers from taking the “easy way out?”

Whether or not increased awareness of post-abortion problems is the primary explanation for the decline in abortion rates, it is an important explanation that will resonate with Americans. If pro-lifers understand this explanation, and the psychological reasons why the average American wants to believe this is true, we can accelerate the trend away from abortion.

The Need to Understand

Throughout the 1990s, abortion rates have been on a steady decline. The total numbers, rate, and ratio of abortions to births have all been on a downward trend. In fact, if one were to look at only those women getting their first abortion, the drop is even more dramatic.

Reporters, government officials, abortion advocates, and abortion foes are all trying to explain the trend. Depending on one's partisan position, various explanations are that the abortion rate is declining because of inadequate access to abortion facilities, a shortage of abortionists, better use of contraception, the success of pro-life educational efforts, chastity programs, or the passage of women's right to know laws, et cetera

It is likely that there are a large number of factors involved in the decline. But for the purpose of this analysis, it is not important to discover the real cause. What is important is the effect the decline is having on people's attitudes.

For example, on January 16, 1998, in its coverage of the *Roe v. Wade* anniversary, ABC News examined the decline of abortion rates and reported that 60 percent of doctors who do abortions are 65 or older. Without an infusion of new providers, still fewer abortions might be done in the future. Then, immediately after this segment, ABC anchor Peter Jennings aired a report on the efforts of the Catholic Church doing post-abortion healing with Project Rachel.

What is amazing is that it was a sympathetic report. Women who were being helped by the support groups were interviewed. There was no indication that Project Rachel was anything other than a good program that reasonable people would support for those who needed it.

**Most Americans wish
the abortion issue
would just go away.**

Such positive reporting of pro-life views, especially on a major network, has been extremely rare. But I would argue that it was not a coincidence that the segment followed a report of a dramatic drop in the number of abortion doctors. A psychological principle, working in an unseen way, even on the ABC

News staff, had laid the groundwork for a positive perspective on post-abortion outreach programs.

What is Cognitive Dissonance?

A lot of psychological research has been done on why and how people make decisions. Up until 1956, however, little had been done to study the mind *after* decisions are carried out. Researcher Leon Festinger took an interest in this, and especially in learning why some people act in ways that do not appear logical. How, he wondered, do people rationalize behaviors and beliefs that are self-contradictory? His answers to these questions laid the ground work for the theory of *cognitive dissonance*.

Cognitive dissonance is a fancy phrase for an easy concept. Any bit of knowledge a person has can be called a “cognitive element.” Cognitive elements can include anything from a specific known fact like “apples grow on trees,” to a vague concept like “Jerry is a nice guy.”

It is the nature of the mind to sort through all of these ideas, looking for patterns in an effort to reconcile them into a single true world view. Most cognitive elements, like the two about apples from trees and nice guy Jerry, have no apparent relation to each other. Their relationship is called “irrelevant.” If the two ideas come together in the mind, they produce neither tension nor stability.

When one learns that lemons grow on trees or that Jerry takes his children to church every Sunday, these new cognitive elements seem to agree and fit well with the previously held ideas. Ideas that fit well together are called “consonant.” They tend to strengthen the stability of a person's confidence and world view,

beliefs, and behavior.

If two cognitive elements (or ideas) are in conflict with each other, however, they are called “dissonant.” This “cognitive dissonance” produces tension. This tension, in turn, will motivate the mind to take some action to relieve this instability, this contradiction.

The mental strategies people use to deal with cognitive dissonance vary with individuals and situations. But this dissonance is a strain and people do try to find some way to get relief from it because they all have a basic need for consistency, stability, and order in the way they see the world. When new information threatens their previous views or assumptions, they feel uneasy or resort to defensive maneuvers of one kind or another.

One set of defensive strategies is marked by avoidance. In this case, the persons threatened with cognitive dissonance simply “tune out” the new information, ignore it, banish it from their minds, or declare it to be irrelevant. The more one is confronted with the new information, however, the more difficult it is to avoid dealing with the ignored conflict.

Alternatively, persons faced with a new idea that creates strong feelings of cognitive dissonance will simply deny the truth of the new information and insist that an older, more comfortably held belief is still more true. They may also try to reinforce prior beliefs by making aggressive, belligerent or even outlandish claims to bolster their more dearly held beliefs.

Finally, the two ideas that are originally seen as being dissonant can become more consonant either by (1) abandoning one of the old ideas and replacing it with the new information which is accepted as true, or (2) reflecting on the two dissonant ideas until one discovers how one or both can be modified in a way that eliminates some, most, or all of the tension.

The most important principle in the theory of cognitive dissonance is simply this: some ideas are more resistant to change than others. Dearly held ideas, therefore, will tend to shape one’s interpretation of new information. Ideas that come into conflict with these ideas are more subject to change. Furthermore, when two dearly held ideas come into conflict, it is more likely that a person will resort to denial and avoidance behavior rather than modify or abandon either idea.

When applied to the abortion debate, the resistance-to-change concept allows us to understand how much cognitive dissonance surrounds the abortion issue and how it can most likely be reduced

and resolved in our favor. The most important factor in selecting a strategy is to determine which idea is more resistant to change and to change the one that is less resistant.

Relieving Mental Tension Over Abortion

Everyone holds some contradictory ideas at some times, but if the bits of knowledge that are in discord do not hold much importance, the efforts to deal with them will be minor. Life and death issues are always important, however. This is why the abortion debate produces so much emotional strain and activity among activists on both sides, and so much denial and avoidance behavior by the millions who simply do not want to think about it.

Beliefs touching on self-esteem are among the most important ideas held by all people.

For many people, basic self-respect is one of the cognitive elements that is most highly resistant to change. Any idea that threatens their self-respect is likely to be rejected. Conversely, any idea that boosts their self-respect is likely to be accepted.

This is the concept that ties together the rise and fall of abortion rates with cognitive dissonance theory, and my recommendations for improving pro-life educational efforts.

During the 1970s and 1980s, rising abortion rates created cognitive dissonance in American society, which caused widespread denial and avoidance of the issue. The two ideas in conflict were:

- (1) The abortion business was expanding. There were more and more clinics, and the number of abortions was climbing or maintaining at a very high rate;
- (2) We Americans are a noble and virtuous people.

That first idea was a fact. It was a fact that was impossible to dispute. But the second point, though only an opinion, involves critical issues of self-respect and national pride. That makes it all the more resistant to change. Many pro-lifers may have decided that Americans are not noble and virtuous, but the public in general was (and is) unwilling to abandon this positive view of our national character.

Because both points resist change, the average American could most easily deal with the tension produced by these two ideas simply by deciding that they don’t conflict. In other words, since Americans are virtuous and abortion rates are rising, abortion must be morally acceptable. From this viewpoint, it was not well-

Most people will be relieved by the decline in abortion rates.

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reasoned arguments in favor of abortion that convinced the American public to accept abortion as a moral choice. Instead, public acceptance was motivated by the need to resolve the rise in abortion rates with the view of ourselves as a virtuous people.

During the '70s and '80s, pro-life efforts to call attention to the rise in abortion rates and the immorality of abortion were perceived as an attack on the virtue of the American people. Within this denunciation of abortion, many people saw pro-lifers as disturbers of the peace who were maligning the good will of the American population. Thus, hostility toward pro-lifers was not only a result of media bias, it was also the result of cognitive dissonance.

But now the situation has reversed. The psychological elements of cognitive dissonance theory have shifted to favor pro-lifers, if we know how to apply it. These are the new cognitive elements:

(1) Abortion numbers are declining, fewer doctors are willing to do them, and clinics are scarcer;

(2) We Americans are a noble and virtuous people.

Conflict resolved.

Once the first point has changed (abortion rates began to fall), it makes sense for people to think that the second point (American's innate virtue) caused the first.

In the earlier decades, the dynamics were working against the pro-life position. But a great reversal is now underway. Under the new facts, the same dynamic can start to work in favor of the pro-life position.

Recommendations for Framing the Abortion Debate

For the last three decades, most of the public was highly uncomfortable with abortion. Most people who saw themselves as "pro-choice" were not enthusiastic about abortion, but they saw no alternative other than to accept the status quo. Now that abortion rates are on the decline, most people are inclined to greet this news with great relief.

While we all know that abortion will not go away completely any time soon, the news that abortion is on the decline reduces cognitive dissonance for those in the middle majority of Americans who have mostly tried to ignore the issue. In many cases, reducing their tension level by showing them the positive trend will also help to draw them out of their shells and give them reasons to support the new trend toward reducing abortions.

The accommodation of abortion never really brought relief of the tension that people felt. But the decline in abortion rates is beginning to trigger a powerful shift in public perceptions. It is powerful because people want it to be true. They want to avoid despair. They want hope. They want to think well of themselves and their society. They want to resolve the decades-long tension produced by cognitive dissonance.

Emphasizing the decline in abortion rates can also have the salutary effect of heartening those who have been working hard at pro-life efforts for years. For the public, a consistent effort

The Hard Truth vs. The Soft Sell

As Rachel MacNair points out in the preceding article, most people would rather ignore the abortion issue than face up to the moral judgement it implies on us as a nation. As she succinctly stated: "For nearly three decades the pro-life movement has tried to argue not only the case against abortion, but also the case for our society's guilt."

An example of pro-lifers arguing the case for our guilt is the strategy of the Center for Bio-Ethical Reform (CBR), which recently began displaying huge pictures of aborted babies on trucks cruising our major city highways. CBR also takes its Genocide Awareness Project (GAP) to college campuses, where 14-foot-tall pictures of aborted children are shown side by side with pictures from the Nazi Holocaust and Ku Klux Klan lynchings. Through GAP, college communities are challenged to look upon the "seamless garment" of death. Are the distinctions modern liberals make between human lives worth protecting and human lives subject to destruction really any different from the distinctions made by the Nazis or the Ku Klux Klan?

Yes, our society is guilty. It has to be, since it is made up of sinners like you and me. We are all tainted with the original sin of Adam, our father. The view that "Americans are a good people," if not a nationalistic fancy, is a primordial memory of what we should have been. Certainly Americans have been a very blessed people. Certainly, like all humankind, we also have inherent value and dignity because we are made in the image of God. But where is the evidence that we are inherently *good*, as in well-behaved? As one wit pointed out, the doctrine of original sin is the only doctrine that is proven in every daily newspaper.

Recognizing our guilt, both as individuals and as a nation, is essential to the task of conversion. But this task will not be finished until Christ comes again. We are all too adept at the psychological games of denial and rationalization.

This is why MacNair's recommendations are useful. They are based on sound psychological principles. She has identified a soft-sell approach, geared toward gradually reorienting perspectives to bring about a change in attitudes, practices and beliefs. It is a practical strategy for influencing the way people think about abortion rather than how they think about themselves. This is both its strength and weakness. It is psychologically, but not spiritually, satisfying. It is directed toward the goal of ending abortion—something we may well see accomplished in our lifetimes—rather than the goal of converting the world, which is an unending task.

"Repent." That one word summarized the entire message of John the Baptist as he prepared the way for Christ.

Continued next page

to call attention to the declining abortion rate can produce a “bandwagon effect” by establishing a sense of momentum in the direction of our virtuous society moving away from abortion.

Most importantly, if the above analysis is correct, the good news that abortion rates are declining lets people know that is now psychologically safe to let their guards down. By removing the fear that our message will undermine their self-esteem, we enable people to listen to information they deliberately ignored before. By focusing, even momentarily, on this good news, we are proclaiming the success of our inherently virtuous society in rejecting a mistake that will soon be in our past. Instead of our message being a cause for greater tension, alarm, and guilt, it can be heard and accepted as an explanation for the decline in abortion, and even welcomed as a guide for efforts to continue reducing abortion rates.

Discussing the decline also allows us to claim credit for it. That places us in the role of being victors rather than doomsayers. To do this, we should explain that the decline is due to our educational efforts that have helped women to better avoid abortions, which most women never really wanted in the first place.

We should also give credit to American women in general. Thirty years of abortion have resulted in a new generation of women who now know, from personal experience, or from observing their friends, what abortion really is—an ugly encounter with death, grief, and guilt. The decline in abortion rates, we should emphasize, is largely due to this new generation of better-informed women, who are now discouraging their daughters and co-workers from making the same mistake.

These brief points should be made in coffee room discussions at work, in letters to the editor, in printed educational materials, and by every pro-life spokesperson handling a media interview. Preferably these points should be stated at the beginning of the interview or public presentation. Our goal should be to relieve cognitive dissonance as early as possible so as to better prepare the listeners to want to accept and believe the information that follows this good news.

Jumping to a discussion of the declining abortion rate is especially effective when an exasperated interviewer asks if the conflict over abortion will ever be resolved. We need only point out that it is actually already in the process of being resolved. It is only a matter of time before the negative effects of abortion are so well known that few, if any, women will consider it.

Educating the public about the aftermath of abortion is especially important. Most people who have supported a “pro-choice” position understood themselves as supporting something that was good for women. When they find out that abortion rates are declining, that better-informed women are choosing abortion less frequently, and that those who have had abortions are now counseling against it and entering into post-abortion healing programs, it will not be difficult or stressful for them to accept this new information and modify their views to a more pro-life position. This approach allows them to maintain their view of themselves as compassionate both before and after they learned this new information.

The Hard Truth, continued from page 3

Repentance must always precede Christ. Where there is no repentance, there is no conversion. John’s message is still relevant today. It applies to our nation and to each individual—including believers—who must repent and convert every day.

So which strategy should pro-lifers pursue? Guilt-provoking campaigns that use graphic pictures that bulldoze through denial? Or more subtle methods, like those proposed by MacNair, which allow people to maintain the illusion of America’s virtue in order to make pro-life messages less threatening?

In our opinion, both approaches have their place. At times, as seen in the accompanying article, “The Awakening of African-Americans,” both methods will even converge. Circumstances and audiences will dictate the best approach, or blend of approaches, we should take.

We would like to offer one caution, however. Our experience with post-abortive women and men suggests that great care must be taken when one takes the route of breaking denial. It is not enough to show people why they are guilty. That alone can be mere cruelty.

The goal of breaking denial must be to help others find forgiveness and healing. Our goal should be that of Christ, who came into the world not to condemn, but to save (John 3:17). Our efforts to break denial should always be coupled with an equal, perhaps even bolder, effort to offer understanding, compassion, and healing.

We have come a long way since 1973. For nearly three decades the pro-life movement has tried to argue not only the case against abortion, but also the case for our society’s guilt. That most people didn’t want to hear this isn’t surprising.

Today, the situation has changed. Abortion rates are declining. Instead of focusing on guilt, we can focus on hope. If we are mindful now of the task of relieving psychological distress, we will find our task of educating on abortion aftermath to be easier.

Dr. Rachel McNair served as national president of Feminists for Life of America from 1984-1994, and is now director of the research arm of the Seamless Garment Network. She got her Ph.D. in psychology and sociology in 1999 in order to do research.

Author’s Note: This concept is discussed in more depth in the on-line book Achieving Peace in the Abortion War, especially chapters 1, 4, and 17. The book also discusses reasons for the decline, involving the emotional aftermath of abortion for all concerned and the social dynamics which indicate why the downturn may well be permanent. It is available at www.fnsa.org/apaw.

The Awakening of African-Americans

Peggy Lehner

Recently I was asked to participate in a debate on abortion at an African American conference. The invitation came from the conference director, who had heard me speaking on a local black radio station about the prevalence of abortion in the black community. My opponent was to be a black social worker whom I did not know.

Very few conference participants chose to come into the workshop. Our audience consisted of three of my pro-life friends and six of my opponent's friends. Everyone else apparently chose to go to the workshop next door on racial profiling.

I started out by presenting some statistics on abortion and the African American community. Facts such as: Abortion is the leading cause of death in the African American community, accounting for more deaths in the last 25 years than all other causes combined Hispanics have now surpassed African Americans as the nation's largest minority group Married African American women have a five times greater abortion rate than married Caucasian women. This was just to be my introduction.

My opponent stood up, looked at me, and said, "*Why has no one ever told us these things?*"

The debate was over. We spent the rest of the hour having a rather serious discussion with the audience as to how these statistics came to be.

I certainly will not claim that everyone in the room became instantly pro-life. But there is no question that they were suddenly looking at abortion in a new light.

While virtually all polls indicate that African Americans tend to hold as strong or even stronger pro-life beliefs than the population as a whole, we also know that they undergo a very disproportionate number of abortions (36 percent, while representing only 14 percent of the child-bearing population).

Some might expect this dichotomy to lead to a greater percentage of African American women in need of post-abortion ministries. Yet certainly in our area we see very few African American women coming forward for help in dealing with their abortions. As a matter of fact, except for the high number of African American clients seen in our crisis pregnancy centers, very few African Americans are involved in the pro-life movement in any way. Why?

How We Learned

Approximately four years ago, Dayton Right to Life decided to seek the answers to these questions. We started out by enlisting the help of the Center for Business and Economic Research at

the University of Dayton to conduct some focus groups with African American women. From those focus groups we were able to discern some basic information as to how these women perceived the abortion issue, as well as their attitudes towards Right to Life, area crisis pregnancy centers and organizations such as Planned Parenthood. We also tested the effectiveness of various pro-life tools, including some of the leading pieces of literature, television and radio ads, and slogans.

Based on our initial findings, we continued to conduct a number of personal interviews, group discussions and more formal focus groups over the next two years. The participants in this research ranged from teens, single mothers, fathers, pastors and professionals. Some had experienced abortion; many considered themselves to be "pro-choice."

Following are some of our key findings, which we hope will begin to foster a concerted effort on the part of the pro-life movement to reach out in a more effective manner to our African American neighbors.

While these findings represent dominant opinions identified in our research, it is important to keep in mind that not all African Americans think alike, any more than do individuals in any other group of people. We found that the more removed someone was from black cultural influences, the less likely he or she was to share in some of these attitudes. For example, while the group as a whole did not feel that the desire to keep a pregnancy a secret had much bearing on abortion decisions, the participants who were suburban and college-educated seemed to feel that the need for secrecy was an overriding concern.

What we Learned

One of our most striking findings was the high rate of denial many of the participants exhibited over the rate of abortion within the African American community. Some accused us of making up the figures to "make them look bad." As one woman told me, "When I first heard you saying these things, my reaction was, 'Here we go again. White people telling us one more thing we are doing wrong.'"

Men especially seemed to believe that abortion is a "white problem." We were frequently told, "Our women don't do that." Some men expressed disbelief that any black woman would seek an abortion for economic reasons. Their thinking went along the line that black women are used to being poor and that they somehow always made room at the table for another mouth to feed.

The women tended to believe that while abortions did indeed occur, they usually were reserved for serious situations where

no other option was perceived to exist—and economics often played an important part.

For years, African American families have dealt with out of wedlock births by absorbing the child into the family structure, with grandparents or aunts informally adopting the child. While this continues to happen to a considerable degree, the number of women who choose abortion has gone unnoticed.

There is a striking lack of knowledge about the pro-life movement within the African American community. In our initial focus groups no one was able to identify even what issue Right to Life was involved with. When prompted that we were an organization that was opposed to abortion, they tended to identify us with stereotypical negative media images, such as “those people who bomb clinics.” While some were familiar with and had actually utilized area crisis pregnancy centers, they did not really connect them with abortion opposition or other pro-life efforts.

On the other hand, virtually all the participants correctly identified the services provided by Planned Parenthood and generally had favorable opinions of that organization. They saw Planned Parenthood as a place where teens especially could go for help when their parents were not available. However, we also found it interesting that several women who had previously undergone abortions mentioned pressure from Planned Parenthood as contributing to their decision to abort.

Many of the women we talked with expressed strong religious opposition to abortion. I don’t believe we heard any woman express the belief that abortion was not morally wrong. However, they also believed that God readily forgives abortion since He knows the personal circumstances that would make abortion a woman’s only option.

In one of the few in-depth sociological studies we found related to abortion and the black community, it was noted that while in the seventies attendance at church was a contributing factor towards an African American woman’s opposition to abortion, this factor had disappeared all together by the nineties.¹

It is our theory that as “abortion rights” became more and more of a key dogma of the Democratic party, African American churches, which have been intimately linked to that party, grew increasingly silent on abortion. This perhaps accounts for the muddy theology we heard so frequently expressed on the issue.

Reactions to Pro-Life Materials

Very little pro-life literature held much appeal to the African American women in our study. It was generally perceived as being “written by white people, for white people.” With these comments in mind, we have developed two new brochures that hopefully will be more effective in reaching the African American community.

The first one, which we refer to as “The Answer,” is directed towards women facing a crisis pregnancy. Included in this brochure are several photos of aborted babies—something which many crisis pregnancy centers have avoided using. Our research revealed that these photos, which by and large have never been

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seen in the African American community, had an extremely powerful impact. We also found none of the negative reactions which have led many pro-life groups to stop using these photos. Women who had experienced abortion appeared to feel most strongly that the photos should be shown.

Some of these women described how they had been pressured into their abortions by family members and said that they if they had known more about abortion, they might have been in a better position to resist the pressure. I remember one young woman especially who stated, "If I had been able to show these pictures to my brother, I just know he would not have wanted me to do that to my baby."

Another thing we found that might be especially useful for post-abortion healing is the power of the testimonial. The voice of women who have "been there" is something African American women really seek. There is a strong sense that "If you haven't walked the walk, don't try to talk the talk."

The second brochure, "The Question," is designed to awaken the African American community to the toll that abortion is taking on them as a race. We have found this brochure to be very helpful in starting dialogue on this issue. It was the information in this brochure that I used in my "debate."

The women and men we spoke to are very aware of the African American role as the dominant minority group in American culture. Showing them that (1) abortion has so greatly diminished the population of their racial group and (2) they have been displaced by Hispanics as the largest minority group sets off powerful alarm bells.

Before the Rev. Jesse Jackson entered presidential politics, he

correctly preached that abortion was a form of genocide that would devastate the black community. African American pro-life leaders, such as the Rev. Johnny Hunter of L.E.A.R.N., continue to preach the same message.

Our research suggests that their instincts are right. Outreach efforts to the African American community that underscore the devastation abortion has wrought on African Americans as a group are very effective in awakening concern about abortion—which is otherwise commonly dismissed as a "white issue."

There is no question that the African American community is in great need of pro-life education and services. Among the approximately 18 million African American women in this country, a very high percentage of them are carrying the pain of 13 million abortions. Each year more than 400,000 abortions are added to those numbers.

As pro-lifers we must start building bridges into our African American communities. I believe that as we make the effort, we will quickly find that we are building the bridge side by side.

Peggy Lehner is President of Dayton Right to Life.

If you would like to contact Dayton Right to Life for a sample of their materials or additional information, you may email them at info@dayton.righttolife.org. Or write Dayton Right to Life, 211 S. Main St., Suite 830, Dayton, OH 45429.

Notes

1. John Lynxwiler and David Gay, "The Abortion Attitudes of Black Women: 1972-1991," *Journal of Black Studies*, 27(2):260-277, Nov. 1996.

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News Briefs

Kansas Abortionist Not Punished in Consent Case

A Kansas abortionist who was accused of performing an abortion after a sedated patient had withdrawn her consent will not be punished after reaching an agreement with state officials.

Kristin Neuhaus's agreement with the state health board requires her to comply with existing laws on sedating and monitoring patients, keep proper medical records, and inform patients about the probable gestational age of their unborn children. The board ruled that there was no evidence that Neuhaus acted out of malice or unconcern during the abortion, in which the woman apparently withdrew her consent after learning that a general instead of a local anesthetic would be used.

New Campaign Seeks to Protect Women from Forced Abortions

In an effort to combat forced abortions in the United States, the Population Research Institute has launched About FACE, a national campaign to protect American women from violations committed in private and state-funded abortion clinics and family planning centers throughout the U.S.

About FACE draws on a ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals in Atlanta which exposes abortionists to being charged for violations of the federal FACE Act (see story below). The About FACE campaign will train pro-life sidewalk counselors on how to recognize and respond to violations of federal law outside clinics, educate attorneys on how to prosecute abortionists who violate FACE, and educate women on their rights and what to do if those rights are violated.

For more information, contact the Population Research Institute at (540) 622-5240 or pri@pop.org.

Florida Woman Sues Clinic Over Forced Abortion

A woman in Melbourne, Florida is suing an abortion clinic for a violation of the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act.

The woman says that she experienced severe abdominal pain while undergoing an abortion at the now-closed Aware Woman Center in March 1997, but that abortionist William Eggherman had staffers hold her down when she demanded that he stop the abortion and call an ambulance for her. She was later transferred to a hospital and had to undergo emergency surgery. The U.S. Court of Appeals in Atlanta ruled that Eggherman violated the FACE Act by preventing the woman from accessing services to treat her pain. At this point, criminal charges under FACE have not been filed.

Ms. Magazine Attacks Elliot Institute and Post-Abortion Groups

In an August article entitled "Post-Abortion Stress Syndrome?" *Ms. Magazine* attacked the Elliot Institute and other pro-life groups for reaching out to women struggling with a past abortion.

Calling post-abortion syndrome "a bogus affliction invented by the religious right, author Cynthia L. Cooper accused post-abortion groups of "exploiting" women and using them to attack abortion rights.. Although excerpts from Dr. David Reardon's writings were extensively quoted in the article, Cooper never contacted Dr. Reardon for his comments. Ironically, Cooper ended her article by describing efforts by abortion clinics and pro-choice groups to "help" women resolve negative feelings about their abortions which Cooper earlier insisted don't exist.

The article can be found at www.msmagazine.com.

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