

Why a Pro-Abortion Columnist Says the Movement Is in Tatters

July 20, 2020 | John Horvat II



Why a Pro-Abortion Columnist Says the Movement Is in Tatters

It is always good to listen when pro-abortion feminists speak frankly about the state of their movement. It reveals the weakness of the other side and helps dispel the illusion of liberal invincibility.

A recent op-ed in the British daily, *The Guardian*, is an eye-opener. The author is Jessa Crispin, a U.S. correspondent for the paper and a former Planned Parenthood employee, who worked at a Texas chapter of the organization for around five years. She bitterly complains that “the pro-choice movement is in tatters” and “Planned Parenthood is part of the problem.”

Much of what the author says is not new. The dire situation of the pro-abortion movement is reflected in the growing number of clinic closings (1,707 since 1991) and the rising number of federal judges forcing through their rulings. However, the reporter does make two very important conclusions that all pro-lifers need to know.

Planned Parenthood = Pro-Abortion Movement

Her first observation is that the pro-abortion movement in America is almost inseparable from Planned Parenthood. There hardly exists anything outside the shadow of this massive yet profitable non-profit behemoth. Not only does Planned Parenthood commit the most abortions nationwide, but it is also the movement’s political leader, economic powerhouse, and media center.

The bad news is that Planned Parenthood is well-financed, powerfully connected, and firmly established.

The good news is that Planned Parenthood is the only game in town. When the abortion giant decays, the whole [abortion](#) movement decays. Its ugly reputation pulls down everyone.

And there is nothing to replace it. There is no Plan B.

The pro-abortion *Guardian* writer denounces Planned Parenthood as decadent. She claims it has joined the liberal establishment. It has lost the passion of a movement and acquired the complacency of a multi-billion dollar NGO. Ms. Crispin says Planned Parenthood is “concerned with hobnobbing with the powerful, paying the CEOs of its regional chapters salaries in the mid-six figures, making symbolic gestures and coming up with a catchy slogan to sell on T-shirts.” This top-heavy bureaucratic Goliath specializes in fundraising with celebrity galas that perpetuate its existence and comfort.

Losing the Ground War

The result, she claims, is that [Planned Parenthood](#) is losing the ground war. This second observation is very revealing. All wars, even culture wars, need boots on the ground. The article’s author laments the movement’s lack of grassroots-level advocacy. While Planned Parenthood bigwigs socialize with establishment figures, the pro-life activists are praying the Rosary outside abortuaries, promoting state laws, closing clinics, and developing vast networks of grassroots activists.

The failure to organize locally means access to abortion continues to decline everywhere. The non-profit’s national organization takes the limelight while its local abortion mills are often underfunded and understaffed. For example, a letter sent to the organization’s board by a collective of Planned Parenthood of Greater New York staff accused leadership of “abusive behavior and financial malfeasance,” as well as “systemic racism.” Clinics are constantly closing due to mismanagement, pro-life activism, and toxic work environments.

Most importantly, the movement is failing because it cannot connect with the nation. The author laments that “‘My body, my choice’ is the best our pro-choice leaders can seemingly come up with to protect our rights.” Such pithy slogans fail to articulate a coherent message that makes “clear what is at stake.”

Huge Swathes of America Are Not Pro-Choice

For a movement that calls itself pro-choice, Ms. Crispin bitterly complains (while pro-lifers rejoice) that vast swathes of the nation are left without an abortion choice, *Roe v. Wade* notwithstanding. Many potential victims cannot afford Planned Parenthood’s exorbitant \$400-600 abortion fee. Six states

have only one surviving clinic, a fact that effectively bans abortion in the outlying areas.

“There’s no choice when the nearest clinic is 400 miles away and you don’t own a car and it’s been 80 years since Amtrak stopped in your town.”

What makes matters worse for the other side is that many Gen-Z feminists seem indifferent to the fight on the ground. Liberal activists of this age group do not see the abortion issue as urgent and are involved in other social or ecological problems deemed more pressing.

Moreover, the pro-life movement has also succeeded in giving Planned Parenthood its well-deserved bad name.

Two Lessons

The *Guardian* article contains two lessons for pro-lifers.

The first is that having a single monolithic organization with a huge budget has its disadvantages. Indeed, Planned Parenthood suffers from its top-down bureaucratic structure that easily gets bogged down and unwieldy. Its socialist one-size-fits-all solutions are oppressive and brutal. The non-profit allows little competition.

The plight of Planned Parenthood is so different from the refreshing assortment of organic pro-life organizations that are numerous, nimble, and adaptive. If one pro-life group fails, others fill the breach.

The second lesson is that organizational structures are not enough to prevail. The human element is essential to success. The pro-life movement succeeds because it turned [abortion](#) into a moral debate that reverberates deep in the hearts of people. The warm moral issues resonate because they speak of transcendental values and ultimately of God.

Jessa Crispin is right. The pro-abortion movement is “in tatters” today. This is because [Planned Parenthood](#) failed to keep abortion’s moral dimension out of the debate. It now suffers because it has no moral message. It can only express itself in the secular terms of terminating life.

For now, the pro-abortion movement/Planned Parenthood may have the legal muscle to ram through its agenda by force, but it has no heart. It cannot win the moral battle that now frames the debate and inspires the actions of so many pro-lifers.

As seen on CNSNews.