



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on July 13, 2010

Pro-Life Group Forcing Americans to “Face the Truth”

Since the Supreme Court’s 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision gave women a “choice,” abortion has been one of the major issues dividing “liberal” and “conservative” Americans. Sadly, while nearly every thinking adult has an opinion on the subject, to a majority the act of abortion remains little more than an abstract idea, with few on either side of the debate willing to take a hard look at what abortion really means.

Thus, as more than 40 million tiny and defenseless humans have been slaughtered over the past 37 years, a comparatively tame and genteel war has been waged between those who think a woman should have the choice of whether or not she will bear a child she has conceived with a man, and those who are convinced that life begins at conception and an abortion terminates that life.



While it is true that a handful of abortionists and pro-life activists have paid the ultimate price for their actions and convictions, by and large the abortion conflict has boiled down to a war of political ideologies played out in the media, in the courts, and in the hallowed sanctuaries of state and federal lawmakers.

As the killing has continued non-stop for the past four decades in the midst of intensive political maneuvering and PR campaigns, what very few in the pro-life camp have been willing to do is compel the public to view the truth about abortion—to take the average American all the way to “Ground Zero” in the abortion war.

One pro-life organization is helping to change that, however. On July 9 the Pro-Life Action League, a Chicago-based group launched in 1980 by former Benedictine monk Joseph Scheidler, kicked off its 11th annual “Face the Truth” tour, designed to “help citizens visualize and understand the human cost of abortion,” according to a press release from the group.

The strategy is simple: participants go to high-profile public venues, where they display large placards and signs bearing full-color images of pre-born babies who have been, literally, pulled limb from limb out of their mothers’ wombs. This, the group declares, is abortion’s bottom line. “We want to expose the truth about abortion to the public, and the power of graphic signs is undeniable,” explained Eric Scheidler, executive director of the Pro-Life Action League and the son of its founder.

Scheidler agrees that the pictures passersby are forced to look at are disturbing and evoke a wide array of emotions and responses. But the tactic is a necessary step, he argues, to force people to understand that abortion is nothing less than the slaughter of real, flesh-and-blood individuals. “The killing of an



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unborn baby in her mother's womb is a horribly disturbing reality that takes place more than 3,400 times every single day in our country," said Scheidler.

In explaining the justification for the extreme measures his organization is taking to confront America with the reality of abortion, Joseph Scheidler argues that the nation has embraced a death ethic and must be wakened to the reality of what many Americans casually accept as an inevitable reality — even those who share a theoretical opposition to abortion. "We've killed 47 million children and something has to be done," he said. "We're doing what has to be done. We're showing the American people the real face of abortion."

The elder Scheidler noted that his group has taken Catholic Church teaching as a model for its strategy. "Above every altar in every church where mass is said, you have to have one of the most grotesque figures you can think of," he explained: "a man beaten half to death, crowned with thorns, broken and torn, hanging on a cross. You've got to have that. It's liturgically required that we look at Jesus Christ crucified every time we go to mass. Isn't that awful? Yes it is, but that's the reality of His sacrifice."

The group's website explains that just as Christ "had to be lifted up in order to show His love for us and to show us the seriousness of sin ... our pictures graphically portray the reality of abortion in the public square, and show the seriousness of taking the life of an unborn child."

Dr. Monica Migliorino Miller, a university professor and regular participant in the "Face the Truth" campaign, noted that although abortion has been an accepted part of America's culture for nearly 40 years, most of the people that volunteers meet while on the streets with their signs have never been confronted with the graphic reality of abortion. "This is the first time that 99 percent of the people have seen these pictures," she said.

Ann Scheidler, the Pro-Life Action League's vice president and wife of its founder, noted that because we live in such a visual-oriented society, individuals are often dramatically impacted by the images that confront them through the campaign. "People need to see victims in order to empathize with them," she said. "You see that with the Holocaust pictures that are in history books. You see it with the victims of starvation and war in third-world countries. You have to see what's happening to people in order to empathize with them and make a difference."

Joseph Scheidler can attest to the power the graphic images have to impact individuals. "These pictures are tremendously effective," he said. "I know that because that is how I got into the pro-life movement. I saw a picture of what they do to babies and I said, 'That is intolerable. I've got to fight that.'"

Regardless of the undeniable truth represented by the pictures, many people — including many who oppose abortion — are appalled and offended by the group's strategy. But Ann Scheidler maintains that there is simply no other way to communicate the reality of what is happening when a baby is aborted. "Yes, it's graphic, and it's really disgusting," she conceded. "And we have to do something to stop it."

Some critics have expressed their concern for children who are inadvertently confronted by the images. Ann Scheidler admits that it is a serious concern. "Some people are legitimately questioning this," she said. "But we saved a baby's life yesterday," she recalled, "and if we were able to save a life by doing what we do, then forcing someone to talk to their child about abortion is worth it."

Joseph Scheidler added that the photos, as disturbing as they are, offer parents an opportunity to talk to their children about the reality of abortion. "We say, 'Talk to your children about drugs, and talk to your children about bad TV.' Why not talk to your children about abortion?"



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But for all the negative response to their campaign, the group has also gotten much positive feedback from individuals with whom they interact as they hold their signs. “We’ve had overwhelmingly good response,” said Dr. Miller. “Lot’s of thumbs-up, and people saying, ‘God bless you. What you’re doing is right.’”

Most important, the signs have actually saved the lives of babies. One “Face the Truth” volunteer named Jim recalled how he was able to help a woman change her mind about abortion at a particularly crucial time. When the lady asked him about the pictures on a sign he was holding, he responded that they were of a baby whose life had been ended by abortion. As the lady began to cry, Jim asked her, “Is there anything I can do for you?” To which the young lady responded, “I’m pregnant and I have an abortion scheduled, but I really didn’t know what it was.” Because of the pictures she saw, the lady kept her baby, and volunteers from the Pro-Life Action League were there to help her throughout the process. “That was a tremendously uplifting experience for me,” Jim recalled.

The Pro-Life Action League is not the only group to use graphic images to demonstrate the horrific truth about abortion. Since 2001, a Los Angeles-based organization calling itself the Center For Bio-Ethical Reform has conducted nationwide “Reproductive Choice” campaigns in which volunteers drive cargo trucks bearing billboard-sized signs with graphic images of aborted babies.

The goal of the group is the same as that pursued by those involved in the “Face the Truth” campaigns, with the trucks winding their way through the busy streets of communities across America, forcing people to face the bloody facts about the “choice” of abortion. Explains the group’s website: “Abortion will continue to be trivialized as ‘the lesser of two evils,’ or as ‘a necessary evil,’ so long as it is allowed to remain an invisible abstraction. Pictures make it impossible for anyone with a shred of intellectual honesty to maintain the pretense that ‘it’s not a baby’ and ‘abortion is not an act of violence.’”

As for the Pro-Life Action League, in addition to its Chicago-area campaign that concludes July 17, the group is partnering with other pro-life organizations for similar “Face the Truth” efforts across the nation. Said Joseph Scheidler: “The truth is abortion is ugly, it’s murder, it’s killing children, and the American people have to see it. So we’re going to launch these efforts all over the United States.”

For more information, visit www.prolifeaction.org/truth.



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