

Creating a Culture of Life

“The care of human life and not its destruction is the first and only legitimate object of good government.” —Thomas Jefferson

“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter.” (Prov. 24:11 NIV)

Intercessors for America (IFA) was established in the same year that the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion in America—1973.

The U.S. Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* decisions on January 22, 1973 rendered over 200 years of legal protection for the unborn in the U.S. null and void. Having built on Colonial “common law,” by 1965 most every state had laws banning all abortive procedures except in a few “extreme” cases. Then, for the first time in American history, abortion was made the law of the land by “raw judicial power,” as Justice Byron White termed it in his dissenting opinion.

Unleashing an “open season” on the unborn, the lives of 56,622,169 or more children have now been terminated by abortion in

America. Peaking at 1.6 million reported abortions in 1980, the annual number of abortions has dropped yet continues at about 1.1 million each year—this is still over 3,000 babies killed every day; about one every 20 seconds!

But, as you will now learn, through concerted prayer and Spirit-led obedience by IFA and devoted pro-life workers across the U.S., a conservative estimate is that 20 million or more babies have been saved since 1983, and it is likely that at least 500,000 are now being saved each year! This would help account for the drop.

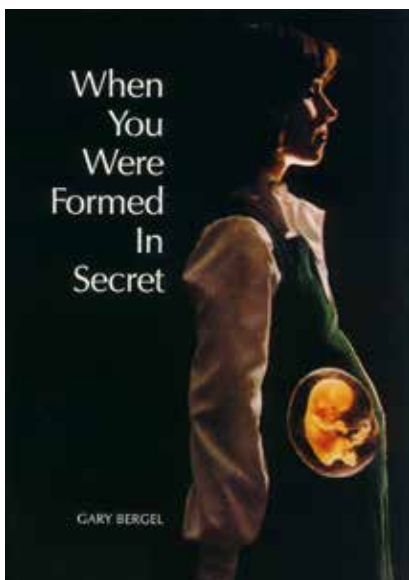
The following is a snapshot of the catalytic role IFA has been privileged to play to help preserve Life. There was an immediate consensus among the founders of IFA in 1973 that the Sanctity of Human Life

should be set as a top intercessory prayer priority. It was, and it remains there to this day. January of each year sees a March for Life in Washington, D.C. and all IFA materials carry a Sanctity of Life focus.

President Ronald Reagan proclaimed January 22, 1984 as the first National Sanctity of Human Life Day. He went on to designate the third or the Sunday closest to January 22 to be an annual Sanctity of Human Life Day. President George H. W. Bush continued the practice, Bill Clinton abandoned it, George W. Bush restored it, and Barack Obama instead issued a January 22 proclamation extolling a “right” to choice and abortion-on-demand.

An annual Sanctity of Life Sunday continues to be widely observed across America since Focus on the Family, founded in 1977, spearheaded the observance in local churches. IFA promotes this observance and concerted intercession each year.

IFA’s very first teaching seminars revealed that only a minority of professing Christians were



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aware of a cunning new push to legalize abortion in the late 60’s and early 70’s. IFA entered into collaboration with pro-life organizations, published articles, and produced materials to help educate and promote Spiritual Awakening.

IFA’s monthly prayer letter, the observance of the First Friday of each month as a day of united prayer and fasting, the mid-week Informer prayer alerts, Web news postings, and IFA’s emergency text and social media alerts all routinely carry a Sanctity of Life/Culture of Life focus.

Throughout the year, the ministry continues to encourage repentance and pro-life lifestyle, compassionate outreach to women with unplanned pregnancies, adoption options, prayer and non-violent witness at abortion clinics, and legislation at the federal and state levels to curb and end abortion-on-demand.

In 1980, IFA published a full-color, dual booklet, “When You Were Formed in Secret/Abortion in America.” Billboards were mounted and ads were placed. The booklet quickly released truth, inspiration, encouragement, and helped to raise the bar in the pro-life movement. Until then, a lot of very good pro-life instructional materials were mimeographed or Insty-printed in black and white.

Nine editions and more than three million copies were distributed by IFA from 1980 to 2000—including customized editions for National Right to Life in the U.S. and Canada. Translations were made in Spanish, German, Hebrew, Russian, and Arabic. Each edition contained updated toll-free Pregnancy Help Line phone numbers, quickly connecting women in distress with Crisis Pregnancy Center counselors.

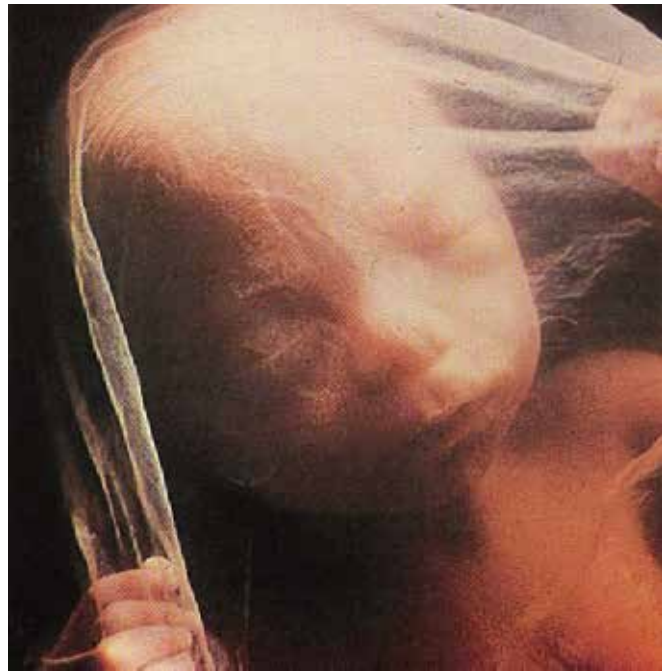
Pro-life Pregnancy Centers, as they are now more commonly called, were being established in cities since Robert Pearson opened the first in Hawaii. The first

1971 directory listed 75 organizational contacts. Yet, in the early 80's no one knew how many centers were in existence, or how effective they were. While continuing to sustain its monthly intercessory prayer mobilizations, IFA commissioned a formal survey of Pregnancy Centers in 1983 and issued a report in November 1984.

David J. Ayers, Ph.D., now Dean of the Alva J. Calderwood School of Arts and Letters at Grove City College, worked with IFA staff members to compile and cross-check lists and soon identified at least 1,753 pro-life Crisis Pregnancy Centers in operation in 1983, just 10 years after the Roe v. Wade decision.

Using accepted social science sampling protocol and methods, Dr. Ayers conducted telephone and mail surveys. Data amassed actually showed that existing Pregnancy Centers saw at least 557,000 women face to face. This survey and other studies at the time found that over 75% of women who visited pro-life centers chose not to abort their babies. Thus, it was revealed that 418,000 or more babies were saved at least partly through, or with the help of, the ministry of these Pregnancy Centers in 1983. The survey received solid press coverage in *Vogue Magazine*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Baltimore Sun*, and *The Sacramento Bee*.

Additional survey work indicated that over 2,100 Pregnancy Centers were operating at the end of 1984. Sources indicate that 3,500-4,000 U.S. Pregnancy Centers are currently in place and compassionately serving women (and men) in crisis pregnancies. Many centers are now equipped with ultrasound. Care Net reports that over 90% of the women they see in their 1,120 centers choose carrying their baby to term. Hence, we can safely



postulate then that upwards of 20 million babies have been saved by Pregnancy Centers over the 30 years from 1983 through 2013.

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Sustained intercessory prayer prompts intercessory action and divine intervention.

Pregnancy Centers now outnumber abortion clinics. Surgical abortion clinics operated by Planned Parenthood or affiliates have declined from some 1,800 in 2005 to 600 or less at the start of 2014. This continuing drop can be tracked on AbortionDocs.org. Planned Parenthood is positioning some new metro “mega-clinics.”

Last year on January 4, *The New York Times* headlined: “Pregnancy Centers Gain Influence in Anti-Abortion Arena.” Pam Belluck wrote that, “With free pregnancy tests and ultrasounds, along with diapers, parenting classes and even temporary housing, pregnancy centers are playing an increasingly influential role in the anti-abortion movement.”

ABC News documented that before 2010 no states banned abortions outright at any stage of pregnancy. Nebraska started a 20-week abortion ban trend by passing a “Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act” in April, 2010. Nine additional states enacted 20-week bans by early 2013. Americans United for Life reported that 360 abortion-related measures were before the legislatures of 48 states in 2013; most were pro-life. From the 2010 elections until the close of 2013, a span of just three years, 205 abortion limits acts were enacted in 30 states.

Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Kansas, North Dakota, and Texas were cited for making the most significant progress in implementing life-affirming and protective laws in 2013. Provisions were introduced in 14 states seeking to ban abortion after the fetus is deemed viable. Some called for banning at the first detection of a fetal heartbeat. Others prohibited sex-selection abortions. North Dakota became the first state to ban abortion for the reason of “genetic abnormalities.” Efforts to limit and ban abortion and to restrict access to abortion clinics are continuing in 2014.

A “Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act” is now before the U.S. Senate.

This year on January 3, *The New York Times* headlined: “Access to Abortion Falling as States Pass Restrictions.” Erick Eckholm summarized that, “A three-year surge in anti-abortion measures in more than half the states has altered the landscape for abortion access...” “I think

we are at a potential turning point: Either access to abortion will be dramatically restricted in the coming year or perhaps the pushback will begin,” declared pro-abortion Suzanne Goldberg, director of the Center for Gender and Sexuality Law at Columbia University.

The battle over Human Life, termed a “fundamental culture change” by NBC News, continues to rage. May we continue in prayer and obedience as the Lord directs.

“See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil.... blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendents may live; that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days...”

(Deut. 30:15, 19, 20)



Gary and Susan Bergel

—The above was authored by Gary Bergel. Gary assisted IFA in various capacities from its founding in 1973, and served as Executive Director and then President from 1985 to 2009. He and his wife, Susan, now reside near Charles Town, WV. Gary is presently a teaching artist on the faculty of Blue Ridge Community and Technical College, coordinates Heritage Harvest International, and operates Bergel Art/Media.

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*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*

To see God’s purposes for America fulfilled through sustained prayer and Spirit-led obedience.