P.S. to the NEWS
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THE PRO-FAMILY FACTOR IN THE ELECTION

Ever since the November 4 election, the pollsters and the pundits have been trying to explain away their failure to predict or anticipate the landslide victory that washed Reagan and the Republican Senate into office. The chief reason why the professionals didn't discover the voters who would make up the big margin of victory is that, in selecting their supposedly "scientific" sample, the pollsters failed to take into account the pro-family movement and its issues.

The prevailing wisdom the day before the election was that it would be close, and that a large turnout would benefit Carter, but a small turnout would benefit Reagan. The election proved the opposite: the large turnout benefited Reagan. The pro-family movement provided the large margin of victory, and the pollsters had not discovered it because its members do not fit into any generally-recognized political categories.

The pollsters mistakenly assumed that the pro-family movement (if, indeed, they recognized that it exists at all) is only a subset of the conservative movement. Journalists have for years been treating it that way, but the facts are to the contrary.

The pro-family movement has a heritage different from the conservative movement, different organizational segments, and different leaders. Most members of the pro-family movement never participated in the political process until the last three years.

The pro-family movement is made up of people who are motivated by the so-called moral or social issues (as opposed to economic or political issues). It consists of an unlikely mix of Republicans, Democrats, independents and non-voters, conservatives and liberals, and all ages, classes, races, and religions. They are people to whom "crossover" issues are far more important than party.

These people voted for Ronald Reagan and for the winning U.S. Senators because (a) the candidates articulated the values they cherish on the issues they care about, and (b) the Republican Platform offered a clear choice as opposed to the Democratic

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Platform, especially on the issues of abortion, gay rights, prayer in the schools, the integrity of the private school system, and appointments to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The anti-abortion forces, who had tested and proved their political mettle two years ago by knocking off Senator Dick Clark (the intellectual liberal heir-apparent to Hubert Humphrey), this year collected an impressive list of scalps. Call the roll of the pro-abortion Senators who bit the dust November 4: Birch Bayh, Frank Church, John Culver, George McGovern, Warren Magnuson, Gaylord Nelson, and Robert Morgan.

Senate senority and chairmanships have been a main pillar in the pro-abortion forces in the current U.S. Senate, and the election brought a mighty change in that. Strom Thurmond will replace Ted Kennedy as chairman of the powerful Judiciary Committee, and Orrin Hatch will replace Birch Bayh as chairman of the subcommittee on constitutional amendments.

Abortion was not, of course, the only factor in those Senate races. But one indication of its crucial importance can be gleaned from the Des Moines Register "exit" poll of Iowa voters: 10 percent voted for Chuck Grassley (the winner over Culver) because of his anti-abortion stand. Barry Goldwater's late conversion to support of a Human Life Amendment probably gave him his razor-thin margin of victory.

Two of the pro-family movement's special favorites won amazing victories over tremendous odds. Admiral Jeremiah Denton, our nation's highest-ranking POW, was elected the first Republican senator from Alabama since Reconstruction, and Congressman Robert Dornan withstood a challenge from Gregory Peck's son which was so star-studded and fantastically-financed that it was dubbed "star wars."

Lou Harris and others are now trying to convince Ronald Reagan that the election was not a mandate for a Human Life Amendment, for prayer in the schools, against affirmative action, or against federally-directed sex education. If Reagan and his advisers believe that, they will miss their great opportunity to build their victory coalition into a lasting foundation among the electorate on which he and his successors can govern for as long and as influentially as Franklin D. Roosevelt did.

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