

# Super ad meets super hypocrisy

## Sunday

It seems a fairly straightforward proposition: If you can raise the dough, you can buy an ad on the Super Bowl. It takes a lot of money to do it, \$2.5 million to \$3 million for a 30-second spot for the 2010 edition of the most-watched football game of the year.

Focus on the Family, a conservative Christian group, plans to run an ad during the game featuring Florida quarterback Tim Tebow and his mom. While in the Philippines and pregnant with Tim, her fifth child, Pam Tebow went against the advice of doctors who said that complications from dangerous infection endangered her and her child. They encouraged her to abort; she chose life. She was healthy, her baby was undamaged and is now bound for the NFL.

Focus on the Family found donors who specifically wanted to get this message on the air. A single 30-second spot during a four-hour broadcast doesn't usually have a lot of impact. In advertising, you need reach (they have that, with the size of the audience watching the game) but you also need frequency. This ad benefits - before it has even been seen - from the publicity and controversy surrounding it. A lot of people don't think it should air, and some sanctimoniously say it should not air during the Super Bowl, as if that is somehow "hallowed ground."

"I'm stunned that any of the networks would risk one of the few, last great franchises of broadcast television for an ad that could polarize viewers," said Bob Garfield, ad critic for the magazine Advertising Age. That's right, when Garfield refers to one of the "last great franchises of broadcast television," he is not talking about documentaries, or the president's State of the Union message, he's talking about a football game.

Some pundits have said the Super Bowl and its advertising messages need to be protected from political commentary, or any kind of "message" advertising. Right. We need to reserve that time for more beer commercials, snack chips, automobiles and ads from edgy Internet companies wondering whether the women in the ad are

“too hot for TV.” Those are apparently the only “messages” deemed appropriate for Super Bowl Sunday.

The Supreme Court of the United States recently ruled that corporations are considered entities as far as political speech is concerned. As such, companies and political action committees will be able to buy messages for and against specific candidates before an election. If that’s the case, why can’t a Christian organization that has the funds sponsor a message it wants to put on the airwaves? Is a football championship more sacrosanct than a political contest?

The Women’s Media Center has teamed up with the National Organization for Women to urge CBS not to air the Tebow ad during the game. They claim it will be offensive to women. Ironically, according to the group’s Web site, “The Women’s Media Center makes women visible and powerful in the media. ... (T)he WMC works with the media to ensure that women’s stories are told and women’s voices are heard.” Well, except, not this woman’s voice, and not this woman’s story. It’s ironic and hypocritical that the WMC wants to empower women, unless they don’t toe the party line. We thought that kind of blind submission was what NOW was established to fight against. It’s odd that NOW and WMC are not offended by Super Bowl ads that sexually objectify women, but are offended by the Tebow ad. What’s “offensive” is that the WMC and NOW cannot fathom that a woman would reject abortion, and that she would want to share her success story.

We ought to welcome the positive message in support of life coming from the Focus on the Family. And let’s save the arguments for which team ought to win: the one that abandoned our city under the cover of night, or the one named for heavenly beings?