

CAL THOMAS

Realities as Roe vs. Wade turns 20

Twenty years ago last Friday, the Supreme Court removed a God-given, unalienable right from unborn babies, a right it has the duty to secure and protect.

This momentous case known as Roe vs. Wade has been transformed into a type of brand name, like Kleenex or Jell-O, becoming in the process as much a philosophy as a court ruling.

Those who have labored for two decades in the political system to reverse Roe and persuade government to again recognize the inherent right to life of the unborn, are blocked at every turn. Most judicial, executive and legislative authorities have accepted the Supreme Court's redefinition of human life — that it does not begin at conception.

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With the swearing-in of a new president who favors "the right to choose," pro-lifers must face the reality that government is unlikely to turn around on this issue. Legal and social transformation must come from the people, upward.

Apathy, lethargy and resignation must not be the response of the pro-life community to the frustrations of 20 years of unsuccessful labor. To quote President Clinton, who quoted the Bible in his Inaugural address, but in a different context, "Never cease in well-doing for, in due season, you will reap your reward if you faint not." As the once pro-life New York Times said more than a century ago, "The evil that is tolerated is aggressive."

In this long struggle, information

remains the key. Recently, a woman wrote to the Arthur DeMoss Foundation, the group that produces the "Life, What A Beautiful Choice" television spots. She said she was in an abortion clinic preparing to terminate her pregnancy. The abortionist had a television set in the room and the commercial came on and changed her life. The woman says she got off the operating table and decided to give birth to her baby. She wrote to thank the producers for persuading her not to make a terribly wrong decision.

Television commercials, billboards and other methods of conveying information to women about the nature of the growing life in their wombs — and that choices far preferable to abortion exist — must now

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be the primary focus of pro-lifers. Additional crisis pregnancy centers, which already number in the low thousands, must be established, and those that exist should be expanded.

As part of the new strategy, pro-lifers must not fall into the trap of repeating old nostrums that fall on deaf ears.

University of Texas professor Marvin Olasky has offered a wise suggestion in this regard. He calls for applying diplomat George Kennan's anti-communist policy of containment to the abortion war. In his Foreign Affairs article of 1947, Mr. Kennan wrote that instead of engaging in military adventures against communism, the United States should concentrate on the "long-term, patient but firm and vigilant

containment of Russian expansive tendencies."

Mr. Olasky's point is that great evil, be it communism, or the destruction of innocent human life, if contained and not allowed to spread, will ultimately self-destruct. "The pro-life goal," he writes, "should be to help Americans see abortion not as a right but a rite, a nonnormative practice engaged in by sidestream groups and not given societal approval. As abortion is contained in that way, the provision of compassionate alternatives will reduce the likelihood of abortion being used a desperate recourse."

Pragmatically, stricter laws against abortion are unlikely to materialize or have much effect as long as our society is drenched in the sen-

suality and immorality that has become the staple of so many television programs, music and motion pictures that equate premarital and extramarital intercourse with romance and fulfillment.

Women who become pregnant in difficult circumstances are more likely to seek abortions if they've been taught that life is cheap and that babies can and should be sacrificed, to careers or convenience. Containment and eventual rollback will require a unity, a oneness of vision and purpose heretofore unseen in the pro-life community.

As long as the emphasis remains exclusively on the president, the Congress or the Supreme Court, there is little hope that the unborn will regain their rightful legal protection. But if pro-lifers adopt a policy of containment, along with a strategy of information, compassion and even sacrifice, abortion could go the way of the Soviet Union.