

# THE COST OF ROE AT 35

by Cal Thomas; Thursday, January 17, 2008

Thirty-five years after the Supreme Court unilaterally struck down state laws restricting abortion, the cost of that decision continues to increase our moral deficit, which will have far greater (and eternal) consequences than the impact from economic challenges during a possible recession.

Depending on how one counts the number of abortions per year since 1973, more than 50 million people who might have been are not. These were people who, regardless of the circumstances of the women who carried them, had the potential to contribute to the country and to the world. But now they cannot, because they are not. Would we be fighting the battle over immigration had we not rid ourselves of a generation of humans who likely would have done the work for which we are now importing illegal aliens? Actions have consequences.

Roe and its companion case, *Doe v. Bolton*, took the question of endowment of life by "our Creator" and placed it in the hands of individuals. History has shown what happens when humanity seizes such power for itself: political dictatorships, eugenics and scientific experiments unrestrained by any moorings to a moral code. Each becomes her and his own god; each becomes a taker of life, rather than a giver, inverting the creation model into one of destruction and transforming the pregnant woman from life-giver to life-taker.

The social restructuring unleashed by the judicial fiat that was Roe created a cultural fissure that remains today. We moved quickly from acknowledgement of a right to live, to assertions of a right to die. In her essay "The Women of Roe v. Wade," Harvard professor Mary Ann Glendon calls to mind the novelist Walker Percy who prophesied two years before Roe that "Qualitarian Centers" would spring up, "where, as one of Percy's characters explained, doctors would respect 'the right of an unwanted child not to have to endure a life of suffering.'" State governments, Percy suggested, might eventually recognize a right to die. Arrangements would be made for the sick and elderly to push a button that would transport them to a "happy death" in Michigan, a "joyful exitus" in New York, or a "luanalu-hai" in Hawaii. Percy's fiction increasingly resembles fact.

Abortion on demand cannot be seen in isolation from social breakdown. In 1973, near the end of the Vietnam War and the approaching resignation of President Nixon two years later, the focus on self, pleasure and convenience by Baby Boomers was at its height. Marriages easily dissolved as "no fault" divorce laws were passed; cohabitation and out-of-wedlock births were on the rise; "unwanted babies" (who were labeled "products of conception" to make it easier to deny the obvious) became an impediment to the pursuit of pleasure and material gain.

Abortion was not a cause, but a reflection of our decadence and deviancy. One does not begin to kill babies until other dominos have fallen. And once they have fallen, it becomes difficult to set them aright because to do so would require an admission of something so horrible that those responsible for this fetal holocaust would have to acknowledge their sin and repent of it. Such a thing is not a character trait of this most pampered generation.

In recent years there have been signs that things may be — if not turning around — then moderating. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, abortion numbers have declined steadily since 1990, from a high of 1.2 million annually to fewer than 900,000. This is due, I believe, to the unrelenting commitment of the pro-life movement through pregnancy help centers, information by Internet, marches and what appears to be a growing pro-life consensus among many women who reject the cavalier attitudes about life displayed by their mothers' feminist generation.

Hollywood has infused a pro-life subplot into films such as "Juno" and "Knocked Up." Might the "old-fashioned" become the new fashion?

Politicians and judges could help bury Roe by requiring that pregnant women receive complete information about the nature of the life within them, including being required to view sonograms before electing abortion. This would follow truth-in-labeling and truth-in-lending laws by fully informing and empowering women. Such an approach would satisfy the liberal demand to keep abortion "safe and legal" and the pro-life desire to make them rare.

After 35 years of slaughtering our young, isn't it time to stop? That child born in 1973 could be a parent now. There are children who could have been born today. Thirty-five years of killing has diminished and corrupted us all. Let's summon the moral courage to stop it for our sake and for theirs.

