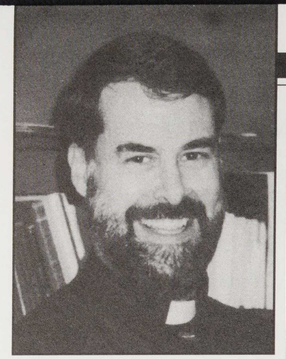

Habiger

Pro-life efforts in Russia pick up support

Moscow, RUSSIA, — At a conference that started on May 18, designed to secure an anti-abortion beachhead in Russia, video monitors played the film "Silent Scream" as young women distributed pamphlets with graphic pictures of mangled babies.

In Russia, where 2 out of 3 pregnancies end in abortions, the fledgling group backed by American money has begun spreading what is seen here as a new message: Abortion is dangerous, immoral and ungodly.

It was familiar stuff for Americans but almost completely unheard-of in Russia, where for years abortion has been a habit encouraged by the state, not a subject of debate.

"Russia's different," said Tatyana Vorobyova, vice president of Right to Live, the Russian group that is cosponsoring the country's first major anti-abortion conference. "It's impossible for now" to picket abortion clinics. "People aren't ready for it. They first need to be shown what abortion is."

For Vorobyova and her colleagues, the anti-abortion crusade will be an uphill climb. Russia was the first country in the world to legalize abortion, in 1920. With contraceptives in short supply and sex education virtually unknown, abortion for years has been the most common method of birth control in Russia.

"I think you have to wake people up," said the Rev. Matthew Habiger, a Roman Catholic priest who is president of Human Life International, a Gaithersburg, Maryland, group that cosponsored the conference and paid the nearly $40,000 bill. "There's a numbness, a callousness here. A certain part of the Russian psyche is dead. We can provide good, hard information that might change the attitude toward abortion."

The Russian Orthodox Church, although it officially opposes abortion and cosponsored the Moscow conference, is not especially active in the movement.

Although Right to Live claims some 1,000 members, just 30 activists form the core of the group, many of them from Baptist, Lutheran and Catholic churches in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

About 300 people attended the conference, including about 50 Europeans and Americans.

Said the Rev. Janusz Balicki, a Polish priest at the conference: "There's a lack of knowledge among Russian women about when and how life begins. They're not pro-choice. They simply lack knowledge."■

New South African government to promote, pay for abortions

Johannesburg, SOUTH AFRICA — Just days after the installation of Nelson Mandela as president of South Africa, an ambitious African National Congress (ANC) health plan released on May 18 would allow abortion on demand.

The plan addresses campaign promises made by President Nelson Mandela during the nation's first all-race election, which the ANC won.

During the election campaign, Mandela and other candidates mentioned the need to reduce the birth rate to control population growth.

The plan says contraception is necessary but insufficient to address the problem, and calls for increasing the status of women in society to give them more power in deciding how many children to have. It also would allow women to choose whether to have an abortion. Present law severely curtails legal abortion.

Dr. Tim Wilson of the Health Department said only 1,000 of the abortions performed in South Africa each year are legal. ■

California Supreme Court decides on "fetal murder"

San Francisco, CA — In a 6-1 decision on May 16, the California Supreme Court said the state could punish "fetal murder" without regard to the "viability" of the unborn child, the crucial point in U.S. Supreme Court rulings on abortion.

An assault on a pregnant woman that kills her "non-viable fetus" is murder, the court ruled, giving the state the nation's strictest law on murder of the unborn.

However, the court made it clear it was not referring to abortion.

A 1970 California law defined the killing of an unborn child as murder but didn't mention viability. California appeals courts had ruled since 1976 that only the killing of a "viable fetus" is murder, reasoning that the state could have no legitimate interest in protecting a fetus that a woman could legally abort.

The new opinion, by Chief Justice Malcolm Lucas, said: "When the mother's privacy interests are not at stake, the Legislature may determine whether, and at what point, it should protect life inside a mother's womb from homicide." ■

Eleven states defy abortion payment order

Washington, D.C. — Eleven states are not complying with a law requiring Medicaid to pay for abortions for poor women who are victims of rape or incest, the Clinton administration said on May 13.

One state, Colorado, was ordered by a federal judge in Denver Thursday to pay for such abortions, and most of the other states are facing similar lawsuits brought by the Planned Parenthood Federation and other pro-choice groups.

Sally Richardson, the director of the Federal Medicaid Bureau, said the government will send formal notices to the 11 states, initiating a process that could lead to the withholding of some Medicaid funds.

The other states are Arkansas, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Utah. ■

Ware

Jury rejects ATF charges against pro-lifer

Panama City, FL — It took just under two hours for all 12 Florida jurors to find Daniel Ware not guilty of the gun possession charges brought against him by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF).

Ware, a Houston, Texas pro-life activist was charged with possession of firearms after he travelled to Florida during the Michael Griffin trial (*Life Advocate,* June 1994).

Ware was said to have uttered threats about shooting abortionists while there. He denies making the comments.

The original charge of "felon in possession" was dropped after it was discovered that a 20-year-old felony conviction had been lifted under the Youthful Offenders Act. The remaining charge involved an obscure, rarely used statute that requires persons who have firearms in their luggage to notify the bus company in writing prior to the trip.

The jury unanimously acquitted Ware.

"This proves that the ATF must give an account to the God-fearing citizens of this country," Ware said.

Ware was transported from his Houston home to Florida for the trial, was denied bail, and spent 70 days in jail as a result of the charges. ■

An anything-but-abortion attitude

by Andrew Sullivan

I have been thinking for sometime now why the pro-lifer comes and goes like the moon and can't stay focused on abortion. I even questioned why my own actions against abortion are not constant. After much contemplation, the reason is clear why abortion still exists and why the work against it isn't constant.

The pro-life movement has allowed all Americans to hold onto a security blanket where we can believe we are really OK and love children. This security blanket is a lie and it is the biggest obstacle to ending abortion. We bury our guilt in the security blanket and go about daily life as if nothing is wrong. We forget every abortion says something about us as a society and a country. It affects everything we touch and until we feel the guilt of abortion in everything we touch, we won't do much about abortion.

We say we love children but we don't. In fact, nine out of ten children murdered in industrialized countries are slain in the U.S. and that doesn't even count abortion. If abortion is to end, it must become the center of our universe where anything but abortion is morally superior. This would free us to attack the whole problem of abortion including the root causes, instead of limiting ourselves to rescues and political campaigns, and polite Christian civility. The only real way to get America to give up abortion is to shame it to the point that it voluntarily gives up abortion in shame.

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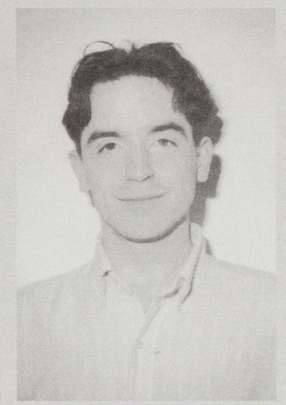

Doing this though will require pro-life activists who are masochists, who are willing to be offensive, mean, confrontational, even sadistic in attacking and ripping up America's security blanket. It even means offending those who say they are pro-life. It means making the end of abortion priority number one.

Imagine a Buckets of Blood Committee which walked into any elected official's office and dumped a bucket filled withred Jello and plastic babies on the floor. It could occur at any public meeting, like a city council meeting or congressional hearing or some other event.

Imagine pro-life clergy inviting numerous pro-abortion clergy to a special dinner in their honor, inviting the press and then awarding the pro-abort clergy awards for serving the Anti-Christ in defending child-killing.

Imagine stopping the promotion of contraceptives in public schools by handing out pornography to students and telling them it is better to masturbate than to kill a baby or get AIDS. What would the critics say?

Imagine putting up billboards saying "Thank you America for killing your babies. I'm glad you enjoy it! —The Devil"

Imagine sending out a mass mailing to homosexual organizations asking them why they continue to defend a straight crime against children—abortion.

Imagine many pro-lifers signing a signature ad saying "We rather support the North American Man/Boy Love Association than America's continued campaign of killing children before birth. At least the North American Man/Boy Love Association finds boys desirable which is morally superior to America's way of killing babies because they are unwanted. America, you say you love children but we don't believe it when your hands are covered in blood. Can pedophiles learn something from pederasts ?"

Imagine a bunch of Christians burning the American flag, and the media is there to hear them say they refuse to pledge allegiance to a flag representing a country engaged in killing babies. What would the critics say?

Imagine ads in the campus newspaper which read, "You say you believe in a woman's right to choose. Do you also believe in Hitler's right to kill whichever Jew he chose?" Better yet, take a picture of aborted babies and place the words "Think Jewish babies" on it or "Think African-American babies".

Imagine asking "pro-choice" male politicians how a man can be personally opposed to abortion. Imagine asking "pro-choice" male politicians, "Do you support abortion because your mistress had one?" Insult "pro-choice" female politicians and ask them if they have ever had an abortion and when they say no ask them "how can you really be pro-choice if you never had an abortion?"

Imagine billboards proclaiming, "*Roe v. Wade* lives! Christianity is dead," or "Abortion continues. God is Dead in America." or even better, "Abortion is proof that Christianity is a gutter religion." An extreme statement.

Many people will resist what has been said and will run back to their security blanket. But for many it will become clear they can not run away from abortion because all roads lead to abortion as can be proven. The guilt of abortion can not be relieved without actually doing something about abortion, and out of guilt and shame America will do something about abortion. This would be a campaign to shame America. America will say it loves children. We will demand the evidence. ■