

*Abortion*

Unfortunately, there is not enough time tonight to discuss how we change attitudes and society in order to give support to the woman who faces that monumental decision in her life about whether to carry the child through to completion of her pregnancy or to have an abortion because the support is not there for the woman and her child.

I acknowledge from the outset that God is the giver of life and that, in my opinion, neither I nor anyone else has the right to take the life of that unborn child. The Bible says that man was made in the image of God, and everything I have learned tells me that each of us has a soul, a body and we inhabit spirit. We will be conscious beings through eternity. We are created by God and we have a responsibility to respect and protect others whom God has also created.

Many great leaders have acknowledged God's laws. U.S. President Thomas Jefferson, in 1776, said in Philadelphia: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men were created equal, they are endowed with certain unalienable rights; among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness". I believe that the unborn child has these same rights and that its life is also inalienable.

When God called Jeremiah to be a prophet he said: "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; before thou came forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee . . .". Those words establish in my mind beyond a shadow of a doubt that the fetus is important to God from the point of conception onward.

I am disturbed when I hear some people say that while they agree abortion on demand is wrong, the unborn child with some form of physical or mental defect is perhaps a different case and aborting that life would be acceptable. I do not believe it is.

When God called Moses at the burning bush and wanted him to speak to the people of Israel, Moses was not very enthusiastic and told God that he was slow of speech and of a slow tongue, indicating that he probably was not the person to speak to the people of Israel. But God answered Moses by saying:

"Who hath made man's mouth or maketh the dumb or the deaf or the seeing or the blind? Have not I", sayeth the Lord?

Whether we like it or not, it seems to me that God makes what we might call the perfect and the imperfect. I do not think God makes a mistake in that regard.

How many Members in this House have lived with a retarded or perhaps a severely handicapped person? Everyone who has would recognize and reinforce my belief that those people are special in this world and in fact enrich our daily lives. They give us insight and experience that we would otherwise never have. We gain some kind of appreciation for life by seeing the difficulties that some people live with. They are simply glad to be here on this earth, to be able to enjoy it and live with us. That makes us better and makes our communities stronger.

Some Members have talked about development before birth. Let me reiterate some of the comments that have been made. There has been much development well before the mother even is sure she is pregnant. By 18 to 25 days, the heart is already beating. At 45 days brainwaves can be detected. By nine to 10 weeks, the baby can squint, swallow, and move its tongue. By 13 weeks it can suck its thumb. Doctors accept that by at least six months the baby can survive outside the womb.

That leads me to the question of viability, about which I hear many people talking today. People seem to suggest that the foetus should be protected once it is viable, but up to that point protection is not so important. I cannot accept the argument of viability. After all, if we accept the definition of viability as being able to survive on one's own, who is viable? Is the newborn baby viable? Of course not. It could not live without the mother to feed it or a nurse to take care of it in the hospital.

We could ask if the one-year old could survive alone. It could not. Could a three-year old survive? Could it feed itself, provide clothes, or build a house? Of course not.

I do not think you or I could survive if we did not have our society to help us provide an interrelationship. We could not survive without friends and colleagues to provide a sense of purposefulness in life. We are interrelated from conception onward.

How did we let ourselves be stampeded into the belief that abortion is somehow acceptable? At some point it seemed that people began believing that the quality of human life gained respectability at the expense of human life itself. But many of these arguments are without foundation. Thousands of women were said to be dying each year at the hands of criminal abortionists. In the United States in the mid-1960s, some estimated that 10,000 women died each year of illegal abortion. However, on closer scrutiny, the U.S. Public Health Service reported that from all abortions, legal and illegal, only 189 deaths occurred in 1966, and 160 deaths in 1967.

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It seems to me that inflation hit the abortion statistics perhaps before it hit the economy. Part of the problem today when we speak of abortion relates to terminology. It used to be said that an expectant mother was with child. Today, people who are pro-abortion and many scientists will only talk about the foetus. They talk about aborting the foetus. But, in reality we should be talking about killing children.

Where are we today? As everyone knows, the Supreme Court has struck down the abortion law we had in this country. In fact, right up until the moment of delivery abortion would seem to be acceptable because of the fact we do not have an abortion law. That is why we are here. We have a responsibility to bring in a new law.