

**PRAYER MENU**  
**2008, No. 1**

Thirty-Five years ago Norma McCorvey (alias Jane Roe) signed the affidavit that “brought the holocaust of abortion into America,” as she says now. Her signature initiated a series of court actions that resulted in the Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision in 1973. McCorvey did not have an abortion, but two lawyers who wanted to challenge Texas law convinced her it was her right. She was pregnant and divorced. The rest is history, and that history now claims the lives of millions of babies in America. McCorvey became a Christian in 1995 and is an active pro-life supporter.

- **PRAYERS HEARD.** Prayers and protests against abortion are being answered in a most unexpected way: in Hollywood! Film and television producers have begun to put a positive face on the pro-life choice. It is not because Hollywood has had a change of heart; rather, they can’t figure out how to make an abortion attractive on the screen. Abortions don’t sell tickets! So, they make heroines of those who choose life. It’s quite an amazing story. (*World 1-2/19-08*) [Thank God for hearing our prayers on behalf of unwanted children.](#) (Note: If permission is given, we will make copies of this story available at the information center.)
- **TEEN PREGNANCIES.** The latest data indicates that the number of teen pregnancies has gone up 3 percent in the recent past. Those promoting “safe sex” among teens blame those who promote abstinence. The debate pits condoms against celibacy. They say that preaching abstinence is impractical and avoids reality among teens. Challenged, of course, are faith-based programs. (*US News 12-31-07*) [Pray for the young people of America, their families, and a Christian witness among their role models.](#)
- **PERSECUTED CHURCH.** Recently the media reported on persecution of Assyrian Christians in northern Iraq. Many have fled to refugee camps in Syria and Jordan, and many more have made their way to North America and other secure places. The Assyrian Church is unique in that its history goes back to biblical times. Their ancestors were among the first converts to Christianity. (*SCJ 1-5-08*) [Remember to pray for the persecuted church all over the world.](#)
- **STEM CELL NEWS.** Scientists have the first evidence that stem cells can be reprogrammed to correct disorders. Biologists used skin from the tails of sick mice to cure the rodents of sickle cell disease. There is now proof that the process works, and it works without using embryos. (*SCJ 12-7-07*) [Thank God for scientists who are dedicated to relieving pain and suffering ethically.](#)
- **AFRICAN VIOLENCE.** The continent of Africa continues to be a place where violence reigns. The latest scourge is in Kenya, where after a rigged election, mobs took to the streets and countryside with guns, clubs, and machetes, killing and maiming

thousands. Some victims were burned to death in churches, where they had fled for safety. (SCJ 1-2-08) Violence also dominates the scene in Zimbabwe, where dictator Mugabe has depleted the country's resources and has driven white settlers off their farms—while he builds a \$15 million mansion for himself. (NYRB 12-20-07) Continue to pray for peace in war-torn countries.

- **MORE CORN, MORE NITROGEN.** With record prices for corn and record tons of fertilizer used to grow it, the Gulf of Mexico develops a larger and larger “dead zone,” where fish, crabs, and shrimps suffocate. Farmers along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers planted 93 million acres of corn in 2007, also a record, and over 100,000 tons of nitrogen made its way into the Gulf. Nitrogen depletes the oxygen in the water. The “dead zone” in the Gulf now exceeds 7,900 square miles and is expanding. (SCJ 12-18-07) Pray for solutions to environmental challenges we face as a nation.
- **COAL DRYERS.** North Dakota has a huge deposit of coal, but it is “dirty.” Great American Energy is investing \$20 million in a plant that will dry the coal to make it more environmentally friendly. Power for the coal dryers will come from waste heat from the power plant in Underwood, N.D. The process can remove 25 percent of the moisture from the coal to make it burn better and cleaner. (SCJ 1-11-08) Thank God for every attempt to use earth's resources stewardly.
- **PRISON MINISTRY CHALLENGED.** The popular Prison Ministry Fellowship (PMF), founded by Charles Colson, can no longer be supported by tax dollars. A federal court upheld a lower court ruling filed against the Correctional Facility in Newton, Iowa. Americans United For Separation of Church and State filed the original suit. Their larger goal is to challenge all of President Bush's faith-based programs, which channel tax dollars through religious agencies, such as the PMF. (SCJ 12-4-07) Pray for Christian prison ministries, including Crossroad Bible Institute.
- **DEATH PENALTY.** The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments for and against using lethal injection for the death penalty. The case is not decided, and probably will not be decided by the highest court. It is most likely to be sent back to the Kentucky judges who have already sided with those promoting the 3-drug dose. Justice Stevens suggested a minimalist approach: rule that “Kentucky is doing an adequate job of administering this protocol.” (NYTimes 11-8-08) Thank God that our democracy has a legal process for considering such weighty matters as the death penalty.
- **ELECTIONS.** We may tire of hearing candidates, taking phone calls, and watching political ads on television, but this is a modest inconvenience for our form of democracy. Thank God for an election process that is flawed and cumbersome, yet a fundamental democratic process.

We urge you to include items from the PRAYER MENU in family and personal devotions. You may contribute to the menu by giving a news item of concern to one of our committee members: Abe Bos, Diana Gonzalez, Jim & Sally Koldenhoven, Jason & Tammy Lief, Jim & Thea Mouw, Lauren & Barb Ochsner, Andrew Sybesma, Jo Vander Werf, and Lisa Vander Plaats.