

# ■ CAPITOL AREA ■

# CHRISTIAN NEWS

Vol. 1 No. 2 ■ Quarterly by Reformation Press ■ June 1991

## Religious Liberty, Closer To Home

by Michael Colvin, Ph.D.  
Pastor, Reformation Lutheran Church, Bowie, Maryland

Those Christians who still read newspapers (I write thus in acknowledgement of the many who have given up the effort required to separate truth from lies and from half-truths) are certainly aware that most of the "great" constitutional issues concerning the separation of church and state and religious liberty are still very much alive and come up for regular review before the highest courts in the land. It may be that we are so mesmerized by arguments about courthouse creches and sacred peyote that we miss ominous developments in our own back yard.

I would guess that most residents of Prince George's County, Maryland, were blissfully unaware of a proposal by the county council, first offered in 1989, to "regulate" home churches. I confess that I was among the ignorant. The proposal, which first arose as county bill CB-27-1989, would have used amendments to the zoning laws to place restrictions on home churches. The stated intent was "to minimize the impact of new churches on neighboring residential communities, and to allow the residents of an area to have input into the approval process." The ostensible reason for introducing the bill (Councilman Frank Casula was the sponsor) was complaints from neighborhood residents about the disruption caused by home churches in the Riverdale and New Carrollton areas.

The bill would have required churches in residential areas to meet strict requirements concerning lot size, setback from the property line, parking and access. New churches would also have been made subject to the Detailed Site Plan Review procedure. Any new church that did not meet these zoning requirements (i.e. any "home church") would have been required to seek a "Special Exception" from the County Council itself.

A public hearing was held in July of 1989, and enough opposition was expressed that the Council failed to enact the legislation. As frequently happens with legislative bodies, however, the supporters of the bill kept the issue alive by creating a Task Force for "further study." County Resolution 101 directed that a "Church Development Review Task Force" study the "land use impacts of church development in residential communities," identify the "problems associated with a church and its accessory uses," and propose "corrective legislation."

The makeup of the task force is interesting to contemplate, in itself. The Council directed that it contain nine representa-

tatives from the "religious community" church," else why designate the nineteenth member as "impartial"? Maybe the Council is right in thinking that churches are in such low esteem that Joe Citizen can reasonably be expected to oppose their interests. If so, I cannot help but wonder whether this is a commentary on the utter secularization of American society or the reprobate and materialistic state of many churches.

The task force met regularly throughout 1990 and held a public meeting on October 10, 1990. A final meeting was held after receiving comments from the general public, to come to a conclusion. Only ten of the eighteen members were present, and the chairman posed the question to them in these words: "Under certain circumstances, should approval by an administrative body be required prior to establishing a church in a home, provided public input is allowed and the approval is based on meeting specific criteria?" I am pleased (relieved? flabbergasted?) to report that, by a vote of five to four (!), with one abstention, the task force rejected the idea of regulating home churches and recommended to the County Council on January 29, 1991 that no revisions be made to existing zoning laws. No further action has been taken.

When I learned of these events, months after the fact, I felt as if I had slept through a tornado that had roared through town, lifted my roof and placed it gently back on the house. The Lord apparently looks after His children, even the ignorant and apathetic. In retrospect, we should all be outraged that this proposal got as far as it did, although the whole affair can be seen as an illustrative parable on the defects of our system of government, whether county, state or federal. It seems that elected officials develop a certain built-in arrogance, including a conviction that they themselves hold the key to the well-being of society.

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tives from the "religious community" (pastors, for the most part), nine representatives from civic and citizens associations, plus an "impartial" member to serve as chairman. The unavoidable conclusion is that the Council assumed that civic and citizens' groups would be uniformly "anti-

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## Religious Liberty

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Does a "problem" exist? Then surely the "solution" is more legislation! Do you have a noisy home church next door that wakes you up with their hymn-singing at the outrageous hour of 10:00 am? Don't waste your breath complaining to the pastor when your county councilman is ever ready to lend an ear and form a task group! Did a church member park with one wheel on your grass last Sunday? Change the zoning laws!

Some other significant lessons may be drawn from this near-catastrophe. First, it is obvious that churches, which only a generation or so ago were held in high esteem and seen as valuable components of American society, are now held in approximately the same esteem as dry cleaners, convenience stores or landfills. "Not in my neighborhood, you don't!" It is probably way too late to raise a cry about the crass materialism of our society, as manifested by its worshipping at the shrine of "property values." Interestingly enough, the bill originally proposed in 1989 would have subjected even architectural masterpieces with plenteous parking to strict review and to the complaints of neighbors. The implication is that churches have no business in residential neighborhoods, unless they can prove in advance that they will not offend. Each church, in effect,

would have had to justify its own existence before it was granted "permission to exist."

At the risk of being offensive, where do these homeowners, activists and meddling councilmen think churches do belong? In industrial parks? In shopping centers? Underground? (If I sound outraged, it is because I am, and I hope that other Christians will catch the spirit of outrage and stop acting like doormats for this sort of foolishness.)

While we're asking rhetorical questions, here is another: How do these people think churches get started, if not in homes? Do congregations of 200 members drop out the sky with church buildings that unfold from a kit? Surely part of the problem is that people who never darken the inside of a church and know nothing of what a church is or does are also ignorant of how churches get started. My own church began meeting in homes, and so did every other one whose origins I know, including the ones in the New Testament.

One final point seems to suggest itself here. This aborted attempt at legislative oppression of Christianity probably could not have slipped by with so little notice if Christians themselves were not infected with a distorted view of what the church is. Surely part of the problem is the individualism and "Lone Ranger" attitude that characterizes so much of modern thinking about religion. If religion is just "me and Jesus" and all nature is a cathedral, then why make such a big deal about meeting places? As long as the government doesn't

interfere with my right to read my Bible and pray, everything is fine, isn't it? The short answer to that question is a resounding "NO." The church is the body of Christ and the vehicle through which God desires to bring glory to Himself in this world. The church needs to be visible, to do things corporately in the name of Jesus, and its light is not to be hidden under a bushel or behind a thicket of zoning laws.

Let us end this diatribe with some practical suggestions for living in the real world. First, Christians (of all people!) should be good neighbors. If you are a member of a home church, be sure that you and everyone else in your church is sensitive to problems of noise, litter and parking. Unless your services are exceptionally quiet, think twice before scheduling early morning worship (before 9:30, I would say). If parking is tight, Christians might consider a parking shuttle between the home church and a nearby parking lot. As Peter suggested, let us be persecuted for doing good and not for being obnoxious. Finally, let us stand up for God's kingdom, and the next time our county government tries to intimidate the churches of God, let them hear the roar of the righteous!

Ed Note: Let those who voted in favor of these regulations be named here and admonished by you to restrain themselves from evil. The five including one abstention are:

Charles H. Dickson, Presley Manor Civic Association;

Charles French, Apple Grove Citizens' Association;

Major Andrew Hanko, City of New Carrollton;

Lisa Mowrer, Adelphi Forest Civic Association;

Rev. William Moyer, III (Abstained), Hillandale Baptist Church. ■



Rev. Dr. Michael Colvin; Florence Smith, Director of the Forestville Pregnancy Center and others in front of Senator Miller's Office.

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## CHRISTIAN NEWS

Published Quarterly by  
Reformation Press  
2927 Tarragon Lane, Bowie, MD  
20715

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# Home Schooling: Support Groups and Associations

Over 100 years ago, the great Princeton theologian A.A. Hodge said this about the proposed system of centralized secular education which we now bear:

"I am as sure as I am of Christ's reign that a comprehensive and centralized system of national education, separated from religion, as is now commonly proposed, will prove the most appalling engine for the propagation of anti-Christian and atheistic unbelief, which this sin-rent world has ever seen." (POPULAR LECTURES ON THEOLOGICAL THEMES, Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of publications, 1887. p. 283f.)

Statist (as opposed to Christ-centered) education does not lead a child in "the way he should go." It is difficult to rear godly children and at the same time send them to government schools. (It is possible, however, with abundant parental involvement.) Christian schools and home schooling have become ever more popular alternatives. The home schooling phenomenon, as a trend away from centralized, government education is a new one and the burdens and unknowns are many. Support groups and associations have sprung into existence in recent years. Following is a list of many (of those which are above ground) in the Metro area:

Christian Home Education Network  
3673 Cragmoor Road  
Ellicott City, MD 21043

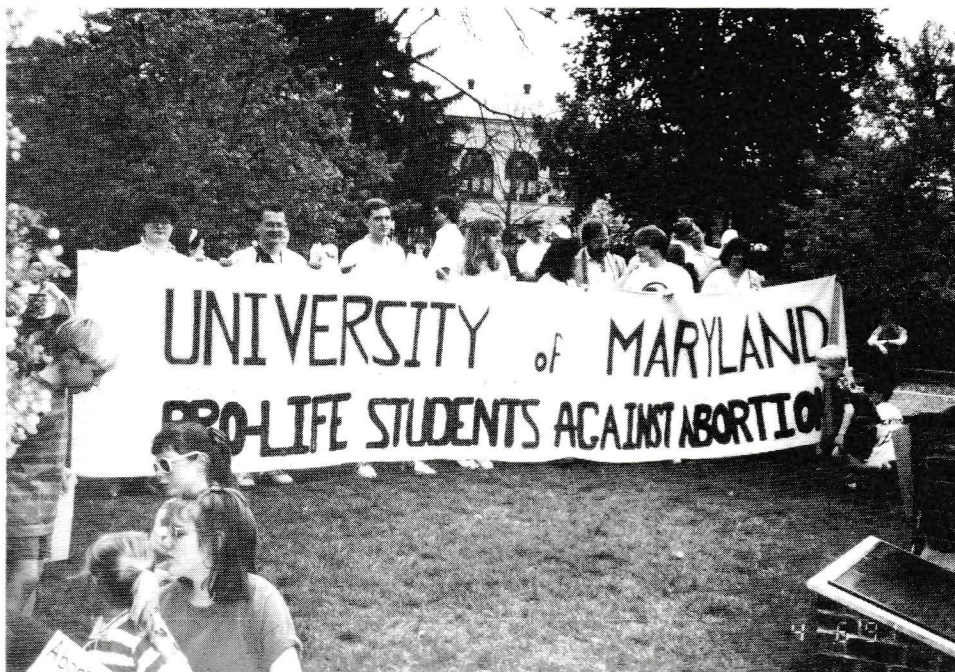
Maryland Area Christian Home Education  
P.O. Box 1041  
Emmitsburg, MD 21727

Heritage  
3801 Queen Mary Drive  
Olney, MD 20832

Traditions of Roman Catholic Homes  
2036 Pheasant Villa Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21228

Arundel Home Schoolers  
31 South Gate Avenue  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Valley Brook Academy  
9135 Guilford Road, Suite 170  
Columbia, MD 21046



*University of Maryland Students for Life. Children reared in the way they should go. Attendees at the Vote Know Coalition Rally*

Laurel In-Home Family Educators  
3805 Maple Terrace  
Laurel, MD 20707

Chapel Gate  
9752 Gingerwood Drive  
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Covenant Community School  
5485 Harpers Farm Road #202  
Columbia, MD 21044

Maryland Federation of Church Schools  
5485 Harpers Farm Road, Suite 202  
Columbia, MD 21044

Maryland Association of Christian Schools  
2383 Broad Run Court  
Jefferson, MD 21755

Fairfax Covenant School  
POB 2279  
Fairfax, VA 22031

New Covenant School Ministry  
12411 Sussex Lane  
Bowie, MD 20715 ■

## Coming Events

- **MORE PETITION SIGNATURES.** Call Sam Bogley at 301-262-0001 to schedule yourself to help.
- **Regular picketing and sidewalk counseling.** Six area abortion mills on Saturdays (Call CUL at 301-854-8208) Annapolis mill on Thursdays (Call PR at 301-464-0108)
- **Rescue last weekend in September.** Rally and rescue sites to be announced.



## Support Your Local Charity

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For more information on support PR or for registering other organizations to receive donations, call your local Coast International, Inc. representative at 301-262-5267. ■

## Abortion — The Sacred Cow

by George Yourishin

*"Your people have made to themselves a molten calf, and have adored it, and sacrificing victims to it, have said, 'These are our gods...' —Exodus 32: 7*

A few weeks ago I learned that a local pro-life pregnancy center was being audited by IRS. I thought, "A perfectly legitimate occurrence." But then an old metaphor came to mind. Could it be that the SACRED COW has struck again? There's been a lot of that happening around here.

Over the past year we've learned that an under-age girl and a woman have died,

and another woman has become severely paralytic following legal abortions performed in Prince George's County. The owner of the Suitland abortion mill where two of those abortions took place has also been indicted for Medicaid fraud.

What are "the authorities" doing about it? Checking on other area abortion chambers for conditions that would lead to more of such incidents? Not to our knowledge.

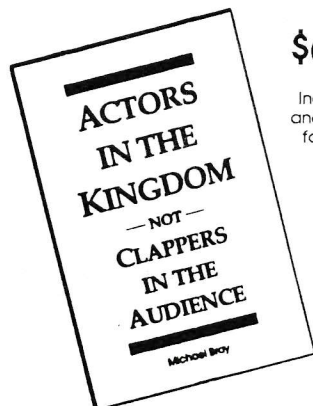
What we do know is that, in the face of abortion clinic fraud and the death and maiming of abortion clients, the bloody practice continues to receive very special treatment by government in this area.

For 1989, the year the two deaths occurred, the State Abortion Report shows no deaths. When asked about it, the chief statistician in charge of compiling the report, replied that Maryland relies on reports received from the abortionists! It's left to the perpetrators to report their own malpractice!

What did this year's General Assembly do? What everyone expected. It rallied to the defense of the abortion industry and made the situation worse; worse than anywhere else in the nation. The Maryland Abortion Act of 1991...

- Made abortionists immune from civil and criminal liability for their decisions to abort, whether the victim be twelve years old or middle-age. No such legal immunity exists for any other field of medicine.

These essays were written by Michael Bray during his 4-year imprisonment (1985-1989) following the destruction of several abortion clinics in Maryland, Virginia, Delaware and Washington, D.C.



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Mr. Bray has remained a pastor of a local church which he helped found in 1984. The essays reflect his zeal for the growth of the Kingdom of God and particularly the reformation of our republic as one nation under God.

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**Abortion...**

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- Repealed all criminal penalties for all abortion-related activities.

- Repealed the Information Law. That law had required the State to publish, annually, sources of assistance that are available to pregnant women and new mothers, and it required abortionists to show that information to all women seeking abortions.

The Information Law was enacted in 1979 by votes of 45-0 in the Senate and 100-1 in the House.

- Repealed a 1975 law that had prohibited the operation of for-profit abortion referral businesses.

- Made the abortionist the sole judge of whether it is "in the best interest" of an under-age girl that he notify her parent(s) before aborting her. (Some judge! His best financial interest is always to abort.)

- Amended the Conscience Law by putting pro-life doctors and hospitals in jeopardy of civil suit and recriminatory action for NOT referring women for abortions if pregnancy results in serious injury.

The conclusion of the matter? Pure absurdity. How can such high homage be paid to such a grizzly industry? Abortion has become a sacred cow worshipped by Governor and General Assembly alike.

Consider by contrast the intolerance shown by government to pro-lifers who deny the cow its deity. In 1989 there was a typical non-violent pro-life rescue at the Hillview abortuary on Silver Hill Road. In 65 years on earth I have never seen such a massive police presence at one location. Three lanes of police cars parked bumper to bumper would have taken more time and energy to count than I possessed. There were mounted police, motorcycle police, police dogs, prison buses, paddy wagons and command vans.

Hillview is the abortion mill whose owner is charged with defrauding a program that helps the poor. It is also where one woman met her death and another her fate of severe paralysis. Sad irony it is that these abortions occurred in the same year in which police were dragging away Christians who were blocking the doors to prevent death for mothers and children.

Yet, local jurisdictions continue to dispatch large police contingents to every abortuary in the area whenever there is the

prospect of a rescue at any of the killing sites. We are still in the grip of the sacred cow.

Does IRS periodically audit the area's three dozen abortion mills? It should. The financial contrasts between the abortion industry and pro-life pregnancy centers are stark and dramatic.

All abortuaries charge between \$200 and several times that amount for some late term abortions. A hundred killings per week is not unusual for a single abortion mill. That's a gross income of at least a million dollars per year for a busy mill.

Moreover, abortionists generally take cash, not checks or charge cards.

By contrast all assistance is free at most pregnancy centers. Income is donated and is non-taxable. So why is IRS using valuable manpower auditing those who give their goods and services to those they serve without charge? Could it be, yet again, the obscene power of the sacred cow?

*George Yourishin has been active in word and deed in the local pro-life movement from the beginning. He serves regularly at the Forestville pregnancy center and often keeps the pro-life message before the public with his fiery pen. ■*

## Referendum: A Legislature Full of Abortophiles

The petition drive to bring the new Maryland state abortion law to referendum was formally kicked off in front of the State Capital building on April 6. Several speakers addressed several hundred Christians. Among those who spoke was the coalition chairman, former Lt. Governor Sam Bogley, who reminded those in attendance, "You are the salt of the earth. You are the salt of Maryland and you are going to make a difference."

The Vote Know Coalition had divided the state into 11 regions and with the support of various churches and other organi-

zations has been gathering signatures to reach the required 33,333 by June 30. The drive will continue through the June 30 deadline. You should be sure that your church provided an opportunity for members to sign. (The easiest way is to permit a table near the exit of the building following a service.) To arrange for such an event or to assist in gathering signatures, call Sam Bogley at (301) 262-0001.

Judging by the applause, the most well received speaker was the prophet-like Dr. Alan Keyes. He was set apart, if not by his position as an orator, by his blackness and

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*In front of pro-life Senator Miller's home: Mike King (organizer of Life Chain, 16 June) and others. Police watch Miller's home at tax payers' expense.*



## Referendum

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an otherwise almost entirely white audience. Dr. Keyes drew artfully from our nation's history — particularly Civil War and Civil Rights events — as he delivered a message in the spirit of Isaiah. Following is an excerpt:

*And we all know that on the day that we read out of that constitution the life of the unborn; on the day when we say unequivocally that we will give up and surrender the rights of the weak and helpless, we will have surrendered the rights of all! [applause]...*

*[I received a question in New Jersey] "How can you stand up and make this argument?" that one could stand against this POLITICALLY CORRECT view — that folks had the "right to do wrong." ...Martin Luther King used to talk about the people who said that people had the right to do wrong — the right to exclude people from lunch counters, the right to discriminate, the right to oppress. It was very clear that no majority can give us that right, that no power or principality can give us that right, because the fundamental rights of human beings are according to our AMERICAN creed etched in the laws of nature by the HAND of GOD and they cannot be removed by any legislature [cheers, howling, applause], by any human being [pause for applause to die]. And so we will do what Americans have done before us. When legislatures passed unjust laws, Did we accept them? [No!] We worked against them. We worked to arouse the citizenry of our nation, as we will work to arouse the citizenry of our state (cheers)... to the voice of Conscience, to the voice of Right, to the path of Truth [cheers]. And we will go down that path as Americans DID in the Civil War, as they DID in the Civil Rights movement, as they WILL DO TODAY! [continuous applause] until we stand once again as a nation united behind the integrity of our great principles, declaring that we will not surrender them — not today, not tomorrow, not ever. And we will go forward in that belief. And though we have failed yesterday, and though we fail today, and though we fail tomorrow, we will never give up...*

We trust that many were inspired by Dr. Keyes' call to perseverance. The petition drive is going well. However, to their shame some prolife churches have refused to allow opportunity for petitions to be signed at a table following church services. Whether from cowardice or ignorance — I know not — these churches obstruct the effort to "work through the system." (The

same type of churches which rant and rave against the "illegal blockades" of rescuers seem to have no taste for ANY church involvement in causes which might put to risk their precious buildings and pastoral retirement plans. Such hypocrisy reveals that they have no real concern for leading their churches to do the true works of the gospel.

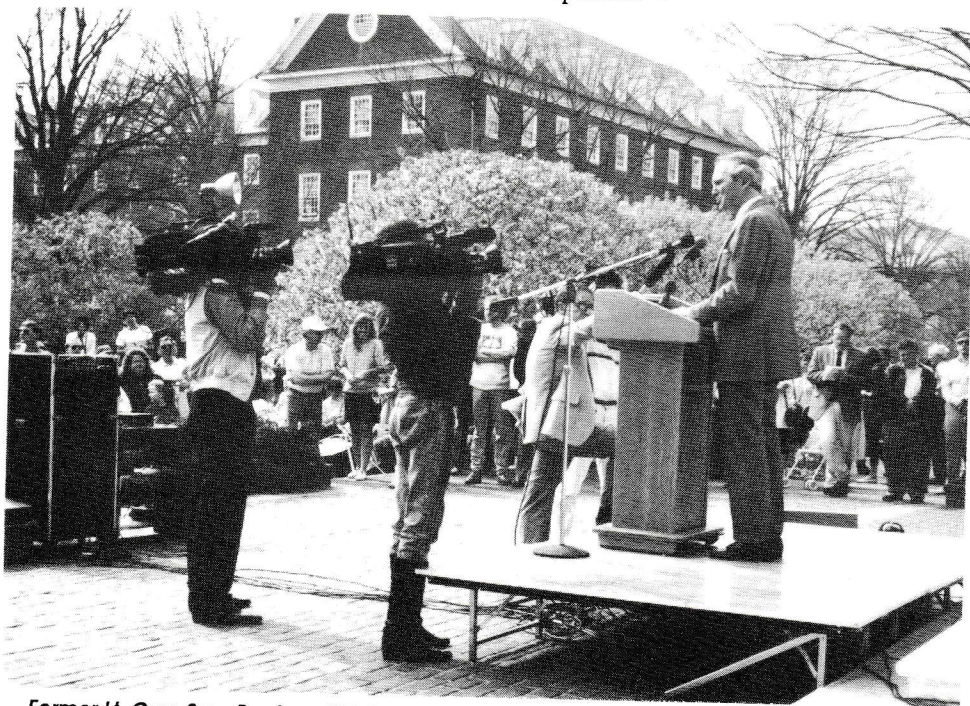
Certainly, the Assembly cannot be burdened with every pet cause which comes through the mail, but this is no small thing. And unless a church is conscientiously isolationist with doctrines akin to the Amish, it stands condemned for failing to open its doors to those Christians who seek nothing but to make the petition available for signing.

Let names be named. The biblical writers did not spare Judas, Pilate, Simon

Magnus, Diotrophes, Herod, and a host of others. In this editor's town, prolife Reformed Presbyterian church led by Michael Coleman has refused to allow a table.

Right across the street from the infamous Hillview abortuary in Suitland is First Baptist Church. Even after 60 Minutes exposed this operation as a veritable butchery for women as well as babies (so disreputable as to provoke certain abortophiles to hand out tracts during the month of May warning women entering the premises to go elsewhere to commit their abortions), the pastor will not permit a table for petition signing. He excuses himself from prolife activities by crying about an anti-abortion bomb that blew up across the street six years ago.

Time for some sheep to look for other shepherds. ■



Former Lt. Gov. Sam Bogley at Vote Know Coalition Rally on April 6 at the Capitol building

## Short Reports...

### Picketing In Suitland

Following the 60 Minutes report of 21 April on the death of one woman and the maiming of another at the Hillview Women's Medical Surgical Center in Suitland, opposition to this mill has been stepped up. On 4 May Project Rescue began regular Saturday morning picketing at the site. Join fellow Christians there from 7:30 until 9:00 am at the Hillview mill on 5408 Silver Hill Road. Picketing will

continue until this house of death is closed. Call Project Rescue at 301-464-9405 for more information.

### Quiet Invasion Of Suitland Mill

On Saturday, 18 May, several Christians picketed the Hillview mill while a rescue-minded couple entered the waiting room of the mill. They were able to speak to all waiting mothers for a few hours before finally being evicted by the police.

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## Short Reports

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### Local Convicts Jailed and Released

Justice was finally served on those hooligans who blocked access to abortion mill doors on 28 Dec., 1989. Following the trial of the Dirty Just-Over-Half Dozen on 15 March an assortment of sentences were passed. Depending upon the age and attitude of the convicts there was meted out jail time, detention center time, or community service. Of the two minors, Jennifer Morson (of Crofton), a member of Sacred Heart parish in Bowie (led by the Reverend John Hogan) was sentenced to a few days at a detention center. Her older sister Beth and fellow she-rescuer Dottie DeBruun spent nine days in the Annapolis jail.

Good did proceed from this evil sentence, however. Beth and Dottie report that they were able to counsel and comfort several other jailed women. One pregnant woman was encouraged to keep her child. Another was helped to find housing. Most notably was the recollection that each of the convicts possessed while they suffered for righteousness sake: saved lives. Of the 54 babies who had been scheduled to die at the clinic on that 28th of December only four met the fatal fate planned for them.

### Abortion Mills Admit the Success Of Rescues, Sidewalk Counseling, and Picketing

On 13 March the *Washington Times* reported "Confrontation at the Clinic" on the front page of the "Metropolitan" section. Complete with several pictures, the article said, "For the past year, pro-choice 'escorts' and pro-life 'sidewalk counselors' have jostled for influence in front of five of the metropolitan area's 40 abortion clinics."

Peggy Veith of Catholics United for Life was reported to have said that since the sidewalk counseling in Washington began in 1983, the group has persuaded 400 women to "turn around."

On 2 May the *Times* reported: "Protests curbing access to abortions," titled an article on the front page of the "Nation" section of the paper. The article cited a new study released by the National Abortion Federation and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists in which a decline of "abortion providers" was sorely lamented. "Unless drastic changes are made, American women will lose the right

to abortion, and the Supreme Court won't be the cause of it," said Barbara Radford, executive director of NAF.

The problem? The report stated that "anti-abortion harassment" and "professional stigmatization" of those performing abortions were among the causes of this sad state of affairs. Here is an excerpt of the heartbreaking article:

The report found that many abortion providers "endure picketing, vandalism, lawsuits, eviction, insurance cancellation, withdrawal of necessary support services, and legislative efforts to restrict or preclude women's access to their services and/or

impose crippling restrictions on abortion facilities."

Even worse, the report said, increasing numbers of doctors and clinic administrators are reporting "more destructive action, including death threats, vandalism, and clinic firebombings." Some abortion providers have been "subjected to malicious smear campaigns," and their spouses and children have been "viciously harassed... at home, school, the workplace, and places of worship."

Yes, friends, abortionists live tough lives, too. How about some sympathy for the Devil? ■

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Please pardon the forthcoming poor mouthing. We acknowledge the high price we are requiring for such a small infrequently published newsletter. But we don't receive government grants. Moreover, we don't even have the blessing of the National Council of Churches or even National Right to Life. Our hope is to increase frequency as we become financially able; i.e. as subscriptions increase.

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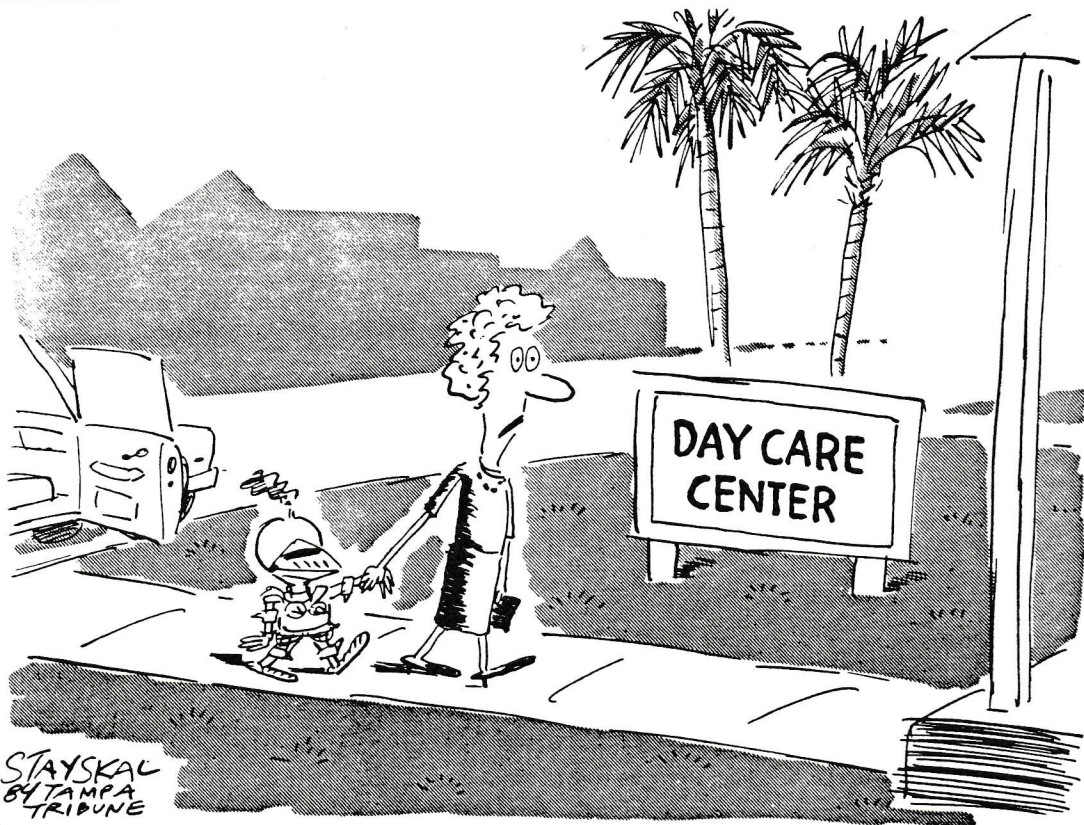
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