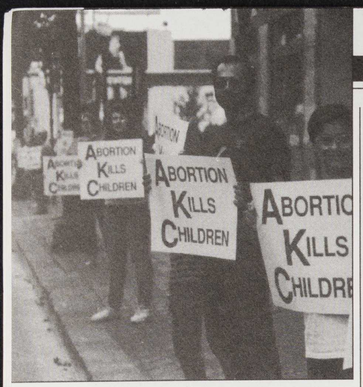


Life Chain to include additional emphasis on prayer, clinic activity

The national Life Chain on Sunday, October 2 will place a greater than ever emphasis on prayer and action throughout the year, according to Royce Dunn, founder of the event.

Life Chain is a national event where hundreds of thousands of people line the streets of their communities holding signs that say, "Abortion kills children" and "Jesus forgives and heals" for one hour on a Sunday afternoon, usually in October. Millions of people have participated in Life Chains over its four-year history.

Local coordinators have been asked to urge more prayer and less conversation between participants during the event and, at the end of the event, that there would be recruitment of "prayer teams" that would pray outside abortuaries regularly throughout the year. Team members would sign up for a two-hour prayer time each month during the coming year. The goal is to have prayer teams outside every clinic during all the hours they are open.

In the past, Life Chain has been criticized for what some perceived as a "one-shot" approach to abortion and the less-than-serious atmosphere during the time spent holding their signs.

Dunn has been working to change that and hopes that the additional emphasis will succeed in overcoming those problems.

National Life Chain may be contacted at (916) 671-5500. ■

"Justifiable Homicide" legal brief withdrawn

Virginia Beach, VA — American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ) has retreated again under social pressure by withdrawing the doctoral thesis of Michael Hirsh from Regent Law School's law review. The thesis was based upon the law of justification and showed how current law should have permitted a "justification" defense for Michael Griffin, convicted slayer of abortionist David Gunn.

ACLJ and Regent College are both connected with Pat Robertson's "empire."

The writer had a minor role on the legal team defending anti-abortion activist Paul Hill against a misdemeanor charge related to protests at Florida clinics, but the ACLJ attempted to abandon Hill and his free speech case after the shooting of abortionist Britton. However, the court refused to allow the ACLJ to withdraw.

Hirsh wrote the article, which was pulled before the law review was published, about another case of a slain abortionist, David Gunn in March 1993. Hirsh argued that Michael Griffin, who was convicted and sentenced to life in prison in Gunn's death, was justified in the shooting.

"Though Michael Griffin could have fled for his own safety, the children he protected could not flee and had their backs to the wall—the uterine wall," Hirsh wrote.

He wrote that Florida law allows the use of deadly force by someone who reasonably believes it will "prevent imminent death or great bodily harm to himself or another." Unborn babies inside abortion clinics are in such danger, Hirsh wrote.

Gene Kapp, a spokesman for Robertson and Robertson's American Center for Law and Justice where Hirsh works, confirmed that Hirsh asked in an August 12 memorandum that the university pull the article. The memo gave no reason for the request.

Kapp, university President Terry Lindvall and J. Nelson Happy, dean of the law school, said Robertson had no role in pulling Hirsh's article. ■

Louisiana passes abortion funding law, taxpayers foot the bill

Baton Rouge, LA — The Louisiana Legislature backed off its pro-life position and passed a law allowing taxpayer-funded abortions for rape and incest victims, obeying Clinton's demands that threatened the state with the loss of billions in Medicaid money.

The Senate voted 28-8 for the measure and the House, which has balked at the legislation in the past, went along with the Senate version of the bill in a 59-40 vote.

Because of its ban on funding abortions for rape and incest victims, the state had been faced with the loss of $3 billion in federal Medicaid money used to provide health care for 600,000 people.

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia denied an emergency request by Edwards and other state officials to lift a lower court order requiring the state to pay for the abortions or give up the federal money.

Louisiana law formerly allowed abortion funding only to save the life of the mother.

The federal Hyde Amendment similarly banned federal money for abortions except to save a woman's life. But last October, Congress amended the law to include cases of rape and incest.

In May, the Clinton administration interpreted the law to "require" payment and warned several states they could lose their Medicaid funding if they did not comply with the federal law. ■

Religious leaders threatened

Miami, FL — Roman Catholic and Episcopal priests across Florida were cautioned on August 9 to be careful after an anonymous caller threatened retaliation for the July 29 slaying of an abortionist and his armed bodyguard in Pensacola. The caller telephoned a Miami-area church last week and said ten priests would die for every person killed outside the Panhandle abortion clinic. ■

Foster home operator admits to killings

Portland, OR — Jon Self, who operated a foster home for the elderly, told authorities he killed four terminally ill residents who died there, according to a police affidavit.

Self confessed to the killings in an interview with police July 28; his wife said he used morphine, according to the document filed in Washington County District Court.

The Selfs operated the home, called the Beach House, in suburban Beaverton from November 1991 to March 1994.

Police interviewed the couple after getting a tip that the four residents may have been euthanized, said Beaverton police spokesman Mark Hyde.

Self, 25, has not been arrested because there is not enough evidence, said Scott Upham, Washington County district attorney. "You can't convict anyone based on a confession alone," he said.

Police got permission to exhume the body of 85-year-old Joseph Shearman, who died on Jan. 28, 1992, Hyde said. Evidence of euthanasia may be hard to obtain because of the length of time since death, he said. The other three bodies were cremated.

The Selfs started operating another foster home for the elderly in suburban Aloha after the Beach House closed. Two residents were living at the new home but moved the day of the police interviews.

The Washington County Aging Services Department, which licenses foster homes, also is investigating the deaths. ■

Suspected Nazi doctor banned from U.S.

New York, NY — The World Jewish Congress announced on June 29 that one of Germany's most prominent doctors has been barred from entering the United States because of his Nazi past.

Dr Hans Sewering, 77, has been placed on the "watch list" by the U.S. Justice Department, which prohibits his entry to the United States.

In Washington, a spokesman for the Justice Department's Nazi-hunting Office of Special Investigations later confirmed the action, saying Sewering allegedly was connected with a mental hospital that put people to death during World War II.

The World Jewish Congress (WJC) said the action was taken because an investigation found that Sewering had taken part in Nazi acts of persecution.

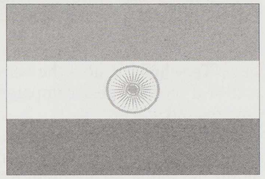
Sewering was forced to step down as president-elect of the World Medical Association in January 1993 after the WJC released documents showing his membership in the Nazi Party and the Nazi SS as a teenager. He allegedly signed an order in 1943 to transfer a handicapped girl of 14 to a facility known as a "euthanasia center" where she was killed.

Sewering has admitted his Nazi Party past but said he did not know the facility he sent the girl to was involved in euthanasia.

The WJC commended the Justice Department for the action.

"It demonstrates that even after 50 years, justice prevails. It says that people who participated in Nazi acts of persecution should not be allowed to breathe the same air as Holocaust survivors in the United States," said Elan Steinberg, executive director for the World Jewish Congress.

The World Medical Association represents 2.5 million doctors worldwide. Its aim is to encourage discussion of medical ethics. Sewering was elected at the annual meeting in the fall of 1992. ■



India bans gender testing

New Delhi, INDIA, July 26 (UPI) — On July 26, India passed legislation banning gender-determination tests culminating in selective abortion, in an effort to stem the increasing number of abortions of female unborn babies.

"Female feticide is one of the greatest social evils which is widening the gap in the sex ratio of the country," said Deputy Health Minister Paban Singh Gatowar.

The government passed the Prenatal Diagnostic Techniques Act to prevent the misuse of the gender-determination tests. Many pregnant women in India undergo tests to determine the sex of the unborn child, which, if found to be a female, is often aborted.

"Private clinics have mushroomed all over the country which are thriving on female feticide," a legislator told the Parliament.

Four Indian states have already banned these tests. ■

Clinic sues former employees

Greenville, SC — An abortion clinic has sued two former employees, claiming they tried to put the clinic out of business by booking phony appointments to prevent doctors from seeing real patients.

Palmetto State Medical Center's federal lawsuit seeks unspecified damages from Sharon Bowen and Melissa Spearman.

"We want to send a message that trying to hinder a woman from a safe abortion will not be tolerated," said clinic attorney Suzanne Coe.

Bowen was a manager, Spearman an assistant manager. They were fired March 3 after the doctor who owns the clinic taped phone conversations the women had with each other and an anti-abortion advocate. They allegedly discussed how to set up false appointments so the clinic would be driven out of business.

Clinic employees had to sign consent forms allowing all their phone calls to be taped, but the answering machine that was to tape the calls was turned off when the doctor was not present, the lawsuit says.

The doctor secretly installed a second tape recorder. ■

1,000 march on clinic

Fargo, ND — Nearly 1,000 demonstrators sang and prayed as they marched on North Dakota's only abortion clinic.

Bishop James S. Sullivan ignored criticism by the clinic's administrator, Jane Bovard, who called the march "incredibly irresponsible" in view of the recent killings at Pensacola, Florida, abortion clinics.

"We had this planned for months," Sullivan said. "We are a praying people."

Bells tolled as the procession filed out of St. Mary's Cathedral in downtown Fargo. Marchers sang and prayed as they walked 16 blocks to the Fargo Women's Health Organization.

Two federal marshals, posted at the clinic since July 30, sat in their cars out back.

Sgt. Kevin Volrath estimated the crowd at between 950 and 1,000. ■

Clinic finds replacement for Britton

Pensacola, FL — On August 17 The Ladies Center announced it had found a replacement for abortionist John Britton, the abortion doctor killed in its parking lot July 29.

Citing security concerns, Linda Taggart, director of the clinic, said she would neither identify the doctor nor say where he is from. Pensacola police said they would provide protection to the doctor but also declined to give details.

The Ladies Center typically has hired off-duty police officers to provide security for its staff and patients.

After Britton, 69, and his armed guard James Barrett, 74, were shot and killed at the center, Pensacola police said they had offered to guard Britton but he had refused.

Since the shooting, federal marshals have been stationed at the center and other abortion clinics around the country. ■