Pastor's Column:

What It's Like To Be Rescued

by Randy Alcorn

Rescuing takes on new meaning when you're the one being rescued.

My family and I were spending two weeks in Alaska. I had spoken to two hundred missionaries at their annual conference near Palmer, outside of Anchorage. Afterwards, we were to fly to Galena, three hours north by small plane. There we would stay with our friends and observe their ministry in Indian villages on the Yukon. My ten year old daughter, Karina, and I were flying with our missionary friend and his daughter. My wife Nanci and youngest daughter Angela were leaving with the rest of our friend's family an hour later in another plane, going a different route.

An hour after take-off we were flying over a beautiful waterfall at 3000 feet elevation, when suddenly the engine lost power. Smoke poured out. Seeing there was no oil pressure, my friend finally had to shut off the engine, which wasn't working anyway and looked like it might blow up.

We were suddenly descending rapidly in a rough mountain pass where there were almost no place to land. It looked like we might not make it. By God's grace and my friend's skill, he spotted a possible landing site. Had we been only a few minutes further, there would have been nowhere to land. We would have crashed into the side of the mountain.

After making a beautiful emergency landing at 4:30 p.m., we set off the emergency locator transmission, tried to reach help with the radio, built an SOS, set up shelter, ate C-rations, prayed and waited. At 10:30 p.m. a Search and Rescue plane saw one of our flares. After seven hours on the ground we were picked up at 11:30 by a Search and Rescue Helicopter. When the pilot got out and flashed his broad grin, he was one of the most welcome sights we'd ever seen.

Three planes had flown over us earlier. Two were flying high. They apparently weren't listening to the emergency frequency, didn't see our SOS or fire, and didn't see us waving our white flags down below. They went right on as if we didn't exist. The third airplane could have easily seen us but

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the pilot simply wasn't looking. He no doubt had other things on his mind besides finding people to rescue!

It was a strange feeling to see and hear these planes go over, flying along so casually, with no knowledge of or interest in our dilemma. I thought about the preborn child in the womb. The world goes by as if he is not there. Even as he is physically taken inside the abortion clinic, no one seems to care. He cries when he is cut to pieces, but no one hears him cry. No one is listening. No one is looking for him. It seems that no one believes he's even there.

At least when we were stranded in that mountain pass, we could do something to take care of ourselves. The little child is helpless. At least we had flares to try to get someone's attention. The little child has nothing. We had four Search and Rescue airplanes and two helicopters combing the mountains looking for us. The little child has no one.

I'll never forget the girls' squeals of delight as that huge Rescue helicopter landed only forty feet from us. When they put the four of us on board, gave us food, and flew us to spend the night in a hunting lodge, it was an indescribable feeling. I know what it means to be rescued.

And I think I can ask with a little more empathy a question on behalf of the precious preborn child about to die:

"Is there somebody out there who will try to rescue me?" ■

Randy Alcorn is a pastor, writer and conference speaker living in Gresham, Oregon. He is the author of four books, including Money, Possessions and Eternity. This is an excerpt from his most recent book, Is Rescuing Right?, to be published by InterVarsity Press in September.

Action Alert

The "Freedom of Choice Act" calls for abortion-on-demand. The bill is numbered HR3700 in the House, and S-1912 in the Senate. It reads as follows:

To protect the reproductive rights of women, and for other purposes.
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled.

Section 1. Short Title. This Act may be cited as the "Freedom of Choice Act of 1989."

Sec. 2: Right To Choose.
(a) In General—Except as provided in subsection (b), a State may not restrict the right of a woman to choose to terminate a pregnancy—
(1) before fetal viability; or
(2) at any time, if such termination is necessary to protect the life or health of the woman.
(b) Medically Necessary Requirements—A State may impose requirements medically necessary to protect the life or health of women referred to in subsection (a).

Sec. 3. Definition of State.
As used in this Act, the term "State" includes the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and each other territory or possession of the United States.

Contact your Senator or Representative today! Just say "No" to the 'Freedom of Choice Act'.

Editorial

Survival As What?

by Paul deParrie

It was strange. My wife and I were alone. This does not happen often—and especially overnight—but the four remaining children living at home were all spending the night at friends' houses.

Bonnie suggested we rent a video to watch together and together we went to the store. The variety assaulted our eyes but we settled on a long, two-part movie that we would never be able to watch uninterrupted with the kids around—and in which they would certainly have no interest. It starred Spencer Tracy and Burt Lancaster and was called *Judgment at Nuremburg*. It focused on a single war-crimes trial where charges were brought against Third Reich judges who had upheld the Holocaust in court. one was a cowardly sniveler, another a true-believer, still another was a chameleon who went with the flow, and the last (Lancaster, of course) was a renowned legal mind who had a profound respect for law and country. This last sat through the trial in stoic pride.

I was, however, unprepared for the way in which this movie spoke to the Holocaust of our day—and, indeed, spoke to the judges who now sentence rescuers to indefinite sentences, dun them for inordinate fines, eliminate their legal defenses, and, ultimately, condemn millions to die—not in horrible camps and ovens, but in the safest place in the world—in their mother's wombs.

The defense attorney for the judges on trial demonstrated that the U.S. Supreme court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes had defended forced sterilization—as had the Nazi judges. He pled that the judges only followed the law and often sought to mitigate the suffering of the persecuted. He said that to find these judges guilty was to condemn the entire populace of Germany in common guilt.

The Lancaster character undercut his defense, though, when he insisted on taking the stand and made conclusive statements of his own guilt—he admitted that there was no defense for his actions.

The chief justice of the tribunal (Spencer Tracy) was deeply moved by the plight of these judges—being himself a judge—especially for the character played by Lancaster. But, as happens in movies, justice prevailed and the judges were sentenced to life imprisonment for their deadly abuse of office. The movie provided a last meeting between the chief justice and the great German legal mind in a cell. At this point, the convicted judge finally offered an excuse. "I loved my country," he said. He related that he thought the Nazi "excesses" were a passing phase and that a few might not receive justice for a while, but that the nation would recover its senses soon and all would be well. He said he had no idea the Holocaust would go so far. The old chief justice left the parting shot, "The first time someone was unjustly condemned, it had already gone too far."

Throughout the film the theme of survival stood out. The Lancaster character sought to aid national survival, others sought financial or family or personal survival. It was very reminiscent of today's situation (though we risk immeasurably less). But I felt the crowning statement of the movie came when one person was explaining the need for sacrificing even one's principles for survival. To which the prosecutor of the case replied with a question we must ask today, "Survival? But survival as what?" ■

Editorial

Rescue Begins Revolution In Romania

by Roxanne McKnight, San Antonio, Texas

Roxanne McKnight

When evangelist Sammy Tippit was told by the Romanian government in 1988 that he could never return, he felt saddened, thinking he would never again see his Christian Romanian friends. However, one week after the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime, his friends in that country urged him to return. When he did, he found that an awareness of God and a hunger for the Gospel pervaded the population. The first words spoken over the Romanian national television were, "God is with us"! They have become the watchword of the Revolution.

Sammy tells the true story of a 13-year old girl who lives in a city called Timisoara. When she heard the gunfire of the rebellion, she asked her father, "Daddy, why aren't you out there"? He said, "If I go out there you might not have a daddy." She said, "Daddy, you need to give your life for our people." So, he did go out there, without a weapon, and fought with rocks and sticks. Today, that man is mayor of Timisoara.

Sammy reports that this revolution is called the Children's Revolution because the catalyst which brought it about was the machine gun-murder of 30 children along with women and men. What were these people doing that enraged the Communist government? They were peaceful Christians who were trying to protect their pastor by physically placing their bodies between the intended victim and his would-be murderers. Does that sound familiar? These people were rescuing their pastor in the same way that Christians around the world are rescuing unborn babies from their would-be murderers.

Sammy says that the blood of those 30 children cried out against the government, and that is why it fell. When the word got out what had happened, Christians and non-Christians alike come out of their houses and said, "We're not going to stand for this."

The American people have to come to the realization that killing little children in the womb is just as hideous as killing little children outside the womb. When they realize that, Christians and non-Christians alike will come out of their houses and say, "We're not going to stand for this." ■