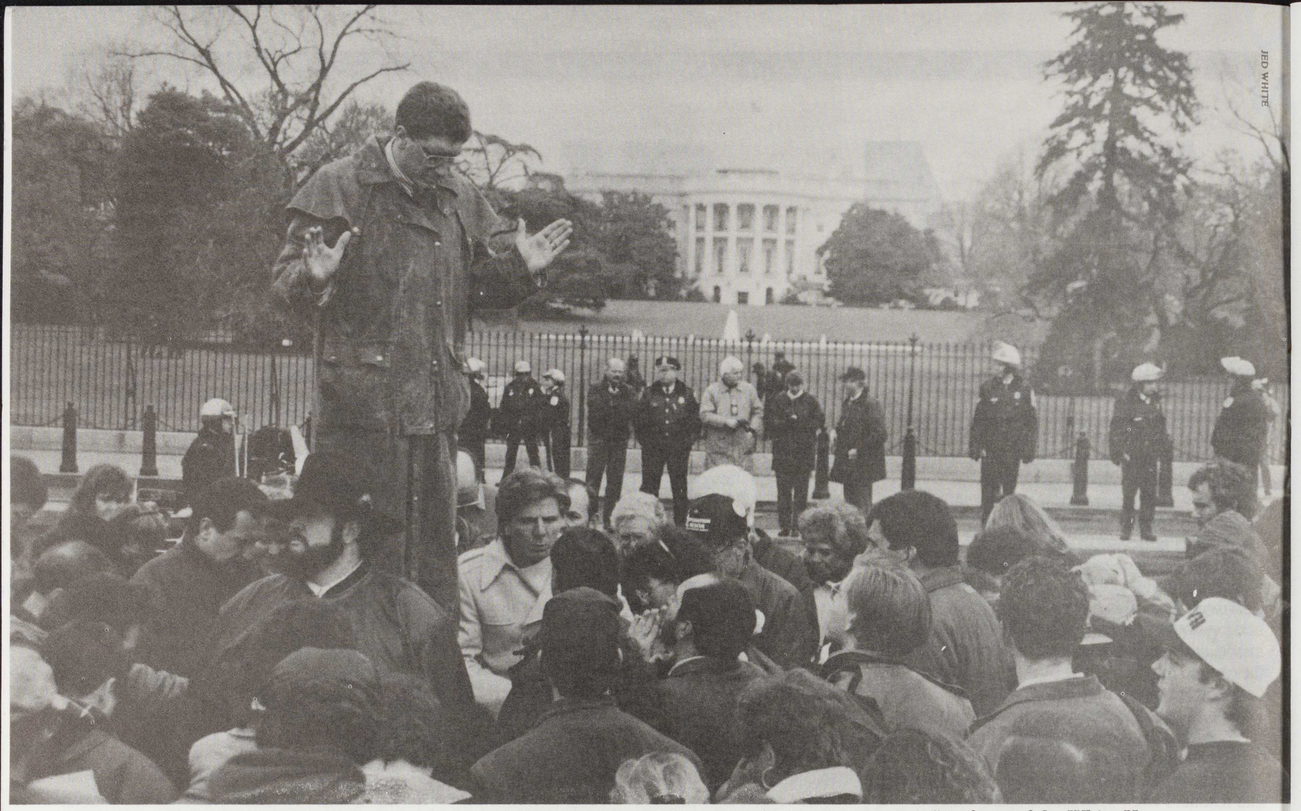

JED WHITE

Randall Terry leads prayer just moments before several hundred pro-lifers cross the street to "pray-in" in front of the White House.

Hundreds confront Clinton during "pray-in"

by Cathy Ramey

Washington, D.C. — Only hours before the 20th annual March for Life to memorialize the legalization of child-killing in America, nearly 300 Christians from as far away as Alaska, California and Oregon gathered outside of the White House on an area of sidewalk usually restricted from any type of protest activity.

Reverend Patrick Mahoney of the D.C.-based Christian Defense Coalition (CDC) organized the "pray-in" despite the Park Bureau's refusal to grant a permit for a large group of people. Mahoney applied for a permit for the purpose of praying for President Clinton and the nation but was turned down. Park authorities eventually granted permission for a single individual to pray on the sidewalk only.

Moments before the pray-in was scheduled to begin, park police ordered members of the militant pro-abortion Refuse and Resist group from the sidewalk area. After threats of arrest only about a half dozen of the group wandered around the area in hopes of disrupting the activity scheduled by CDC.

The pray-in outside of the White House began with a 30 minute rally and prayer time across the street before activists marched in a long column to take position in front of the black wrought-iron fence surrounding the presidential residence. Federal agents in black combat uniform advanced part of the way across the lawn and stood at attention throughout the event.

In a brief 15-minute period pro-life leaders from around the nation led the faithful in prayer while Christians extended hands toward the White House. Park police issued warnings throughout the protest citing participants with blocking the sidewalk, failure to obtain a permit to assemble, and threatening arrest for those who refused to leave. However, police did not make arrests when it became apparent that the gathering was ready to disperse.

Despite a lack of clear media coverage (most media saw the pray- in as an extension of the March for Life) protesters claim the prayer event was "one of the most significant things to happen during Clinton's first week in office." Amid fiery claims likening the Clinton administration to the biblical reign of Ahab and Jezebel, many expressed belief that the prayer confrontation was a prelude to some type of judgment upon America for rejecting God.

According to Rev. Mahoney the protest was meant to offer up legitimate prayer for the president and the nation, but was also intended to be an appeal to Clinton to turn back from fullfilling campaign promises regarding abortion and homosexuality. On the very day of the pray-in and Nellie Gray's March for Life Clinton overturned the so-called "gag rule," a ban on federal funding for fetal tissue research, and other abortion funding limitations.■

Hundreds kneel in prayer for new administration in the White House.

Rescuers hit Planned Parenthood near White House

by Tim Murphy

Washington D.C. — On Saturday, January 23, rescuers closed a Planned Parenthood abortion mill located two blocks from the White House for over two and a half hours. Police barricades and large numbers of pro-abortion demonstrators continued to block the area around the mill after the rescuers were removed. Pro-life sidewalk counselors reported two abortion-bound mothers changed their minds and left.

The rescue at the Planned Parenthood mill, located in the 1100 block of 16th St. N.W. was the largest of five held in the D.C. area Saturday morning. Three hundred and nine rescuers were arrested at all five sites. Police reported 185 pro-lifers were taken into custody at the Planned Parenthood site, including seven juveniles.

The rescues were part of the "Call to Resistance" campaign sponsored by the Christian Defense Coalition/Joshua Project which challenged Christians to "take a bold stand to confront the new Clinton administration." Operation Rescue National and Collegians Activated to Liberate Life (CALL) were among the major groups organizing the rescue activities.

Pro-lifers arrived at the Planned Parenthood mill before 6 a.m. to find police barricades set up and "clinic defenders" blocking the door. A group of rescuers moved past the barricades and took up positions at the front entrance with the opposition. Another group of rescuers at the sidewalk stood in front of a line of chanting pro-abortionists on the grass.

At 6:30 a.m. police gave the order for everyone to clear the area. A young man wearing baggy tie-dyed harem pants and a "peacekeeper" sign on his back moved up and down the sidewalk calling for all clinic defenders not willing to risk arrest to leave. Abortion advocates at the sidewalk broke ranks and ran. Those at the front door scurried away leaving signs behind. Rescuers moving up from the sidewalk quickly replaced the departing pro-aborts.

A small contingent of "clinic defenders" still remained by the front door. One male pro-abort, screaming obscenities, began shoving rescuers including a woman. A pro-lifer from Brazil, new to rescue and angered at the man pushing a woman, punched him. The two exchanged blows before being separated. The "peacekeeper" then ordered "clinic defenders" to give up the doors. They reluctantly obeyed, persuading the pro-abort involved in the scuffle, still screaming, to come with them.

Rescuers told the Brazilian pro-lifer that he also had to leave. The man replied that in his country that was how men who pushed women were dealt with, referring to his physical defense. He was crushed when rescuers gently explained that a "repentant spirit is essential for rescue," and that it "would be best" if he left. Other rescuers felt challenged by his ready defense of a helpless person and expresssed a concern that he should not have been asked to leave. Police began making arrests and he begged them to take him. Finally, his head bowed, he joined prayer supporters across the street.

Police told rescue leaders that if pro-lifers didn't walk they would quickly be taken away three at a time. Leaders negotiated to allow rescuers to take "baby steps" when walking to the bus. For the most part, police allowed rescuers who walked to take their time. Rescuers were only arrested one at a time.

However, some rescuers couldn't walk. They were dealt with more harshly. Police tightly cuffed their hands behind their backs, grabbed them under their arms and lifted them up.

When a policeman asked Sue Bergquist, a Chicago rescuer, and mother of six adopted handicapped children, to walk, she said, "I can't walk away from murder." Obviously moved, the policeman explained that there were "other things" she could do. She could "go home and pray." Sue invited him to pray and told him that she couldn't leave because when the rescuers were gone the abortionist was going to cut up the babies. The policeman turned and walked away. Another policeman asked Sue to get up. She repeated she couldn't walk away from murder. He said, "Okay, lady," handcuffed her behind her back and with two other policeman, grabbed her under her arms and carried her to the bus.

Police continued with arrests, removing the last rescuer around 8:30 p.m.

In the bus, Rev. Ronny Wallace, a black pastor from Charlotte, North Carolina, witnessed to the police. He preached that in the day of Moses, Pharaoh ordered all the Jewish baby boys to be killed. The soldiers who followed his orders were just doing their job.

He went on to explain, "King Herod's order to kill the innocent was carried out by soldiers doing their job. When Hitler ordered his police to arrest the Jews, they were only doing their job."

He directly addressed the police, "And now, you're arresting people saving babies. You're just doing your job. One day you're going to stand before the Almighty Judge. He's going to send you to the place you have to go to. He's just going to be doing His job."■

PRO-LIFE ACTION LEAGUE

Top: D.C. police pause before carrying rescuer to the bus. Above: Rescuers block entrance to Planned Parenthood abortion mill just two blocks from the White House.