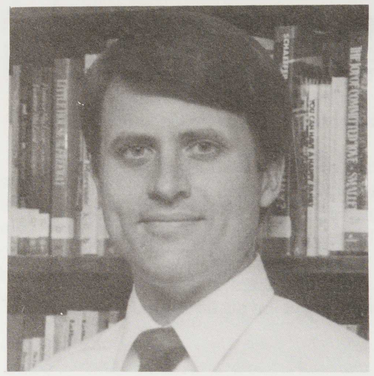

Randy Alcorn

Civil Disobedience in the Church

The Protestant Reformers: Part II

by Randy Alcorn

In *A Christian Manifesto*, Francis Schaeffer reminds us that "in almost every place where the Reformation flourished . . . there was civil disobedience." Schaeffer went on to give pages of illustrations of this Christian civil disobedience in the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, Scotland, Hungary, France, and Spain.

In the spirit of the reformers, in 1660 John Bunyan disobeyed the law of England by preaching without a license. He was arrested at a church meeting and put in a prison so damp that he said it was enough to "make the moss grow on one's eyebrows." There he converted his prison into a pulpit and wrote the greatest of all Christian classics, *Pilgrim's Progress*. He was told that he would be released if he promised not to further violate the law for which he was imprisoned, but he refused to do so. He was arrested two more times for the same act of civil disobedience.

The Puritans were early products of the Reformation. They too understood the need for civil disobedience in certain situations. William Perkins (1558-1602) wrote *A Discourse of Conscience* and *The Treatise of the Cases of Conscience*. He defended from Scripture the fact that the conscience cannot be ultimately bound by any civil law, but only God's Word. He viewed human laws as not inherently binding, but only as far as "they are agreeable to God's Word, serve for the common good . . . and hinder not the liberty of conscience."

One of Perkins' illustrations is particularly pertinent to the question of rescuing. He told of a fictitious city in time of war, where the magistrate commanded that the city gate not be opened. The purpose of this law was to protect the citizens from the enemy. But certain citizens ended up outside the city gate and were being pursued by the enemy. Consequently, a man opened the gate to rescue them. Has the man sinned? Perkins answers: "He has not: because he did not hinder the purpose of the law, but rather furthered it."

Since the proper purpose of civil law is the good of innocent people, one fulfills the purpose of the law by doing what is for the good of innocent people. Applying the argument of Perkins, since the purpose of a "no trespassing" law is to protect the welfare of people, rescuers fulfill the purpose of the law by protecting people (in this case young and small people, and their mothers who are deceived and exploited) even if they have to "trespass" to do it.

The Reformers and the Puritans are part of the heritage of many American Christians today. We need to remember where we've come from. Rescuing is often seen as something new, strange and out of character with Christian conduct. It isn't. Christians have always seen the legitimacy of civil disobedience when man's law stands in violation of God's. ■

Randy Alcorn is a writer and conference speaker, and the author of four books, including Is Rescuing Right? *He can be contacted at 5430 SE Chase Road, Gresham, Oregon,97080 .*

National Youth Rescue

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is raising up a generation that will not compromise with the child-killing industry. We are this generation. You can throw us in jail. You can sue us. You can break our arms and our legs, but we will not cease to defend the members of our generation from the horrors of abortion."

The next morning Youth for America met for prayer at 5:45 am. The youth then swarmed on Northside Women's Clinic in Chamblee which reportedly kills 10% of all babies killed by abortions in Georgia. Twenty-five people risked arrest and thirty-six were arrested as police arrested some prayer support. Seventy-five attended in prayer support. Six of those arrested were minors.

The minors were released to their parents without being charged. The others were charged with a city charge for interfering with a business and released on their own recognizance. The police failed to mention that the business involved kills babies. One confirmed save and several turn-aways resulted from the rescue. Laurel Foreman, in a television interview, said, "The police are nice and we would like to listen to them when they tell us to walk, but to do that we would have to walk away from murder."

Youth for America would like to urge all young people to start youth rescue groups in their own communities. The command to rescue is as much for minors as the command not to lie is. We would also like to encourage youth to come to the D.C. Project Nov. 7-10. Youth for America will be at the D.C. Project and will lead a youth rescue in conjunction with Operation Rescue/Nationals. ■

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Abortionist Hanson Sued For Malpractice Again

Reprint from Pro-Life Action News, July/August, 1990

Mildred Hanson, the Minneapolis abortionist who was sued for malpractice last fall by a former abortion patient, is now being sued by another former patient. Among other complaints, the woman alleges that Hanson's office did not notify her that she had cervical cancer until 10 months after an abnormal Pap smear that should have received immediate attention.

According to the lawsuit filed April 19, Mrs. Marjorie L. Holmquest went to Mildred Hanson in September 1988 with complaints of pain. Hanson's office did a pregnancy test and told Holmquest it was negative. They then did a pelvic exam which they determined to be normal. Hanson also did the Pap smear that day. Holmquest claims that Hanson then offered to do an acid bath to treat the pain, but Holmquest refused.

Since Holmquest is an American Indian, she then went to the Indian Health Board which determined that she was indeed pregnant. According to the lawsuit, Holmquest went back to Hanson to complain about the erroneous pregnancy test and the suggested acid bath. Holmquest states that "Defendant Dr. Mildred S. Hanson, M.D., by offering to perform an acid bath on her while she was pregnant, would have injured or destroyed her baby."

Abortionist Mildred Hanson. She is suing Pro-Life Action Ministries and has recently had another malpractice suit filed against her.

Hanson replied that she could do an abortion and that under the law, Holmquest's husband did not have to be notified. Holmquest was shocked and refused to abort. According to the lawsuit, Hanson "then insisted that with two children, Plaintiff Mrs. Holmquest did not need to have any more children and that an abortion would be advisable, since Defendant Dr. Hanson stated that she thought Plaintiff Mrs. Holmquest had enough children."

Holmquest sought prenatal care elsewhere and had a baby girl on June 4, 1989. Seven weeks later, she claims she received a phone call from Hanson office in which she was crudely told, "By the way, didn't anyone tell you that you have cancer?" Holmquest immediately sought treatment at the University of Minnesota Cancer Clinic and continues to be treated for cervical cancer.

She is suing Hanson in excess of $50,000. She alleges that she was subjected to severe emotional distress due to the coercion and intimidation to abort and "upon hearing that her Class II B pap smear had been in existence for approximately 10 months without her knowledge and without treatment. Mrs. Holmquest lives in the fear of death from cervical cancer and the fear of the spread of cancer throughout her body." She also claims that she was treated negligently and discriminated against because she is an American Indian and that she has acquired "a general distrust of the medical profession and a subliminal fear of genocide with respect to her Native American ethnicity."

Hanson kills unborn children up to 21 weeks. She is also the medical director and does abortions at Planned Parenthood in St. Paul. ■

Reprint from Pro-Life Action News,

L.A. Judges Provokes Outrage

Los Angeles, CA—Southern California pro-lifers have expressed shock and outrage at the conduct and sentences given out in July by a Los Angeles Municipal Court Judge.

In addition to grossly abusive jail terms imposed on pro-lifers in that area, Judge Patti Jo McKay:

- Banned the following words in the courtroom—Abortuary, murder, murderers, rights of the unborn, baby killer, genocide, death mill, and deathscort.
- Ordered all pro-life buttons and 'religious jewelry' removed from the courtroom, including small crucifixes.
- Asked potential jurors if they were Catholic, and if so, dimissed them. Hispanic jurors were also eliminated.
- Banned praying in the courtroom and hallways and forbade Bibles from even being opened in the courtroom.

Judge McKay instructed the jury not to read the recent series of the *Los Angeles Times* articles on the press distortion of the pro-life cause.

"We consider the actions of Judge McKay to constitute gross intimidation and discrimination against the unpopular views held by those trying to speak up for the civil rights of the unborn," said Tom Minnery, vice president of Focus on the Family.

The public defender who defended one of the pro-lifers was himself charged with contempt, given three days in jail and fined $500 for questioning the veracity of one of the prosecution witnesses, a security guard at the clinic.

Steve Kipp, an employee of Focus on the Family, received a total of seven months in county jail, for failure to disperse, trespassing, and blocking a public sidewalk. Eight other pro-lifers received from 90 to 120 days. Other first offense defendants for such crimes as burglary and prostitution routinely receive sentences of five days. One pro-lifer was given 120 days for a first offense trespassing charge.

Tom Minnery, vice president of Focus on the Family, said his organization pledges itself to correct "this travesty of justice through appropriate channels."

"We consider the actions of Judge McKay," he said, "to constitute gross intimidation and discrimination against the unpopular views held by those trying to speak up for the civil rights of the unborn. We applaud these defendants and will do all in our power to see that justice is restored." ■