ACLA stirs Washington

by Paul deParrie
Joan Maguire also contributed to this story

Washington, D.C. — A bright but cool sun had risen over the nation's capital on Sunday, January 22, when pro-life activists headed — by car or Metro transit — to the Foundry Methodist Church. Their plan was to picket the home church of President Bill and First Lady Hillary Clinton because of the church's implicit approval of abortion by uncritically welcoming the president and his wife.

A crowd of 200 activists coagulated before the church in a cooperative effort between Pat Mahoney's Christian Defense Coalition, Jack Humphries' Project NOVA — both local activists — and the American Coalition of Life Activists (ACLA) in its first official, national effort. Joining the picket were representatives of Youth Defense, an Irish pro-life activist group (see sidebar).

ACLA participants had been primed for this and other weekend events at a Saturday night rally outside Washington, D.C. where they were exhorted by Father Matthew Habiger, the director of Human Life International.

Nor was the date of the protest at Foundry Methodist Church coincidental. Local activists, who had conducted a picket at a local abortuary with the Collegians Activated to Liberate Life (CALL) out of Madison, Wisconsin (see sidebar) the previous morning, and the cooperating ACLA planned the weekend's events around the 22nd anniversary date of the *Roe v Wade* Supreme Court decision which "legalized" abortion in 1973.

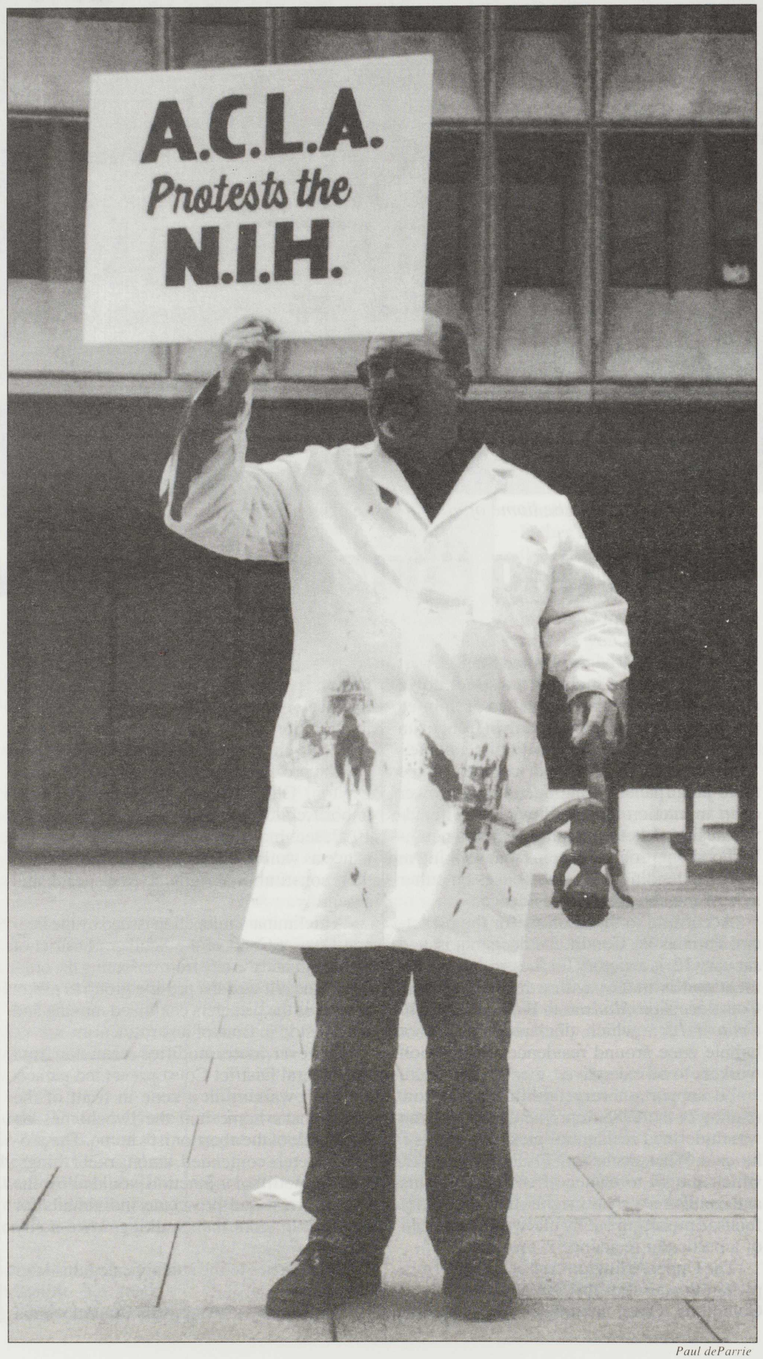
All of the weekend's activities also coincided with the annual March for Life (see sidebar).

Clinton's plans were changed and his family attended church elsewhere.

Ironically, retired Justice Harry Blackmun, author of the *Roe v Wade* decision, was scheduled to speak at a panel discussion at 1:30 p.m. in the same church but canceled the appearance.

In the morning service at Foundry Methodist, the pastor blamed the cancellation on the picketers outside.

"Since the writing of *Roe v Wade*, Judge Blackmun has taken a lot of abuse," he said. "He's a sensitive, warm individual. It is a shame a man of that sensitivity can't dialogue without such abuse."



Raymond Sharon from Wichita, Kansas protests fetal experimentation wearing a red-stained lab coat and holding a "dead" doll.

Paul deParrie

Pro-lifers hold up "Baby David" postcards of an aborted baby while blocking the doors at Health and Human Services in protest of fetal experimentation.

Paul deParrie

On that afternoon, the National Community Church on Capitol Hill, begun in 1994 by pro-life activist, rescuer, and pastor, Rob Schenck, formerly of Buffalo, New York, held a vigil for the 32 million killed by abortion since 1973. The service was interrupted when police responded to a telephoned threat that a bomb would explode in the church at 3:30 p.m. No bomb was found, but, since a "threat of violence" against a "place of worship" violates the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances (FACE) Act, the threat could be prosecuted under the same federal law that is now used against rescuers.

No denunciations or promises of an investigation were forthcoming from Attorney General Janet Reno or her Justice Department.

The ACLA "hit list"

By far the most controversial — and widely reported — ACLA action of the weekend was the announcement and distribution of the Deadly Dozen list of abortionists that the group hopes to target for pickets over the next year.

The list included the names, addresses, and, sometimes, phone numbers of 12 abortionists — two from each of the six ACLA regions (see p.13).

"We are recommending First Amendment activity to expose their deeds," said David Crane, Northeast director of ACLA.

Crane denied that the list was created to foster violence and noted, "We see the violence as what's happening inside the clinics."

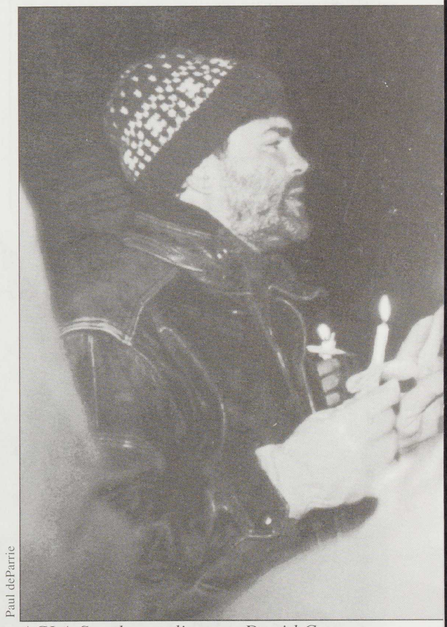
Immediately, however, abortion enthusiasts proclaimed the Deadly Dozen a "hit list" designed to stir up violence. Gina Shaw, a spokesman for the National Abortion Federation, called the list "utter terrorism."

"It is dangerous and irresponsible to release a list like this," she said. "In the present climate . . . it encourages intimidation and harassment."

Early news reports indicated that Attorney General Janet Reno had ordered 24-hour-a-day federal marshal protection for those named on the list. But later reports seemed to refute that.

While the Justice Department ordered agents to meet with all those named and develop a comprehensive plan to better protect abortionists and clinics, clinic owners say that it is unrealistic to rely on federal protection.

Abortionist Warren Hern, who was on the list, met with agents and later said, "I can't



Paul deParrie

ACLA Southeast director David Crane leads prayer at the candlelight vigil outside abortionist Gresinger's home.