Hundreds of Christians pray outside Palmetto State Medical Center where they were arrested for "demonstrating" in a group larger than 10.

Over 500 arrested joining pastors at clinic

Greenville, SC — On Saturday, January 30, over 500 people were arrested while praying on public sidewalks near the Palmetto State Medical Center, an abortion mill in Greenville, South Carolina.

Those arrested were charged with violating a picketing ordinance, which says that no more than 10 picketers are allowed within a city block, unless they have a permit. Pastor Michael Cloer, however, claimed that the ordinance did not apply to those praying, and therefore no permit was needed. "This ordinance is about picketing, and we are not picketing. We are there to pray; no one is demonstrating, and no picket signs are being used."

But even if the ordinance did address prayer on public sidewalks, Cloer said the pastors would not apply for a permit. "In the history of the nation, we've never had to ask for a permit to pray, and we're not going to start now."

Since the beginning of November, churches have been praying on a rotating basis at two Greenville abortion mills each weekend without incident. Recently, however, one of the abortion mills sued the city to make them enforce the picketing ordinance, claiming that the large prayer gatherings were unlawful.

A few days prior to January 30, Circuit Judge Victor Pyle, Jr., ruled in favor of the abortion mill, and ordered the police to make arrests if there were more than 10 people on a city block. In addition, he ordered the arrest of anyone who got within 10 feet of the abortion mill driveway. The next day, city police painted white lines on the sidewalk on both sides of the driveway in preparation for January 30.

In response, Cloer told 4,000 Christians at a Solemn Assembly Friday night, "We won't obey an edict that's unjust." Referring to Daniel 6, he said, "If you comply with a line of 10 feet, then the next line will be 100 feet." As the crowd rose to their feet in applause, Cloer stated, "I'm not inciting a riot tonight, I'm inciting righteousness in the hearts of God's people."

The next morning the prayer vigil began at 7:14 a.m., a reference to 2 Chronicles 7:14. The vigil was led by Pastors For Life, a non-denominational group of pastors working together to stop abortion and bring revival in upstate South Carolina. The pastors had decided there would be no singing or preaching, and the crowd remained silent during the three hours it took police to arrest participants.

Many pastors were among those arrested. Roland Dry, of Rock Hill Baptist Church, said, "What is being done this morning is not radical Christianity. We believe we are speaking to a hardened country for those who cannot speak for themselves, the unborn children." Dry was one of 20 pastors who were arrested during a pastor's rescue in December.

Those arrested were taken to the municipal courthouse, booked, and released on personal recognizance.

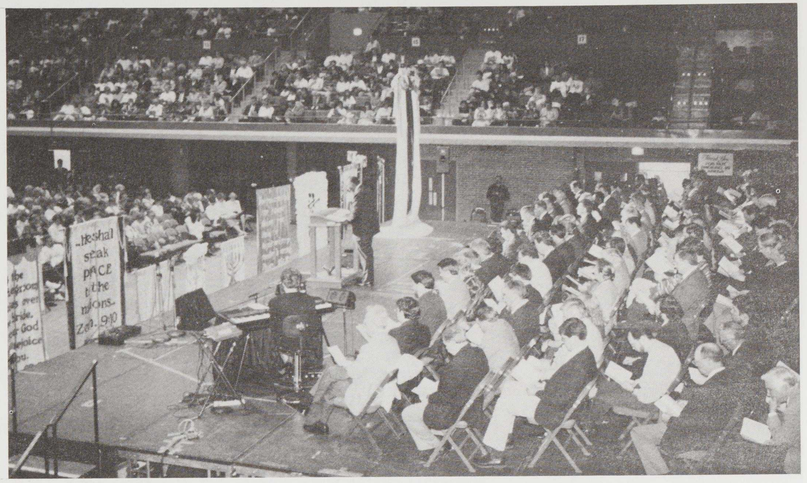
Due to the large number present, the abortion mill canceled all appointments for the day. "We've tried so many other approaches for years," said Cloer, "but when we began to pray on a regular basis, God began to move in mighty ways, and there's been a drastic decrease in the number of abortions in recent months at both killing centers. This is not the culmination of our efforts, just the beginning."

The Saturday prayer effort was preceded by a Solemn Assembly at the Greenville Memorial Auditorium. About 4,000 attended the gathering, which was patterned after Milwaukee's Solemn Assembly last August.

The service began with 20 minutes of choruses and hymns. This was followed by the blowing of shofars and then trumpets. As Joel 2:15-17 was read, approximately 160 pastors came to the platform to lead the meeting in confession, repentance, and commitment.

As the pastors came forward, 11 worship banners appeared in the exit aisles and were carried through the auditorium as a combined choir from several churches sang warfare choruses. The banners were then carried down the center aisle as the choir sang "Mighty Warrior." As the last banner, the "Jesus" banner came down the aisle, the crowd erupted in a roar of applause and shouts of praise.

The time of worship was followed by confession, repentance, and finally, commitment. The next day, God's people showed up to pray for His mercy and stand for the unborn.■



Over 4,000 Christians gathered at the Greenville Memorial Auditorium for a Solemn Assembly as a call to arms for pro-life activity.

Officers For Life join Solemn Assembly

Pastors For Life has begun an Officers For Life group to encourage police officers to take a stand for life. The first meeting was held in January and was attended by two dozen officers. This was an important step in building trust and establishing ongoing communication between Pastors For Life and Christian officers.

Officers For Life provided security at the Solemn Assembly. The group was recognized during the service and received a standing ovation. During the Saturday prayer vigil, two officers were arrested.

The Officers For Life group is part of The National Federation of Officers For Life. This group can be contacted at P.O. Box 892, Corpus Christi, TX, 78403-0892. Phone/fax line is (512) 992-1296.■

Chicago area sees two rescues in two days

by Lewis Ludwig

Downer's Grove, IL — For approximately a year and a half, Access Health Center located at 1700 75th Street in Downer's Grove, Illinois has purposefully killed preborn children up through the second trimester by the act of abortion. Access is one of the many abortuaries in the Chicagoland area but on January 15, approximately 25 Christians gathered to save babies scheduled to die.

Rescuers arrived at 7:30 a.m., normally in time to give witness to the workers as they enter the killing center; however, this Friday was different. Upon arrival rescuers were informed by early-bird sidewalk counselors that six couples were already in as another car pulled into the lot. As the mother and her partner entered the building after buzzing the door, five rescuers armed with pamphlets and a lock followed closely behind. To the astonishment of abortuary staff and the other six couples in the waiting room, rescuers took position on the floor and two locked-in as one female rescuer, herself an aborted woman, began to plead for the lives of the children.

For an hour and ten minutes those in the waiting room were offered help and given the facts of abortion and possible dangers for each woman scheduled to have a child killed. Not only because the waiting room was crowded but because the staff was so stunned, the many other couples arriving were told to wait in a small glassed-in foyer. As the foyer filled, sidewalk counselors had nearly 45 minutes to speak to the couples huddled outside.

Police, although never directly involved with a rescue before, took time to remove rescuers. As prayer supporters spoke to the officers about the killing of children and their role of removing the "only protection the children had," it was evident that some officers struggled. All five rescuers were released that afternoon on bond.

The following day, January 16, a cold Saturday in the Chicago area, a group of approximately 45-50 Christians gathered in front of the Concord Medical Center in Westmont, Illinois. In front of the doors of this killing center were 11 adult rescuers and one juvenile. Unlike Access Health Center, which was taken by surprise the day before by rescuers, Concord staff called the police who showed up promptly. Rescuers have been a means of stopping the killing at Concord from the very inception of Operation Rescue Chicago in 1989. Prayer and singing could be heard as rescuers were warned matter-of-factly by experienced, hardened police officers, many of whom work as "security" for the mill on their off duty hours. Sidewalk counselors called out to the couples offering help and warning of the dangers of abortion. Signs depicted concern for the women, encouragement to "choose life," and pictures of the victims of abortion.

CBS cameras were there to film the rescuers being carried away as police ensured that women could keep appointments to have their children destroyed.

The cameraman spoke to several carrying signs and said, "Your pictures (signs) will never be shown. You might as well put them down."■