

PRO LIFE NONVIOLENT ACTION 1526 E. 35th Ave. Denver CO. 80205

web site: www.radicalchristianpress.org

*Open your mouth for the speechless, In the cause of all who are appointed to die.
Open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy.* Proverbs 31:8-9 (nKJ)

For this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. John 18:37

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Matthew 25:40

Dear Pastor

August 21st 2008

This August we begin our 20th year of a 5 day a week pro life witness and **Sidewalk Counselling** effort in front of Rocky Mountain Planned Parenthood. Last month they combined the *surgical clinic*--the abortuary--with their headquarters, and moved both to a new fortress like compound at 38th and Pontiac. So of course we moved along with them and have been settling into our new home on the sidewalk out in front along Pontiac Street. We miss the shade trees we had on Vine Street but we don't miss the complaining neighbors and now we have the whole street to ourselves. There is plenty of room for gory posters and it is easy to park. I believe our daily picket line was a major reason for this move. For years they have been trying to Do Something to counter the picket line, which at least chases a lot of their customers away. They used to have 20 to 30 abortion customers on Friday, their busiest day. Now they have about 10 on a Friday.

Last month **Leo Mantei** got punched by an irate boy friend who resented Leo's appeal to him to be a *real man* and *take responsibility*. Leo raised 5 children and has some right to speak on the subject. Since Leo is 74, the boy friend wound up spending a month in jail on a *felony assault* charge before they dropped it to a misdemeanor. We have had a few other tussles and wrestles in the past--it is an occupational hazard--but that is the first time Leo was ever hit and he has been coming out there every Wednesday and Friday for the past 18 years.

Yesterday, **Jo Scott** was found guilty of *Sidewalk Counselling* in pro-abort Denver County Court and sentenced to six months *suspended* and \$ 93 court costs. Which really means that she walked out a free woman and she still has a good case against the *8 foot ordinance* which attorney James Rouse intends to appeal all the way to the Supreme Court if necessary. It was two Planned Parenthood staff who set her up by parking out on the street and pretending to be abortion customers. This is the first actual prosecution we have ever had under this law which was passed in 1993 by NARAL and Planned Parenthood to be used as a weapon against the *Sidewalk Counsellors*. At the new place, the entire sidewalk is outside the 100 foot limit, so this may be the last case.

Between 1989 and 1997 we had about 115 cases out there, for all sorts of junk--*disturbing the peace by talking too loud*. We won nearly all of them--got them dismissed or won on appeal. In 1997 we had a *section 1983* federal lawsuit against the City of Denver and Planned Parenthood for backstairs collusion. That, plus our stubborn refusal to be intimidated, forced them to abandon the policy of pseudo-legal harassment. It is still the bottom line that you sometimes have to risk jail to rescue *the least of these*. But it is a stretch to call yourself a *Christian*, if you won't do it. Over the years, we have rescued about two babies per week on the average. At the same time, we rescue their mothers from a life of inconsolable grief. *Rachel mourning for her children and would not be comforted*. On December 26th 1999, three babies were born on the same day to three women encountered by our sidewalk counselors in front of the Planned Parenthood abortuary.

Al Garcia, one of the best and bravest Sidewalk Counsellors we ever had out there, died of a heart attack on Friday May 16th. I saw him that morning at 20th and Vine where I first saw him in March of 1989. He seemed happy. He had the same hearty energy and eloquence that he had displayed 19 years earlier. He waved as he drove away. That afternoon he had a heart attack and he was gone. Al was a fearless banty rooster of a fellow with a booming voice and a wonderful eloquence in both English and Spanish. He could be outrageous and rude and crude but he was very effective at saving babies, whether

he was questioning the manhood of the boyfriend going in there--*you are supposed to be the man of the house, not the mouse of the house*!--or kneeling on the sidewalk in front of a mother pleading in English or Spanish: *I beg you for the life of your baby*. If he succeeded, as he often did, he would give them money, buy groceries for them, get them a place to stay. When he was arrested, and put in jail, he came right back again.

He had all sorts of props left over from his days as a junkman which he would use. He had a giant wooden Santa Claus he brought out at Christmas time. He would don a gorilla suit and hold a stuffed monkey doll standing by the driveway: *gorillas don't kill their kids*. Once on his way to 20th and Vine he found a dead cat in the street so he brought it along. He stood by the fence and held it up as the customers went in: *this cat will get a decent burial, your baby won't* ! The cops soon showed up and ran him off with the cat. But he had no shortage of props. After that, Planned Parenthood put up 8 foot high plastic curtains along the front. After that, we started using ladders.

When I first went there, the other pickets were trying to shut up Al Garcia. He wasn't respectable. We should preserve church decorum at all times, even if it was a butcher shop, not a church. After I had gone there a few times I decided that Al was doing the right thing by speaking out, calling out to the abortion customers as loudly and eloquently as he could to get them to stop. I began to speak out too. What else was it but *Bearing Witness to the Truth* ? Later, I found a bible verse which seems appropriate: *Open your mouth for the speechless, In the cause of all who are appointed to die. Open your mouth, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy*. Proverbs 31.8-9 Several organizations have copied that verse from me--I should have copyrighted it--which is all right, but I wish they would copy the Sidewalk Counselling as well, instead of just using it to raise money.

Over the years, speaking out loud became characteristic of the pro life witness in front of the Vine Street Planned Parenthood *surgical clinic*. Despite complaints from church groups which show up once a year to pray quietly--and criticize us. They admonish us and say nothing to the abortion customers. Despite complaints from neighbors, put up to it by Planned Parenthood which led to 100 free speech cases from 1989 to 1997 that finally established our right to speak out. Al Garcia won our first case on appeal from *disturbing the peace* by speaking out loud, doing the paper work himself. Bishop Robert Zeiger won 7 cases, several of them on appeal to the District Court. Mike Martin won 8 free speech cases. Over a period of years we developed a basic free speech brief.

The cowardice and conformity which so deeply infects the Christian churches limits their witness against abortion to what is useless. So called *Christians* do not possess the Spirit of Courage which would compel them to speak out against abortion. There is a self-deceiving theology which goes with it: **our job is to pray**. It is up to God to stop abortion. If your niece is headed for the Planned Parenthood abortuary this morning, all you can do is pray that God will somehow stop her. It would be un-Christian for you to speak out.

We are still out there every morning from about 8:30 am to 10:30 am, Tuesday through Friday, 7:30 to 10:30 on Saturday. I go Thursday, Friday and Saturday now. I was out there 5 days a week for 12 years. Through the years we have rescued many babies by *sidewalk counseling*, despite physical and legal attacks. Recently, we have seen more young people out there. But we still rely upon the *gray panthers* to anchor the witness. Nothing is more basic to living the Christian life than **BEARING WITNESS TO THE TRUTH**. The truth about abortion is the cutting edge of Christian truth in our time. *Sidewalk Counselling* is the front line of the battle. Pastors must set the example.

Terry Sullivan