

'Cities of Refuge' protests end

By Lee Strong
Senior staff writer

ROCHESTER — Operation Rescue's 10-day "Cities of Refuge" campaign concluded July 18 amid incomplete reports about the number of participants, arrests as well as the protests' impact.

The July 9-18 campaign targeted seven U.S. cities: Philadelphia; Cleveland; Minneapolis; Dallas; San Jose, Calif.; Jackson, Miss.; and Melbourne, Fla. A small number of Rochester residents took part in the Cleveland and Philadelphia protests.

According to figures supplied to the *Catholic Courier* by Operation Rescue's headquarters in Summerville, S.C., more than 7,500 people had registered to take part in the protests as of July 17. Police had arrested 593 pro-life activists and 32 pro-choice demonstrators. According to Operation Rescue, 36 women had either told sidewalk counselors or pregnancy center staff members that they had decided not to have abortions because of the protests.

The campaign included such tactics as blocking clinic entrances, a practice known as "rescues;" prayer vigils; publicly identifying doctors who perform abortions; sidewalk counseling; and picketing outside the homes of doctors who perform abortions.

"We change our tactics to fit the situation," said Gerald Crawford, director of Rescue Rochester.

Crawford noted that during the Cleveland protests — in which he and approximately a dozen Rochester residents participated — the decision was made early on not to risk arrest. Instead, the protests were used to help educate and organize local church groups.

The protests also included follow-up care for those women who changed their minds, noted Miche-



AP/Wide World Photos
Ignoring the taunts and insults from pro-choice demonstrators, Andy Anderson, a pro-life activist, kneels and prays outside a church in San Jose, Calif. on July 11.

lle Cramer, a spokesperson for Operation Rescue.

Cramer told the *Courier* that the women who had decided not to have abortions will receive support and material assistance from pro-life groups in their respective areas.

Cramer reported, for example, that one homeless woman in Dallas — who was six months pregnant — changed her mind about having an abortion after talking with a sidewalk counselor. In addition to finding the woman housing, pro-life officials are providing help with medical care and counseling, she said.

In addition to the seven targeted cities, the protests also spread to

nearby communities. In Wilmington, Del., for example, protesters from Philadelphia took part in a rescue at the Brandywine Valley Women's Center July 10. That center's porch collapsed under the weight of pro-life activists, effectively closing the clinic.

Approximately 130 people were ticketed for trespassing at the Wilmington protest. Those people are not included in the numbers given by Operation Rescue for arrests because Wilmington was not one of the targeted cities, Cramer explained.

Penfield resident Robert Dorscheid spent three days in Philadelphia. Although he was not among those ticketed, he was also present at the Wilmington protest.

Dorscheid, a parishioner at Penfield's St. Joseph Church, traveled to Philadelphia with two other Rochester-area residents: Kevin Bush, who lives at the Abbey of the Genesee in Piffard, and Miles Moore of Rochester's St. Stanislaus Parish.

A veteran of previous "rescue" efforts, Dorscheid said he is seeing an increasing level of violence against pro-life activists at the protests.

"There have been a lot of people hurt," Dorscheid reported. "Not just at rescues, but at prayer services and vigils."

Indeed, according to the information supplied by Operation Rescue, among the charges lodged against pro-choicers arrested at the Cities of Refuge protests were assault and battery, stalking and vandalism.

So far, that violence has not occurred in Rochester — but the potential exists, Dorscheid warned.

"I think in this city, both sides are non-violent," he said. "But it's the kind of thing that depends on the leaders."

"The anger is there, but the violence is not," Dorscheid concluded.

Father Erb to mark double anniversary

WEBSTER — A celebration will be held at Webster Park on Sunday, July 25, to commemorate two anniversaries for Father John Erb, SVD.



Together with family and friends, Father Erb will celebrate the 60th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood and the 65th anniversary of his profession of vows to the Society of the Divine Word.

Father Erb, a native of Rochester, took on several roles during his ministry in Ghana, West Africa, which ended with his retirement in 1989. He served as a pastor, press bureau director, instructor at Mt. Mary Teacher Training College, superior and vicar delegate for northern Ghana, executive director of social communications at the National Catholic secretariat, and finally as chaplain of the Korle Bu Hospital in Accra before he retired.

Prior to his African assignment, Father Erb taught at SVD schools in Iowa and Illinois and was editor of a society publication known as "The Little Missionary." He also staffed the SVD News Service in Rome, Italy, and was a U.S. Army chaplain during World War II in Alaska, the Aleutian Islands, France, Germany and Austria.

The Society of the Divine Word is a 5,700-member congregation of priests and brothers who serve as missionaries in 55 countries.

Ecumenical music group to perform at Ithaca parish

ITHACA — Celebrant Singers, an internationally known Christian music ministry, will present a community-wide concert on Tuesday, Aug. 3, at 7:30 p.m. at Immaculate Conception Church, 113 N. Geneva St. Although an offering will be collected, the concert is free and open to the public.

Celebrant Singers provide contemporary Christian music, praise and worship, and personal witness and ministry. Members have performed in all 50 states and 52 foreign countries. During 1993, the ministry is scheduled to present more than 1,400 concerts in some 30 countries.

Celebrant Singers are ecumenical in nature. Seven teams of committed, dedicated and talented young adults represent 38 states, nine Canadian provinces and several foreign nations.

In addition to live appearances, Celebrant Singers have released six recordings to date.

EDITORS' NOTE: Organizers need to arrange housing in Ithaca for those performing the Aug. 3 concert. If you can house one or two of these musicians, call Annette Kobylarz at 716/277-3097.

St. Anthony of Padua set to hold school reunion

ROCHESTER — All graduates of the former St. Anthony of Padua School, 15 Costar St., are invited to attend a reunion tentatively slated for this fall.

No formal reunions have been held since the school closed in 1986. The event was scheduled after several parishioners expressed interest in a reunion, according to a press release from the parish council.

Interested alumni should call the rectory at 716/458-1180, between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday-Friday, for more information.

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