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Parker: Root Of Nation's Economic Crisis Is Moral Crisis

SUBMITTED by SHNS on Friday, February 13th, 2009

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ScrippsNews Website: <http://www.scrippsnews.com/node/40942>



A travesty of justice has occurred in Oakland, California. But realities surrounding this local issue point to how the economic crisis in our nation is symptomatic of and flows from a deeper fundamental moral crisis.

A black pastor awaits sentencing, which could amount to two years in prison and \$4,000 in fines, for standing outside an inner city abortion clinic holding a sign saying "**Jesus Loves You & Your Baby, Let Us Help You,**" and offering pro-life literature.

Walter Hoyer, founder and chairman of the Issues4Life Foundation, was found guilty of "unlawful approach" under the "Access to Reproductive Health Care Facilities Ordinance" enacted in Oakland in 2008.

Under the ordinance, it is prohibited, within 100 feet of the entrance to a "reproductive health facility," to approach within eight feet of a client "for the purpose of counseling, harassing, or interfering" with that person.

"Harassing" means holding up a sign, passing out literature or offering counseling.

The "reproductive health care facility" in question is Family Planning Specialists in Oakland. Looking over their Web site, it's clear that there is only one kind of reproductive health care they provide. Abortions.

According to testimony of the facility's executive director, they perform about one hundred [100] abortions per week. Assuming an average of \$600 per abortion (from the fee schedule on the website), that's about \$3 million a year in revenue. Not bad for an inner city neighborhood business.

Pastor Hoye's conviction is strange in that no "victim" testified against him -- there was only testimony from those with an interest in the clinic -- employees and volunteers, no specific incident was cited, videotape showed Hoye standing peacefully holding his sign and materials, and the convicting jury was given no instructions regarding the definition of "approach."

Nevertheless, Hoye has been convicted and may wind up in jail and liable for thousands of dollars in fines.

But beyond the troubling details of this trial and conviction, circumstances surrounding the case convey the realities of our deeply confused and lost nation.

Abortion clinics such as Family Planning Specialists strategically locate to optimize their deadly business. This means in poor black neighborhoods.

A search of the 94607 zip code in Oakland where this facility is located shows that the population is 50 percent black, the median household income is 40 percent that of the median household income in the state of California while 30 percent earn below the poverty line and 58 percent of households with children are single parent households.

The poor black kids from the broken families and communities there go to failing public schools in Oakland where half of them drop out.

In these failing public schools, it is prohibited to teach the most important thing that these children could possibly hear. That there are absolutes in this world -- that there is right and there is wrong.

As religion and tradition have been purged from public life in America, the most immediate victims have been the weakest and most

vulnerable.

California deals with this problem by subsidizing it. Every poor girl that goes to Family Planning Specialists gets her abortion paid for by California state insurance, Medi-Cal.

This fiscal year Medi-Cal will spend \$52 million dollars of taxpayer funds paying for abortions of poor young women. This while Governor Schwarzenegger has announced an anticipated deficit of over \$40 billion and tens of billions from the federal government in the new trillion dollar "stimulus" package will be sent to bail out the state.

The stated purpose of the Oakland ordinance, which may send Walter Hoyer to jail, is to protect 'right of privacy.' "Right of privacy" of teenage girls not old enough to vote, but who can get a state paid for abortion without informing a parent.

Yet the first amendment of our constitution no longer protects the freedom of a pastor to peaceably stand in front of an abortion clinic and tell these lost young women there is another way.

Something is wrong in America today. Very, very wrong.

<p>(Star Parker is an author and president of CURE, Coalition on Urban Renewal and Education (http://www.urbancure.org). She can be reached at parker@urbancure.org.) (Distributed by Scripps Howard News Service, http://www.scrippsnews.com)</p>
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