

# Rally moving for wrong reasons

By Hon Walker  
Emerald Associate Editor

Sunday's anti-abortion rally was emotionally moving for almost everyone present. At the end, I too had tears in my eyes — but not for the reasons the pro-lifers did.

The courtyard of the Federal Building filled as demonstrators, most of them couples and families still dressed in their Sunday best, arrived in groups.

Coordinators distributed "Stop abortion" placards and

## Reporter's Notebook

lapel pins printed with the number "4,000" — the number of abortions performed daily in the U.S.

A solemn blond girl, about 6 years old, walked past me with a sign that read, "I'm glad my mommy kept me."

There were so many children. They mouthed some of the words to "Amazing Grace" while the courtyard thundered with voices. A couple of boys used their "Stop abortion" signs to playfully hit each other over the head.

Soon the front of the federal building became a mix of white faces and red protest signs.

The group was larger than last November's "Mobilize for Women's Lives" rally.

The group made up the largest pro-life demonstration in Lane County.

And the group reaffirmed what they had insisted all along: the pro-choice movement had underestimated their opponents' numbers and dedication.

The rally itself was about an hour long. It wasn't until the third speaker, Rev. John Booher of the Willamette Christian Center, took the microphone, that I fully realized the literally religious passion with which abortion opponents adhere to their cause.

Booher gave a true fire-and-brimstone speech, thundering on about the need for "decency instead of decadence, morality instead of morass and mutilation," and drawing applause after accusing women seeking abortions of "using their bodies for parking lots."

By the time he led the group in a prayer, some demonstrators were dabbing at tears. The crowd fell absolutely silent, and hundreds of heads bowed. Some in the group raised their right hands skyward.

Foes of legalized abortion say they're making headway toward reaching the non-Christian faction (Bernard Nathanson, leader of National Right to Life, is a self-proclaimed atheist, I was told), but there was little evidence of it Sunday.

Most of the crowd consisted of members of church congregations, and at least one service adjourned with instructions to attend the rally.

If nothing else, abortion rights is a far-reaching and difficult issue because it crosses boundaries that include not only religion, but color, economic status, age, and so many other factors. However, this large crowd lacked this diversity.

Children and babies, though they cannot vote, are central to emotional appeals against abortion. The young ones at the rally served this purpose. However, most of them could not possibly grasp the legal and political implications of such a divisive issue.

Abortion is the struggle of the 1990s that will continue to pit colleagues, family members, neighbors and political candidates against each other.

Making a reproductive choice is an ordeal I can only imagine. I don't like the idea of terminating a pregnancy. I doubt anyone does.

But dealing on such a personal level with such philosophical basics as life and choice should not be the duty of a morally-motivated community.

The blurred distinction between church and state threatens to restrict the difficult right to choose. A homogenous group of people appears eager to impose their absolutist stance.

At the time most of the pro-lifers were leaving I decided to leave, too. A honking horn caught my attention, and a shiny white car filled with four




File Photo

Anti-abortion supporters at the rally Sunday.

teenage boys sped by. Two of them waved "Stop abortion" signs, and on a rear window was a smaller sign that read, "Stop playing God."

The irony hit me hard.



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### INFORMATION TABLE

**JANUARY 24 & 25, 1990  
WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY  
9:00 AM TO 3:00 PM  
EMU LOBBY**

### PRESENTATIONS

**JANUARY 24, 1990 (WEDNESDAY)  
4:00 PM to 5:00 PM  
CEDAR ROOM A & B, EMU  
FILM: LET IT BEGIN HERE**

**JANUARY 25, 1990 (THURSDAY)  
12 NOON TO 1:00 PM  
CEDAR ROOM A & B, EMU  
VIDEO: PEACE CORPS  
IMPRESSIONS**

**JANUARY 25, 1990 (THURSDAY)  
7:30 PM to 9:00 PM  
CEDAR ROOM E, EMU  
SLIDES & EXPERIENCES  
OF MICRONESIA**

### INTERVIEWS

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