

RALPH BUNDY, THE ABORTION CLINIC DOCTOR

By **Kate Santich Of the Sentinel Staff**

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Most doctors who perform abortions don't say so publicly. Fewer still consent to media interviews.

And it is nothing short of extraordinary for one to lend his face to the cover of a magazine labeling him: "The Abortion Doctor," as the Florida magazine headline read on May 13, 1990.

But Dr. Ralph Bundy says he has no regrets. He is, in fact, as outspoken as ever.

"People think this is just about abortion, but it's not. It's the whole morality-control thing: You can't watch The Last Temptation of Christ, the video-rental store is being told which movies it can stock, and they're trying to dictate to Wal-Mart the magazines it can sell.

It's a matter of what you're willing to lie down for and let them do to you.

Bundy, medical director of The Women's Health Center Inc. in Orlando and Daytona Beach, got a lot of mail for the first few weeks after the story ran -maybe 20 or 30 letters, he says, running 3-or 4-to-1 in his favor -and he still gets new patients who seek him out because they've read about him.

His colleagues expressed surprise. His friends, with one exception, expressed support.

"I did lose one really good friend that I'd had for 20 years," he says. "She sent me a couple of books, and the message -both from the books and from her -was that I was going to burn in hell. . . .

She pretty much blew me off."

Many of his friends didn't know precisely what he did for a living. He had told them only that he worked in a clinic.

"I don't hit people over the head with it," he says. "I don't go to a party and say, 'Boy, I did a tough abortion today.' "

undy's clinics in the 16 months since the story ran,

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"They sit or stand in front of the clinic and pray, or at least that's what they say they're doing," Bundy says.

"They don't directly harass the clients . . . and they're not screaming or chanting, though they occasionally carry signs."

They come once a week or so, with usually four to 10 people at a time.

Bundy thinks anti-abortion fervor has subsided -given the Florida Supreme Court ruling affirming a constitutional right to privacy and the retention of Chief Justice Leander Shaw, who wrote that opinion.

He cites national polls that show people largely disapprove of the tactics employed by such anti-abortion groups as Operation Rescue.

"They're going way too far," he says. "I think, ultimately, their actions will have a negative effect on support for the religious right."

Still, Bundy gets letters warning him that he has made an enemy of God.

Bundy answers now as he always has.

"Well," he says, "most of the people I admire are in, or are going to, hell. And I look forward to joining them."

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