

2-1-1986

[Book Review of] *Closed: 99 Ways to Stop Abortion*, by Joseph M. Scheidler

Mary O'Malley

Follow this and additional works at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq>

 Part of the [Ethics and Political Philosophy Commons](#), and the [Medicine and Health Sciences Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

O'Malley, Mary (1986) "[Book Review of] *Closed: 99 Ways to Stop Abortion*, by Joseph M. Scheidler," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 53 : No. 1 , Article 16.

Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol53/iss1/16>

care-givers. Rollin proposes one solution to the tragedy of terminal suffering and she has not presented persuasive arguments that her solution is the best.

— Rev. Robert Barry, O.P., Ph.D.
National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow,
Dominican House of Studies,
Washington, D.C.

Medical and Health Information Dictionary: Libraries, Publications, and Institutions

Anthony T. Kruzas, Kay Gill, and Karen Bakus, eds.

Detroit: Gale Publishing, 1985. xiv + 699 pp., \$160, hardback.

Upon first seeing this directory, I wondered what use it might be, but after having seen and used it, I wonder at how useful it is! It contains the addresses of virtually every journal, newspaper, newsletter, organization, agency, directory, audiovisual producer and service, computer information system, library, information center and organization that is in any way remotely involved in medicine, medical ethics, medical law, advocacy and research. The directory gives addresses, phone numbers of virtually all of these organizations and descriptions of the activities and concerns of all of these publications, services and organizations. It is clearly the most comprehensive directory of this type ever to be published, and it is of great benefit to all who work in the rapidly expanding field of health care and its related fields.

Admittedly the price is high for this work, but it is clearly worth it for health care organizations, attorneys and academic personnel working in health care. What would be of benefit would be if Gale would publish updated addresses and phone numbers of the items listed so that the value of this directory would endure. But even without that, this directory will still be of great use to those working in health care and allied fields.

— Rev. Robert Barry, O.P.
National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow,
Dominican House of Studies,
Washington, D.C.

Closed: 99 Ways to Stop Abortion

by Joseph M. Scheidler

Crossway Books (Westchester, Ill.) 350 pp., \$9.95.

The issue of abortion has always created controversy, and the debate rages on. The United States Supreme Court is scheduled to review two abortion cases from Illinois and Pennsylvania in which the Department of Justice has intervened by filing a brief seeking reversal of the 1973 abortion rulings. Advances made by the medical and scientific

communities in the areas of fetology, embryology and genetic research have raised new and complex ethical concerns, heightening the interest and awareness of the abortion issue. However, for a certain segment of society, abortion is not just an issue. Abortion is the battleground where human lives are won or lost. This growing segment of pro-life activists attempt to stop abortion and save lives *now*. The commander-in-chief of these activists is Joseph M. Scheidler, former monk, journalist, father of seven and author of *Closed: 99 Ways to Stop Abortion*.

The title of this book is designed to be provocative and inciting. The contents scream for action. The author shares with us an encyclopedic synthesis of his experiences and observations of pro-life, non-violent action in the midst of the battlefields. Contained in the 99 offerings are a potpourri of possible counterattacks to abortion as it exists in our communities: sidewalk counseling, pro-life books displayed in public libraries, study of drug company reports, and information on the special problem of abortion hospitals.

Joseph Scheidler is a man convicted. That conviction has brought with it a mission, the "collapse" of the abortion industry. On the pages in his book, he reveals, explains and espouses the use of tactics to accomplish that goal.

Clearly a requisite for understanding this manual is believing the premise contained in the introduction, "... abortion equals murder . . ." If this equation is acceptable to the reader, then the author's insistence upon immediate non-violent direct action will be understood.

For centuries oppressed, powerless and voiceless people have responded to injustice with non-violent direct action. Gandhi brought about revolutionary change in India through this method. Martin Luther King, Jr. transformed it into a working blueprint to obtain civil rights and racial freedom. Both Gandhi and King made reference to a "constructive tension" necessary for resolution of the struggle between the oppressed and the oppressor.

In his writing, Joseph Scheidler has cited 99 ways to create a similar kind of "constructive tension". He does not uniformly follow the non-violent direct action line or belong in the civil disobedience camp. Rather he imparts tenets of both and combines them with his own inimitable style which results in creative action. He emphasizes that creative action must be used as a response to abortion. It provides pro-life activists with the ability to exercise power. Scheidler points out, "The American people were never allowed to vote on abortion. Abortion on demand was handed to Americans by a Supreme Court fiat, through a very serious misinterpretation of the Constitution." He further explains that when pro-life people act and are successful, "... it is on the spot reversal of the *Roe v. Wade*, *Doe v. Bolton* abortion decisions."

While the contents of this book are broad in scope, the average chapter length is only three pages long. There were moments when I wondered if the author came up with the title first, then felt an obligation to live up to it. It is written in a staccato type style that makes for very easy reading. Aside from some repetition, there is also a tendency to go from simplistic activities to gargantuan feats. As the chairwoman of a pregnancy center, I can attest that the page and a half on setting up a pregnancy help office (Chapter 43) doesn't scratch the surface of what is necessary to start and maintain such a facility. The same is true for several other activities briefly described. More attention should have been directed towards chapter placement, so that instead of being arranged in patchwork fashion, sections and subsections would better serve the reader. There were disclaimers and cautions throughout and appropriately so, considering the material explored and the potential for abuse. Extra responsibility, sensitivity and awareness should be exercised when contemplating some of the proposed actions in the manual.

While I felt the above areas had room for improvement, Joe Scheidler should be recognized for filling a void and offering this compilation of ideas for exploring and implementing. He gives readers an opportunity to customize their plan for action based on their own criteria. As the author points out in speaking of the various suggestions, "... some will work for you but not for other pro-lifers. You have to be selective." Resources for the author's communications and public relations experience are apparent throughout. He presents excellent suggestions for getting the pro-life message across.

dealing with the media and the effective use of advertising.

Some of his best work is near the end of the book in Chapter 96: *Be a Prayer Warrior*. The way to stop abortion is to pray as though everything depended on God and to work as though everything depends on you." In Chapter 97, *Whatever You Do, Do It with Love*, he says "Pro-life is a movement based on the highest form of altruism so there is no room for hatred." Chapter 98: *You Are the Pro-life Movement*, offers, "The pro-life movement is everyone who works, suffers and sacrifices for the unborn." He states in Chapter 99, *Write the Next Chapter Yourself*, "This is a Manifesto for which you or perhaps your children will write the final chapter."

If and when the final chapter is written on abortion, it will not be in the text as we presently understand it. There will be significant breakthroughs in medicine and science. The composition of the Supreme Court and other key judicial positions will change. Pharmacology will make a substantial impact on abortion in the future. Politics, legislation and laws will shift with public opinion and time. However, the most profound change must be in the minds and hearts of the American people.

The urgency remains for pro-life activists to rescue as many lives as they can. Front and center is Joseph Scheidler, the personification of the "abortion fighter" he describes in Chapter 69, "a tireless, aggressive, imaginative, daring and optimistic individual who carefully plans his strategy and accomplishes what he sets out to do." This author is unwilling to allow the abortion industry the comfortable anonymity and respectability it so desperately desires. His aim is to maximize the involvement of the pro-life activists.

Closed, 99 Ways to Stop Abortion is a manual which will be of great influence and value to those who are interested in being part of the pro-life front line.

Albert Schweitzer once said, "Example is not the most important thing in influencing others, it is the only thing." Joseph Scheidler, with this book, provides 99 examples.

— Mary O'Malley, Chairman
Shady Grove Pregnancy Center
Gaithersburg, Maryland

Christian Ethics and Imagination: A Theological Inquiry

by Philip S. Keane, S.S.

Paulist Press, N. Y.: 1984

What prompted Keane to write this book is the tendency, he perceives, of moral theology to rely too heavily on forms of moral argument which are logical, discursive, and positivistic. He thinks that we need more than discursive logic to address successfully the kinds of problems facing us today (p. 14). He hopes that a better use of imagination and creativity will enable us to understand our moral principles, and make appropriate applications of these to concrete problems in the moral life. He appeals to such themes as virtue, narrative, liturgy, and beauty as avenues to new understandings and deeper insights into the human condition. His intent is to make a contribution to the development of a theology of imagination and ethics which is both systematic and practical (p.20).

After two chapters on examples of non-discursive aspects of Christian thought and contemporary insights on the use of imagination, Keane comes to his most important chapter — Chapter 4 — which attempts to make a comprehensive statement of what moral