

Pro-Life Pastor Released

✖ **April 14, 2009** – A minister jailed last month for violating an Oakland, Calif., city ordinance that prohibits pro-life activists from approaching women entering an abortion clinic was released April 7 and plans to resume sidewalk counseling in May.

Walter B. Hoyer II, a minister from Berkeley, Calif., who founded the Issues4Life Foundation, was given 30 days in jail, a \$1,130 fine and three years probation in February. Hoyer also was ordered to stay 100 yards away from the Oakland abortion clinic he was convicted in January of unlawfully approaching, but he refused.

The judge said he would not have given Hoyer jail time had he agreed to stay away from the abortion clinic for three years.

Hoyer said he will likely resume offering pro-life pamphlets and counseling to women outside the Oakland abortion clinic on May 7, the National Day of Prayer (NDOP). "Like Gen. Douglas MacArthur, 'I shall return!'" Hoyer said in an email update Monday.

While held in the Santa Rita Jail, Hoyer said he taught Bible studies, participated in late-night prayer meetings and led eight men to Christ. He also spread his pro-life message to the inmates, opening "both the eyes and the hearts of men to the horrors of abortion and their responsibilities," he wrote.

In the weeks leading up to the NDOP, Hoyer said he plans to spend time with his family and recover from his ordeal. He said his health suffered while he was incarcerated, and he began to lose hope.

"I nearly lost sight of God's purpose for my life and wondered if I would spend the rest of my life in jail," he said. "I allowed the sin of self-centeredness and the agony of self-

doubt to threaten my faith in God. I was tempted to believe that God had forsaken me.”

Prior to his arrest and conviction, Hoyer launched a federal civil lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the Oakland city ordinance later used to arrest him. The law bars picketers from coming within eight feet of women entering an abortion clinic.

The Life Legal Defense Foundation (LLDF), which represented Hoyer at his trial, is challenging the constitutionality of the ordinance in federal court. A hearing is scheduled for June, and LLDF legal director Catherine Short and attorney Mike Millen said they are hopeful the ordinance will be struck down and Hoyer vindicated.