

The Strike-em-Dead Wave

By Jamie Buckingham

When U.S. Supreme Court Justice William Brennan stood to give his outdoor commencement address at Loyola-Marymount Law School in Los Angeles last spring, he was interrupted by a low-flying airplane. The plane was pulling a huge banner which read, "Pray for Death: Baby-killer Brennan."

Brennan is well known among pro-life forces as one of the chief supporters of the 1973 *Roe vs. Wade* decision which legalized abortion.

The aerial demonstration coincided with public prayers by R.L. Hymers, pastor of the Fundamental Baptist Tabernacle in Los Angeles who asked God to kill Brennan. Brennan's death would allow President Reagan to appoint a pro-life judge to the Supreme Court.

At this point, it doesn't look like God has answered Hymers' prayers. Not only Brennan, but all the other pro-abortion justices are proclaiming good health. The next step, I guess, is for someone to go after one of the liberal justices with a lethal injection of saline; or even worse, a coat hanger. I mean, if God won't do it, then maybe His henchmen will.

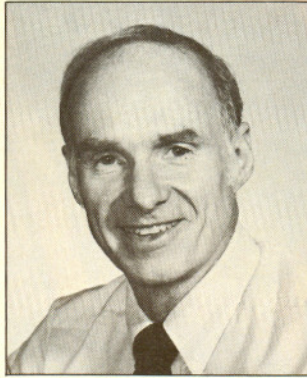
Along with millions of other Americans, I hate abortion. Aside from slavery, it is the vilest thing ever legislated in this nation's history. In most cases it is nothing more than murder for the sake of convenience. On the other hand, calling down fire on liberal legislators or judges who approve of legalized abortion smacks of something a group of apostles once tried to talk Jesus into. If He didn't approve then, why now?

The idea of seeing God as the Great Hit Man Upstairs is especially appealing to a number of angry people. Hymers is not the only one who has started bombarding heaven with death prayers for his enemies; so have some other fundamentalist preachers. In fact, there are so many people now in favor of asking God to kill other people, I'm predicting this will be the next "wave."

Waves are in, you know. In fact, charismatics know the kingdom of God runs on wavepower. First there was a speaking-in-tongues wave, followed by a deliverance wave, a discipleship wave, a submission wave, a word-faith wave, a cell-group wave, a super-church wave and now a power-evangelism wave. So far, you notice, we've not had a be-kind-to-others wave, nor a lay-down-your-life-for-someone-you-don't-like wave. That's good, because waves like that have a way of devastating personal kingdoms.

Some waves are named after men. There was a Juan Carlos Ortiz wave, a Mumford wave, a Wimber wave and now a Pat-for-President wave. All of these waves have had a charismatic flavor. Thus, it seems right that the fundamentalists should have a turn. So why not a Strike-em-Dead wave for the fundies?

Recently, wanting to be on the "cutting edge" of the new wave, some of my friends began making up a sanctified "hit



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list" to present to God. I couldn't talk them out of it, but they did agree to run the list by me before they sent it off for final execution. If an order is going in, the least I could do was make sure none of my friends were on it.

When word got out about the master hit list, several other lists arrived through the mail. One, scrawled with a black crayon, wanted God to exterminate Tammy Faye Bakker, My Darling Evelyn and Mother Teresa. A Texan wanted God to knock off Jimmy Swaggart and Sylvester Stallone. A third asked God to waste the entire Roman Catholic Church.

If we're going to be on the "leading edge" in these last days (they may be here sooner than we expect now that we've started doing this),

we need to get our orders in before the rest of the nation starts bombarding heaven with the names of folks they want zonked. You see, if praying for God-delivered woe gets fashionable, everybody may end up on somebody's hit list.

Fact is, you probably won't be part of the "in crowd" unless at least one entire church is praying for you to drop dead.

Like most waves, once a thing like this starts it isn't long before everyone gets in on it. Who can forget those early days of the deliverance wave when everyone who was anyone showed up at a meeting with a handful of paper towels and a brown bag to puke in. Gold lapel pins with the words "COME OUT" certified you were available, at the screech of a demon, to exorcise even the most unwilling applicant.

Now the lapel pins have changed to lightning bolts. I mean, if God was willing to strike that English cathedral in York a few years ago and blow a hole in the ceiling just because the bishop said he didn't believe in the virgin birth, what will He do if a God-and-country, Bible-believing, pulpit-thumping evangelical who has a picture of Pat Robertson tattooed on his chest (right over his heart) puts in an order to blow away Tip O'Neill? If I were the house speaker—or any one of those five liberal justices—I'd go out tonight and buy a lightning rod. And I sure wouldn't play golf during a thunderstorm.

It's kind of heady, being able to order God around. Most folks simply have to wait until nature takes its course and folks drop dead from eating too much Baked Alaska. But not my friends. They've got the power to call down fire wherever they want it—on the Russians, the U.S. Supreme Court, even the Presbyterian Church.

In short, you better be careful whom you make angry. Some Christian just might stick a pin in *your* doll. After all, what's the difference in asking God to kill people and a bit of voodoo? A curse is a curse, whether it's an incantation by a witch doctor or some fundamentalist preacher. ■

Note: In the 1985-1986 Florida Magazine Association awards competition, Last Word placed second, for regular columns. It also received a second place award for standing feature at this year's Evangelical Press Association meeting.