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# Anti-circumcision group protests at Manchester intersection

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Members of Bloodstained Men & Their Friends, a California-based nonprofit organization, protested Monday in support of circumcision education and anti-circumcision policy at the corner of Buckland Street and Pleasant Valley Road in Manchester.

Joseph O'Leary / Journal Inquirer

MANCHESTER — Members of the organization Bloodstained Men & Their Friends stood Monday at the town's busiest intersection to condemn circumcision.

More than a dozen members and supporters of the California-based nonprofit stood at the four corners of the intersection of Buckland Street and Pleasant Valley Road. Many wore white shirts and pants with red paint on the crotch, and held signs opposing circumcision.

Harry Guiremand, the organization's road spokesman from Kapaa, Hawaii, said Monday's stop in Manchester was part of a 21-day tour of the northeastern United States. The group is traveling from Delaware to Maine, then to Pennsylvania.

"We are an educational organization," he said, intending to spread the message that "circumcision is unnecessary, painful, harmful."

The group opposes infant and childhood circumcision, saying has no health benefits and "violates the child's right to its own body," Guiremand said. "It's a right enshrined in the universal declaration of human rights."

Traffic occasionally snarled at the intersection as onlookers slowed and stopped to look at the protesters. Some drivers honked or rolled down their windows to speak to protesters, while others yelled at the group or mocked them as they drove through.

Police Capt. Christopher Davis said police received several calls regarding protesters running in and out of traffic, but police on the scene didn't see them break any laws.

Guiremand said he believed it was a false report filed by a driver opposing the organization.

Some members of the group travel nationally, visiting 60 cities a year, said group founder Brother K, who said he legally changed his name in 1986 in support of circumcision education. K said he self-published a manuscript in 1980, "The Circumcision Instinct," and sparked protests in that decade.

After a break, the group began protesting again in 2012, when K said the American Academy of Pediatrics came out with a statement saying that the health benefits of newborn male circumcision outweigh the risks, but are not great enough to recommend universal newborn circumcision.

That energized protests and led K to found the organization.

The group began using the bloodstained suits, which Guiremand said represent the lasting wound of circumcision, to draw attention.

“It’s provocative,” Guiremand said, “but it’s a necessary tactic to get attention.”

“It’s shocking, but truthful,” added K. “It’s a powerful protest symbol.”

Guiremand said the group isn’t looking to ban all circumcision, but seeks to make it a choice, comparing it to body modifications like tattooing.

Some protesters travel nationally with the group, relying on donations, while others, including Cassandra Cross of New Hampshire and “regret mom” Karen Prue, who said she lives about 45 minutes away from Manchester, join the group for regional protests.

Cross said she became interested in protesting with the group after learning about it on Facebook, and Monday was her third time traveling to a New England protest.

Prue said she regrets having her own sons circumcised and said the risks of the operation outweigh the benefits, saying it’s “like cutting off a pinky finger because you’re scared of dirt under the nail.”