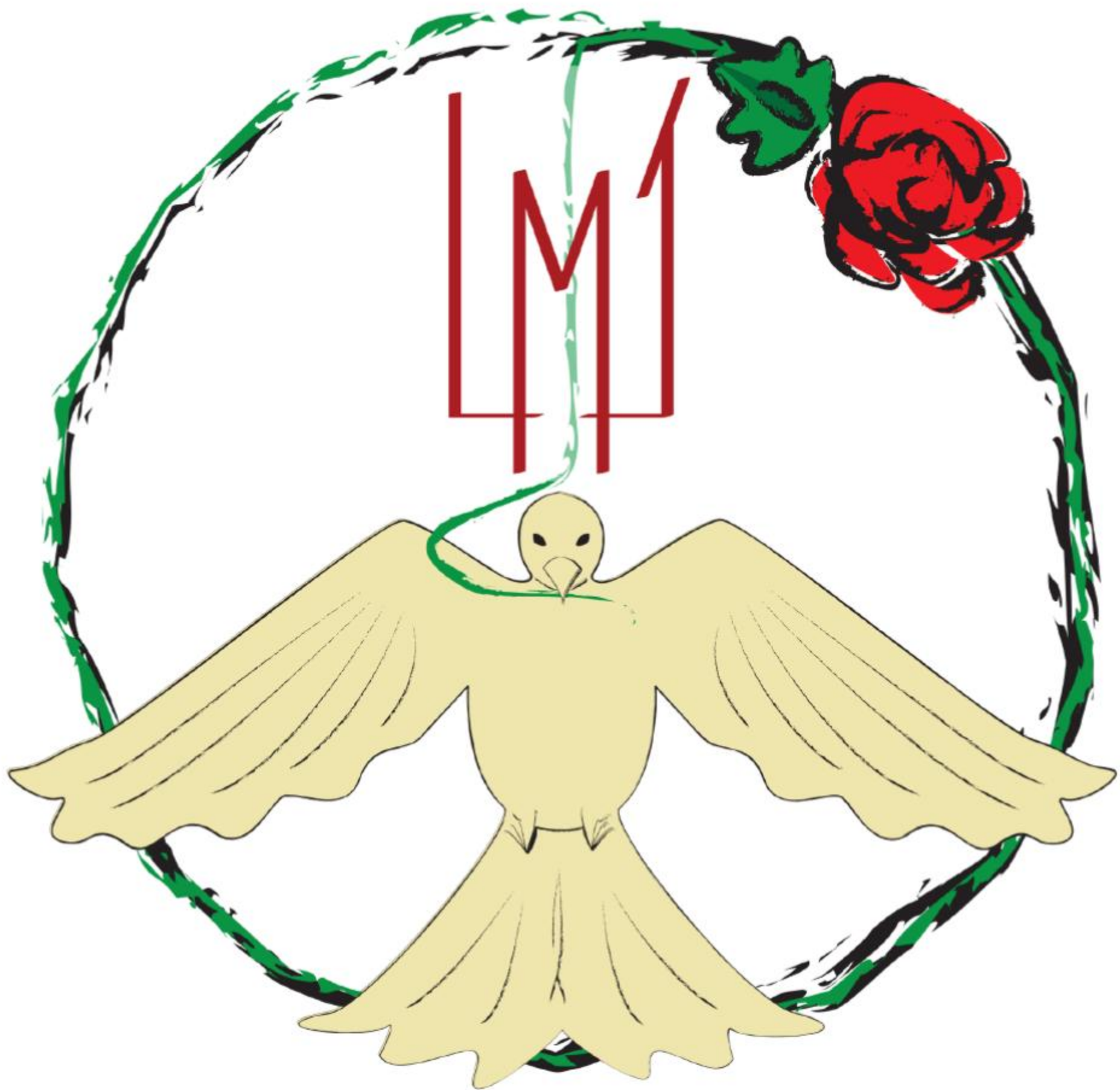


FOR PEACE AND ALL LIFE
VOLUME 1 - ISSUE 3



LIFE MATTERS
JOURNAL

This journal is dedicated to the aborted, the bombed, the executed, the euthanized, the abused, the raped, and all other victims of violence, whether legal or illegal.

We have been told by our society and our culture wars, that those of us who oppose these acts of violence must be divided. We have been told to take a lukewarm, half-way attitude toward the victims of violence. We have been told to embrace some with love while endorsing the killing of others.

We reject that conventional attitude, whether it's called "Left" or "Right", and instead embrace a consistent life ethic toward *all* victims of violence.

We are Life Matters Journal, and we're here to defang the viper that is legalized homicide.

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LIFE MATTERS JOURNAL

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INTRODUCTION - LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear readers, supporters, and friends,

These past few months have been interesting, to say the least. Certainly eye-opening and educational on many, many levels. I learned that we will probably get yelled at or scolded wherever we go, because hey, we're approaching things from a different angle than what somebody wanted. At the Students for Life of America Annual Conference, we were scolded by some zealous Christians who claimed that we could not be secular because you had to be Christian to value life. Some other attendees were upset that we had submissions by LGBT individuals or Muslims. It hurt a little to get the criticism, but we got a generally good response and I was pleased by the interest that students exhibited. We have some new interns on staff which we will be introducing formally in our next issue. So I shrugged off the anger and prepared myself for the next venture.

In case you weren't aware, I was one of the plenary speakers at the Consistent Life Conference this year. I was really thoroughly excited to share the enthusiasm of young people and have a platform to talk about the young movement. I was, of course, also terrified, being that public speaking is about my least favorite thing ever. But there was criticism; some very hard-lined supporters of the Consistent Life Ethic claimed that I, and Life Matters Journal, "shouldn't be [there]," because we were against only unjust violence. Some of the comments wounded my pride in the work that we do here at Life Matters Journal. I felt personally attacked and it has been really difficult to get back on the horse again. I struggled in considering the future of the Journal.

But I realized something in the end that I could not shake off: this work is bigger than me. This cause is more important than my pathetic, wounded pride. Whether or not I want to do it, I have a moral responsibility to do something to change the world, and end aggressive violence. Hopefully in the next issue I will address just war/just force/just defense and we can discuss it further. But in the meantime, please continue reading. And if you find these causes to be important to you, continue writing and adding your voice to the conversation.

For peace and all life,



Aimee Bedoy

Have a letter for the editors here at Life Matters Journal? Please write us at lifemattersjournal@gmail.com to let us know what you think.

Just put in the subject line "Letter" and we will post it in our next issue along with our responses.

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CURRENT EVENTS AND CONSISTENT LIFE

JUSTICE FOR TRAYVON MARTIN AND HIS PARENTS

by Jen Roth

Most of the talk of reproductive rights in mainstream politics and media in the United States revolves around not bearing children. Family planning advocates, ourselves included, argue for sex education and access to contraception to prevent unintended pregnancy. Pro-choice advocates argue for a right not to bear children who have been conceived.

What is too often neglected in the mainstream discourse is the right to have children, and to raise them safely and with dignity. One reproductive right that women of color do not have in this country is the right to raise their children free of the fear that their babies will be killed because they are “suspicious.” (Please see blogs: <http://arewomenhuman.me/2012/03/17/trayvon-martin/>, <http://www.lawson-ry.com/2012/1434.html>, <http://irenesdaughters.wordpress.com/2012/03/15/justice-for-trayvon-martin/>)

Trayvon Martin was a 17-year-old African American who was visiting family in Sanford, Florida. On



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February 26, during halftime of the NBA All-Star Game, he walked to a nearby store to get candy for his brother and a can of tea for himself. As he walked back to his father's home, the hood of his sweatshirt pulled up against the rain, he was spotted by the (self-appointed, as far as I've been able to tell) Neighborhood Watch captain George Zimmerman. Zimmerman, 28, thought Trayvon looked "like he's up to no good, or he's on drugs or something. It's raining, and he's just walking around, looking about." He called 911, then told the dispatcher "these assholes, they always get away" and "he's running." Zimmerman left his SUV to chase Martin, despite being told by the 911 dispatcher that a squad car was on the way and he did not need to follow him. Neighbors reported hearing a fight, and cries for help. On one 911 tape, cries and a gunshot can be heard. When police arrived, Trayvon Martin was dead -- shot in the chest by George Zimmerman. Zimmerman claimed he had acted in self-defense. Sanford police accepted his explanation, saying that they had no probable cause to believe otherwise, despite the fact that Zimmerman shot an unarmed minor with whom he had needlessly initiated a confrontation.

Trayvon Martin had no history of violence or misbehavior, and had no drugs or alcohol in his system. George Zimmerman has a history of belligerent behavior, and was not tested for drugs or alcohol.

I think of how devastated I would be if this happened to my daughter. I also know that it wouldn't happen to my white daughter; she will never be found guilty of Walking While Black (see: <http://www.sockitmama.com/2012/03/17/walking-while-black-a-mothers-worst-nightmare/>). If she were killed while walking down the street on a simple errand, police would pursue and charge her killer. So while I stand in solidarity with Trayvon's parents, I also don't presume to really know what they're going through, or what all the parents of young men of color who fear that their

It's too late to help Trayvon Martin's family keep their son alive. Here's how you can help them with their demand for accountability for his death:

1. Sign their petition (see: <http://www.change.org/petitions/prosecute-the-killer-of-our-son-17-year-old-trayvon-martin>) asking the Florida State's Attorney to prosecute George Zimmerman. Or call the office of State's Attorney Wolfinger at 407-665-6410.
2. Contact the Department of Justice to ask them to investigate the case and the reluctance of Sanford police to act.
3. Call Attorney Jasmine Rand at 850-222-3333 to give to the family's legal fund.
4. Share this information. Follow @attorneycrump and @blacklaw18 and the #TrayvonMartin hashtag on Twitter, or "like" the Justice for Trayvon Martin page on Facebook, or follow the blogs I've suggested here. Don't let the case fade away without so much as a charge.

NOT ANOTHER WAR BASED ON SUSPICION *by Nicholas Neal*

Before I make the case for why we should not attack Iran, I would at first like to apologize. When I was in high school, I, like many conservative Christians, had supported the Iraq war. Like many Christians I had fused my religion with neoconservative ideology thus blinding myself to the evils of war with "patriotic" rhetoric, and a messianic faith in the American state. When I went to college I had delved deeper into the pro-life philosophy and discovered the consistent life ethic. I realized that the continuation of the pro-life philosophy can only result in opposition war. Now I see our country heading down toward the same mistake in Iran. Attacking a country based on suspicion. Some neoconservative commentators have even had the nerve to dust off the phrase "Weapons of mass destruction" as a reason to preemptively attack Iran. As a matter of penance, I cannot be silent, because as Martin Luther King Jr. said when he spoke out against

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the Vietnam war, “A time comes when silence is betrayal.” [1.]

First I would like to examine the ethics of war itself, and in doing so I will largely draw from Murray Rothbard’s famous essay “War, Peace, and the State”[2.]. Let us say that Jack attacks Patrick and attempts to do lethal harm to him. Now alas, I am not a pacifist (yet) and I would actually agree that Patrick has a right to defend himself, even if it means killing Jack. However, let us say that during this conflict, Jack escapes and hides in a crowd of people. Is Patrick morally justified in spraying a machine gun in the crowd to kill Jack, Is he morally allowed to throw a grenade in the crowd to kill Jack? The answer is no. Killing innocent human beings is an absolute moral evil. It is the reason why Patrick felt he had a right defend himself in the first place. This is something that we as proliferers should understand. It would be wrong to think that the state is above this type of moral law. For the

State is made up of individuals like Patrick and by that logic, are bound by the same moral law as he is. Thus the moral problems of war are exposed. The innocent civilians killed are not part of some utilitarian price to pay for some greater good. Their deaths are the result of an immoral act. It should be noted that in condemning the killing of civilians in war I am not intending to show malice toward our soldiers. Their lives are just as threatened by war and several veterans have joined the anti-war movement due to seeing at first glance, war’s evils.

Now I have not even touched on the flaws of preemption. Which is comparable to a case where, Jack has not even attacked Patrick, but Patrick suspects he will and thus blows up Jack’s house killing him and his family.

Some Christians are stating that we must go to war for theological reasons. Stating that Israel is God’s holy nation and thus we must align our foreign policy to Israel’s and whenever Israel goes to war, we must join them. I am not going to debate the theological status of Israel. That has been the subject of debate in Christendom for centuries. What I will argue is that there is no theological imperative for Christians to fight and kill for any government, any race, or any nationality. There are several more theological imperatives to live in peace with all people. (Hebrews 12:14) In deed the early church, many of whom were Jews, refused to kill in war for three centuries. Thus as a Christian myself, I think the quasi-theological reasons for killing our Iranian brothers are deeply flawed, if not totally contradictory to the test of Christians set forth in 1 John 4:20.

What about Iran itself though? Do we know that they are making Nuclear weapons? Would that really justify a preemptive attack? Has the leader of Iran really said that he wants to “wipe Israel off the map”? The answer to the first question is that we don’t know whether or not they are developing nuclear weapons. We suspect that they are making nuclear weapons, perhaps that suspicion is true perhaps it is not. However from this vantage point it is not justified to launch a

war killing massive amounts of innocent people based on a suspicion. The fact of the matter is, the U.S. has not even begun to engage in diplomatic efforts with Iran, and we should not demonize diplomatic efforts as somehow “caving” in to evil demands. Ronald Reagan had engaged in diplomatic efforts with the Soviets who we knew had nuclear weapons. Talking with a country that might be trying to make one is not as crazy when compared to negotiating with one that made stockpiles!

In regard to Iran’s “leader”, the media’s inflation of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s “presidency” is quite laughable. The Iranian president is ranked 14th in power in their government. He does not have much decision making power over foreign policy and is easily outranked by the “supreme leader” of Iran. In regard to Ahmadinejad’s statement about “wiping Israel off the map” this is also an exaggeration. The original translation of the statement was that “the regime occupying Jerusalem must vanish from the page of time.”[3.] Ahmadinejad’s power irrelevance combined with the vagueness of his buzz line statement further weakens the case of launching an attack on Iran.

Finally the confusion over just war theory must be dealt with. Just war theory does not make every war just. There are several obstacles that must be exhausted first. It is meant to limit war, not to make us quick to it. We have not even begun to exhaust diplomatic resources with Iran. The threat is not assured. Attacking a country based on suspicion can hardly be called defense. Finally innocent people will be killed if we launch another war on a third world country. To advocate such a war so carelessly does not show a proper respect for the sanctity of human life.

[1.] King, Martin Luther, “Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence”, speech delivered at Riverside Church in New York City, 1967

[2.] Rothbard, Murray, “War, Peace, and the State”, *The Standard*, 1963 <<http://www.lewrockwell.com/rothbard/rothbard26.html>>

[3.] Steele, Jonathan, “Lost In Translation”, *Guardian.co.uk*, 14 June 2006, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2006/jun/14/post155>>

ESSAYS

RACE, ABORTION,
AND THE MILITARY:
A TRAGIC PARALLEL

by Julia Smucker

As explosive a combination of topics as the subject of this article appears to be, I am aiming here to address a systemic problem in a way that can hopefully cut through the usual polemics. The particular problem I am referring to is the disproportionately large representation of racial minorities in both abortion rates and military recruitment in the United States. I am using this problem as both a concrete example of how life issues interpenetrate and a jumping-off point for addressing them each more broadly while continuing to hold them in parallel. I aim above all to avoid the finger-pointing that occurs far too frequently on all sides of these issues and to make instead a proposal for reconciliation.

One can read any number of things into the statistics, depending on what one is looking for. Some activists have accused abortion providers or military recruiters of deliberately targeting minorities, but on reflection, I doubt that such charges are either true or helpful. In all probability there are many people working for organizations such as Planned Parenthood who sincerely believe they are helping by providing health care to the underserved and many military recruiters who likewise believe they are helping by providing education and career opportunities. And in fact they are providing these things—but at a far greater cost than they can or will acknowledge. In both cases, life-affirming activities are bound tightly together

with life-denying ones, and the added racial dynamic only compounds the problem. When minorities are compelled to sacrifice both their unborn and adult children in disproportionate numbers, what this amounts to is systemic racism, which is no less unjust for being unintended. Several injustices combine to create this problem, and violence is at the heart of each.

In responding to such complex problems, it should go without saying that it is not enough to simply be anti-abortion or anti-war or even both. Even the more positive identifiers of “pro-life” and “pro-peace” are often sadly reduced to narrowly “anti” connotations, especially when they are talked about in a vacuum and compartmentalized as separate “issues” in a way that ignores their interrelatedness. In order to promote life and peace, it is necessary to break apart the vacuum-sealed compartments and address the connections among issues, both by targeting the root causes of violence and providing consistently life-affirming alternatives.

Regarding the root causes, I see the deeper question beyond the statistics as this: what leads so many Americans, and minorities in particular, into situations in which abortion or military enlistment appears to be the only viable option? This question is big enough to deserve its own separate treatment

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and touches on a variety of areas beyond my expertise, so I will not attempt to answer it here. Yet it must be raised as an essential foundation for preventing violence through the creation of nonviolent alternatives. If, instead of debating the justification of certain forms of violence, we could begin by agreeing that they should all be prevented as much as possible, then we could focus on making such prevention our common goal: from crisis pregnancy centers to ensuring a just livelihood for parents and children at all stages of life; from equal-opportunity education to just peacemaking and conflict prevention strategies. Maybe then we wouldn't even need to argue on the level of hawks and doves, pro-life and pro-choice.

In proposing this basis for common action, let me acknowledge outright that I have been speaking from the premise that all violence is intrinsically

evil—and that war, abortion, and racism are all forms of violence. We could easily go around in circles debating the finer points of this premise, but I would like to suggest a better alternative. Whether or not one can fully agree with my premise, I hope that we can all at least agree that all three of the above are tragic and undesirable and that, given this agreement, it is possible to work together toward eradicating their root causes and providing positive alternatives. This strikes me as a much better use of our energies than debating whether and under what circumstances any of these tragedies may be permissible.

In the end, what I am calling for is nothing less than a paradigm shift, by which it will become possible to see allies in those we have seen as enemies.

A version of this piece previously appeared on Vox Nova (www.vox-nova.com).

SUSAN B. ANTHONY WAS SLUT-SHAMED, TOO!

by Mary Krane Derr

Have you ever been slut-shamed—that is, cast as a sexually disordered, out-of-control woman? Take heart. You are in excellent company. Name any independent, outspoken woman from history, and you can probably find feverish, unreality-based, perverted fulminations against her sexual character. Even the nineteenth-century suffragist leader Susan B. Anthony (1820-1906), a seventh-generation Quaker and confirmed temperance advocate whom no one ever knew to endorse, let alone live out, a wild, partying lifestyle, received this treatment.

Anthony has become such a hallowed icon today that even advocates of “traditional family values,” such as the Rick Santorum-endorsing Susan B. Anthony List, try to claim her. Never mind that she pointedly chose a life for herself as a single woman and non-parent. Although she kept her romantic relationships, if any, intensely private, Anthony probably was a lesbian. Whatever her own sexual orientation might have been, she warmly supported the “Boston marriages,” or same-sex domestic partnerships, of other suffragist women.

Anthony did oppose abortion. This was not because abortion supposedly allowed “bad” women to have sex without “consequences,” however. Rather, she deemed it unjust prenatal life-taking that resulted

directly from wrongs against women, such as the denial of their family planning rights. This was the oft-expressed editorial stance on abortion of the Revolution, the newspaper she ran, with her dear friend Elizabeth Cady Stanton, from 1868 to 1870. As the paper’s business manager, Anthony implemented its “no exceptions” policy—unusual for journals of that time—against publishing lucrative abortion advertisements. The New York Times, a paper that profited handsomely from such ads, “lament[ed] the indecency” of the Revolution, that is, its outspokenness on sexual and reproductive matters. The Revolution then editorialized:

In the frontier states we have seen kitchen fires made of wood eight feet long, and shovel and tongs to match. But no tongs were ever long enough to touch many advertisements that smut the columns of the Times, and which only its insatiable greed of gain enables even itself to tolerate.

Anthony was by then already quite accustomed to insults against feminists’ sexual characters, including her own. As early in her activist career as 1853, a newspaper published this piece of character assassination after she publicly defended women’s right to prevent unsought pregnancies:

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With a degree of impiety which was both startling and disgusting, this shrewish maiden counseled the numerous wives and mothers present to separate from their husbands whenever they became intemperate, and particularly not to allow the said husbands to add another child to the family (probably no married advocate of woman's rights would have made this remark). Think of such advice given in public by one who claims to be a maiden lady!...What in the name of crying babies does Miss Anthony know about such matters?

The sneering tone; the mixing up of birth control with improperly obtained carnal knowledge and wronged babies: doesn't this sound all too familiar?

As president of the 1858 National Woman's Rights Convention, Anthony permitted two speakers onto the platform to make the case for voluntary motherhood. Not only did she agree that women had this right, but, as one newspaper reported, she "said that when the platform was free there could be no danger from discussion, as truth must prevail." Much of the

press went into a frenzy, alleging that Anthony's convention was all about the promotion of "free love," which in the views of its detractors meant utterly self-absorbed, unbridled, destructive lust—and such lust on the part of women, who were supposed to have no libido whatsoever. In response to the newspaper coverage, mobs threatened the convention hall. For the rest of her life, antifeminists charged Anthony with "free loveism." These accusations sometimes plunged into breathtakingly paranoid conspiracy seeking. For example, in 1871, a Seattle journalist exposed--or thought he exposed—what she was really all about:

It is a mistake to call Miss Anthony a reformer... she is a revolutionist, aiming at nothing less than the breaking up of the very foundations of society, and the overthrow of every social institution organized for the protection of the sanctity of the altar, the family circle and the legitimacy of our offspring, recognizing no religion but self-worship, no God but human reason, no motive to human action but lust... [T]he apparently innocent measure of woman suffrage as a remedy for women's wrongs in over-crowded populations, is but a pretext or entering wedge by which to open Pandora's box and let loose upon society a pestilential brood to destroy all that is pure and beautiful in human nature.

She did not directly and positively broach the licentious social theories which she is known to entertain, because she knew well that they would shock the sensibilities of her audience... It is true that Miss Anthony did not openly advocate free love and a disregard of the sanctity of the marriage relation, but she did worse—under the guise of defending women against manifest wrongs, she attempts to instill into their minds an utter disregard for all that is right and conservative in the present order of society.

How did Susan B. Anthony persist despite all the slut-shaming, despite all the misogynists who just

knew far better than she ever could what she was all about and what was really good for her sex? Anthony resolutely refused to divide womankind into the “pure” and the “impure,” confident in her knowledge that all women were both human beings of inestimable value and yet potentially at the mercy of exploitative and violent men. She calmly saw through the tactic of slut-shaming and named it for what it was: a trivializing distraction. She persuaded an 1869 meeting of the Equal Rights Association to set aside a resolution repudiating “free loveism” with these words:

This howl comes from the men who know that when women get their rights...they [will] be able to live honestly and not be compelled to sell themselves for bread, either in or out of marriage...We can not [sic] be frightened from our purpose, the public mind can not long be prejudiced by this free love cry of our enemies.

Unfortunately the public mind remains all too prejudiced by the cry of “free love,” despite the heroic work of Anthony and so many other foremothers, as well as more recent feminists. If Susan B. Anthony could be slut-shamed, that just goes to show: it can happen to any woman, especially any woman who dares to challenge the power of men over women. In other words, it can and does happen to the best of us, whatever our own personal sexual histories happen or don't happen to be.

[1] Lillian Faderman, *To Believe in Women: What Lesbians Have Done for America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 24-30, most strongly makes the case for Anthony's lesbianism and documents her support of Boston marriages like that between her niece Lucy Anthony and the Rev. Dr. Anna Howard Shaw.

[2] Parker Pillsbury, “Quack Medicines” (editorial), *Revolution*, March 26, 1868; Susan B. Anthony to Anna Dickinson, February 13, 1868, Elizabeth Cady Stanton-Susan B. Anthony [ECS-SBA] Papers, microfilm edition, Reel 12, 831; Susan B. Anthony to William Lloyd Garrison, March 8, 1868, ECS-SBA Papers, microfilm edition, Reel 12, 845; “What the Press Says of Us,” *Revolution*, February 5, 1868; “The Times Turned Preacher,” *Revolution*, August 20, 1868.

[3] Editorial, *Utica Evening Telegraph*, reprinted in Ida Husted Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, Volume One (Indianapolis: The Hollenbeck Press, 1898), 84.

[4] Susan B. Anthony, quoted in “Woman's Rights Convention,” *New York Daily Tribune*, May 14, 1858. On the uproar, see Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, Volume One, 162-163, and Carol Faulkner, *Lucretia Mott's Heresy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 158.

[5] Beriah Brown, *Seattle Territorial Dispatch*, reprinted in Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, Volume One, 401-402.

[6] Susan B. Anthony, quoted in Harper, *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*, Volume One, 313-314.

ON DATE RAPE: RESPONDING TO AND DECREASING SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

by Mary Stroka

There's a problem that plagues many campuses across the nation and around the globe. It's not an issue of low-quality food in the cafeteria, but something much more serious: violence – specifically date rape.

Statistical information about rape is unreliable, partly because of the sensitive nature of the issue, but the prevalence of rape is certainly a problem, even if it is not as high as statistics suggest. The National Center for Victims of Crime states on its Campus Dating Violence fact sheet that about 1 in 20 American “college women experience a completed or attempted rape in a given year,” citing a 2000 study from the U.S. Department of Justice entitled *The Sexual Victimization of College Women*, by Bonnie Fisher, Francis Cullen, and Michael Turner. The problem is definitely global, as evidenced by the World Health Organization's 2005 report *WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women*. The study found that 59 percent of surveyed Ethiopian women who had ever had a relationship had experienced sexual violence at least once.

Although there is a movement, composed of several organizations and initiatives, to fight against this wrongdoing, date rape and other forms of domestic violence persist. It's essential communities start and continue to fight this crime that can happen to anyone.

The Gift of Fear, a 1997 bestseller by Gavin de Becker, helped further the discussion of the issue by addressing date rape and other instances of violence and how people should react in and after such situations. De Becker designed the MOSAIC Threat Assessment Systems, which are used to help discern whether government officials are at risk. He is also a senior fellow at UCLA's School of Public Affairs.

This book is about understanding how to protect oneself from violence and is a worthwhile read for anyone who has experienced violence or who understands that the chances he or she will experience violence aren't exactly low. De Becker states that it becomes more likely for someone to enter a dangerous situation if he or she ignores signals that come from true fear.

The writer recommends people ask more questions about the people whom they hire, such as babysitters. There are several “survival signals,” de Becker writes, which those who are seeking victims tend to cover up, usually using methods that can actually reveal them.

One of the signals is “forced teaming,” which is when an attacker tries to convince the potential victim to trust him by using the word “we,” as in, “How are we going to handle this?” The best defense, de Becker writes, from forced teaming is to flatly refuse to be thought of as being part of a

partnership. Although a person who refuses this may think of the action as rude, the situation may call for some “rudeness” for the sake of safety. Forced teaming is inappropriate, and the potential victim should remain firm in this conviction.

Another is “typecasting,” which is when someone labels the victim something that the victim may try to disprove. For example, an attacker may say something like, “you’re probably too conceited to pay me any attention,” which may encourage the victim to engage in conversation or otherwise prove that she is not conceited. The defense for this one is silence and remembering that what he says is trivial.

A third is ignoring the word “no.” If a person refuses to listen to the word no, de Becker states, “[he] is seeking control or refusing to relinquish it.” De Becker says people should say no in a steady and direct manner and remember that it can be a complete sentence; it’s better to risk coming off rude than to risk safety.

Lowering violence is something that should be a community effort as well. People, especially victims of violence, need to know they are not alone in their pain. The stigma a rape victim often experiences needs to be rejected by a community that refuses to be tolerant of violence and is supportive of victims and their loved ones (who are also hurt when a person chooses to injure someone they care for).

The family and friends of victims don’t necessarily need to avoid talking about the subject, but it’s essential that they allow and encourage the victim to speak and also are sensitive about the issue. Jokes about rape, for example, are extremely inappropriate because the situation should not be taken lightly.

The Sexual Assault Center of Pierce County in Tacoma, Washington, includes detailed information on its website, www.sexualassaultcenter.com, about how rape affects the victim’s family and friends. The Center refers to these supporters of the victim as “secondary victims” and has some suggestions for them.

Family counseling may be helpful for a family dealing with the trauma of the experience because secondary victims may also have emotional and physiological reactions: these feelings may include anger and resentment toward the victim, as well as doubting the victim. The victim may pick up on these attitudes, perhaps resulting in more feelings of humiliation. The secondary victims may also feel impatient, guilty, and fearful because of the pain the primary victim has experienced, and counseling could help facilitate healing.

Family and friends play a key role in the recovery process of a rape victim. “The victim needs to find a sensitive, caring response. Without supportive responses from family members and others, victims remain victims, rather than becoming survivors,” according to the Center’s website. A supportive response from friends and family includes encouraging him or her to retain a normal lifestyle, making themselves available to talk, keeping what he or she shares confidential, and empowering the individual.

Empowerment comes through reassuring the victim that he or she is strong and will grow as he or she moves through recovery, instead of constantly shepherding him or her, which may lead to a more deeply ingrained sense of helplessness. The victim needs to have the opportunity to mourn and process the rape, but, at the same time, have the support of family and friends.

The website also encourages supporters of the victim to ask what the victim needs and support the victim in declaring his or her needs and making decisions about subsequent action.

Rape victims may want to call a free, confidential, 24-hour hotline such as 1.800.656.HOPE, the National Sexual Assault Hotline, or visit websites, such as RAINN.org, that have relevant resources.

[1] Gavin de Becker, *The Gift of Fear* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1998), 73.

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TRUE LIFE

POLAR-IZED LANGUAGE

A TRUE LIFE STORY

by Carol Crossed



Here is a conversation I had with a tourist guide in the country of Greenland.

I went to the Arctic Circle for some R & R and to learn about polar explorations. I fell in love with a pair of child's sealskin slippers. I was poised to buy them.

"You are from the United States, no?" she asked in her nicest ever tourist voice. "It is one country you cannot bring in the skin of the seal."

Seeing my confused look, she explained, "It is how you say, a populist law, only made in US." She paused to make sure there was no offense. "It is not

fair law. We use every part of the seal and throw nothing away."

This reminded me of foot long strips of seal meat I had seen drying from porches on tiny colorful family homes for Greenlandic winter consumption, and for their husky sledge dogs laying lazily around in the summer sun hiding in the rock crevices where we trekked. And I recalled the stench wafting from seal tanning factories on harbors of tiny settlements, where warm outerwear was produced, that left me with little appetite.

"It is the baby seals that the US tries to protect." This from a fellow tourist, a Dane, chiming in on

the conversation. I immediately remembered the PBS documentary.

The tour guide's gentle response is a question: "But in America you can take the knife to the Inuit not born, no?" Behind the kiosk, I see that she is actually pregnant. She says this and caresses her midriff.

Inuit. At a lecture I attended by and about Arctic people, I am reminded that Inuit is only another word for 'human being'. I wonder if Greenland is like other European countries, struggling to maintain replacement levels of population. One tiny settlement of 150 we visited boasted 27 elementary children, whom they claimed a cherished resource.

Her obvious reference to abortion rights left me dumbfounded. As a pro-life activist, didn't I come to the Arctic Circle to get away from debates like these?

I mumbled under my breath, "Don't go there with me."

"S'kuse me?" she says.

"I said I don't think that is right either. Killing babies of any sort, seal or human. It's just that in our country one has a choice to believe if a baby is human or not human." I realized how utterly ridiculous that sounded only after I said it.

"The baby seal is not human, yes? This is my choice to believe, no?" I really set myself up for that one. This young bright woman should be doing something other than selling souvenirs.

But the Dane once again comes to my rescue. "I think it is the clubbing of seals that the US opposes." (Please God; don't let her ask me if clubbing a baby seal is less compassionate than scraping a human fetus from the womb with a curette.)

The conversation goes from bad to worse. "Ah...if we kill seals with the gun it would be, how do you say, political? Like the US bomb in the war?" (Note

to self: Vacation in Antarctica in '09.)

"Actually all of these killings are wrong." That would be me, the moralistic American

"But some killings you can do. Because you can choose in America, no?"

I am slow on the uptake. I begin to understand the posters I see hanging on Greenland public buildings that say "Avoid Cultural Prejudice" and a magazine cover with two mocking Greenlandics in sealskin coats holding a young calf titled 'Save the baby veal'.

I slither away and begin writing in my head a sequel to *The Ugly American*, starring myself.

THE NOISE THAT WON'T GO AWAY

A TRUE LIFE STORY
by Nathan Will Sheets



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The noise is what I remember the most.

The noise itself was not deafening in a literal sense, however my mind remembers it as such. When I have flashbacks, it is the thought of the noise that triggers me first, putting me into a state of anxiety or apprehension. Music is constantly flooding my mind: a song from this musical, or a classical piece by that person or even something that I have made up; I typically do not notice noises around me, or even, in some cases, noises directed at me. This noise, however, could not be avoided or ignored.

I had finally chosen to come out of my shell and

visit with some old friends on that Friday night, the day after Thanksgiving. I was having mixed feelings about seeing them, but overall I was feeling ready to wander into this social New World. We were meeting in Gladstone, only a few miles from my house. I remember, en route, approaching River Road, wondering if I should diverge (it runs perpendicular to McLoughlin, the street I had originally intended to take). I decided to keep on cruising down McLoughlin—River Road was too curvy for my tastes. Besides, I was driving my parents' van due to my car being out of commission, and curvy roads and big vans are to be avoided when possible.

I wonder what we'll be doing tonight, I thought

with some apprehension. These people were my old church friends—a church none of us were a part of anymore. Incidentally, I was no longer a part of any church or religion or “spirituality”, having gotten my fill of religious indoctrination in the years previous. *They’re still kind of really into God—that’s going to be awkward. I wonder if we’ll do anything, or if we’ll just sit around talking. That would be nice, only I really don’t want to talk to them about God. I’d rather just hear how they’re—F*CK!*

I hope the reader excuses the language, because when a person runs in front of your car while you are driving 40 miles per hour, the “f-word” is the only word that any English-speaker thinks, regardless of religious affiliation or moral view of cursing. Indeed, my mind had not finished the entire one-syllable word before the noise entered into my mind forever.

Her head hit the windshield, so the noise included cracking. Her body hit the hood, so the noise included crumpling. My foot was slammed on the brake, so the noise included skidding and swerving. My voice was engaged in some form of horrified expression, so the noise included a whimper.

My eyes squeezed shut as I slammed on the brakes as one does when startled, but I still saw her hit the windshield and hood nonetheless. When I opened my eyes, I saw her—a person: a living, breathing fellow human being on this confusing world of ours, with passions and family and a history—flying 20 feet in front of my car. She lay lifeless in front of my van.

What? What just happened? Is that a person? Oh my god, it’s a person. A person just ran in front—oh my god! What if she’s dead? All of these thoughts, occurring simultaneously, filled my mind, while my body managed to grab my phone, get out of the car, and walk ahead to the nearest cross street so I could tell a 911 operator what had happened and where I was.

There were people. “Somebody help her!” I screamed. Deep down, I knew I should not approach and look at her. I knew she was dead. I had no idea

if it was my fault or not, and I knew seeing her up close would not be good for me later. What I did see from afar was hard to stomach: the shin of one of her legs—*Oh my god, look at her leg! I did that! I did that with my car. Oh my god, she’s dead—*was broken in half, lying irregularly at a ninety-degree angle.

People were hovering over her, with one lady administering CPR. “I’m on McLoughlin and Glen Echo—this woman just ran in front of my car!” More people were gathering—out of taverns, out of cars. *Oh my god, I did this.* “What if she’s dead?”

“Sir, just stay calm, I have emergency response on their way.” The 911 operator gently said, keeping calm, as if I were having a casual Sunday afternoon chat.

My disbelief of the situation began to overwhelm me. More people. Gladstone police, Milwaukie police and Clackamas County Sheriffs were all on the scene. *Don’t faint, Nate. The 911 operator is still on the phone, asking you questions. Be a man. Don’t get overcome with emotion.* “Yes, ma’am, the police just showed up.”

“OK, go ahead and hang up with me and find one of them to talk to.”

As I hung up the phone, my body went into shock. “Where is the driver?” I heard people asking. The voices were muffled and a high-pitched sound filled my head. My head kept drifting down—*Must... find... officer*—and I had to make a concerted effort to keep it up. I walked like a zombie, taking six-inch steps. *The noise... she hit my car so hard. There’s no way she can be alive. Oh my god I just hit a person with my car. It was so loud. Where are the police? I need help!*

“Where’s the driver?” I kept hearing. Forty people were on the scene by this time. Witnesses, bystanders, police, paramedics. I could not find a police officer, even though there were a dozen running around me. My mind did not recognize them. Finally, I found

two bystanders on the sidewalk. I looked at them with sad, lost eyes. "I'm the driver. I can't find an officer," I told them. I must have looked like a child who loses their parents at Disneyland and finally musters up the courage to seek help from a random person on the street.

"Oh my god!" the woman exclaimed with compassion while taking me by the hand, a mere 10 feet to the nearest Sheriff's deputy.

"I'm the driver," I said, as if those were the only words I could put forth. Internally the noise—the cracking, crackling, skidding, screeching, whimpering—kept going through my mind. It would not stop. Over and over again my mind heard the noise and saw her hit and fly in front of the car. It would not stop.

And yet, I was answering the deputy's questions. "I had one drink about two hours ago", "Was I speeding? I don't think so...", "No, she just ran in front of my car—maybe ten feet ahead of me..." The deputy was beckoned over to the scene. She informed me that the officer taking care of me—like a restaurant hostess telling me who my waiter would be for the evening—would actually be an Oregon State trooper. Four different police agencies, all responding to something I had done. She just ran... in front of the car.

The deputy walked away, leaving me by myself. I stood, forty feet from the lady's lifeless body, watching as they performed CPR on her. People were still everywhere. The entire highway was closed. Oh my god, I did this. Is it my fault?

Two men approached me and asked me if I was the driver. They told me they saw the whole thing, smoking outside the bar they were at. "Dude, she just ran right in front of you!"

"She...she did?" I asked. "Could I have stopped?"

"No way, dude. It was insane."

I have probably not been as grateful for anything in my whole life as I was upon hearing that it was not my fault. I do not know if I felt the gratitude at that moment, or just afterward, but they planted an important seed that would help me later. It's not my fault...

The evening pressed on slowly. Blood and urine tests, a trip to the emergency room, being told the woman had died—everything was happening in a slow-motion, surreal way. I was trying to awaken from my nightmare, but I was not granted such a privilege.

Days passed, and then weeks. I do not know anything about the woman except for her name and that she was 60 years-old. I tried to put together what had happened as the results of the investigations came in. They found that I was not speeding. She's dead. All six witnesses said it was not my fault. It was so loud. The insurance companies and lawyers started their calls. But it's not my fault! I retold the story, as I remembered it, hundreds of times over the next few months, answering questions that ranged from the basic to the ridiculous:

"No, I hadn't been drinking before I got into the car. I had a drink two hours prior."

"What kind of music was I listening to? I don't think I even had the radio on. How is that unusual? I just like driving without a radio on—ask my friends. Why is this relevant?"

"I was driving my dad's van because my car is out of commission. Yes, I'm insured on that car. No, I will not settle."

"I was going to a get-together."

The noise was so loud...

Work resumed, people's memories faded, but the noise remained in my head. During meetings, talking about kids who need help, my mind would hear the noise. I would picture the woman's head smashing against the windshield. "Jonny needs to get his

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prescriptions refilled.” It was so loud. “So why aren’t the foster parents getting them filled?” Why didn’t she use a crosswalk? “They say that there’s an issue with the prescription’s insurance.” She must have misjudged where my van was as she sprinted across the highway... “OK, I’ll get right on it. It’s probably just the computer system, you know how that is.” I picked the wrong week to become an atheist...

I became more isolated than I had ever been before, even more so than after leaving my faith, my “god” and my friends. Hot wings became my nightly companion, in addition to a two-liter of soda. Night after night (playing video games, eating hot wings, and drinking soda) I withdrew from normal human activities, with my only interactions occurring at work. Each day, as soon as I was done working, I would retreat into a fantasy world of swords, guns, portals and bad voice-acting. I began to gain weight. My depression worsened and I could not cry. I did not talk to god, nor to anyone else (except perhaps one close friend) about what I was going through.

And yet I desperately wanted people to know—I

wanted them to know that, during our interactions, I was not really there. I was in a place of sadness and horror and melancholic reflection. But how does one convey the message without feeling like a basket case or a narcissist? Too apprehensive to reach out, I continued my journey in silence.

My personality was completely different than before. I was more cynical, more pessimistic and less smiley than I have been my entire life. I did not make jokes, go to parties or even leave the house on the weekends. My co-workers did not reach out to me, and I did not reach out to them. I allowed them to think that I was a distant person, only warm in certain instances that were few and far between.

We all go through times of mental anguish, perhaps suffering from mental health issues—mostly silently. For the first time, I experienced what that vast majority of my clients at work have experienced their entire lives—a mental health condition. And I am not alone. The National Institute of Mental health estimates that 26% of the American adult population has a mental health issue at any given moment. Because mental health issues can be treated and go away, this does not account for people who at one time or another has had a mental health issue and has worked through it. So the number of people who have or have had a mental health issue is actually quite higher if one takes into account all of the people who have, have had or will have a mental health issue at any time in their life.

Today, mental health conditions take a backseat while we have national dialogues around accommodations for disabilities in the workplace. We, as employers and co-workers are typically willing to accommodate and help someone in a wheelchair, or someone who is blind or even someone with a developmental disability, so long as they are able to do their job—but what of mental health conditions?

Mental health conditions are still treated like something that we just do not talk about. It is the teenager, upon her parents finding out she is pregnant, going

to live with her aunt in Iowa for eight months. It is something about which to be ashamed: people who are retarded can not help it, but people with Bi-Polar Disorder need to “get over themselves”. We consider inquiries into one another’s mental health statuses to be inappropriate and extremely intrusive, unless the person with the condition volunteers that information, in which case they may come across as an attention whore or as being socially awkward. When a person breaks their leg, they receive a vase of flowers and a nice card from the office whereas when a person is admitted to the hospital because of a nervous breakdown, their co-workers probably never find out and assume they have the flu. This hush-hush attitude toward mental health issues is ironic, in that so many people have a mental health issue while significantly fewer have actual disabilities that require accommodation.

Life is not like a movie, where something occurs or someone wanders in to our life, encouraging us to be refreshed and start life anew. Having spent the year 2010 grieving and living in my mental health condition, I noted that the next year was 2011. My favorite number since childhood has been the number 11. It is a balanced number, yet “odd”. What better time to claim something for myself: to rise out of my depression and become bigger than the event that changed me so? So I did it: I claimed 2011 to be “my year”. Even more so, I am fortunate to have a clearer understanding that people all suffer internally at some point in their lives, and I—as a manager, as a friend, as a human being—can be in tune to that, and be the person that can encourage them to turn it around, get some help and rise above their mental health condition.

We all have the choice to be transparent about our issues and use it to change the culture and dialogue about mental health issues, or we can continue a culture of silence around an issue that affects nearly all of us. By the culture changing, encouraging people to be more open about their issues, it may even help decrease episodes of depression, suicide or neglect of

mental health issues that leads to institutionalization or violence.

Since writing this essay for a college course, Nate has been able to work with his co-workers to understand his mental health issues, and he encourages others who are experiencing depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Bi-Polar Disorder or any other mental health issue to be honest with friends, families and co-workers to help end the stigma. Nate found BringChange2Mind.org to be a helpful resource. Nate welcomes emails at natewillsheets@gmail.com. Nate is living a very happy life in Portland, Oregon, where he works with foster children with developmental disabilities and mental health challenges.

We don't just talk the talk...

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THE “MAKE IT HISTORY” CAMPAIGN

LIFE SOCIETY
AT NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND,
GALWAY

submitted by Evelyn Fennelly



Ireland remains one of the only countries in the world without abortion, embryonic stem cell research, or the death penalty. Its armed forces are neutral in wartime, and are only ever sent on peacekeeping missions. Pro-life student groups at Ireland's colleges and universities have a vital role to play in educating the next generation of Irishmen and Irishwomen about the importance of maintaining the country's pro-life ethos.

Life Society at the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) is at the forefront of this mission, seeking to educate the university's students on right to life issues and to foster value and respect for each person's dignity as a human being.

This year, the society has undergone a period of transition. A new committee was elected in Fall 2011 that made the decision to move away from focusing solely on abortion. Life Society's events now also encompass other right to life issues such as capital punishment, gendercide, and racism.

A more engaging approach was adopted by the society, preferring genuine discussion of the issues, rather than relying on shock tactics. This new approach has been successful for the society, with many students commenting that the group seems more approachable and mainstream this year.

In talking to pro-life students, some members of

Life Society and I found that many of them knew why they were pro-life but found it very difficult to articulate their reasons to others. In January we hosted a debating workshop for pro-life students to equip them with the skills to talk to other students about right to life issues. It's extremely important to be pro-life in one's heart, but it's equally important to be able to explain to others why it's necessary that society values human beings' lives equally.

Our organization collaborates with other groups to organise the provision of better support for expecting and parenting students on campus. Thanks to the generosity of donors and alumni, we are in a position to provide some support to students ourselves. Members of Life Society recently founded a support group for expecting and parenting students on campus. Nurture is a weekly informal meeting where expecting and parenting students can meet and share their fears, challenges and achievements. Every three weeks or so, the group hosts a guest speaker or workshop on some aspect of parenting. Supporting expecting and parenting students is a critical function of a university pro-life group; every effort should be made to ensure that female students who find themselves unexpectedly pregnant will be supported in their dual role as parent and student and not see abortion as their only option.

In both semesters, we hosted gendercide information stalls. At these stalls, we showed All Girls Allowed's video "37 Seconds" and encouraged students to sign the Stop Gendercide Now petition. In November, we planned to host Reggie Littlejohn, founder and President of Women's Rights Without Frontiers. Unfortunately Reggie had to return to the United States when her mother unexpectedly passed away and the event had to be cancelled. Life Society's gendercide information booth was one of a series of events in NUIG to mark International Women's Day on March 8th. In addition to the video and petition, we also took photos to contribute to the Women's Rights Without Frontiers' photo campaign to free Chen Guangcheng, a human rights activist jailed in China for exposing forced abortion and other human rights abuses.



photo courtesy of NUI Galway Life Society

Talking to students about gendercide led to some interesting discoveries. Most strikingly, the majority of students either didn't know the practice of gendercide existed or didn't realise its prevalence. All were, of course, aghast once they learned about the issue. It was also remarkable that even when presenting gendercide in the context of a broader pro-life ethic, we received support from students who would never previously have described themselves as pro-life. Having spoken to many NUIG students at Life Society events, it seems that contextualising gendercide as one part of a broader group of right to life issues challenged many of them to reconsider their viewpoint on other issues such as abortion or the death penalty.

Combatting racism is an important, and often forgotten, issue in the pro-life movement. Even today, in supposedly developed countries, venomous institutional racism can be found at the heart of major organisations. We were blessed to be able to host Ryan and Bethany Bomberger from The Radiance Foundation, who gave a presentation on their work challenging institutional racism in Planned Parenthood in the

'BRITISH WOMAN on DEATH ROW'

a Channel 4 documentary

The Death Penalty: What do you think?

An abuse of the right to life?

or

Justice in an age of soaring crime rates?



When? Monday 27th February @ 7:30pm

Where? IT 125

Our final event for the year will be the Inter-Varsity weekend for pro-life student groups in the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. We are really looking forward to meeting our counterparts from other pro-life student groups across the country to share our progress with them and hear about events their groups have organised.

Evelyn is a student at NUI Galway and is a member of the Life Society on her college campus.

Want to have **your group featured** in an upcoming issue of Life Matters Journal in the Make it History Campaign?

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United States. Recently, we screened "Maafa 21: Black Genocide in 21st Century America," which gives an in-depth analysis into the eugenic and racist foundations of the American abortion industry. Although such matters may be difficult to contemplate, we must not shy away from discussing them simply because they are abhorrent. A person's inherent worth is not contingent on the amount of melanin in their skin. Racism erodes a person's human dignity; it is completely unacceptable, and pro-life student groups should loudly and proudly proclaim this message on their campuses.

We recently hosted a screening of "British Woman on Death Row," a documentary about Linda Carty who is currently waiting to be executed in Texas. The death penalty hasn't been used in Ireland since 1954, so the horror associated with capital punishment is now virtually absent from Irish living memory. It is vital that we continue to educate young Irish people so that the country's pro-life laws are never reversed. The right to life is too important a cause to neglect; we must keep working to maintain legal protection for the right to life and to constantly strive to make our society more caring and life-affirming.

We have arranged a few more events before this academic year draws to a close in April. We will be raising money for DigDeep, a human rights advocacy and development initiative committed to promoting and protecting the right to water with a Whole Life ethic. They run education projects across the United States and work to provide safe and sustainable water sources in Sudan. A researcher in NUIG was recently given special recognition by the Irish Cancer Society for her work on stem cell therapy using adult stem cells. In the coming weeks she will be giving a talk to our members on this exciting research. On April 27th, we will have volunteers stationed across the campus to collect donations for the Special Olympics National Collection Day.

**It's going to be a
game changer.**

**Kristan Hawkins
Executive Director,
Students for Life of America**

To learn more, visit ²⁷AbortionSafety.com

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MEDIA REVIEWS AND CONSISTENT LIFE

"OCTOBER BABY" FAILS TO DELIVER *by Aimee Bedoy*

As an avid pro-life activist, I really wanted to love this film. I looked forward to it for months and months, and the preview actually looked decent. Upon sitting down for a pre-screening at the Students for Life of America conference this year, I was so ecstatic to get the chance to go back to my friends and sing its praises. But within the first five minutes, my hopes for a truly good-quality film that I could take back to my friends were dashed.

It is a story of Hannah, who finds out that she is an abortion survivor, and her struggle in finding herself and coming to terms with the circumstances of her birth, her adoption, and her life. It comprises a road trip, college drama that seems like it belongs in middle school, and confrontations galore.

The basic plot to October Baby is the strongest thing that the film has in its arsenal. It had a good starting point with a story based on true-to-life experiences from abortion survivors, but it did not follow up on



the potential that lay within. To be humbly honest, the dialogue seemed contrived and the actors were very obviously overacting; for some that might have been due to the fact that they were very wet behind the ears in the acting realm, but overall it made the whole story seem over-the-top and put-on. In addition, the use of Christian music and saccharine dialogue about grace and faith really made it an inaccessible film to the crowd that I believe we should be aiming to persuade in the anti-abortion movement. *October Baby* seemed to be preaching to the choir, when we should use an art form as powerful as film to reach out to those people who we might have struggled to reach on a daily basis.

Finally, I would like to add a major qualm that I had with *October Baby* after I had finished watching it: despite the fact that the slogan for the film is “Every Life is Beautiful,” it did not address the core issue in the abortion debate. At the end of the film, Hannah approaches her adoptive father and says to him, “Thank you for wanting me.” This does exactly what the pro-abortion-choice side has been saying all along: that your life is not worth living unless you are wanted. Whether that be by birthparents or adoptive parents, our worth as persons does not lie in whether or not we are wanted, but in our humanity. They did not address the issue of humanity and worth at all, but put the ball back in the court of “wantedness,” and brought us back to square one.

Overall, I would not recommend that my friends or family see *October Baby*, but rather, that they endeavor and push to see good quality films that address real-world issues in a way that can reach the general public, and not just fellow Christians who already agree on all of the same issues. The thing that Christian filmmakers need to realize is that simply because a film is made by good people, does not mean that the film will be of high quality or make it worth seeing. An art form like film has such immense reach and immense power, but mediocre films will do little to advance our cause in the grand scheme of things.

“LOVE” SPEAKS VOLUMES *by Anthony Bedoy*



Angels and Airwaves is a band not largely appreciated by the general public, mostly due to the whiney voice and poppy feeling to their music. Whatever one feels regarding such types of music is largely irrelevant to the powerful message conveyed in their first full-length film, *Love*. This independent film, released in 2011, won awards at countless film festivals, shocked and awed viewers with scenes of colors, lights, and sounds unlike any other. As an introduction, the film begins as the International Space Station orbits a darkened and shadowed Earth as a narrator with a tormented voice is heard: “They say, when you hear sounds of devils, all else is quiet.” The story revolves around



questioning the importance of human history and humanity's individual inherent value. " I have decided I am not looking for one discovery. I am simply hoping that we have a history worth remembering."

I would heartily recommend that anyone see this feat of cinematic beauty and philosophical majesty. Despite the fact that it may not be immediately clear or understandable in every degree, it is a piece worth mulling over seriously, especially in the ramifications for our human society, peace, and regard for all human life.

a man who loses contact with Earth due to reasons unexplained (most likely nuclear annihilation) while trapped on the International Space Station in the near future. As life supports dwindle, Captain Lee Miller battles to maintain his sanity. His life is claustrophobic and lonely as he contemplates the possibility of hope. In addition to the beautiful and iconic cinematography, the film also traverses many questions regarding life; it's meaning, and the metaphysical and communal existence of humans.

The film puts quite a large emphasis on the importance of human life, even to the point where Miller mulls over the choice of suicide by plummeting towards the warm soil of Earth or by slow painful death alone. Throughout the film there are sequences of mysterious transmissions that transition scenes in the film. These transmissions are stories of individuals from Earth that have lived through pain, agony, and suffering yet still sees the value of connection and human life. "We're social creatures, and we need to interact with people. That's why relationships are so important, just so crucial for existence." Finally, Captain Lee Miller comes to a strange culmination of insanity and hope by stumbling upon a strange and fulfilling mystery aboard the ISS. He finds himself

FICTION

THE LIVES AND TIMES
OF MARJORIE WALKER:
A SHORT STORY
by Sarah Terzo

It was a dull, gray morning when Marjorie Walker drove into the parking lot of North Ridge Women's Center and parked her car. She saw that the clinic manager was already there, her red BMW parked in the employee section of the parking lot. The sky was overcast, and it was cold, and she felt a little bit thankful for that, because it meant that fewer protesters would show up at the clinic.

They had their regulars, most of whom stayed pretty quiet, only holding signs with slogans such as "Let Your Baby Live" and "We Can Help You" with a few more inflammatory "Abortion Is Murder" placards thrown in for good measure. They usually kept their distance from the women coming in and only occasionally approached one to offer literature. When the women turned them down, which almost always happened, they walked away with good grace. There were a couple of protesters, however, who crossed the line into outright harassment. There was a woman who showed up in wrinkled clothes, looking disheveled and unbalanced as she wheeled her baby carriage full of bloody dolls back and forth in front of the clinic. There was a man who occasionally showed up dressed as the Grim Reaper. And every now and then a group of people from out of town descended on the clinic with bloody pictures of aborted fetuses. By now Marjorie knew what fetuses looked like before and after abortion, and the pictures held no shock value for her. But they upset the women who were coming in for their abortions, women who were already nervous and troubled enough without having horrific pictures shoved in their faces. She was glad that those particular protesters hadn't shown up in a while and hoped they would not put in an appearance today.

She walked into the clinic and nodded hello to Michelle Gaines, her supervisor.

“So what’s the schedule like today?” She asked.

“Pretty typical. Twenty procedures scheduled for today, all in the first trimester except for two. We’ve got one 14 -weeker and one at 16 weeks. Dr. Donovan’s on his way. He got held up in traffic but he should be here in plenty of time. How was your weekend?”

“It was fine. I finally met Bill’s parents. His father is nice. His mother seems a little strange. She’s really into crystals and auras and things like that. She couldn’t stop talking about a psychic she was visiting. I think Bill was a bit embarrassed, but I told him that my family is just as odd.”

“Especially that insane uncle of yours,” Michelle said with a smile.

Marjorie groaned. “Don’t even remind me of him. I told you about the Christmas gift he gave me, right?” Michelle laughed. “That’s right. He’s having you frozen. That cryo – cryo – what is it?”

“Cryogenics,” said Marjorie with a smile. “According to him, is the science of the future. He’s arranged to have the entire family cryogenically frozen after we die and stored for two hundred years in a containment facility in Philadelphia. I swear, he’s really gone off the deep end. When I think about how much money he must have spent on this ridiculous idea of his, I can’t believe it. He probably could’ve bought me a top of the line home entertainment system or diamond ring with the money he spent. I’ll tell you one thing about Christmas around my house, Michelle, it’s not boring.”

The door opened, and two of her coworkers came in, Crystal Williams and Patricia Swank, followed by two of the nurses and Dr. Donovan, who was wearing a friendly smile and a button-down shirt which unsuccessfully tried to hide a bulletproof vest. Marjorie smiled back in greeting, then sobered, as she

always did, as she looked down at the vest the doctor was wearing. She had to remind herself, all the time, that there was real danger here, that there was always the possibility that one of the protesters would turn violent, or that a stranger, someone they’d never seen before, would try to hurt her or one of the others. Fortunately, there had never been any actual violence or threats that she was aware of, other than some yelling and name calling from the more rowdy protesters. The doctor poured himself a cup of coffee and offered her one.

“Traffic was awful,” he said. “There was an accident on the turnpike, and cars were backed up for a mile. It’s a good thing I left early. So no one showed up yet?”

“Not yet,” Marjorie said. “But they should be coming in any minute.”

“No protesters so far,” said Patricia with a smile. “Maybe the cold will keep them away.”

“We can only hope,” said Marjorie.

Almost on cue, a car pulled up and parked in the patient parking lot. A pale, frightened looking teenager and an older woman who may have been her mother headed towards the clinic. The receptionist handed the girl some paperwork and Marjorie hurried into the procedure room to prepare the instruments. Things soon fell into the rhythm of an ordinary day. Women came in, young girls with their mothers and sometimes their fathers, slightly older women with their boyfriends or husbands, and sometimes two women came in together, one there to support the other.

Everything was running along smoothly when Michelle nodded towards the window and said, “Looks like one of them did show up.”

Marjorie looked out the window and saw a young woman standing there with a small sign that read “Choose Life.” She recognized the girl as one of the regular protesters, but had never seen her there alone

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before.

“Well,” Marjorie said with a shrug. “She’s one of the regular ones. I don’t think she’ll give us too much trouble.”

“These people need to get a life,” said Crystal angrily. “What the hell is wrong with them anyway? We’re helping women. We’re allowing people to go on with their lives, have careers, get educations. We’re making the world a better place. All these people do is stand around and wave signs. If they care so much about babies, why aren’t they out there taking care of abandoned children and orphans? Why aren’t they out there fighting poverty? All they want to do is deny women their freedom.”

Marjorie forced a smile. “You sound exactly like me when I first started,” she told the young woman. “Back then, I used to complain every day about the protesters. After a while though, you just sort of get used to them. They fade into the background. No big deal.”

“It’s just so frustrating,” Crystal muttered, as she turned away from the window.

It was almost an hour later and between procedures when Marjorie heard a heart-wrenching scream coming from outside the clinic.

“Oh my God,” she muttered. “What’s going on?” A small group of clinic workers were clustered around the window, and Marjorie shoved her way into the front.

The pro-life protester was on the ground. A man towered over her, shouting. She cowered beneath him, half his size, holding the sign up above her head as if for protection. As Marjorie watched, the man grabbed the sign out of the woman’s hands and raised it above his head. Marjorie saw the girl cringe as the man swung, bringing the heavy sign down on her back. The girl cried out in pain.

“My God,” Marjorie gasped.

A few feet away from the man and his victim, a young woman stood stiffly, staring at the confrontation in fear and helplessness.

The man was shouting, but Marjorie couldn’t make out what he was saying. He raised a sign to strike again.

“We have to do something,” Marjorie said. “That poor kid’s getting beaten up!”

“Don’t get involved,” Michelle ordered. “Stay inside.”

But Marjorie ignored her.

“Call the police,” she said. Then she stormed out of the clinic and ran towards the huddled girl and angry man. Approaching the man, she spoke loudly and firmly. “Stop. Stop that at once.”

The man turned on her, his face red, his eyes wild. “She has no right! Who the hell is she? Is she going to raise this kid? Take care of it? Let her drop out of school and take a job supporting some snot-nosed brat. This is none of her business!”

The man was slightly unsteady on his feet. His eyes were red rimmed and he appeared to be swaying.

Marjorie thought that he must be drunk or on some kind of drug.

“Sir, she said, “you need to calm down.”

“I don’t need someone judging me! We’re doing the right thing! This little self-righteous bitch shouldn’t be out here!”

He raised the sign to strike again. In the distance, Marjorie heard a siren. The girl on the ground looked up, her eyes wide and terrified. Marjorie grabbed the man’s arm.

Angrily, he shook her off. Then he turned and back-handed her across the face. She staggered back, pain blasting through her. She tasted blood. Then a police car was turning into the lot and police officers were running towards the man. One of them grabbed him and pulled his hands behind his back, cuffing him. The other one went over to Marjorie.

“Are you okay?”

Marjorie touched her nose. It hurt but did not seem to be broken. “I’m okay.”

The other officer was reading the man his rights. The first officer then turned to the girl on the ground.

“What about you? Do you need medical attention?”

“No,” whispered the girl. There were tears running down her face.

By now, some of the other clinic workers had come out to talk to the police. The man’s partner, the woman coming in for an abortion, was quickly ushered into the clinic while Michelle talked to the police officer. Marjorie was left alone with the girl.

She squatted down. The girl cowered.

“It’s all right,” Marjorie said gently. She held out her hand. “What’s your name, honey? I’ve seen you around here but I don’t know your name.”

“Kelly,” the girl answered, as Marjorie helped her to her feet. “My name is Kelly.”

“I’m sorry this happened, Kelly,” Marjorie said. “But you’re safe now. Do you have someone you can call? Someone who can pick you up?”

Kelly looked up at Marjorie, sniffing slightly. Her eyes were still filled with tears, but she straightened in resolve.

“No,” she said. “I want to stay. As long as they’re doing abortions, I want to stay.”

Marjorie sighed. The girl shouldn’t be here, but she couldn’t force her to go home. She reached into her pocket and pulled out some tissues. She handed them to Kelly, who took them gratefully and began wiping her tears.

“Do you have a cell phone?” She asked the young woman.

“Yes,” said the girl.

“If you need to, call someone to pick you up. You should. Maybe it’s not such a good idea to be here alone.”

The girl nodded. “I know. But I have to stay.”

Marjorie turned to leave and the girl said “Wait.”

Kelly looked straight into Marjorie’s eyes. “Why do you work here?” she asked. “You were so kind to me. Obviously you’re a good person. Why do you help kill babies?”

Marjorie frowned. “I help this girl and this is the thanks I get,” she thought angrily. How stupid to think she had something in common with an anti-choice protester. Without answering, she turned and walked away.

For the rest of the day, she avoided looking out the window.

By the end of the day, it was getting dark and the temperature had dropped even further. As Marjorie said goodbye to her fellow clinic workers and walked to her car, sleet began to fall. The parking lot was slick and wet with ice that was beginning to form.

She took one last look at Kelly, who was still standing in the cold outside the clinic. The girl's head was bowed and her lips were moving in silent prayer. Marjorie turned away and got in her car.

She drove. The sleet turned into snow and visibility was poor. As she approached a stop sign, she stepped on the brake. She pressed on the brake harder, but the car kept moving, skidding into the intersection. Marjorie fought the wheel, trying to steer out of the skid, but the car was spinning around. She watched in horror as a pickup truck came bearing down on her, ready to hit her head on. Then there was a horrible crack, a moment of violent, agonizing pain – then nothing.



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Marjorie could hear voices, but she couldn't make out any words. She opened her eyes, but her vision was blurry. She could hear the beeping of machines. "Where am I?" She wondered

Slowly, her memories came back. The clinic. The protester and the man with the sign. Then the drive home and... an accident. She had been in an accident.

Gradually, her vision began to clear and she realized she was in a hospital room. She looked around and saw that she was lying in a hospital bed attached to an IV. There didn't seem to be anyone in the room with her. She tried to get up and realized she couldn't move. She could only move her eyes and her head a little bit, but her body was frozen in place, paralyzed.

She heard footsteps and was able to turn her head enough to see a nurse bending over one of the machines next to her bed. She struggled to speak. At first, all that came out was a faint croak. Then she said "Where am I?" Her voice was hoarse and cracking.

The nurse looked up, and her eyes widened in surprise. She paused a minute, looking uncomfortable. "You're in a hospital," she said. "You were in an accident."

"I know... I remember." A terrible thought occurred to Marjorie. "I can't move... I can't move. ... am I paralyzed?"

"The doctor will explain everything to you in a minute."

The nurse left the room. Marjorie was left waiting. She heard the beeping of the monitors and looked up at the white ceiling. She didn't feel any pain, only a strange numbness. She tried to imagine going through the rest of her life as a paraplegic. She blinked back tears. How long had she been in the hospital? Where was Bill? Where were her parents? Did anyone even know she was here?

The nurse came back with two men, one who may have been a doctor. He began checking her vital signs, reading the numbers on the many machines and adjusting them around her bed. He said nothing to Marjorie.

"Are you my doctor?" She asked, "I know it was in an accident. What hospital am I in? Has anyone been here to see me? How badly am I hurt?"

The doctor ignored all her questions. He pulled out a flashlight and leaned over her, shined the light in one eye and then in the other.

"Please, won't you talk to me? What's going on? Please tell me... Am I paralyzed? Will ever walk again?"

The doctor turned to the nurse at the side of the bed. He nodded.

"Everything should be fine. Get her prepped for surgery."

"Yes Dr. Hall," said the nurse.

"Wait," Marjorie cried to the doctor's retreating back. "I'm having an operation? What's wrong with me? When you going to do? Why won't you talk to me?"

One of the nurses looked at her and quickly looked away. The other one turned and followed the doctor out of the room. A third nurse came in with a tray. On the tray was a large needle.

"Please," said Marjorie. "Please talk to me. "What's going on?"

She locked eyes with a nurse holding the tray. "Please," she pleaded.

The woman sighed deeply. "You're being prepped for surgery," she said. "Try to calm down."

"Don't talk to them, Alicia," said the other nurse. "I told you a million times. It only makes it harder for you and for them."

The nurse who had scolded Alicia took the syringe and leaned over Marjorie. She injected the medication into her IV line. Then she turned and walked away.

"Please," said Marjorie again, looking up at Alicia. "Am I going to be okay?"

"It'll all be over soon," Alicia said sadly. "Just close your eyes and go to sleep now."

The nurses walked out of the room, but she could still hear them in the hallway.

"I think I've about had it with this job," said one of them, the one named Alicia, she thought. "I mean, seriously. I know what the Supreme Court says. I know we're saving lives. But this just doesn't seem right to me."

“I know it’s hard. It’s hard when they wake up, especially, and when they’re so young. But you have to understand. The heart will be going to a woman in the city who’s been on a transplant list for over a year. The liver and kidneys and even the lungs will go to other people. We need these donors – there’s a need for organs, you know that need can’t be met any other way. Besides, she has no relatives. At least none who are willing to pay for her care. Imagine the medical bills it would generate to rehabilitate her and get her walking again, functioning again, living again. An astronomical amount of money, and when you think about it, she had her chance at life. Even if she were to survive, how could she understand the world and what’s going on in it 200 years after she died? It’s kinder to her – and everyone her organs will save.”

“And the fact that the hospital is getting thousands and thousands of dollars from selling these organs is irrelevant, I suppose.”

“Well, you know, this is what we do. We save lives. And it’s legal. And if you don’t do it, someone else will. I know it’s hard, I know it’s taxing sometimes, but we’re doing the right thing.”

“Maybe you think so. But I’m done. This is the last time for me.”

Marjorie had been listening to the conversation with growing horror. “I died,” She thought “they brought me back. And now they’re killing me.”

She began to drift away. She struggled against the narcotic, dreamy darkness. She gritted her teeth, tried to thrash around on the bed, but her body seemed to be encased in a straitjacket of paralysis. She couldn’t move, could barely breathe, and her vision was growing dim. She heard the beeping of the machine speed up as her heart pounded and she struggled with all her strength to stay awake. Everything began to fade. As she slipped away, she heard the door opening and closing, heard footsteps, and felt the bed being wheeled away, away, into darkness.



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Melanie Lane stood quietly outside the hospital with her small group of friends who came every Sunday, rain or shine. She watched, sadly, as an ambulance left, bearing the organs of some poor human being who had been killed, used and destroyed for the selfish gain of others. She blinked back tears. She wondered about the victim. Was it a man or a woman? Young or old? She would never know. She raised her sign as two of the nurses left the hospital and walked to their cars. Maybe, one day, one of them would stop and talk to her, would listen to her, would realize that what they were doing was murder. Maybe one of them would leave. Maybe someday, other people would speak out and it would all end. She turned to her friends and fellow protesters, and read the sadness in their eyes. Sometimes, the sign seemed so heavy. The human tragedy was more than she could deal with. She could only imagine what went on behind the walls of this hospital, so modern, sleek and professional.

Then the day was ending, the night was falling, and she and her friends turned to leave.

BOTH UTMOST SANCTUARY

by Mary Krane Derr

for the Consistent Life 25th Anniversary Conference

Never mind
and never heart
the prearranged war
that splits and splits

the literal cord
of one lifebody from
the quite familial
other & smaller one.

Instead, why not
negate either into
an insensate clump
of merest cells,
why not create both
utmost sanctuary:

the woman-with-child,
the child-with-woman,
who subsist not singly
but doubly human,

whose joint faces call,
the invisible smaller
nested within
the visible larger,

call for
a multiplied,
all-seeing,
all-hearing
responsibility of peace

be robustly with
us all/the epochs
of both
our pre-
and post-
partum lives.

GRAVE CONCERNS.

by Lisa Groves

Sixty-seven days ago I discovered the utility of making major life decisions in a cemetery.

Ripe ground for an epiphany, indeed.

Surrounded by people crammed into little boxes, I rapped on the walls of my own.

Itsy-bitsy, teeny-weeny little boxes housing all I hold dear - my empire - lined up neatly like the soup cans in
my grandma's pantry.

Until sixty-seven days ago, that is.

I suppose it doesn't much matter what particular transaction drove me to seek clarity on a wet and dirty path separating rows of people I've never met. The big stuff usually falls under love, money, sex or family, so take
your pick.

But as for my epiphany? Well, here is the skinny: control is always, invariably - ultimately - just an illusion.

When my gal pals ask me for the fast track to an epiphany of their own, here is what I've got to say: while I was busily straightening boxes, a divine force descended and shook me awake. Then left me laying in its wake;

like a bloody nose that comes in the night.

There are only three things in this world I know for certain. One, nothing in this world is certain; Two, nice girls nurture but do not possess; and Three, if you sit in a graveyard surrounded by plots, you will learn how to
live, outside of the box.

Lisa Groves is a recovering attorney, an author, yoga teacher, president of I've Been Meaning to Write, LLC, a Scottsdale based marketing firm, and Madeline Mary's Mom. The above essay is excerpted from Lisa's book "Off the Beaten Path," © 2012, her most recent work of nonfiction and journey through abuse recovery. For orders, to view additional excerpts, or for a righteous vegan lemon bar recipe, contact Lisa at lisa@meantowrite.com or visit www.meantowrite.com.

PRAGMATISM VS. IDEALISM

by Aimee Bedoy



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As you may know from reading my Letter from the Editor, I attended the Consistent Life conference at the beginning of March. It was a good, fruitful experience and I can gladly say that I learned a lot and felt bolstered by much of the weekend. I heard one idea there after my presentation on youth and the consistent life ethic that struck a chord within me and helped me to come to terms with some criticisms I had received: there are two sides to every movement, one being pragmatic, the other being idealistic. Both are necessary for a movement to grow and remain true to its values over time. And I am glad to say that we at Life Matters Journal fill a very pragmatic role within the consistent life movement, but we would run the risk of losing sight of our goals without the help, prodding, and helpful criticism of those more idealistic friends within the movement.

If the goal of a movement is growth alone, pragmatists would be the sole need of any movement. As has been evinced by the Occupy Wall Street move

ment, sometimes admitting everyone implies that you lose your focus (or never find it, whichever it is) and you may not be able to attain the goals which you hoped to achieve. Though attracting great multitudes and spreading the general “theme” of your cause is growth, it is just as easy to attract fringe benefactors who truly detract from the cause at hand.

Likewise, if the goal of a movement is purity alone, idealists would be the sole need of any movement. Only those with the most pristine thought concerning any movement would be admitted in, and growth would be minimal, if not impossible by certain standards. The movement would dwindle or die within a generation or two, and many would be tempted to despair because of a lack of growth and interest.

.....
I do find that the Life Matters Journal falls into the former category: we are pragmatists in the most real sense. We are doing our best to bridge gaps left by the culture war: therefore, we are non-sectarian, with no particular religious belief assigned to the Journal,

and we are non-partisan, taking no particular political perspective as the singular or primary belief of the publication. We are doing our best to ensure that people understand that the Journal (and its associated social media) is a safe space for dialogue and discourse, regardless of what belief system they follow, what their personal struggles are, or what background they come from. This means that we try to be less dogmatic: we stand against unjust violence in an attempt to provide a framework in which to discourse. This means that people who are struggling with questions of “what is just?” and “what is violence?” will often still engage us in conversation to see what we have to say.

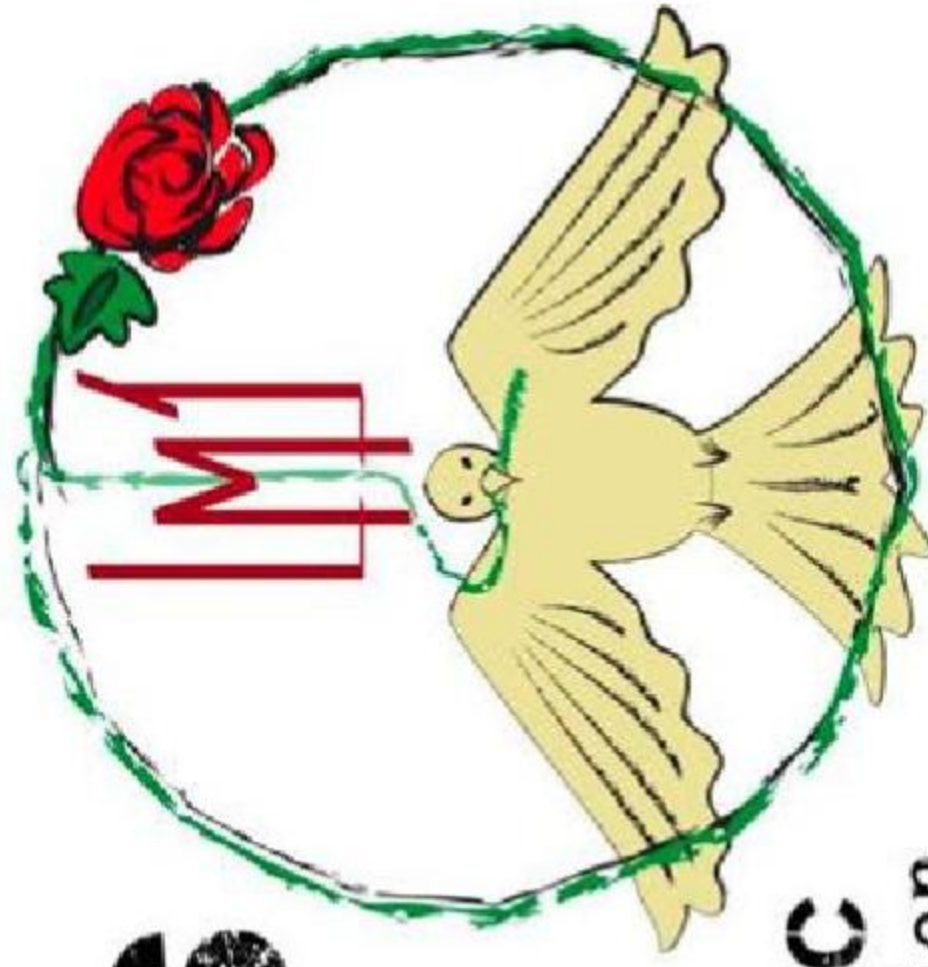
We are not pure pacifists in the strictest sense, but we are as close as you can possibly get while still remaining true to ideals of the consistent life ethic and simultaneously ushering in new people to the movement. To paraphrase something that Rachel MacNair said in the Q&A period after my presentation, in an effort to calm things down, was that some people think Just War Theory and Pacifism are on opposite ends of the spectrum. But in truth, genocide, mass-murder, and things of that like are at one end, and Pacifism is at the other. Just War Theory is only mere millimeters away from Pacifism: in the strictest sense, it is the closest you can get to Pacifism without actually being a pacifist. We find this to be true, and I will hopefully address it in our next issue in a longer format, but a sentiment that we carry remains that just use of force/violence is extremely limited, and should be thoroughly tempered and restricted by Just War Theory, not easily enabled or justified by it. But we need the pacifists, to remind us of why we do the work we do: indeed, if there were only just wars, there would be no war at all. We must work towards the ideal of peace throughout the world, and hand in hand, the Just War theorists and the pacifists can and should work together to change the dialogue in the world.

You can think of it as if we are the hands and the idealists are the heart of the movement. We could not

go anywhere without the pragmatic work of gaining ground in the world, yet we could not remain alive in the true spirit of our purpose without the idealists.

Of course, we still and always will engage in dialogue to further our world along towards peace and the hopeful gaze towards the ideal world; like I said, we are not here to be dogmatic in that we would only accept pieces on just violence -- we eagerly welcome pacifists into our discussion because it is necessary to hear that perspective. In the end, we bear the same goal: to end all violence. It is merely the framework from which we see the goal that differs.

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