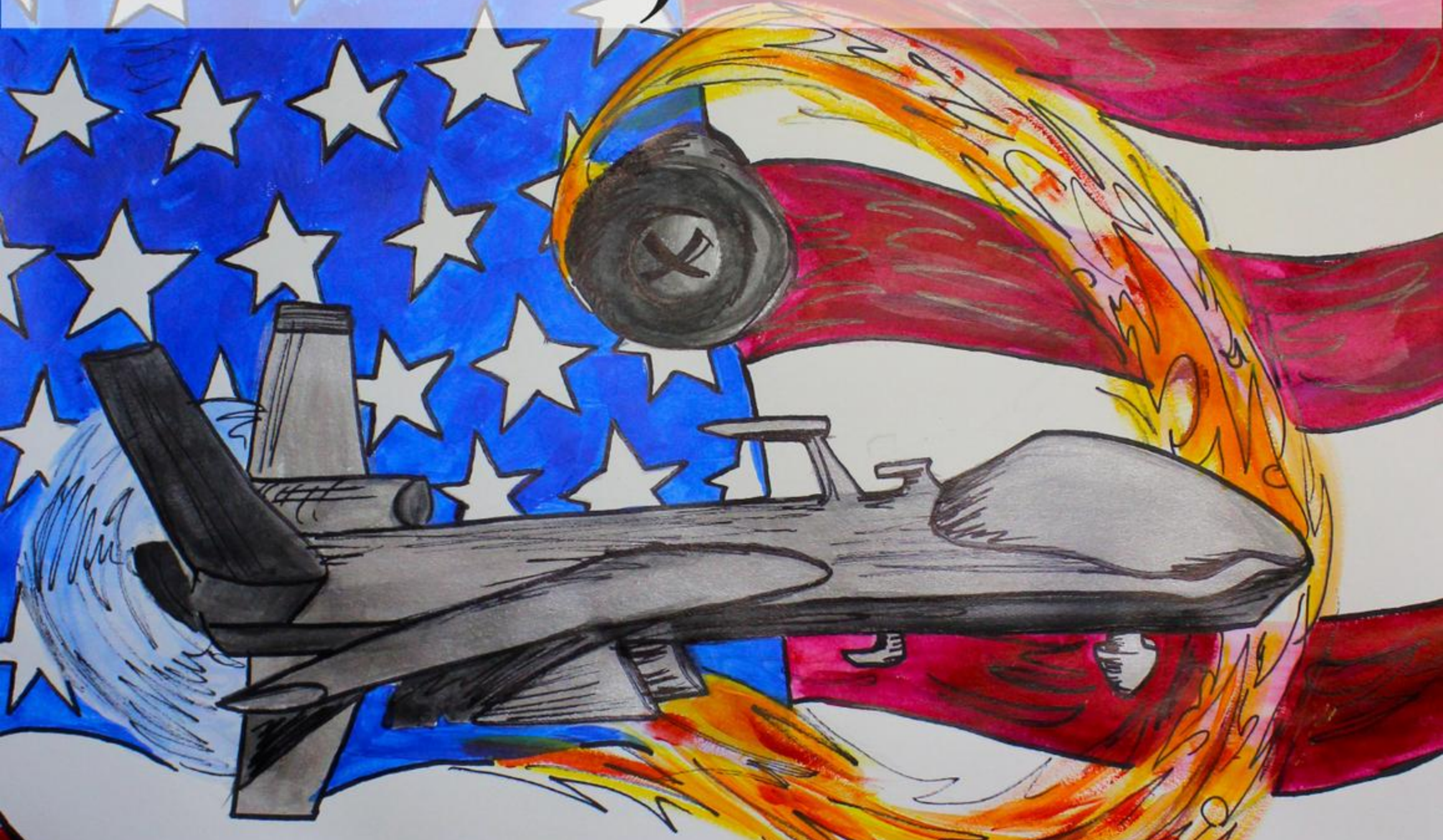


LIFE MATTERS

JOURNAL

VOLUME 2 - ISSUE 3
SPRING 2013



ROBOTS FIGHTING OUR BATTLES:
THE DRONE WAR

Rand Paul's Filibuster,
The Rise of Anti-War Republicans,
& The Obama Administration's
Broadly Defined Lethal Powers

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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cover art: "A New Kind of War" by Rosemary Lipnicki

LIFE MATTERS JOURNAL

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INTRODUCTION - LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear readers, supporters, and friends,

Back in January we went to the March for Life and various other events dedicated to promoting human life and dignity. It was such a great joy and boon to my own perseverance to see so many looking for a voice like ours!

First, we went to the Democrats for Life breakfast roundtable to hear what they had to say. While we're not Democrats ourselves (I think most of us prefer not to align by party), we were encouraged to see people working within the existing framework for a more consistent-life approach to politics. Next, we went to the "For Peace & ALL Life" meetup and march group (which we are glad to say we initiated) at the March for Life, where we handed out 40 goodie bags and networked with supporters and leaders from more than 9 different peace and life organizations! Media representatives were even coming to the meetup and speaking with some of the less-traditional pro-life organizations. After the March for Life, we proceeded to Consistent Life's post-march meetup to discuss the Consistent Life Ethic, strategy for the movement, and current events. It was definitely a good discussion with a very present youth voice. The following day we attended the Students for Life of America National Conference, where we shared our table with Secular Pro-Life. The attendees received us well and really seemed interested in our mission and our ethic. It really confirmed our belief that young people these days see all of the life matters really as human rights issues, not as political or religious. Not to mention, so many agreed that all of these issues really are linked. We loved meeting all the new youth and look forward to working with them!

Our whole weekend experience was a really beautiful testament to the fact that we are not alone in working for peace and life in our world, and was so encouraging to our team as we move forward in our work.

But, as you know, the cause of Life Matters Journal will not be ended with the abolition of abortion. Though we indeed are abortion abolitionists and will work tirelessly for its end, we stand for a greater scope: the fullness of the pro-life mission. We will not quit our work until every human being is given due respect in accord with his or her dignity, and all life is properly valued and upheld by law. This means we're in it for the long haul, though, and we are just beginning. Please join us in this ever-important work.

For peace and all life,



Aimee Murphy
Executive Editor

Have a letter for the editors here at Life Matters Journal? Please write us at info@lifemattersjournal.org 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.

Aimee Murphy, *Executive Editor*

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DISCLAIMER:

The views presented in the journal do not necessarily represent the views of all members, contributors, or donors. We exist to present a forum for discussion within the consistent life ethic, to promote discourse and present an opportunity for peer-review and dialogue.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear Life Matters Journal:

As a political independent, I heartily applaud Nick Neal's efforts to encourage the Republican Party toward a more consistently pro-life position ("Dual Human Dignity"), both in terms of respecting the human dignity of the unborn as well as their mothers and of including "people in different countries as well as people on death row" among the lives worth defending. He rightly argues that rather than sacrificing the pro-life cause, Republicans should expand it and "rearticulate it as the human rights issue and peace issue that it always should have been," thus giving it more credence. However, I am disturbed by the implications of one particular reason he offers for doing so, namely that "it would give Republicans ground to rip Democrats on their hypocrisy when it comes to legalized homicide." Is he hoping that Republicans will become more consistent and Democrats will not?

The consistent life ethic is largely unwelcome in either party, which is one of the main reasons I identify as an independent. To be clear, I do not believe a commitment to the consistent life ethic necessarily requires abstention from any party affiliation. But it is necessary to be wary of temptations to allow party affiliation to obscure the goal of consistency on all fronts. Those of us committed to a consistent ethic of life must recognize the need for people working within both parties to bring them closer to that goal (which Neal is in fact doing, as are a few pro-life Democrats I know and respect). Such people are needed in their own parties, not for the sake of political advantage or to "rip" the other party, but in view of a more consistent defense of all life, on both sides of the aisle.

Sincerely,
Julia Smucker

Nicholas Neal, Managing Editor, responds regarding "Dual Human Dignity"

[Note: The opinion is my own and not the official opinion of the journal]

Dear Julia,

I thank you for raising this concern. To answer your question, of course I want both parties to embrace a consistent life ethic. The point of my argument was that when conservatives and progressives argue about each other's inconsistencies, they both just seem to cancel each other out. The consistent life ethic not only repels accusations of inconsistency but reveals the inconsistencies of the one arguing against you. Perhaps I should not have used the phrase "rip Democrats" but my point was that the consistent life ethic is a stronger way to argue the pro-life case.

I certainly support pro-life Democrats in their efforts to change the party from within. Unfortunately, as was shown in the last election, the Democratic Party leadership is largely supportive of lethal ageism, as are many of the politicians under their banner. The pro-choice plank was the part of the platform they emphasized the most in 2012. In addition to that, the Democrats have largely embraced an aggressively pro-war policy in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Mali, etc., and they have largely defended President Obama's drone policies, including citizen assassination. So even on the life issues they traditionally support, they are failing to live up to their principles. I am not saying pro-life Democrats should quit, I am just saying that, in the short run, the party that refused to even recognize their existence is unlikely to embrace a consistent life ethic soon. Perhaps later they will, when the time comes when they are pressured to redefine themselves. However, even if they do, I cannot assume they will do it at exactly the same time Republicans do it.

So, because of that, when I am giving advice to the Republican Party, I have to take the Democratic Party as it is, not how I want it to be. The reason I'm giving

advice to Republicans is because they are in the process of redefining themselves. Yes, they have horrendous war policies from the war era, but at least there's more of a chance to change it now. This is not because the GOP is more self-critical than the Democrats, but rather because they got beat and therefore have to re-brand themselves. The recent GOP opposition in the Senate to drone overuse shows the potential for the party to change its tune on Bush-era foreign policy (finally) as well as a host of other issues like gay marriage and immigration. They want to embrace new ideas but don't want to become identical to their opposition. Within that context I offered the consistent life ethic as a way to rescue the pro-life cause and, yes, to win back the abortion argument while still adapting the party and making it both more principled and more appealing to moderates. An advantage to this approach is something that both parties want: to have better arguments than their opponents. That's what I meant when I listed "rip Democrats" as an advantage for a CLE GOP (that should be an organization).

I think Julia's main concern is the consistent life ethic becoming partisan rather than a consensus. That concern is legitimate. We do not want the consistent life ethic to be about beating a certain party. The end goal is change society and you unfortunately need a consensus to do that. However, we do want people to realize that the consistent life ethic is a stronger ideological system for defending the causes of human life than whatever inconsistent ideology they currently hold (progressivism or conservatism).

For Peace & All Life,
Nicholas Neal, Managing Editor

Julia Smucker replies:
Dear Nick,

I would like to thank you in turn for your openness to conversation. From your response, I am convinced that we share the same overarching goal of a more consistent defense of life across the board. I completely agree that partisan arguments pointing out each other's inconsistencies tend to cancel each other out, which is why I am wary of any implication

that one party is intrinsically more compatible with the consistent life ethic. The unfortunate reality is that both parties have been blatantly selective in the lives they defend and at times have even shown hostility to consistent life principles. We must be realistic about the inconsistencies on both sides and avoid too rosy a view of either party. And at the same time, we must give hopeful support to life-affirming positions and policies wherever they are found and avoid dismissing either party's capacity to become more consistent. In this light, Nick is right to point out the GOP's present opportunity to redefine itself. I hope they will take it as an opportunity to expand their defense of life, and I hope Democrats will take a similar lesson from this as well. Sen. Rand Paul's opposition to the Obama Administration's drone policy is a particularly hopeful sign. Unfortunately, I am not convinced that the Republican Party as a whole is any more likely than the Democratic Party (or vice versa) to fully embrace a consistent ethic of life in the near future. Consistent life proponents in both parties face a long uphill battle even to gain the respect, let alone the conversion, of their party leadership. That is all the more reason we need people like Nick working to persuade Republicans that to be truly pro-life means standing up for all life, just as others are needed to persuade Democrats that true concern for the vulnerable must extend to pre-natal life as well as to those living under the threat of American drones, no matter what party holds the presidential office.

Sincerely,
Julia Smucker

Dear Life Matters Journal,

I have long admired Carol Crossed's lively and meaningful writings on life issues. I was sorry to see the unfortunate error that credited me, rather than Carol, as the author of "The Consistent Life Ethic Is Like Salt" in volume 2, issue 1, page 37. Please publish this letter to correct this. Carol Crossed is the author of "The Consistent Life Ethic Is Like Salt" (and a lot of other great stuff!

Sincerely,
Rose Evans

Dear Rose, Thank you so much for the correction! Both you and Carol have left an amazing legacy!

For Peace & All Life,
Aimee Murphy, Executive Editor

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CURRENT EVENTS AND CONSISTENT LIFE

A FEMINIST RESPONSE TO CUOMO'S REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE ACT

by Feminists Choosing Life of New York

Feminists Choosing Life of New York opposes the Abortion Expansion component within the Women's Equality Act. This unnecessary expansion:

- Raises abortion to the status of a fundamental right in New York State making abortion immune to common sense restrictions such as parental notification for minors' abortions, restrictions on taxpayer funding, informed consent or waiting periods for those seeking abortions-all of which have been shown to lower state abortion rates. Life is a fundamental right, abortion is not.
- Removes the physician mandate for the abortion procedure thus, leaving women in the hands of potentially less experienced medical practitioners who may lack adequate surgical experience or be less able to handle unforeseen complications. This is irresponsible and puts women's lives in danger. 39-43 states require a physician.
- Contains a broad "health of the mother" exception that will allow late-term abortions for essentially any reason through all nine months of



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pregnancy. These later term abortions pose an increased risk to the mother which increases with each week of gestation. 70% of New Yorkers oppose late term abortion.

- Removes the requirement that such late term abortion be performed in a hospital setting and instead allows the procedure to be performed in out-patient settings. Only hospitals are equipped to handle emergencies and complications that arise. Out-patient clinics are unsafe settings for such procedures. More women will die.
- Allows an attending physician to determine viability of an unborn infant. Such determinations are subjective because viability goes undefined within the law. The attending physician also stands to profit from a late term abortion if he/she determines unviability.
- New York has an abortion rate of 33% (40% in NYC); almost double that of any other state. Clearly this rate doesn't point to a need for greater access to abortion but to a need for greater resources that encourage and enable women to carry their pregnancies to term

Just as our foremothers rejected the Equal Rights Amendment because of its inclusion of an abortion component, FCLNY will reject the Women's Equality Act that likewise contains an abortion expansion component.

Governor Cuomo should not be allowed to hold improved social equality for women hostage to his ideological and political aspirations.

FCLNY also submitted this response:

New York State has the highest abortion rate in the county with 33% of all pregnancies ending in abortion (40% in NYC). An effort by the governor to include abortion expansion as part of his 10-point

Women's Equality Act will make abortions even more frequent and dangerous for New York women. Feminists Choosing Life Action (501 4c), a pro-woman, pro-life organization that recognizes the dignity of all human beings from conception to natural death, offers an 8-Point response to Governor Cuomo's plan:

Point #1. The movement in Albany toward abortion expansion (as in The Reproductive Health Act S438) and point 10 of Gov. Cuomo's Women's Equality Act) represents a dangerous step backwards for the women of New York.

Point #2. The abortion expansion plan would allow an undefined "licensed health care practitioner" to perform an abortion up to 24 weeks gestation. 39-43 states require a physician present during the procedure. Practitioners may have less surgical experience and less experience handling unforeseen complications. This change in law shows little regard for women's safety during a surgical procedure.

Point #3. By refusing to put forth a Women's Equality Act that excludes the abortion expansion component, the governor is holding improved social equality for women hostage to his radical abortion ideology and personal political aspirations.

Point #4. Through a broad "health of the mother" exception, this plan will allow abortion through all nine months of pregnancy for virtually any reason. The risk to the mother's life greatly increases with each passing week of gestation. Late-term abortions are deadly for women and 70% of New Yorkers oppose them.

Point #5. Currently, state law mandates that abortions past the twelfth week of pregnancy be performed in a hospital. The abortion expansion would allow them to be performed in "licensed facilities." Such clinics and out-patient facilities are less equipped to handle emergencies or complications. A hospital is the safest place for women undergoing such a procedure. Again, this change in law shows little regard for women's medical safety.

RAND PAUL'S FILIBUSTER *by Jeffrey Bishku-Aykul*



photo provided by FCLNY

Point #6. Governor Cuomo has reported that he has consulted “women’s organizations” for each point in his Women’s Equality Act”. All of these women’s organizations, without exception, support abortion rights and represent his personal abortion ideology. We call on the governor to invite anti-abortion women’s groups such as Feminists Choosing Life and the multitude of women-owned pregnancy care centers around the state to participate in the dialogue around this most crucial women’s issue.

Point #7. The newly formed coalition for the Women’s Equality act will assert that the abortion component will merely codify New York State abortion laws. This assertion is intentionally misleading and false. The proposed expansion goes far beyond that of Roe v. Wade. Please go to: www.NewYorkersForLife.org to learn more.

Point #8. Life is a fundamental right. Abortion is not.

Feminists Choosing Life of New York is a pro-life, pro-woman organization that seeks to open minds to its philosophy of pro-life feminism, the belief that all people, by virtue of their human dignity, have a right to live without violence from conception to natural death. They can be reached by email at info@feministschoosinglife.org.

Upon watching Senator Rand Paul’s March filibuster opposing the confirmation of CIA director John Brennan, the first thing that becomes apparent is his resemblance to his father, former Congressman Ron Paul. Rand may have not yet inherited his father’s grey hair or gaunt physique, but his eyes give off the same worried expression, his voice the same concerned quiver.

Minutes into Rand’s now famous 13-hour monologue, which ignited a national conversation about the Obama administration’s use of drones, the Senator mirrors not just his father’s likeness, but also his politics.

Rand mentions in passing that he is pro-life and supports the right to bear arms, stances he shares with his father. But what is admirable is that, like the Congressman, Rand shows that he wants to be heard even when what he says challenges the mainstream political wind.

Though a majority of Americans are thought to support Obama’s drone war, it is important to remember that morality has never been a function of democratic decision-making.¹ Americans once supported slavery. Americans once supported the legal subjugation of African Americans to the lowest rungs of society. And laws in many U.S. states and countries abroad continue to dehumanize gays and lesbians.

Obama’s drone policy, as Paul suggests, is not a partisan issue. Both members of the left and right have expressed concern over the President’s drone strikes, acts of war which Rand rightly says appear to have no end in sight.

“The problem is, is that we have come up with a scheme that basically has no limitations, no



geographic limitations on where the war's fought. It's hard to defeat an enemy if the entire world is the battlefield," Paul said.²

Yet the Senator has brought about a shortsighted attention to Obama's "drone war," as it has been called.

Paul and the media covering his filibuster have mostly focused on a perceived threat Obama's drone policy poses to American citizens, not the suffering it already causes abroad.

In his nationally focused filibuster, he discussed how Obama's drone strikes undermine the separation of the judicial and executive branches and said he didn't want drones being used in America the way they are abroad.

"No American should ever be killed in their house without a warrant and some kind of aggressive behavior by them," Paul said. "To be bombed in your sleep? There's nothing American about that."³

Like many other critics of Obama's drone policy, Paul pointed to the drone strike that killed 16-year-old American citizen Abdulrahman al-Awlaki – who has been accused of having ties to Al Qaeda – as evidence that future strikes on American nationals may not be so unlikely, after all.

Military age males killed in drone strikes unidentified otherwise are classified as combatants, a fact Paul alluded to many times.⁴ Yet there was not one mention of another 16-year-old, Tariq Aziz, a Pakistani who had no clear ties to terrorism, who was in a car on his way to pick up his aunt.^{5 6}

According to The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, as of press time, Obama drone strikes had killed 314 and Bush's, 52.⁷ Will we ever know how many other Tariq Azizes have been killed, how many other non-Americans could have lived a full life had they not been murdered by drone?

Paul's message, while well meaning, represents not just an American problem, but a global one: in this day and age, one in which people from around the world realize a common humanity that spans across all races and ethnicities, many of us still cling to the outdated notion that a life's worth can be measured in accordance with its citizenship.

No matter the issue at hand, we are now too interconnected, too aware of one another's humanity, to think the colors on another country's flag make the people who pledge allegiance to it any less human.

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(continued...)

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NO MORE ABORTION FOR PREBORN WITH HEARTBEATS & GENETIC ABNORMALITIES IN NORTH DAKOTA

by Lauren Enriquez

The North Dakota Senate approved two pieces of legislation in March that, if signed by the governor, will protect preborn children whose heartbeat can be detected and those who are diagnosed in utero with genetic abnormalities, respectively.

Pro-life stalwart Rep. Bette Grande (R-Fargo) sponsored both bills in a bold effort to mitigate abortion in North Dakota. Although the bills are extraordinarily radical as pro-life legislation goes (they are unprecedented, in fact), Grande observes with candor the common sense and humane approach that the bills enshrine.

Speaking of the bill to ban genetic abnormality abortions, which would legalize the practice of aborting a child based on its sex or genetic makeup, Grande recalled the days of Hitler's eugenic policies. She compares the abortion of children with genetic abnormalities with the prejudices of Nazi Germany, not mincing words when she stated: "It takes you back to Hitler, and we know where that went. He started going after those with abnormalities, and I think it's an absurdity that we would go back to that kind of thing."^[1] Absurd indeed. Witnessing the discrimination suffered by her own family members born with genetic abnormalities, Grande has seen first-hand the need for more comprehensive legislation that recognizes the dignity of such persons and protects their right to life.

The same bill would also ban sex-selection abortions, which are wildly out of control in countries with a history of strong preferences for male children, like China and India. In the United States, thanks to rulings on the federal court cases *Roe v. Wade* and

Doe v. Bolton (both 1973), abortion is virtually on-demand, so there is no legislation in most states to prevent a parent from choosing to abort based on a preferred sex.

For example, couples who use in vitro fertilization to conceive often find themselves blessed with multiples. However, in these cases, physicians, citing the health risks sometimes associated with carrying multiples, often recommend what is known as “reduction abortion,” a procedure in which a parent who does not wish to carry multiple babies to term chooses to eliminate one or more of the embryos. The most disturbing element of reduction abortion is its requirement that a parent choose which of their own children to keep and which to destroy. These decisions are sometimes made based on desired sex, leaving the children of the undesired sex at the mercy of an abortionist. North Dakota’s new legislation—if signed into law by the governor—will protect preborn children from being aborted on the grounds of sex preference.

The “heartbeat” bill, filed in conjunction with the genetic abnormality bill, would outlaw the abortion of a fetus whose heartbeat can be detected. This can occur as early as five to six weeks. (According to National Right to Life, the fetal heart is developed and beating by 22 days.) This legislation will essentially root out surgical abortion in North Dakota, which cannot normally be carried out on a fetus younger than five or six weeks.

Not surprisingly, North Dakota’s brave legislation has garnered attention from shocked and incensed liberal media outlets across the board. A quick Google News search for “North Dakota abortion” gleans a slew of articles from every major pundit with headlines like, “How Can North Dakota Pols Ban Abortion? Let Me Count the Ways” (the ACLU), “North Dakota legislature approves two anti-abortion bills” (CNN), “North Dakota lawmakers pass restrictive abortion bill” (LA Times). Notice how these news outlets focus on the restrictions, rather than the protections proposed by these bills. The anti-life movement would have the public believe that tightening up the circumstances in which an abortion is allowed to be performed curtails



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a woman’s freedom.

However, the motive of North Dakota’s legislators was not so licentious at all; their goal is clearly to protect the freedoms of preborn humans, namely: fetuses whose hearts are beating, babies in danger of being aborted on account of their sex, and preborn children with genetic abnormalities. In so doing, the legislature affirms its support for women, who should not be subjected to a mentality that implies that their reproductive system is intrinsically flawed in having created a beautiful baby, and they are spared the devastating physical and psychological side effects of abortion. Lauds go out to you, North Dakota, for your daring efforts, and we hope to see 49 more states following your fearless leadership very soon.

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Lauren is a freelance writer, wife, mother, and pro-life advocate who has worked for organizations such as Students for Life of America and Texas Right to Life, where she is currently a writer and Outreach Development associate. She is a daily contributor at Live Action News, and you can view her articles at liveactionnews.org/author/lauren-enriquez. Follow her on Twitter @LNEnriquez.

ESSAYS

PRO-LIFE DEMOCRATS

by Rose Evans

Polls show Americans as fairly evenly divided between pro-life and pro-choice positions. Until recently, there was similar diversity in the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party, during many years of its existence, was open and diverse in positions on abortion. Democratic politicians and candidates were accepted and supported, whether pro-life or pro-choice. In 2004, a Zogby poll found that 43% of Democrats “agreed with the statement that abortion destroys a human life and is manslaughter.”¹

Mark Stricherz, in his book *Why the Democrats Are Blue, How Secular Liberals Hijacked the People’s Party*, reports on how this was changed, starting around 1968. As the dust jacket of Stricherz’s book notes, “He reveals how a group of secular professionals seized control of the Democratic Party, driving away Catholics and blue-collar workers. He exposes the tactics these elites used as they hijacked a commission formed at the 1968 Democratic national convention, toppled the party bosses, created a nomination system geared toward activists, and built an affluent, secular base of support.”²

Pro-life Democrats who had held office for years discovered that they could not run as approved Democratic candidates and would receive no support. Pro-life Democrat Robert Casey, Sr. discussed this in the

article “The Gag Rule Party.” He said,

“The raging national debate about tolerance on the issue of abortion was ignited in New York at the 1992 Democratic National Convention, when the party denied me, then the Democratic Governor of Pennsylvania, the right to speak because I am pro-life and planned to say so from the convention podium. That’s how the Democrats became known as the party of the gag rule. . . . They have become intolerant of those who hold the pro-life view, who have carried the Democratic banner into battle and supported the party and its candidates for generations. . . . This imposed conformity, which treats the right to life as an idea beyond even the pale of discussion, has peer and precedent in our national history. . . . Abraham Lincoln warned of an established opinion that would tolerate nothing short of saying slavery was right—that would “grant a hearing to pirates or to murderers,” but not to opponents of slavery. . . . Why is my position on this issue—which is shared by numerous Democratic members of Congress, elected Democrats at all levels of government and countless Democratic voters—now so unacceptable that it must be unspoken among us?”³

Casey went on to call on the Democratic Party to



“give all God’s children, born and unborn, a seat at the table.”⁴

The many pro-life Democrats have reacted to this takeover with shock and grief; many have left the party. At Democrats for Life tables at Walks for Life, this writer met many people who came up to say, “I used to be a Democrat but I left the party because of abortion.” Others have stayed and worked to turn the policies around. Jimmy Carter and other prominent pro-life Democrats signed a public letter calling on the party to change these policies. Carter said, “. . . except for the times when a mother’s life is in danger, or when a pregnancy is caused by rape or incest I would certainly not, never have approved of any abortions.”⁵ Democrats For Life of America (DFLA) provided an organized group within the party where pro-life Democrats could find fellowship, organize support for pro-life Democratic candidates, and provide a public voice. DFLA exists to foster respect for life from conception to natural death. It is a member organization of Consistent Life. Their website reports the doings of pro-life Democrats.

The intolerance toward pro-life Democrats continued until 2004. Stricherz notes that after Democratic

losses in the 2004 election, many Democrats concluded that the party should no longer shut out culturally conservative Democrats.⁶ The work of DFLA and the protests of prominent pro-life Democrats also had an effect. John Kerry said that the national party needed to rethink how it presented itself to voters on issues like abortion and that pro-life Democrats should be embraced. Hillary Clinton said that if Robert Casey, Jr. wanted to address national convention about abortion, she would support him; she said, “We’re a big tent party.”⁷

The Democratic Party was more open to pro-life candidates in the 2006 midterm elections. The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee endorsed Bob Casey, Jr., a pro-life candidate who won his Senate seat. He, with other pro-life Democrats in the Senate, gave the Democrats a majority. There were 37 pro-life Democrats in the House of Representatives and this openness continued for several years. Casey spoke to the Democratic Convention in 2008. That year, the head of NARAL Pro-Choice America stated that DFLA is growing and is a threat to the pro-choice stance of the Democratic Party.

The cause of pro-life Democrats was damaged by controversy over the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. Pro-life Congress member Bart Stupak had for months led an effort to keep abortion out of the new health act. He struck a deal with President Obama by which Stupak and his many supporters would vote for the bill and Obama would sign an executive order forbidding the use federal dollars to fund abortions. Several large, conservative, pro-life organizations attacked the deal, Stupak, and other pro-life Democrats, saying it did not prevent tax dollars from paying for abortions. They ran vigorous campaigns to defeat some pro-life Democrats in 2010. The number of pro-life Democrats in Congress was cut in half. Pro-life Democrats disputed the conservatives’ assertions that the health care act funded abortions. Independent fact-checking organizations agreed with the pro-life Democrats. The pro-life Democrats also pointed out that the health care act provided urgently needed support for pregnant and

parenting women.

The 2010 election losses were a setback for DFLA. Still, they are hopeful and optimistic. They note that 25,000 people signed their “big tent” petition, calling for the welcome of pro-life Democrats in the Democratic Party. In 2012, they endorsed three pro-life Senate candidates (all were winners), and four successful candidates for House seats. They have been particularly successful in races for state and local offices where large campaign funds rarely enter. 152 pro-life Democrats won state senate or state house seats in 2012.

DFLA continues its fight for the inclusion and increase of pro-life Democrats in the party. DFLA is planning a Historic Pro-Life Democratic Summit in St. Louis, MO, on September 20 and 21, 2013. Planned panels include: Being pro-life is more than opposing abortion; Bringing pro-life voters back to our party; Wining local races and grassroots building; and The future of the pro-life movement.

Pro-life Democrats who long to see their party as a party of peace, justice and life have much work to do on all those issues, as do our brothers and sisters in other parties.

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ANTI-WAR REPUBLICANS

by Benjamin Wirtz

What do we mean when we say anti-war Republicans? Is the Republican party becoming more anti-war? If we look at history we will see that historically the Republican Party has been much less hawkish than it is now. Republicans in the early part of the 20th century were by and large non-interventionist. They opposed Woodrow Wilson's efforts to get the United States involved in World War I. Robert Taft, son of former president and chief justice William Howard Taft, was a leading conservative Republican in the 1940s and '50s. He opposed wars of aggression. Even Dwight D. Eisenhower could be seen as being less of a war hawk than many modern Republicans, even though he was the top general of World War II. He exposed what he called the "military industrial complex" in his farewell address. This all started to change after World War II and with the onset of the Cold war. The "old right" that had supported a less intrusive foreign policy began to give way to a more interventionist philosophy in about the 1960s.

Part of the cause of the shift toward a more aggressive foreign policy in the Republican Party was the rise of neoconservatism. What neoconservatism (it's adherents sometimes referred to by the shortened neocon) is exactly is not always well-defined but it is essentially a redefining of what it means to be conservative. The idea behind neoconservatism is that it's supportive of American imperialism and exceptionalism, and pushes the idea that we should spread democracy to the rest of the world, never mind that the other country may not even want our help. They believe that

the U.S. is in some way morally superior and therefore has a duty to be the world's policeman or the watchtower of the world. It was championed by Irving Kristol and the magazine *Commentary*, and it's leading advocate today could be seen to be William Kristol, Irving's son. The movement eventually took over the leadership of the Republican Party, but there seems to be a current trend of an increased number of Republicans going away from it now. Neoconservatism has become associated with George W. Bush's administration although interestingly, when he first ran, Bush denounced the idea of nation-building. When in office however, he was influenced by such neoconservative figures as Paul Wolfowitz and Karl Rove. [1] Similar to Bush, when campaigning, Barack Obama criticized Bush's foreign policy, but since he was elected, has embraced much of it. The aforementioned Bill Kristol even called Obama a "born again neo-con". [2]

There have been a number of anti-war conservatives who have felt disenfranchised by Republican Party due to the hostility they received, people such as Pat Buchanan, a leader of what is called paleoconservatism, a non-interventionist rival to the neocons. However on the other hand there seems to be a shift in the Republican Party in some respects toward a less aggressive foreign policy. Ron Paul initially lead the way and even criticized Bush and now his son, Rand Paul, who is in the Senate, but others have joined it now including Congressmen Walter Jones and Justin Amash. John McCain, one of the leading neoconservatives and the Republican presidential nominee in

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“okay” when their guy does it. Many Republicans opposed Obama’s intervention in Libya. So is this shift genuine or just a response to abuses from the Obama administration? I think it is too soon to say for sure, but the fact that so many Republicans have spoken out against fellow Republicans such as John McCain is a good sign.

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2008, has been criticized by many Republican figures for criticizing Rand Paul’s filibuster which mostly focused on the use of drones. Even the rhetoric is changing. Many Republicans were for troop withdrawals, something they wouldn’t have supported years ago. Public opinion among conservatives seems to have been shifting that way and thus grassroots candidates tend to do better in this regard while many in the Republican leadership would like to hold onto a more neoconservative bent.

The fate of anti-war Republicans can also be seen in the recent hearings to confirm Chuck Hagel as Secretary of Defense. Hagel a Republican, was criticized by his fellow Republicans largely due to his opposition to the Iraq war. Many of these same Republicans had no problem voting to approve John Kerry, a Democrat, as Secretary of State by a large margin only weeks earlier. While this may show that there is still a strong neoconservative element, we can hold out that the landscape will continue to shift for the better.

It often seems that the party not in power will oppose wars started by the other party but not those begun by their own, usually coming up with an excuse for the

BROADLY DEFINED LETHAL POWERS

by John Whitehead

Two documents have been made public this year that provide more information about the Obama administration's targeted killing policy. The first is a Justice Department paper that describes the administration's justification for killing American citizens who are living overseas and are thought to be terrorist leaders. The second is a letter from Attorney General Eric Holder on whether the government could kill an American citizen living within the United States. Both documents raise troubling questions about the expansive scope of the president's ability to order people killed without trial.

The Justice Department paper was apparently provided by the administration to the Senate Intelligence and Judiciary Committees in June 2012, prior to being obtained by NBC News, which published the paper in January of this year.¹ The paper explains its purpose as setting forth

a legal framework for considering the circumstances in which the U.S. government could use lethal force in a foreign country outside the area of active hostilities against a U.S. citizen who is a senior operational leader of al-Qa'ida or an associated force of al-Qa'ida—that is, an al-Qa'ida leader actively engaged in planning operations to kill Americans.²

Use of such “lethal force” would be lawful, the paper argues, if

(1) an informed, high-level official of the U.S. government has determined that the targeted individual poses an imminent threat of violent attack against the United States; (2) capture is infeasible, and the United States continues to monitor whether capture becomes feasible; and (3) the operation would be conducted in a manner consistent with applicable law of war principles. [The “applicable law of war principles,” the paper makes clear elsewhere, include discriminating between combatants and civilians and avoiding disproportionate unintentional harm to civilians.]³

Whether or not targeted killing would be justified if these requirements were observed is open to question. Later passages in the document raise disturbing questions, however, about how rigorously the administration observes even these requirements in practice.

The first requirement for a targeted killing is that the target must pose “an imminent threat of violent attack against the United States.” Later, however, the paper explains that “the condition that an operational leader present an ‘imminent’ threat of violent attack against the United States does not require the United States

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to have clear evidence that a specific attack on U.S. persons and interests will take place in the immediate future.”⁴ To wait for clear evidence to emerge of a specific attack in the near future, the paper argues, would be to give the terrorists too much time to prepare their attack and too little time for the United States to respond. Instead, a “broader concept of imminence” is necessary. The paper advises decision makers to

take into account that certain members of al-Qa’ida (including any potential target of lethal force) are continually plotting attacks against the United States; that al-Qa’ida would engage in such attacks regularly to the extent it were able to do so; [and] that the U.S. government may not be aware of all al-Qa’ida plots as they are developing and thus cannot be confident that none is about to occur.⁵

Having made these qualifications, the document explains that someone might pose an imminent threat if he is “an operational leader of al-Qa’ida or an associated force and is personally and continually involved in planning terrorist attacks against the United States.”⁶ If this “operational leader” has recently been involved in plots that posed an imminent violent threat to the United States, this is further reason for regarding him as currently posing an imminent threat.

Taking into account these qualifications, the “imminent threat” requirement becomes more permissive

than it first appeared. Targeted killings, according to the Justice Department paper, need not be limited to situations where the target is involved in a definite, impending attack on American lives and lethal methods are necessary to thwart that specific attack. Instead, targeted killing can be used against someone whom an “informed, high-level official of the U.S. government” has determined to be an operational leader of al Qaeda or an affiliated group who is continually involved in plotting attacks on the United States, regardless of whether any specific future attack is imminent.

Whether or not a target holds a leadership position in al Qaeda and is involved in plots against the United States will presumably not be determined by putting the target on trial to determine his guilt but will be decided by extra-judicial means: the relevant “high-level official” will probably be not a judge or jury but someone in the Executive Branch making a decision based on intelligence agencies’ findings.

Given that formal trials within the imperfect American judicial system can lead to innocent people being convicted of crimes they did not commit, and given the notoriously unreliable nature of intelligence, this procedure all but guarantees that people who are not operational leaders of al Qaeda will be killed by mistake. Moreover, such a costly policy cannot be justified by invoking the emergency created by a definite, impending terrorist attack, as the paper explicitly divorces targeted killings from knowledge of a specific future attack. Instead of being a response to extreme crises, targeted killing without trial—and all the dangers to innocents it involves—is envisioned as being a relatively routine method in an ongoing campaign against al Qaeda and its associates.

Another worrying passage in the paper is a discussion of targeted killing’s geographical scope. A targeted killing operation outside the United States directed against al Qaeda members or their associates is called “consistent with international legal principles of sovereignty and neutrality if it were conducted, for example, with the consent of the host nation’s government or after a determination that the host nation

is unable or unwilling to suppress the threat posed by the individual targeted.”⁷ This passage seems to say that the United States can lawfully kill an American citizen living in another country if a) the host country’s government agrees to the targeted killing; or b) the host country’s government does not agree, whether out of lack of will or capacity.

The question arises: under what circumstances would the United States not be justified in killing an American citizen in another country? All possible situations seem to be pronounced lawful here. The practical result, that the United States can kill any target anywhere in the world, with or without the host country’s consent, is highly disturbing. Such a policy threatens to make many enemies for the United States and possibly entangle the United States in other nations’ internal conflicts and divisions.

The Justice Department paper provokes one set of worries; the recent attorney general’s letter provokes another. The letter from Attorney General Holder, dated March 4, was sent to Senator Rand Paul (R-KY). The letter was in response to an inquiry from Senator Paul to John Brennan, President Obama’s nominee to be CIA director. Senator Paul asked Mr. Brennan if the president had the authority to order the targeted killing without trial of American citizens within the United States. Mr. Brennan referred the question to the attorney general, who replied by writing that

the U.S. government has not carried out drone strikes in the United States and has no intention of doing so. As a policy matter, moreover, we reject the use of military force where well-established law enforcement authorities in this country provide the best means for incapacitating a terrorist threat... The question you have posed is therefore entirely hypothetical, unlikely to occur, and one we hope no President will ever have to confront.⁸

Attorney General Holder then goes on to write

It is possible, I suppose, to imagine an extraordinary circumstance in which it would be necessary and appropriate under the Constitution

and applicable laws of the United States for the President to authorize the military to use lethal force within the territory of the United States. For example, the President could conceivably have no choice but to authorize the military to use such force if necessary to protect the homeland in the circumstances of a catastrophic attack like the ones suffered on December 7, 1941, and September 11, 2001.⁹

By allowing that the president might use deadly force within the United States “to protect the homeland in the circumstances of a catastrophic attack,” the attorney general is leaving room for the targeted killing of American citizens on American soil. He assures Senator Paul that this would be an “extraordinary circumstance,” but given how the Justice Department has expanded the notion of “imminent threat” when it comes to killing Americans abroad, what is to prevent a similar expansion of “protecting the homeland from a catastrophic attack” so that using lethal force on American soil moves from extraordinary to ordinary? If someone within the United States is believed by



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intelligence agencies to be an operational leader of al Qaeda and is continually involved in planning violent attacks on Americans, might a high-level official in the U.S. government decide it is better to kill that terrorist leader without trial rather than arrest him and risk a confrontation and harm to law enforcement officers?

These two Justice Department documents, the targeted killing analysis and the attorney general's letter, raise several disturbing prospects. The targeted killing analysis raises the prospects of people who pose no particular threat to the United States being killed because someone in the government judged them to pose "imminent threats," under the new expansive meaning of the term. This same analysis also raises the prospect of a global campaign of targeted killing, in defiance of other governments' wishes, with all the risks to American interests and reputation involved. Last, the attorney general's letter leaves open the possibility, however remote, that some people within the United States might be killed without trial because they are suspected of terrorist activities. If such a practice is used even half as much as targeted killing abroad has been, then whatever minimal fairness the criminal justice system currently offers could be threatened. Both these documents offer ample reasons for concern over and criticism of the Obama administration's current policies.



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ILLUSION OF PURITY: DECONSTRUCTING THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM

by Nicholas Neal

A question that consistent lifers ponder to themselves is where we fit on the political spectrum. The simple answer is that we are a form of centrists. This is because we incorporate positions that are both on the left and the right. We are certainly not the only type of centrists, and for that reason, we should probably not put so much emphasis on it, lest we be confused for the likes of Joe Lieberman or Rudy Giuliani. However, the bigger problem is the political spectrum itself. It's simply not a good metaphor for political philosophy in regard to consistent lifers.

If there is anything that unites everyone across the political spectrum it is the belief in the political spectrum. Many simply take it for granted as the ultimate divider of groups and philosophies. It creates a grid of intelligibility which defines the limits of opinion, and one of the limits it has imposed upon the political populace is that pro-lifers go over here, peace activists go over there and never the two shall meet except in conflict. They may point out the inconsistencies of the other side, but never shall they oppose both acts of homicide.

Not only does the spectrum divide movements but it also divides perceptions of reality. Film theorist Mas'ud Zavarzedeh argued that visual images (including real life) are not auto-intelligible but can only

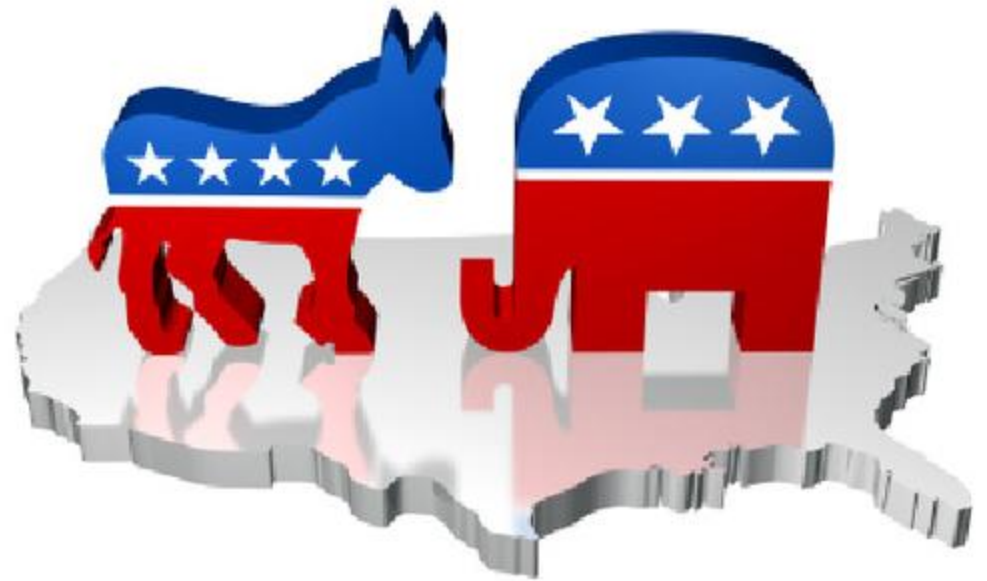
be interpreted through ideology.[1] The images of dead fetuses and dead foreigners are interpreted differently depending on ideology, thus the victims of abortion and euthanasia are segregated from the victims of war and the death penalty into two different perceptions of reality. This reveals why consistent lifers must deconstruct the political spectrum. We must show that all of these victims inhabit the same world and the violence against them must be approached with a consistent ethic.

The political spectrum is not a literal spectrum. There is no real way of measuring anything from it. It is merely used as a way to visualize the range of political philosophy. The problem with this visualization is that it makes it seem as if progressivism and conservatism are running in a straight line in opposite directions, and that the ends of each spectrum is what happens when the philosophies are so pure and consistent that they have no gradations. For this reason we have terms like "hard right" and "hard left" for each end and "mushy middle" for the center, which is perceived as the least pure in regard to principle. An example of how a spectrum conjures an image of pure end points and a compromised middle would be a gray scale. One end is white which is the purest form of light and other end is black which is the purest end of shadow. The gray middle is mixed and compromised.

However, the ends of the political spectrum are only asserted to be pure. Progressives, for instance, are supposed to believe in peace, tolerance and equality, yet what if they decide that dismembering the unborn isn't peaceful, that the eugenic idea of destroying fetuses for their genetic defects is intolerant, and that lethal ageism is anti-egalitarian? Are these people deviating from their philosophy? No, they are being more pure with their principles, but because they do not fit the liberal stereotype, pro-life liberals are unfairly placed in the center as if they are less pure than pro-choicers. Thus we see that the ends of the political spectrum are really just how much one fits a predetermined view of what progressivism and conservatism is rather than how pure one is to principle. Lethal ageism is progressive because progressives believe in it. Big government anti-life projects called wars are conservative, because conservatives believe in them. Ultimately the ends are based on self-affirming conventions, not actual conclusions to applied principles.

This illusion of purity is what legitimizes conservatism's and progressivism's inconsistencies. Claiming to be pro-life, pro-war and pro-death penalty is not seen as a contradiction but rather as following a straight "consistent" line rightward. The same goes in claiming to be pro-peace while supporting the legal killing of the unborn. The spectrum conflates metaphorical direction with consistent principles.

As a cinema major I cannot help but express this through film theory. A basic principle of editing is that when two or more images are placed in sequence with each other, they give a third meaning. A classic example given by Alfred Hitchcock would be showing an image of mother and child playing in the park juxtaposed with an old man smiling. [2] This creates the third meaning that this is a kindly old man, perhaps a grandfather. If however we were to replace the image of mother and child in the park with a girl in a bikini and kept that same image of the old man smiling, the third meaning is totally changed. He's suddenly a pervert. The political spectrum puts issues in sequence, and I would argue that doing so creates



the same "third meaning" effect. It creates the third meaning that these lists of policy positions given by both parties represent a coherent system of thought. It's the sequencing of policy positions that creates ideology and gives an assertion of principle.

However, films can be re-edited. Their images can be re-sequenced to a point where the entire meaning of the film is changed. It's time that consistent lifers totally re-edit the national film that is the political spectrum. The pacing is terrible, the acting is shallow, and the plot doesn't make sense. By sequencing the causes of life and peace together, we create a third meaning: the victims of these acts of homicide inhabit the same world, and the same ethical rules ought to apply to both.

For this reason consistent lifers should interrogate (to use a feminist term) this illusion of purity at the ends of the spectrum. We should measure principle by how consistently it is applied, not by how well it follows a metaphorical and ultimately constructed direction.

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TRUE LIFE

AN INTERVIEW WITH “NIPS” MATHESON OF BIKERS AGAINST CHILD ABUSE



Photo from BACA International Facebook

Perhaps the first thing you think of when you hear the word “bikers” is a quaint little cruiser bicycle with teal spokes, or maybe a slick road bicycle ready for the Tour de France. But we are talking about a more hardcore biker today – the Hell’s Angels type of bikers. Except, these bikers take to the road to work against and prevent child abuse, and give children support in some of the most badass men and women who take to the streets. Bikers Against Child Abuse might sound like an oxymoron to you, but the work they do has been changing lives. I had the pleasure of interviewing Kimberly “Nips” Matheson of Bikers Against Child Abuse about their mission, their vehicle for success, and how they have changed the landscape for abuse victims.

Aimee: *Why did you choose to start an anti-child-abuse initiative with bikers? What was the motivation behind getting involved through this demographic of people, reaching out to victims of abuse?*

Nips: “Initiative” is not quite the word I would use to describe what motivates (B.A.C.A). Our mission started as an effort to help one child who was a victim of abuse. Empowering that child “To not feel afraid of the world in which he lives” became a concern for the many children who experience abuse. Our particular group of bikers, are dedicated biker brothers and sisters who love to ride, (that’s what bikers do), those who are drawn to B.A.C.A. as an organization are compelled to “ride for a reason”, our reason, our

mission, is abused children. The reward for being there to help empower a child through a very challenging ordeal is priceless. We are “keepers of the children”, kids dig that. Bikers understand brotherhood, and are very protective of their own, the image is one that lends itself nicely to our mission to protect children. So I’m not sure it’s not more like, kids chose us to be their protectors, we accepted the invitation. It was a natural fit.

Aimee: *What do you hope to achieve through your work with the BACA initiative? (Both short term and long term?)*

Nips: Empowerment. Abuse is a cycle, it exists through generational conditioning. A child becomes “conditioned” into thinking that’s the way the world works, either through being abused, or abusing others. We help them understand that it isn’t supposed to be that way. Our mission to empower victims, one child at a time is both a short, and long term challenge. By empowering a child today, there is a better chance that he does not remain a victim or become an abuser tomorrow.

Aimee: *Tell us briefly about your experience with the B.A.C.A. Initiative in action.*

Nips: I believe that any member you were to ask about their experience would tell you the B.A.C.A. experience is very rewarding. When a child is empowered and able to tell what has happened to them in a court of law and aid in the prosecution of their abuser, it’s payday! Payday for the child by not having to live in fear that the abuser will be able to hurt them again, and payday for us because we have helped them get there by lending them our emotional and physical support.

Aimee: *What were the impressions and reactions of the people with whom you worked and served? What about the general public?*

Nips: B.A.C.A. in general is well received by those we have come in contact with. State and local agencies we work in conjunction with are supportive of

Photo from BACA International Facebook



our efforts. No other organization focuses on empowering the victim like we do. We simply care and believe that every child is entitled to a happy childhood. Since B.A.C.A. started in 1995 (by JP “Chief” Lilly) we have become International, with chapters around the world. With that being said and with that kind of expansion it would be safe to say we are well received well globally.

Aimee: *What has the impact been in your regions/neighborhoods when it comes to child abuse?*

Nips: B.A.C.A.’s impact on abuse itself, regionally or otherwise, is a bit difficult to evaluate. However, on an individual level, to the kids we serve, the ones who have allowed us to be a part of their lives, it is very easy to evaluate. B.A.C.A. kids become more self-confident, they are happier and well adjusted. We have seen children go through many changes. We have seen kids go from being very shy and withdrawn, to outgoing and at ease with the world around them. We are the best paid volunteers in the world, we get to see kids flourish and that priceless.

TRUE LIFE - BIKERS AGAINST CHILD ABUSE

Photo from BACA International Facebook



For more information about Bikers Against Child Abuse, please visit www.bacaworld.org.

Aimee: *Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about your work, or B.A.C.A. in general?*

Nips: Bikers Against Child Abuse (B.A.C.A.) exists with the intent to create a safer environment for abused children. We exist as a body of bikers to empower children to no feel afraid of the world in which they live. We stand ready to lend support to our wounded friends by involving them with an established untied organization. We work in conjunction with local and state officials who are already in place to protect children. We desire to send a clear message to all involved with the abused child that this child is a part of our organization, and that we are prepared to lend our physical and emotional support to them by affiliation and our physical presence. We stand ready to shield these children from further abuse. We do not condone the use of violence or physical force in any manner, however, should circumstances arise such that we are the only obstacle preventing a child from further abuse, we stand ready to be that obstacle.

Aimee: *Thank you so much, Nips, and the rest of the B.A.C.A. team for your work and sharing your time with me to spread the message of respect for human life and dignity.*

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CONCEIVED IN RAPE: MY STORY

by Rebecca Kiessling



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I was adopted nearly from birth. At 18, I learned that I was conceived out of a brutal rape at knife-point by a serial rapist. Like most people, I'd never considered that abortion applied to my life, but once I received this information, all of a sudden I realized that, not only does it apply to my life, but it has to do with my very existence. It was as if I could hear the echoes of all those people who, with the most sympathetic of tones, would say, "Well, except in cases of rape. . . ," or who would rather fervently exclaim in disgust: "Especially in cases of rape!!!" All these people are out there who don't even know me, but are standing in judgment of my life, so quick to dismiss it just because of how I was conceived. I felt like I was now going to have to justify my own existence, that I would have to prove myself to the world that I shouldn't have been aborted and that I was worthy of living. I also remember feeling like garbage because of people who would say

that my life was like garbage -- that I was disposable.

Please understand that whenever you identify yourself as being "pro-choice," or whenever you make that exception for rape, what that really translates into is you being able to stand before me, look me in the eye, and say to me, "I think your mother should have been able to abort you." That's a pretty powerful statement. I would never say anything like that to someone. I would say never to someone, "If I had my way, you'd be dead right now." But that is the reality with which I live. I challenge anyone to describe for me how it's not. It's not like people say, "Oh well, I'm pro-choice except for that little window of opportunity in 1968/69, so that you, Rebecca, could have been born." No -- this is the ruthless reality of that position, and I can tell you that it hurts and it's mean. But I know that most people don't put a face to this issue. For them, it's just a concept -- a quick cliché, and

Photo from Savethe1 Facebook page



they sweep it under the rug and forget about it. I do hope that, as a child of rape, I can help to put a face, a voice, and a story to this issue.

I've often experienced those who would confront me and try to dismiss me with quick quips like, "Oh well, you were lucky!" Be sure that my survival has nothing to do with luck. The fact that I'm alive today has to do with choices that were made by our society at large, people who fought to ensure abortion was illegal in Michigan at the time -- even in cases of rape, people who argued to protect my life, and people who voted pro-life. I wasn't lucky. I was protected. And would you really rationalize that our brothers and sisters who are being aborted every day are just somehow "unlucky"?!?

Although my birthmother was thrilled to meet me, she did tell me that she actually went to two back-alley abortionists and I was almost aborted. After the rape, the police referred her to a counselor who basically told her that abortion was the thing to do. She said there were no crisis pregnancy centers back

then, but my birthmother assured me that if there had been, she would have gone if at least for a little more guidance. The rape counselor is the one who set her up with the back-alley abortionists. For the first, she said it was the typical back-alley conditions that you hear about as to why "she should have been able to safely and legally abort" me -- blood and dirt all over the table and floor. Those back-alley conditions and the fact that it was illegal caused her to back out, as with most women.

Then she got hooked up with a more expensive abortionist. This time she was to meet someone at night by the Detroit Institute of Arts. Someone would approach her, say her name, blindfold her, put her in the backseat of a car, take her and then abort me . . . , then blindfold her again and drop her back off. And do you know what I think is so pathetic? It's that I know there are an awful lot of people out there who would hear me describe those conditions and their response would just be a pitiful shake of the head in disgust: "It's just so awful that your birthmother should have had to have gone through that in order to have been able to abort you!" Like that's compassionate?! I fully realize that they think they are being compassionate, but that's pretty cold-hearted from where I stand, don't you think? That is my life that they are so callously talking about and there is nothing compassionate about that position. My birthmother is okay -- her life went on and in fact, she's doing great, but I would have been killed, my life would have been ended. I may not look the same as I did when I was four years old or four days old yet unborn in my mother's womb, but that was still undeniably me and I would have been killed through a brutal abortion.

According to the research of Dr. David Reardon, director of the Elliot Institute, co-editor of the book *Victims and Victors: Speaking Out About Their Pregnancies, Abortions and Children Resulting From Sexual Assault*, and author of the article "Rape, Incest and Abortion: Searching Beyond the Myths," most women who become pregnant out of sexual assault do not want an abortion and are in fact worse-off after an abortion. See <http://www.afterabortion.org>.

So most people's position on abortion in cases of rape is based upon faulty premises: 1) the rape victim would want an abortion, 2) she'd be better off with an abortion, and 3) that child's life just isn't worth having to put her through the pregnancy. I hope that my story, and the other stories posted on this site, will be able to help dispel that last myth.

I wish I could say that my birthmother was with the majority of victims and that she didn't want to abort me, but she had been convinced otherwise. However, the nasty disposition and foul mouth of this second back-alley abortionist, along with a fear for her own safety, caused her to back out. When she told him by phone that she wasn't interested in this risky arrangement, this abortion doctor insulted her and called her names. To her surprise, he called again the next day to try to talk her into aborting me once again, and again she declined and was hurled insults. So that was it -- after that she just couldn't go through with it. My birthmother was then heading into her second trimester -- far more dangerous, far more expensive to have me aborted.

I'm so thankful my life was spared, but a lot of well-meaning Christians would say things to me like, "Well you see, God really meant for you to be here!" Or others may say, "You were meant to be here." But I know that God intends for every unborn child to be given the same opportunity to be born, and I can't sit contentedly saying, "Well, at least my life was spared." Or, "I deserved it. Look what I've done with my life." And millions of others didn't? I can't do that. Can you? Can you just sit there and say, "At least I was wanted . . . at least I'm alive" or just, "Whatever!?" Is that really the kind of person who you want to be? Cold-hearted? A facade of compassion on the exterior, but stone-cold and vacated from within? Do you claim to care about women but couldn't care less about me because I stand as a reminder of something you'd rather not face and that you'd hate for others to consider either? Do I not fit your agenda?



Photo from RebeccaKiessling.com

In law school, I'd also have classmates say things to me like, "Oh well! If you'd been aborted, you wouldn't be here today, and you wouldn't know the difference anyway, so what does it matter?" Believe it or not, some of the top pro-abortion philosophers use that same kind of argument: "The fetus never knows what hits him, so there's no such fetus to miss his life." So I guess as long as you stab someone in the back while he's sleeping, then it's okay, because he doesn't know what hits him?! I'd explain to my classmates how their same logic would justify me killing you today, because you wouldn't be here tomorrow, and you wouldn't know the difference anyway, so what does it matter?" And they'd just stand there with their jaws dropped. It's amazing what a little logic can do, when you really think this thing through -- like we were supposed to be doing in law school -- and consider what we're really talking about: there are lives who are not here today because they were aborted. It's like the old saying: "If a tree falls in the forest, and no one is around to hear it, does it make a noise?" Well, yeah! And if a baby is aborted, and no one else is around to know about it,

does it matter? The answer is, YES! Their lives matter. My life matters. Your life matters and don't let anyone tell you otherwise!

The world is a different place because it was illegal for my birthmother to abort me back then. Your life is different because she could not legally abort me because you are sitting here reading my words today! But you don't have to have an impact on audiences for your life to matter. There is something we are all missing here today because of the generations now who have been aborted and it matters.

One of the greatest things I've learned is that the rapist is NOT my creator, as some people would have me believe. My value and identity are not established as a "product of rape," but as a child of God. Psalm 68:5,6 declares: "A father to the fatherless . . . is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families." And Psalm 27:10 tells us "Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me." I know that there is no stigma in being adopted. We are told in the New Testament that it is in the spirit of adoption that we are called to be God's children through Christ our Lord. So He must have thought pretty highly of adoption to use that as a picture of His love for us!

Most importantly, I've learned, I'll be able to teach my children, and I teach others that your value is not based on the circumstances of your conception, your parents, your siblings, your mate, your house, your clothes, your looks, your IQ, your grades, your scores, your money, your occupation, your successes or failures, or your abilities or disabilities -- these are the lies that are perpetuated in our society. In fact, most motivational speakers tell their audiences that if they could just make something of themselves and meet this certain societal standard, then they too could "be somebody." But the fact is that no one could ever meet all of these ridiculous standards, and many people will fall incredibly short and so, does that mean that they 're not "somebody" or that they're "nobody?" The truth is that you don't have to prove

your worth to anyone, and if you really want to know what your value is, all you have to do is look to the Cross --because that's the price that was paid for your life! That's the infinite value that God placed on your life! He thinks you are pretty valuable, and so do I. Won't you join me in affirming others' value as well, in word and in action?

MEDIA REVIEWS AND CONSISTENT LIFE

WHAT *THE HUNGER GAMES* TEACHES US ABOUT VIOLENCE

by Julia Smucker

Fear, poverty, state power, violence as entertainment, moral dilemmas: these are among the chilling themes that have made *The Hunger Games* such a massively compelling story. Not only does this dystopian fantasy draw us in with a powerful, suspenseful plot, but more significantly, it offers a thought-provoking critique of violence and society's participation in it.

Set in the futuristic country of Panem in what was once North America, the premise of *The Hunger Games* centers around the totalitarian rule of the country's capitol, which requires an annual retribution for a past rebellion in the form of one boy and one girl selected at random from each of 12 districts. Those selected compete in the Hunger Games, a nationally televised life-and-death competition in which the last remaining survivor is declared the victor. In the midst of this dehumanizing scenario, Katniss Everdeen volunteers to take her younger sister's place as "tribute" in the games. This courageous act is only the beginning of an intense personal and moral struggle which raises challenging questions for us all.

Katniss, whose driving aim is simply survival, must



fight to maintain her own humanity and to see the humanity of others, even her opponents in the arena. But can she succeed in doing so in a situation where survival requires a willingness to kill?

From the start, there is a profound tension between Katniss' revulsion at the injustice in which she is forced to participate and her deep-seated survival instinct. This tension produces something of a moral disconnect: Katniss is deeply aware of the fundamental injustice of the Hunger Games, yet within the games, she demonstrates surprisingly little hesitation to kill. In one exchange the night before the games begin, Peeta, the male tribute from Katniss' district, expresses a desire to "die as himself," to maintain some piece of his identity despite the brutality that the repressive Capitol is trying to reduce him to. Katniss retorts that she "can't afford to think like that": as she goes into the games, survival trumps defiance. Peeta too, despite his grandiose declaration, exhibits the same disconnect by his prediction that he will kill like everyone else. In this resignation he has already defeated his wish to show the Capitol they don't own him.

By the end of the games, something appears to have changed for both Katniss and Peeta, whose ultimate act of defiance involves a decision to lay their lives on the line rather than kill, and in doing so reclaim their own humanity. The refusal to kill turns out to be the only way to defeat the Capitol's claim on them. Even as a risky survival maneuver, their choice is a dramatic demonstration of the true power of nonviolence, which raises an even more provocative set of questions.

In one of the film's earlier scenes, Katniss' friend Gale wonders aloud, "What if no one watched?" That is, if watching 24 teenagers kill each other is nobody's entertainment choice, could the games be repeated year after year? The question implicates everyone, and the implications concerning the potentially desensitizing effects of our own entertainment choices, as well as our indirect complicity in state-sponsored violence, are well worth pondering.

But one might also ask, what if no one killed? How would it affect the games if all of the tributes, or even one, refused to kill from the start? What kind of message would that send about the Capitol's ownership of their humanity?

An all too easy dismissal to this question might be found in reference to the tributes from the wealthier districts, referred to in the book (and more briefly in the film) as the Careers because of their lifelong ambition and training to compete in the Hunger Games. The Capitol and its representatives, especially the despotic President Snow, are the true villains of the story, but in the Careers we get a more immediate set of antagonists. For the audience, this has the unfortunate effect of dehumanizing some of the characters vying for their own survival – each presumably with a family back home hoping for their safety and a back story we never see. What if all the tributes had simply been, like Katniss, trying to do what it took to survive? If that were the case, we would surely be more disturbed by every death that takes place in the arena. By creating characters whose deaths we can feel good about, novelist Suzanne Collins has done us the disservice of a moral reprieve in an otherwise powerful critique of the dehumanizing nature of all violence. Still, the presence of the Careers may give us cause to consider who we are tempted to dehumanize as a handy excuse to justify violence in whatever form it takes.

Many have seen the popularity of *The Hunger Games* as owing to more than its gripping plot, masterful as it is. To a considerable extent, the story has found resonance on a deeper level, touching a social nerve about the acceptance and even glorification of violence, often exacerbated by other social injustices such as systemic poverty. As we anticipate the release of the second film in the trilogy, *Catching Fire*, this coming November, we are left with much to ponder about the nature of violence and the moral choices we must all make in relation to it.

THE VALUE OF MERCY: JUSTICE & DOCTOR WHO

by *Lilianna Meldrum Serbicki*

The television show Doctor Who receives an extremely intense devotion from many of its fans. Whovians discuss and dissect the show with an almost religious fervor. On the surface, it is, admittedly, an often goofy program that is sometimes more fantasy than science fiction. However, there is an important element of its storytelling that makes it unique. At its thematic core is the desire to affirm the dignity of the human person and the potential for good—and mercy—that we all have.

Science fiction in general serves to remind us how beautiful and frightening the real world is by showing it to us in a carnival mirror; sci-fi is really about our society and our world, not the future or some far-off planet. The most effective storytelling portrays what is universal in humanity, and that is why Doctor Who endures. While it does not shy away from killing off beloved characters and presenting true evil, it still encourages the viewer to react to the world with wonder, optimism, and respect, not fear. Christopher Eccleston, who played the ninth incarnation of the Doctor, expressed the core message of Doctor Who as: “live...as fully as you can. Care for others, and be respectful of all other life forms”.¹

The Doctor himself is a semi-immortal alien who can travel throughout space and time, in turn saving and complicating the lives of those he encounters. He often travels with companions who act as effective foils. These usually human characters help to bring the Doctor (figuratively and sometimes literally) down to earth. Because of his age, intelligence, and experience, he is occasionally tempted to look at the “big picture” when he finds solutions, rather than the individual details. The companions often remind him to ask, not if a solution “works” for people, but instead, “are they happy?”.²



The themes of mercy and justice are addressed repeatedly in Doctor Who, particularly in Eccleston’s time as the ninth regeneration. However, “A Town Called Mercy,” a recent episode from this current season, is an excellent example of the attitude Doctor Who strives to express.

While the show has an affirming message, it does not paint a simplified view of the human (or alien, as the case may be) soul. The show does have its share of one-dimensional antagonists, but the best villains in Doctor Who challenge the viewer’s ethics because they are not easily categorized. In “A Town Called Mercy,” the Doctor (now in his eleventh regeneration) deliberates over whether or not he should allow a war criminal to be killed by someone set on vengeance. The war criminal is Kahler-Jex, an alien doctor and scientist who experimented on his own kind to create cyborgs to help his people win a war. He landed near Mercy, a tiny 19th-century town in the American west, in the course of his escape from a man with a vendetta against him. This man, Kahler-Tek, whom the inhabitants of Mercy call the Gunslinger, is one of Kahler-Jex’s own violent creations. He cuts off supplies to the town and threatens the inhabitants in his desire to reclaim and kill Kahler-Jex.

However, Kahler-Jex is not “simply” evil. After reaching Mercy, he subsequently saves the Western

town from a cholera outbreak and provides the people with electricity from his ship. As a result, the marshal of the town is dedicated to defending him, and refuses to hand him over to the Gunslinger. The viewer (and the Doctor) wonders: why did Kahler-Jex decide to cure the town's cholera? Is he merely trying to relieve the weight of his own evil actions through this self-inflicted "punishment"?

The Doctor is horrified and disgusted by the actions Kahler-Jex has taken. This man has caused pain, death, and violence—but in doing so he won a war that "saved" millions of other lives. As the Doctor struggles with his own conscience as he decides whether or not to hand the scientist over to the Gunslinger, Kahler-Jex declares wryly that it "would be so much simpler if I was just one thing, wouldn't it?"³ This is an incredibly important statement; dividing people into categories of "good" and "evil" is very convenient, but not realistic. Killing, even in an arguably "just" act, changes those who kill as well as those who die. A terrible act, even if it is done for a "rationalized" reason, remains a terrible act.

The Doctor has seen death, war, genocide, tragedy—a portion of it even caused indirectly by his own hand. We, as viewers, have seen much of it with him. The Doctor is no longer young, and most of the people he loves have been torn away from him. As his outer appearance has become increasingly youthful, his inner self has become more cynical. His eyes are "heavy with the weight of all [he has] seen"³ In many ways this comes to a head in this episode; he almost hands Kahler-Jex to his self-appointed executioner. It would be easy for the Doctor to trade the life of an ethically compromised man for the life of a town. This is not the first time the Doctor has (almost) made a morally gray decision, but this episode's "problem" is notable for how directly it is confronted and resolved.

Amy, one of the Doctor's human companions, desperately asks him to show mercy to this man. The Doctor is tired of seeing violence, of meeting liars; he has been encountering murderers and traitors for centuries, and he has almost reached the breaking point. He

has always tried to "negotiate...to understand," but now he mourns "all the people that died because of my mercy" ("A Town Called Mercy"). However, his companion, Amy, says that they should be better than Kahler-Jex; they should not have to resort to violence in order to provide justice. The Doctor realizes she is right, and tries to help the town—and the Gunslinger—realize "that's how all this started...now that same story's gonna make you a killer, too. Don't you see? Violence doesn't end violence, it extends it. And I don't think you want to do this. I don't think you want to become that man" ("A Town Called Mercy"). The quality of mercy saves those who are merciful just as it saves those who receive compassion.

Perhaps this is what Kahler-Jex himself should have heard before he initially tore members of his own race apart to create an army of supermen and "save" millions of lives by winning a war. Perhaps he believed that his actions would bring an end to the war, to violence, to the fear and anger inside of him. It is easy to rationalize our choices when we view lives as elements in an equation rather than individually priceless entities. Kahler-Jex ultimately ends his own life (in an action the Doctor himself does not endorse). The despair this character feels knowing he has destroyed so many lives ultimately destroys him. His death is tragic, but it emphasizes the effect that violence has on the hearts and minds of those who enact it.

The Gunslinger, who had been hunting Kahler-Jex, is tempted to end his own life as well, but with the Doctor's encouragement, he becomes the new protector of the town Mercy. There is hope and redemption here for those who are seeking it; the story goes on. In the end, that is the enduring appeal of Doctor Who. All the tragedy in the universe cannot drown out the fact that the Doctor believes "that in nine hundred years of time and space...I've never met anybody who wasn't important."⁴

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THE END OF SUMMER

A SHORT STORY

(PART 1)

by Alexander Pyles



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The night was warm, while the sky faded slowly from pink to violet. Ellie always liked twilight. There was unmistakable energy as the sun went down. The neat and pretty upper-class suburban neighborhood breezed by as she watched from the passenger seat.

It was a Saturday night, which meant party night. Specifically, it was the Pearson twins' party, which meant it was going to be one that rocked. She grinned to herself at the thought of loud music, boys and alcohol.

A coil of her brown hair drifted down in front of her nose by the slight breeze, breaking her from her gaze out the window. She turned to her best friend, who was driving.

Jenny was quietly singing to the song issuing from

the radio, her fingers tapping the steering wheel of the yellow convertible Bug with the soft beat. Her dyed blonde hair was swirling behind her head from the wind. Her thick mascara made her look the part of a princess of the Nile, complementing her olive skin.

"Do you think Van will be there?" Ellie asked.

Jenny looked at her from the corner of her eye. "Probably, I mean he's part of that whole clique that the twins are in. Why—are you hoping to hook up?" replied Jenny, with a sly smile.

"No!" she snapped back, quickly betraying her supposed sincere intention.

Jenny looked sideways at her best friend, with her smile only wider this time. The two knew the truth.

There was a silence between the two of them for a moment. The radio started a song that lasted a catchy beat. It wasn't long before Ellie started to hum with the song, while Jenny unconsciously harmonized with her. The two girls noticed at the same time and started to giggle.

Before either could say anything more, they arrived at the Pearson's house. The music was already pounding inside, with the windows silhouetting a crowded interior. The bushes were neatly trimmed and the lawn looked fresh cut.

"Looks like they started early, goodness," said Jenny. Her eyes squinted as she tried to see a spot in the long line of cars along the curb. After searching for a couple minutes Jenny conceded with a spot a block away.

Ellie pulled the door handle and stepped out into the comfortable twilight air. Her flats slapped the pavement as she started to walk toward the house.

"Wait-for me," called Jenny, with the Bug's door ajar.

"Come on you priss," Ellie replied, walking over to the driver's side.

Jenny was hurriedly running a comb through her tousled hair. "You can't rush this," she said, waving a hand in front of her face.

"Well, hurry up Princess, before all the boys are taken," replied Ellie.

"I am I am," said Jenny, "I forget...your husband Van is waiting."

Ellie rolled her eyes and turned to walk to the Pearson house. The rapid clicking of Jenny's heels struggled to catch up with her, but her best friend's love of tight mini-skirts sabotaged her attempt to move quickly. Ellie stopped in her walk, grinning in soft amusement at Jenny.

"Shut up," said Jenny, pulling her thigh-hugging

mini-skirt down as she attempted to regain her composure.

It wasn't long before the two girls came to the house. The music had taken on a thumping beat, while the profile of the crowd in the window had taken a controlled throb as bodies moved with the rhythm. All the outside lights were on, casting shadows as the girls came up to the house.

Jenny quickened her strut as they came up the impeccably primed sidewalk, arriving at the front door. Ellie knocked, though she thought it was silly immediately considering how loud the music was. Yet, the door knob turned and the door swung in releasing a loud pulse of the coalescing techno and hip-hop.

A girl, who had been in Ellie's homeroom stood there with a cup in her hand and she shouted over the noise, "Come on in." Ellie and Jenny stepped into the hot house, which was accompanied by the faint smell of alcohol. Jenny looked at Ellie for a quick moment, with another large grin on her face and took the lead into the controlled chaos of the Pearson twins' party.

Jenny grabbed a beer from the open case sitting on the kitchen table. Ellie did likewise and both girls started sipping the bitter beer. Jenny's fascination with alcohol came from her parent's habits of being daily drinkers. Ellie, being her best friend, had been towed along with this fascination, but she had developed a taste for it all her own.

It wasn't long before a couple of guys came up to the two of them and started to chat. Ellie picked up on their intentions within half a minute. Their clumsy attempt at sincerity was dashed by their scanning eyes that went from the two girl's feet to their lips. Their breath smelled thick with beer and a new can was already in each of their hands. The conversation went far enough for both girls to turn the exchange back and deter the would-be hook-ups.

Jenny looked at Ellie and motioned for her to follow her, "Let's get into this crowd." She started to move with the music, her arms pumping with the music.

Photo by Daniel Mezone, some rights reserved.



Ellie finished her can, draining it before setting it down, and followed her best friend into the sweaty mob. After a couple of songs, both girls went to pound another pair of beers and repeated the process a couple more times, Ellie could feel the buzz. She loved that contented warmth and fuzziness, which made the music even smoother for her.

It was then Van arrived on the scene. Ellie spotted him first in the crowd as the music took a particularly throbbing tempo. *He is beautiful*, she thought, *chipped from a block of sandstone*. His firm torso stretched his shirt in all the right places. Ellie glided toward the boy, without a second thought, which hadn't come from her present buzz.

Van could feel eyes on him and turned his eyes to her, which normally would have caused her to freeze, but with music permeating her body and alcohol swirling in her veins, she didn't. The two started dancing with the crowd, as she drew close, but it was Van that broke the wordless exchange.

"You're Ellie, right?" he asked, over the noise. His hazel eyes sparkled with a certain amusement.

"Yeah," Ellie replied, trying her best to match Van's movements, though she felt slightly rubbery.

"How have ya been?" he asked.

"Good," she shouted back.

"Wanna get out of here?" he asked.

"Sure," said Ellie and her heart skipped a beat.

Van didn't say anything more and grabbed her hand, leading her off the dance floor. He led her upstairs, weaving past the crowded stairwell and hallway. The music had softened as Van walked with Ellie further down the hallway to a bedroom.

Van went in and closed the door. He went over to the window and opened it, letting the breeze in, before slumping on the bed. "Finally away from all that noise," he said rubbing his face with both hands.

Ellie sat down next to him, smoothing her dress nervously, her mind excited, but scared of how her crush was right next to her. *What am I supposed to do now? Are we going to kiss?* They were only fragmentary given the alcohol in her now.

"So, Ellie you drink right?" he asked, sitting up. Ellie only nodded. "Have you ever had whiskey?"

"No," she managed to say.

"You aren't nervous are you? You shouldn't be nervous," Van said, pulling a bottle of caramel colored liquid from a drawer in the night table. "I know the twins well enough from lacrosse to know that they stash alcohol," he said with a grin and a swig of the whiskey.

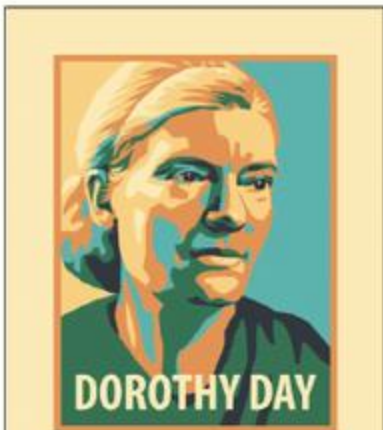
Ellie watched him and took the bottle when he offered it to her. She took a swig, but did not expect the harshness on her throat and she coughed. "Oh, I should have warned you," said Van patting her back, but his hand touched her skin where her dress was open in the back. The touch caused more color to flood to her cheeks.

The buzz had grown louder in her and she grabbed Van's other hand. The boy froze and the two stared at each other for a long moment. Then with alcohol heavy on their breaths and minds, the two kissed and Ellie only felt the warmth of a sweet embrace.

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Father Daniel Berrigan, Consistent.
 "One is called to live consistently, even if the change one works for seems impossible."
 Born in Virginia, Minnesota on May 9, 1911, Daniel Berrigan has been a priest, a novelist, an activist. Along with his brother Philip, Berrigan was an important opponent to American militarism, founding the national peace group, Sings and Lays Concerned about Vietnam.
 Ordained in 1932, Father Berrigan marched with his brother during the civil rights movement activities in 1963. Together they led numerous protests against the war in Vietnam, including the destruction of draft board files in 1968. For his various acts of civil disobedience, Father Berrigan has spent more than six years of his life in prison.
 "We speak out, committed civil disobedience, and want to help because the peace hangs so seriously and justifiably upon us upon us, casting billions to build and billions to improve—means which become more certain."



Dorothy Day, Consistent.
 "The greatest challenge of the day is how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us."
 Born in Brooklyn, New York in 1897, Dorothy Day was an American journalist, a powerful social activist and a devout Catholic. With fellow activist Peter Maurin, Day helped establish the Catholic Worker, a social movement that continues to combine direct aid to the poor and homeless.



Dr. Catherine Meeks, Consistent.
 Catherine Meeks is a storyteller with a purpose.
 Born in 1948 in segregated Arkansas, Ms. Meeks has spent a lifetime working on issues of racial healing and the promotion of life. The daughter of a sharecropper and a teacher, Catherine grew up hearing her father talk about a 12-year-old brother who died from a brain aneurysm before she was born at a white hospital. "I grew up in that kind of atmosphere; the world is really hostile toward us because we're black and poor."
 For more than 30 years, Catherine has advocated wellness and social justice, giving voice to those living on the margins of society and promoting a healthy social dialogue worldwide.



Gandhi, Consistent.
 Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869, and became the international symbol of the power of nonviolence. Gandhi was the most revered political and ideological leader in India during the nation's delicate transition to independence. His leadership of national civil disobedience led ultimately to India's separation from Great Britain, and



Reverend Johnny Hunter, Consistent.
 Dr. Johnny M. Hunter recently died at birth. After others had given up on the mission, an elderly man refused to let him die. The later told him that he was born for a reason.
 Reverend Hunter believes he lives the reason—to protect life. With more than 30 years in the ministry, Dr. Hunter is the President of Global Life & Family Mission (GLFM), a ministry dedicated to promoting traditional family values, racial harmony, and the survival of children around the world.
 Dr. Hunter is an ordained minister, a co-founder of the National Community Church in Capitol Hill, Washington, DC, and the former minister of Church of the Living Water, Dallas, TX. He is a nationally respected public and civil rights advocate, and founded the Life Education and Resource Network (LEARN), Inc., a broad consortium of Christian (pro-life, pro-family) advocates. LEARN is a prominent African American evangelical pro-life ministry in the United States.



Rose Evans, Consistent.
 Rose Evans was born in San Francisco in 1928, where she still lives, not far from the Pacific Ocean. Rose grew up in a loving family with a Scottish father and a Canadian mother. She grew up without any particular religion, but in college was drawn to a relationship with Jesus, and with several friends was baptized in the Episcopal Church.
 Rose Evans has been an activist for peace and life for more than 40 years. She is the oldest member of the Board of Consistent Life.
 Rose was happily married to Matthew Evans, a university professor—and they shared four children together. When her youngest child was ten, Rose went back to college and got an M.A. in Education of Exceptional Children. Her work in special education helped to inspire her activism in the issues.



Reverend Patrick Mahoney, Consistent.
 Patrick J. Mahoney is a nationally known Christian social and political activist, and an ordained minister in the Reformed Presbyterian Church. He is director of the Christian Defense Coalition, a "national ministry committed to challenging the Body of Christ to live out their faith in the public square."
 Born in New Jersey, Rev. Mahoney attended the University of Dayton and the Catholic School of Theology in Miami. His early ministerial experiences in New York City led him to embrace a commitment to expanding the role of the church in addressing society's wrongs. He began to develop and initiate social programs, and has worked tirelessly on pro-life causes, homelessness, hunger, racism and other pressing issues of social justice from a Christ-centered biblical perspective.
 In 1992, Mahoney brought his family to Washington, DC, where he



Fannie Lou Hamer, Consistent.
 Fannie Lou Hamer was a courageous civil rights leader and a passionate activist for voting rights in America. Her legacy remains today.
 Born in 1917, Hamer played a major role in registering the Mississippi Freedom Summer for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC).
 Growing up poor in segregated Mississippi, Hamer developed her passion for social justice—and was known for her outspoken rhetoric. In the early 1960s she joined the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and began work on registering voters in the deep south. Despite arrests and beatings, she continued her vigilance, eventually helping to form the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party.



Sister Helen Prejean, Consistent.
 In 1982 a friend asked Sister Helen Prejean if she would correspond with convicted murderer Elmo Patrick Sonnier, located in the Louisiana State Penitentiary. This began a journey motivated in her book *Dead Man Walking*—that continues today in her tireless work to abolish the death penalty.
 A Catholic nun since 1957, Sister Helen endorses the consistent ethic of life. She works toward the recognition that every life has dignity—not only the innocent, but also the guilty—and she rejects all violence, from conception to natural death.
 "I would morally opposed to killing; was execution, killing of the old and decrepit, the killing of children, unborn and born... I believe that all of life is sacred and must be protected, especially in the vulnerable stages at the beginning of life and in old."



Martin Sheen, Consistent.
 Martin Sheen is an actor. He is best known for his performances as Captain Willard in the film *Apocalypse Now*, Cardinal General Robert F. Lee in *Gettysburg*, and President Josiah Bartlet in the popular television series *The West Wing*. Mr. Sheen has worked with some of the world's most noted directors, including Martin Scorsese, Steven Spielberg, Oliver Stone, Francis Ford Coppola, Richard Attenborough, Terrence Malick and Mike Nichols.
 Martin Sheen also believes in the consistent life ethic. He rejects all violence, from abortion to war.
 Inspired by a deep Catholic faith, Sheen has put his beliefs in action for almost 50 years. He supported Cesar Chavez during the early days of the farm worker movement in California, and has worked tirelessly on behalf of a variety of peace and justice causes. He has spoken out about political oppression in Central America, marched on international unions, taught against the Salvadoran death squads, and supported the closing of nuclear test sites. He has been arrested on a number of occasions for nonviolent civil disobedience.



Joseph Cardinal Bernardin, Consistent.
 Joseph Cardinal Bernardin (1928-1996) has been widely credited with advancing the Consistent Life Ethic. Originally called the *Sacred Gift*, Bernardin drew from New Testament principles in rejecting all forms of violence as inconsistent with Catholic teaching.
 Bernardin was an outspoken critic of nuclear war and abortion, but he was especially his vision to include all kinds of violence. "The spectrum of life runs across the issues of genetics, abortion, capital punishment, nuclear warfare and the care of the terminally ill," wrote Bernardin in a famous speech at Fordham University. He began to define a new moral theology for Catholics that respected all life, from conception to natural death.
 Cardinal Bernardin told an audience in Portland, Oregon: "When heaven is considered 'cheap' or easily expendable in our area, eventually nothing is held as sacred and all lives are in jeopardy."



Aimee Bedoy Murphy, Consistent.
 Aimee Murphy was born in 1981. She's young. She's also a leader and the Executive Director of Life Matters Journal, the leading consistent life ethic magazine.
 Aimee was a teenager when a personal conviction led her to the cause against abortion, and she came to support and defend the consistent life ethic during her time in university.
 During her undergraduate studies, Aimee worked to successfully change the profile organization on the college campus to one that centered on equal respect for the dignity of all human life. She helped to bring change in the profile dialogue on many college campuses. As a writer whose efforts began in anti-abortion work, Aimee believes that "making the pro-life movement more accessible connects directly to the level of consistency in the ethic of its members."
 Through her work with Life Matters Journal, Aimee intends to reach people all over the globe with the consistent message of human worth. The journal's mission statement includes her words, "We must realize that the most important issue of



Shane Claiborne, Consistent.
 You'll find Shane Claiborne on the streets of Philadelphia, bringing his radical Christianity to the poor and disenfranchised, ministering to people in need and serving as a radical voice in the church.
 Born in Ironwood, California is one of the founding members of the Simple Way in Philadelphia, "a web of subversive friends, conspiring to spread the vision of 'Loving God, Loving People, and Pulling down' in our neighborhoods and in our world." This community was featured in the cover of *Christianity Today* magazine as a pioneer of the New Monasticism movement.
 Shane studied at Eastern University, Wheaton College and Princeton Theological Seminary. He is now a part of The Abolitionist Seminary. Claiborne has founded a Willow Creek Community Church outpost (one with Mother Teresa in Calcutta, India). Shane has been a part of peace delega-

Why not a consistent voice?

These are just a few of the individuals who have spoken out with a clear, unwavering voice for peace and life—rejecting all violence. **Consistent Life** is a network of 200 groups and many individuals which furthers the consistent life ethic through exhibits at conferences, advertisements, a weekly e-newsletter, a presence on social media and community speakers. We need both a network such as Consistent Life and a quality journal like *Life Matters Journal* to spread the idea of respecting the dignity and worth of each human life.

What can you do to make the world a less violent place? Will you help us?

We are committed to the protection of life, which is threatened in today's world by war, a bortion, poverty, racism, capital punishment and euthanasia. We believe that these issues are linked under a 'consistent ethic of life'. We challenge those working on all or some of these issues to maintain a cooperative spirit of peace, reconciliation, and respect in protecting the unprotected.



<http://www.consistent-life.org/join.html>

WHAT FEEDS RAPE CULTURE?

A RESPONSE TO PORTRAYALS OF RAPE IN THE MEDIA

by *Mary Stroka*



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“It’s happening in your neighborhood, happening in your town, your village, your city,” Ohio Atty. Gen. Mike DeWine said about the Steubenville rape case that found two high school football players guilty of sexually assaulting an incapacitated teenage girl .

Although sexual assault is not happening in every neighborhood, the effect of the statement is critical. This is an issue that directly impacts enough people – 200,780 cases, nationally, of rape or sexual assault in 2004-2005 – that everyone is affected in some way.

As a newly minted journalist, I have not yet become cynical about the state of the media. So when top media personnel, such as CNN’s Candy Crowley, make comments like “What’s the lasting effect though on two young men being found guilty in juvenile court of rape, essentially?” , I am alarmed and ashamed. I

am ashamed these are the news outlets and media personalities that people get their news from, that they acclaim. Crowley is an award-winning reporter, and she made, to put it mildly, unsympathetic comments on a story receiving national attention. Why did CNN allow this? Why have there been no apologies?

I realize that there needs to a certain level of freedom of speech, but when the “top” TV news channel broadcasts such comments and does not bother to apologize, there is a serious problem. And this problem reflects what is referred to as “rape culture.”

Rape culture is pretty well defined in a post, “So you’re tired of hearing about rape culture?,” Lauren Nelson wrote on March 19 on her blog, Rant Against the Random. She runs through more than two dozen examples of how American society excuses instances of sexual violence; they include many facets of the

Steubenville case but also comedian Daniel Tosh's rape joke and various offensive advertisements.

What makes it worse is that this media response is echoed on Twitter and Facebook. Nelson included a photo of such comments, and it's sickening. Everything from blaming the victim to a tweet by zjosiah, who wrote, "Steubenville : Guilty. I feel bad for the two young guys, Mays and Richmond, they did what most people in their situation would have done." To be fair, zjosiah has since apologized and may have even deleted his account, but the point is that there are significant number of people who somehow think that the rapists' behavior is acceptable.

Could it be a lack of awareness of the meaning of consent? Some of the comments seem to suggest this because of the focus on how the victim was intoxicated. Regardless of how she became intoxicated, the perpetrators' actions and those of the bystanders are atrocious. Consent is a process, in that each person needs to agree to each more intimate stage. It needs to be verbal. It needs to be sober. And it cannot be coerced. So could the victim be "at fault" for the event? No.

This contradicts what might be the immediate reaction: shouldn't the victim have to deal with the consequences of her actions? Victim blamers might say that a person who gets raped brought it on herself if she puts herself in a risky situation, wears immodest clothing, or initiates a romantic encounter. The person who gets raped is only completely innocent and deserving of compassion if she is raped by a stranger in a dark alley. I disagree. Nobody with a relatively healthy mind wants to be forced or coerced into sex – rape. The Steubenville victim could not have predicted that her body would become a sex object that night and that nobody would protect her. And besides, this mode of thought presumes that all men are rapists; the simplest provocation will result in rape. It's ridiculous.

One of the few silver linings is the outstanding number of people who chose to stand up for the victim and others who have faced such violence. Change.org has a petition in which 286,709 people as of March 28

are challenging CNN to "apologize on air for sympathizing with the Steubenville rapists." A YouTube public service announcement of how men should treat women titled "A Needed Response" by Samantha Stendal, a sophomore film student at the University of Oregon, has gone viral with 1.7 million views as of March 28. There were plenty of radio and TV personalities – Steve Cochran and commentators on The Ed Show, for example - who objected to the attitude of Candy Crowley, Poppy Harlow, and others who had responded similarly. So there is solid reason to expect some cultural change.

Rape and sexual assault is not likely to be a solitary issue; it may reflect a continued, covert misogyny and a lack of regard for human dignity. When Victoria's Secret has a line of sensualized lingerie for teens and tweens, music contains both clear and concealed messages of disrespect for sexuality, and entertainment tends to be violent, it's not surprising that rape persists in being nearly accepted by a significant part of society.

This issue is of particular relevance to the pro-life movement because of the question of allowance for abortion in the case of rape. The consistent life ethic calls for no exceptions in abortions because all conceived children have the right to life, no matter the circumstances of their being brought into the world. The crime of the father should not dictate that the child receive the death penalty. There is an opportunity for "abortion abolitionists" to change hearts through acting on a deep sense of compassion for rape victims. By bringing attention to the cause and sharing in the struggle to eliminate rape culture, it logically would become exceedingly more difficult for society to label pro-lifers as the misogynists.

We need to work together to free society of the scourge of sexual violence. Build a culture of life and respect for the dignity of the human being.

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.

SHARE YOUR DEDICATION FOR PEACE & LIFE



WEAR YOUR HEART
(& YOUR CONVICTIONS)
ON YOUR SLEEVE!

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VISIT OUR WEBSTORE AT
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