

LIFE MATTERS JOURNAL

VOLUME 2 - ISSUE 1
FALL 2012



Where's my party?

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: "Where's My Party?" by Aimee Murphy

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INTRODUCTION	2	Who's Who of Life Matters Journal (part 3)
	3	Letter from the Editor: Where's Our Party?
	4	Letters to the Editor
CURRENT EVENTS	7	Operation Sharecraft <i>by Anthony Bedoy</i>
	9	The Light Footprint <i>by John Whitehead</i>
	11	Colorado Shooting <i>by Julia Smucker</i>
	13	Abortion & Gun Control <i>by Carol Crossed</i>
	14	Comparing Romney & Obama on Life Issues <i>by Benjamin Wirtz</i>
	16	Ron Paul's Legacy <i>by Nicholas Neal</i>
ESSAYS	20	The Oneness of Human Rights <i>by Carol Crossed</i>
	22	Abortion & Poverty <i>by Jen Roth</i>
	24	Pro-Life Feminist History <i>by Mary Krane Derr</i>
	27	Contraception is not Pro-Life <i>by Marc Barnes</i>
TRUE LIFE	31	A Pro-Life Teen <i>by Madeline Bloomquist</i>
THE "MAKE IT HISTORY" CAMPAIGN	34	Students for a Fair Society at Franciscan <i>by Keith Michael Estrada</i>
POETRY & PROSE	37	The Consistent Life Ethic is Like Salt <i>by Rose Evans</i>
...AND ONE LAST THING	38	Priority of Questions <i>by Nicholas Neal</i>

INTRODUCTION - WHO'S WHO OF LIFE MATTERS JOURNAL

Andrew Brown, *Treasurer*

Andrew has the responsibility and the privilege of being the newest member of the Board and the Treasurer for Life Matters Journal. He grew up the youngest of four brothers, in the small town of Hampden, Maine. Throughout his life he has played hockey and still has an obsessive (some might say unreasonable) love of the game. Currently, he is a senior Nursing student at Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio, where he also met his future wife, to whom he will be wed in August of 2013. He has been a supporter of Life Matters Journal for a very long time and he says he is "honored to be a part of its mission." He was taught from a very young age about his responsibility to ensure all people of their right to dignity, respect, and life. Andrew affirms us of his dedication, "I cannot express in words my joy to be a member of this amazing, truly humanitarian, organization. I look forward to our future together."



WHO'S WHO OF LIFE MATTERS JOURNAL (PART 3)

Aimee Murphy, *Executive Editor*

Nicholas Neal, *Managing Editor*
John Whitehead, *Deputy Editor*
Lisa Lindstrom, *News Editor*

Lilianna Serbicki, *Fiction Editor*
Mary Stroka, *Writing Intern*
Anthony Bedoy, *Writing Intern*

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.

Dear readers, supporters, and friends,

I hope this first issue of Volume 2 finds you well! I can't believe we've been on this journey for a year; it seems to me that we've only just begun. My life, as always, is continually full of changes: the new husband and I are doing splendidly, and I started graduate studies in Philosophy in August, so I've certainly got my hands full!

Alas, we have come to a difficult time of year in the United States –when many people find themselves at odds with friends and family in anticipation of the voting booth. The conundrum for those of us who subscribe to a consistent life ethic lies in the fact that no party fully represents a holistic approach to human life issues. Most consistent lifers will agree that abortion is the most pressing issue of our time, but unfortunately that doesn't make the very difficult moral decision of voting easy this time around. The question remains: how do we work to change the culture of politics and political discussion in this country to one that does not pick and choose which human lives are valuable and worthy of protection? I believe that we have a responsibility to reject the existing paradigms of “left” and “right” and work towards a political system in this country that is for peace and all life. How you put that into action of course, will be a matter of your own conscience.

I'd also like to address two articles in this issue which discuss contraception and it's relation to human life issues: Marc Barnes's piece “Contraception Is Not Pro-Life” (p.27) and Nick Neal's piece “Priority of Questions” (p. 38). Marc stresses that contraception does not reduce abortion, and in fact, may create a need for abortion; his article is a response to some of the claims in Mary Krane Derr's piece “Family Planning Freedom is Pro-Life” in Volume 1, Issue 1. Contrary to both Derr's and Barnes's works, Nick Neal asserts that our primary responsibility is to protect the preborn human in our laws instead of trying to first address the policies of family planning and sexual ethics. These will be our last featured articles on contraception – we have decided to let other organizations more dedicated to sexual ethics discuss these issues. As it stands, however, we will continue to push for full legal recognition of the preborn as human person, and an abolition of all human abortion.

I hope that in our work we can continue to be home to forum and discourse, and endeavor together to engender respect for all humanity. To the beginning of our second year! Cheers!

For peace and all life,



Aimee Murphy
Executive Editor

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

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear LMJ team,

I appreciated John Whitehead's review of *Bloodlands* in the Summer 2012 issue. I agree with Whitehead that the questions raised are disturbing, but well worth pondering.

Obviously we cannot rerun history and try out a different scenario. So we cannot really answer "what if" questions, but I wonder if we can take the pondering a little further. The pondering is important because how we view historical events has a great influence on how we view present-day possibilities.

Whitehead writes that "nonviolence seems unlikely to have prevailed against Nazi Germany, at least in Eastern Europe." But let's ponder this a little more. Whitehead notes the success of nonviolent resistance in some circumstances against the Nazis, but postulates that one reason why it might have worked is that the populations which practiced it were largely "Aryan" and therefore the Nazis were less inclined to brutally suppress them. So perhaps what Whitehead is saying is that nonviolence by the Jewish population of Eastern Europe was unlikely to have prevailed. This is definitely a harder case, but we can still wonder.

As the American civil rights movement demonstrated, mass nonviolent action by an oppressed people met by violence and repression by representatives of the favored ethnic group stimulates sympathy for the oppressed group among those in the dominant group. That sympathy can be key in undermining the racist system. Would similar mass nonviolent action by the Jewish and other target populations in Germany and Eastern Europe during the Nazi era also have resulted in a significant shift in the majority population? We cannot know for sure, but it seems at least to be a significant possibility. As in the case of the USA during the civil rights movement, we know that during the Nazi era that there were some in the majority population who already found the racist Nazi policies abhorrent.

Then we can look at the international picture. First, we need to note that the Allies did not go to war against Nazi Germany in opposition to the racist policies of the Hitler

regime. The Allies were racist, largely refused to accept Jewish refugees before the war, and certainly in the case of the USA instituted horrible racist actions (e.g., the internment of Japanese Americans) domestically during the War. The Allies didn't even acknowledge the Holocaust until well into the war. So the Allies were not fighting a moral battle, but rather a more traditional geopolitical one. It was the expansionism of the Nazi regime that resulted in the Allies feeling they needed to go to war.

But postulate that there was a desire by other nations to morally oppose the Nazi regime. How effective is war in that cause? Not only are the other failures to meet just war criteria applicable here, but we can also note that the war did not prevent the extermination of a very high percentage of the Jewish population of Germany and Eastern Europe. There we have a proven ineffectiveness.

I am not aware of any nation ever mobilizing massive nonviolent action instead of massive violent action. But there is no reason why a nation couldn't. If nations mobilized on anything like the scale they do for a war like the world wars for nonviolent action, what might be possible? Isn't it possible that it might be more effective, and at far lower cost?

In the last several decades, we have had a number of instances of the successful overthrow of brutal regimes by massive nonviolent action by the people of the countries involved. In almost every case, these actions were mounted with the people, including the leadership, inexperienced in nonviolent action and without an ideological or religious commitment to nonviolence. There was no advance preparation, but rather the actions were largely ad hoc. In view of the many successes in these adverse situations, we must ponder how effective a planned program of preparation for nonviolent defense would be with even a small fraction of the resources nations now devote to preparing for military action.

- *Bill Samuel, President of Consistent Life,
Silver Spring, MD*

Dear Bill,

Thank you for your thoughtful response to my Bloodlands article. In that article, I argued that nonviolent resistance by Eastern Europe's Jewish and Slavic inhabitants was unlikely to prevail over the Nazi occupation of the region. Mr. Samuel suggests that I am too quick to dismiss nonviolent resistance's potential. Instead, he identifies successful nonviolent resistance as "at least... a significant possibility" in this situation. He argues that nonviolent resistance by Jews and other groups targeted by the Nazis might have elicited further nonviolent resistance by favored groups. Perhaps it would have; I did not consider this scenario in the article, and I do not feel sufficiently well informed about conditions among the German people or other favored groups to assess its probability. I would certainly welcome the prospect of successful nonviolent resistance to the Nazis' worst crimes. Nevertheless, I will make one general comment about nonviolent resistance.

Situations in which nonviolent resistance would be ineffective probably have occurred and will occur again. Nonviolent resistance might well have an impressive record of effectiveness. Pursuing its organized use on a massive scale, as Mr. Samuel proposes, might well be a very wise and humane course to follow. Nonviolent resistance cannot be guaranteed of success in all situations, however. Nonviolent resistance, in the sense we are considering it here, is a method of political struggle—in this respect, it resembles more conventional, institutionalized methods of combating injustice or effecting social change, such as running for public office, lobbying for legislation, or waging lawsuits. Those other methods have produced impressive successes; nevertheless, sometimes they fail. Sometimes they fail because those using such methods lack shrewdness or determination; sometimes, however, they fail simply because the opposition is too strong or circumstances are otherwise unfavorable. I see no reason to believe that nonviolent resistance differs from those other methods in being immune from failure. I think such resistance can and sometimes does fail for reasons outside of the control of its practitioners: because an

opponent's control of the media interferes with publicizing the resistance; or because an opponent obstructs the growth of the civil society necessary to sustain a nonviolent resistance movement; or for other reasons. To hold that nonviolent resistance could, in all times, places, and circumstances, prevail against all injustices strains credulity. Can any other method of political struggle or social change claim such a capacity?

None of this necessarily means that violence is the correct option when nonviolence fails or seems likely to fail. Violent resistance might also be deemed unacceptable, whether from a pacifist, just war, or other perspective. If nonviolent resistance sometimes fails against injustice, however, consistent life advocates should acknowledge this fact, and give serious thought to what should be done in such disturbing situations.

Sincerely,
John Whitehead, Deputy Editor

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CURRENT EVENTS AND CONSISTENT LIFE

OPERATION SHARECRAFT *by Anthony Bedoy*

Lazy, obnoxious, and immature are just a few of the words people often use to describe gamers and those involved in the Internet community. These so-called “nerds” have been referred to as the “lazy American gold rush”. It is the “new age” way to earn a small fortune with nothing but a computer and a gaming console. YouTube has helped promote a community on the Internet that is surrounded by gaming commentaries, Major League Gaming competitions, and prize giveaways. This might seem like a bad thing for our society, considering the disconnect that technology can create. However, one group shines as an example of the redeeming qualities of the internet gaming community.

What could the gaming nerds of this world do for the greater good of our global community? Consider Athene, a YouTube sensation with a raunchy sense of humor who sets himself apart from most gaming commentators. His videos are PG-13 at the least and are consistently about him “pwning noobs” in World of Warcraft or other popular online games. His



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CURRENT EVENTS - OPERATION SHARECRAFT

YouTube channel began in 2007, and has been gathering loyal subscribers since then. Athene, or Bachir Boumaaza, also pulled off one of the most gracious and successful fundraisers based in the gaming community. Although he seems to be quite crude in his YouTube videos, in real life Athene has a soft side.

In late March of 2012, Athene began a campaign through which he would eventually gather one million dollars for an organization called Save the Children. The money would directly support the attempts to solve the worst hunger crisis in 60 years taking place in the Horn of Africa. Athene's goal was to encourage the gaming community, Reddit followers, and the general Internet population to join together and raise aid for children and families suffering from hunger. His strategy was to live-stream nightly events to promote his cause while allowing the participants to spread the word and raise money at the same time. For every dollar a person raised, they had a better chance of winning one of the available prizes. Prizes included high-tech computer mice, keyboards, laptops, and other devices. His goal was to reach five hundred thousand dollars; DC Entertainment had agreed to match that donation.

About 18 days into the event, Athene recognized the goal was unreachable without more publicity and a massive rise in donations. Athene took a few moves from a famous social protester, Gandhi, and went on hunger strike to raise awareness about his cause. During the 10 days after he began his fast, the donations began to roll in. This sent a message to the world that he was serious about Saving the Children. While Athene is a gamer, he is first and foremost a member of a larger world community - one that recognizes the value of all life:

“...and we are gonna try to gather one million dollars for the Horn of Africa, the worst hunger crisis in 60 years, no media – nothing, because it is not some earthquake, tsunami, or whatever the f***: That is how the media works, but I don't give a s***. I mean we own it up, we are the Internet. When I was supporting charity and everything, I never thought

photo by Glenn Batuyong, some rights reserved.



I would be able to share that passion with my viewers – and now I really say it sincerely: I am really proud of you guys, you make me smile, you give me a reason for doing what I am doing, and today I don't feel alone in my fight against all that is wrong in the world. The gaming community, the interwebs, together we can do this man, it is gonna be awesome, we are really looking foreword and I cant wait – Let's play them games!”

By attempting to provide a voice for the voiceless, Athene gave his followers and the supporters of OP Sharecraft the ability to see the results of their good deeds. He traveled to Africa and filmed a series of YouTube videos dedicated to the people he and the Internet community helped. His passion allowed others to share the burden of responsibility as men and women of good will. I tip my hat to you, Athene, for being so generous and willing to sacrifice your comforts for the lives of others in a truly loving fashion.

You can read more about OP Sharecraft here: <http://opsharecraft.com>

THE “LIGHT FOOTPRINT”: ECONOMY & SECRECY IN OBAMA’S MILITARY POLICIES

by John Whitehead

Barack Obama is now more than three-and-a-half years into his presidency and at least a preliminary assessment of his approach to foreign policy is possible. Three journalists have each written such analyses, all of them published this year: *Kill or Capture: The War on Terror and the Soul of the Obama Presidency*, by Daniel Klaidman; *The Obamians: The Struggle inside the White House to Redefine American Power*, by James Mann; and *Confront and Conceal: Obama’s Secret Wars and Surprising Use of American Power*, by David Sanger. Klaidman is a Newsweek special correspondent; Mann is a former LA Times reporter who now works at Johns Hopkins University; and Sanger is chief Washington correspondent for the New York Times.

As the title suggests, Klaidman’s book focuses on the Obama administration’s policy of killing suspected terrorists, as well as the internal debates over what to do with terrorism suspects detained at Guantanamo Bay. Mann and Sanger’s books both take more panoramic views of Obama’s foreign policy, examining not only the administration’s counterterrorism policies but also its relations with China, Iran, North Korea, and Pakistan, as well as its response to the “Arab Spring” uprisings of 2011.

All three books offer highly readable accounts of President Obama’s foreign policy decisions. All three also suffer from a fault common in journalism, perhaps especially journalism about contemporary politics: a reliance on anonymous or only vaguely identified (“administration official” “intelligence official”) sources. Klaidman is particularly frustrating in not providing any footnotes, whether for anonymous sources or any other type. Granted, these authors are far from unique in

this approach and promises of anonymity were presumably necessary to get the sources to speak to them at all. Nevertheless, much of what the books report about matters outside the public record, such as internal administration debates, should be taken with at least a few grains of salt.

Allowing for these accounts’ limitations, what kind of picture do they present of the Obama administration’s foreign policy? In particular—to focus on a question of particular importance to consistent life ethic advocates—what kind of picture do they present of the administration’s use of military force or other forms of violence as foreign policy tools? The overall impression the books leave is of a president quite willing to use violence but leery of risking American troops lives or of spending billions on military operations. Obama tends to favor reliance on allies; air power, whether in the form of planes or pilotless drones; covert action by special operations troops or intelligence operatives; and other “light footprint” (to use a phrase from Sanger’s book) methods. By contrast, large-scale commitment of ground troops has been avoided, except in Afghanistan.

Perhaps the most dramatic action taken by Obama to avoid large-scale military commitments was the gradual withdrawal of US forces from Iraq—one of the great achievements of his presidency to date. The 2011 US intervention in Libya’s civil war provides a different example of an economy-minded use of force. The intervention emphasized a bombing campaign against Muammar Qaddafi’s regime rather than putting in ground forces, and Obama took care to swiftly hand leadership of the air campaign over to allies such as France and the United Kingdom (although the United States certainly remained a participant even after deferring to its allies). One result of this arrangement was that the Libyan intervention cost the United States about \$1-\$3 million a day by April 2011, while the war in Afghanistan cost over \$300 million daily. Another example of the “light footprint” approach is Obama’s famous—or infamous—reliance on killing suspected terrorists or other militants by means of

drone attacks or strikes by special operations forces. Reliable numbers on drone attacks are elusive, but Sanger estimates that the Obama administration authorized 265 drone strikes by 2012, in comparison to 40 such strikes during George W. Bush's administration. Roughly 60 bases for drone operations, run by the military or CIA, now exist. Sanger also says that strikes by joint special operations forces rose to 10 to 15 per night under Obama, although he does not provide a source for that claim. Targeted killing most famously claimed the life of Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan in May 2011, but others were killed in this way, including alleged al Qaeda operatives Anwar al-Awlaki and Samir Khan—both American citizens—in Yemen in September 2011; Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, an alleged al Qaeda member who worked with the Somali Islamist Shabab organization, in Somalia in September 2009; and Baitullah Mehsud, a member of the Pakistani Taliban, in August 2009.

A little-known but very intriguing example of Obama's approach—one that is not "violent" in the traditional sense, but is not exactly peaceful either—is his use of cyber-warfare. This is a subject covered in Sanger's book alone: he claims that the US government, first under Bush and then under Obama, has attempted to sabotage the Iranian nuclear program by smuggling a virus into the computer system at Iran's facility in Natanz where centrifuges work to enrich uranium. This highly classified program, known as "Olympic Games," was undertaken in coordination with the Israelis and has apparently caused centrifuges to malfunction and might have caused some delays or obstruction to the uranium enrichment program. Sanger's account is reportedly based on interviews with a variety of participants in "the covert effort against Iran," none of whom would speak to him on the record. Nevertheless, some outside corroboration for his account is available. If indeed the Obama administration has been pursuing cyber-warfare—undermining another nation with a few lines of computer code—then this would certainly be consistent with the general policy of reducing costs and American casualties.

This carefully qualified approach to using

force, whether real or virtual, has a certain logic in the current political context. With the United States reeling from a weak economy and two unpopular wars, a policy that targets enemies while avoiding the sacrifice of American lives or money would appeal to most politicians. The need to tailor US foreign policy to reduced resources is a theme in both Mann and Sanger's books. The implications for future military operations were articulated by former Defense Secretary Robert Gates when he said "Any future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should 'have his head examined.'"

This more economical approach to war and national security certainly serves, at least in the short-term, to reduce American casualties in war. Nevertheless, it has a more disturbing side. Military commitments might be smaller under Obama, but the tendency of the president to make military decisions in secret and without restraint persists. The Libya intervention, for example, was notable not only as a carefully limited American military campaign but also as an example of a president taking the country to war without congressional approval. Obama did not receive Congress' authorization before bombing Libya, and he did not seek it even when US involvement in the Libyan campaign had gone on for 60 days—the deadline set by the 1973 War Powers Resolution for seeking congressional authorization.

As long as decisions about the use of violence continue to be made by the president without adequate oversight or discussion, then the risk of stumbling into some larger conflict or provoking some larger crisis also continues, even if American casualties are kept low in the process. Drone strikes might have eliminated terrorists, but they might also have created some: Najibullah Zazi, the Afghan-American who tried to bomb the New York subway system, or Faisal Shahzad, the Pakistani-American convicted of trying to detonate a bomb in Times Square, both cited drone attacks on their ancestral lands as reasons for their actions. The fact that drone attacks have killed innocent people makes them all the more likely to elicit anti-American hatred. In the same way, the killing of

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Osama Bin Laden and other American attacks on Pakistani soil have fueled anti-American sentiment in that nation. Bin Laden's killing—carried out without Pakistani knowledge or consent—led to denunciations of the United States before Pakistan's parliament and threats to end US-Pakistani cooperation. Anti-Americanism in an unstable, nuclear-armed nation might ultimately prove more dangerous than a single terrorist. Even the seemingly mild practice of cyber-warfare has ominous implications: to attack the infrastructure of another nation might be considered an act of war, especially if people die in the process (and malfunctioning centrifuges can be deadly). Can Iran now attack American troops or citizens, either directly or through terrorist proxies such as Hezbollah, and claim to be acting in retaliation for cyber-sabotage of their nuclear facilities? Will the United State be drawn into a larger conflict as the result of decisions made largely in secret?

These dangers of Obama's new approach aside, one of greatest flaws in his foreign policy to date has been the major exception to the more economical approach: Afghanistan. In contrast to the withdrawal of troops from Iraq and the use of air power, drones, and computer code elsewhere, American troops remain committed in large numbers to fighting a war in Afghanistan. Even when planned withdrawals are taken into account, almost 70,000 troops will remain in Afghanistan. Given that roughly 1,000 Americans have died in the region in the last few years alone, a continued American presence in Afghanistan for even a couple more years is a grim prospect. After more than a decade of war, peace remains elusive, even with a "lighter footprint."

THE COST OF AUTONOMY

by Julia Smucker

A few days after the July 20 mass shooting at an Aurora, Colorado, movie theater, I heard a hauntingly perceptive comment to the effect that the occurrence of such an incident about every 1-2 years is what our society is willing to put up with for the sake of our attachment to guns. In other words, there is an unspoken yet seemingly unassailable agreement to accept tragedies on a public scale as a matter of course, a necessary evil of sorts, in exchange for the sacrosanct right to possess firearms.

Have public shootings become an expected social phenomenon? A recent news article from Reuters presents a timeline of major shootings worldwide during the past 20 years. Of the 23 incidents listed, one each occurred in Australia, Nepal, the Netherlands, Norway, and Belgium, two each in Great Britain, Germany, and Finland, and twelve in the United States. This is not, then, an exclusively American problem, nor is it an entirely predictable or clockwork-like occurrence, yet it does reflect a disturbing trend. Between 1999 and 2012, the longest span of time between shootings in the United States has been three years and three months. This was the span between a less-publicized apartment shooting in Wisconsin in October 2007 (half a year after the much more infamous Virginia Tech shooting) and the attempted assassination of Arizona representative Gabrielle Giffords in January 2011. Since then, the trend appears to have worsened: while garnering more national attention, the Colorado shooting is the third in the United States this year, followed by a fourth just two weeks later at a Sikh temple in Wisconsin.

Nearly as disturbing as the shootings themselves, or perhaps even more so in terms of the priorities it reflects, has been the now-predictable political pattern that surrounds them. Every time a shooting makes national news, questions about gun laws come up. And every time someone asks whether perhaps there should be more legal restrictions on the possession of

weapons, the suggestion is met with countless vehement cries of protest. In fact, gun sales have spiked the most after public shootings, giving a cold, steely tangibility to the wave of fear that follows in the wake of such tragedies.

Those who fear increased restrictions on gun ownership have little to worry about. Politicians in both parties are themselves afraid to take any public stance that would challenge our national firearm fetish. The incidents of this year and last have inspired noncommittal comments from President Obama on the need for an end to violence, with no suggestion of any policy changes for that purpose.

Of course, it is not only fear of tighter gun laws that is behind the increase in sales following a mass shooting, but also the fear for one's own safety that such tragedies naturally evoke. Yet looser gun restrictions for the sake of self-protection are a double-edged sword, as the same laws enable people like Aurora gunman James E. Holmes to build their own arsenals as easily as anyone else can obtain the same weapons with a view to protecting themselves. Far from making us safer – or even making us feel safer – the legality of semiautomatic weapons such as those used by Holmes is only keeping us enslaved to fear. Making a similar point, a recent editorial in the Jesuit magazine *America* offers an incisive observation about our society's priorities: "After a massacre, questions about the collective good are typically raised. Yet they are put aside once the gunman is

portrayed as a lone actor among millions of law-abiding gun-owners, whose constitutional rights ought not be infringed because of one oddball's misbehavior. Thus society allows individuals to build an armory, heedless of the rights of all Americans to live in safety.... Extreme individualism underlies the tendency to extend personal liberty at society's expense. That attitude also distorts other public policy debates, like those over taxation and health care."

I had my own moment of clarity regarding the broad implications of individualism while taking a cultural anthropology test several years ago, in which the essay question read something like, "What would the repeal of motorcycle helmet laws say about American cultural values, and how does this relate to issues such as abortion and gun control?" Having discussed in the class the question of what happens when different cultural values come into conflict, I realized that in the case of either abortion or gun control, U.S. laws give precedence to the autonomy of the individual over even the protection of human life.

How many more lives must be sacrificed on the altar of individualism before we are willing to instead sacrifice some degree of personal autonomy for the sake of the common good? As the editors of *America* have said, "If some say that gun violence is the cost society must pay for citizens to exercise the constitutional right to bear arms, then others must insist that the cost is too high." This is one timely implication of the broader principle, so desperately needed in response to all forms of violence that are prevalent in society, that nobody's personal choice is worth more than anybody's life.



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[1] Reuters, "Timeline: Mass Shooting Incidents in Last 20 Years," August 5, 2012. <http://ca.news.yahoo.com/timeline-mass-shooting-incidents-last-20-years-003607548.html>

[2] Patience Haggin, "Gun Sales Spike in Aftermath of Aurora Movie Theater Attack," *Time*, August 9, 2012. <http://newsfeed.time.com/2012/08/09/gun-sales-spike-in-aftermath-of-aurora-movie-theater-attack/>.

[3] Reuters, "In Colorado, Obama Calls for End to 'Senseless Violence,'" August 8, 2012. <http://ca.news.yahoo.com/colorado-obama-calls-end-senseless-violence-212503072.html>.

[4] The Editors, "After Aurora," *America*, August 13, 2012. http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=13524.

RIGHTS TO “PRIVACY” & “SELF-PROTECTION”: ABORTION & GUN CONTROL

by Carol Crossed

Two of the most contentious issues this election year are gun owners’ rights and abortion rights. In 2008, out of 4,600 registered political action committees (PACs), the National Rifle Association was ranked 14th, with \$650,000 going to Republicans. Abortion rights PAC EMILY’s List is ranked 5th largest, with \$6,500,000 going to Democrats.

Despite the approximately 20 mass shootings and 1.1 million abortions annually in the United States, supporters for both causes fight any restrictions on what they consider their constitutional rights. For instance, Colorado has no gun registration law. Most Democrats in Congress voted in May 2012 to allow abortions even if the reason was that the unborn child was the “undesired” gender.

Both the gun and abortion industries claim a need for self protection. NRA ads, increasingly marketed to women, use abortion-rights language: “A gun is a choice women need to know more about and be free to make. The NRA is working to ensure the freedom of that choice always exists.” Eighty-five percent of women gun owners claim their purchase is for self-defense. But the Violence Policy Center reported in 2001 that women are more likely to be victims of homicides with handguns than to use handguns in justifiable homicides. For every woman who used a gun in self-defense, 101 women were murdered with handguns.

Likewise, the abortion-rights lobby claims abortion is needed in cases of rape or life endangerment, when only 1.1% of women who have abortions cite using abortion for those reasons.

In the meantime, both guns and abortion are available with few restrictions to justify these extreme and rare cases. The primary victims of gun violence and



photo by Pop Culture Geek on flickr, some rights reserved

abortion are often minorities and the poor.

Supporters consider guns and abortion symbols of American freedom and claim even reasonable limitations or regulations would infringe on their privacy. Planned Parenthood opposes spousal notification and even parental consent laws in the case of teenagers’ abortions. The gun industry fights gun restrictions in private venues.

It’s argued that abortions and shootings will happen whether they are legal or not. Indeed, sources say legislation may not have prevented the Colorado massacre killer from stockpiling weapons from the black market. Another market will find an abortionist for the right price.

But laws prohibiting taking life are teachers and can change attitudes about moral behavior. Relentless, unmitigated individualism requires logical limits to our freedoms in order to reduce violence in our world. Adding laws to provide common-sense restrictions and regulations for abortion and gun ownership will go far to promote a culture of peace for ourselves and our posterity. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “The law cannot make you love me, but it can keep you from lynching me.”

COMPARING ROMNEY & OBAMA ON LIFE ISSUES

by Benjamin Wirtz

Mitt Romney and Barack Obama may seem to be different on many issues, but are they really different where it matters? In terms of where they stand on issues of life, we cannot simply take a candidate's word on something without looking at all the facts first.

Romney says he is pro-life, but is he really? Let us look at his record and see. When he was Governor of Massachusetts, he was not even remotely pro-life nor did he pretend to be. He openly admitted that it was of vital importance that women have the right to choose. He is also willing to compromise on the issue wherever he sees it as necessary. Even now, he claims exceptions for rape, saying, "My position has been clear throughout this campaign. I'm in favor of abortion being legal in the case of rape and incest, and the health and life of the mother." That is what he said this year, although he changes his tone depending on who he is talking to. He may be slightly better than Obama on the abortion issue, but he's still not that great, and the fact that he has been so inconsistent in his views is troubling. While Governor of Massachusetts, Romney put forward a healthcare plan very similar to Obama's. The fact that it had provisions for abortion should trouble any pro-lifer. He also said, as recently as 2007, that he thought it would be good to institute such a plan nationally. Romney hasn't presented any real hard evidence to support his claim that he has changed his view on abortion to a pro-life one.

Some may acknowledge Romney's troubling record but now find comfort in the fact he has selected the solidly pro-life Paul Ryan as his running mate. However, even this view is in error. First of all, the vice president has very little power to affect policy, and Ryan has already said that although he doesn't believe in rape exceptions, he will go along with what Romney says anyway. He is effectively taking back his previous position of not allowing abortion except to save the life of the mother.

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Obama has never claimed to be against abortion, but he has downplayed some of his views, views that a majority of Americans would find disturbing. While in the Illinois Senate he voted against a bill protecting babies who survived abortion, a bill known as the Born Alive Infant Protection Act. One of Obama's campaign staffers actually claimed Obama was in fact pro-life because his healthcare plan would save lives, while Romney-Ryan's plan would cut Medicaid, making it less pro-life. Coming to that definition of being "pro-life" is the biggest stretch of the term imaginable. The mere fact that he is more than willing to support abortions and force others to do so through his insurance mandate counters this claim thoroughly. There is nothing about Obama's policies that is remotely pro-life.

Joe Biden is Catholic, and so, if he were true to his faith, he would be pro-life. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Beyond going along with what Obama does, he has openly spoken out in favor of the one-child policy in China, which results in forced abortions whose victims are disproportionately unborn girls.

Obama's HHS mandate requiring insurance companies to cover contraception and certain abortion-

causing drugs has been opposed by Catholics and many Protestants as a violation of their religious convictions. Religious leaders of different faiths even attended a congressional meeting to protest the matter. Obama has been pushing back hard against religious freedom, as well as the right not to be forced to pay for something morally reprehensible.

Both Obama and Romney have approved of unconstitutional and unnecessary wars despite neither one having military experience themselves. Obama continued Bush-era policies of nation building, and Romney would be likely to do the same, as he has stated his support for American exceptionalism. Obama is undeserving of the Nobel Peace Prize in every way, having gotten involved in undeclared wars in Libya and elsewhere. Although Obama campaigned on getting our troops out of wars, he has done just the opposite. Sure, he has removed the troops from Iraq, but he actually wanted to keep them there longer. In the meantime, he started an unconstitutional war with Libya and got involved in the Syrian conflict. Obama was assisting the Syrian rebels by helping them acquire military support, but not giving such support directly. There is some evidence to suggest that these same rebels may be supported by al Qaeda. Finally, he has seriously been considering getting involved in a conflict with Iran.

Obama renewed the Patriot Act and signed the National Defense Authorization Act, which is similar to the Patriot Act, into law. Romney supports these pieces of legislation, and Paul Ryan voted for them. You might wonder what these have to do with the issues of life, but the fact is that they endanger Americans' freedoms directly relating to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and life is the most fundamental of all of these rights. Obama has also approved drone strikes, and Romney is not likely to reduce those significantly. On all these issues, both candidates have said amazingly similar things.

After the party conventions, the Democrats and Republicans put explicit wording in their platforms regarding abortion. The Democrats took a solidly pro-choice position, while the Republicans took a pro-life position.

While the position the Republicans took publicly looks good, in practice the platforms are often seen by party members as guidelines rather than absolute rules.

If, after reading this, you wonder how you could vote, it's not for me to tell you outright, but you should consider carefully before you compromise on the important issues of life. Hopefully, this article has given you a better understanding of the two major candidates' views. Given the aforementioned information, voting for either of the two major-party candidates could be a big compromise. You may even consider candidates of a third party: research their positions to see if they are more in line with your view. Many people don't like that idea, claiming it will throw the election to one of the major-party candidates, but you do have to draw the line somewhere. The idea is to look at everything, see the bigger picture, and vote in good conscience for the best candidate to uphold the cause of life. The question we must ask ourselves as informed voters is, how much do we compromise so we can get someone who is slightly less bad than the other guy? It's true no one is perfect, but we also want to get the best we can get. Where do we draw the line, at what point do we say that we have drifted too far in accepting mediocrity? All this is not to tell you how to vote but to make you a more informed voter: do your own research and look into the records of the candidates on life issues beyond their lip service to the cause.

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RON PAUL'S LEGACY

by *Nicholas Neal*



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This year will be Ron Paul's last in Congress. Adding together Ron Paul's years in Congress from 1976-1985 and 1997-2012, he has spent over 24 years in Congress, often as a lone vote on several pieces of legislation. He has been a rare and consistent advocate of free market liberalism, drug legalization, returning to the gold standard, auditing the Federal Reserve, reducing spending across the board, strict construction of the U.S. Constitution, federalism, opposition to war, and opposition to *Roe v. Wade*. While Ron Paul's movement and legacy is often discussed in terms of advancing libertarian philosophy, the effect Ron Paul has had on advancing the consistent life ethic should also be noted.

The consistent life ethic and libertarianism are two distinct philosophies. The consistent life ethic's main claim is opposition to legalized homicide and the dehumanizing effects that surround it, such as racism and poverty. Libertarianism's main claim is opposition to the coercive violence of the State. While it seems as though these two groups' axioms could overlap, many consistent lifers see federal welfare programs as essential to ending poverty, whereas libertarians see such programs as coercive violations of economic freedom. In addition, consistent lifers are pro-life, seeing abortion as an

unjust form of legalized homicide. Libertarians are at best divided on the issue of abortion. Some argue that killing the unborn is an unjust act of homicide and thus violates the non-aggression principle. Others argue that the child is either a) not a person or b) an intruder. Ron Paul, however, was able, to a certain extent, to reconcile these two philosophies. After the death of Pope John Paul II, when Democrats and Republicans were selectively praising the deceased pope for certain causes while downplaying others, Ron Paul stood before the House of Representatives and praised Pope John Paul II for advocating a consistent ethic of life. He stated:

“The Pope's commitment to human dignity, grounded in the teachings of Christ, led him to become one of the most eloquent spokesmen for the consistent ethic of life, exemplified by his struggles against abortion, war, euthanasia, and the death penalty.

Unfortunately, few in American politics today adhere to the consistent ethic of life, thus we see some who cheered the Pope's stand against the war and the death penalty while downplaying or even openly defying his teachings against abortion and euthanasia...I would encourage those who wish to honor his memory to reflect on his teachings regarding war and the sanctity of life, and consider the inconsistencies in claiming to be pro-life but supporting the senseless killing of innocent people that inevitably accompanies militarism, or in claiming to be pro-peace and pro-compassion but supporting the legal killing of the unborn.[1]”

Ron Paul was willing to connect his opposition to war and a general libertarian belief in peace with opposition to abortion and vice versa. He incorporated the core of the consistent life ethic-- opposition to legalized homicide--into his libertarian vision of peace, stating in his book *Liberty Defined*:

“the consistent right-to-life position should be to protect the unborn and oppose abortion, to reject the death penalty, and to firmly oppose our foreign policy that promotes an empire requiring

aggressive wars that involve thousands of innocent people being killed. We would all be better off for it, and a society dedicated to peace, human life, and prosperity would more likely be achieved.[2.]”

For the longest time, Ron Paul and his philosophy were seen as a lonely and insignificant faction within the GOP. The Republican Party of the Bush Era was seen as the party of war, the party of torture, the party of the electric chair, and—awkwardly--the party of life. This made it hard for mainstream pro-lifers to maintain their credibility. It was also hard for consistent lifers due to the Democratic Party’s endorsement of legalized abortion and the Republican Party’s endorsement of continual warfare. It was also difficult for fiscal conservatives to maintain their credibility as opponents of big spending while paradoxically supporting an incredibly expensive war. When Ron Paul ran for president in 2008, he was booed by the hawkish audience at the debates for offering the CIA theory of “blowback” as an explanation for 9/11 rather than claim that foreigners simply hate us for how awesome the United States is. The 2008 Republican National Convention was very much a celebration of the Bush-Era foreign policy. Joe Lieberman, a former Democrat who had a liberal voting record on every issue except the war in Iraq, was allowed to speak at the convention. Ron Paul was not. Support for war trumped all other issues for Republicans, including the sanctity of human life and limited government.

While Ron Paul will not be president in 2012, his movement has still gained influence in the Republican Party. The GOP platform now calls for an audit of the Federal Reserve, a central cause among Austrian economists. Paulian supporters were able to gain more power in state-level parties, and more and more Republicans are willing to rethink and even outright criticize American militarism overseas. This change was most evident during the debt-ceiling debate. As conservative New York Times columnist Ross Douthat put it:

“From Rand Paul to Grover Norquist, there’s



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a broad constituency within the conservative movement for shrinking the national security state, either as a compromise necessary to keep domestic spending low or as an end unto itself. [3]”

Ron Paul has planted within the Republican Party his own wing of libertarian conservatives, who see war and civil liberties violations as manifestations of big government. Most of these Paulian Republicans are also pro-life, as Ron Paul is, and even the Paulians who are pro-choice typically oppose *Roe v. Wade* for its centralizing effect, which harms states’ rights.

What is significant for consistent lifers about this is that there is a small but growing number of anti-war Republicans. There are now Republicans who oppose killing both the unborn and foreigners. These Republicans will have an uphill battle within the party, just as pro-life Democrats have had for years. However, if they succeed, they could work to challenge the very political spectrum itself, thus breaking the political separation between anti-homicide forces.

It would still be hard to reconcile some of the differences between the consistent life ethic and libertarianism. Though he likely did not do this consciously, a way in which Ron Paul bridged the gap between the two camps on the issue of poverty was to emphasize opposition to state privilege for the rich such as bail-outs, farm subsidies, the military-industrial complex, etc. In addition to that, Paul persuasively argued that the Federal Reserve was a poverty issue. When a currency is devalued it causes prices to rise, thus causing a “hidden tax” that transfers money from the poor to the rich. This is why even the hard-core progressive Dennis Kucinich was willing to vote for the Audit the Fed bill.

The consistent life ethic's concern for poverty does not necessarily call for government social programs as a solution. It just calls for a substantive response to poverty, and Paul's Left-libertarian approach of opposing state privilege for the rich and the Fed's inflationary theft from the poor is a substantive response.

Ron Paul will likely not enter politics again. However, he has made a mark on the political process that could cause people to rethink, if not reject, the political spectrum. From a consistent-lifer point of view, anything separating pro-lifers from neoconservative hawks is a good thing. Thus, Ron Paul should be commended for showing that you could be a pro-life conservative Christian while still opposing militarism.

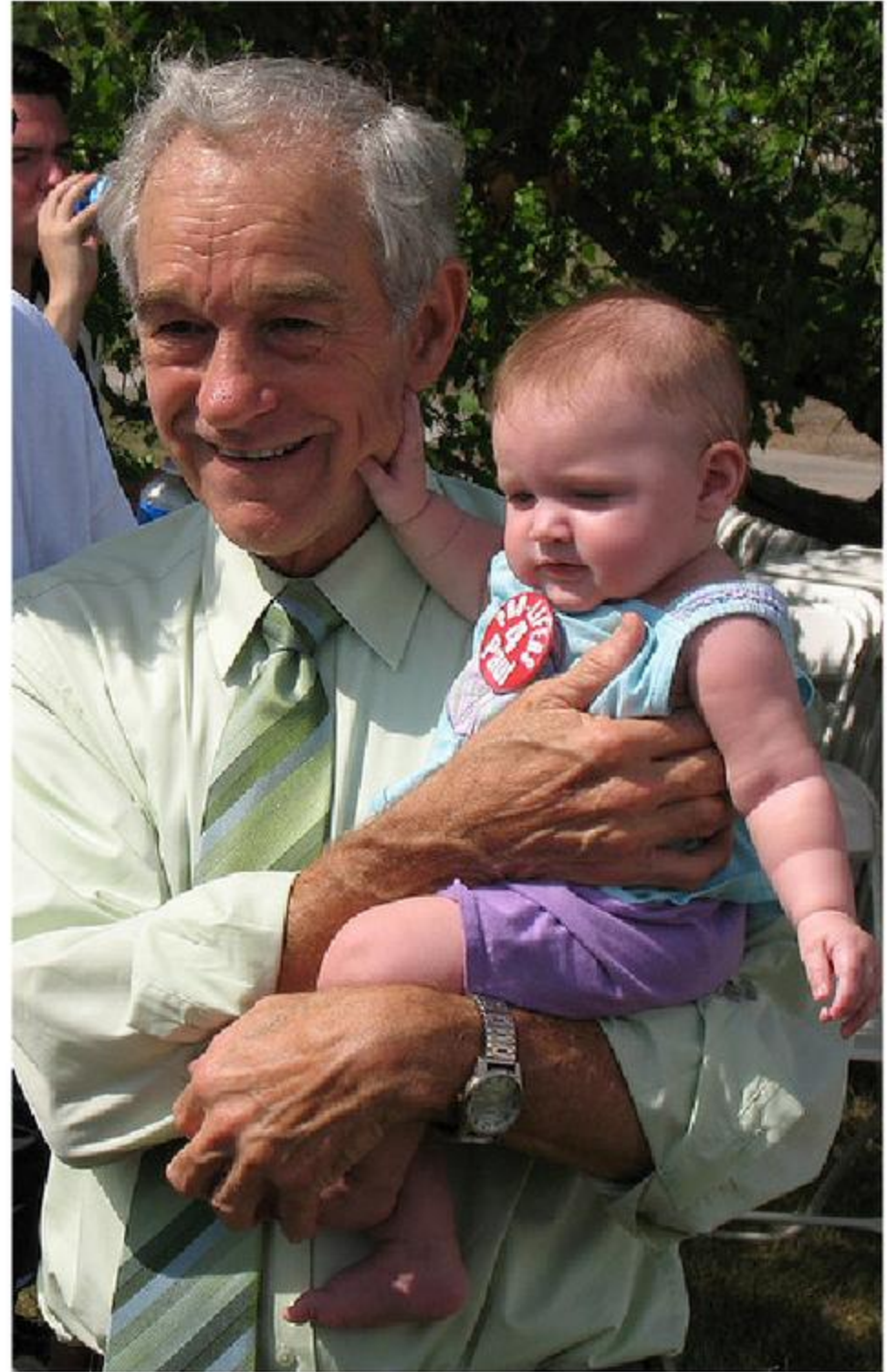


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ESSAYS

THE ONENESS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

by Carol Crossed

“**S**eward Seminary: Rosetta, daughter of Frederick Douglass, was denied the right to enroll in [this] girls’ private academy.”

So reads an historic plaque on the grounds of Genesee Hospital in Rochester, New York, reminding us of our sins of discrimination in 1834.

Today at the hospital, another group of individuals is being denied their right to enter society--pre-born children.

I am confused. As a person active in peace and justice work, I ask why is there polarization of those groups active on behalf of civil and human rights for the born and those involved on behalf of justice and human rights for the pre-born?

It is fitting that the recent rescues held at abortion clinics in New York City and at Rochester’s Genesee Hospital used the nonviolent tactics of Martin Luther King. Steadfast resistance, no unkind word, and absorbing the evil through a sit-in presence...these methods were promoted in the pro-life training sessions.

My first acquaintance with these methods was at Howard University in Washington, DC. I was privileged to be one of three white students on the campus of this

all-Black institution in the mid-1960s. I learned fast the language of oppression. These memories today engender in me a sense of outrage about another institutional violence--abortion.

James Burtchaell, in *Rachel Weeping*, describes the many parallels between abortion and slavery. Both injustices were aggravated by Supreme Court rulings (in 1857 and in 1973) that were rendered in 7-2 decisions. In each case, that of *Dred Scott* in 1857 and *Roe v. Wade* in 1973, one party was designated as the property (i.e., their rights were at the disposal of) the other. Both Justices Taney and Blackmun refused to grant personhood or human rights to any class of beings not specifically referred to in the Constitution.

Pre-born children today are considered underdeveloped, less human, insensitive to the pain of an abortion, and not individuals. Likewise, Blacks were labeled all of the above, and one slaver wrote that the inability of slaves to understand their misery made slavery, “a vice less viceful, less hurtful...and less displeasing to God.”

Like anti-abortionists, the anti-slavery people were looked upon as self-righteous religious fanatics with a single-minded purpose. They mixed politics and religion, much to the dismay of certain church leaders, such as George Armstrong, a Presbyterian pastor

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from Virginia. In his *Christian Doctrine on Slavery*, he wrote that Christians should stay out of the slavery question, “because it requires the Church to obtrude herself into the province of the state.”

Abolitionists, like anti-abortion people, were accused of being “impracticable,” “simple,” “absolutists,” who didn’t understand the complexities of this “necessary evil.” Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, was considered to be a northern elitist, ignorant of the realities of plantation life. In addition, like abortion, they claimed that, legal or illegal, “slavery will always exist.”

Many humanitarians and politicians held a kind of pro-choice position on slavery. Abraham Lincoln, in his early political career, claimed that, while he himself would never own a slave, he wasn’t sure he could pass judgment on those who did. Chief Justice Taney himself, who ruled against *Dred Scott*, strongly opposed slavery and regularly attended Mass and confession with Black people.

One of the more striking resemblances between abortion and slavery is the claim to privacy and freedom

of choice. Congressman Drayton of South Carolina, in 1828, said, “...we would as soon permit others to invade the sanctuary of our dwellings as to touch slavery, We would as soon permit Congress to dictate to us a code of morals.”

The most prevalent justification of the pro-slavers position in the mid-19th century was that slavery as an institution was good for the Black race. Not unlike the arguments of abortion supporters, who genuinely care about potential problems of child abuse, poverty, and the mental health of the child in the womb, anti-abolitionists genuinely believed emancipation was “inconsistent with the best interests of slaves” (1834 Synod, Southern Clergy). Indeed, it was argued by sociologists of the time that since a higher proportion of Blacks in the free states were certified insane than in the slave states, then slavery must somehow be beneficial to mental health.

Another altruistic claim is the benefits to society. The 4,000 abortions per day in the United States, it is argued, keep down the welfare rolls and control population. Likewise, emancipation was seen as “an evil” that would “let loose a population nearly twelve times as numerous” as the slave states’ existing population. Educational costs, unemployment, and crime, it was argued, would take a suicidal toll on the south.

Sojourner Truth, the spiritual Black abolitionist leader, challenges us in her “*And Ain’t I a Woman?*” speech to see the interconnectedness of the rights of all “sub-human” persons. When the rights of one group in society are threatened-- Blacks, the unborn, women, Jews--then all our rights are threatened.

Perhaps it is too soon to make heroes out of the fanatical purists in the pro-life arena. But Michael Harrington, the Democratic Socialist leader, angered a 1979 Planned Parenthood assembly when he said that the anti-abortion movement was “one of the few genuine social movements of the 1970s.”

DRAWING CONNECTIONS: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE, POVERTY, AND ABORTION

by Jen Roth

The consistent life ethic is traditionally seen as a way to draw connections among issues that do not seem related at first glance, such as war, the death penalty, and abortion. However, the connections among different forms of violence and injustice are sometimes more immediate. Recent research, including a study published in August 2012 by the Guttmacher Institute, has highlighted connections among intimate partner violence, poverty, and abortion.

Intimate partner violence and abortion

Multiple studies from countries around the world have established a link between intimate partner violence (sometimes also known as domestic violence) and unintended pregnancy and abortion.

The increased abortion rate among women who have experienced intimate partner violence begins with an increased prevalence of unintended pregnancy. A health survey in Massachusetts found that 40 percent of women who reported being abused had experienced one or more unintended pregnancies in the past five years, compared to 8 percent of non-abused women.

Women in abusive relationships who become pregnant face numerous pressures to abort. These include fear of being punished if their partner doesn't welcome the pregnancy, fear that the child will be abused, and the belief that having a child will make it impossible to leave the abusive partner for good. Among women who had abortions in the United States in 2008, about 7 percent reported having been physically or sexually abused by their aborted child's father.

Reproductive coercion

In 2010, University of California-Davis researcher Elizabeth Miller and her colleagues conducted the largest study to date of a phenomenon Miller has termed "reproductive coercion." Miller's team surveyed women aged 16-29 seeking reproductive health services in five clinics in northern California. Of these women, 53 percent had been physically or sexually abused by a partner at some point in their lives. Nineteen percent had experienced "pregnancy coercion," defined as a male partner using emotional or physical pressure or threats to get a woman to agree to become pregnant. Fifteen percent had experienced "birth control sabotage," in which their partner had deliberately interfered with their efforts to use birth control. Miller uses the umbrella term reproductive coercion to cover pregnancy coercion and birth control sabotage.

Reproductive coercion is often associated with intimate partner violence and may partly explain why intimate partner violence is associated with high rates of unintended pregnancy.

Guttmacher study of "disruptive life events" and abortion

In August 2012, the Guttmacher Institute published a study in the *Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care* about the circumstances under which women have abortions. The researchers surveyed 9,493 women who had abortions and found that most had experienced at least one "disruptive life event" in the last year, such as unemployment, divorce or separation from a partner, getting behind

on the rent or mortgage, moving two or more times, or having a baby.

The women in the study who were living in poverty experienced more disruptive life events--and hence, more abortions--than the women who were living above the poverty line. Women living in poverty were also more likely to report having been physically or sexually abused by their partners.

In addition to the quantitative survey, researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 49 women. Nearly half of these women said that disruptive events interfered with their ability to use contraception consistently. Women reported losing health insurance and having trouble affording prescription contraception and getting to doctor's appointments. Consistent use, not simply any use of contraception, is key to preventing unintended pregnancy. Poverty and disruptive life events appeared to make consistent use more difficult.

There were no questions on the quantitative survey about reproductive coercion, but six of the 49 women interviewed in depth reported experiencing it.

Conclusions

Intimate partner violence and poverty make it more difficult for women both to avoid unintended pregnancy and to carry to term if they become pregnant.

For pro-life advocates who are working to reduce the demand for abortion, these data suggest two courses of action. The first is working to end poverty and abuse themselves and ensuring a strong social safety net to buffer against the effects of disruptive life events. The second is to ensure that women currently experiencing poverty and abuse have the information and healthcare access they need to prevent unintended pregnancy, as well as social and material support if they do conceive.

Mitigating the effects of injustice and working to end it are not mutually exclusive approaches. To give one example, Elizabeth Miller and her colleagues reported in 2011 on a pilot program that tested a new harm-

reduction intervention for women experiencing abuse or reproductive coercion. The intervention enhanced standard intimate-partner-violence counseling by providing information on reproductive coercion and how to minimize the risk of unintended pregnancy by using birth control methods that were concealable or hard to tamper with. The enhanced intervention both reduced the incidence of reproductive coercion and increased the likelihood that women would leave abusive male partners.

Protecting lives that are threatened by poverty and intimate partner violence also turns out to be a way to protect lives that are threatened by abortion.

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PRO-LIFE FEMINIST HISTORY

by Mary Krane Derr

Feminists of the 1960s and 1970s were hardly the first to address abortion. Their 19th- and early 20th-century foremothers also took a strong, if—to many today—unexpectedly oppositional, stance. Since at least the late 1980s, pro-choicers and pro-lifers have repeatedly and heatedly disputed the precise content and meaning of this herstory. After over two decades of research and writing on this subject, I cannot agree with pro-choicers who outright deny that early feminists opposed abortion or who claim that this opposition was for now-irrelevant or retrograde reasons. Nor can I side with abortion opponents who crudely invoke early feminists even as they defend policies that harm women, such as restricted access to family planning (pregnancy prevention) services.

So what did early feminists really say and do regarding abortion, and why?

While I cannot here do justice to the abundant, many-voiced early feminist literature on abortion, I can briefly outline a consensus shared by everyone from anarchist, freethinking “free lovers” to Women’s Christian Temperance Union members. For documentation of primary and secondary sources, please consult the book I co-edited with Rachel MacNair and Linda Naranjo-Huebl, *ProLife Feminism: Yesterday and Today, Second Expanded Edition* (FNSA/Xlibris, 2005), as well as my article “Activism throughout the

Centuries” in *Consistently Opposing Killing*, edited by Rachel MacNair and Stephen Zunes (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2008).

Like some who identify as feminists today, early feminists opposed abortion out of a belief that life began at conception and acquired human rights at that point. The context of this belief was something parallel to a present-day consistent life ethic. Early feminists’ concern for prenatal lives was hardly a single-issue one. It was interwoven with their robust advocacy for women, especially their defense of women’s non-abortion reproductive rights, and for already-born children. It was hardly unrelated to their challenges to racism, classism, imperialism, the death penalty, and war and (in many cases) their promotion of animal welfare and practice of vegetarianism.

Early feminists did not oppose abortion simply in deference to its illegality. They nonviolently challenged many quite legal practices, such as the denial of women’s right to vote, marital rape and domestic violence, and bans on the open discussion and provision of family planning. Early feminists were deeply concerned about the danger to women’s lives from doubly unsafe abortion procedures. At the same time, they spoke about any abortion that killed a woman as a taking of two lives, not one.

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Early feminists demanded, and themselves created, greater social supports for pregnant and parenting women and their children. Single mothers and their children were ruthlessly denied food, clothing, shelter, and healthcare on the grounds that this was aiding and abetting “immorality.” Many single mothers could not survive without going into prostitution. Married mothers, too, struggled in isolation with such difficulties as domestic violence and economic insecurity. If they were middle or upper class, they faced enforced economic dependence; if working class, toxin-riddled, unsafe jobs that failed to pay living wages or allow for healthy childcare practices. As happens today, pious rhetoric about the sacredness of marriage, home, and family frequently obscured these difficulties and blocked effective solutions.

Early feminists squarely held men responsible for any children they conceived, inside or outside marriage. They called men to responsibility in an even more radical way through anti-slavery activists’ documentation of sexual and reproductive outrages that white men committed against African American women and children. As Matilda Joslyn Gage stated, no “subject lies deeper down into woman’s wrongs” than “the denial of the right to herself.”

Although this might seem very strange to today’s pro-choicers, when early feminists spoke of a woman’s “right to herself” or “right over her own body,”

this did not include a right to abortion. It did encompass many measures that would empower women to prevent unintended pregnancies, abortions, and cases of difficult motherhood. Woman’s right to her own body unquestionably meant her right to choose whether, when, and with whom she wished to have penis-vagina sex and thus face the possibility of conception. In other words, it meant freedom from rape, inside and outside of marriage—at a time when the very notion of marital rape was laughed at, even more than it is today. Despite the prevailing cultural belief that “virtuous” women should remain ignorant, feminists also insisted upon thorough sexual and reproductive health education as part of woman’s body-right.

Against widespread contempt for “old maids” such as Susan B. Anthony, early feminists defended women’s right and ability to choose a generative singlehood. Although voluntary pregnancy prevention was cast and abhorred as some monstrously wicked, selfish shirking of maternal duty, many early feminists stood up for women’s liberty to use contraceptives and even resort to “Dianaism,” or sexual practices other than penis-vagina intercourse. In a time when women were reviled or pitied even more than they are today for not marrying men, a number of women’s rights activists openly chose “Boston marriages,” or committed same-sex domestic partnerships, or at the very least warmly supported their friends and colleagues who made this choice.

Could the herstory of early feminists on abortion still mean something for today’s abortion debate—other than more pointless, unproductive argument that leaves real-life women and children, born and unborn, out in the cold? Despite all the bickering I have heard and despaired over, I dare to hope so. I believe that this herstory holds at least two big lessons for the present time.

First, many—not all, but many—pro-choicers and pro-lifers alike can validly claim these pioneering feminists as foremothers. Substantial numbers on both “sides” share a consciousness, arising from

shared historical sources, of women's and already-born children's rights. Second, if people from both "sides" share this consciousness, they can together contemplate the early feminist analysis of causes of and solutions for unintended pregnancy and abortion. They can ask, "How does this analysis fit and no longer fit the present? To what particular collective as well as individual responsibilities does it invite us?"

What if a strong pro-choice/pro-life coalition demanded a toxin-free environment, a better child support enforcement system, a living wage, paid family leave, and genuinely universal health care that included a full array of voluntary family planning methods, prompt access to quality prenatal care, and drug rehabilitation for those who need it? What if we redesigned schools, workplaces, places of recreation, and religious facilities to be truly family-friendly, to all kinds of families?

In regard to abortion itself, today's pro-lifers and pro-choicers obviously draw the parameters of a woman's body-right differently. For many pro-lifers, pregnancy interconnects two equally valuable bodies and lives. For many pro-choicers, pregnancy is a matter of one body and life, the woman's, and/or perhaps a fully realized life nurturing a potential life inside of herself. But why can't both "sides" at least cooperate on defending a woman's body-right before conception?

Comprehensive sex education already enjoys a broad base of public support. It can incorporate strong messages of male responsibility and nonviolence towards women and children, as well as teaching young women the assertiveness and self-respect vital to making positive decisions about their bodies and lives.

And, rooted as it is in basic rights to health; freedom of speech, association, and religion; and privacy, freedom of conscience in pregnancy prevention is another potentially large area of common ground. Freedom of conscience in this area includes the right to personally choose, or not choose, the various

reversible or permanent contraceptive methods, fertility awareness/natural family planning, abstinence/celibacy, and sexual practices other than penis-vagina sex, whether in the context of straight or LGBT relationships. I'm not one of them, but I hope people with religious or ethical objections to any of these practices can agree that it is not the government's place to decide specifically how any of us do or do not exercise this right—even if the government is responsible for ensuring that everyone can exercise it freely.

At the same time, I would like skeptical pro-choicers to consider that pro-lifers may already be more supportive of woman's body-right than expected. I personally have advocated this right for years and know other pro-lifers who have done the same. We are not isolated cases—as shown by the appeal of All Our Lives (<http://www.allourlives.org>), a nonprofit that I co-founded with Jen Roth. This nonprofit organization describes itself as "pro every life" and supports "nonviolent sexual and reproductive decisions."

If pro-lifers and pro-choicers both take up and work steadily on these shared reproductive justice responsibilities, both at the collective and individual levels, what will our descendants be talking about and doing in a century or two? What places will unintended pregnancy and abortion have and not have in their society? I, for one, would love to know! Surely such a cooperative effort will both expand women's choices and protect the lives of the unborn. And—even though we cannot be sure of what they would think—wouldn't our feminist foremothers be proud of us, at long last?

A version of this article previously appeared on RHRealityCheck.org under the title "What the First Wave of Feminism Can Teach the First Wave of Common Ground." It is reproduced here under Creative Commons License.

CONTRACEPTION IS NOT PRO-LIFE

by Marc Barnes

The claim that the widespread promotion of contraception is pro-life is by no means a bad one. Mary Krane Derr, in her well-researched contribution to the Life Matters Journal entitled “Family Planning Freedom is Pro-life” argues precisely this. The underlying idea -- that because abortions are the result of unplanned pregnancies, contraception, by reducing unplanned pregnancies, reduces abortions -- is reasonable, understandable, and lucid. And although I wish I didn’t, I disagree. The statistics and anecdotes cited by Derr in defense of her argument do not present an accurate picture of the relationship between contraception and abortion.

Derr claims that birth control prevents 112.3 million abortions a year. This is, in one sense, true. If conception is prevented by contraception, then there is no child to abort.

But in order for this to matter, or to be some sort of check-mark on the side of contraception, contraception cannot have created a need for abortion in the first place. If contraception does create that need for abortion, and by its introduction into society increase abortion rates, then it is no victory that it partially reduces the problem it created.

An honest look at the data shows this to be the case. In virtually every country that accepted the widespread use of contraception -- usually by the late 1960’s and the 1970’s -- there was a simultaneous increase in the abortion rate over the same time. In England (FPA, 2007; Rogers, 2012), Australia (Caldwell and Ware, 1973; Johnston, 2012), Canada (Women’s Health Surveillance Report; Johnston, 2012) Singapore, Cuba, Denmark, the Netherlands, and South Korea, to name a few (Marston and Cleland, 2003).

That these countries have periodically seen the abortion rate reduced by the use of contraception is good, but it must be considered in the overall context. These countries have never seen the abortion rate reduced to its place before the introduction and widespread use of contraception. Again, it is no victory of contraception if it partially reduces a problem that it created in the first place.

Derr does not mention these countries. She mentions the few countries that saw a decrease in their abortion rates simultaneous with the increased use of contraception. But even if we were to ignore the previously mentioned countries that saw an increase in abortion rates simultaneous with increases in

contraception, there would still be precious little evidence to support the blanket claim that contraception lowers abortion rates.

Most of the countries that saw a decrease in abortion rates simultaneous with the introduction of contraception were communist countries. In fact, 4 of the 7 countries the The Guttmacher Institute cites to make the claim that contraception reduces overall abortion rates (a claim restated by Family Health International, who Derr cites) are ex-communist countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, and Bulgaria.

This is precisely the problem that Derr does not take into account. At the time contraception became widely used, the abortion culture in these countries was radically different from the abortion culture of the rest of the world. In the article “Is ‘abortion culture’ fading in the former Soviet Union? Views about abortion and contraception in Kazakhstan,” published in 2002 in *Studies in Family Planning*, the point is made that in the Soviet Union, “soon after it was re-legalized in 1955, abortion became the main form of birth control, available on request and free of charge (Popov 1991; Remennick 1991). Little ideological or moral opposition to abortion existed” (Agadjanian, 2002). This cannot be said of the vast majority of countries.

The fact that the introduction of contraception lowered the abortion rate in these countries -- while excellent -- can not be used as evidence to make the blanket claim, as Derr does, that “family planning measurably reduces abortion rates.” Rather, it seems that the introduction of contraception helped to reduce abortion rates in certain countries in which abortion was already regarded as a moral form of contraception. Contraception, by reducing the overall number of conceptions, created a society in which there were far fewer children to abort. It did not do away with abortion, it simply aids it in achieving its end (and quite successfully, as most of these countries are now experiencing drastic population decline (Jackson, 2011) Thus, despite initial reductions, these communist and ex-communist countries still have

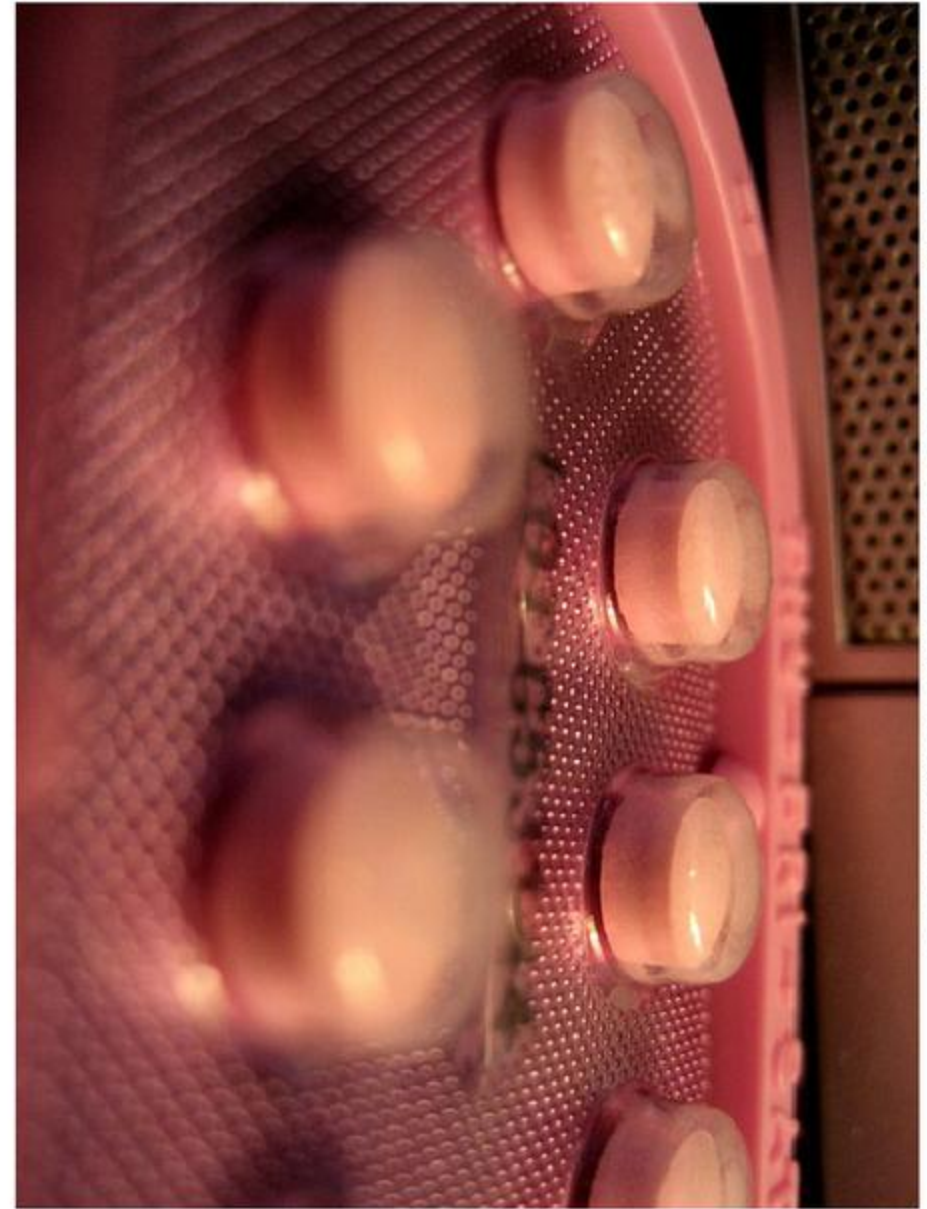


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some of the highest abortion rates in the world. Contraception has not made abortion any less of a cultural need.

Perhaps it would be wise to change the bold claim that “family planning measurably reduces abortion rates” to “family planning measurably reduces abortion rates in countries that already view abortion as a moral or amoral means of family planning.” But even this considerably less hopeful statement isn’t precisely true.

It is not always the case that contraception lowers the abortion rate, even in countries with an “abortion” culture. In the article “The Persistence of Induced Abortion in Cuba: Exploring the Notion of an ‘Abortion Culture’” published in *Studies in Family Planning*, it was shown that in Cuba, like in other communist or ex-communist societies, “abortion is seen as a reasonable fertility-control option by itself, not just in cases of contraceptive failure or unprotected sexual intercourse that results in pregnancy.”

Derr suggests that the reason for Cuba's high abortion rate is that Cuba does not have enough access to contraception. If there is truth to this, it is not the whole truth. Cuba has greater access to contraception than many countries with lower abortion rates, with approximately 73% of sexually active women "currently using" contraception. The issue is three-fold. First, there exists in Cuba an "abortion culture", a culture that views abortion as amoral -- or at the very least morally relative -- and thus merely as another means of contraception. Secondly, poverty is described as a major contributor to the Cuban abortion rate. Finally, there is a greater concern about the side-effects, health risks and the actual use-effectiveness of contraception, so while contraception is used, it is often used sporadically.

We must add to our previous rewrite: "Family planning measurably reduces abortion rates in countries who already view abortion as an amoral means of family planning, providing those countries have no fear of the health risks and side effects of contraception."

While I can find no specific studies pertaining to the abortion culture in Vietnam -- a country whose high abortion rate is claimed by Derr to result from a lack of family planning freedom -- the same article does list it as a country considered to have an "abortion culture" similar in its post-communist status to Cuba and the Soviet Union (Belanger and Flynn, 2009).

My point is simply that claiming these countries as evidence of the pro-life, abortion-reducing nature of contraception is a weak argument.

Outside of the narrow parameters set by Derr, contraception does create a need for abortion. According to The National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, the majority of women undergoing abortion were using some form of contraception when they conceived, with 55-60%

of women who undergo abortion "reported that they "currently used" contraception during the month of their last menstrual period." More importantly, according to Guttmacher Institute researcher Stanley K. Henshaw, "contraceptive users appear to have been more motivated to prevent births than were nonusers."

Contraception, as far as I can tell, is not pro-life.

Marc is one of the founders of 1Flesh.org, and a blogger for the Patheos portal as BadCatholic.

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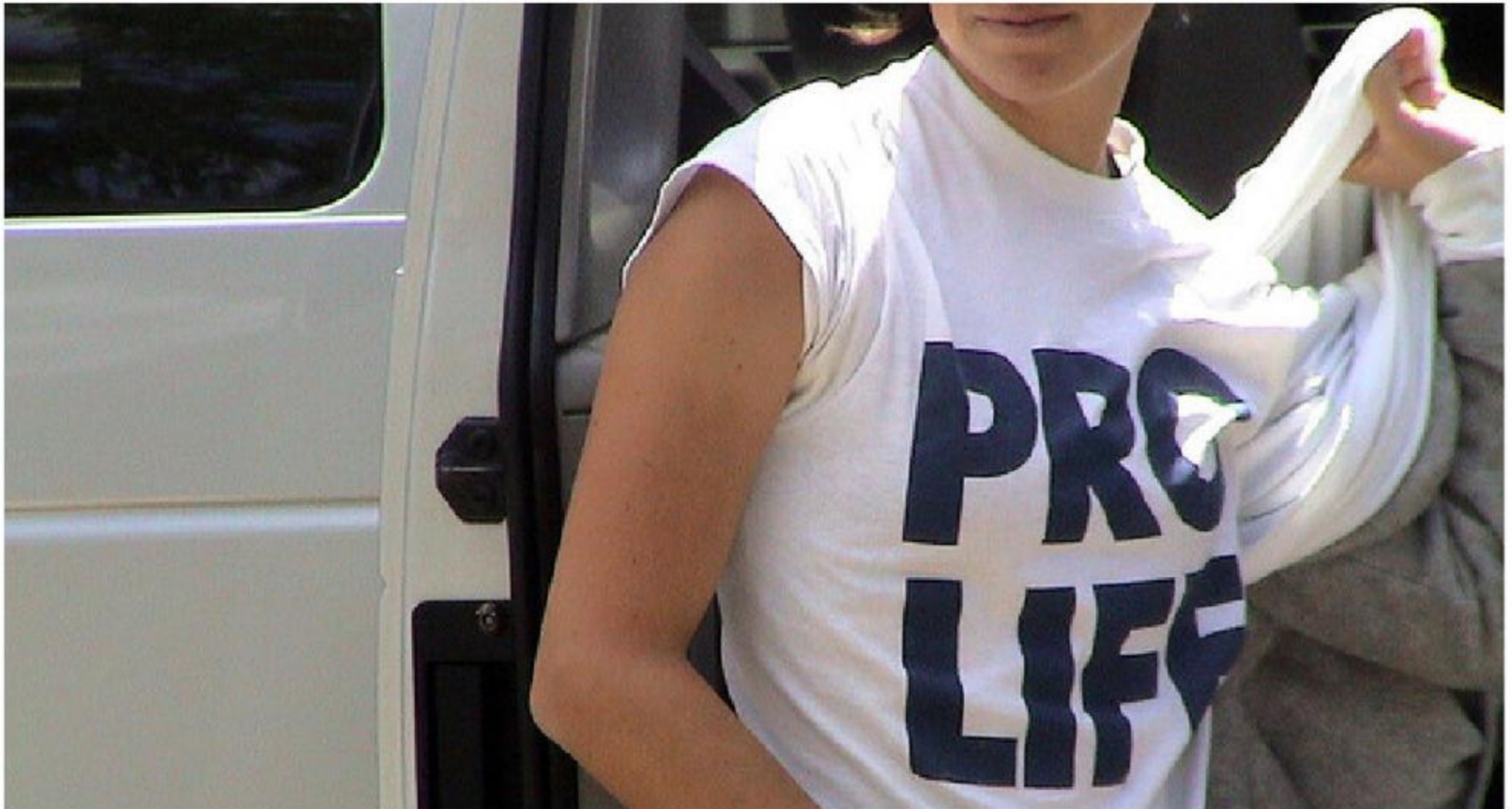
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TRUE LIFE

A PRO-LIFE TEEN

by Madeline Bloomquist

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As far back as I can remember, my parents have been avid supporters of the pro-life movement and have emphasized the importance of respecting *all* life.

Gay and lesbian life. Disabled life. Other-than-white life. And, yes, pre-born life.

But not until the past year did I really form my own, individual opinion on abortion. It all started in the eighth grade, when I gave a speech on making abortion illegal and didn't garner the same applause as the death penalty kid. I started thinking, "why -- exactly -- do I oppose abortion?" There were the obvious reasons, of course: a fetus can think, it can

move, it can breathe, it's alive. It has the potential of Shakespeare or Gandhi.

It finally hit me when I saw a post on Facebook. There was a picture of a man on his knees praying, and his thought bubble said, "God, why haven't you given us the cure for AIDS?" God replied, "I did, but you aborted her."

It was in that moment that I realized the importance of holding all life sacred and understood that what I had been supporting all these years was actually the pinnacle of feminism: *equality*.

Last Thursday, I sat in fourth period, minding my

own business and drawing unicorn doodles on my palm. While waiting for class to begin, the girl sitting next to me noticed my pro-life bracelet and asked to see it. After examining the bracelet, she turned to me and said, "Ugh, you're one of those pro-life girls, aren't you?" Stunned at the mocking way she addressed me, I just responded with "yes." But she didn't stop there. She leaned in to me and hissed, "Women have the right to do whatever they want with their own bodies." "I agree with you," I replied, "but it's not her body. A woman's body is a vessel to protect a vulnerable but most-definitely alive human fetus. Its cells are multiplying and dividing, the very definition of life. It is a human organism, not a banana, balloon, or bicycle bell."

At this point, our conversation had sparked a flame of interest in our usually comatose classmates, and an audience was gathering around our desks. I thought I would be scared, feel pressure to please my peers, but I didn't. My parents raised me to walk my talk, no matter what beliefs I choose to live by.

So I continued. "Everyone has the right to determine their own destiny, and no one should be allowed to take that away from us." She then inquired, "What about rape? Why would someone want to have the baby after such a traumatic experience?"

I replied, "The baby isn't the rapist. It isn't the baby's fault. In some countries, if a woman is raped they kill her. Either way, you are killing one person for the crimes of another."

Her reply? "Whatever."

This concluded our little debate.

A true feminist respects her body, mind, and soul. Aborting a fetus -- a sacred, pure part of you -- is not an act of feminism. It is a symbol of the ways in which society has failed women.

I hear a lot about bullying in school, about harming someone you perceive as weaker or less important than yourself to suit your own agenda. Abortion is the ultimate act of bullying.



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MAKE IT HISTORY - STUDENTS FOR A FAIR SOCIETY

THE “MAKE IT HISTORY” CAMPAIGN

STUDENTS FOR A
FAIR SOCIETY
AT FRANCISCAN UNIVERSITY OF
STEUBENVILLE

submitted by Keith Michael Estrada

Life. Solidarity.



Charity. Justice.

What does it mean to be ‘pro-life’? This is a question I asked myself when I first dived into the student culture at Franciscan University of Steubenville. The campus has a very positive reputation for protecting the lives of the pre-born and those near death; people here call themselves ‘pro-life’. However, I was forced to ask myself: is that all being ‘pro-life’ means? The answer I found was surprisingly controversial. I thought to myself, “If I am going to be consistent and honest, I must love and protect all lives with consistency and honesty.” It isn’t rocket science, but it is unpopular in many environments, including our own.

I found myself in a difficult position: I was at a

Catholic school that pledged full fidelity to the Church and her teaching, but I thought I found a major teaching that was, at times, rejected in the name of something called “prudential judgment.”

I decided to start a group on campus that would promote a full and consistent adherence to the teaching of the Catholic Church, which included a full adoption of what many call the “Consistent Life-ethic”. This was an environment where the death penalty was applauded by plenty, war celebrated by the masses, torture condoned, and unjust abuses tolerated. It should not be surprising that a sense of hostility arose when a recent transfer decided to start a group that says “No!” to the loudest voices on

campus and insisted that to be “pro-life” is to love and protect all life.

Enter our organization: Students for a Fair Society. I decided reinforcements were needed; the message that all life was actually intrinsically valuable had to be promoted. There had to be some students on campus who felt the same way I did, and there were enough students to start a group, a group dedicated to embracing the wholeness of Catholic teaching without diluting it with political ideology. This group of students became known as Students for a Fair Society. This group did not start without opposition from students, faculty, and staff. To this day we are not sure why there was such opposition. We just wanted to be Catholics at a Catholic school; what is wrong with that?

In less than a year of publicly rejecting an incomplete pro-life culture, we’ve targeted many issues pertinent to the flourishing of all human life. We observed “no bullying or name calling week” as our first event. Bullying causes so much emotional turmoil, and can lead to self-harm, sometimes to the point of suicide. We distributed flyers that pointed out the huge problem of pornography, along with a suggested ten-step solution for ending an addiction.



When we heard that a young high school student in the city died due to a house fire, we quickly assembled to raise funds for the funeral and rebuilding costs. We hosted a talk on Islam in order to promote inter-faith dialogue, solidarity, and peace. A few of us even held a demonstration outside of a Rick Santorum rally in order to show the lack of a consistent life-ethic. We held a prayer vigil for a man who was on death row, the night before he was scheduled to be executed. We started organizing with the local community to stand up against violence, leading to a participation in the community’s March for Peace and Love.

We’ve essentially tried to act upon the notion that all life has value, and that we are called to serve and protect all life. That is why we are involved in



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environmental causes as well. We are hosting a panel on the costs and benefits to life in the natural gas industry and showing a documentary on the threat of climate change. We recently started an anti-human trafficking campaign this semester, along with an anti-spiritual and intellectual poverty outreach that serves the inner-city youth.

Students for a Fair Society is an organization that seeks "to bring the 'pro-life' movement to its more perfect fulfillment." There is no doubt in my mind that people will come to see that we must protect all life if we are ever to find authentic progress as a human community. All it takes is a little bit of clear thinking, and courageous people to show these truths to others.

Keith Michael Estrada is a graduate student of philosophy at Franciscan University of Steubenville and is the founder of Students for a Fair Society. For more info see www.studentsforafairsociety.org

THE CONSISTENT LIFE ETHIC IS LIKE SALT *by Rose Evans*

Consistent-Life Ethic is like salt. You don't need a whole lot to be effective. But it's essential to have it present ... spread out here and there to spice up politics, to add a little flavor to dull single-issue groups.

But it stings, like when you wash your mouth out to cure a canker sore. It smarts on the wound. It makes you sit up straight and take notice that something's different here.

And then it heals if you leave it there long enough. The "liberals" need it to cure contradictions and the "conservatives" need it for incongruities. And we all need it to cleanse and purify us from self-righteousness. Yes, consistency is good for what ails the Left and the Right.

Salt forms new compositions and breaks up ice. Like consistent-life-ethic it warms cold and hardened opinions and makes slush ... soft and malleable. The fragile unborn child becomes the person on death row. We abandon our stale ideologies that leave somebody out. The homeless on the war torn streets of Afghanistan become the homeless unwanted child in the womb.

Home. That's where consistent-life-ethic brings us. No hidden agendas. It allows us to be whole, to be ourselves again.

PRIORITY OF QUESTIONS

by *Nicholas Neal*



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In the first issue of Life Matters Journal, we had an article arguing that access to birth control is a way to reduce abortions. In this issue, we have an article arguing that abstinence is the best way to reduce abortions. I would like to give a third perspective on this debate and argue that we're asking the wrong question. Instead of arguing how to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies in order to reduce the number of abortions, we should instead be criticizing the idea that it's justified to kill unwanted children in the first place. We also should not shy away from arguing against the unjustness of legalized homicide.

To illustrate my point about prioritizing questions, let us say that we asked, "How do we make men less angry?" Now, as a man, I think this question is worth asking. The world's smartest psychologists, biologists, and historians should all come together to

collaborate on this question. It would make life a lot easier. However, let us say that we asked, "How do we make men less angry so that they do not beat their wives?" Further, let us say we asked this question in a country where wife beating was legal. There is a problem with this question in that, by asking it, we skip a far more primary question, "Does a man's anger justify him beating his wife in the first place?"

In comparison, asking the question, "How do we reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies?" is fine in and of itself. Answering that question will make life a lot easier. However, connecting it to abortion, especially in a country where abortion is legal, skips the primary question, "Is it justified to kill children because they are unwanted?" It is not that those who do connect reducing unwanted pregnancies (whether through abstinence or birth control) to abortion be

lieve that killing unwanted children is just. Rather, it is that in this society that question unfortunately needs to be answered, and skipping it will not help the cause of unborn rights.

Some may contend that arguing against the justness of abortion is impractical and that instead we should merely try to find common ground with pro-choicers and try to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies. This position has even been argued by some in this journal. The conservative side of the pro-life movement will typically retort by saying that abstinence is the best way to reduce abortion, and thus the argument over abstinence vs. artificial birth control becomes connected with the abortion debate.

I'm afraid I must respectfully disagree with both the common grounder and the conservative. For, just as there will always be men who get angry, there will always be unwanted children, no matter which approach we choose. Maybe we can reduce instances of unwanted children, but they won't go away entirely, and, as long as there are unwanted children, then answering the question of the justness of killing the unwanted will be vital. So the real practical approach is to break the assumption that unwanted children can be killed in the first place, and then, for the sake of making life easier, try to find a way to reduce unwanted pregnancies.

Now, of course, there is another, more emotional reason why some would like to avoid arguing against the justness of homicide. Arguing about morality can sometimes make the arguer appear judgmental. Images of abortion protestors yelling at mothers or anti-war protestors spitting on soldiers instantly flash to mind. Too often ethical arguments have been conflated with name calling, anger, and self-righteousness. However, arguing against the justness of legalized homicide, whether it is homicide against the unborn, foreigners, the elderly, or death-row inmates can be done without name-calling and appearing too judgmental. Ethics and justice are about the moral nature of an action, not hatred toward those

believed to be in the wrong. Indeed, if we appeal to the morals we have in common about the immorality of, say, killing newborns and then show how that ethic can be expanded to the unborn, foreigners, death-row inmates, the elderly, etc., then making our case can be done without malice. Even if we do cause strife, we should not seek to trade this tension for what Dr. Martin Luther King called a "negative peace," a deafening silence that condemns the innocent simply for the sake of avoiding offense.

Pro-life intellectuals should do all that they can to distance abortion from "sexual issues," because combining the two does not give abortion the proper moral weight it deserves. People are not as willing to legislate on issues of sexual morality, and for good reason. Sexual morality largely involves vices, not crimes. However, the ethics of violence do have a more direct relationship with rights and legislation. It's unethical to kill the innocent, therefore the innocent have a right to live, therefore we legislate against killing the innocent. If we put abortion in its proper category, as a violence issue, than we stand to make a case that the unborn have the right to live, regardless of whether he or she is wanted or not.

