

LIFE MATTERS JOURNAL

VOLUME 2 - ISSUE 2
WINTER 2013



does not lie in our
WANTEDNESS

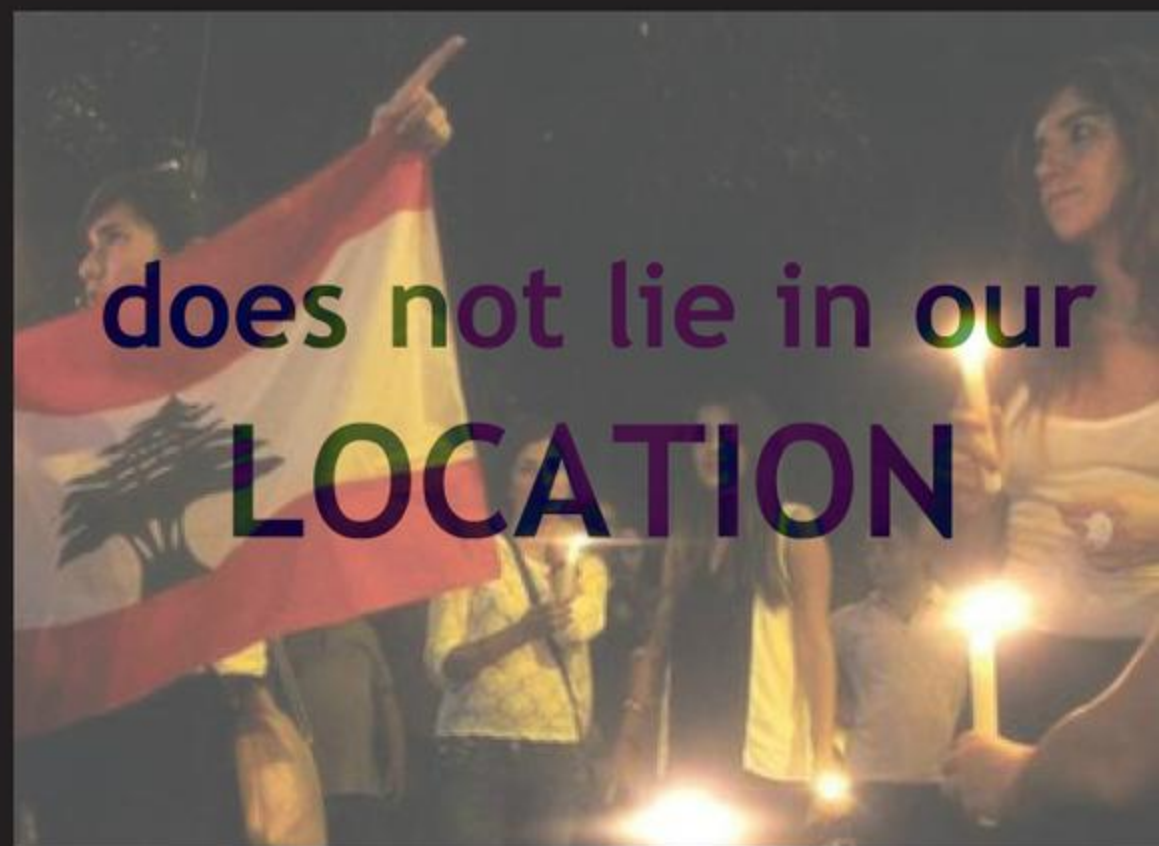


does not lie in our
INNOCENCE

OUR VALUE



does not lie in our
ABILITY



does not lie in our
LOCATION

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

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

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

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

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LIFE MATTERS JOURNAL

Winter 2013 - Volume 2 - Issue 2

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INTRODUCTION - LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear readers, supporters, and friends,

Happy New Year! It is 2013, and we begin another chapter in our work for peace and life. Life Matters Journal is growing and our reach is expanding, but we remain a small staff working so hard to spread the message, educate, and change our culture. Especially this year, we are hoping to expand even further: we will be going to more events, speaking at schools and conferences, and we finally have our own gear and t-shirts to further live our mission, start discussions and educate on all life matters. We are thrilled that you are here to begin this year with us, and we look forward to the work that we can and will do together!

This issue brings out a great variety of issues that really need to be discussed: the attempt in California to end the death penalty, the narrow victory over the assisted suicide bill in Massachusetts, the stigma surrounding mental health and suicide prevention, as well as some great pieces on consistency and the value of life. Our culture has the astounding ability to process and discard news so quickly -- before a tragedy is mourned, we have already moved on to obsess over which celebrity is pregnant or which will break up next. We have no longevity of attention and our activism has become a sort of "slacktivism" that only lives in the online world and does not exist in brick and mortar reality. Despite the fact that most of our work is on an online platform, I firmly believe that if I do not take my convictions to the street, to my campus, to my home, to my workplace, my advocacy is weak and near-worthless. This doesn't mean you have to donate to every single charitable organization or spend all your time on the street protesting -- but it does mean that you walk the walk and do the little things in your daily life that will contribute to building the culture you want to see. Gandhi said, "Be the change you wish to see in the world." I firmly believe that: don't wait around for everyone else to change the culture. Be the culture of life in every word and in every deed.

I wish you all the best in 2013!

For peace and all life,



Aimee Murphy
Executive Editor

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

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

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear Life Matters Journal:

After such a promising start, I am disappointed by your editorial decision not to feature any more articles on contraception, pro or con. Why did you decide to do this, and what do you have to lose if you reconsider?

If there is anything I have learned from over 25 years of activism, it is this: the prolife movement as such has few to no safe spaces for respectful, substantive, honest discussion and debate regarding contraception. There is, in fact, trust me, a great deal of outright censorship applied to anyone who deviates from a certain party-line sort of hostility to contraception, or from a "neutrality" that demarcates birth control as an untouchable and/or irrelevant topic in the abortion debate.

I also think that Nick Neal ("Priority of Questions") misunderstands a position like my own which so emphasizes common ground with prochoice advocates in order to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies and abortions--something urgently necessary whatever the legal status of abortion. Such cooperative action with prochoicers is fully compatible with arguing that abortion is unjust prenatal lifetaking. In fact, if it wasn't, I personally would not be so powerfully motivated to take on all the difficulties of seeking out common ground, which are not for the faint of heart.

I am opposed across the board to the death penalty. But I am hardly diluting or weakening that stance if I work to stop executions alongside people who don't oppose the death penalty per se, but are concerned about innocent people on death row, or the disproportionate number of poor black and brown men there. By the same token, as a pacifist I have no problem with working alongside just war advocates, and even military leaders, to avert or end wars.

I also disagree with Nick that connecting pregnancy prevention to the abortion issue somehow does not give abortion "the proper moral weight it deserves." I agree that abortion itself is fundamentally a matter of violence, not a "sexual morality" issue.

However, effective prevention of unintended pregnancy and abortion does depend, and inescapably so, on people having and utilizing the information, resources, and social power to make the right pregnancy prevention choices for them. And in my experience, people are more likely to listen to the case for prenatal life if they hear it from someone who is actively prochoice on matters of pregnancy *prevention* and respectful of already-born life in this way.

Sincerely,
Mary Krane Derr

Editor's note: Mary passed away in November of 2012, after sending us this letter following Volume 2, Issue 1. Following is my answer to her letter, written in part before her death, and in part following the news of her passing. An obituary written by Sarah Terzo will follow.

Dear Mary,

Firstly, words cannot describe my sorrow at losing you -- our global community and pro-life culture will lack much at your passing. Your spirit and fervor for the causes for which you fought is something that all activists should strive to attain. I did want to address your letter, because I know you were always an advocate of discussion.

We have received both harshly negative and some small positive feedback on having articles on contraception in our pages. I think the main thing we're emphasizing here is that we won't further accept pieces that focus merely on the goodness/badness of contraception, since I think we've covered those bases at least in short form.

Your "Pro-Life Feminist History" piece was quite comprehensive and mentioned in its pages access to contraception -- this is not the kind of thing we're trying to leave out of our issues, rather we'd like to take away the focus that is myopic on contraception. We still hope to have many different viewpoints presented, and I hope you can understand we're trying to cut our losses while still keeping a forum that won't censor either side.

INTRODUCTION - LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

I would certainly like to hear more, perhaps from one of your colleagues from All Our Lives, on the common ground approach and working towards reducing abortions by working with pro-choice organizations. That being said, I hope you know that we are not endorsing either side of the contraception debate; we merely decided that we do not want to focus our discussions on the perceived or active benefits or lack thereof for contraception.

Our work, as always, remains to discuss peace and life, and our aim is to eliminate aggressive violence. Whether that means an incremental approach like some advocate, or a more idealistic abolitionism, we are sure that all activists for life are integral to the discourse and the cultural shift to respect for life.

We will miss you dreadfully, and we will do our utmost to continue your work for a pro-woman, pro-life future.

Sincerely,
Aimee Murphy, Executive Editor

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IN MEMORIAM MARY KRANE DERR



The pro-life movement has been affected by tragic loss. Lifelong pro-life activist Mary Krane Derr passed away suddenly on November 30, 2012. An accomplished poet, Krane Derr had been invited to the Kritya International Poetry Festival in India to do a reading, where she fell ill. She was 49 years old.

Krane Derr was the co-editor of the book *Pro-Life Feminism: Yesterday and Today*, a compilation of feminist writing on the issue of abortion from the 19th century to the present. The book reveals the fact that early feminists such as Susan B Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton opposed abortion, in contrast to the mainstream feminist movement today.

Krane Derr's research and careful documentation helped countless pro-lifers convey the feminist pro-life message in their speeches, articles, blog posts, and lectures, and will continue to be a powerful resource for the pro-life movement going forward. She had also authored many pro-life articles in different publications, including the anthology "Swimming Against the Tide: Feminist Dissent on the Issue of Abortion"

She had published her poetry in small-press magazines like *Many Mountains Moving*, anthologies like *Hunger Enough: Living Spiritually in A Consumer Society* (ed. Nita Penfold, Pudding House, 2004), and such websites as *Poets Against the War* (www.poetsagainsthewar.org). She has read it at the Chicago Cultural Center and the 1999 Parliament of the World's Religions, Cape Town, South Africa. Her nonfiction has been published by *Utne Reader*, the disability rights magazines *Mouth* and *Ragged Edge*, and the independent Turkish news agency *BIAnet*.

Krane Derr overcame a lifetime of health problems to become a pro-life champion, talented poet, devoted grandmother, loving wife, and good friend to many. Her death is a loss to the pro-life movement, her family, and everyone who knew her.

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CURRENT EVENTS AND CONSISTENT LIFE

NARROW VICTORY OVER PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE MEASURE IN MASSACHUSETTS

by Mary Stroka

Apart from debates about the presidential election, several individual states' voters faced other controversies on ballots. Massachusetts voters rejected a physician-assisted suicide measure 51-to-49 percent on Election Day 2012, for example. The ballot initiative would have allowed a Massachusetts-licensed physician to prescribe lethal medication if the patient met certain criteria.

The patient had to be an adult "medically determined to be mentally capable of making and communicating health care decisions," "diagnosed by attending and consulting physicians as having an incurable, irreversible disease that will, within reasonable medical judgment, cause death within six months," and voluntarily communicating an informed desire to die, according to the Massachusetts Commonwealth's online voter guide.

Massachusetts would have joined the states of Oregon and Washington had it accepted the measure, also known as the "Death with Dignity" act.

Opponents of the act focused on convincing people that it was flawed in a few ways: there was no requirement of a psychiatric exam, a patient did not need to notify family members of his or her decision, and predicting when a person will die from a

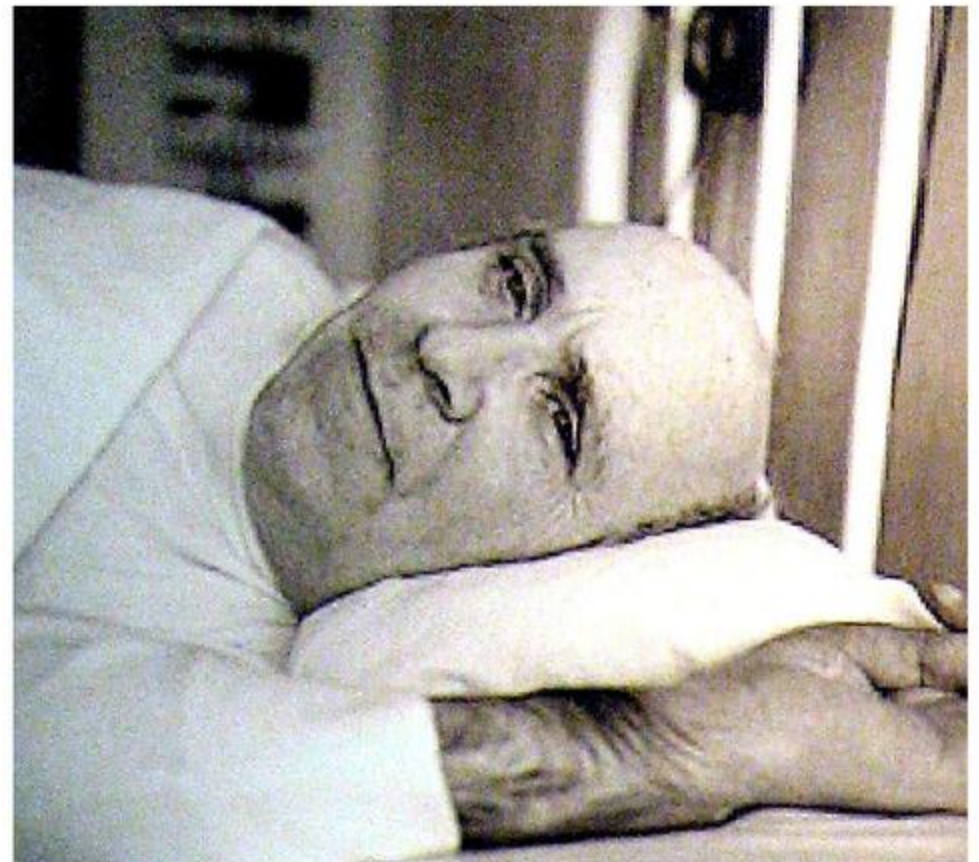


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disease is difficult. The measure's opponents raised \$4.8 million, about four times as much money as the measure's proponents. The two largest donors were the Boston Catholic Television Center and St. John's Seminary Corporation, which both spent \$1 million.¹

Voter Brian Peter O'Hanlon has lived in Massachusetts for four years. He said, "A lot of the folks... were talking more about the wording of the law, and how it did not mention consulting a psychologist or informing the family, and generally was not really well-written, rather than talking about ending human life:

"Perhaps this was for the best, as Massachusetts residents may not be very receptive to talking about the dignity of life and would view the arguments about wording better, but I fear that in the future, the proponents of the physician-assisted suicide bill may reword the bill and add much of what opponents claimed was lacking, and so the focus will have to come down to dignity and end-of-life care, which things were certainly mentioned this time as well, just not emphasized as much."

Polish immigrant and Massachusetts resident Weronika Balewski voted for the first time this year. "This was the only question I was really clear about," she said. "I was really glad I could participate in the decision."

She said people from St. Clement's Eucharistic Shrine in Boston distributed pamphlets in public places, explaining the pro-life position and informing passersby why people were against it.

Balewski said physician-assisted suicide does not make sense in a pro-life context. "You would never hand a suicidal person a gun to shoot himself or tell him to go ahead and jump off a bridge. It's an instinctual thought that people shouldn't commit suicide; they should get help instead," she said. "We shouldn't force expensive, unnecessary treatments but that doesn't mean we have the right to take away basic care at the end of life."

She said it reflects a more widespread social problem.

"The 'Death with Dignity' act is like a word battle. It sounds nice; everyone wants to die with dignity, but it's not dignified to help someone commit suicide. We're so afraid of suffering and not wanting to be a burden on people," she said. "In my life, I see people who think their worth is based on what they do. They feel worthless if society doesn't judge their actions to be productive. People dying aren't being productive, they might be in a lot of pain, but that doesn't make their life worthless. I [could] not defend this belief if I believe[d] that physician-assisted suicide is okay."

REFERENCE

[1] Chris Camire, "Support Withered for Assisted-suicide Ballot Question," Lowell Sun, December 9, 2012, http://www.lowellsun.com/todaysheadlines/ci_22157064/support-withered-assisted-suicide-ballot-question#ixzz2Egbgwy23.

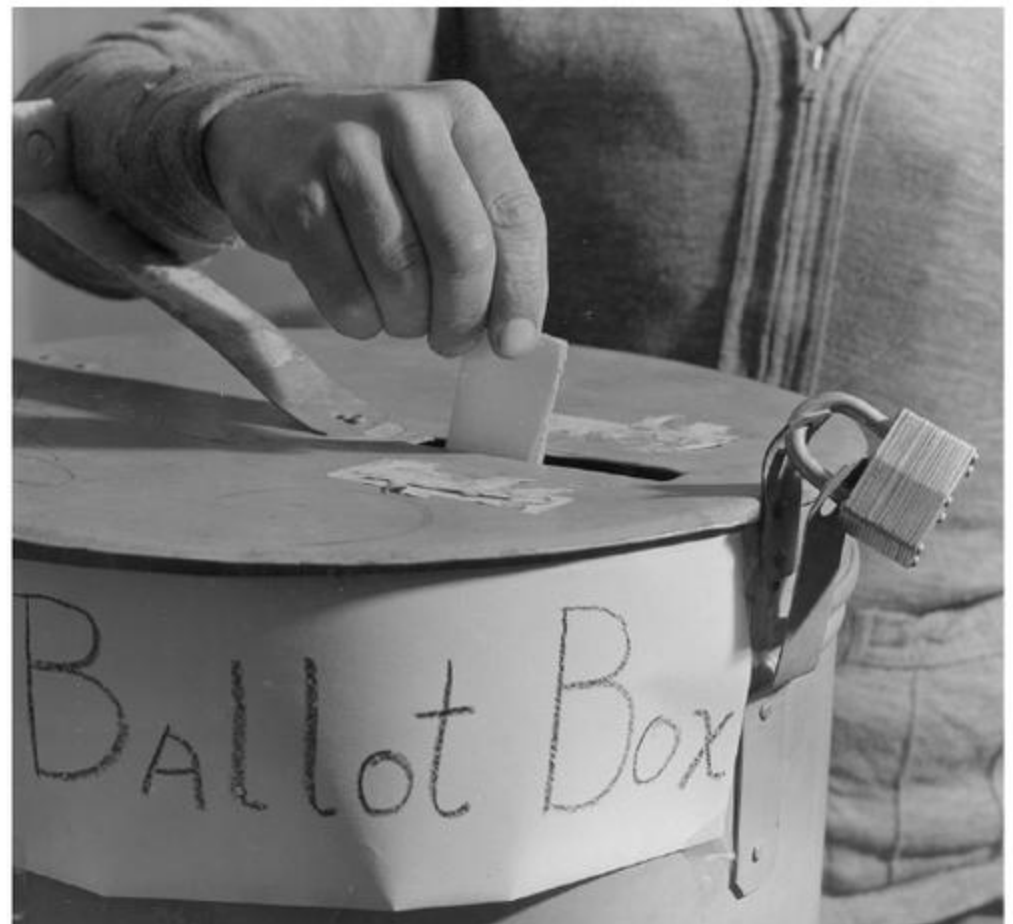


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TRAGEDIES AND TALKING POINTS

by Nate Will Sheets

Immediately following the tragic shootings in Newtown, Connecticut, my Facebook was filled with friends and various organizations voicing their condolences and shock, as well as their political views and self-righteousness.

Before any of the facts came out, people already knew the problem: lack of gun control, not enough guns, mental health care not being accessible, and on and on. This was before we knew who the shooter was and what connection, if any, the shooter had to the school.

I read through my newsfeed, sad also at the people mentioning “the special place in hell” for the shooter—again, despite their knowing nothing about the situation or the shooter himself. It was an almost identical situation to just a few days earlier, when the mall just three miles from my house, Clackamas Town Center, had a gunman open fire during the Christmas rush, killing three.

If there is one thing I have learned from social media and the mainstream media, it’s that America needs to learn how to have a conversation without tempers flaring. When it comes to social issues such as abortion, the death penalty, war, and gun rights, we seem to think that if we talk louder than the other side, then we will win.

But it’s not happening. Instead, we click “Share” and spread our outrage about this or that and don’t give a second thought to whether or not we are spreading misinformation. If the image or meme supports what we think, then it’s all OK.

The response to the shootings in Newtown is just a small piece of the pie that is America’s inability to listen, learn, and make solutions. We assume that our opinion is just so logical, so divinely inspired, or so apparent that compromising is not only a non-option but to do so would be to compromise our morals.



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And god-forbid we compromise our moral beliefs—regardless of the consequences that failing to do so will have on the poor, on women, or on unborn kids.

We will make more progress on these issues when we allow our own worldviews to be challenged and our minds to see other solutions. And this cannot be done if we are busy being enraged at what people who disagree with us on any particular issue do or say.

I encourage everyone to resist the “Share” button and ask yourself if you are spreading information or if you are spreading rage. We have enough rage in America and perpetuating indignant talking points and self-righteous anger only perpetuates that rage.

CALIFORNIA'S PROP 34: THE CHOICE OF MONEY VERSUS MORALS

by *Anthony Bedoy*

It seems a bit off to consider where the United States stands in comparison to most other countries in civil and human rights. The U.S. has recognized the right of women to vote, the right of all citizens to speak freely, and the right to a just trial under the law and taken many other significant leaps forward that other countries have imitated in their policies. What appalls the mind is the inherent disregard for the lives of those who commit crimes, however. In this respect, the United States government stands alongside multiple countries that are continually frowned upon for their civil and human rights violations. The death penalty is still applied in North Korea, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, the People's Republic of China, and the United States, to name a few. Why are we not alongside the other 139 countries (according to Amnesty International) that have outlawed the death penalty? Is it due to our violent culture or are there greater powers at work here?

California had the chance this last November to join the 17 states (plus the District of Columbia) that have abolished the death penalty. Proposition 34 was designed to repeal the death penalty as the maximum punishment for persons found guilty of murder.

Instead, the maximum punishment would be to imprison murderers for life, without possible parole. Proposition 34 would also direct \$100 million to law enforcement agencies for investigations of homicide and rape cases. The proposition, it was estimated, would save about \$130 million each year after the first few years. Proposition 34 thus had a price tag of \$100 million initially for grants to law enforcement, but the proposition's authors expected it to be paid for over four years—with hopes that the savings from ending the death penalty would be incentives for people to support the proposition. The reason the proposition would save money is because the costs of court appeals, trials, and all the expenses that go along with the associated red tape would be unnecessary without a death penalty. While the proposition seemed like an advance in the eyes of some social justice advocates, others saw this bill as a free ticket for murderers and rapists.

While it is not overt, the motive behind the proposition does not seem necessarily to be concern for the rights of the convicts on death row. The drive behind the proposition can be taken solely as an economic and fiscal policy choice for the state. Defending the rights of humans on death row is difficult, as it seems that the United States is not run by concern for morals but rather for the pocketbooks of CEOs and the like.

Is there a fault in founding a policy solely on economic needs? Would there be a change in policy as soon as the price for the death penalty dropped and it was actually more expensive to keep a convict in prison for life?

Although unlikely, the possibility of such a change seems terribly wrong. I am not sure I could stand for a morality based on profits and budget balancing. The value of a woman or man's life arguably cannot be measured in money. How then do these policymakers see fit to form a policy solely around money? It is possible that this proposition could not succeed upon moral grounds in a country so bent on protection from murderers and rapists. The economic argument seems much more convincing to an ordinary person. Each and every one of us can understand the value of saving money, but the moral argument does not connect with all.



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While advocates argued that the bill would save money, opponents argued that horrific crimes deserved punishment and that rather than abolishing the penalty, California's government should reform the judicial process in order to make it cheaper to execute individuals. In regards to these different arguments for and against the bill, there seems to be no voice of true morality. It is as if the United States government decides upon legislation with only wealth in mind. Could this be where our country is destined to fail? Contrary to how we would hope our legislation is formed, it must inevitably be recognized that many of our laws are passed or repealed on fiscal grounds.

Being a California resident and a social justice advocate, I had hopes for Proposition 34, but when I heard about the argument for repeal, my dreams of a state without a chance of death under the government were dashed.

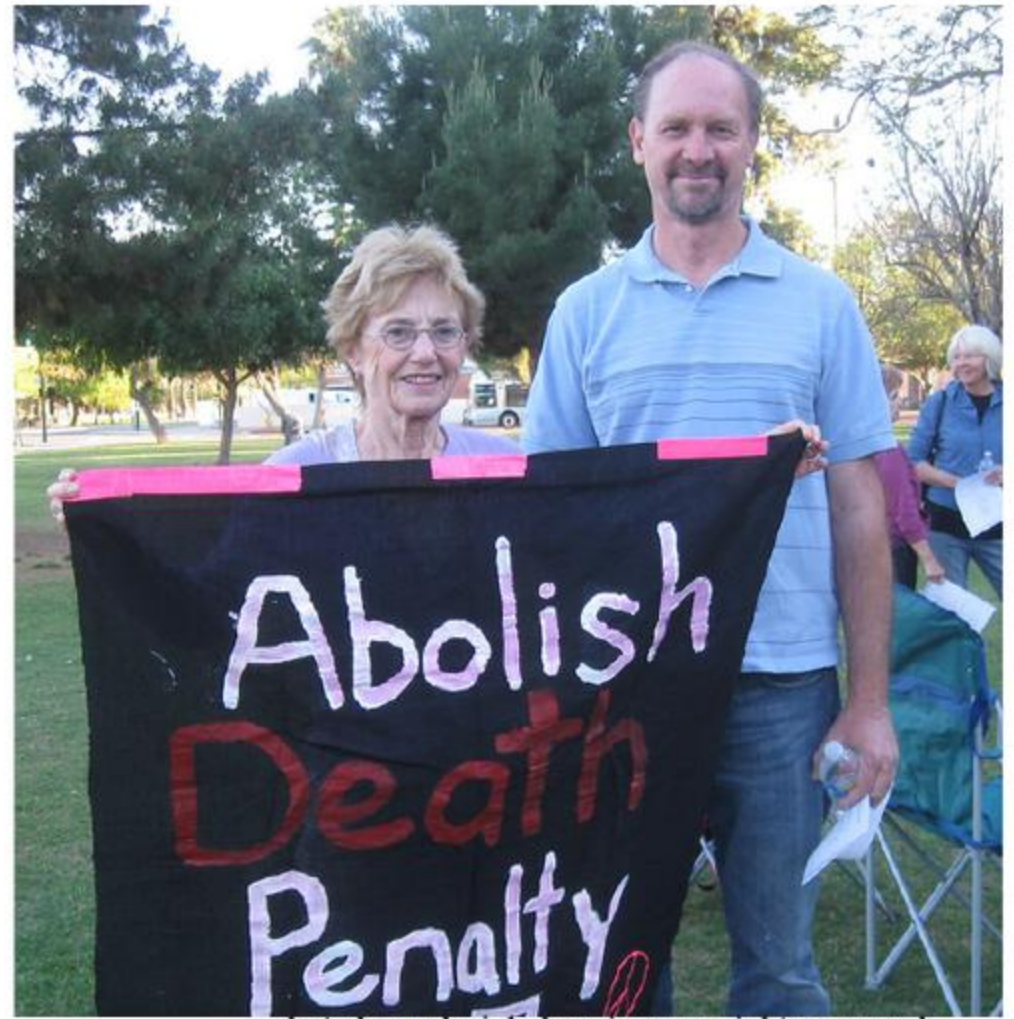


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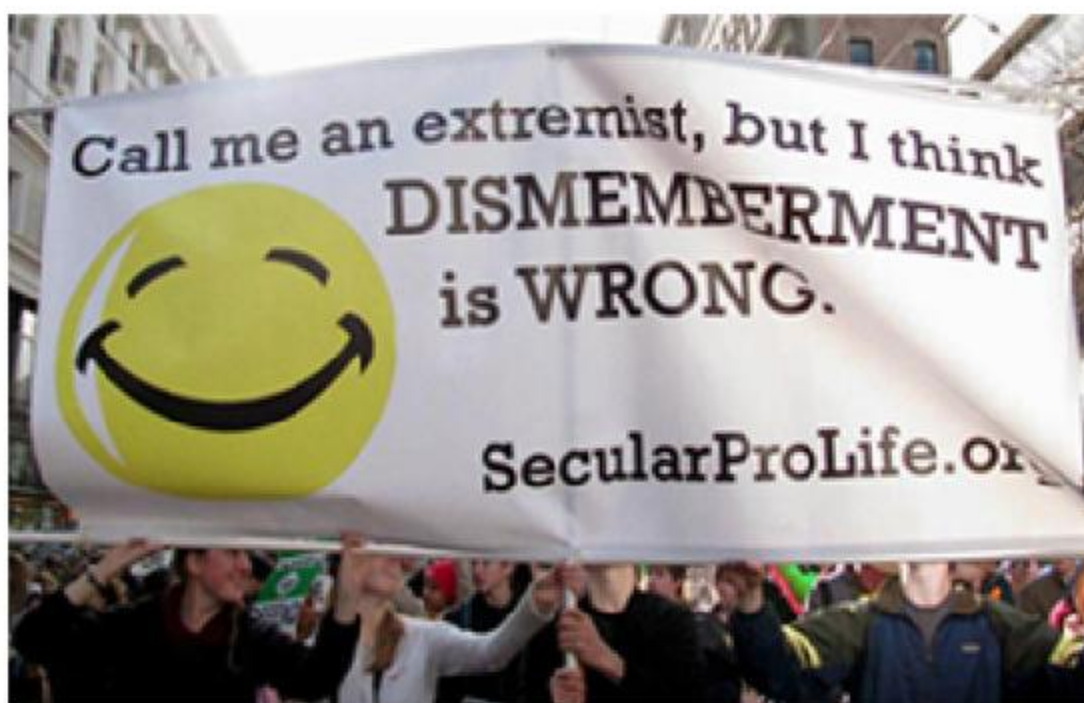
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ESSAYS

THREE QUESTIONS ON U.S. TARGETED KILLINGS

by John Whitehead

The US government policy of killing suspected terrorists, whether by means of pilotless drones or Special Forces strikes, is now at least 10 years old. Estimates of how many have died because of this policy vary, but a conservative estimate is that roughly 2,000 people have been killed to date. Most of these targeted killings have taken place in Pakistan, but they have also occurred in Yemen and Somalia. The killings date back at least to November 2002, when President George W. Bush's administration used a drone to kill six people in Yemen. The number of targeted killings has significantly increased under President Barack Obama's administration. With Obama's reelection, the killing policy will presumably continue (although the policy would also likely have continued had Mitt Romney become president in 2013).¹

This policy should concern all those who wish to prevent violence and foster peace. To pacifists, any killing is inherently wrong; but even non-pacifists (of which I am one) should be troubled by a government policy of killing people who do not belong to the armed forces of any recognized state, who live in countries with which the United States is not at war, and who have not been convicted of wrong-doing in a court of law. Three serious questions about this policy should be pondered.

1. *What is the policy's cost in civilian lives?*

As with estimates of the total number of people killed, estimates of civilian deaths vary: within Pakistan, the number may be as low as about 150 or as high as almost 900. The Obama administration's determinations of targeted killings' cost in civilian lives might underestimate the number by considering all military-age men within a strike zone to be combatants, according to a New York Times report, "unless there is explicit intelligence posthumously proving them innocent."² Whatever the precise numbers, however, people who are not terrorists or other militants have definitely died because of the targeted killing policy.

A principle of Just War theory is that lethal violence in war must be limited to combatants, with civilians being spared. Positions vary among Just-War-theory adherents on whether military operations that unintentionally kill civilians as well as combatants can be justified; what is likely less controversial, however, is the notion that at least some precautions should be taken to avoid even unintentional civilian deaths. Whether the United States targeted killing policy takes adequate precautions is open to question.

One disturbing aspect of the policy is the category of targeted killings used in Pakistan known as "signature" strikes. In contrast to operations aimed at killing a particular, named person, such as Osama Bin Laden, signature strikes apparently aim to kill people whose location and characteristics or

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behavior identify them as enemy combatants, even if their identities are not known.³ This raises the possibility of an overly lax targeting policy: a gathering of male civilians in an area known to be under the Taliban's or another hostile group's control might be hit with a drone strike because they are suspected of being terrorists plotting together. Even if other criteria are included—"suspicious" behavior or clothing identified with militants—the possibility of mistakes might exist.

Another aspect of the targeted killing policy, also used in Pakistan, that might create excessive risk to civilians is the "double tap" tactic, in which a targeted area is bombed several times in a relatively short period of time. One effect of this policy might be to kill or injure civilians who attempt to rescue or aid those hurt in the first bomb attack. This has the added effect of discouraging people from aiding victims of strikes. One victim of a drone attack, Faheem Qureshi, says that often "when a drone strikes and people die, nobody comes near the bodies for half an hour because they fear another missile will strike."⁴

Even those who accept the legitimacy of targeting terrorists for death would do well to consider the costs this policy has in civilian lives and whether the rules by which targeted killings are conducted take sufficient care to avoid civilian casualties.

2. *Is this policy encouraging anti-Americanism?* While killing terrorists belonging to al Qaeda or affiliated groups probably does reduce, to some extent, the danger of terrorist attacks on Americans, the targeted killing policy has significant negative consequences for US security. Lethal strikes that kill civilians along with terrorists and can provoke popular anti-American backlash. Compromising other nations' sovereignty through targeted killings can provoke governmental anti-American backlash.

Pakistan provides the most vivid example of this negative response to the targeted killing policy. A 2012 Pew Research Center poll indicates that roughly 80 percent of Pakistanis have a negative view of the United States, with almost 75 percent viewing the United States as an "enemy"—both percentages having increased, from already-high levels, in the past few years. Meanwhile, the same poll indicates Pakistani support for drone strikes stands at merely 17 percent.⁵ One particularly dramatic manifestation of anti-drone sentiment came in June 2011, when a deadly drone strike prompted hundreds of Pakistanis to stage a protest in which they blocked a road and chanted anti-American slogans.⁶

Osama Bin Laden's killing involved perhaps the most dangerous potential confrontation with Pakistan. The raid prompted denunciations after the fact by Pakistani politicians and the Pakistani intelligence agency's head.⁷ More disturbing, however, is an aspect of US preparations for the Bin Laden killing: US forces engaged in the killing planned to fight Pakistani military forces, if that was necessary to make their escape from the Bin Laden compound.⁸ That is, the US government was willing to risk open combat with the troops of a populous, unstable, nuclear-armed nation in order to kill a single terrorist.

Another very important consequence of the targeted killing backlash is that it may be spawning new terrorists to replace those killed. Two of the more notable terrorist plots in recent years were Najibullah Zazi's attempt to bomb the New York subway system and Faisal Shahzad's attempt to bomb Times Square; both men cited anger over American drone strikes as a motivation for their plots.⁹ In an op-ed, two military veterans, including counter-insurgency expert David Kilcullen, argued that "every one of these dead

noncombatants represents an alienated family, a new desire for revenge, and more recruits for a militant movement.”¹⁰

3. *When do targeted killings end?* Even if other concerns about targeted killings are set aside, the question arises: when can this policy be ended? What is the point at which the US government will say “enough”? The American war against al Qaeda has now been going on for over a decade and, barring an explicit admission of defeat by the terrorist organization, it might not have an obvious end point. “Victory” might not be apparent except in retrospect, many years after al Qaeda has withered away. In the same way, the targeted killing campaign has been a geographically wide ranging one, involving operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, and Somalia and might extend to still other locations before it is over (the al Qaeda presence in Mali could prompt targeted killings there, if it has not already). Lacking either a chronological or geographic limit, what prevents targeted killing from becoming a permanent feature of US foreign policy?

Targeted killing need not be limited to suspected al Qaeda members, either. New terrorist or non-state enemies might well emerge in the future, and future American presidents might deal with them as past ones dealt with al Qaeda. In theory, new struggles against new enemies would require some degree of public debate and congressional approval, but given the US government’s unhappy tendency to wage war without such prior scrutiny and authorization—as manifested most recently in the Libyan war—that cannot be taken for granted. The precedent of past targeted killings, together with claims of national security and executive authority, could override such limitations.

Last, the behavior of not only future US presidents but of other world leaders needs to be considered. If the United States maintains that it can kill suspected terrorist enemies in other nations, without trial and even without the permission of other nations’ governments, then other countries can claim the same prerogative. Chinese, Russian, or other leaders

might order the killing of “enemies” elsewhere in the world—even in the United States—and claim that national security concerns (the precise nature of which must, of course, be kept secret) justify their actions. If criticized, they can point out that they are merely behaving as the United States has. Targeted killing could become a more generally used and tolerated tool of international relations—a development that hardly promotes peace.

The targeted killing policy and the questions it raises need to be very seriously considered as we contemplate how to fight terrorism in a just and effective way.

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DUAL HUMAN DIGNITY: HOW REPUBLICANS CAN BETTER ARTICULATE THE PRO-LIFE MESSAGE

by Nicholas Neal

After the Obama victory in the 2012 election, commentators and political strategists have been discussing what, if any, changes the GOP will have to make in order to broaden its base and successfully win elections the way it did back in the 1980s. One of the biggest issues that the Republican Party is expected to cave on is abortion. The Democratic Party used the war-on-women rhetoric triumphantly to energize their feminist base to deliver a 2012 victory. This, of course, caused the pro-life faction of the GOP to become the biggest scapegoat for their 2012 loss. This scapegoating is the wrong move, and instead what should happen is the GOP should learn not only how to better articulate the pro-life position but why they should hold the pro-life position in the first place.

Gallup polling indicates that roughly 50 percent of Americans identify as pro-life[1]. In fact, young people have been shown to be more anti-abortion than their parents, despite being less religious and more liberal on other issues. Age, not gender, is the significant factor in determining one's opinion on abortion, meaning that blaming the Republicans' gender gap on abortion is inaccurate [2]. The pro-life movement is very young and very viable. It will survive into the future, and if the GOP abandoned the pro-life cause, it would chip away at the party's base, not strengthen it.

However, the GOP needs to change how they approach abortion. It needs to change the reasoning behind the pro-life position. This is particularly important on the vexing issue of abortion and rape.

The Todd Akin scandal magnified this problem dramatically. The failed Missouri candidate

idiotically claimed that women could not get pregnant during rape and thus that most rape pregnancies were due to "illegitimate rape."

This was used by feminists to hammer home the narrative that pro-lifers were ignoramuses (or is it "ignorami"?) who did not care about women. Still I don't want to imply that Akin's comments were wrong simply because he misspoke or even because it cost the Republican Party a Senate seat. The statement was wrong because it was an act of blaming the victim. It trivialized the violence of rape and therefore showed an inherent disrespect for the victims of such actions. However, this doesn't mean that Republicans should abandon the rights of children conceived in rape.

Republicans can articulate this position better by arguing that both the fetus and the mother in the situation of rape are innocent parties in a complex and horrific situation and that homicide against one of these innocent parties is too rash a solution for it. By emphasizing this message of dual human dignity, the Republicans can push back against the non sequitur that violence against the mother somehow logically justifies violence against the unborn.

In addition to that, Republicans should concede to feminists that there is patriarchy in society that causes rape in the first place. Assumed female inferiority (a legacy of years of male supremacy), the fusion of masculine identity with violence, and the unfair expectation that women should "avoid getting raped" are cultural norms in our society that create an oppressive and dehumanizing system for women. Just as they should oppose the culture of lethal ageism against the unborn, Republicans should also oppose the culture of

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violent sexism against women.

However, this advocacy of human dignity should not be cynical. It would be nice if Republicans would implement some policies to back up the fact that we care about both the mother and the child. For instance, denying the rapist's visitation rights to the child would certainly be just, in that the rapist does not have the right to ever see the mother again, and would be a great way to be tough on crime. Also, it promotes the message that rape is not what defines the child, that the child's worth is based on who she is as a person, not how she was conceived.

Republicans will also have to change their language. They will need to stop framing abortion as a cultural-values issue, but instead frame it as a human rights issue. This framing of it will make some headway with a more secular and liberal youth population that still has some sympathy for unborn rights.

Finally, a great way the Republican Party can articulate the pro-life cause is to expand it. If the Republican Party were to embrace a consistent life ethic and oppose abortion along with war and the death penalty (which are two pro-death, big government programs anyway), then the pro-life cause would be taken more seriously because it wouldn't seem like it exists in a vacuum. In addition to that, it would give

Republicans ground to rip Democrats on their hypocrisy when it comes to legalized homicide. They can say "you Democrats claim to be the party of peace and tolerance, yet you advocate lethal ageism against children for the crime of existing inconveniently. We Republicans embrace a consistent life ethic. We oppose both killing the unborn and people in different countries as well as people on death row." Right now the Republicans can make only half that claim, and Democrats can respond by saying that the GOP is inconsistent too: Republicans claim to be pro-life but support war and the death penalty. If the Republicans were to respect life in all stages, then the Democratic rebuttal would fall apart and their claims to being in favor of tolerance and peace would be met with the skepticism it deserves. A good model for this would be Republican Senator Rand Paul who tied together war and abortion as causing a "coarsening of culture towards violent death."^[3]

Defending unborn rights is an important issue and it frustrated pro-lifers, including myself, to see Republicans either defend them inadequately or wimp out and not defend them at all. While the rest of social conservatism is dying, the pro-life cause is still the cause that can win. However, the Republican Party will need to rearticulate it as the human rights issue and peace issue that it always should have been.

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ANCIENT CHRISTIANITY AND THE CONSISTENT LIFE ETHIC

by Rob Arner

When measured against the standard of the ancient Christian church, contemporary American Christianity is in a moral mess. When it comes to what have been called the “life issues,” Christians are today no less sharply divided than are members of secular society. Some Christians, who have been called “conservative” by the conventional narratives, believe that abortion is a grave moral evil. Yet often these same Christians will readily fall in line to support the latest war proposed by the nation’s chief executive. Other Christians tend not to view abortion as such an intrinsic evil, but rather a tragic “choice” for mothers in difficult circumstances. These Christians, who are sometimes called “liberal,” are more concerned with systemic and social evils, such as poverty, and are critical of the ready recourse to war to solve international disputes.¹ These two groups far too often find themselves talking past one another at best and actively working against one another at worst, so that significant progress is not made toward addressing either group’s moral concerns. There is thus a profound disagreement over right and wrong, good and evil in the contemporary American church. And for a people who are supposed to be conformed in their lives and witness to the image of Jesus Christ, not to mention united to one another in his death and resurrection, this moral muddle is a scandal indeed.

But imagine if this were not so. Imagine the impact if, instead of moral confusion and ethical chaos within the church, there was a united witness, an ecumenical consensus surrounding the thorny question of whether and in what circumstances a disciple of Jesus might take a human life. Such a consensus actually existed in the ancient Christian church, stretching from the time of the apostles until the Christianization of the Roman Empire following the conversion of the Emperor Constantine, early in the second decade of the

C.E. In my investigation into the ethics of the ancient Christian church, I read every surviving orthodox Christian sermon, treatise, letter, and apology from that period (about 90-314 C.E.) and discovered a startling consensus on this issue. As diverse as the ancient Christian church may have been on wealth and poverty, sexuality, church governance, theology, and a host of other issues, when it comes to the subject of killing other human persons, the ancient Christian writers and teachings were startlingly in accord with one another. Without exception, the church strongly condemned the taking of human life in any form whatsoever. Neither homicide, nor feticide, nor infanticide, nor suicide, nor capital punishment, nor killing in war were considered acceptable to a church fiercely committed to following the teaching and moral example of the incarnate Lord. Put more precisely, *no surviving orthodox Christian writing dating from before Constantine ever approves of Christian participation in human bloodshed.*

This is of course an audacious claim, and I do not make it lightly. It is only after considered study of the surviving Christian sources from this period that I can make this conclusion. In what follows, I will offer some representative samples of the moral convictions of the ancient Christians, showing that in all circumstances, from abortion to war and everything in between, the ancient church was steadfastly opposed to killing a human person. Because of the limitations of space, these samples and my comments must necessarily be brief.² However the theological conviction underlying this startlingly clear moral stance will become readily apparent, namely that human life belongs ultimately to God who gave it and only God may legitimately take it. The ancient church believed that when Christians kill, they usurp the divine prerogative that belongs to God alone (cf. Romans 12:19). From this conviction, they disavowed all killing of human persons, no matter the circumstances.



The Setting

In the Roman Empire, life was cheap. Not only was the “peace” of the empire secured and maintained through brutal conquest and the subjugation of neighboring peoples, but everyday life for Roman citizens, even during times of peace, was filled with violence.³ Killing was sport in the gladiatorial conquests and chariot races that thrilled the crowds, and the value of individual human persons was deemed to be subordinate to the good of Rome. This was true at both the upper levels of society—witness just how many Roman emperors met with violent deaths at the hands of their rivals (or loved ones!)—and at the bottom strata, where the life of a slave was all but worthless to his or her master and unwanted children of the poor were either aborted or abandoned in the countryside to die of exposure.⁴ The glory of Rome was built on the broken backs of enslaved peoples and the blood of those deemed to be expendable. It is into this milieu that the ancient Christian church brought its message that was decidedly on the side of life—in every case.

Abortion and Infanticide

Both abortions of unborn children and the killings of unwanted or deformed children who had already been born were widely practiced in ancient Rome.⁵ The early Christians however, operating under the conviction that life is a precious gift from God, stood forcefully against these practices. In stark contrast to this culture of disposability, the early Christians asserted that the God-given inviolability of human life forbade them from taking the life of a child, either while still in the womb or after birth. This prohibition is present from the earliest days of the Christian moral tradition. For instance, the ancient discipleship manual commonly known as the *Didache*, or more formally as The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles to the Nations, which dates from either the last decade of the first century or the first decade of the second century (and therefore may actually have been written at

the same time as some of the writings that made it into the New Testament), contains an explicit prohibition of infanticide and abortion. As part of a section entitled the “way of life,” we discover: “A further commandment of the Teaching: Do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not practice pederasty; do not fornicate; do not steal; do not deal in magic; do not practice sorcery; do not kill a fetus by abortion, or commit infanticide” (*Didache*, 2.1–2).⁶

This explicit prohibition was necessary in an era when such killings of born and unborn children were common. The Christian character Octavian, in Minicius Felix’s early third-century dialogue of the same name, was one of many apologists who responded to the common charge leveled against Christians by their pagan critics that Christians kill and eat their offspring in their secretive worship services. He turns this charge against his accusers and points out the larger pagan culture’s hypocrisy in doing what it suspected Christians of doing. “And in fact,” he retorts, “it is a practice of yours, I observe, to expose your very own children to birds and wild beasts, or at times to smother and strangle them—a pitiful way to die; and there are women who swallow drugs to stifle in their own womb the beginnings of a man to be—committing infanticide before they give birth to their infant” (*Octavius*, 30). The great second-century apologist Justin Martyr likewise reflects the Christian condemnation of this practice, saying that “we have been taught that to expose newly born infants is the work of wicked people” (*First Apology*, 27), while Clement of Alexandria laments that “women who resort to some sort of deadly abortion drug kill not only the embryo but, along with it, human kindness” (*Christ the Educator*, 2.10).

The early Christian condemnation of killing children (either before or after birth) as a means of dealing with the difficult problems posed by unintended or unwanted pregnancies was a stark contrast with the social norms of Roman society. That the early Christians did not make a distinction between the killing of born and unborn children may sound scandalous to sensitive modern ears, but for the ancient church, abortion and infanticide were two sides of the same coin, as Tertullian’s brilliant apology from the end of the second century makes clear:

But with us, murder is forbidden once for all. We are not permitted to destroy even the fetus in the womb, as long as blood is still being drawn to form a human being. To prevent the birth of a child is a quicker way to murder. It makes no difference whether one destroys a soul already born or interferes with its coming to birth. It is a human being and one who is to be a man, for the whole fruit is already present in the seed (Tertullian, *Apology*, 9).

Indeed, the whole focus of the church’s work in the world was on saving life and working for peace with justice as Jesus had done in his life, culminating with the cross. What

could be further from that mission than the devaluing and destruction of the human person *in utero*? The witness of the ancient church on this issue could not be clearer. Indeed as Richard Hays has remarked, “the recent shift in some branches of liberal Protestantism to advocacy for abortion rights is a major departure from the church’s historic teaching.”⁷ But as we shall see, this was only one facet of the ancient church’s consistently pro-life ethic.

Killing in War and Military Service

Just as on abortion and infanticide, those most “private” of violence issues, the early church offered an adamant “no,” so too on the most “public” kinds of killing the church drew a firm line. The early Christian discussions on killing in war, and on military service more broadly, are so numerous and multifaceted that I can only scratch the surface in this brief overview.⁸ It is widely recognized by church historians and ethicists that ancient Christian writers, such as Origen and Tertullian, had moral scruples against Christians serving in the Roman legions, even though it is well documented that many Christians were serving in the military, even prior to Constantine. What is less well-known is precisely *why*. To what did the church object? Was it the idolatry of the Roman legions, who were often compelled to offer sacrifices to pagan gods and to the person of the emperor himself? To be sure. But there was another significant factor that many commentators miss out on: the church’s broad condemnation of killing made the military profession deeply problematic.

The best angle from which to approach this issue is by examining a document known as the *Apostolic Tradition*, which was probably written in Rome by the church elder Hippolytus or his immediate circle around the year 215.⁹ The *Apostolic Tradition* is of a genre known as a “church order,” a prescriptive document detailing the liturgy and worship life, as well as the polity, of the church at the time it was written. It is clearly authoritative, since numerous later church orders were based on its framework and preserve large portions of its content intact. It has been called “a kind of early Church consensus” for its descriptive narration of widely practiced church life at the time and for its authoritative nature in shaping later church orders.¹⁰

A crucial text for our purposes, Chapter 16 of the *Apostolic Tradition* describes how the church prepared new initiates for baptism. One important factor was that all facets of the initiate’s life came under close scrutiny in order to determine whether or not the candidate would be accepted into the catechumenate, a kind of training period before baptism in which the candidate learns the ways and faith of the church. This scrutiny included the candidate’s occupation. Some of those engaged in questionable professions were permitted to remain in their profession, so long as they modified their behavior to conform it to church discipline. For example, one who was a sculptor by trade was permitted

to continue practicing his or her profession, provided that he or she did not craft idols for pagan customers. Others were required to quit their profession entirely: this requirement applied to those in such objectionable professions as sorcery and prostitution. If the individual under scrutiny failed to meet the requirements for entry into the catechumenate or refused to quit or alter their profession as necessitated by the church order, they were simply rejected from consideration for church membership and would never be permitted to receive baptism until their lives conformed to the church’s rigorous discipline.

Three canons from chapter 16 are crucial for understanding the early church’s scruples on killing in war and how those scruples were enforced in the life of ancient Christianity:

(9.) A soldier in command must be told not to kill people; if he is ordered so to do, he shall not carry it out. Nor shall he take the oath. If he will not agree, he should be rejected [from the catechumenate]. (10.) Anyone who has the power of the sword, or who is a civil magistrate wearing the purple, should desist, or he should be rejected. (11.) If a catechumen or a believer wishes to become a soldier they should be rejected, for they have despised God (*Apostolic Tradition*, 16.9–11).

First, in canon 9, the “soldier in command” who seeks entry into the catechumenate in hopes of ultimate baptism is included among those who must modify their behavior before acceptance.¹¹ The soldier who wants to become a Christian must refuse to kill anyone, even if ordered to do so; likewise he shall not take the (idolatrous) military oath. Violating either of these two conditions would mean automatic exclusion or expulsion from the catechumenate. Yet it is significant to note that the soldier is not explicitly ordered to quit soldiering. For many soldiers, quitting the army before their term of service had expired would have entailed an almost certain death sentence. This is an extension of grace from the church to those soldiers who had been evangelized as the gospel message penetrated deeper into the Roman Empire. Those who were already soldiers at the time of their conversion could stay in their posts as long as they did not swear the military oath or, more importantly for our purposes here, kill anyone.

The next canon speaks to those who are higher up in the chain of military authority. Those with “the power of the sword” (military officials) or “civil magistrates wearing the purple” (a symbol of the authority of the Empire), are not extended the same grace which is given to lower-ranking soldiers. They are told in no uncertain terms that if they wish to join the church, they must resign their posts or else face rejection from the catechumenate. Was it service to the empire that was in and of itself objectionable? The phrasing that anyone who has “the power of the sword” must quit strongly suggests otherwise. In fact, the sword itself was the cause of

the objection in this case. This was something fundamentally incompatible with the gospel of life that gave the church its significant moral scruples in this area.

The third and final canon from the *Apostolic Tradition* that bears scrutiny for our purposes tells us that the catechumen or believer (i.e., a full baptized member of the church) who wishes to become a soldier must be rejected, “for they have despised God.” This canon is not addressing those who are already soldiers, as was canon 9, but those within the church (or desirous of being in the church) who also wish to become soldiers in Caesar’s legions. The answer the church gave to this desire is an unambiguous “no.”

In sum, according to the *Apostolic Tradition*, soldiers who seek to become Christians may for pragmatic reasons remain in their current occupation provided they do not kill anyone. However, Christians or catechumens who seek to take up a profession of arms are forbidden from doing so, under penalty of excommunication. The tolerance of converts who were already in the army strongly indicates that it was not military service as such to which the church objected, but it was the killing that is so frequently inherent in the occupation of a soldier that was unacceptable to church discipline. Hornus sums up the evidence well when he says that chapter 16 of the *Apostolic Tradition* “proves that the Church expressed itself officially on this subject, and that it clearly condemned in the army the homicidal violence which is its fundamental characteristic.”¹² It was therefore not military service per se to which the early church objected, but the specific activities that can characterize service in the military, especially idolatry and killing.

This point is underscored by the frequency with which the early Christians employed military metaphors, known by scholars as *militia Christi* imagery, to describe the church.¹³ Ancient Christian literature is replete with militaristic imagery and metaphors, which is curious considering the church’s ambivalence toward the Roman military machine. The church is continually likened to an army, but an army unlike any the world has ever seen. In the early fourth century, the rhetorician Lactantius declared that worship of God is “a kind of heavenly military service” (*Divine Institutes*, 5.19). Even the paradigmatic pacifist Tertullian called the church “God’s militia” (*On Prayer*, 19.5). And in his *Apology*, with more than a little twist of irony and humor considering the Christian church’s stance against violence, he writes, “We come together for a meeting and a congregation, in order to besiege God with prayers, like an army in battle formation. Such violence is pleasing to God” (*Apology*, 39.2).

Military metaphors were useful for the church, because the Roman legions were famous for their discipline and order, and it was these characteristics, rather than the Roman military’s infamous brutality and conquest, that the church sought in its own ranks. In fact, one unique facet of this military imagery is the early church’s insistence that despite



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the fact that Christians were an “army” of sorts, they did not shed blood as the armies of the world did nor wield worldly weapons (cf. 2 Corinthians 10:3–5). Clement of Alexandria illustrates this point well:

But when the shrilling trumpet blows, it assembles the soldiers and proclaims war; and shall not Christ, think you, having breathed to the ends of the earth a song of peace, assemble the soldiers of peace that are his? Yes, and He did assemble, O man, by blood and by word His bloodless army, and to them He entrusted the kingdom of heaven. The trumpet of Christ is his gospel. He sounded it, and we heard. Let us gird ourselves with the armour of peace, “putting on the breastplate of righteousness,” and taking up the shield of faith and placing on our head the helmet of salvation; and let us sharpen “the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God.” Thus does the apostle marshal us in the ranks of peace (*Exhortation to the Greeks*, 11).

In this powerful passage, Clement calls Christians “soldiers of peace” and Christ’s “bloodless army,” leaving no doubt as to what sort of militia the Christians constitute. The early Christian witness against war and killing did not prevent them from employing militaristic metaphors to describe themselves, yet they were also explicit that theirs was an army that sheds no blood.

Categorical Statements against Killing

As if their moral stance against the violence of war and abortion is not enough, numerous ancient Christian writers go on record as opposing all killing, *period*, as incompatible with the life of Christian discipleship. Their words express a strict ethic that was pervasive across the

church of that era, not just isolated to one city or region. Tertullian, a Latin-speaking lawyer writing in northern Africa at the start of the third century, wrote against Christian participation in—and even attendance at—the bloody Roman “spectacles,” the gladiatorial combat and other events at which people were killed for “sport.” Tertullian does not merely condemn the violence he finds there but casts aspersions on all other violence against human beings, since God did not intend for any of his creations to be used in the slaying of human beings: “You see murder committed by iron dagger, poison, or magic incantation: but iron, poisonous herbs, demons are all equally creatures of God. Yet did not the Creator design those creatures of His for man’s destruction? Certainly not. He forbids man-slaying by one summary commandment: ‘Thou shalt not kill’” (*The Spectacles*, 2.8).

In another part of the empire, Origen, a third-century Greek-speaking theologian based in Alexandria in Egypt, wrote a powerful response to a pagan critic of the Christian faith named Celsus, in which Origen both deftly responds to Celsus’ accusations and makes the rationale of the early Christian ethic clear. Celsus had alleged that the Christian faith had its historical origins in a violent “revolt against the community”—basically charging that Christians were unpatriotic traitors and insurrectionists from their very founding. In reply, Origen observes that Celsus’ charges cannot be true, because Christians are forbidden by their Lord from killing anyone:

If a revolt had been the cause of the Christians existing as a separate group..., the lawgiver of the Christians would not have forbidden entirely the taking of human life. He taught that it was never right for his disciples to go so far against a man, even if he should be very wicked; for he did not consider it compatible with his inspired legislation to allow the taking of human life in any form at all (*Against Celsus*, 3.7).

The Christians’ divine lawgiver (i.e., Christ) makes it quite clear to his disciples that killing a human person is never an acceptable option, and this makes Celsus’ slanderous charge false on the face of it. It was both a crystal-clear expression of the church’s ethic and a supremely deft apologetic strategy.

Back in the northern part of the empire, in the first decade of the fourth century (shortly before Emperor Constantine’s conversion brought about the church’s acceptance of the just war theory), Christian rhetoric teacher Lactantius wrote what is perhaps the clearest and most categorical statement from this era against killing:

For when God forbids killing, He not only prohibits us from freebooting, which is not permitted even by public laws, but He also advises that those things also, which are regarded as lawful among men, should not be done.

So, neither will it be permitted a just man, whose service is justice herself, to enter military service, nor can he accuse anyone of a capital crime, because there is no difference whether you kill a man with a sword or a word, since the killing itself is prohibited. Therefore, in this command of God, no exception whatsoever must be made. It is always wrong to kill a man whom God has intended to be a sacrosanct creature (*Divine Institutes*, 6.20).

Lactantius’ statement is explicitly theological, grounding the prohibition against all killing in the command of God and in God’s will for the protection of and reverence for the human person. In this light, even socially approved forms of killing are forbidden, Lactantius says, because right and wrong are not determined by human society, but by the expressed will of God.

Conclusion

We have seen here only a brief sampling of the rich early Christian ethic of peace and life. Yet it has been more than enough to demonstrate that the ancient Christian church forbade the killing of human beings for any reason, under any circumstances. Christians who followed the way of Jesus simply did not kill. Rather than confining the term “pro-life” to the narrow issue of abortion as we do today, the church before Constantine consistently rejected killing—whether in the womb, in the arena, on the battlefield, or anywhere else. While the early Christians were more than willing to shed their own blood in the numerous persecutions of that era as a witness to their faith and in imitation of Christ’s passion, early church teaching forbade the killing of other people by catechumens and baptized believers, and all the evidence indicates that this teaching was widely followed. Their startling conviction to never kill another human being, coupled with their readiness to bleed and die in witness to the kingdom of God, marked the church off as radically different from their pagan neighbors and witnessed to the transformed reality that is possible through Jesus Christ.

Might this ethical and moral clarity be relevant today, in our time of polarizing culture wars? Might it have the power to bridge the gap between “conservatives” and the life issues dear to their hearts and “liberal/progressives” and the peace and justice issues dear to theirs? I submit that the way of Jesus Christ as lived by the early Christian church is decidedly a “third way” that defies these two conventional categories and has tremendous potential for healing a broken world by uniting ideological opponents to work alongside, rather than against, one another in a common cause. At this hour of history, it may be the most effective and necessary means by which we can become ambassadors of reconciliation and protect the vulnerable persons in our world today.

Rob Arner (rarner@ltsp.edu) is Adjunct Professor of Religion at Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia. This article is adapted from his book *Consistently Pro-Life: The Ethics of Bloodshed in Ancient Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010). The book is available from the publisher at <http://www.wipfandstock.com>, from Amazon.com, or directly from the author via the email address above.

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[1] As deeply inadequate as this standard liberal/conservative dichotomy is at describing the ideological and moral orientation of particular groups, it nevertheless serves as a helpful if overly-generalized categorization of two ideologically opposed groups, which Lutheran bishop Lowell Erdahl has called “Pro-life” and “Pro-peace.” See his *Pro-Life/Pro-Peace: Life-Affirming Alternatives to Abortion, War, Mercy Killing, and the Death Penalty* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986). While recognizing the fluidity of these categories, and the fact that few if any people fit consistently into “conservative” and “liberal” Christian stereotypes with any real regularity, I have found that these two overly broad generalizations actually do significantly describe two major constituencies of American Christians, both of whom are largely ignorant of, or outright deny, the connection between major “life issues.” Sociologist Edith Bogue has found in her research that among the American public there is “a division between respect-for-life issues in the domains of private morality and personal behavior (passive euthanasia, suicide, physical and social reasons for abortion) and those that involve social policies (capital punishment, military spending, welfare spending, and environmental spending).” See Bogue’s “Does the Seamless Garment Fit? American Public Opinion,” in *Consistently Opposing Killing: From Abortion to Assisted Suicide, the Death Penalty, and War*, edited by Rachel M. MacNair and Stephen Zunes (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), 81. That is, “conservative” or “pro-life” Christians are usually chiefly concerned with the life issues in the private sphere, while “liberal” or “pro-peace” Christians are mainly focused on the life issues in the social sphere.

[2] Readers who seek fuller documentation and contextualization may find it in my book, *Consistently Pro-Life: The Ethics of Bloodshed in Ancient Christianity* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2010), or in a more recent title by Ron Sider, *The Early Church on Killing: A Comprehensive Sourcebook on War, Abortion, and Capital Punishment* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), which reaches substantively the same conclusions I do about the moral convictions of the ancient church.

[3] For an excellent exploration of the character of this Pax Romana or “Roman Peace,” see the work of John Dominic Crossan and Jonathan D. Reed, *In Search of Paul: How Jesus’ Apostle Opposed Rome’s Empire with God’s Kingdom* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2004).

[4] This latter practice is well attested both historically and culturally. The Greek dramatist Sophocles’ tragedy *Oedipus Rex*, for example, is premised on the case of mistaken identity that occurs when one such infant who has been left to die of exposure is rescued and returns to the society and family that had abandoned him. Few in Sophocles’ audience would have batted an eyelash at the morality of this common cultural practice.

[5] The definitive work on abortion in antiquity is Michael Gorman’s *Abortion & the Early Church: Christian, Jewish, and Pagan Attitudes in the Greco-Roman World* (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1982). Gorman documents the reasons and prevalence of abortions in ancient Greece and Rome and highlights how the early Christian and Jewish communities resisted it because of their convictions about the value of human life and their adherence to the Sixth Commandment.

[6] The “Two Ways” section of the *Didache* is closely mirrored in the early second-century Epistle of Barnabas, where a nearly identical prohibition of abortion and infanticide is present in chapter 19.

[7] Richard Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1996), 453.

[8] If this topic is of interest, I direct the reader to my much fuller discussion in my book, as well as to Jean-Michel Hornus, *It is Not Lawful for Me to Fight: Early Christian Attitudes toward War, Violence, and the State* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1980).

[9] The best edition of the *Apostolic Tradition* in print is that of Alistair Stewart-Sykes, from the Popular Patristics series published by St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press in 2001. Stewart-Sykes holds that while the historical figure of Hippolytus may not have been directly responsible for the current text of the *Apostolic Tradition* as it stands, his school was critical in the document’s development. He contends that, contrary to some recent scholars, the *Apostolic Tradition* must be regarded as Roman in origin, a fact that heightens its significance as an influential, widely followed church order.

[10] Hornus, *It Is Not Lawful for Me to Fight*, 161.

[11] Stewart-Sykes is emphatic in his commentary on this passage that, despite the “in command,” the context makes clear that what is referred to here is not a commander, but a soldier of inferior rank: a lowly grunt or private in today’s terminology.

[12] Hornus, *It Is Not Lawful for Me To Fight*, 161.

[13] The phrase *Militia Christi*, Latin for “army of Christ,” was made famous by Adolph von Harnack’s now-classic study of the early church and war, *Militia Christi: The Christian Religion and the Military in the First Three Centuries* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981).

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TRUE LIFE

AN INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL BROOKE OF LONGBOARDING FOR PEACE



Photo provided by Michael Brooke.

Michael Brooke is a wavermaker.

His dream is peace and his heart is in the work; he lives out his dream by continually working daily for a culture of peace in the world. But he lives the message in a quite different way than you might expect: he is a longboard skateboarder whose mission for peace has been realized in what he loves to do most. Though the dominant paradigm surrounding skateboarding is that of the hoodlum and hooligan, Michael and other longboarders around the world have found that longboarding instead promotes a globally cohesive community which stimulates a culture of unity and peace. I had the honor of interviewing Michael and learning more about the Longboarding for Peace Initiative

which he began just a few short years ago to bring people together and demonstrate the common ground that we share in our humanity.

Aimee: *Tell us a little about yourself, where you're from, why you're into longboarding.*

Michael: I was born in Leeds, England in the mid 1960's. I lived in Buffalo, NY in 1970 for a year and in 1972 moved to Ontario, Canada.

I've been skateboarding for 37 years. It's the one thing that has always made me feel great. It's never let me down and it keeps me balanced! I feel that longboarding emulates the act of surfing in many ways. If you don't have the good fortune to

live near surf, longboarding is the next best thing!

The magazine I publish [called Concrete Wave] was started in 2002, prior to that I wrote a book on the history of skateboarding (also called Concrete Wave). My magazine was created to promote the pure stoke of longboarding!

Aimee: *Why did you choose to start a peace initiative with longboarding, of all things?*

Michael: I am convinced that when it comes to changing the world, you need to take a two-step approach. This means, you can't go around and shout "Hey, live in peace!!" You need to provide people with something that is tangible that takes them out of their "comfort zone" and is an intermediate step to doing good.

Skateboards? Sure... It's counter intuitive – but it works. Getting kids and young adults to interact with their sworn enemy is no easy task. But longboarding provides an opportunity for sharing the joy and freedom on four wheels. It's exhilarating, different and gets people working together – for balance! Plus, unlike team sports, there are no winners or losers – there are merely people participating for FUN! I knew this in my heart and the four demos we did in Israel and the Palestinian territories proved it. The kids had fun and the adults had fun too. From here, the seeds of peace can be sown. It's a long haul... but that's why we are using longboards!

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

Michael: For the short term I want to continue programs around the world. We've just set something up in Comox, British Columbia. We've got natives and non-natives working and skating together. It's going to lead to so much more. That's the spark that will lead to real change. [Our] long term goals [include to] continue to build programs worldwide and document them in Concrete Wave. It took 15 years or so for longboarding to become a real force within the world of skateboarding. My plan now is to take the next 30 to 40 years to make longboarding a real force within

Photo provided by Michael Brooke.



the world of peace initiatives. I have my work cut out for me!

Aimee: *What is your reach currently, and who comprises the demographic you are trying to reach?*

Michael: We have 100,000 readers. We want to reach all those who love longboard and truly understand its incredible ability to heal, transform and rebuild. We are talking about a soulful and truly spiritual journey to make this world a better place through longboarding. It makes no sense to most, but the truth is that longboarding is about balance. And once you have physical and mental balance, you achieve harmony. And with harmony, anything is possible. I know this in my heart...and so do my readers.

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

Michael: It was unreal. The Peres Center for Peace coordinated the various demos and we worked with Surfing for Peace. Without these two groups, it would still be a dream. At one point, I was in Jaffa and



remember thinking to myself “Wow...I can’t believe we’re doing this! It’s really a happening. The kids – Arabs and Jews are not fighting...they’re enjoying the vibe of longboarding together. I was so overwhelmed by the joy that was pouring out of these kids that I literally stopped for a moment and almost wept.

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

Michael: We made Israelis feel like tourists in their own country! Folks were nervous, they were worried; but I knew in my gut that things would be ok. Everyone in the group was stoked out of their minds. People were so happy to participate. The kids were begging us to come back!

Aimee: *How can the average dude/dudette help to spread the stoke of the Longboarding for Peace Initiative and help to spread peace throughout the world?*

Michael: That’s the beauty of what I have built. I don’t want money from anyone (well, maybe one benefactor) but the truth is that Longboarding for Peace is a movement, not a charity. It’s really there to get people to step up and get involved in their own initiatives. You can spend time on the sidelines or you can get in the game. So, if you want to be involved, all it takes

is for you to START something. We have stickers that help spread the message of SEARCH/SPARK/STOKE. This message means many things but when it comes to Longboarding for Peace, it means:

SEARCH for Opportunities for PEACE,
SPARK the PEACE,
STOKE the PEACE.

It can be peace between neighbors, peace between nations and peace of mind. We have no limits to the pursuit of peace, because in pursuing peace, [we are making] a better world.

Liking on facebook ain’t going to get you in the game – if you want to really change the world, you GOTTA STEP ON and STEP UP!

But we enable this!

Aimee: *Thank you, Michael for telling your story and getting the work out about your groundbreaking initiative. We are so grateful for your work and your example.*

Michael: Thanks for the opportunity to help spread the word on longboarding for peace!

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THE “MAKE IT HISTORY” CAMPAIGN

THE RESILIENT SOLDIERS FOR LIFE
AT UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO
submitted by Christian Andzel

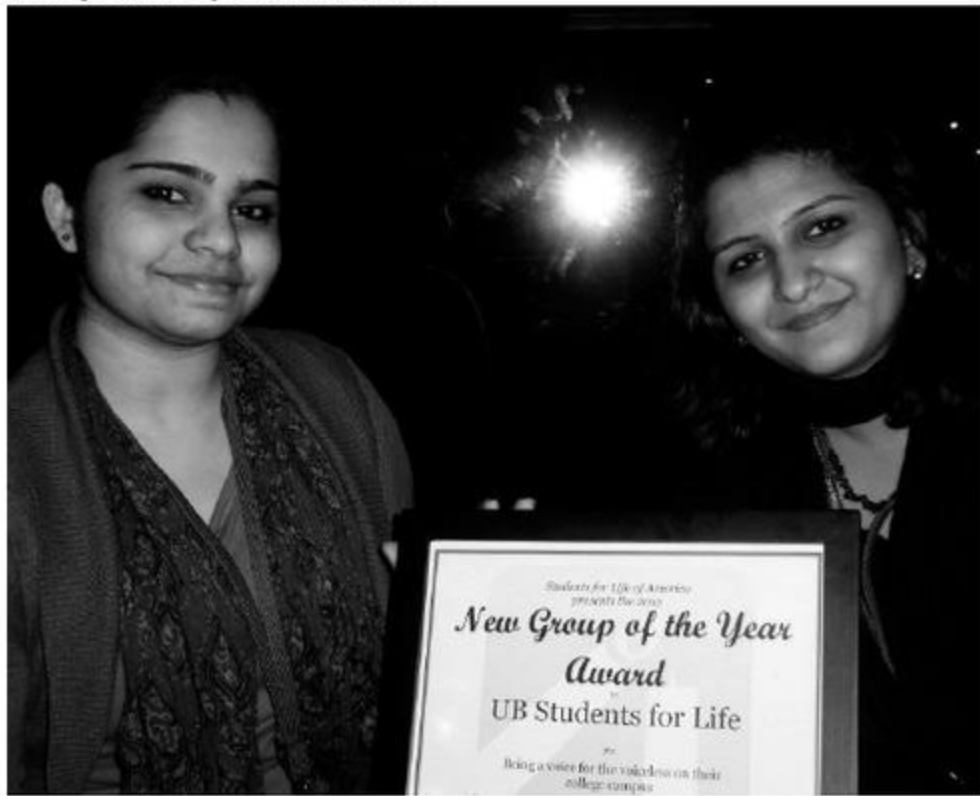


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Groundbreaking. If there was one other word besides “resilient” that describes the University at Buffalo Students for Life groundbreaking would certainly be the word. Never before on the liberal campus of the University at Buffalo has the topic of abortion been raised, debated, and argued and stirred up controversy as it has over the last two years. Although abortion is the main topic we focus on, we do, as it states in our Constitution, seek to protect every life from the moment of conception through natural death. UB Students for Life is the number-one ethically consistent human rights group on campus. We have meetings on the death penalty, torture, sex slavery, and other human rights issues. Students in the club are committed to providing a voice to the voiceless and leading on many issues, as we know that the protection of all human life is essential to our society.

We have been taunted, our presentations have been desecrated multiple times, the administration has not always been supportive of us, and the student association early on was very obstinate about us becoming a recognized club. We were even prohibited from tabling and participating with other clubs at a “human rights day event” because the host club, which advocates for the “human right” to kill preborn humans, disagreed with us on this one issue that was not even relevant on that day: all the people at the event were writing on behalf of freedom of speech and expression. Sadly and hypocritically enough, UB Students for Life’s speech and expression were suppressed. Through it all, our determination for standing up for Life never wavered. There were many times when we could have thrown up our hands and forgotten about our goal, which is to spread the Life message throughout campus, but we did no such thing.

Photo provided by Christian Andzel.



UB Students for Life has three meetings a month to talk about current issues, how to respond to the other side, the history of women leaders and to connect to the very diverse population at the University at Buffalo. We host an annual debate, advertise in school, hold an annual banquet, participate in community service, are very visible within the community, attend the March for Life and the Students for Life of America Annual Conference, and were awarded “New Group of the Year”. We were awarded this honor by Students for Life of America, and we had to compete against somewhere around 80 clubs for the award but through action and passion for the preborn we were able to come out on top.

There is something, however, that trumps all of the above. It is about community. The fact that Buffalo, New York, is so very pro-life and supports us so whole-heartedly is why we have been so strong. Without the community support, we would not be who we are. We are big believers, as a club, that a club’s outside influence only goes as far as people are willing to support and back you through the tough times, and the Western New York area has

done that and more. I am confident you will be hard pressed to find another university pro-life club that is intertwined with the surrounding pro-life community. It is a blessing beyond belief because it allows the students to get in touch with community leaders, community organizers, and people that care about the cause. There is always a home for the community at the university, where their views about Life are being advocated for and cherished. The club also has a safe haven on the outside with people who care about the future and want the next generation’s leaders to be prolife. This is the best symbiotic relationship that could ever exist between UB Students for Life and Western New York.

Lastly, Buffalo, New York was a hot bed for the abolitionist movement in fighting the oppressive system of slavery that prohibited the freedom and right to Life of an entire people during the 19th century. Buffalo was also an area of searing tension in the early 1990s between those who wanted to protect life, and those who advocated for the right to kill the preborn. Those years were called the “Spring of Life.” The preborn babies who were born during those years of the battle for freedom and Life in the ‘90’s are now the leaders here at the university fighting the same battle 20 years later and still are fighting the war for freedom for all human beings that should have ended back in 1865. That history continues to be the spirit that drives us forward to accomplishing our goals and being a light in a world that, because of the culture of death, is in the dark.

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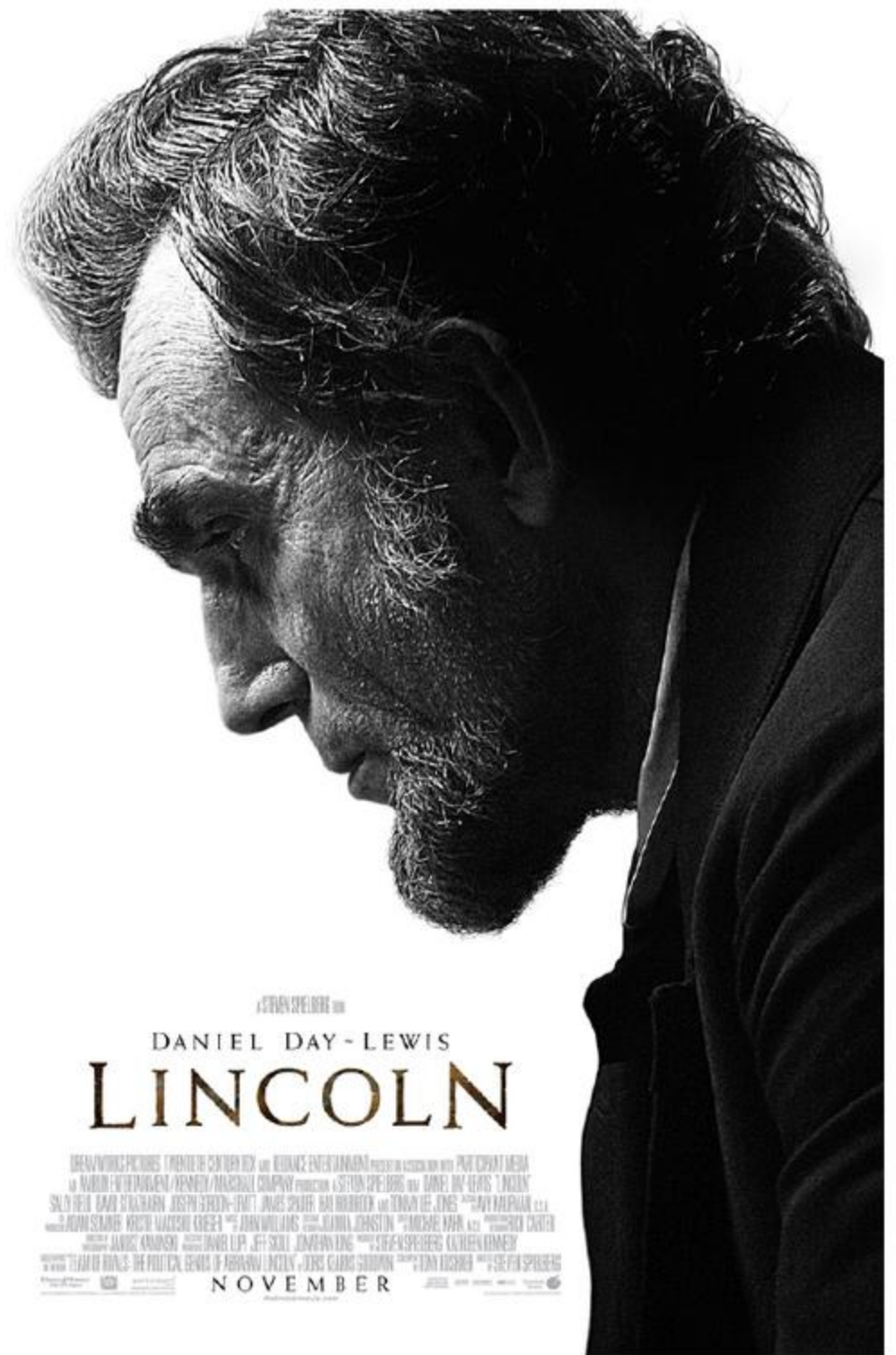
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MEDIA REVIEWS AND CONSISTENT LIFE

LINCOLN, THE PERSONALIST PRESIDENT: A MOVIE REVIEW *by Joseph Antonello*

There is so little to say about the recent *Lincoln* film that has not already been said. One could go on and on about the intimate portrait director Steven Spielberg has put together. One could go on and on about the wonderful portrayals of President Lincoln and his wife by Daniel Day-Lewis and Sally Field, respectively. One could go on and on about whether or not the film was presented in a way that is entirely historically accurate. However, I would much rather take the film on its own terms and review its philosophical underpinnings, intentional or not.

The beginning of this film has a great reminder of the lives lost in Gettysburg, and the sacrifices African-Americans had to endure in those days: making less, getting less, but doing the same amount of work. Lincoln's response was one of loving support, entertaining the simple thought of black commanders and lieutenants. He did not dismiss the idea, but rather allowed it to be supported by the soldiers themselves, ending with the reminder that, yes, these men are Americans, free men, fighting for the country that has oppressed them. Lincoln, ably portrayed by Daniel Day-Lewis, seemed to take this to heart, and



lived according to the great love he had for all men.

The force behind Day-Lewis's performance is not simply how he expressed the mannerisms of the President, or the interpretation of his voice, but the way he embodied the love of persons, constantly telling stories and anecdotes of simpler times. It is this love of persons that makes even his anger powerful; he is angry because of oppression and the terrible civil war that divides the country. In one of the more powerful and subtle parts of the film, Lincoln's son Robert - portrayed by Joseph Gordon-Levitt - pleads with his father to allow him to join the Army and expresses that his father doesn't much care for him. The President slaps him and whispers "I can't lose you," as Robert storms off. This is not just the love of a father shining forth, but the hatred of war itself shown throughout the film that is embodied.

It is this hatred of oppression and war that was driving the President and the Republican Party in those days. I must admit, knowing little of history, learning that the President was a member of the Republican Party came as a surprise and a reminder of what politics has lost. The Republican Party in these days was one for persons, which it tries to retain even up to now, but it was this being for another that made that Party so popular in the first place. It was abolitionist and anti-war, the latter of which has been lost in the present day. I've heard some say that if the film was released two weeks earlier, it may have changed the entire course of our last election. Maybe, but I think there is a lack of genuine love - or a perceived lack - from modern politicians that made Lincoln so loved in the first place. It will not take a movie, no matter how great it is, but men and women who love to change the world for the better.

The film has subtle overtones of modern debate, especially regarding gay marriage and the right-to-choose mentalities pervading politics these days. It is especially interesting to see the Democrats in the film declare that the State has no right to make equal "those whom God has made unequal," using flawed arguments from natural law to defend slavery. It is



these overtones that make the scenes in the House hard to bear in some ways, though it may advance serious discussion on the nature of persons, the nature of marriage, the role of religion in the public sphere, etc. It is the fight for equality that has surfaced in this day and age, and it is going to be hard to avoid these overtones, no matter how intentional or unintentional they may be.

All that said, the film is an excellent source of what a presidency looks like when it is based on love and not power; a presidency of care for others and not political posturing. This is a film about Personalism, dedicated to love of neighbors and self, but above all, the common good. Lincoln deserves the awards it will win, but not because it is a perfect film. No; it deserves all it will receive because it shows what America can be like when it is guided by love, not by our faith in politicians.

MY LITTLE ONE

by *Mary E. Sasso*

You captured my heart from the moment I knew
My face always glowing, suspicions they grew
Your beautiful body bonded to mine
My womb is warm and I'm feeling fine

Your presence is true, timing is perfect
I'm growing outside while you grow under the surface
Swimming about, you're sewn by God's love
A crescendo of adoration for this gift from above

It struck me down, the pit in my stomach
A Season of Sorrow in our lives did it plummet
I curled up covered, my body felt tight
Puffy eyes and pain, praying you'll be all right

My eyes like a faucet through the blur I could see
The tiniest hand—formed perfect in weeks
To touch, to taste... now nothing feels right
What a tumultuous twist in the timing of life

Why my thoughts take me here, I really can't ponder
Perhaps they're going where you want them to wander
Can't help but think of your millions of friends,
whose fates everyday forcefully put to an end

Please pray for Companies and Dr. Extortion,
Who claim to "help" us women—instead they give us
abortions
Please pray for the parents who struggle with pain
Help them love themselves and to get pregnant again

Dear Little One also, pray for those who have yet,
To make this decision that most will regret
The pain will be searing, the scars will run deep
Please pray I will help others, as they will help me

Is it you that are putting these thoughts in my head?
You're pushing me to move, to get up out of bed
Well I hear you—I gotcha—I'm moving—Let's Go!
When I'm serving others you'll be with me, I know.

YOU BREATHE

by *Camille Aubrey*

I am
Lost.
Taken.
Bound.
Broken.
Sold.
Day after day,
Until I am dead.
Touched, but so alone.
Screaming with no voice.
No one hears
No one hears me.
But somehow
A whisper echoes through my soul
Something beats in my chest
Do I still have a heart?
And You breathe, You breathe
Suddenly I can breathe...
A hand stretches out, opens
Bleeds... You bleed for me
A hand reaches out, touches me
Holds me... You hold me
Rescued
Safe
Restored
Made new
Loved.
Day after day, until I am alive.
Born again.
Freed from every chain.
Free.
Alive.
Yours.

"And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See,
I am making all things new.'" —Revelations 21:5

FORGOTTEN THIRD

by Caroline Pilgrim

A eulogy upon hearing of a friend-of-a-friend's choice to abort

I never met you, unformed face,
Never met the three of you.
Three driving in the damp drizzle across the bridges,
Across the tall-treed tundra of trepidations.
Two with great cups of suffering
Bitter cups they chose to buy,
Chose to drink, lying in accidental lies,
The laying conceived you, The Third.
Third faceless face, voiceless voice,
Uniquely ignored, delivered to deliverlessness,
And despicably denied, not accidentally.
But I'll remember you.

The two won't remember; They'll drink more cups
Of laying lies perhaps satisfactorily.
The Third's remaining (random) record consisting of:
-1 gallon: gasoline; CO2 in West Coast air, \$3.84
-1 surgery; co-pay, \$369
-1 evening, to-do lists denied
-2 month, laying deferred
-1 vial, 25 30mg vicodin tablets consumed prn

This list is easily secured in
two minds' time-vaults of forgetfulness, perhaps?
But I'll remember you.

END THE STIGMA: MENTAL HEALTH & SUICIDE PREVENTION

by anonymous



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In the United States, one in four adults will suffer from a mental health disorder in any given year.¹ With suicide as one of the leading causes of death in this country, you would think that our culture would pay attention to the fact that over 90 percent of all those individuals who die by suicide have a diagnosable mental health disorder.² But our society muffles the cries for help under masks of success and feigned smiles and by brushing off depression as merely “a phase.” I speak as an ongoing survivor of chronic severe depression, suicidal temptations, and the extreme proclivity to undervalue my own life and dignity: the stigma of mental health disorders in our culture can be crippling to anyone searching for help and hope. And it shows: less than one-third of all adults with a currently diagnosable mental health disorder are given necessary treatment.³ This could be partially due to a lack of resources and access, but I firmly believe that the stigma against mental health

disorders has created a ripe ground for some of the worst violence against self that we have seen in the last few decades.

I have suffered from anywhere from mild to severe depression since I was in my middle school years, and it’s something that I just haven’t been able to shake. Suicidal thoughts were the norm for me for a year or two, and to this day when I enter a sneaky self-hate spiral, I face the worst demons. But only in the last four years have I sought help in a more long-term fashion, and thus? experienced the stigma that comes with owning up to my own mental health difficulties. In high school, I was labeled “crazy,” “insane,” or “needy” if I sought help or openly spoke about my suffering. I did my best to hide my struggles and trudge through life.

But while at my undergrad, the challenge

became not dealing with teasing or childishly hurtful remarks but rather professional pressures and worldly expectations that every single student should be the “perfect student” and the most successful future alumnus. That culture drove both me and some of my fellow first year-architecture students to severe anxiety, depression, hypertension, insomnia, and other maladies, both physiological and psychological. As the time went by, we would joke about our workloads, brag about how little sleep we would get, shrug off our tears and our pain, and keep our mental health struggles mostly at bay with the little-consoling remark that “everyone else is doing this too.” And this classroom culture only further propelled the stigma against seeking help; students would alienate the quiet one or ignore the silent tears across the table and the sobbing screams from stairwells. No one wanted to be seen walking into the Counseling and Psychological Services office; no one would seem to recognize you in that waiting room or offer help once outside of it. All of this has become obvious as my alma mater mourns at least the second suicide of a student in the past four years. It’s obvious that something isn’t working.

One of the threads that runs throughout so many cases of depression is that of self-hate, yet stigma against mental health disorders and the search for help for such struggles can only worsen and compound the effects of depression’s hold. This holds true for me, and I know many friends who face the same fate in our society. There are a plurality of psychologists, psychiatrists, and trained counselors who can give proper care for such conditions – but not only do I see a lack of access due to financial constraints, I gravely see so many people refusing care because they do not want the word to get out about their mental state. These situations can lead to both undiagnosed cases and uncared for conditions, which in turn could lead to a much higher chance of suicide.

Of course, I’m not only talking about depression when I talk about mental health disorders, but I hope you can at least see from my own personal example what it is like for a young person today

facing the world with a mental health disorder. Mental illness knows no racial, economic, age, or locational boundaries and can strike at any time; that’s the danger and the fragility of every human situation. My call is for greater care and compassion towards all, especially those with mental illness. We would not shame a person for being unable to work due to a severe case of cancer or kidney disease: why then, would anyone in our society think it acceptable to shame or ignore such a condition as severe depression or bi-polar disorder? If we truly want to represent a culture that is pro-life, then we also have a responsibility towards our fellow human brethren to end the stigma of mental health disorders and love thoroughly in our words and actions. If we want to work for a culture that values every human life, then we will offer a helping hand and an open heart: we will not bully or stigmatize anyone, especially the many people who suffer day in and day out with an illness and a struggle that we merely cannot see.

If you or anyone you know is struggling with a mental health disorder and depression, please seek help. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Information & Referral Helpline:

1 (800) 950-NAMI (6264)

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