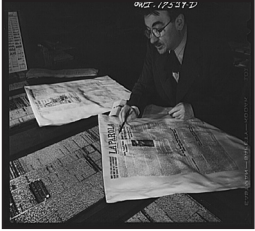


## From the Editor's Hovel *By Tony Masalonis*



Greetings, and here's wishing peace and all good things to Consistent Life's faithful (or any kind of) friends and supporters around the world! I'm happy to be back at the editor's desk this year and to bring to you good news of a world slowly awakening to the beauty and the just plain sensible-ness, if that is a word, of respecting all life.

In this issue we offer you a review by our President, Bill Samuel, of a great new book by Charles Camosy that provides comprehensive coverage of, and a fresh look at, the abortion issue. We describe just two of the many conferences and events we attended this year: Richard Stith and Rachel Peller write respectively about our own regional conference in Austin featuring Sr. Helen Prejean and Abby Johnson, and our effective participation in the conference that celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. I will take the stage briefly to talk about my CL outreach activities in my old stomping grounds of Taiwan. Carol Crossed tells you all about our push to better engage our member groups and comments on the importance of individual members and volunteers, and most especially of our member groups, to making Consistent Life a household word!

We'll also vent a little about some of the challenges we face. Lisa Stiller, perhaps our most active Board member and volunteer in 2015 (and other years), who creatively represents CL in various ways nationwide on a backpacker budget, shares the resistance we often face when reaching out to progressive groups--which is paradoxical because many of us identify as progressive. In his President's Corner column, Bill shares some remarks on

the erroneous charge -- usually brought against us by those on the political Right who focus on abortion -- that the Consistent Life Ethic dilutes individual life issues.

But such is the nature of stereotype-breaking and bridge-building, and what doesn't kill us only makes us stronger (and nothing kills us, by the way). In recent months, we've shown our peaceful strength by adding two new Board members and by launching our blog (<http://consistent-life.org/blog> : submissions always welcome!); furthermore, we have very recently welcomed an Organizer as a paid consultant, funded by a targeted donation from a private donor (THANKS!!). Our organizer, Aimee Murphy of Life Matters Journal, will initially focus on bringing to greater fruition some of the member group outreach discussed in Carol's article.

We have many more big plans for the future, including acting locally with the formation of regional chapters, acting globally by continuing to reach across oceans and language/cultural barriers, "acting up" by increasing our participation in tangible activism, and putting on our 30th Anniversary Conference and celebration in Spring 2017, most likely in Chicago but TBD! Stay tuned for more news via this newsletter, our social media outlets (see back cover page), and our weekly e-letter, Peace and Life Connections! Better still, don't just stay tuned, get in touch with us and let us know how you and/or your group can help in our work to promote love and justice for all life.

We are so glad that you, our readers and supporters,  
are along for the ride!

## President's Corner

Some say the Consistent Life Ethic (CLE) waters down a particular life issue. The harsher critics state, or at least imply, that this is deliberate. This kind of criticism is not new, but this year I've been seeing it more than I usually do.

While some may be insincere about their support of the CLE, we believe a genuine commitment to the CLE strengthens work on each issue. Our Purpose Statement states, "We serve the anti-violence community by connecting issues, building bridges, and strengthening the case against each kind of socially-approved killing by consistently opposing them all." And this synergy among issues works: People who aren't convinced on one of the issues often tell us that they respect our position because we are consistent. They are more willing to listen to why the unborn should be protected because we also oppose the death penalty and war or listen to our arguments against war because we also favor protection of the unborn. They may be much less willing to listen to those not committed to other life issues.

Some people mistakenly believe that we oppose focus on a single issue. In fact, we believe there is a need for some individuals and groups to work mainly on one particular issue. Some of our member groups focus on one issue or perhaps on two. They join Consistent Life because they see their work in the broader CLE context. We don't want to water down the work of any of these groups. We are an inclusive network that encourages and promotes the anti-violence activities of all our group and individual members, working together, each in their own way, to make a difference.

*-Bill Samuel, President*

To support Consistent Life's work, go to <http://www.consistent-life.org/join.html>

## Valentine's Day Synergy

By Richard Stith



Abby Johnson and Helen Prejean

Consistent Life sponsored a conference on February 14 in Austin, Texas, that included the coming together of two groups of activists, two great women leaders, and two worlds.

Attendees at the conference included many who had previously worked

exclusively against war, against the death penalty, or against abortion. They learned that the struggle against violence crosses seemingly hard-set boundaries of politics, religion, and friendship.

Sister Helen Prejean, an iconic leader in our struggle against the death penalty in America, met and conversed publicly with Abby Johnson, the former director of a Planned Parenthood abortion clinic who now leads more and more staff members out of those clinics. The fact that they came to know and appreciate each other bodes well for both pro-life struggles.

Not only people but also worlds opened up to one another. Those who've questioned the voluntary "choice of death" by capital-sentenced inmates (who choose death by giving up further court appeals) found they shared much with those seeking to rescue other vulnerable persons from the choice of assisted suicide. "Perpetration-induced traumatic stress" was found to occur among prison guards as well as among abortion clinic staff. The dehumanization of racism could be seen to be of a kind with the dehumanization of the unborn, and indeed a racist link between the two became clear with the targeting of blacks for abortion.

Even with regard to poverty, where abortion is often depicted as a necessary solution, linkages between the practice of abortion and the abuse and impoverishment of women emerged. Indeed, the very availability of abortion may lead to the abandonment of single mothers and the consequent feminization of poverty because of the feeling among men and in society, "If that child is her choice, then it's her problem."

On the deepest level, people who had long struggled against one form of violence learned of their own unconscious callousness toward violence in other forms. Those on the Left became more aware of the brutal violence against unborn babies, while those on the Right learned, especially from Abby, that even those who support abortion may somehow see themselves to be defending the weak (i.e., women in need). This insight would be well for pro-lifers to keep in mind as we see how participation in abortion has corrupted the hearts of Planned Parenthood's leaders. Like prison guards, racists, and those contemplating suicide, they may somewhere harbor good intentions that must be built upon if we are to lead them in the direction of fuller nonviolence.

## Head East...

By Rachel Leigh Peller

With contributions from Rachel MacNair



2015 Women's Power to Stop War

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which was founded in 1915 by Jane Addams and Carrie Chapman Catt during World War I, celebrated its 100th anniversary with an international conference in The Hague: "Women's Power to Stop War." CL Vice President Rachel MacNair and I had the opportunity to attend, funded by private donations and personal/external sources.

The conference was, mostly, incredible and inspiring. I have only recently been drawn to issues related to war. I think it's such a huge topic that it seemed too daunting to even begin seriously thinking about, especially because it's so perpetual and so removed. Furthermore, the US tries to avoid "war" and instead gets involved in "conflicts," which make tracking and understanding the problem even more difficult. But according to one estimate, (<http://www.mintpressnews.com/us-now-involved-134-wars/196846/>), the United States is currently involved in five wars and has a military presence in 134 countries.

While there are so many angles through which to understand war (religion, economy, environment, etc.), I'm particularly interested in the ways in which war is both an outcome/spectacle of systems of power and inequality and also perpetuates those systems. People who are already marginalized and oppressed by everyday structures are more deeply affected by severe incidences of violence – including children, women, the elderly, undocumented persons, those without economic security, etc. And war is so often started by either powerless people who are seeking a solution or by powerful people who are seeking further access to resources or power itself. Human rights become subordinated to these desires when violence is the tactic used to achieve them.

Dr. Shirin Ebadi, a Nobel peace laureate, stated: "We are women meeting here to end the wars started by men."

There were about a thousand of us, from 80 different countries, present at the conference. For three days we listened to speakers, participated in workshops and dialogues, sang together, ate together, danced together (seriously – there was an evening session on the "womb" dance which included a whole lot of breast thrusting and hip shaking), and laughed and cried together.

Here were some of my favorite quotes:

"The money spent on war in one year is equal to 480 years of the entire UN budget." -Madeleine Rees

"We are defiant, refusing to shut up, using our pain as fuel." -Leymah Gbowee

"War is not heroic. What is heroic is that sometimes human people in battle do things to save other people. Using guns in the name of honor, family, country, or religion – there is nothing heroic about that." -Jody Williams

"Why did we go on a sex strike? Well, here's the truth. In order for media to care about the work women do, sex has to be involved. That was our reality. So we used the sex strike to bring attention to all the other work we had already been doing for years." -Leymah Gbowee

...Continued on page 5

## Intolerance Knows No Partisan Boundaries *By Lisa Stiller*

As a CL board member who has been working to promote CL representation at conferences and festivals—and the vast majority of the time loving it!—I have sometimes been amazed and discouraged at the amount of intolerance found on both the Left and Right.



This past spring, I applied to have CL represented in the Activist Area (social justice groups) at the Clearwater Festival, held each year about 30 miles north of New York City. In May I received a phone call from one of their staff letting me know that our application had been rejected.

The reason: We are faith-based, and they do not accept faith-based organizations.

I told them we are secular, but the response was that our Web site indicated that most of our member groups were faith-based, despite the fact that our home page clearly indicates we are not tied to any faith! So, I asked why the Fellowship of Reconciliation is always present at their festival, noting that their Web site clearly points to their faith roots! Simple answer: No, they are not faith-based! Even if that were true, I also noticed at the festival this year that the Unitarians and a faith-based retreat center were given tables.

I was also told that Clearwater selects organizations that are in line with their "values."

"We are a pro-peace organization," I responded. I did not get much of a response to that. Clearly, our opposition to abortion was the issue, but my disappointment was that they could not, or would not, say this!!

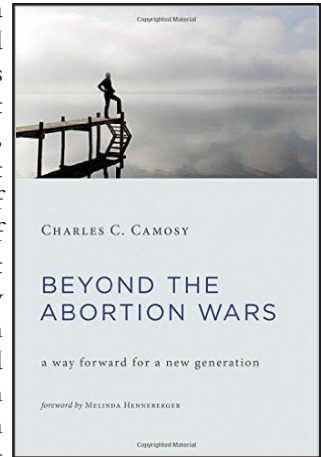
This is not the first time this has happened. Our application to have a table, workshop, and/or program ads at the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom conference in the Hague was turned down. Although the conference organizers didn't state the reason for the rejection, we point out that the organization has spoken against restrictions on abortion, calling it a sexual and reproductive right. However, two of our board members attended the meeting to advocate on behalf of the CL message (see the article by Rachel Peller elsewhere in this newsletter). We will not be deterred.

We have been turned down multiple times for workshops at other traditionally progressive events as well, but we are usually at least "allowed" a table at such events. We take advantage of these opportunities to engage attendees in conversation, get sign-ups for our newsletter, and recruit people who would like to help us organize at the local level.

Those on the Left portray themselves as the standard bearers of tolerance. Yet when it comes to abortion, tolerance often ends; we see this all the time in the mainstream Democratic Party, despite the fact noted by CL member group Democrats for Life of America—of which I am now a Board member!—that 22 million Democrats identify as pro-life. But too many on the Left don't seem to recognize their own hypocrisy. Or they turn their backs to it. ...*Continued on page 5*

## A Way Beyond the Abortion Wars? *By Bill Samuel*

Ever since *Roe v Wade*, abortion has been a major political issue in the United States, and we don't seem to be making much progress in coming to a solution that would quiet down the "abortion wars." Charles Camosy, Professor of Theological and Social Ethics at Fordham University and a Board member of CL member group Democrats for Life of America, has been deeply concerned about this for a long time. He was one of the key organizers of the 2010 Conference, Open Hearts, Open Minds and Fair Minded Words: A Conference on Life & Choice in the Abortion Debate, held at Princeton University. This conference brought together people from across the spectrum of views on abortion in an atmosphere encouraging respectful and fruitful dialogue on the issue.



*Beyond the Abortion Wars: A Way Forward for a New Generation, Charles C. Camosy, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2015.*

Camosy seeks in this book to move the dialogue forward by outlining where we are in the abortion controversy in the United States, describing key approaches to a better understanding, and presenting a proposal for moving forward. He presents an outline of The Mother and Prenatal Child Protection Act (MPCPA), which he proposes as federal legislation. In the course of the book, he also engages in considerable discussion of Catholic theology as it relates to the issues discussed in the book.

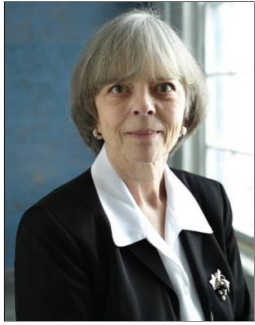
Camosy is to be thanked for his considerable effort to find a way to move the country forward on this difficult issue. His book, which includes extensive footnotes and a bibliography, shows evidence of the enormous effort he has made to gather information and perspectives helpful in moving forward. There is much in the book which will be helpful to people interested in making progress on this issue.

In looking at the present state of the abortion debate, he indicates that confusion and polarization have created the illusion of a hopeless stalemate. However, he maintains that a majority of Americans actually agree in many respects about abortion morality and law. He supports this view with the results of numerous polls which show that most Americans are not on either end of the spectrum of views on abortion and the law.

He also notes that it's only been a few decades since abortion was identified with party and ideology in the way it often is today. He writes of a "Costanza strategy" in which ideological and party positions on abortion seem to be in contrast to their general political approach. On the subject of protecting the unborn, Republicans seem to take an uncharacteristic "big government" approach in focusing on legal regulation, while Democrats seem to take an individualistic approach rather than their usual support for protecting the vulnerable.

Relying heavily on the work of feminist scholar (and CL endorser) Sidney Callahan, Camosy extensively looks at the effects of abortion on women. In looking at the main principles of "pro-choice" feminists, she (Callahan) realized they were not feminist at all but simply borrowed from men. Camosy also notes that current American policies on abortion are largely a product of men. Men such as Dr. Bernard Nathanson and Hugh Hefner were key figures in the early days of a strong push for "abortion rights." *Roe v Wade* was decided by an all-male Supreme Court, and Justice Blackmun's majority opinion particularly focused on the concerns of male physicians. Because





Sidney Callahan

women's choices are made in the context of social structures created by powerful and privileged men, making abortion an option also results in pressures on women to have abortions rather than leading to greater freedom for women. A study found that only 28% of American women having abortions said they were sure about the decision, and 64% said they were pressured by others to have the abortion.

Camosy notes some important reasons for hope that the United States can move forward on the abortion issue. For example, there are significant demographic factors in play. The rising proportion of Latinos in the population is important because this population is more inclined, regardless of their party identification, to favor protecting the lives of prenatal children. Another factor is that younger age groups are more skeptical of abortion than older age groups. He also notes that, despite the "war on women" rhetoric of "pro-choice" groups, poll after poll has shown that a larger proportion of women than men support restrictions on abortion.

#### What Is Abortion?

Camosy posits that there are "direct abortions" and "indirect abortions." In doing so, I think he is blurring important distinctions. To most people, abortion is an act taken with the deliberate intention to end a fetal life. If you Google "abortion definition" you are presented immediately with the definition of "the deliberate termination of a human pregnancy." This is what Camosy calls "direct abortions" (with an important qualifier described in the next paragraph). Medical procedures taken for other reasons which might result in an undesired side effect of the death of a prenatal child are not considered by most people (for good reason) to be abortions, and Camosy confuses things by labeling them "indirect abortions." One reason this is important is that even the most strongly pro-life people who want all abortions to be illegal will generally oppose making such medical procedures illegal. Overall, he is seeking to blur the lines between "pro-life" and "pro-choice", which has value in trying to come to common ground on ways forward, but I don't think broadening the term abortion to include cases where there is no intent to terminate a human life is an appropriate way to do that. Prenatal children die for a variety of reasons, but it seems to me that intent is critical to defining abortion.

But Camosy goes even further. He includes in "indirect abortions" cases where there is a deliberate decision to end the life of a prenatal child, but the means used is RU-486 (mifepristone) rather than surgical abortion. His argument for considering chemical abortions "indirect" is based on an analysis of the exact means by which the drug results in a death which he holds puts it in the category of "refusal to aid," a distinction based upon common categories used by professional ethicists. Again however, to most people it is not the means used which is critical, but the intent to end the life of the prenatal child.

#### A Way Forward?



RU-486 pill

Camosy proposes federal legislation with provisions he divides into four categories:

- Equal Protection of the Law for the Prenatal Child. Direct surgical abortions would be prohibited except to save the life of the mother.
- Equal Protection of the Law for Women during Pregnancy. A pregnant woman would have the "right to defend herself with deadly force against a clear and present mortal threat." Direct abortion would be permitted if

the pregnancy poses a "clear and present" threat to the mother's life, and "indirect abortion" would not be effective.

- Support of Mothers and Their Children during and after Pregnancy. He proposes to protect the civil rights and social equality of women through a number of measures, including: equal pay for equal work; increased protection for women and mothers when it comes to hiring and firing; universal access to postpartum maternal health care; dramatically increased paid pregnancy leave with complete job protection; two years of universally available prekindergarten and increased availability of affordable child care; attempts to reform both the huge cost of adoption and the stigma of adoption; and improvements in collecting child support along with prosecution of those pressuring women into having an abortion.
- Refusal to Aid for a Proportionately Serious Reason. "Indirect abortion" would be banned except to save the mother's life and in these three cases: 1) in the first eight weeks of pregnancy using RU-486; 2) after eight weeks of pregnancy where nonconsensual sex is demonstrated by a preponderance of evidence; and 3) clear and unambiguous terminal diagnosis and the likelihood that the prenatal child will die in utero (to allow mother and other family to baptize, cuddle, or otherwise bond with the child).

Key here is Camosy's framing of an important aspect of the seemingly intractable nature of the abortion debate, that on the one side of the issue the focus is on the prenatal child and on the other side the pregnant woman, often without giving much consideration to the other party. This results in people on opposite sides of the issue talking past one another. Camosy seeks to bridge this gap by incorporating the basic civil rights of both mother and child in the proposal. Whatever one might think of some of the specific elements of the proposal, it seems to me that Camosy is right on target on the need to incorporate protections for both the mother and the child.

There are certainly barriers to such a proposal, some of them intrinsic to the political and cultural environment in the country and some which may be related to how Camosy framed his proposal. I see some of these as:

- How the media/corporate/political-industrial complex, as Camosy describes it, has framed the abortion debate. I believe Camosy is correct that the people are not nearly as polarized on the issue as this complex would have us believe, but the reframing of the issue in ways that foster real solutions is going to face difficult going.
- Those on either end of the spectrum of views on abortion will need to compromise to some extent if we are to reach some societal agreement which will substantially abate the abortion wars. This is difficult, and those with a more nuanced perspective are less likely to try to lead movements related to the issue than those with the strongest views on each side.
- Camosy rests significant parts of his proposal on making or blurring distinctions in ways which will not seem to make sense to most Americans. The idea that medical procedures not intended for the purpose of ending the life of a prenatal child can nevertheless be considered abortions is questionable. And the idea that whether an abortion is surgical or chemi-

...Continued on page 6



Chamber of U.S. House of Representatives



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"We are not a silent majority but a silenced majority." -Madeleine Rees

"And I'm sure you know, the leader of ISIS was tortured in the US until he became a monster." -Yanar Mohammed

"Organizing is hard work, it's dirty work, it's daily work – we need to do it consistently and persistently. And we need to stop looking for activists on the internet. The activists are doing work in communities." -Unknown, I think either Radhika Coomaraswamy or Hakima Abbas

"We build a power of WE by being honest – and acknowledging our different positions of power." -Yifat Susskind

"Men are not the problem. Patriarchy is the problem." -Unknown

The conference was a great fuel for me in my work around gender and violence. I think there's more of a need for activists against war at this point. The media and the public already bring attention to slut shaming, rape jokes, and street harassment – and while this isn't anywhere near enough and so much more progress clearly needs to be made, I like to think that at least we're on the right track. But war doesn't seem to be getting any better, any rarer, any less violent.

There are some things about the conference we wish had been different. First and foremost, Consistent Life was turned down for a table, for taking out ads in the program, and for hosting a workshop. However, between Rachel and me, we passed out over one thousand CL-oriented leaflets. One of these leaflets quoted admired peace people, another related abortion to nuclear weapons, and a third discussed our outreach to pro-lifers on the importance of supporting peace. This was an eager leaflet-taking crowd, and we were encouraged by their receptivity to exploring consistency by reading our materials. Despite being rejected by the conference organizers, we planted seeds by our presence.

One concern that I had with the conference itself was that it did not address patriarchal and imperialist structures within our own interactions. It's one thing to critique governments and militaries, but I don't think we can call out others if we aren't practicing using a critical lens on ourselves.

Here were a few of the problems, in particular: there was very little critique of the man/woman binary (people enforced cultural expectations of women as nurturers and didn't address non-binary people); dominance of English (without discussing the history of English as a language of colonial power); and the tendency of the North to talk over people of the South (i.e., just because half the room is American should not mean that Americans take up half the time talking... there's a reason Americans take up all that space – things like travel ease, financial options, etc.). Rachel and I did our small part to overcome the linguistic imbalance by bringing and distributing our CL materials not only in English, but also in Spanish and French.

Despite the above concerns, Rachel and I are thrilled to have had the opportunity to join other humans who are working against violence on a global scale.

*A version of this article originally appeared on the blog of CL Member group Feminists for Nonviolent Choices*

...Continued from page 3, Intolerance

The past few years have surprisingly taught me that the Right has no monopoly on intolerance. Any pro-choice Lefty who tries to tell you they are open minded while cursing you out for your support for unborn lives needs a gentle challenge.

And every so-called tolerant social justice organization that does not tolerate and does not want to at least open up the floor to a presentation that presents a view that holds all life sacred may deserve to have their claim to support social justice challenged.

## Even Farther East...

By Tony Masalonis

A better and somewhat less interesting translation of this restaurant's name would be "Curry for the People!" The same words mean different things to different people, and we who believe in the CLE are always striving for a universal understanding of the value of life, even while "off duty."



Why Taiwan needs CL?

This May and June, I visited some of my old good friends on the beautiful island of Taiwan, where I lived for almost 4 years in the '00s. I get there every few years, and this time, I decided to spend a little time during my personal vacation promoting Consistent Life. In general, I spoke to my friends about the Consistent Life Ethic more freely than I had in the past, and got some comments that our philosophy made sense. In a little bit of more targeted action, I began to explore group membership in the CL network, and/or other forms of collaboration, with Buddhist humanitarian group Tzu Chi, via my friend who has been active in that organization. No formal communication between our groups has happened yet, but it's an open door and we're continuing to communicate.

The highlight of my CL outreach during this trip took place at my old parish, Holy Family Catholic Church. I reminded one of my friends who is in a leadership position there of my involvement with CL, and got invited to give a short talk after Mass at the coffee/social hour of Holy Family's English-speaking community, a highly international group of expats and a few locals. They listened with interest and snapped up every button and Consistent Card -- our picture cards (<http://consistent-life.org/cards.html>) of figures such as Dorothy Day, Helen Prejean, Gandhi, and Joseph Cardinal Bernardin -- that I had available to give away. If even one or two of those in attendance takes the message beyond the church walls into Taiwan at large, and/or back to their own country, it was more than worth it. I received positive comments afterward, and am following up with the church to ship them more literature and continue the outreach.

CL already has one essay on the Consistent Life Ethic translated into Chinese, available on our Web site (<http://consistent-life.org/chinese/>), which interestingly enough is about the great power of language and word choice to influence the readers'/hearers' views, and we hope to have more in the near future. The translator was yours truly, but with LOTS of review needed from native speakers, so if anyone reading this is fluent in ANY language other than English and would like to volunteer to help with our translation efforts, please contact us at [info@consistent-life.org](mailto:info@consistent-life.org). Indeed, even if you speak only one language, you might be able to help us with "translation" between the tongues of the Right and the Left, the young and the less-young, the Buddhists and Pagans and Catholics. Let us know how you can help us bring the message to your corner of the world.

Translation assistance is obviously needed, because during my Taiwan trip, when I told my one friend (in Chinese) that CL opposed the death penalty, he asked why we were against tattoos!



# Calling All Member Groups

By Carol Crossed

If you are like me, you may often get a puzzled response when you say you support the Consistent Life Ethic. When I say I am on the board of CL and explain what that means, I often hear things like, "Really? That's gotta be a pretty lonely group of people."

The other group that I am active with, Feminists Choosing Life of New York, is a member group of CL and thus part of a network of nearly 200 organizations. The CL network embraces nonviolence across the political spectrum. While some groups fade each year, other groups join.

Boards of activist groups change leadership. Groups change communication methods and locations. So a major push this fall is to reengage member organizations, to remind them they are part of the Consistent Life network, let them know about our projects, and explore ways to collaborate on activities and publicize each other's efforts.

It's crucial to have actively engaged member groups if we are to turn Consistent Life into a true global movement rather than a nice idea known and supported only by a select few. Even inviting groups to become part of our network can help spread the word, regardless of whether they accept our invitation. Whether or not to embrace the Consistent Ethic of Life can create healthy dialogue among Board members of groups. Deciding to become part of CL, or even the act of considering it, can take groups to a new level of participation and challenge. Connecting nonviolent issues on the Left and Right forces us to emerge from an ideological stalemate.

At the same time, individual members of CL are also out there promoting a respect for all life and doing all they can to make "Consistent Life" and the "Consistent Life Ethic" into household terms. Here is what some of our Board members and supporters do to challenge both the Left and Right to link the issues of life:

- **Lisa Stiller** travels across the United States, participating in dialogues, in tabling and workshops at peace and life conferences and community events;
- **Rachel MacNair** edits Peace and Life Connections, a weekly e-newsletter about world-wide news related to the Consistent Life Ethic and the life issues, events of member groups, and opinion pieces, often by our endorsers, that look at violence in a connected way;
- **Rachel Peller** is in charge of redesigning our web site for the '10s and beyond, to be a space for the Board, Consistent Life endorsers, and member groups to showcase publications, activities, policy analysis, and legislative initiatives that link issues in a creative way.
- **Tony Masalonis**, who is editor of this newsletter, uses creative ways to address Consistent Life Ethic activism at rallies, at prayer witnesses, and at street vigils;
- **Joan Baranow** is compiling an anthology for publication of Consistent Life Ethic articles.

A belief in the Consistent Life Ethic deepens the meaning of a person's or group's activity in whatever life issue(s) they are inspired to focus on, makes for challenging discussion, and fosters consideration of new nonviolent strategies and ways of thinking. We are looking forward, in the coming months especially, to growing our base of member groups to spread the word farther and wider.

...Continued from page 4

cal affects whether it should be legally permitted, when both procedures clearly intend to end the child's life, also seems like a non-starter to me.

- The differences which exist in America on the role of government in general, and the relative roles of different levels of government, create difficulties in accomplishing all this through Federal legislation—aside from the question of the basic merit of the ideas. So there will be some public objections on the basis that a provision should not be a matter of government mandate at all, and some on the basis that the provision should be decided on the state or local level, not the Federal level.
- It seemed to me a glaring omission that Camosy does not mention paid maternity leave, despite its importance to the mother (and family as a whole) and the fact that the US is the only industrialized country in the world which does not mandate paid maternity leave. This seems a more critical matter than the increased paid pregnancy leave he does advocate.

However, I think Camosy has provided a great service in seeking to outline such a comprehensive way forward. Few people would agree 100% with anyone's attempt to outline such a comprehensive proposal, but this does not negate the value of doing so. I hope that his effort will stimulate thinking on what is needed, and it should help in moving forward and developing some legislation which can obtain sufficient support to be enacted. So I heartily commend Camosy for drafting and publishing the proposal.

## It's Not Just a Catholic Issue

There is a problem in the structure of the book which can cause confusion. Camosy is quite explicit that the theology of a particular faith group should not be the basis of legislative action. Yet he has been accused of seeking to impose Catholic theological positions on the nation. While the charge is false and he has presented arguments for his proposals which are not dependent on any particular theological point of view, the interweaving of detailed expositions of Catholic theology in parts of the book can confuse people. He does present material and a proposal which is valid for Americans regardless of their faith perspective or lack of it, but the interjection of Catholic academic theological arguments in the book can nevertheless mislead some readers.

Camosy seemed to me to be always looking over his shoulder at the Catholic hierarchy to try to ensure that his status as a Catholic theologian is not threatened by what he writes. In a couple of footnotes, he even says that his viewpoint should be disregarded should the Church ever define its doctrine in a way which is inconsistent with it. To someone like me who is not a Catholic, that's a real turn-off and can even lead to wondering how sure he is of the views he expresses.

I wish he would have largely refrained from arguing Catholic theology in the front of the book, and instead had a Part 2 or an Appendix which detailed how his arguments and proposal were consistent with Catholic theological understandings. Such a separation would have made it easier for those who do not adhere to Catholicism to evaluate his arguments and proposal more on their merits. However, that was not his choice and we who are not Catholic need to seek to avoid being put off by the Catholic theological reflections interwoven in the book.

## Conclusion

I heartily recommend this book. There is much valuable and well documented information in it. Despite some quibbles I have with its content and structure, I think it is groundbreaking in seeking to set out a possible direction to move beyond the abortion wars. It can serve to stimulate a much-needed dialogue.

*A version of this review originally appeared on the CL blog on July 23, 2015*

## Welcome!

*Two new members have joined the CL Board this year, Thad Crouch and Tom Webb.*

Thad has a passion for connecting various life issues and is committed to the idea that the concept of “pro-life” should be globally associated with the word “war” just as much as it is with the word “abortion.” He dreams of a day when human beings die in only one of two ways--naturally or accidentally! On that distant day, the Pro-life movement could primarily be concerned with safety issues.



Most of Thad's work has been with Pax Christi and Veterans for Peace on issues of war and militarism, including assisting soldiers at Ft. Hood, Texas who apply for Conscientious Objector status, and speaking about nonviolence. He's also been active on the environment, racism, and the rights of workers and immigrants. He's served as the chair of both the Loyola University Community Action Program and the Education Committee for the Pax Christi New Orleans Council, and also as the coordinator of the Religion and Labor Network in Austin, Texas.

In his current role as a coordinator of his Catholic parish Respect Life Ministry and a member of a social ministry committee in Austin, Thad is currently focused on prayer vigils at the two abortion clinics within three miles of his home, the Texas death penalty, and climate change. He's also looking for opportunities to create more teamwork for life issues in Central Texas and plans to start a parish ministry in 2016 for veterans with moral injury, or P.I.T.S. (Perpetration Induced Traumatic Stress), based on the David's Heart Ministry of the Catholic Peace Fellowship.



Tom has been involved in and committed to faith-based, nonviolent social justice work for over 35 years. He has taught in Catholic high schools and served as lay pastoral associate in the Archdiocese of San Francisco and the Diocese of Santa Rosa. Additionally, he has been a regional and national council member of Pax Christi USA. He is currently a staff member of the Oakland Catholic Worker.

## In Memoriam



**Rose Evans, 1928-2015**  
**Co-founder and former Secretary of CL**  
**Wordsmith. Teacher. Friend.**

As we sadly reported in an issue of Peace and Life Connections (<http://consistent-life.org/weekly150424.html>), on April 13 of this year, Rose Evans peacefully concluded her long and very peaceful life on Earth. Rose had been active in CL since the founding meeting of our network, and before that with CL's predecessor, Pro-Lifers for Survival. She served many years on our Executive Committee as Secretary and, until her passing, on our Advisory board. She also edited the CLE magazine Harmony. Rose worked professionally with developmentally disabled persons, published books on animal advocacy, and worked hard as an activist promoting education and health support for women (<http://consistent-life.org/evanscard.pdf>). She remained cheerful thorough all of life's ups and downs, and was instrumental to our endurance and success.

## WE NEED YOUR HELP!

*Consistent Life depends on the generosity of members and other donors. As the holidays and end of 2015 approach, please consider making a donation to Consistent Life, either by mail using the enclosed envelope or online at <http://www.consistent-life.org/join.html>.*

*Please also consider purchasing any of Consistent Life's products, available at <http://www.consistent-life.org/products.html>.*





**Consistent Life**

P.O. Box 9295 Silver Spring, MD 20916-9295

## **PEACE AND LIFE CONNECTIONS SIGN UP TODAY!!!!**

This weekly email publication contains brief notes, including action suggestions, news of events past and present, notifications of resources available, and relevant quotations.

[www.consistent-life.org/weekly.html](http://www.consistent-life.org/weekly.html)

## **TWITTER**

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Please follow us at **"#consistentlife"**



**Consistent Life**  
is on



**Consistent Life**

Voices for Peace and Life



## **Consistent Life**

### **OUR MISSION**

We are committed to the protection of life, which is threatened in today's world by war, abortion, poverty, racism, capital punishment and euthanasia.

We believe that these issues are linked under a 'consistent ethic of life'. We challenge those working on all or some of these issues to maintain a cooperative spirit of peace, reconciliation, and respect in protecting the unprotected.

### **OUR PURPOSE**

We serve the anti-violence community by connecting issues, building bridges, and strengthening the case against each kind of socially-approved killing by consistently opposing them all.

### **DISCLAIMER**

Consistent Life is a network of groups and individuals who agree on our mission statement and join together in working for the consistent life ethic. While some member groups focus on a particular strategy, the Network's Board supports all non-violent strategies to protect the unprotected, whether education, legislation, civil disobedience, prayer, or service. Although as an organization we do not necessarily endorse all viewpoints expressed in our newsletter—we recognize that there is a diversity of views within our constituency on many topics—we appreciate all points of view on how to advance the consistent life ethic.