

Consistent Life News

An international network for peace, justice, and life

Issue # 10
August 2009

Consistent Life Board Strategizes for Future

by Bill Samuel



Front row: left to right, Rose Evans (Secretary), Mary Rider, Rachel MacNair (Vice President), Carol Crossed, Denise VanEck (meeting facilitator). Back Row: Linda Naranjo-Huebl, Ross Heckmann, Bill Samuel (President), Tony Masalonis, Richard Stith, Michael Garcher. Board member Rachel Muha was unable to be present.

Most of the time, the Board of Consistent Life, which is scattered across the country, conducts business through teleconferences and emails. However, every few years the Board gets together for a face-to-face meeting.

At the end of April, the Board gathered for a weekend at the Peach Orchard Christian Retreat Center in Silver Spring, Maryland. Only one Board member was unable to come, and two activists came whom we later added to the Board. We solicited input from individual and group supporters prior to the meeting, and we thank all those who responded. We also held a session during the weekend with representatives of some groups from the area to obtain input in an interactive format.

The Board feels we are at a time when there is more openness to our message than there has been in a long time. We

focused on developing strategies that would enable us to more effectively raise awareness about the consistent life ethic. We were facilitated by Denise VanEck of Deep Shift, a group which helps organizations transform their efforts in order to mobilize energy to move towards a better world. Deep Shift was started as an outgrowth of Consistent Life endorser Brian McLaren's book, **Everything Must Change**.

Programs will not emerge full blown from one weekend's efforts. However, we did identify several avenues to explore in developing programs that could be implemented within the next several years. We established committees to work on the various elements we identified for our future. Our facilitator summarized the results in the following flip chart page:

(Continued on Page 2)

CL Adds Board Members

Since the last Newsletter, we have added three new people to our Board. Two of them were added following their participation in our April Board retreat, and the third was identified later. We are happy to have these additions to the Board:

Tony Masalonis, from Washington, DC, has been active in a variety of groups concerned with life and social justice issues, including Habitat for Humanity, Northwest Pregnancy Center and Pax Christi. He writes



Tony Masalonis

poetry and spiritual reflections, is a practicing Roman Catholic, and is enrolled in the Education for Parish Service certificate program. He has been helping Consistent Life for some time in Catholic outreach and translation of material into Chinese. Tony participated in our April Board retreat, and is now serving as Chair of our Educational Resources Committee.

Mike Garcher, from Valparaiso, IN, is a peace and social justice activist. A nurse by profession, he also hosts the Liberal Bias Hour on WVLP, a community radio station. He has been active for years in promoting

(Continued on Page 2)

New Members

(Continued from Page 1)

Consistent Life at conferences and other opportunities. Mike participated in our April Board retreat, and is now serving as Chair of our Outreach and Membership Committee.



Mike Garcher

Rob Arner, from Holland, PA, is a doctoral student in Theology at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, majoring in Contemporary Theology (Christian Ethics). He has a Master of Arts in Religion from Eastern Mennonite Seminary, where he did his thesis on *Proclaiming the Gospel of Peace: Living Faithfully According to the Original Vision* (to be published by Cascadia Publishing House). He is a Mennonite. He recently completed a draft of **Consistently Pro-Life: The Ethics of Bloodshed in Ancient Christianity**, to be published by Wipf and Stock in 2010.



Rob Arner

Also, Board member Scott Schaeffer-Duffy resigned due to the pressure of other commitments. However, he agreed to serve on our Advisory Board and to continue doing the layout for the newsletter. ∞

Issue 10

August 2009

Consistent Life

P.O. Box 9295

Silver Spring, MD 20916-9295

(866) 444-7425 (Toll free) Fax (413) 485-2881

info@consistent-life.org <http://www.consistent-life.org/>

CafePress store: <http://www.cafepress.com/lifecounts>

Action Alerts: We send out occasional e-mail Action Alerts with things you can do for this cause. Subscribe to them by sending an e-mail to action-request@consistent-life.org with "subscribe" in the subject line.

Board Strategizes for the Future

(Continued from Page 1)



Some of the areas we are exploring are:

- Improving our Web site and use of social networks;
- Creating videos, including ones for distribution through Youtube;
- Youth and campus outreach;
- Energizing our speakers' program, identifying, training, and coordinating tours of dynamic speakers who could effectively convey our message;
- Improve networking with member groups and other potential allies;
- Developing a variety of new and improved resources — brochures, packets, curricula, PowerPoint presentations, etc.;

- Developing improved structures — staffing, financing, etc. — to support a larger program effort.

We expect to implement our plans using some combination of volunteer efforts, consultants, staff, affiliated groups, and firm or non-profits with which we could contact.

We can use a lot of help in moving forward on these plans. Of course, we need financial support to have the resources to implement them. We also need your ideas. And there are a variety of skills and experience we need to add to the mix of what Board members have. Possibilities for ways you can bring your skills and experience to the table include providing expert advice, doing some of the tasks, and serving on a committee working in your area of skill or experience. Please contact Bill Samuel at president@consistent-life.org to offer your assistance. Some areas in which we are looking for skills and experience are:

- Video production,
- Graphic design,
- Web site design,
- Campus organizing,
- Grant writing and identification of appropriate grant sources,
- Non-profit fund-raising, and
- Bookkeeping and financial management. ∞

The Effectiveness of Consistent Life

by Rachel MacNair

There are pro-life people who have argued that the consistent life ethic, by including a bunch of issues, waters down the importance of the abortion and euthanasia issues and therefore doesn't help the cause. There are peace movement people who make the same argument in reverse: the ethic is to detract attention from important peace issues. We've always made the argument that linking issues of violence actually strengthens the case against each component.

Our research arm, the Institute for Integrated Social Analysis, did an on-line survey called the Heated Debates Survey. It offered five arguments that connected issues of abortion, the death penalty, and war; three of the arguments favored one or all three, but two opposed all three. In addition to the consistent life ethic, the idea



that killing is traumatic to those who do it was the other argument opposing all three. After having declared their own position on the issues, people were asked to rate the arguments as to whether they were more likely to favor or oppose the practice based on that argument.

For those who were in favor of any of the practices, the consistent life ethic and

the killing-as-trauma argument tended to move people toward opposition — as long as they did oppose one issue of violence already! Those who favored all issues of violence were less impressed. The study provides empirical support for our contention that the consistent life ethic strengthens the case against each of its component parts, by being a persuasive opposition argument to those who initially favor the practices.

This study was presented at the University Faculty for Life conference, and is scheduled to be presented at the Peace & Justice Studies Association conference — both using the same PowerPoint. If anyone would like a copy of that PowerPoint or of the more academic paper on the study, please send a request to admin@rachelmacnair.com. ∞

Pro-life, Pro-Peace Booth Well Received at Mennonite Church USA Convention

by Vicki Sairs

Mennonites who attended the Mennonite Church USA convention in Columbus, Ohio, this summer got a glimpse of Consistent Life's "Prolifers for Peace, Peacemakers for Life" banner.

That's because CL graciously let my friend, Sherry Thackrey, and I use their display materials to help people think about connections that might resonate with a group known for its focus on peacemaking.

MCUSA is pro-life on paper and at the grass-roots level, but there's been reluctance at the agency and leadership level to address this issue for various reasons: concern for women, ambivalence about the humanity of the unborn, and alienation from the pro-life movement, which seems to tolerate violence in other areas. Sherry and I tried to address those concerns with a gentle and consistent voice for life in all areas. We were thrilled with the response.

Thousands of youth attended the convention, and many of them made their way

to our booth. We gave them salt water taffy and soft, life-sized models of a 12-week-old unborn child, along with cards that listed fetal development milestones. All week long small groups of teenagers would show up, asking for "those little babies."

Many people saw the connection between life and peace as "a natural fit" for Mennonites and thanked us for being there. I especially appreciated the times when people who disagreed felt free to talk with us and discuss their concerns. One young social worker worked with abused children and wondered if perhaps abortion wouldn't have been a better choice for children who suffer so much. We talked about how the abuse rate had actually gone up since abortion was legalized, and how parents who abuse generally don't have abortions.

Another young woman said, "I'm sure about everything else, but I just don't know about abortion." We agreed with her

that it's a tough issue and showed her some of our materials from Feminists for Life and our resource handout.

People were open about their own experiences. One older man got tears in his eyes as he recalled a conversation years ago with a young Mennonite woman who told him she'd had an abortion. He was still distressed because he didn't know how to help her at the time.

Another man talked about an abortion in his marriage that affected his relationship with his wife. He said going through a post-abortion healing program was a huge help.

A nurse in obstetrics said she sees women who've had abortions have their first baby. "All of a sudden it clicks," she said, "and they're upset." She's able to talk with them and comfort them.

Two seminars at the convention addressed issues surrounding unplanned pregnancy and abortion. Both were crowded — a good sign for the future. ∞

Democrats for Life Event

by Tony Masalonis

Representatives of Consistent Life participated in an important event held by Democrats for Life of America (DFLA), a CL member group. DFLA held their 8th annual Hall of Fame Dinner and conference at the charming Phoenix Park Hotel and at the Democratic National Committee, both on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC, July 13 and 14. Attendees included many representatives of state chapters, as well as a number of local members and supporters, Congresspersons, and staff.

July 13 evening sessions dealt with community action and outreach topics. On July 14, sessions were held regarding building a state chapter, as well as additional fundraising and outreach topics. In the afternoon, attendees visited Congressional offices to lobby for the Pregnant Women Support Act, followed by an evening reception during which DFLA Executive director Kristen Day acknowledged CL support for DFLA. In addition, all attendees received a CL handout in their binder and on a CD.

CL Board member Tony Masalonis attended parts of the event in person, as did CL President Bill Samuel by webinar. The number of attendees expressing deep support for the Consistent Life Ethic was impressive, though of course not surprising. One representative from a state chapter said that using a CL approach in their outreach materials and efforts had been indispensable in growing the chapter; it was a philosophy that really brought people in. Tony also had productive discussions with attendees who are interested in helping with CL's ongoing effort to produce literature promoting the CLE for people of specific faith traditions, and of no specific faith.

CL thanks DFLA for their support over the years and the opportunity to participate in the Dinner and Conference. ∞

Gushee, Roth Endorse Consistent Life

David P. Gushee recently endorsed the Mission Statement of Consistent Life. Dr. Gushee is the Distinguished University Professor of Christian Ethics at McAfee School of Theology at Mercer University. He is currently working on a book entitled *The Sanctity of Life: A Christian Exploration* (Eerdmans, 2010).

Dr. Gushee teaches at McAfee and throughout Mercer University in his specialty, Christian Ethics. Beyond his work at Mercer, he is the president of Evangelicals for Human Rights, a columnist for Associated Baptist Press, and a contributing editor for *Christianity Today*. Dr. Gushee also currently serves as co-chair of the Biblical/Contextual Ethics Group of the American Academy of Religion and on the Christian Ethics Commission of the Baptist World Alliance.

He has published nine books, over 75 scholarly essays, book chapters, articles, and reviews, and hundreds of magazine articles and opinion pieces. His books include the award-winning *Kingdom Ethics*,

as well as *Righteous Gentiles of the Holocaust* and *Only Human*.

Dr. Gushee was the principal drafter of both the Evangelical Climate Initiative (2006) and the Evangelical Declaration Against Torture (2007). He is the Kingdom Ethics columnist for *Prism*, the magazine of Evangelicals for Social Action, a Consistent Life member group.

John D. Roth, a leading Mennonite historian, also recently endorsed the Mission Statement of Consistent Life. Roth is Professor of History at Goshen College. He has a Ph.D. in Early Modern European History from the University of Chicago.

Roth serves as Editor of the Mennonite Quarterly Review. He is also President of the Mennonite Historical Society and Director of the Mennonite Historical Library.

Roth has authored or edited a number of books, most related to Mennonite history or life. One of these books is *Choosing Against War: A Christian View* (Good Books, 2002). He is also a prolific writer of articles in a variety of magazines and periodicals. ∞

Mobilization to End Poverty

Consistent Life member group *Sojourners* magazine held a Mobilization to End Poverty in Washington, DC in April, a huge conference with extensive lobbying of Congress. We put the following text as an ad in the program:

Imagine a world where the dignity of each human life is respected, where no one suffers in misery due to the greed of others, where no mother feels she has to end the life of her unborn child because of her circumstances, where no young person feels they must join the military fighting other young people like themselves because he or she sees no economic alternative, where no one is put to death due to being unable to afford good legal representation. Imagine a world where people's needs are met, there is peace, and everyone rejoices at the miracle of new life.

Ross Heckman and Rachel MacNair represented CL at the Mobilization. On CL's web page we put up a more extensive commentary on the connection between abortion and poverty. For a write-up explaining this more complicated case in detail, see www.consistent-life.org/poverty/abortion.pdf.

Progressive Prolifers at the *Progressive Magazine* 100th Anniversary Celebration

by Mary Krane Derr

We weren't gate crashers. We were there as part of the festivities, sometimes recognized, sometimes not, sometimes welcome, sometimes, not.

For starters, take two of the speakers on the official program, Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio) and political scientist Stephen Zunes. Most of the event wasn't about abortion, and these two activists were both present to speak on issues other than abortion. But their respective stances on that particular subject are a matter of public knowledge. Anyone with Internet access can look up Marcy Kaptur's legislative record, including her good record on labor, LGBT rights, family planning, and maternal/child health and welfare, among other recognizable-to-all progressive concerns. Stephen co-edited the recent anthology *Consistently Opposing Killing: From Abortion to Assisted Suicide, the Death Penalty, and War*.

Rachel MacNair and I are friends who go way back and have long histories of our own with Consistent Life. We team-staffed a literature table for CL in the exhibit hall at the *Progressive Magazine* celebration. Our table featured a large, eye-catching banner: "Prolifers for Peace, Peaceworkers for Life."

And who was the very first person to approach us, when we were still setting up the table? A young man who told us he was pro-life, but did not feel free to disclose this opinion in progressive circles. Throughout the day, we met a number of pro-every life women and men who also gladly outed themselves to us.

Quite a few of the people who stopped by were pro-choicers who said lovely, hospitable things like, "I may not agree with you about everything, but I'm glad you're here" and "I like your kind of prolife." We had good, respectful dialogues about relieving the root causes of abortion as well as better understanding our areas of disagreement — including not one but two long conversations with an abortion clinic escort.

Rachel and I enjoyed the overall positive climate of these exchanges. We didn't know quite what to expect at the *Progressive Magazine* event. But not a single person came up to our table and issued one of those dreaded ad hominem rants, or scolded us along the



Stephen Zunes, Rachel MacNair, and Mary Krane Derr

lines of "What the hell are *YOU PEOPLE* doing here?" Which has happened in the past, far more than once. That's progress among progressives.

Now, a few folks did raise eyebrows at our banner or shake their heads and walk briskly away. And once, when I was by myself at the table, I did distinctly see and hear a pair of conference-goers stop dead in their tracks, proclaim "Yikes!" and turn about-face. As if there were not a quite involved and sentient being (me!) taking all this in just inches away. And a sentient being at the ready to make eye contact and smile sincerely at them in passing, at the very least, and if they allowed, to ask them, quite seriously, what specifically was behind that "Yikes!" I did want to know, I did want to listen, but if people don't give you an opening, then it's not yours to grab after. But any of these responses sure beat the bad old unreality-based ad hominem rant.

However, something quite troubling did happen to Rachel, after I had taken my leave

of the conference. Rachel attended a bigwig panel discussion on the future of the progressive movement. During the question/comment period, she pointed out the existence of progressive pro-lifers. She recommended that the progressive move-

ment as a whole work with us to reach people who otherwise might not give progressive values and politics any serious hearing. Now, Rachel says she wasn't going on any longer, and probably was going on shorter, than others who lined up behind the questioners' mikes. I did attend previous panel discussions, and there sure were a lot of talkative folks with strong opinions who leapt up behind those mikes the instant they were switched on. But the bigwigs on the panel grumbled that they could see where Rachel was going with this (they could? How did they know before she went there?). There amidst the champions of free speech, she was summarily cut off. Then the panel bigwigs unleashed a number of statements Rachel had no chance to publicly respond to. And no one challenged the censorship dynamic here. Indeed, there was apparently a lot of applause for it.

On the other hand, some women in the audience approached Rachel afterwards and shared their own reproductive challenges. They quickly grasped that hers was not the stereotype they expected, and they all ended up hugging each other. But why were complex, very human, small-scale interactions like these, the kinds of exchanges we had both experienced elsewhere in the conference, not reflected in the overt, bigwig-marshalled, publicly unchallenged group dynamics that cut off Rachel's mike?

Like Rachel would tell you if she had a chance — that question matters to the future of the progressive movement, to the hundred more years we wish the dear old *Progressive* magazine. ∞

Pro-Peace/Pro-Life Harmony Pilot Project

Do you know of groups situated within the same campus, denomination, or community that define themselves as either pro-peace or pro-life, but might be willing to dialog with each other? Consistent Life's emphasis on how the issues are connected and on cooperation of violence-opposing groups gives us a prime opportunity to change the destructive right/left dynamics of these debates. We have a PowerPoint presentation designed for joint meetings of such groups to encourage discussion. Before launching this as a program, complete with a manual with good advice on what experience has shown, we need to have experience to know what experience has shown. Anyone who might like to organize a session with appropriate local peace & life groups to help us develop this program, please contact project coordinator Rachel MacNair at drmacnair@hotmail.com or (816) 753-2057. ∞



Rachel MacNair presents the consistent-life case that killing is traumatic to those doing the killing in socially-approved circumstances — combat, executions, abortions, etc. — at the Inter-American Congress of Psychology held in Guatemala in June, 2009.

CL at Pax Christi Conference

Consistent Life sponsored a table at the Pax Christi conference in Chicago, July 17-19, 2009. Board members Richard Stith and Mike Garcher had the opportunity to speak with many attendees and to distribute "No Violence. Period." buttons, which proved quite popular and were worn by attendees throughout the conference. They also distributed Consistent Life brochures and sold several of our books (**Achieving Peace in the Abortion War**, **Pro-life Feminism**, **Perpetration-Induced Traumatic Stress**, and **Psychology of Peace**). Visitors to the table strongly supported CL's mission statement, and most were familiar with the Seamless Garment philosophy. Fewer knew about Consistent Life as an organization, and Richard and Mike were pleased to fill them in. ∞

Consistent Life Needs a New Treasurer

Consistent Life is currently without a treasurer.

The Treasurer of Consistent Life is responsible for the maintenance of all financial records of the organization, the recording of contributions, the disbursement of funds, maintenance of Consistent Life banking accounts, and filing of financial-related forms. As an officer of Consistent Life, the Treasurer also serves on the Executive Committee. Consistent Life urgently appeals to any supporters with the skills to perform this work who can make time available for it to offer their services. For more information and/or to offer your services, contact President Bill Samuel at president@consistent-life.org or (301) 943-6406. Also, let us know if you are aware of someone else who might be invited to consider the position.

The actual day-to-day performance

of the tasks for which the Treasurer is responsible may be handled in various ways. These may change as needs change.

We are currently in the process of developing plans for new and revised activities, which may result in changes in how we accomplish our mission. Financial tasks may be accomplished directly by the Treasurer and/or other volunteers, by paid staff, by individual consultants, and/or by organizations (either for-profit businesses or non-profits) with which we contract to perform them. The Treasurer will participate in the determination of the best means of accomplishing these tasks.

Consistent Life is a volunteer organization. Officers and Board members serve without monetary compensation. Out-of-pocket expenses are reimbursed by the organization. ∞

Consistent Life Member News

Nobel Laureate Jailed

Mairead Maguire, the co-winner of the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize from Belfast, Northern Ireland, was seized on the open sea by the Israeli Navy, jailed inside Israel, and then deported in June along with an international team which sailed from Cyprus with humanitarian aid, toys, and construction materials for civilian use in Gaza. Maguire, a CL endorser, said, "The sea passage into Gaza has been closed for over forty years by the Israeli government.... The tragedy is that the American government, the UN, and Europe remain silent in the face of abuse of Palestinian human rights."

No to Abortion in Health Plan

Jim Wallis, an endorser of the Consistent Life Mission Statement and the founder

and leader of a Consistent Life member organization, Sojourners, said in a February 5, 2009 interview with CBN's Jim Brody, "Making abortion provisions part of healthcare reform will kill healthcare reform... There are a number of people who believe this is an issue of deep moral conviction and conscience and there are firewalls that if they are breached will really destroy common ground." Brody told his listeners, "Reverend Wallis is considered progressive on many social issues including poverty reform which has been a driving force in his life. But on the abortion issue he is pro-life."

Consistent Life Vigil Begins

Beginning in June 2009, Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker community in Worcester, Massachusetts, a Consistent Life member organization, began a monthly vigil against war at a military recruiting station followed immediately by another vigil at a Planned Parenthood office. One of their banners displays

women and men interlocking their joined hands under the heading "Unite Against Violence."

Democrats for Life of America

DFLA has announced that their Pregnant Women Support Act has been introduced into both houses of Congress. Congressman Lincoln Davis (D-TN) introduced the Pregnant Women Support Act in the House and Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) introduced the legislation in the Senate.

DFLA said: "We truly appreciate the Congressman's and the Senator's leadership and hard work that led to this momentous occasion. We now have a comprehensive measure that will support pregnant women who don't want to have abortions by ensuring health care, child care, support to stay in school, and other important support for pregnant women and their families. We commend Congressman Davis and Senator Casey for their commitment to protecting

(Continued on Page 8)

SIGN US UP! We want to become members of Consistent Life of to renew our membership.

Our contribution is enclosed.

☐ Organizational Member

☐ Individual Member

Name: _____

Organization and Contact Person, or Individual Member

Address: _____

Phone Number: () _____ - _____ FAX: () _____ - _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Organizational Member Dues

\$50 Groups under 100 members

\$100 Groups 100-500 members

\$200 Groups over 500 members

\$____ For Communities living in voluntary poverty

Individual Member Dues

\$25 Individual members

\$40 Household membership

\$75 Supporter

\$15 Low Income membership

To donate in other than American currency, please go to <http://www.ammado.com/nonprofit/consistent-life>

Send to: **Consistent Life**, P.O. Box 9295, Silver Spring, MD 20916-9295, Telephone: (866) 444-7245, FAX (413) 485-2881, <http://www.consistent-life.org/>, E-Mail: info@consistent-life.org

Member News

(Continued from page 7)

life and their dedication to pregnant women and their unborn children.

DFLA asks everyone to contact her or his representatives to ask them to co-sponsor this important legislation!"

March for Life

CL Board member Richard Stith and then-future Board member Tony Masalonis attended the annual March for Life in Washington, DC, on January 22, 2009, the 36th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. As always, the event was very well attended and fortunately, the weather was a bit better than the bone-chilling cold and dampness of the 2008 March for Life. Tony created and walked with a Pro-Life/Pro-Peace sign for the March, complete with Consistent Life's website URL, and met fellow marchers from Philadelphia and Ohio who supported the Consistent Life Ethic (one of who believed in it but didn't know it by that name, and was promptly provided

our URL for further reading!)

Friends Witness

Friends Witness for a Prolife Peace Testimony, a Quaker group, has sponsored two more ads in *Friends Journal* this year. One advertised books (**Consistently Opposing Killing, ProLife Feminism, and Achieving Peace in the Abortion War**), and the other challenged the American Friends Service Committee to re-think its abortion position.

A Book to Treasure

Fr. Joseph Nangle, OFM has done enormous service to the consistent ethic movement. He was President of Consistent Life (then known as The Seamless Garment Network) for some years after its founding and was most eloquent and effective speaker and advocate for the movement. Joe is a powerful voice for a spirituality of justice and has written some great books on the intersection of justice and spirituality. He served 15 years in Latin America, where he was part of the awakening of the church to the suffering of the poor.

His latest book, **Engaged Spirituality, Faith Life in the Heart of the Empire**, offers his deepest vision of a spirituality open and aware to the others — God and all our brothers and sisters "at every stage, from before birth through natural death." This short review cannot convey the depth and riches of this book and the many issues it touches. It is a book to treasure.

Killing of Dr. Tiller

Consistent Life, an international network of 200 groups and many individuals for peace, justice, and life, condemns the assassination of Dr. George R. Tiller. Responding to violence with violence only furthers the cycle of violence, which harms all human society. We urge opposition to all forms of violence through creative nonviolent means. Killing people does not demonstrate that killing people is wrong. Executions, whether by governments or private parties, represent moral failures. We hope that people reflecting on the tragedy in Wichita on May 31 will reject the idea that violence is an acceptable "solution" to problems. °°