

Consistent Life News

An international network for peace, justice, and life



Issue # 9
November 2008

Mary Rider Jailed Joyfully

by Patrick O'Neill

Mary Rider is a co-founder, Board member, and former Executive Director of Consistent Life.

My wife, Mary Rider, a mother of eight children, received a 15-day jail sentence for praying during a North Carolina execution.

Mary, co-founder of the Father Charlie Mulholland Catholic Worker House in Garner, N.C., was sentenced to 15 days in the Wake County Jail on August 7, stemming from her August 18, 2006 arrest for trespass during a protest of the execution of Sammy Flippen at Raleigh's Central Prison.

Mary and three others attempted to symbolically enter the prison to stop the execution. At a police line, the four knelt in the driveway where the witnesses enter the prison. Mary, 48, who has six children age 14 or less, was sentenced to jail after telling Wake County Superior Court Judge Michael Morgan that her conscience would not allow her to pay a \$100 fine and \$130 court costs into a system that oppressed the poor and carried out executions in her name. A social worker, Mary told the judge she would agree to perform community service in lieu of the fine and court costs.

The judge, a firm and cold man, who frequently undercut Mary's attempts to defend herself based on Catholic Moral Teaching and the First Amendment, seemed to take personally Mary's conviction that the "judicial system" is racist and

oppressive.

"Ms. Rider has stated that the judicial system is one too flawed and too imperfect," Morgan said. "I am a member of this system."

By agreeing to give Mary community service, he would be in a sense validating her criticisms of the system, Morgan said.

"It's easy to open your wallet, pay that money, and walk out of court,"



*"Bearing wrongs patiently"
by Ade Bethune*

Mary's pro bono lawyer, Tim Vanderweert, told the judge. "It's much more difficult to perform community service."

In the course of the three-day jury
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Convincing Scientists to Abide by Rules

by Rachel MacNair, Ph.D.

Rachel MacNair is the Director of the Institute for Integrated Social Analysis, a research arm of Consistent Life. The following is her commentary on The Report of The American Psychological Association's Task Force on Mental Health and Abortion. Questions for Dr. MacNair can be addressed to drmacnair@hotmail.com.

We have known for a long time that the word "choice" in the abortion debate doesn't have its common English meaning, having become a euphemism for abortion rather than a matter of actually having options. Now we find that "science" means what the American Psychological Association (APA) says it means, rather than what those of us trained in a university might have been taught.

We start with the appointment of the Task Force. I'm an APA member, and on the Board of Division 48, peace psychology, though not on the APA Council which makes the decisions. Though I keep my ears attuned, the task force membership was appointed and explicitly not open to any more nominations by the time I first heard about it. Actually, there never had been any call for nominations. Membership had been decided by Division 35, psychology
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Jailed Joyfully

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trial, Morgan did not allow an expert witness — renowned Constitutional law professor Dan Pollitt — to testify to the jury as to why Mary's actions in trying to stop Sammy's execution were legally valid under the Constitution. Doing so "would invade the providence of the jury," Morgan said.

He also limited the testimony of Duke Divinity School professor of Christian ethics Stanley Hauerwas, who tried to make the case that Mary's actions in defense of life were justified by Papal decree and Church teaching.

"I am a Christian theologian, and the subject of theology is God," Hauerwas told the court. "Catholic moral teaching is the longest tradition of Church history. Since Christians are a people who worship a person who died at the hands of the state, that being capital punishment, Christianity's relationship to the state is at the heart of what Catholic ethics is about.... Christians are not allowed to give their ultimate loyalties to the state."

In her testimony, Mary shared a story about a time she was called to jury duty at age 18 in Eastern North Carolina. Although she was not selected to sit for the capital murder trial, Mary, who is also a mitigation specialist, said she was surprised to learn that only jurors who supported the death penalty could be seated.

"The only people in the jury are those who believe firmly in the death penalty," Mary said. "It seems like you're stacking the cards against the defendant already."

The judge instructed the jury to only consider the question of whether Mary trespassed or not. Although the jurors were out more than an hour, those initially opposed to conviction were won over. One juror told me after the verdict that, since they didn't get

to hear Professor Pollitt, they were unable to acquit her.

In her sentencing, Mary read the

"Spending time in jail for me would be an honor,"

story from Acts when Peter said he "must obey God and not men."

"I am choosing to suffer for my faith and fidelity to Jesus," Mary told the judge. "Spending time in jail for me would be an honor. Rather than a deterrent, it would be a privilege to encourage others to do the same."

The judge said he had no choice but to sentence Mary to 15 days. The jailers placed handcuffs on Mary as her children openly sobbed in the front row of the gallery.

"You're lucky to have a wife like that, and you're lucky to have a mother like that," Professor Pollitt told me and my daughter, Veronica.

Indeed we are. ∞

The Death Penalty & North Carolina

Since 1984, 43 people have been executed in North Carolina with 175 remaining on death row, including 4 women. A defendant can get death for a felony in which they were not responsible for the murder. Six people on death row have been released after being found innocent. Five have been granted clemency by the Governor. North Carolina has the 17th highest murder rate in the U.S. (6.1 per 100,000). New Hampshire has the lowest murder rate, (1 per 100,000), and, even though it legalized the death penalty in 1991, has no one on death row and has not executed anyone since 1939. ∞

Nonviolent Choice

Nonviolent Choice, (www.nonviolentchoice.info), a Consistent Life member organization, is a global directory of Internet resources that address the root causes of abortion at every level from the individual to the global. It covers everything from male responsibility, sexual and reproductive health education, and pregnancy prevention methods to post-abortion healing and everything



necessary and life-affirming to support crisis pregnancy and beyond. It is meant to serve people of all faiths and none. Nonviolent Choice grows out of a promise to expand online the resource appendix included in the print book *ProLife Feminism Yesterday and Today, Second Expanded Edition*, edited by Mary Krane Derr, Rachel MacNair, and Linda Naranjo-Huebl (Feminism and Nonviolence Studies Association, 2005).

We welcome your website and topic suggestions for the directory as well as your participation in our blog (nonviolentchoice.blogspot.com), which features regularly updated action alerts as well as interviews and posts from visiting bloggers. Thank you for visiting and taking part! ∞

Convincing Scientists

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of women, and the Council apparently rubber-stamped the selection. I knew the fix was in at that point and subsequent events have confirmed this, but I gamely kept trying to talk about balance and science.

Having documented that three members of the Task Force were outspoken defenders of abortion and the remaining three have no public statements of positions, I immediately brought up the point of lack of voice of a scientific point of view. They decided I had the credentials to do so, along with Priscilla Coleman and David Fergusson of New Zealand. I don't know the rest of the 20 reviewers; David is self-described as an "atheist pro-choicer," but he shared his review with me and his opinion about the quality of the science therein was roughly the same as mine and Priscilla's.

I got the original November 2 Report and, to be polite, I will say that I spent 30-40 hours giving them careful and relatively gentle line-by-line commentary. Once I got the March 6 revised version, I saw they had re-organized, based on several previous arguments for balance, they had simply left them out. But there was one major improvement: the short section on abortion-as-trauma "conceptual framework" had dropped the grotesque caricature of pro-lifers and instead offered an explanation that left the reader no longer puzzled as to why anybody might think abortion was traumatic.

But I was startled to dig in and realize that the new rationale for the conclusion was based on only one study — using British women where there was a screening requirement we don't have in the U.S. The fact of

many methodological flaws in that study isn't really the point, since in the real world all studies have some flaws. Far more important is that the study doesn't support the conclusion, since it did find more drug overdoses in women who had abortions compared to others. Also important is that it doesn't even address the conclusion, since it was only looking at extreme outcomes — drug overdoses rather than over-all



substance abuse, for example. (See <http://wiki.afterabortion.org/index.php?title=Gilchrist#Weaknesses> for discussion of the one study).

We don't draw such a sweeping conclusion from only one study. As I said, they all have flaws. We put together a group of studies so that the flaws may balance out. One thing needs to be replicated before it's taken

"...citing only one study in support of a politically – desired conclusion cannot be explained in any other way than as a politically-motivated exercise."

seriously. This is established in the APA's own Task Force on Statistical Inference in 1999: *"Do not interpret a single study's results as having importance independent of the effects reported elsewhere in the relevant literature. The thinking presented in*

a single study may turn the movement of the literature, but the results of a single study are important primarily as one contribution to a mosaic of study effects." (See *American Psychologist*, 1999, page 602).

So, even setting aside the quality of the study itself, citing only one study in support of a politically-desired conclusion cannot be explained in any other way than as a politically-motivated exercise.

So I immediately sent out a memo to the APA governance committees, who were now reviewing the Report, (the problem was buried on page 68; look for the conclusion and note the lone citation in parentheses). There was no response.

Consistent Life, upon noting a quarter of the Council members had changed with the new year, sent out its letter again. This time it got a response, and sent another response; see <http://wthrockmorton.com/2008/07/14/anti-violence-group-express-concerns-over-apa-abortion-task-force/>. I am aware that many other people sent letters as well, making various points. I also sent a memo to all Council members on the idea that a better report would be one that pointed out where the consensus is and where the controversies still are, rather than taking one side in the controversy.

This takes me to the Council meeting of Wednesday, August 13, 2008. This was the first item on the agenda. Speaking for it were endorsers and people commenting that it was good science, on the grounds that it was done by good scientists who really worked hard on it.

I approached the microphone and started to speak as others had, but the president interrupted and said he didn't recognize me as a member of the Council; was I one? I said no, he

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Convincing Scientists

(Continued from Page 3)

said I would need permission to speak, I asked for it, and he gave it so long as I was short. I was told later that it is exceedingly rare that anyone outside of Council is allowed to speak at all.

That may help account for the fact that once I made similar points to the above, no one commented on them. To this moment, I don't have an answer to the basic point of how one study, whether an excellent study or not, could possibly be reasonably seen as supporting a bold and ideologically-desired conclusion.

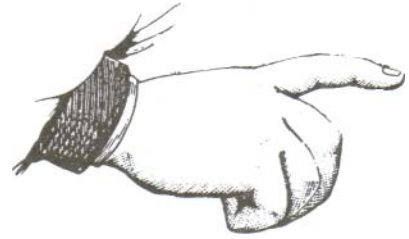
One person did later comment with a smirk on the letters that Council members had received. No content was commented upon. The vote to receive the Report was near unanimous; I believe 6 abstentions. I asked the president-elect about this later, and he said that the vote was like a ribbon-cutting at a building; the building was already built, all the work had already gone in, so that point in time was too late. I pointed out that I had been making these points all along, and he acknowledged that he had seen me doing it. I told him APA had made a mistake since it was going to lose lobbying influence as people discounted the idea that it was actually promoting science, and he didn't deny it; he thanked me for trying.

More studies are coming out, of course. According to the logic of the Report itself, if only one study can

The full-page ad on the opposite page...

ran in the September issue of *The Progressive*, among other publications, such as the

program of the Peace and Justice Studies Association. Please feel free to copy it for your own newsletters and other publications. If you need an electronic version, it is on our web page at www.consistent-life.org on the "Resources to Download" link.

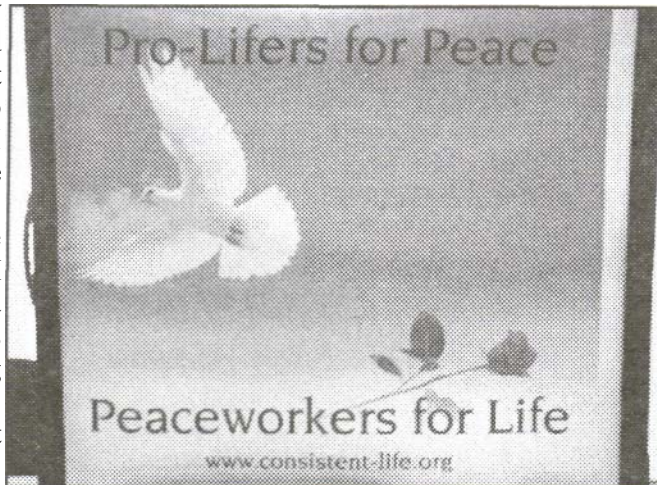


establish the conclusion, then in theory it should only take one study to knock it down, so long as the new study has the same strengths as the 13-year-old one. But that would be taking the assumption that APA was actually interested in keeping up with real science, an assumption for which at this point I have no evidence.

The Report dismisses many of the

studies of post-abortion trauma on the grounds that women were already traumatized by the time they showed up at the abortion clinic. This is surely true, but doesn't it then follow that it's highly irresponsible to simply give them surgery and then send them home? If we have clear and undisputed information that a disproportionate amount of traumatized women (domestic abuse, substance abuse, depression, etc.) are showing up at any medical location, how can it be reasonable medical care to not screen for this and provide opportunity for intervention? I pointed this out in my review, but they didn't see this point as worthy of inclusion.

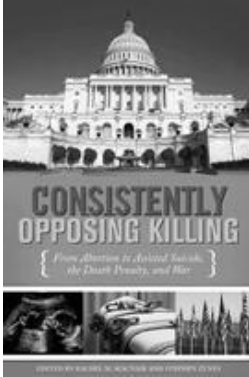
Meanwhile, the Report does say that they do know there are groups that have higher negative aftermath: teenagers, women who are pressured, women who have more than one abortion, women whose abortions are late-term. This is information we can put forth as at least being a consensus among all researchers. ∞



Consistent Life now has a table-top display and table runners for attracting more people to our literature tables. It also gives at least a little information to those who don't stop to learn more. This proved successful at the Peace & Justice Studies Association's 2008 conference. We appreciate your help in knowing about more conferences where we can display our materials, as well as any volunteers willing to staff the tables; please send information to president@consistent-life.org.

Consistently Opposing Killing:

From Abortion to Assisted Suicide, the Death Penalty, and War



an anthology on the consistent life ethic – that right-to-lifers would be more effective if they also opposed other forms of killing, and the same is true for peace and justice movements.

edited by Rachel M. MacNair & Stephen Zunes
published 2008 by Praeger / Greenwood

available through:
www.greenwood.com,
www.amazon.com,
www.barnesandnoble.com,
or through ordering by your locally-owned bookstore

"Some of us who went through the anti-war struggles of the 1960s and early 1970s are now active in the right-to-life movement . . . We are moved by what pro-life feminists call the "consistency thing" – the belief that respect for human life demands opposition to abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, and war. We don't think we have either the luxury or the right to choose some types of killing and say that they are all right, while others are not. A human life is a human life; and if equality means anything, it means that society may not value some human lives over others."

-- Mary Meehan, *The Progressive*, September, 1980

"I'll begin by indicating how I became aware, very belatedly, of the "indivisibility of life" . . . because I think it may be useful to those who are interested in bringing others like me . . . to a realization that the "slippery slope" is far more than a metaphor. . . I remain an atheist, a Jewish atheist . . . For me, this transformation started with the reporting I did on the Babies Doe. While covering the story, I came across a number . . . who were convinced that making it possible for a spina bifida or a Down's syndrome infant to die was the equivalent of what they called "late abortion." . . . These infants were *born* . . . they were entitled to at least the same rights as people on death row – due process, equal protection of the law. So for the first time, I began to pay attention to the "slippery slope" warnings of pro-lifers. . . And I began to find out, in a different way, how the stereotypes about pro-lifers work. When you're one of them and you read about the stereotypes, you get a sort of different perspective."

- Nat Hentoff

"My own decision to become publicly active in the pro-life movement was, I admit, rather selfish. I followed the news stories while a newborn child was starved at an Indiana hospital because he was born with Down's syndrome. The years I had spent fighting for federal architectural standards, for equal access and equal employment suddenly didn't make sense. If the new strategy was to eliminate those of us with disabilities at birth, then that was where I would stand up for our rights. . . . Having looked at the world with the perspective of a man with a physical disability, I saw an attitude - and a mechanism - of oppression, as tangible as racism, that held people like myself at the margins of society. . . . If being open to the experience of one's disability can lead to action in the pro-life movement, what about in the peace movement? A disabled veteran of Vietnam is not likely to have a romanticized idea of war. The disabled children of hibakusha (survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) don't need to ask if it is a sin to build nuclear weapons."

- Scott Rains, disability-rights activist

"If women must submit to abortion to preserve their lifestyle or career, their economic or social status, they are pandering to a system devised and run by men for male convenience . . . Of all the things which are done to women to fit them into a society dominated by men, abortion is the most violent invasion of their physical and psychic integrity."

- Daphne de Jong, New Zealand writer



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News from Consistent Life Members



Book Release-

The Feminism and Nonviolence Studies Association is publishing an updated version of *Achieving Peace in the Abortion War*, scheduled for release in January. It deals with post-trauma reactions of abortion doctors and nurse to their practice, along with insights from peace psychology, applied to how we can help stop this form of violence. To receive a review copy or to be notified on how to purchase this book, send an email with "APAW" in the subject line to notify@rachelmacnair.com.

Witness Against Torture-

With the help of many CL members, including Art Laffin, Kathy Boylan, and Claire Schaeffer-Duffy, an organization was founded three years ago to urge the U.S. government to renounce torture and close the prison in Guantanamo Bay, where hundreds have been held without charges since 2002. In 2005, this group led a pilgrimage from Havana, Cuba to the outskirts of the U.S. prison at Guantanamo. In January 2007, they sponsored a fast and demonstration in Washington, D.C. which included nonviolent civil disobedience in the Federal Courthouse. The defendants each gave the name of a prisoner held at that time in Guantanamo, bringing the detainees names before an American judge for the first time.

Claire gave the name "Abbas Hasid Rumi Al Neely," an Iraqi Shiite who deserted from Saddam Hussein's military to join the 1991 uprising of

Marsh Arabs. After Saddam crushed that rebellion, Abbas fled the country. He was imprisoned in Pakistan as an undocumented immigrant and, in 2002, was turned over to the U.S. forces in Afghanistan for a bounty.

In January 2008, after a march wearing orange jump suits, hoods over their heads, and their hands bound behind their backs, members of the group protested at the U.S. Supreme Court where more than nearly 100 were arrested, including Art and Claire. Several of the defendants received short jail sentences. Retired U.S. Navy Admiral John D. Hutson said the demonstrators had taken "heroic action in a desperate situation for the greater good."

Witness Against Torture is inviting groups to help plan various nonviolent demonstrations for the first 100 days of the new presidency to encourage decisive and quick action to close the prison in Guantanamo. For more information go to: <http://www.witnesstorture.org>.

Prayer to End Iraq War-

On March 19, 2008, the fifth anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, five Catholics, including CL members Ken Hannaford-Ricardi and Scott Schaeffer-Duffy, knelt, in the lobby of Worcester, Massachusetts's federal building, to pray the rosary for an immediate end to the Iraq War. Their action came as the culmination of a 43-day prayer, fast, and vigil inspired by Blessed Franz Jagerstatter, the martyred, Catholic conscientious objector to participation in the German

army during World War II.

In September, the group was tried in federal court where Ken, who has been to Iraq three times, told Judge Timothy Hillman, "No kid deserves to die. No kid deserves to be wounded or maimed." Scott testified, "I've had the privilege to shelter many homeless people, including homeless vets and have learned from them about their experience in war and how the nation treats them afterwards. I have also had the misfortune of seeing many civilian casualties in war zones and having people beg me to help stop the killing. For me, opposition to war is very personal."

All five defendants were found guilty of refusing an order of a U.S. marshal, but not guilty of obstructing an entrance. Ken and Scott said that they could not in conscience pay the \$280 fine the judge imposed and were ordered to return to court on November 6 to be resentenced, most likely to jail. For more information look up "rosary trial" at: <http://www.pieandcoffee.org>

Catholic Flyer Available-

One of our members, Tony Masalonis, wanted to promote the consistent life ethic in Catholic churches. However, we did not have any material specifically directed to a Catholic audience. So Tony agreed to develop a flier for this purpose. *The Consistent Life Ethic and the Catholic Tradition* is now available as a tri-fold flier on our Downloads page at <http://www.consistent-life.org/cl-catholic.pdf>. We encourage Catholic groups and individuals in the U.S. to reproduce and distribute this flier. We thank Tony for this initiative and would also like to have fliers directed at other constituencies. Please let our president, Bill Samuel, president@consistent-life.org, know if you would be willing to work on a flier for another constituency. °°



Achieving Peace in the Abortion War

Rachel MacNair's new book

Due out in January, 2009, published by the Feminism & Nonviolence Studies Association, a member of Consistent Life.

The Freedom of Choice Act

by Richard Stith

Now that the election is over, we need to turn our attention to legislation we could support (such as abortion-reduction and poverty-reduction measures, which can be the same in some cases). But there is also legislation that can be dangerous by way of causing more killing, especially in the areas of war and abortion.

One especially dangerous piece of legislation that we can foresee as something we need to work on urgently, before the Congress even convenes, is the so-called "Freedom of Choice Act" (FOCA). You can find a fact sheet on it at: www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/FOCA/index.shtml.

This federal bill would deeply entrench *Roe v. Wade's* "right" to feticide throughout pregnancy. But it would do much more. FOCA would also forbid any federal or state governmental entity from "interfering with" or "discriminating" against that right "in the regulation or provision of benefits, facilities, services, or information." Thus FOCA could eliminate such "interferences" as parental involvement laws, informed consent laws, and health provider conscientious objector laws—as well as create a virtual entitlement to abortion by requiring that all programs that benefit motherhood not "discriminate" against abortion. All of this would greatly increase the number of abortions.

Most pernicious of all, it would

require Medicaid funding of abortions, which studies clearly show can more than double the number of abortions among low-income women. Among other things, it supports pressures for sex in male-dominated relationships, and pressures by those who want poor infants to be killed instead of being lifted out of poverty.

FOCA is likely to be pushed in the new Congress. Democratic law professors Cafardi, Caveny, and Kmiec have been pushing for Democrat Party wins, but, as Catholics, they would still not welcome FOCA. Democrats have also heard such voices as Jim Wallis and Tony Campolo pushing them in their platform toward thinking about abortion reduction strategies. If voices like theirs join others in opposition to FOCA, it can perhaps be defeated, as an earlier, less radical version of FOCA was defeated at the beginning of Bill Clinton's first term.

We can start by asking current co-sponsors of FOCA to remove their names. For a website with members of Congress who presently co-sponsor FOCA, see: <http://nchla.org/datasource/idocuments/9FOCA%20HsSnSpon15a%2008.pdf>. Of course, letters and visits to all Congressmembers, along with letters to editors of newspapers and blog postings, are needed. In many cases, explaining what is wrong with this from a consistent life perspective may be especially effective. °°

Can the principles of peace psychology be applied to the violence of abortion? This book shows how.

Elections come and go, and outcomes depend on events and characters out of the control of any single movement. The United States' downward trend in abortions, however, has continued during both Democrat and Republican administrations. There are several reasons to believe this is likely to continue.

The fragility of abortion practice in the United States is becoming increasingly clear. (People in other countries may also find useful information in the principles explained here). The real-life experience of doctors and nurses involved in providing abortions shows that they are a weakening link in the abortion chain, and this book explains the reasons why this is so that depend more on psychology than politics.

There is also a vital opportunity in understanding the human mind's drive for consistency and its link to behavior. After learning about how abortion practice has begun collapsing, people find it safer to hear the case against it, and to act in a more constructive way toward the genuine needs of pregnant women.

The social and psychological dynamics of performing and defending abortions offer many opportunities for stopping widespread feticide. The more we understand these, the more effective we can be as peacemakers in the abortion war.

To be notified when the book comes out, please send an E-mail with "APAW" in the subject line to notify@rachelmacnair.com. °°

