

Culture of Peace



& Culture of Life



Culture of Peace - definition



- society-wide practices and habits that promote peace
- a positive way of viewing peace as much more than the mere absence of war

Culture of Peace – Formal Declaration

The United Nations officially declared the first decade of the 21st century the International Decade for a Culture of Peace.



- Many millions world-wide have signed its pledge

Culture of Peace – Pledge

First 2 of 6 items are:

- Respect the life and dignity of each human being without discrimination or prejudice
- Practice active nonviolence, rejecting violence in all its forms . . . in particular towards the most deprived and vulnerable such as children and adolescents.

Culture of Life - Definition

- ❑ society-wide practices and habits that promote protection of vulnerable human lives
- ❑ a positive assertion of the value of life, much more than mere opposition to abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia.



Culture of Life – Formal Declaration



- ❑ Proposed by Pope John Paul II in 1995 encyclical, “Gospel of Life”
- ❑ used by Catholic, Protestant, and other religious groups as well as secular groups

Culture of Life – Founding Principles

- ❑ Respect the life and dignity of each human being without discrimination or prejudice
- ❑ Rejecting violence, in particular towards the most deprived and vulnerable such as children (in the womb or recently born) and people who are disabled or terminally ill.



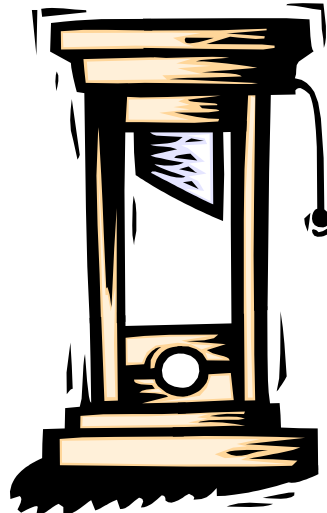
Can we ever build one of these cultures without also building the other?



Link:

The Death Penalty

- John Paul II did include opposition to the death penalty in the Culture of Life.





The Death Penalty

- Peace Issue: a use of weapons against an enemy, differing from war only in individually targeting those who presumably commit criminal homicide.
- Life Issue: euthanasia for the guilty, another example of trying to solve problems by killing individuals



Death Penalty

“If we're trying to establish a culture of life, it's difficult to have the state sponsoring executions.”

-- conservative Republican U.S. Senator Sam Brownbeck

Gloria Borger, “A Time for Uncertainty.” *U.S. News and World Report*, April 11, 2005. p. 34



Link: Racism

The Culture of Peace
opposes discrimination
and prejudice.



Minority ethnic groups
are over-represented
as people targeted by
death row and war





Racism

The Culture of Life
protects vulnerable humans.

Abortion clinic location shows
that minority ethnic groups
are targeted for abortion.



A Threat to Both Cultures: The War of Words

Dehumanizing language targets people as:

- deficient humans
- non-humans or non-persons
- parasites
- diseases
- waste products

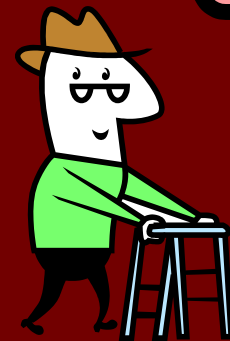


War of Words



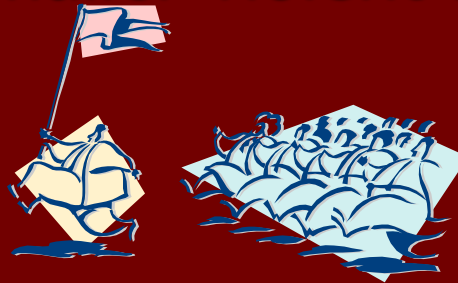
This language has been used against:

- Ethnic or religious minority groups
- Women
- People with disabilities or illness
- People who live in poverty
- Children in the womb
- “Enemies”



The Slippery Slope

- Wars and other massive violence don't generally start full-blown. They start with dehumanizing language and smaller violent acts, and build up.



- Justifying feticide has already led to justifying infanticide and euthanasia; past history with “life unworthy of life” (a Nazi phrase) has shown how the slippery slope can work.

Aftermath

- The Culture of Peace
and
- The Culture of Life



Must help heal the pain that comes from the violence they are trying to prevent – and not just in the victims, but in those who participated.

War Aftermath

Combat veterans have long shown that Posttraumatic Stress Disorder is a common aftermath of war. It seems to be worse for those who killed in battle.

Some evidence shows this for executioners and other socially-approved killing.



Abortion Aftermath



Evidence of post-trauma symptoms has also shown up in some abortion-providing staff, as well as some women who have had abortions and their families.



Both are cultures of hope !

**We can care about each other
and build a culture which is humane
and nonviolent to everyone.**

Quotations for Reflection

Colman McCarthy, columnist - *Washington Post*, April 11, 1992

“Both the military ethic and the abortion ethic are grounded in the same belief: Life is cheap. Iraqi life. Fetal life. . . . The language of the war lobby and the abortion lobby is from the same glossary of evasions. No one likes war, say the generals. No one likes abortions, says NOW. But let's keep the killing option, just in case. And cases keep coming. If Iraqis are causing trouble, or Libyans, Grenadans or Panamanians, bomb them. If fetuses pose problems, destroy them.”

Quotations for Reflection

Wangari Maathai (from Kenya), Nobel Peace Prize Winner, 2004

“When we allow abortion, we are punishing the women—who must abort their children because their men have run away—and we are punishing the children whose lives are terminated . . . I want us to step back a little bit and say: Why is this woman and this child threatened? Why is this woman threatening to terminate this life? What do we need to do as a society? What are we not doing right now as a society?”

Questions for Discussion-Starters

- How does partisan politics, which polarizes peace issues and life issues into different parties, impact cooperation between the culture peace and the culture of life?
- How do media portrayals and common stereotypes impact the culture of peace and the culture of life?

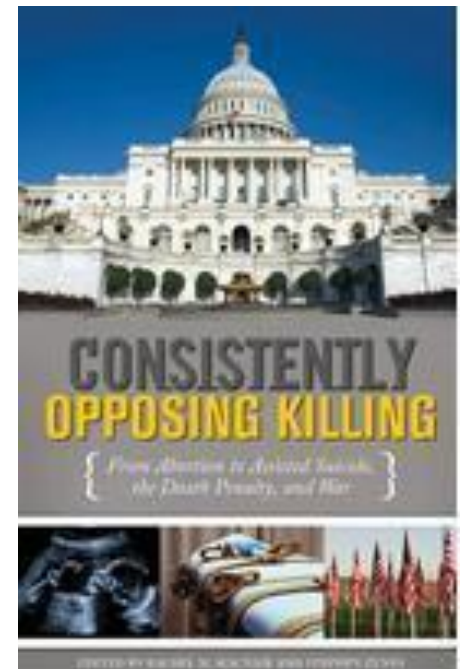


Books on Peace/Life Connections

Anthology:

Consistently Opposing Killing: From Abortion to Assisted Suicide, the Death Penalty and War

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



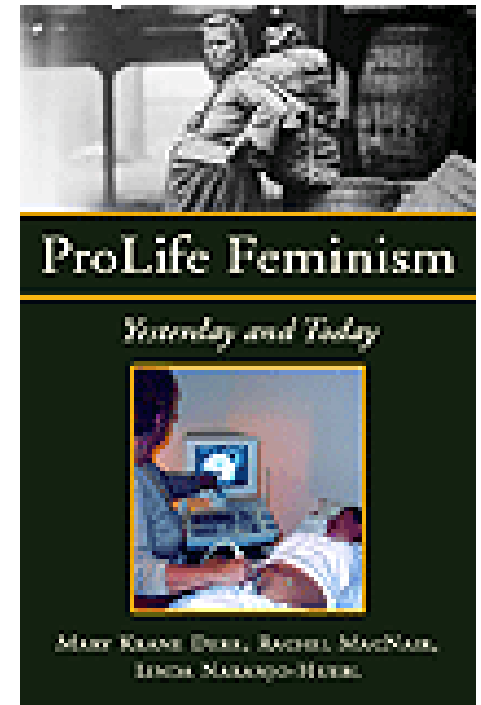
Books on Peace/Life Connections

ProLife Feminism: Yesterday and Today

edited by Mary Krane Derr, Linda Naranjo Huebl,
& Rachel MacNair

Feminism & Nonviolence Studies Association, 2006

*Essays from Susan B. Anthony,
Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and many
others, along with contemporary voices*



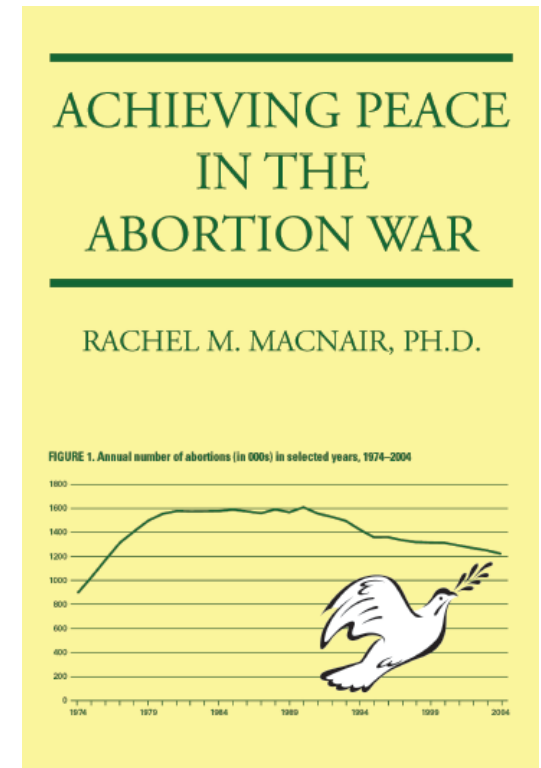
Books on Peace/Life Connections

Achieving Peace in the Abortion War

Rachel M. MacNair

Feminism & Nonviolence Studies Association, 2009

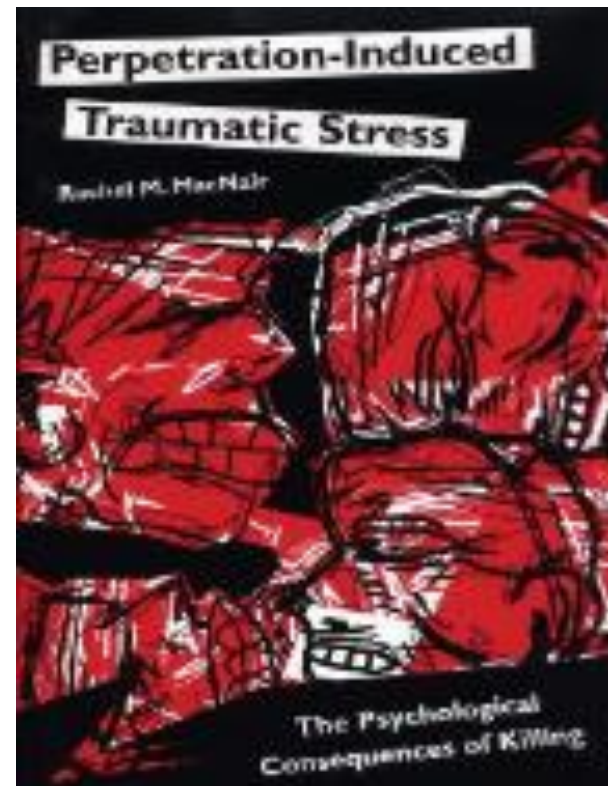
*Applying the principles of
peace psychology to current
U.S. abortion practice.*



Books on Peace/Life Connections

Perpetration-Induced Traumatic Stress: The Psychological Consequences of Killing

Rachel M. MacNair
published by Praeger 2002



Web Sites on Connections

- www.consistent-life.org
- www.fnsa.org



- www.prolifequakers.org



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.