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Time to find a new way

by Dennis Coday

NCR Today

Over on Huffington Post, Jen Boulanger has a piece titled *Come Together to Prevent My Murder*. Boulanger is the executive director of the Allentown Women's Center for northeast Pennsylvania. Her tale is quite chilling:

"While the news crews that covered the Tiller murder have now packed up and moved on, aggressive protesting in the weeks since the murder of Dr. Tiller has escalated. My abortion provider colleagues from across the country have noticed this alarming trend. Since Dr. Tiller's murder, the threats and violent rhetoric have gotten much worse. On the day of Dr. Tiller's funeral, one of our volunteers was asked, "How do you prefer to die, by knife or by bullet?" A week later, a protester told me, "Abortionists were executed after World War II by the Nuremburg Trials" and posed this rhetorical question, "You know what Von Brunn did at the Holocaust Museum?" This protester's son, who has picketed the clinic since he was a small child (he is now in his early twenties), has made a point of mentioning ammonium nitrate, which is used in making bombs, to us while protesting on several occasions."

As Boulanger says: "This is not 'sidewalk counseling' designed to persuade women from choosing abortion." And she notes: "The recent rise in hateful rhetoric is not only poisonous but also contagious."

Commenters to this posting, don't tell me that Boulanger is following a tactic of the pro-choice activists to silence legitimate protests against abortion rights. I am not buying it.

I have to side with Fr. John Dear on this one. He wrote recently:

"I think the time has come for a serious re-examination of the 'Pro-Life movement' movement as it

currently exists in the U.S. It is filled with a spirit of violence, which will only continue to breed hatred. If an extremist for peace had killed an official in the Bush Administration, I would have insisted that we stop all peace movement activities.

This is what Gandhi said in the early 1920s, after some of his movement activists beat five British soldiers to death. He called off the whole national civil disobedience program, went on a fast of repentance and resigned from the movement. He insisted, from his daily reading of the Sermon on the Mount, that there is no cause, however noble, for which we support the taking of a single human life.

In that spirit, I propose that the so-called 'Pro-Life movement' stop all its activities, perhaps for several years, and that the U.S. bishops take the lead. What we need is a thoughtful examination of our addiction to violence, and a new systematic study of Gospel nonviolence."

It is time to stop the violence and find a new way.

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