

**LIMEY PASTOR**

# Light still shines in this dark week

I wanted to write about the shocking events in Nevada, where the commandment “Thou shalt not kill” was broken again and again this week. No constitutional privilege is provided for that purpose. Our founders would be spinning in their graves if they thought that this was a consequence of their words. Enough!

The New Testament provides us another way, a bright model of stepping forward to give up one’s own life for one’s friends, to show Jesus’ example of the cross as a new guide for our behavior. Jesus chose his own way of sacrifice, to demonstrate love and a total wish for freedom for all people by allowing himself to be subject to an execution of immense cruelty. This is his way.

The early Christians such as the Apostle Paul, or Stephen the first martyr, followed the way of Jesus to show Jesus’ journey through the darkness by surrendering their own selfhoods.

In our modern times, Abraham Lincoln, for instance, must have known that his path would one day cross with that of his ultimate assassin, that his own blood would be the seal for the peace that had to come into being. His Christianity was realistic and his ambition was for the wholeness and goodness of his country. He knew what was waiting for him if he pursued his goal with firm intent. He made that commitment.

Lincoln’s example has been followed in modern day life by the likes of the assassinated Martin Luther King in our own country, who foresaw his destiny as a vanguard of liberty, and in South America by the Catholic Archbishop Oscar Romero, a defender of the poor and their rights in El Salvador who was martyred for his little ones.

From my own religious tradition, the Lutheran, Pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer — implicated in a failed plot against Adolf Hitler — was hung for his knowledge and complicity in that plot. He struggled enormously with a choice to participate in Hitler’s overthrow, a government overthrow, which ultimately failed. Lutherans are very ambiguous about this effort because of their discipline in obeying law but most of us see the challenge that Bonhoeffer had to deal with.

But what we saw happen this week was so very different — it was a martyrdom of the everyday person, where hundreds and hundreds of people came under fire from the tower above.

Yet, we saw men and women laying their own bodies, many wounded in their bodies, over the bodies of strangers simply because the love in them overflowed to the point at which they would and did in many instances give their life for these strangers. This was the distillation of the Jesus spirit! It was something extraordinary to behold.

As I write these words, a sudden realization grips me: this vast act of visible self-sacrifice was something radically new to us here, something very new to our televised world, that humans would so willingly die themselves to protect the women, men and children who were on the ground under them. It was so much so, that it was a demonstration that something wonderful has taken effective root in the souls of our people. It was a God-moment of enormous import to our country.

This may be the ugliest event you will ever see, but its beauty in the human spiritual life will be eternal. Things are changed. May these martyrs of love for their brothers and sisters be forever remembered!

Amen.

Colin Brown is the former pastor of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Boardman.



COLIN BROWN  
Faith

# Next generation brings new energy to ongoing U.S. abortion debate

By JILL SCRAMM  
Minot Daily News

MINOT, N.D. — McKenna Beeter and Sommer Bradley soaked up the atmosphere at the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C., last January. The experience of associating with more than 20,000 people who shared their pro-life interests was confidence building, the Bishop Ryan High School seniors said.

“They were passionate about what they were marching for. It definitely changed my perspective about how many people are aware of it and have the same beliefs as we do,” Bradley said. “Now our mission is just raising awareness.”

A separate Women’s March also took place in January in Washington and other communities around the country. A family event kept Kayla Schmidt, 27, a Minot native now of Bismarck, from participating, but she held her own personal march with her family as a show of support for women and their right to make choices, including reproductive choices, the *Minot Daily News* reported.

“You have to find what’s the right choice for you. It’s all about gaining knowledge, gaining self respect, being in a healthy place,” she said.

Young people are stepping up and speaking up when it comes to abortion and picking up a torch lit in America in the 1970s by, more often than not, their grandparents’ generation. This past year’s election of Donald Trump as president, appointment of a new Supreme Court Justice and talk of eliminating federal dollars for women’s services at Planned Parenthood clinics have prodded activism on both sides.

Planned Parenthood sees young people knocking on its door and asking what they can do to help, said state director Amy Jacobson, Fargo.

“We have seen a real surge of folks, young people, reaching out — like the Women’s March,” she said. “For us in North Dakota, it’s traditionally college age that becomes more active in the movement. That’s when they want to learn more about their rights and gain a desire to stand up for them.”

Through an internship program, Planned Parenthood has engaged college students in reaching out to peers on and off campus via meet-ups, rallies or film screenings.

“We really leave the design of it to the students,” Jacobson said. “One of the things we want to do at Planned Parenthood is really empower people to be their own advocate. With young people it’s about mentorship and really supporting them in their ideas so if they have something they want to do around reproductive rights in their community, we really want to shore that up.”

Schmidt, a 2013 graduate of Minot State University, connected with the North Dakota Women’s Network while in college. She coordinated the Women’s Network’s weekly Feminist First Friday conversations on campus.

“I was still pretty young and not sure how outspoken I wanted to be, but I knew I felt very strong about the issues,” she said.

She continues to volunteer her time to the Women’s Network and its Feminist First Friday events. For Schmidt, the real topic is women’s rights, of which reproductive choice is just part of the discussion. She credits her interest in women’s rights to a collective of experiences and the influences of other women on her life. Her generation also grew up very much in charge of their bodies with tattoos, piercing and hair coloring. So the idea of choice when discussing reproduction was not a big deal, Schmidt said.

“For many, it’s about trusting a woman with her own choice and what she wants to

do. I believe women are smart,” she said. “It’s allowing us the voice to say we are competent to make these decisions.”

Beeter and Bradley said pro-life values underlie what they are taught in religion classes at school, but that isn’t necessarily the foundation of their beliefs. Aside from their faith-based beliefs, they said they feel a sense inside themselves that the unborn have a right to life.

“It’s about your inner feeling — your right from wrong,” Bradley said.

Beeter said her adoption and opportunity to meet her birth father fed her interest. Knowing abortion was an option her birth parents could have selected motivates her to promote a pro-life message. Beeter walked with March for Life the past two years, assisted with the N.D. Right to Life entry in the State Fair Parade and worked at the Right to Life booth at the fair this year.

Beeter and Bradley credit their activism to an early awareness of the abortion issue. That’s driven them to do their own research, which has helped shape their views. They are familiar with women’s abortion stories and are concerned about the psychological consequences of abortion. They also are concerned that so many young people don’t have good information and view abortion as an easy way out of an unwanted pregnancy.

Medora Nagle, executive director of North Dakota Right to Life, said the chapter doesn’t specifically target information to young people.

“What we focus on is changing the hearts and minds of everyone,” she said. “The biggest way for us to do that is to provide them with information.”

However, she added young people are the future of the organization. Membership numbers have held steady in Chapters of Collegians for Life and Teens for Life around the state over the past five years, she said.

**BRIEFLY**

## Church serves up Sunday breakfast

MILTON-FREEWATER — The Milton-Freewater First Christian Church will be feeding the soul and stomach during the next few months.

People are invited to enjoy breakfast Sundays from 8:30-9:15 a.m. at the church, 518 S. Main St., Milton-Freewater. While there is no charge, donations will be accepted.

Bible classes for all ages and Kids Klub for children begins at 9:30 a.m. The worship service and junior church starts at 10:45 a.m.

Valet parking and entry via a ramp are available on the side of the building. Also, there’s an elevator at the north entrance. For more information, call 541-938-3854.

## Bible-based recovery program offered

IRRIGON — A 12-step addiction recovery program taking a biblical approach to restoring people to sanity is planned beginning Oct. 12.

Celebrating Life in Recovery, a 14-week program based on the 3ABN TV program hosted by Cheri Peters, will

be offered Thursdays from 7-9 p.m. at the Irrigon Seventh-day Adventist Church, 205 Tumbleweed Blvd. It uses powerful real-life stories from the TV series to help you learn to surrender to God and let Him guide you through the process of recovery.

Peters, the founder of True Stop Ministries, speaks to audiences around the world sharing that God is crazy about you, He longs to heal you, and He delights in your recovery. Her journey from abused and unwanted child, to heroin addict desperate to end the pain, to celebrating life in recovery shows what God wants to do for every one of us.

The program is free. For more information, call Linda Bolen at 541-371-1518.

## International peacemaker to visit Pendleton

PENDLETON — Rev. Delia Leal of Guatemala and Leslie Vogel will speak during a Guatemalan dinner event in Pendleton.

The women’s ministry program regional coordinator in Mexico and Central America with the Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America, Leal focuses on female empowerment and income inequality.

Vogel is the facilitator for the Intercultural Encounters Program. Both women live in Guatemala, where during the last 36 years there has been internal armed conflict between guerrilla factions and the government. The challenge in Guatemala, the women said, is to give hope during despair.

The free event is Sunday at 4 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church, 201 S.W. Dorion Ave., Pendleton. Donations will be accepted.

The International Peacemaking Program of the Presbyterian Church makes it possible for leaders from partner denominations and partner organizations around the world to visit the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. each year to interpret issues of peace and justice. By sharing stories of their work, visitors bring understanding of concerns around the world and provide insights that can inspire and help to build a culture of peace and nonviolence.

Leal said the Guatemalan government has poorly enforced laws, which wears people down. However, she said, it’s important to build spaces of justice and peace.

For more information, contact fpcp@pendletonpresbyterian.com or 541-276-7681.

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