

CCBR: Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform

Making Abortion Unthinkable

March–April 2006

How does one summarize the fruits and insights from 18 presentations, a television interview, a radio show, a graphic abortion exhibit and two meetings—all which occurred over an 11-day period? The short answer: not very easily.

Dear Friends,

From March 13 to 24 I did a whirlwind speaking tour in Ontario. In two of those days, I spoke to over 2000 high school students and showed a clip from CBR's graphic abortion video, "Choice Blues." Here is a sampling of the surveys:

- "Before I thought it was okay for some circumstances for certain people, but **now I think it's wrong for anyone to have an abortion.**" —14-year-old female
- Before: "I was against abortion, but it was hard for me to say what I'd do if I was in the situation to choose whether to have an abortion or not. It would be hard for me to go ahead and have the child since I'm young and I have a lot ahead of me." After: "**My position did slightly change—now that I've been more exposed to abortion, I don't see how I could even be a part of that.** It would be selfish of me to kill the baby just so I might lead an easier, normal life." —17-year-old female



▲ I speak to 1200 students at St. Michael's Secondary School in Stratford.

- Before: "Undecided." After: "**Abortion is bad no matter the circumstances.**" —15-year-old male
- "Before the presentation, I would never have had an abortion but I wouldn't say anything to someone who was going to have one. **Now, I would tell the person abortion is wrong.**" —15-year-old female
- "Before the presentation there was a part of me that thought abortion was okay in some cases **but now after seeing pictures and hearing stories I'm completely against it.**" —16-year-old female
- "**My position went from indifferent to pro-life.** The presentation was very effective and managed to change my mind." —15-year-old female
- Before: "My position was that it is a pro-choice decision and it is all right if people need to do it because they hadn't intended on getting pregnant." After: "**Yes, now I know you can't possibly kill a living life because it is like killing someone.** Pictures and videos: they were powerful." —15-year-old female

On March 15, I visited McMaster University in Hamilton. There I debated Fiona Simpson from the campus debating society. A Christian student wrote that she was "in between" prior to the debate. **When asked if her view changed she wrote, "Yes it has."** She added, "The issues that were made against abortion I feel are relevant. Especially that the fetus is life. Also, how people are taking advantage of abortion."

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▲ My opponent, Fiona (right), and I.

Another student wrote that he was “choice” before the debate. Afterwards? “Pro-choice had weak arguments. Pro-life definitely took this one. **I am leaning towards pro-life.** At no time did pro-choice refute the idea that a fetus is a human or life begins at conception. I’m a little surprised a molecular biologist can’t refute basic embryology. Her argument thus falls apart because she neglects to refute that life begins at conception. Great debate! Keep on fighting for your beliefs. You are impacting society more than you know.”

When I spoke at St. Peter’s Seminary in London, an audience member wrote, “I went to this conference not supporting ‘visual’ types of pro-life argumentation. **I have changed my mind because of your presentation.**” That was very encouraging to read, especially in light of this quote from a high school student who was impacted by visuals:

“My position on abortion before the presentation was that I was not for it but everyone has their own choice and I shouldn’t be the one making their decision. After the presentation I realized that we are all human and have every right to live and that we would never kill a newborn baby or anyone, so why do we have the right to kill a fetus. **The video of all the aborted embryos was very moving and was very visual. It was very important to change my opinion.**”
—15-year-old female

There is so much more I could report on, but space limitations demand that I leave that to a future newsletter.

One last note: while I was away, Jojo spoke to pro-life groups in High River and Pembina about CCBP’s strategy. He and Brendan also helped train the members of the University of Calgary’s Campus Pro-Life (CPL) club in pro-life apologetics in preparation for the Genocide Awareness Project (GAP). All three of us then helped CPL display the project in the final week of March. It was **the most incredible** GAP Canada has seen in the seven years that the project has been conducted in our country; I look forward to telling you about it in our next issue.

Thank you for your ongoing support. Peoples’ minds are changing because you keep us on the front lines of this battle.

Happy Easter,

Stephanie

Stephanie Gray

Upcoming Presentations

April 7–9: Camrose, AB, various venues. Call 403-668-0485 for more information.

April 10: 7pm, “Theology on Tap” at the Ha Tien Restaurant, #15 – 575 28 St. SE, Calgary, AB

Note: Quotations may have been edited for grammar, punctuation, syntax, spelling, and/or length.



▲ L-R: Matthew, Sarah (of King’s College Pro-Life Club), Mel, me, Cris, Fr. McGrattan, and Aaron at St. Peter’s Seminary.



▲ I give a simplified pro-life talk to Grade 5–7 students at St. Joseph’s Elementary in Stratford. The innocence and intelligence of these kids was inspiring. I told them that they were smarter than a lot of university students I speak to. (See the enclosed news report to understand why!)

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LifeSiteNews.com

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Pro-Life Speaker Holds Her Own Against Pro-Abortion Crowd at University of Western Ontario

Abortion supporters' intolerance said to be "appalling"

LifeSiteNews Staff

LONDON, March 27, 2006 (LifeSiteNews.com) - One year after the University of Western Ontario (UWO) awarded infamous abortionist Henry Morgentaler an honorary degree, the abortion debate has re-ignited.

On March 21, Stephanie Gray, Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform, spoke against abortion at King's College at UWO. Police and security were brought to the scene to handle expected disruption from abortion advocates. 130 people attended the talk, about half were vehemently against Gray. Several spoke out of turn throughout the presentation. One student was so disruptive security told him to leave. He refused but remained silent for the remainder of the presentation.

Gray was protected that evening by an undercover police officer. Before the presentation started, she was given a security briefing which included having a uniformed police officer in the next room, ready to whisk her to a police car if violence broke out.

That evacuation plan was not required but many of the abortion supporters were unruly. "Their intolerance was appalling," said Gray. "In my four years of giving presentations and debates at university campuses across North America I have never encountered such a rude and disruptive audience. Abortion supporters 'talk' tolerance but these ones sure don't 'walk' it."

Throughout the presentation, random audience members stood up and faced their backs to Gray. Others placed pieces of tape on their mouths with "choice" written on them.

The crowd became greatly agitated when Gray spoke about personhood. She explained that denying the unborn their status as persons was analogous to past atrocities when societies denied, for example, Jews their personhood. She pointed out that the reason abortion supporters despise the comparison was their denial of the value of the unborn. "And that is exactly the issue," said Gray, "Are the unborn human beings like born people or aren't they?"

A female student was critical of Gray's reliance on science to prove the unborn are human saying, "Science has been wrong before." When Gray asked the young woman for an alternative scientific explanation she did not offer one. Gray explained that when human sperm and egg unite, a whole, living, human being comes into existence, one that has the genetic material needed to inform and



▲ ▼ Pro-abortion students stand with their backs to Gray.



organize its growth. She referred to Moore and Persaud's embryology textbook, "Before We Are Born," used by medical students at the University of British Columbia, which says, "Human development begins at fertilization."



▲ Following the presentation, Gray poses with Fr. Mike and Michael from King's College.



▲ Gray speaks to two students after the talk, as police stand in the background.

A pro-abortion medical researcher also claimed the science cited by Gray was wrong. He said that the unborn become independent beings at birth. Gray responded that the issue was not when someone becomes independent, but instead when one becomes human. She said that after fertilization the unborn get bigger, become more developed, change their environment, and become increasingly independent—changes that people go through post-birth as well—but that their human nature remains consistent.

One young woman said that preventing abortion would force women to have children. That assumes, however, countered Gray, that a pregnant woman doesn't already have a child. "But that's the issue," said Gray, "does she?"

Another student told Gray that the time and money pro-lifers put into their campaigns should be directed to alleviating poverty. Gray retorted with an analogy saying that people don't criticize the cancer society for not addressing AIDS, because they recognize both as legitimate causes. "So," Gray asked, "Is a pro-life campaign a legitimate cause like a program to help born people? Well, are the unborn human like born people? That's the issue."

During the question and answer period, a male student shouted at Gray, "You're insane!" Gray responded by thanking the student: "By calling me insane you're showing me that my arguments are so good you are unable to refute them; instead, you resort to attacking what you perceive my character to be."

Another student complained, "This isn't a debate!" Gray responded that she was willing to debate but many abortion supporters declined the opportunity. In fact, Henry Morgentaler was recently asked to debate Gray at McMaster University in Hamilton. His assistant declined on his behalf.

Following the talk, pro-life organizers handed out cookies to attendees. Pro-abortion students were taken aback at the kind gesture. The host's outreach and Gray's composure showed the abortion supporters that pro-lifers are respectful and kind even when abortion supporters treat them with hostility.

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