



Making abortion unthinkable

“I appreciate the open forum of discussion and I do view the lack of club [as] inappropriate and wrong.”

–22-year-old pro-choice male student after my talk at Lakehead University

Dear friends,

It’s hard to admit that it’s been ten years this June since I received my undergraduate degree. Thinking back, I remember feeling glad to graduate but feeling disappointed as well. When I started at Carleton University’s school of journalism in Ottawa, I wanted to become a reporter who would cover the pro-life view fairly. Instead, I had little exposure to pro-life work at school and was seriously considering a job in the Canadian government. A pro-life career was the furthest thing from my mind. Ten years later, not only do I do full-time pro-life work, much of that work is at university campuses.

For example, if you’ve been following the newspapers, you’ll see that York University, where I debated earlier this year, is once again talking about abortion. The student union there has now banned all pro-life activity from their space. But thanks to that decision, abortion was also discussed in papers and columns from across the country (see links on the next page) and much of it is in support of allowing the debate on campus.

The union’s decision also highlighted what the media aren’t talking about: a generation of pro-life students who are winsome ambassadors for the pro-life position. They are students we’ve trained, who wisely share the pro-life message in ways their peers can understand. And they are reopening the abortion debate at their schools.

For example, after hearing CCBR staff speak at a national symposium for pro-life students, the University of Waterloo’s pro-life club invited me to debate two students from their university’s debating club. About 30 people showed up from the school and from the community. This was a classic case of what we want to see: my pro-abortion opponents were able to share their ideas and I was able to clearly and logically explain why the pro-life position makes the most sense, something many in the audience wrote in their surveys.

The best part of the evening for me was eating dinner with the pro-life students after the debate. They barraged me with questions about how to respond to pro-abortion arguments and were keen to use my suggestions. I even challenged them to consider pro-life work as a career, letting them know that it is possible to do what I am doing.

A week later, I spoke at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay because students from their pro-life club heard me speak at the pro-life students’ symposium. They wanted a debate at their school because their student union decided it would be “pro-choice” and prevent pro-life students from forming an official club which would be eligible to receive funding and space from the union. This happened despite the fact that pro-lifers there must become members of, and pay dues to, that union.



**Above: the University of Waterloo (UW) debate
Below: Members of UW Students for Life sit in the front row; President Hailey Brown is at the far left.**



Because the pro-life students weren't a club, they couldn't sponsor any campus event. But a member of the union wanted to counter the argument that they were censoring free speech and so helped to organize the debate. The pro-lifers and I were apprehensive about the help, so we came to school early on the day of the debate, in case the union would change their minds.

When I arrived, though, a screen and chairs were all set up. We were also in the Agora, the main hall that everyone coming into the school would walk through. There were even posters around the campus. The union representative who helped set up the event arrived and told us there was not going to be a debate. She said that some pro-choicers had discovered that



Lakehead University's LifeSupport; President Cathy Simons is second from right in front row.



I was to debate a pro-choice professor and "bullied" him into not coming. However, she would still allow me to speak, which I did (picture at left).

By the time I showed the abortion images, there were about 80 people in the hall. Afterwards, many students asked questions about my presentation. Not only was I able to handle all the questions, but the pro-life students themselves used the skills we trained them in to debate other audience members for another hour and a half. Some pro-choicers even quizzed me about what I said about free speech. Other students came by and indicated

that they were pro-choice but that they enjoyed my talk and supported free speech for pro-life students. One pro-choice female student wrote, **"I appreciate the speaker and the efforts of the pro-life group and I invite them to bring more speakers to educate and inform the people of Lakehead and Thunder Bay."** The controversy and presentation were covered in the student and local media and more people got a chance to discuss abortion.



Debating some pro-choice students after the debate.

I feel so proud of these pro-life students. Because they are able to endure such persecution, they are reopening the abortion debate on campus. And they are able to share the pro-life message at school because friends like you continue to support CCBR. We've been able train these students to effectively share the pro-life message and even challenge a few of them to do full-time pro-life work. By helping me save the lives of the unborn, you are also helping train a new generation of pro-lifers who are eager to make abortion unthinkable. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Links of the month: A selection of media items on the controversy at York University:

www.nationalpost.com/news/story.html?id=547509

www.canada.com/montrealgazette/news/editorial/story.html?id=c70a3cc2-f0a0-445b-8791-575f96d764a6

Upcoming Schedule: Most of June and July, I will be helping run our Reproductive "Choice" Campaign.

CLARIFICATION: My previous newsletter reported that Prof. Ian Gentles moderated the rescheduled debate at York University. He is not the same moderator who refused to attend the original debate which was relocated off campus. Much thanks for his help.

Please make cheques payable to CCBR, write Jose Ruba on the note, and mail them to

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