



May 2006

Making **Abortion** Unthinkable

On March 27 and 28, the pro-life club at U of Calgary accomplished the most impressive GAP display Canada has seen in the seven years the signs have been exhibited in this country. But it did not come easily: it was a year-long battle with the university to get the display on campus; the day before the scheduled exhibit there was no vehicle to transport the signs; the morning of, two of the volunteers slept in, and my car—which had in it all the GAP supplies aside from the signs themselves—“died” in traffic.

I know why “forces” were working against us though: powerful, positive things were about to occur over those two days. Here are the accomplishments that God’s grace, and your support, made possible:

Perhaps the most inspiring of all “turn-arounds” was with a student I’ll call Mike. During the first afternoon of GAP, Mike confronted me about how we compared abortion to the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide. He was angry and animated. He raised his voice on several occasions and used words that, well, I won’t repeat in this report.



▲ I (centre) debate with “Mike” (far right).

...he thought in shame, “*Is that what I was like yesterday?*”

I’ve dealt with people like Mike before, and I considered him like the others: a hardened abortion supporter whose mind would not be changed by logic. But with a group of 25 students and two security guards gathered to listen to our exchange, my motive in conversing with Mike was to reach the crowd. Unbeknownst to me, though, God was working on Mike’s heart.

The next morning, Mike sauntered by the exhibit. We exchanged names and handshakes again, but I wasn’t going to debate him as we had exhausted the discussion—or so I thought. Mike began to speak with one of our volunteers, Theresa. He then spoke with Campus Pro-life club president, Josh, followed by club vice-president, Drew, returned to Theresa again, and finally went back to Josh.

At one point that afternoon, Josh and CCBR staffer Brendan were occupied with a hostile abortion supporter (and another large group that had gathered to listen). **The student was shouting and swearing at the top of his lungs.** I got involved in the conversation so he turned his attention to me. With that student no longer dialoguing with Josh, Josh stepped out of the conversation. As Josh scanned the crowd that was listening to the debate, he noticed Mike, who had a look of horror on his face. Josh assumed what Mike later confirmed: as he stared at the student yelling at Brendan and me, he thought in shame, “*Is that what I was like yesterday?*”

Josh proceeded to have a powerful discussion with Mike. Each time Mike would raise a bizarre scenario to justify abortion, Josh had a compelling rebuttal that left Mike pensive.

At 3 p.m., I left to prepare dinner for the volunteers. I noticed Josh and Mike talking so I interrupted to say goodbye. As I stretched out my hand to Mike, he hugged me! He said he was interested in learning more about my beliefs on abortion; I gave him my card, not knowing if I'd hear from him again.

He and Josh continued their discussion, which got more personal. After talking at length, Josh needed to get the truck in order to load the GAP display; Mike agreed to walk with him to the truck so that they could keep talking.



▲ Josh (right) debates with a student.

As they drove back to campus together, Josh told Mike he needed to get a pro-life volunteer to make a clearing through the crowd in order to drive the truck to the display. Mike told him not to bother, and then, like Moses parting the waters of the Red Sea, the once-angry student jumped out of the truck to move the crowd aside for the vehicle to get through.

Once Josh parked he said goodbye to Mike. Mike looked at Josh and said, to paraphrase, "I can't say I believe everything you said, and to be convinced it would take God—or Buddha, he or she—appearing to me and telling me I'm wrong." He paused before adding, **"Or if I continue down the path that you guys started me down today."** They shook hands and hugged.

The next day I received an e-mail from Mike with questions that conveyed he was still thinking about abortion. Two days later, we met for coffee. Here is a part of what he e-mailed to me afterwards:

The most horrible and beautiful thing in life is ignorance. The issue of abortion is a question that would have been easier not to ask but since this door has been opened, ignorance is no longer an option or a defence. I do hope that I can provide a concrete argument for the pro-choice side. **After speaking with you over the past week I worry that an explanation or a defence would be a weak and not a powerful one.**

I haven't heard from Mike since replying to that e-mail. Would you please join me in storming Heaven with prayers for his conversion?

In my seven years of involvement with GAP, I have encountered everything from vigorous intellectual debate to total ignorance and downright wacky statements. This GAP was no different.



▲ A "gift" from pro-aborts.

A group of pro-abortion students took their opposition of GAP to a new level: they held a sign that said, "Your campaign stinks like manure," and proceeded to

dump bags of manure in front of the display.

One student made the bizarre claim that "virgin pregnancies are on the rise."

Then there was the woman who wore a t-shirt that said, "I wasn't in church today because I was studying witchcraft and becoming a lesbian." Here's the dialogue that ensued with her:

Josh, with trepidation towards how the talk with her might unfold: "So, what's your opinion on abortion?"

Woman: **"I'm on the fence."**

Josh: "Let's get you off the fence."

Woman: "Why are you comparing these things?"

Josh then explained how slavery, the Holocaust, and abortion all involved killing innocent human

beings whose humanness—whose value—was denied at the time of their deaths. Once she understood the comparison they discussed when someone becomes human. About six or seven times in the conversation, the woman loudly swore to admit when her claims had been defeated. “S***, that doesn’t work now,” she exclaimed at one point.

Woman: “What about rape?”

Josh: “That’s a great example; let’s address that.” Josh explained how our human nature is not dependent on the circumstances under which we were conceived or whether our parents did horrible things. He also pointed out that even the rapist—the only guilty party—isn’t killed for his crime, so why the innocent unborn?

Woman: “Oh, d***, that’s true. You guys have been practicing, haven’t you?!” Josh took her through each of the differences between unborn humans and born humans to show they aren’t relevant when determining one’s value.

Woman, just before leaving: **“I don’t have anything that I can say. I think you’ve convinced me.”**

Perhaps she would consider a revision to her t-shirt: “While studying witchcraft and becoming a lesbian, I walked by GAP and became pro-life.”

The GAP display was a success, not only because of the incredible discussions, but because we finally set up the exhibit on a Canadian campus as it is designed to be displayed: numerous (twelve, in this case) signs facing outwards, in a busy location, with security fencing, security guards, video cameras on tripods, and exhibited for at least two days. All the other Canadian campuses we’ve worked with have student societies and/or university administrations that censor the exhibit in some way. Although the student society at U of C censored its own students, the university, thanks to the involvement of a pro-life lawyer, conceded their students’ right to do GAP. In fact, they set an important precedent by erecting signs around the exhibit that said, **“The exhibit is protected under the relevant sections of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms related to Freedom of Expression.”**

Although it takes a team of dedicated people to make GAP happen, special acknowledgement must be given to a student whose perseverance was instrumental in this exhibit: Drew, the club’s vice-president. He worked tirelessly with a pro-life lawyer and the university to ensure GAP would happen. He put in countless hours of letter-writing, e-mailing, telephoning, organizing, training, and planning the logistics for the setup of the signs. In fact, his studies suffered because of his determined involvement. Would you do me a favour? Right now, please say a prayer for Drew. Then pray for all of our volunteers and the people who encountered GAP. Thank you.



▲ Drew (centre) talks with several students.

On a concluding note, this spring marks several important anniversaries. Seven years ago, CBR in California contacted me about bringing the GAP to the University of British Columbia. Five years ago, the Canadian CBR was conceived: it was in a cabin on Raccoon Island in New Jersey that Jojo, I, and other young Canadians sat with our mentor, renowned international speaker Scott Klusendorf, mapping out our future in the pro-life movement. Then, four years ago, I launched into pro-life work full-time. Since that time, our staff numbers have grown and we have reached thousands upon thousands of people. Minds are changing. Lives are being saved.

Thank you for faithfully standing with us,

Stephanie

Stephanie Gray

Testimonies from GAP Volunteers

CCBR staffer Jojo (far right):



“One Baha’i student told me that he was personally pro-life but didn’t believe that speaking about abortion would be helpful. Rather, he would live out his life according

to his faith and convince people that way to be pro-life. I talked to him for over 45 minutes, explaining that if we know about an injustice, we have the responsibility to share it. **At the end of our conversation he said, ‘I will share my faith by my actions—and my words too.’”**

Volunteer Theresa, from Alberta Pro-Life:



“I pointed to the picture of a 24-week aborted fetus and asked a student if he thought that was wrong and he said yes. Then I pointed to the

picture of an 8-week aborted embryo and asked if that was wrong and he said no. His concern was that the life cannot survive on its own. But I pointed out that a newborn child, if left alone, would not survive. At the end of our conversation, he admitted, **‘Wow, they [unborn and newborn babies] are both dependent on so many different things. I’m going to have to think about that.’** You could tell he really believed what I had said in our conversation but pride stopped him from admitting it to my face.”

CCBR staffer Brendan (left):



“I spoke for over an hour with one student of Jewish descent that had been talking with other student volunteers. He asked questions regarding abortion in various

circumstances and listened sincerely to the answers, acknowledging the validity of our responses. At one point, he informed us that seeing the graphic pictures had led him to believe

that we would be irrational and confrontational, but that his discussion with us revealed that we were anything but.

“At the end of the conversation, he was silent for a moment and then said, **‘F***, I lost.’** I chuckled and encouraged him not to think of our dialogue in terms of winning and losing, but I did point out that when we uphold and defend human rights, *everybody* wins. We parted with a handshake and introductions and the student went and sat down across from the display and just looked at the signs for some time.”

Student volunteer Matt (right):



“My experiences from GAP (other than a sunburn): **The two days that we had GAP on campus were probably two of the best days of the year.** Almost everyone that I

talked to or someone else talked with, while not ready to make a full change, definitely left the display thinking hard about the issue.

“Another great thing about the two days was the grace-filled atmosphere. The hand of God was almost tangible, even as the hand of the enemy tried to intimidate us with shouting, manure, and protesters, etc.”

Student volunteer Veronica (far left):



“A woman approached me to ask me my views on ‘choice.’ She said she was fine with abortion before eight weeks gestation. Luckily, I was standing right

beside the poster of an aborted embryo at 8 weeks and she was open to listen. **After our discussion, she left saying that she would need to think about the question, ‘If abortion kills a human being, then what makes it right to have an abortion up to 8 weeks?’”**

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