



July 2009

MAKING ABORTION UNTHINKABLE

www.unmaskingchoice.ca

Dear Friends,

One of the main reasons why we are so encouraged by the work we do is that we don't *just* see one mind changed about abortion; we see people who change their minds about abortion then actively go out to change others' minds.

This is precisely what happened to a student who saw our Genocide Awareness Project (GAP). We recently received this e-mail from him:

"I had not thought much of the Genocide Awareness Project (GAP) when it was set up at my college campus from time to time. I had glanced at the images but they did not really move me to either side of the abortion debate. Abortion was simply a social issue I was apathetic towards; I thought the whole debate was simply not relevant to my life.

"Months after I had last glanced at the display, my girlfriend told me that she thought she might be pregnant, and though she said I "probably" wasn't the father, wanted to know if I could drive her to an abortion clinic anyway, if this was indeed the case. I agreed at the time without thinking much of it, more burdened with coming to terms with her infidelity and the end of a long-lasting relationship from high school that I thought would result in marriage.

"The next couple of days and nights were absolutely horrible for me. 'What had I just agreed to do?' was constantly repeating in my head. **The enormity of the situation became real to me: regardless of who had said or done what, there could perhaps be an unborn child in the middle of this.** A child that had done nothing wrong, full of love to give and full of potential, was not even recognized as being more than a mere nuisance. **The images I had simply glanced at months and months ago at the Genocide Awareness Project were very real in my head and only then did I realize what an atrocity I had carelessly agreed to be a part of.**

"Regardless of our own moral failures, there could be an innocent human being expunged from life and I was

horrified at how easily we had signed a life off without even knowing if it was there or not. I began researching pro-life resources for pregnant women and was startled at what I began learning about the negative health effects for women as proven by academic study and the nature of the procedure itself. **Regardless of past irresponsibility, I wanted to do my best to present a strong case to discourage someone I had loved from subjecting herself to a procedure that would have serious long-term health implications according to reputable academic studies and I certainly did not want to see yet another child in our society excused from life.**



▲ On July 16 and 17, I spoke at a YWAM (Youth With A Mission) event at Tyndale Seminary in Toronto called School of Prophetic Justice. The themes for the week were human trafficking and abortion, and I equipped attendees in pro-life apologetics and strategy. I'm (right) pictured with Renee Kloosterhof (left) who did music ministry for the week, and Lia (centre), the 12-year-old who became famous for her pro-life speech: www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOR1wUqvJS4

"The pregnancy had turned out to be a false positive. If it had been positive, my having glanced at the GAP display was perhaps all that would have stood in the way of an abortion taking place. Aside from reevaluating my life and making positive changes, I realized how absent the right-to-life reality had been in my life—and I had thought that I was better educated about real world issues. After a

lengthy period of deliberation and seeing so many pro-life activists take a stand on behalf of the unborn time and time again, with conviction to spread the truth year after year, it became apparent that sitting idle on the sidelines was not enough for me and **I have been volunteering for various pro-life causes ever since.**”

Our educational work is designed to impact hearts, in order to change minds, which will transform behavior. And this young man’s testimony shows him going through all three steps. We don’t just want people to *believe* pro-life, we want them to *act* pro-life. And when they do, they help change other minds, just as this young man’s current pro-life volunteering is doing.

But because the truth we share is so powerful in terms of changing minds, it is inevitable that this will be seen as a huge threat to the other side. And much resistance has already come our way. In fact, **we have recently faced censorship attempts from Advertising Standards Canada (ASC)**, a group self-described as “the national advertising industry self-regulatory body.”

In March of this year I received a phone call from ASC, explaining that they received two “consumer complaints” about our “advertising.” I explained that we weren’t advertising (we most certainly do not advertise abortion!) but nonetheless the ASC pursued its complaint-handling process. Apparently we were guilty of violating Code Clause 14 (Unacceptable Depictions and Portrayals). Not surprisingly, the complainants requested an ASC Council adjudication. The ASC’s policy about that says, “If Council determines the advertisement contravenes the Code, the advertiser is requested to **permanently withdraw or appropriately amend the advertisement** to comply with Council’s decision.”

Can you guess what the Council’s decision was? In their own words, **“The image... of an aborted embryo, in the unanimous opinion of Council, displayed obvious indifference to conduct or attitudes that offend the standards of public decency...”**

If displaying abortion is offensive, what about *doing* abortion and *funding* it? Furthermore, how is our truth message any different from a graphic Calgary advertisement promoting seatbelt usage (see upper right)? If that image doesn’t offend standards of public decency, why does ours?

The ASC continued, **“Council also concluded that the imagery combined with the words ‘unmasking choice’ denigrated women who have chosen to have an abortion...”** Does the seatbelt ad denigrate people who have chosen not to wear a seatbelt? Or, instead, does it (and our message) portray the disturbing results of specific *choices* with the noble purpose of preventing others from making life-destroying decisions?



The good news is this: the ASC’s decision has no bearing on what we do nor has any authority to limit our or anyone else’s freedom of speech. We don’t simply control our message, we control the medium. We don’t rent billboard space whose company would likely comply with the ASC. We control the truck and we run it where we want, when we want. Why pay tens (if not hundreds) of thousands of dollars for “advertising” that will be censored, and therefore less effective, when we can educate the culture on our own terms?

Consider this e-mail from a woman who, at abortionNO.org, saw the graphic abortion images we display on our truck:

“I am currently 8 ½ weeks pregnant with my third child...I was considering abortion despite my Christian beliefs because of my selfishness...my 2 children are from my ex husband and this child is from my current boyfriend who does not want a commitment....despite the situation, I cried immediately after seeing these pictures and will be keeping my baby! They need to have this in school and commercials on TV!”

Well, the images may not be seen in “advertisements” on TV, but they *are* on our truck. **Please continue to give so we can continue to share this truth.** Your gifts mean more people will not only change their minds about abortion, but will also be equipped to change the minds of others.

Stephanie

Stephanie Gray, on behalf of the CCBR team

P.S., We are looking for a heavy-duty mechanic in Calgary who is willing to do maintenance on our truck at-cost (charging for parts but not labour, or a reduced labour rate). If you know someone, please contact our RCC Director, Chandler Kerr: ckerr@unmaskingchoice.ca or 403-668-0485.

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