



A special note from PPL's Executive Director

I answered the phone in the office of Presbyterians Pro-Life a couple of years ago and a pastor asked me, “Is there any good news?” I don’t remember the details of our conversation, but the question stuck. Rather suddenly, during a post Easter cantata last Sunday morning, the answer came: For those of us in Christ, there is *always* good news. Jesus is alive! Ultimately that is *everything that matters*. The follow up question for each of us is, “How am I communicating to the world that Jesus is Life and that he is the Lord of life?”

There is good news in the cultural pro-life movement.

No good news came to mind that day, but today I can answer a resounding, “Yes!” to that question as it concerns developments in the pro-life movement also. Many states have approved legislation restricting abortion in continued on back



PC(USA) to vote on End of Life pastoral guide

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) has sent a resolution (Item 11-14) for commissioner approval to the Presbyterian Church (USA) 222nd General Assembly meeting in Portland, Oregon June 18-25, 2016. The resolution includes a pastoral guidebook, a statement of affirmation, and recommendations for conversation and advocacy. It’s long—49 pages—but the subject is critically important for human lives and so it what the church says about life at its end matters, just as what the church says about life in the womb is of critical importance. PPL is writing a seven part blog series to analyze potential and pitfalls of this piece of GA business.

The series will be posted on our website at www.ppl.org. To receive a printed copy please call the PPL Office at 412-487-1990 or email your request to ppl@ppl.org

We set up a “poll table” consisting of a poster asking a question like “Should abortion remain legal through all nine months of pregnancy?” Students were invited to sign their name on a clipboard that said “yes” or “no” or “maybe.” When they did, we had the opportunity to initiate a conversation.



Equal Rights Institute teaches tips for dialogue

by Amy Scherschligt

“To train pro-life advocates to think clearly, reason honestly, and argue persuasively.”

That’s the mission of the Equal Rights Institute, a new pro-life organization founded by brothers Josh and Tim Brahm. (<http://equalrightsinstitute.com/>) I attended their recent all day training in Sacramento and followed it up with two days at University of California, Davis where we dialogued with students. The training taught me to use three essential skills: ask questions, listen to understand, and find common ground when possible. (See Steve Wagner’s book *Common Ground without Compromise*. <http://amzn.to/265SCoW>) The on-campus experience gave me practice in holding non-confrontational continued on back

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recent months. Abortion numbers are falling in every demographic, including teens. Teen pregnancy rates are also down. The pro-life movement is overwhelmingly young and crossing denominational lines. 40 Days for Life prayer campaigns twice a year are now taking place in 273 cities across 30 countries, thousands of babies have been saved, clinic workers have left their jobs and abortion clinics have closed as a direct result of peaceful prayer outside abortion clinics. God has changed many hearts through the prayers of his people

There is good news to report in Presbyterians Pro-Life.

More churches are engaging in pro-life care and witness in their communities. More pastors are preaching pro-life sermons. God is moving in PPL's denominational work, expanding the borders of our work and increasing ecumenical cooperation. What really excites me is this. PPL will be at the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) General Assembly in June with a team led by PPL Board member. She will be assisted by a whole team of volunteers from a church that has recently left the PCUSA and joined ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians. Yes, that's right, *ECO Presbyterians will be doing PPL's work in the PCA!* In the very same week that is happening, a team of 8 volunteers, *including one from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC)*, will be carrying on the witness of PPL to the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) (PC(USA)). Before that ends, yet another small PPL team, *including one member of the PC(USA)*, will attend the EPC GA. PPL's work and witness, always focused on lifting up the Lord of Life is telling broadly the good news that God loves every human life.

Will you support our teams?

The volunteers on PPL's GA Teams pay their own expenses and use precious personal vacation time to advocate for vulnerable lives. A few have been doing this work for more than 20 years! If you are able, would you make a special love gift to PPL today to demonstrate your partnership with these dedicated members of the PPL team who have given so sacrificially year after year? If you are not in a position to make a donation, could you send a card or letter expressing your appreciation or perhaps leave a post on the Presbyterians Pro-Life Facebook page or Facebook group? I know it would bless and encourage our teams to know you are with us in upholding the sanctity of life across the many branches of the Reformed and Presbyterian family.

You can make a secure online at www.ppl.org or mail your gifts and notes to Presbyterians Pro-Life, PO Box 461, Glenshaw, PA 15116. Thanks and God bless you!

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conversations about a subject I am passionate about. I was nervous at first but found it to be fun and heart-breaking at the same time. How deeply tragic to meet young women who believe the lie that they are oppressed by their uterus.

It was wonderful to hang out with other courageous "pro-lifers" and engage for hours in a topic I care deeply about. If I ever thought that "pro-choicers" were the enemy, I never will again. I see them as lost and blind and my heart goes out to them. It was like witnessing Eve in the garden of Eden because many of the students believed they had a better way than God's way. During the handful of conversations I had, no minds were changed about legal abortion but several people commented that this was the most calm discussion about abortion they'd ever had. I appreciated hearing what real people had to say since I admit I only hang out with people who think like me. Who brings up the topic of abortion anyway? How amazing to be able to not only open the conversation but to also have some tools to lead a discussion, find common ground and also point out where we disagree. Even if we don't change minds about abortion we are changing what people think about pro-lifers, in the same way that 40 Days for Life (<http://www.40daysforlife.com>) is able to put a peaceful, civil face on the movement. The training taught us to respond to people, not to arguments. Josh teaches these six tips for having good dialogues:

1. Silence your inner monologue.
2. Rephrase what they said.
3. Find genuine common ground when possible.
4. Acknowledge the horror of rape.
5. Be intentional with your body language.
6. Be willing to jump to another topic.

I found that the students included a host of social problems when talking about abortion: racism, sexism, oppression of women, poverty, patriarchy, contraception, marginalized, access to health care, capitalism, etc.

The "protestors" holding handmade signs mostly did not want to engage in conversation with us. Nor let us take their pictures.

This experience changed me. I am equipped to have a gracious and hopefully productive conversation with someone who disagrees with me. I could have a conversation about the God of the Bible, evolution, climate change and a host of current issues. I no longer have to feel like I am under assault, must have a debate, or have to win an argument. In all of these conversations, we must remember to steer others back to the main issue: God and Biblical morality.