

Timothy Brahm dialogues with Sierra at Winthrop University on February 27, 2017.



Equal Rights Institute Staff Outreach at Winthrop University

By Timothy Brahm

When Rachel Crawford spent a week with us during her spring break, we decided to spend a day doing outreach at a local university. When we're speaking all the time and working on projects in the office, it can be difficult to make the time to go out on campus and talk to people. We consider it absolutely essential to our ministry though; how can we tell people how to talk to pro-choice people if we never do it ourselves? So we scheduled a poll table day at Winthrop University. We had dozens of great conversations, but we wanted to share a couple of highlights.

As we drove to campus, we were all incredibly excited to try some new things and shake off a little rust. But even being as seasoned as we are at dialogue, getting started is tough. The hardest part of a conversation is working up the courage to start it. Fortunately, my first conversation was a joy. Sierra was very pleasant to talk with and very reasonable and open to considering her pro-choice views. **Our conversation lasted twelve minutes and she changed her mind from pro-choice to pro-life!** I was very friendly and very clear, but it honestly didn't take much. All I did at an argument level was trot out a toddler a few times, the most basic of pro-life arguments. Once she saw that her justifications for abortion wouldn't be good justifications for killing

toddlers, her pro-choice view was over. She already believed the unborn was a valuable human, she just hadn't put the pieces together.

I have since told that story in four speeches to encourage students to be willing to take risks, have courage, and start conversations. Even if you don't have good answers to every hard question out there, there are a lot of people out there that we can help who just haven't thought through their view very well. When you meet someone with a hard question, you can admit you don't know and get back to them later. It isn't worth letting your fear keep you from helping people.

We've recently become friends with Devin and Melissa Pellew from Ratio Christi and Melissa was able to join us at Winthrop. She graciously agreed to share about her experience for our newsletter:

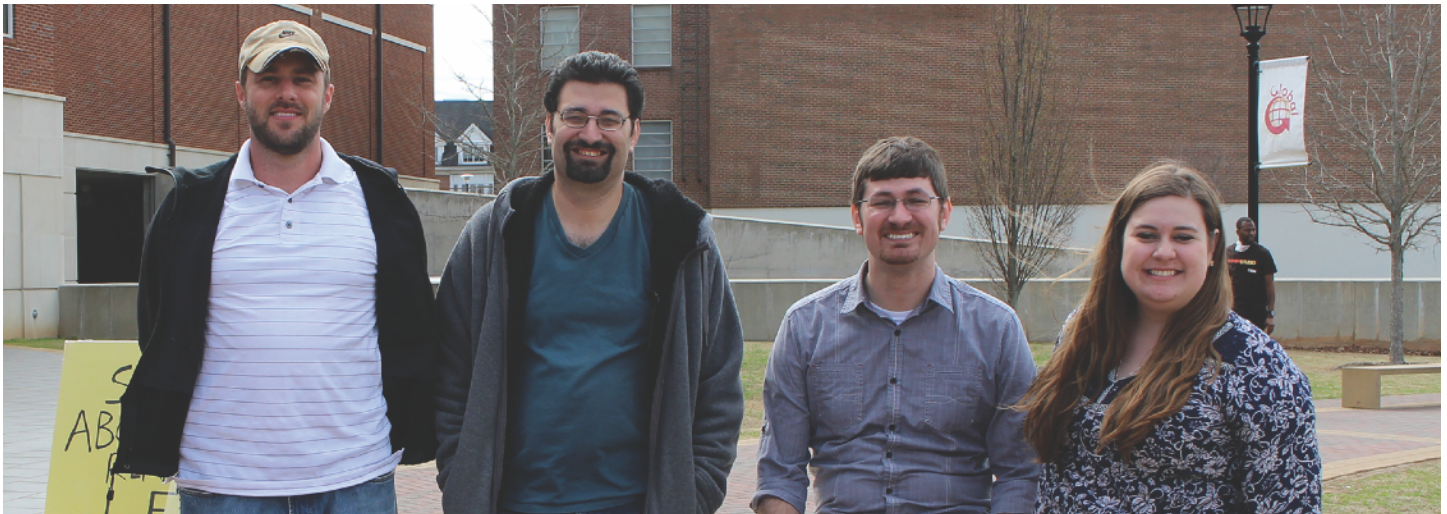
Ratio Christi at Winthrop University was blessed to partner with our friends at Equal Rights Institute. My husband, Devin, and I serve as Chapter Directors, on one of the most liberal campuses in South Carolina as we seek to equip students to know why they believe what they believe and to be prepared to critically think through their worldview. Though a Christian ministry, we have students who are of

other faiths and worldviews, who are seeking to better understand what the Christian worldview espouses in an open environment, where we can openly discuss a number of issues from a logical, philosophical and ethical foundation.

We have followed the ministry of ERI for many years and have learned so much from them through the years. ERI set up a display outside the DiGiorgio Campus Center, our central and busiest building on campus. Josh & Timothy Brahm, Jacob Nels and Rachel Crawford were the team members on campus for the day long outreach. It was very fruitful and students are still discussing it. And hearts and minds were changed on the issue of human equality and abortion.

One of the things that stuck out to me the most about working alongside the ERI team was their amazing compassion for the students. I love the Winthrop campus, students and professors so very much and to see Josh, Tim, Jacob and Rachel engage the students in such a loving, winsome, non-confrontational yet open/listening manner truly impressed me.

We even had a couple students, who came to the table but were rushing off to class, still came back after their class for discussion. There were many great exchanges but the two that



Jacob Nels and Melissa Pellew have a conversation with a student at Winthrop University. Due to some of the personal things that the student shared, we heavily pixelated her to protect her privacy.

stick out to me was one that Tim has with a transgendered student on the issue of abortion as they sat and talked for 45 minutes or so. I have had follow-up contact with this student on campus.

There was another conversation between Jacob and a female students that I was able to be a part of. The student approached the table to express how she had been sexually assaulted and how if she had become pregnant as a result, she would have aborted. I was ready to jump into the abortion discussion but Jacob immediately approached her and expressed as that as a father to daughters, how he empathized with her and shared with her that upholding the dignity of human life, means that we must stand against rape and the

victimization of women. This lowered her guards and we were able to have an hour discussion where she opened up about her life and struggles.

I am so blessed by my time with the ERI team and thankful that Josh and Tim came to share at our home on pro-life apologetics to our students as well. We have seen much fruit on campus through our partnership with ERI and are looking forward to future opportunities to work together!

Melissa Pellew
Ratio Christi at Winthrop University

Ben Shapiro's Response to Abortion in the Case of Rape

A Case Study in the Differences between a Debate and a Dialogue

By Timothy Brahm

A few weeks ago, Ben Shapiro released a video of himself after a campus speech in which he responded to a question about abortion in the case of rape. It was undeniably effective and many pro-life people shared it.

I can't imagine any reasonable person suggesting that the pro-choice student got the better of him in their exchange. **But I am concerned that pro-life students may take the wrong message from the video.**

Shapiro is an incredibly skilled debater, and a Q&A after a speech is clearly a setting for

debate, not dialogue. A speaker's primary responsibility in that setting is to convince the audience, not the person with whom he is arguing. My purpose in this article is not to criticize Shapiro for debating the way he does, it is to explain why it would be a *huge* mistake to emulate Shapiro's debate strategy in a one-on-one conversation (and, to be fair, I have no idea how Shapiro handles a one-on-one conversation without an audience).

Here are the three ways pro-life students should dialogue differently than Shapiro debates:

#1: DON'T MOCK THE THOUGHT-EXPERIMENT OR IMPLY THAT IT IS IMPLAUSIBLE.

Shapiro's first comment is:

First of all, I do appreciate that you've created the saddest possible scenario for a woman to be. Is she also disabled? Let's really go whole hog and she has breast cancer as well, as long as we're creating imaginary victims.



He scores a laugh with this opening, and then later doubles down on it after the student follows up by essentially asking, what if she doesn't have the money for proper health care and would have to drop out of college? Shapiro responds:

Okay, so now you're adding more variables to the situation, so let's take each of those variables at a time, but I'm going to have to cut off the continuing hypothetical after this before she ends up in penury at the end of Les Mis[erables].

Pro-choice people are heavily driven by compassion for women. Most pro-choice people are incapable of taking seriously someone who seems to have no compassion for women.

Every year thousands of women are raped and impregnated. It is incredibly difficult to get accurate statistics on exactly how many, but nobody disputes that it is in the thousands. Extrapolating numbers from a survey of 4,008 rape survivors combined with DOJ statistics on reported and unreported rape, there were roughly 6,600 rape survivors who had abortions between 2005 and 2010. These women are not imaginary victims.

#2: DON'T JUST EXPRESS ANGER. EXPRESS SADNESS.

As Steve Wagner has said, often when people bring up abortion in the case of rape, they aren't wondering if the unborn is human, they're wondering if you are human.

I am completely against faking compassion for the sake of winning an argument. If you don't feel sad at the thought of someone being raped, you have a heart problem, and you should really attend to that before you dialogue about abortion. Assuming that you do feel sad at the thought of someone being raped, you have to express that.

Shapiro says:

Obviously what happened to this person is an awful, awful, horrible thing, and, as I said earlier, the person who raped her should be tracked down, captured, [and] killed or castrated, so that's number one.

The first problem is that such a response has no hope of coming across as sincere if you start by mocking the situation as imaginary or implausible. But even if you don't make that mistake, there's another problem:

Anger against the rapist is not the same thing as sadness for the victim.

Shapiro seems to understand that you have to respond with some level of sympathy in response to rape, but his primary way of showing sympathy is saying the rapist should be castrated or killed. This is a very efficient way to communicate some level of compassion, and I understand that in a Q&A you need to be efficient, but please go beyond this in a one-on-one dialogue.

It's easier to say, "Boy, I'd like to punch that rapist in the face," than it is to really sympathize with someone. In some ways at least, anger is easier than grief. But pro-choice people are not in favor of legal abortion in the case of rape because they want rapists to be punished. That would make no sense. They are in favor of legal abortion in the case of rape because they feel compassionate towards the women who have been raped. You need to show that supporting abortion is not the only option for compassionate people.

#3: DON'T SUGGEST THAT THEIR QUESTION IS IRRELEVANT OR UNDERHANDED IF THEY SUPPORT ALL ABORTION.

"What if she was raped?" is a completely reasonable question, even from someone who is 100% pro-choice.

Please visit EqualRightsInstitute.com/Shapiro to read the rest of this article.

Equal Rights Institute Podcast

We've released a new podcast! We've been podcasting ever since we published the Equipped for Life course, but that podcast is only for people who get the course.

We've now released a podcast that's open to the public. It's different, in that unlike the course podcast which features long roundtable discussions, most of the episodes we release on the "ERI Podcast" are short.

Every Thursday we release a new episode of an ERI author reading one of their articles. These are especially meant for busy proliferators who struggle to make time for reading articles on our blog.

Additionally Josh records an update on what's going on at ERI once a month, particularly for our donors who want better access to what it is they're financially supporting. We also will occasionally release live speech and/or Q&A audios, as well as 3-5 minute snippets from the Equipped for Life Course Podcast.

Go to EqualRightsInstitute.com/Podcast to subscribe in iTunes, SoundCloud, or YouTube!

Dons for Life Club's First Outreach!



The Dons for Life from Cathedral Catholic High School in San Diego and the first club to get a scholarship for our course, did their first outreach last month!

Their club leader later said, "The course gave us fantastic talking points. Through the course we were able to speak life more effectively at our campus outreach."

Thanks so much to their generous donor who made sure this club had the resources they needed to get equipped to defend the pro-life position!

C.S. Lewis Institute Conference



Tim was asked to speak at an event for the C.S. Lewis Institute on the topic of conversational apologetics. He spoke for about two hours about what we've learned about how to create an atmosphere for persuasion in a conversation, including some brand new content he'll be writing more about soon. His talk was very well-received, with one student even saying it was his favorite event of the whole year.

Atlanta Homeschool Conference



Josh spoke at a homeschool conference for the first time and manned an ERI booth with Jacob Nels. Josh's primary session was on the current state of college campuses and why teens should be equipped to deal with the toughest philosophical arguments the pro-choice side has to offer, including bodily autonomy arguments and utilitarianism, before they get to college. We think the Equipped for Life Course will help homeschooling parents make sure that their teens are ready to become leaders for the cause of life on their college campuses.

Personal Note to Josh's Friends and Supporters

It has been a busy spring! We have been in 12 cities in the last three months! We have primarily focused on getting our core content out in most of our speaking, but as you can tell from the top of this page, we've recently also been excited to expand our speaking to new audiences. This has personally been one of my busiest travel seasons, and my wife has been incredibly patient taking care of the kids and home while I've been gone.

That also made our church hunt difficult, as we were pretty excited about the church we began visiting earlier this year, but it was hard to get to the point where we had decided to plant there because for one period I was gone five out of six Sundays! I'm happy to report though that after things settled down a bit and after having a few more meetings with the pastor, we've decided to stay at the church we've been visiting, One Life Church in Concord. We're getting plugged into a "Life Group" that meets in our neighborhood. (It's different than a small group - 40-50 people come to this thing!) But it's all about living life together as a church

family, and we've had multiple opportunities to see that this church doesn't just say that because it looks good on a website, they really mean it.

I've invested in some music equipment recently, both because my keyboard got ruined shortly after the move and so I need something to play at church, and partially because I have aspirations to start or join a rock cover band in Charlotte at some point. It's been good to force myself to sit down and stretch myself musically.

The kids have been having a blast playing most days with their new friends from several houses down. Our neighborhood is really quiet and so it's nice to be able to let them just walk down to their friend's house and play until dinnertime. Even Eli has been getting more social!

Again, thank you so much for your prayers and financial support.

~ Josh



Noah, William, and Eli eating homemade parfaits, just one of many amazing things that Hannah has made for our latest family tradition, "Dessert Monday." Hannah finds a bunch of amazingly decadent desserts on Pinterest and then each week we take turns picking the dessert. We have yet to find one that Hannah can't make.

SERIOUSLY, HOW LUCKY ARE THESE BOYS?!!