



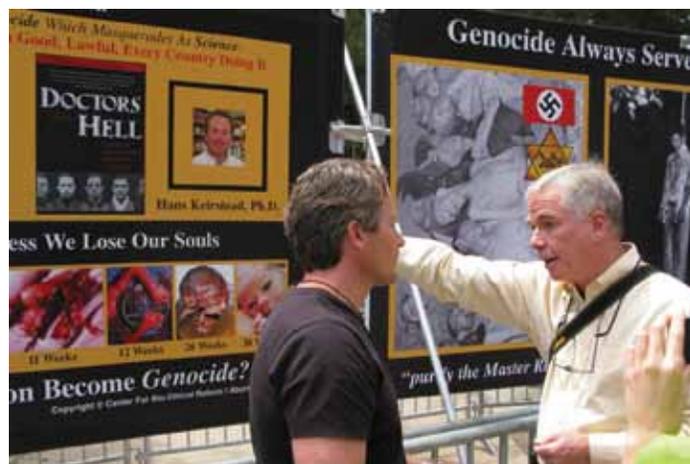
CBR Challenges UC Irvine's Embryonic Stem Cell Research

CBR'S GENOCIDE AWARENESS PROJECT visited University of California, Irvine, for the first time April 19-20, 2010. This campus of 27,000 students is proud of its research faculty, but to its shame, UCI does embryonic stem cell research.

Two leaders from UCI Students for L.I.F.E. attended the annual pro-life Student Leadership Conference, co-hosted by CBR-Southeast in Knoxville. At the September 2009 conference, they heard CBR's rationale for using graphic abortion photos. Ma'May Faucher of our California staff followed up and persuaded the UCI students to sponsor the Genocide Awareness Project (GAP)—our photo mural display which compares abortion with genocide. Accordingly, we designed two new signs to challenge UCI's embryonic stem cell research, featuring photos of the two lead researchers.

Just weeks before our arrival, a UCI Muslim student group had shouted down the Israeli ambassador when he attempted to deliver a lecture. The first day of GAP, about 20 Muslim students approached the display. CBR Executive Director Gregg Cunningham listened to their complaints about our use of the Arabic script "There is no God but Allah and Mohammad is his prophet" above the World Trade Center photo on our 9-11 sign. Gregg told them our sign depicted the Taliban flag so it was the jihadists who hijacked their religious saying, not we. They then complained that we should be more sensitive; Gregg replied, "That is what the Jewish students tell us about our Holocaust/abortion photos." That sent them away but not before we raised the issue of rising abortion rates in the Muslim world. On Tuesday, one Muslim student came back with a list of thoughtful questions which we addressed.

The president of Students for L.I.F.E. chided the school newspaper for ignoring GAP. Kara Ng wrote a letter to the editor, which went unpublished. She noted one of the April 20 headlines was: "UCI Participates in Earth Day from April 19-22." She wrote: "It was astounding how the fact that Starbucks 'gave free drinks to anyone who purchased a mug in honor of Earth day' was considered



CBR Executive Director Gregg Cunningham makes a persuasive case for the preborn to world renowned embryonic stem cell researcher Dr. Hans Keirstead at the UC Irvine Genocide Awareness Project.

more newsworthy than a 100-foot graphic display comparing abortion to genocide." Not to worry, because the entire campus saw our signs!

The biggest surprise occurred when embryonic stem cell researcher Hans Keirstead, Ph.D., approached the GAP display. Gregg immediately recognized him and they began to debate. A crowd gathered. Keirstead's main arguments were exactly the ones used by the Nazi doctors who were doing lethal experiments on Jews. Their victims were subhuman, they were destined to die anyway, it was all legal, other countries were doing it, and it would benefit all mankind to find cures for dread diseases. He was standing in front of a sign with the covers of the books quoting those exact arguments, but the irony was totally lost on him as he stood there parroting propaganda.

As Keirstead deliberately used dehumanizing rhetoric to refer to the babies, he alternately called them "the products of united sperm and egg cells" and "fertilized eggs" and "potential life" and "only 3 to 5 days old." Gregg told him he was doing what racists do when they dehumanize their victims with slurs. When he tried to deny that he was personally killing them, Gregg asserted that he was at least complicit in their killing. Gregg also

reminded him that the term “embryo” describes a stage of life, not a type of life.

Keirstead blasted us with scientific jargon which described arcane research processes with which he hoped to cloud the ethical issues. We kept forcing him back to the immorality of killing one human being for the benefit of another.

He repeatedly said we had no business revisiting these issues because this debate had already been conducted and his side has won with the passage of a California ballot initiative appropriating billions of dollars to fund his work. Gregg said this debate has only just begun. He said we have already educated people about these issues and Gregg said you have lied to them and we are here to set the record straight.

Gregg hammered Keirstead for an article in the *Orange County Register* which quoted him as telling the father of a famous motorcycle racer who had been paralyzed in a racing accident that he could cure him in five to seven years. Gregg accused him of fraud in making such an outrageous claim to manipulate a desperate victim who said he would give Keirstead the \$200,000 he was saving to buy his first home. Gregg had first challenged Keirstead in a letter to the editor (<http://www.ocregister.com/articles/strong-27581-office-nguyen.html>), saying: “What could be more cynical than to manipulate the desperation of accident victims with misleading claims of healing by something resembling a certain date?” At the end of Gregg’s letter, the *Register* placed this editorial note:

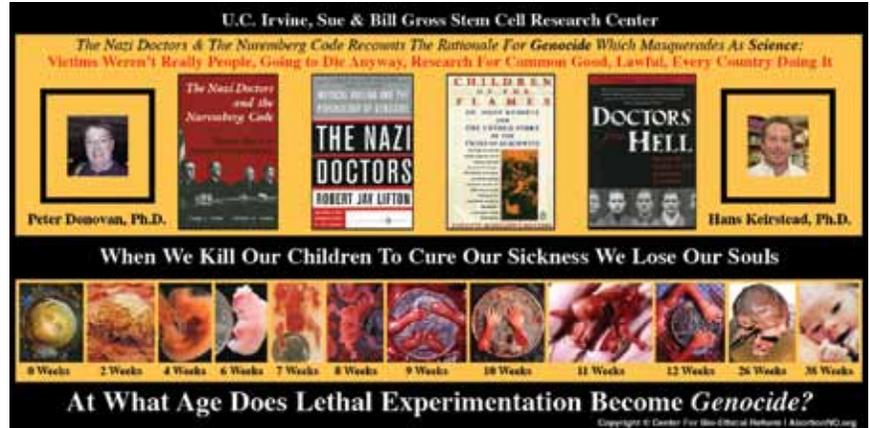
“Keirstead subsequently said he would not accept the \$200,000.” We likely shamed Keirstead into making that concession to the *Register*. Keirstead admitted to us that it generally takes 30 years for researchers to find a cure.

Keirstead was particularly angry that we had his photo on the sign, saying “why didn’t you just invite me to come out here,” and of course the answer is that he wouldn’t have come had our sign not angered him. Gregg told him that he was spending public money to kill babies at a public university and thereby forfeited any reasonable expectation of privacy. Keirstead protested that the sign on which his picture appeared also depicted aborted babies of all ages along a developmental continuum. He said he worked only with “blastocysts” and not fetuses and felt it might confuse people from the humanities department into thinking that his research involved cutting up fetal tissue and babies. We pointed out that there was no moral difference between killing younger babies versus older ones. He condescendingly said people in the humanities department “do not have the language” to understand embryonic stem cell research. Tim, a capable pro-life Ph.D. philosophy student, quickly set him

straight by telling him he was a humanities student who “had the language.”

Over the course of the two-hour debate, CBR staffers Don Cooper and Lois Cunningham joined in, along with graduate student Tim and a few others on both sides. Keirstead taunted us by asking if we consider an unfertilized egg a human, implying that it is ridiculous to say that an egg is not human but moments later after fertilization, it is a human being with the right to life. He seemed confused by the difference between diploid and haploid cells and failed to see the illogic implied by his own ethical claims. He told us he would not use tissue from an embryo with a beating heart, but why would an embryo be human for the moment after its heart began to beat but not before?

Tim used his philosophy training to identify many inconsistencies in Keirstead’s positions. Keirstead defined humanity in part in terms of sentience, but then admitted he didn’t really know when human life began. This sentience contention falls into the usual “form and function” arguments used by pro-aborts. Gregg reminded Keirstead that he would be rendered “insentient” when he fell asleep that night but he will gain sentience when he awakens.



Stem cell sign – At UC Irvine GAP, we introduced this new sign which addresses the inhumanity of embryonic stem cell research. We featured photos of two UCI lead researchers who support their research by making the same arguments as did Nazi doctors.

Keirstead focused repeatedly on consent, stating, “The parents have given consent” for the scientific use of this “tissue” that is “going to be destroyed anyway.” But by what right can a parent “consent” to have their child killed? Lois asked him about the child’s right to consent. He said he can’t give it. Lois replied, “That’s because you won’t allow him to grow a little longer so he can decide about consenting to being destroyed.”

In a comment reminiscent of Clinton’s infamous “legal,



“We are not in a game; we are in a war. Gregg acts like it and rightly expects other activists to do likewise.” Fr. Frank Pavone



Students gathered to debate abortion at UC Irvine GAP display on April 19-20.

but rare” wish for abortion, Keirstead said he wished there were fewer frozen embryos; notwithstanding that, he would rather use the embryos and try to help people with spinal cord injuries, etc. He told us we were damning these people to suffering that he could alleviate with his research. He said God would be pleased that he was working to alleviate human suffering. Nazi doctor Joseph Mengele argued that he was working to benefit all mankind when he harvested body parts from Jewish death camp inmates, but he defined mankind in terms which excluded his victims.

By the end of the exchange, Keirstead may have had second thoughts about the wisdom of his bold challenge to a public debate with us when school opens again this fall. Despite the fact that he is one of the world’s most prominent embryonic stem cell researchers at one of the world’s most influential stem cell research institutes, his poor performance against us was a function of the fact that he had obviously never been challenged so aggressively and the fact that he doesn’t have an ethical leg on which to stand. We will see if Keirstead is still willing to participate a formal debate after getting mauled in our informal debate.

GAP was highly personal for some students. Volunteer Sylvie Hester spoke with a student whose face was filled with emotion as she gazed at our signs. Tears welled up in her eyes as she shared that she was seven weeks pregnant and engaged to be married in three months. She looked at the picture of the dismembered 8-week baby and said, “College kids are so selfish. This will change my life a lot, but when I see the picture of the baby the same age as mine, it makes me realize again that I can’t do that to my baby.” A Students for L.I.F.E. member offered to

accompany her to the nearby crisis pregnancy center and to support her as needed. Student volunteer Alexis gave us this feedback after GAP: “I was surprised to find that the majority of reactions and feedback were positive, and that many people were just uninformed about the issue of abortion.”

The Inspiration of CBR –By Fr. Frank Pavone

I serve on many boards and hold many positions in the Church and in the pro-life movement. But one of my roles of which I am most proud, and most eager to share with others, is that of being one of the directors of the Center for Bio-Ethical Reform. I am proud and eager about this not because it gains me the most popularity. Indeed, many neither understand nor are sympathetic to our work. Rather, I feel this way because this organization, its strategies, and its projects are at the top of the list of my answers to the question, “How do we end abortion?” That, after all, is the goal to which I have devoted my life and ministry, and therefore I spend every waking hour striving for that goal and urging others to do the same. When an organization is effective in advancing toward that goal, it is a privilege not only to be associated with it, but to help to lead it to more growth.

I am also delighted to serve on the board of CBR because I can think of no leader with whom I am more eager to work than Gregg Cunningham. Since we first met and began talking about abortion and the pro-life movement, I have found a remarkable similarity in the way we think about these issues and formulate the path forward for our movement. I appreciate working with Gregg because he tolerates no wasted energy or effort. We are not in a game; we are in a war. Gregg acts like it and rightly expects other activists to do likewise. It is a joy to serve on the board of an organization about which I can have the utmost confidence that every penny, every moment, and every ounce of energy is going only to the quickest and most effective route to ending the killing. Not only that, but I serve eagerly with this organization because I know the kind of people with whom I want to—and have every intention of—celebrating the victory in our lifetime.

Fr. Frank Pavone, Priests for Life National Director

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“This will change my life a lot, but when I see the picture of the baby the same age as mine, it makes me realize again that I can't do that to my baby.”
–University of California, Irvine, student who saw CBR's Genocide Awareness Project on her campus



Cal State University Long Beach students had a repeat visit of GAP on May 12-13 and the display was even larger than 2009.

Events

- July 12-13 - GAP at NAACP convention

Prayer Requests

- God's blessing on all CBR volunteers - they make our projects successful.
- Blessing on Fr. Frank Pavone.

Thank you for supporting CBR. This plea from the psalmist is surely one that preborn babies would speak if they had voices: “Protect my life from the threat of the enemy.” Psalm 64:1b

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