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Gregg & Lois Cunningham

Center for Bio-Ethical Reform

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# Why Abortion Photos are Essential



500,000 marchers participated in the 40th Annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. and all of them proceeded by CBR's GAP display.

**O**n January 22, the *National Catholic Register's* online edition published a hit-piece intended to discredit CBR's use of large abortion photo signs at the March for Life in Washington, D.C. What follows is CBR Executive Director Gregg Cunningham's rebuttal, although the *Register* will only print a 500 word version:

In a *National Catholic Register* essay titled "Eight Reasons Not to Use Graphic Abortion Images at the March for Life," Simcha Fisher breathlessly proposes one self-defeating solution to a litany of problems which exist largely in her fertile imagination. She concedes that "Americans are tragically ignorant about what abortion really is ..." but then lurches to the head-scratching conclusion that abortion photos should never be shown in public -- and only in private "as a last resort." Ms. Fisher, after forty years of failed effort to outlaw abortion, and a body-count reaching more than fifty million dead babies, this *IS* the last resort!

Had Martin Luther King embraced Ms. Fisher's strangled strategy for social reform, showing lynching photos only in private, and only "as a last resort," black people would still be drinking from segregated water fountains. Dr. King instead commissioned the making of sickening photos and then urged their widespread publication and broadcast. The result was the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Ms. Fisher says she decries the public display of abortion photos because, for instance, children attend the March for

Life. It is true that tens of thousands of children are bussed into the March for Life each year from east coast Catholic middle schools and high schools. Many are genuinely devout and authentically pro-life, but others are only nominally Catholic, if Catholic at all. Some are, or soon will become, sexually active. Some are, or soon will become, pregnant. More than a few will abort. Some of them would change their minds if we showed them the indescribable horror of abortion. Guttmacher says 20% of abortions are performed on Evangelicals, and that Catholics are 29% more likely to abort than Evangelicals. Many of the students who attend the March are only vaguely pro-life, if pro-life at all. And substantial numbers are merely seeking a light-hearted road trip which frees them from the drudgery of school. Parents and teachers have told us our abortion photos sobered previously insouciant students. Failing to meaningfully educate them during this fleeting teaching opportunity would be irresponsibility at the level of literal life and death.

Many of these kids know little and will learn even less about the humanity of the baby or the inhumanity of abortion by listening to the yawn-inducing political speeches which have become a tedious feature of March proceedings. Abortion pictures save lives because they teach important, complex facts which can only be transmitted visually. A shocking picture will also be recalled more vividly and for longer periods of time than even the most inspiring speech. What words are adequate to describe the horror of abortion? How many Catholic school teachers are willing to show these kids the

*(Continued on page 2)*



CBR-Maryland volunteers, Ellen and Bridgitta, educate people who attended the Inauguration on January 21.



*Rebecca Kiessling from Save the One (at left in white jacket) chose to stand under the new CBR rape sign during the March for Life. She and others conceived from rape bravely held signs that put faces to this important issue.*

### PHOTOS ARE ESSENTIAL... (Continued from page 1)

truth in the classroom? If we don't teach them here and now, they may not learn the terrible truth until it is too late -- or never learn it at all.

Children who are old enough to be threatened by abortion are certainly old enough to benefit from the protection afforded by seeing abortion pictures. We must muster the moral courage to grant them that protection.

Parents who don't want their children to see the horror of abortion should simply not bring them to the March, just as responsible parents selectively control their children's access to certain categories of television content. Arranging for a baby-sitter is a small price to pay to save the life of another parent's preborn child. Ms. Fisher's "slasher movies" glorify gratuitous violence. Our abortion pictures stigmatize abortion violence. That is a huge and vital distinction. We have countless testimonies from women who argue that nothing less compelling than abortion photos would have saved their children's lives.

Ms. Fisher says we should hide the horror of abortion because post-abortive women attend the March. The CDC reports that nearly half of all abortions are performed on post-abortive women. Post-abortive women are, therefore, among the women most at risk of aborting. They are, consequently, the women who most need to see the terrible truth, lest they kill again. Many post-abortive women (and men) have told us they now realize that visualizing what they had done forced them to stop trying to rationalize it. Only then were they able to confess and repent, so they could be forgiven and healed.

Public relations issues also trouble Ms. Fisher. She wants to be admired and she falsely accuses us of discrediting our movement by behaving in a less than admirable manner. I have attended the March for Life for decades and I have never seen anyone display abortion photos while "shouting, condemning or terrifying," as she intimates.

She also asserts the odd fiction that abortion pictures "sometimes push women into abortions." Ms. Fisher illogically describes as "undecided" a pregnant woman who has already decided to schedule an abortion appointment, long before seeing our abortion photos on the clinic sidewalk, which appointment she has already decided to travel to the clinic to keep. This woman wouldn't be at the clinic if she hadn't already decided to abort. Now the question is merely whether she is ambivalent enough to be dissuaded from that decision. Any woman who can look at an abortion photo and still subject her child to the horror of abortion is highly unlikely to be converted by a sidewalk counselor's mere words. That is a delusional fantasy.

Of course pictures are not a panacea. Many women so harden their hearts that no influence can reverse their decision to abort. But attributing their abortion decisions to abortion photos is a contention for which there exists not a shred of credible evidence. I have never heard anyone say, "I never accepted abortion until I saw a picture of it." I have heard countless people say, "I always accepted abortion until I saw a picture of it." The pro-life movement is sadly ignoring the lessons we should take from multiple studies which have repeatedly shown that stomach-churning, nightmare-inducing pictures are an effective means of reducing smoking. We know experientially that abortion photos also reduce abortion.

She then says, "People see what they want to see." No, they don't. They see what we show them. Ms. Fisher says we shouldn't use abortion photos because "pro-choicers" counter that our photos are "fake." But who cares what "pro-choicers" say? "Pro-choicers" are not our target audience. We are aiming at the broad mass of Americans in the mythical middle. Holocaust deniers say death camp photos are fake but few in the general public accept that transparently false claim. And few agree that our abortion photos are fake. For thirteen years, I have personally stood in the presence of hundreds of thousands of college students as they streamed past our huge abortion photos on their way to class. I have looked into their faces and I have seen their genuinely horrified expressions. They obviously know that what they are seeing is authentic, and all the more so because those who cry "fake" are often the same people who hold bed sheets in front of our signs, in a desperate attempt to cover up our photos. Why would pro-aborts try to cover up photos they really believed to be counterfeit?

**"I have never heard an abortionist say now is a bad time to kill babies. But Christian leaders often tell me that now is a bad time to save them."**

**Gregg Cunningham,  
CBR Executive Director**

The history of social reform is the history of horrifying pictures: Pictures of slaves being tortured to death. Pictures of Native American women and children massacred by the U.S. Cavalry. Pictures of African Americans beaten to their knees for trying to register to vote. Pictures of little children suffering terrible abuses in American coal mines and factories. These pictures traumatized children just like those Ms. Fisher seeks to shelter, but the imagery also convinced the country that the victims were real people, fully entitled to rights of personhood. It also persuaded the electorate that the injustices depicted therein were sufficiently egregious to warrant criminalization.



It is impossible to change public policy without first changing public opinion. Unlike civil rights activists, etc., we don't enjoy the benefit of a sympathetic news media, eager to reveal the injustices against which we campaign. If we don't expose the truth, no one else will. Why, then, have March for Life officials tried to push our photos as far as possible from their sector of the Capitol Mall? Why are so many Christian churches, and so many Christian schools, and so much of the pro-life movement so deeply committed to helping Planned Parenthood conceal the most compelling evidence that elective abortion is an indefensible act of violence which kills a baby? Is it because they wish to be liked -- or at least not abused? Historically, effective reformers are seldom liked, and liked reformers are seldom effective, no matter how graciously they do or do not behave. But what terrible injustice has ever been outlawed by covering it up?

We should pray, flat on our faces, that we never become so craven as to suppress evidence of injustice, for fear of persecution. Ephesians 5:11 commands us, without qualification, to "expose the deeds of darkness," not to show them only privately, and only as a last resort. Responsibility for the terrible longevity of history's most horrific slaughter does not rest entirely upon our adversaries. We will be judged for our timidity, perhaps as harshly as they will be judged for their barbarity -- by history and by Providence.

**Thank you for helping us seek  
justice for preborn babies.  
The Church must rise up in 2013!**

*"Do not pervert justice by siding  
with the crowd." EXODUS 23:2B*

- Pray for our new project directors in Kentucky, the Carolinas and Virginia
- Pray for more volunteers in 2013

## Events

### Genocide Awareness Project (GAP)

Jan. 21 Inauguration project, Washington, D.C.  
Jan. 25 March for Life, Washington, D.C.

### Corporate Accountability Project (CAP)

Jan. 5, 12, 19, 26 Marriott Hotel, Dana Point, CA

### "Choice" sign outreaches

Jan. 22 NARAL Virginia "celebration"  
Weekly Maine - Portland (Fridays), Augusta (Thursdays),  
Bangor (Wednesdays)  
Weekly Baltimore, Germantown, Berwyn Heights, and  
Rockville, Maryland.

Also at Northern Virginia Metro stops, Washington, D.C.,  
and Old Town Alexandria, Virginia.

### Training Seminars and Speaking Engagements

Jan. 19 Redefine conference (student-organized), Phoenix,  
AZ - Speaker CBR-Arizona Director Jason Walsh  
Jan. 27 Sermon at Roosevelt Community Church, Phoenix,  
AZ, Speaker CBR-Arizona Director Jason Walsh  
<http://vimeo.com/album/1956560/video/58338518>

# March for Life and Inauguration Projects in Washington, D.C.

**D**roves of people who arrived for the Inauguration on January 21 saw our 12 by 6 foot signs positioned at Union Station. These signs feature an image of the president and one of his quotes, next to an image of an aborted child. The shock and disbelief on many faces was obvious.

Three days later, marchers at the 40th March for Life on January 25, 2013 proceeded slowly down Constitution Avenue. Midway, by the E. Barrett Prettyman Courthouse, they came upon CBR's Genocide Awareness Project (GAP).

This eighty-foot long by fourteen-foot high GAP photo display contrasts abortion with historically recognized forms of genocide. For many marchers, it was the first time they'd seen what abortion does to preborn babies. Staffing the display were: CBR-Southeast Director Fletcher Armstrong, CBR Project Directors Nicole Cooley and Maggie Egger (Virginia) and Brooke McGowan (Carolinas), CBR-Maryland staffer Jonathan Darnel and volunteers. They also handed out over 20,000 "Choice" cards which gave people our website, a QR code to watch our video, and an abortion photo with which to educate others.

As the 500,000 marchers filed by GAP, CBR-Maryland Director Kurt Linnemann used amplified sound to challenge marchers to:  
1) Use pictures of abortion victims to dramatize the injustice; and  
2) Engage the Church to help end abortion.



*CBR-Arizona Director Jason Walsh gives a presentation at the student organized "Redefine Conference" on January 19 in Phoenix, Arizona.*

“Do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd.” Exodus 23:2b

[AbortionNO.org](http://AbortionNO.org)



*CBR Project Directors Nicole Cooley and Brooke McGowan brought 8 CBR “Choice” signs and lined both sides of the street to put a damper on the NARAL Virginia “celebration” at the Capitol in Richmond, Virginia, on January 22. They were joined by VA Family Foundation and Concerned Women of America.*

**Address corrections**

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**Electronic funds donations**

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**Credit card donations**

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**Product order inquiries**

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