



*Collection*

## **Beefy's on the Green**

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## *Beefy's on the Green: An Explanation*

What sort of discussion can one have at a place called *Beefy's on the Green*? JFA trainers John Michener, Timothy Brahm, and Steve Wagner found out recently when their pleasant dinner conversation (actually, it was a good bit more heated than it sounds) became an outreach event. Read John's version first, which includes the basic story, but read all three to hear what each member of the team learned that evening.

Then read what JFA volunteer Jordan Newhouse did with the story. For her, the Beefy's on the Green story, along with a movie she saw, presented her with a challenge to talk to a stranger...tomorrow. Read her story in the Impact Report entitled, "Jordan Crosses the Jordan."

The Beefy's on the Green story, along with Jordan's extension of the story, provide each of us with the same challenge: Will we take a step to use the training we received during JFA Seat Work and Feet Work events to do Repeat Work? Will we talk to someone in our everyday sphere of influence about important matters of the heart?

Sometimes my job as a missionary finds me asking the same question made famous by a 1980's ad campaign from Wendy's: "Where's the beef?"

I sat with a nurse, a pastor, a young philosopher, and a teacher around an iron picnic table on the patio of *Beefy's on the Green*, a restaurant north of San Antonio. The oak trees spread a canopy above, and the setting sun shone on a squirrel playing in the Saint Augustine grass next to our table.

Speaking of Saint Augustine, the topic of conversation was theology, ranging from original sin and the Trinity, to what we must believe about God to be saved. We were the only ones on the patio. Five different Christians...five different points of view. After more than an hour, Steve, the teacher, became frustrated.

"It's crazy the way we sit here debating this stuff like it matters so much when that restaurant is full of lost and confused people," Steve said.

As if on cue, a dozen teenagers fresh from the lake erupted onto the patio and began to fill the wooden picnic tables near us. They were still in their cut-offs and swimsuits and sporting fresh sunburns. I stepped over to the nearest table.

"Hey y'all. We were just discussing theology at our table. Would you like to give us your views? What is God like?" I asked.

Just then, the obvious leader of the pack emerged from inside. He strode with confidence. He flashed a winsome smile which revealed his perfect teeth. Muscular and towering over the rest, he sported a molded straw cowboy hat with a turkey feather jutting from its band. In the instant it took him to step near the table, I knew that the rest of the kids would follow him anywhere. His name was Luke.

"Would you like to weigh in?" I asked. "Who is God, and what is he like?"



"Oh, man! I love questions like this," he said. "Hey, Caleb, come over here and get in on this."

Caleb was Luke's little brother and charismatic-leader-in-training. At the same time, my friends Steve and Tim the philosopher joined the group as well.

Over the next several minutes of discussion it became clear that Luke and his cadre were Christians of some sort.

"Luke, I want to invite you and your friends to join us tomorrow for our seminar which teaches Christians how to talk about abortion without being weird. I think you'd really enjoy it. By the way, what do you think about abortion?" I said.

"That's a tough question. I don't think it's right, but I don't know. See, I'm older than these other kids. I have some life experiences, you know, that give me some wisdom about things."

"How old are you, Luke?"

"I'm twenty," he said.

I glanced at Steve and Tim. All of us were trying to contain grins. Luke continued.

"I know this girl who is mentally challenged. She likes to party and hang around the wrong

kind of people. She went to a party one weekend with a guy who took advantage of her, and she got pregnant. She's in no position to be having a kid. She wouldn't even know how to take care of a kid. She needs to be able to make that choice, right?"

"You're probably right that this girl should not be raising a child, but let's imagine for a moment that she already has another one-year-old baby. Should she be allowed to kill that baby because she or others believe she should not be raising a child?"

"Whoa! I love these Socratarian questions you're using on me."

"Yes, Socrates liked to ask questions to reveal truth. So, help me answer the question at hand. What reason would justify killing an innocent human being in the womb?"

The conversation continued until Luke's and Caleb's burgers had grown cold, but we had given them something else to chew on instead. We pray that this impromptu outreach at *Beefy's* will have a future impact on the young people who listened to this discussion as well as those who participated in it.

The conversation with Luke and Caleb reminded me of the way the apostle Paul characterized a conversation he had with the Corinthians when he said:

Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it." (1 Corin. 3:1-2)

Then later in the chapter he said:

Do not deceive yourselves... For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written: "He catches the wise in their craftiness;" and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of the wise are futile." (v. 18-20)

Like the wisdom of the Corinthians, the wisdom of my new friend Luke needed some adjustment, and like the Corinthians, what he needed was milk. Perhaps Wendy's was not so

original after all. Perhaps it was simply paraphrasing Paul when it asked, "Where's the beef?"

### Epilogue to Beefy's

After the impromptu outreach at *Beefy's on the Green*, we climbed into our car to leave, and there was a prolonged silence. Then Tim said, "I feel convicted. The other stuff we were discussing before the kids arrived is still important, but is it as important as bringing lost people into the kingdom, or as important as teaching confused Christians basic, fundamental truths such as the sacredness of human life?"

While I was busy thinking about milk and meat and wisdom, my colleagues Tim and Steve were reflecting on their own experiences at *Beefy's*. They have written about other points that we can take away from this story, and you can link to their letters at [www.jfaweb.org/Beefy](http://www.jfaweb.org/Beefy).

### Tornado Alley

A huge tornado struck yesterday just seventeen miles from my church office. My family is fine, but many are suffering terribly. Local churches are rallying to help the victims. Keep us in your prayers.

### Support Report

I continue to be broken-hearted over the thousands of babies who are being killed every day, and I desperately want the killing to stop. Thank you for helping me offer a solution!

Please consider supporting this work financially if you are not. My pro-life ministry will be fully funded with an additional \$1,130.00 per month.





Dear Friend,

In my first six months of working with Justice For All full-time, I have had hundreds of conversations. This month I want to share with you about my brief time with Luke, the most memorable of all my conversations this year, and the one that had the greatest impact on me. It wasn't a dramatic scene in front of a large exhibit on a college campus. It was just a friendly conversation at a restaurant called Beefy's on the Green. As far as I know, no souls were hanging in the balance. It didn't have profound philosophical complexity. But God has a way of using what is foolish in the world to shame the wise (or perhaps in my case, to shame the young twenty-something-year-old punks that think they're wise). My colleague John Michener shares the details of the encounter in his newsletter. Please take a few minutes to read his letter (linked [here](#)) before continuing to read mine.



I was quiet for a while as we left the restaurant. I remembered years of theological conversations where someone pointed out, "This is fine to talk about, as long as we don't forget what really matters: loving Jesus and sharing the gospel with others." I always responded by affirming that, "Of course that's what matters the most," and sometimes thinking arrogantly to myself, "How simplistic and obvious." In one way, that's true: It's easy to affirm that the gospel is more important to people's lives than theology. But knowing how to put that into practice is neither simplistic nor obvious, at least for me.

Our conversation with Luke was something of a success story for Steve and John, but not for me. Steve recognized that we needed to do something other than debate theology, and John took that challenge and struck up a conversation with a group of strangers. I wandered into the discussion a little way through and participated, but if it had not been for my colleagues, I'd have sat on that patio, accusing them of theological insanity, all night long.

**Would you treat the people around you differently if you knew they were on a path to spend eternity separated from God?**

Don't misunderstand me, I think theology matters a great deal. I even think God designed me to be fascinated by it. I don't think it's a mistake to love theology, study it, or even to debate it. As I confessed in the car as we were driving away from Beefy's, the mistake is to treat theology like a game, or a puzzle to be solved, especially when there are hurting, confused, and lost people all around us. I think it's worth spending hours trying to understand the nature of God, but it isn't worth missing the chance to talk to someone who doesn't know God at all.

We challenged Luke with the question of whether or not he would treat the situation with his friend differently if she were considering killing her one-year-old. I'd like to challenge you to consider whether you would treat the people around you differently if you knew they were on a path to spend eternity separated from God.

I wrote the first draft of this letter the day before I flew to Tucson. I do not like talking to people next to me on a plane, but as I went through security, I (slightly grumpily) told my colleague Joanna that I was going to have to tell someone on the plane about Jesus because I just wrote this newsletter. Shortly after our plane left the ground, Joanna pulled cards out of her bag so we could play a game. Sitting on the other side of me was a man in his late twenties named Carl, whom I had already briefly greeted. In the absence of any better ideas for a way to start a conversation, I invited Carl to join us in our game. He pleasantly accepted.



We talked briefly about each other's work. He was pro-life, and he seemed to have a positive attitude toward my description of Justice for All, but it didn't naturally evolve into much of a conversation. He made a comment about not being very religious, but I hesitated. In the moment, I couldn't think of a non-awkward way to pursue that subject.

As I was in the midst of losing a card game to this total stranger, I asked myself, "Would I treat this man differently if I really believed he was on a path to spend an eternity separated from God? Would I care so much about him thinking I was weird?" I prayed for wisdom and for the right words. I couldn't think of a natural way to bring the topic back to religion, so finally I just went for broke and said, "So I know this may sound kind of weird, and some people wouldn't want to talk about it, so if you don't, just say so; I have a thick skin. What do you think about Jesus?" To my surprise, he was happy to have a conversation about Jesus. His wife had recently bought a Bible and they were reading through it.

**"So I know this may sound kind of weird, and some people wouldn't want to talk about it, so if you don't, just say so; I have a thick skin. What do you think about Jesus?"**

Joanna and I talked with him for the rest of the flight about Jesus, shared the case for the Resurrection, and tried to explain some of the confusing aspects of Christianity. I gave him my contact information, and I hope I hear from him.

If you're anything like me, the thought of starting a conversation with strangers is terrifying. Don't assume I'm full of courage; usually I have an exhibit or a poll table to help me start conversations. Maybe you'd like to do what I'm suggesting, but you don't know where to start. Here's a simple option: *just once this month*, go into a Starbucks, spend five bucks on a cup of coffee, and ask God if He wants you to talk to someone. Consider walking up to a stranger and asking, "Hey, a friend of mine had a conversation recently about God and I was wondering if you could take a minute to share your opinion. Do you think God exists? If so, what is he like?"

What do you have to lose? What do *they* have to gain?

In Christ,  
**Tim**

P.S. In his latest newsletter, Steve shares his own reflection on what he learned through this experience. Read it here: [www.jfaweb.org/Beefy](http://www.jfaweb.org/Beefy)

### Recent Projects and Updates

- **Support-Raising Update:** I am currently at 85% of my support-raising goal! Thank you so much for generously supporting me and making conversations with people like Luke possible. If you haven't already, please prayerfully consider joining my regular [support team](#).
- **Appearances on Pro-Life Podcast:** *Life Report* is the best pro-life podcast out there, and I'm not just saying that because my brother, Josh Brahm, is the host. It's an excellent resource and a great way to keep your mind engaged for a half hour at a time while you do laundry (at least, that's what I usually do when I listen to it). Last February, I had the pleasure of recording four episodes with Josh, all of which are now available (episodes 168-171). You can listen to them on iTunes by searching for "Life Report," or go directly to <http://www.prolifepodcast.net> to watch the videos.
- **JFA Philosophy Team VS The Toughest Pro-Choice Argument:** One of the many aspects of my job that I love is working with smart and passionate people to solve hard problems. In the last two years, we have invested a great deal of time into trying to respond to what we consider to be the most difficult pro-choice argument: "Even if the unborn is human, a woman can have an abortion because she has the right to refuse the use of her body to anyone that needs to use it, and especially in the case of rape."

Steve Wagner recently posted his essay online, titled "De Facto Guardian," representing the JFA team. It is an excellent piece of work, in my opinion the best response to this argument currently available. You can read it at [www.jfaweb.org/DFG](http://www.jfaweb.org/DFG).



This is a picture of me in studio with my brother Josh and Gabi Vehrs of Right to Life of Central California, recording four episodes of *Life Report*. Check them out at [www.prolifepodcast.net](http://www.prolifepodcast.net)!

# Afraid to Talk to People? Try Body Building.

STEPHEN WAGNER'S MONTHLY UPDATE

MAY 2013



Dear Friend,

There we were, basking in the cool air as the sun began to set. We were in the last stages of a meal at a burger joint called Beefy's on the Green just north of San Antonio, Texas. My colleagues John, Tim, Daryl, Colleen, and I were discussing intricate questions of what one must believe or not believe to be saved, who God is, and which views are orthodox. After two hours, I literally threw up my hands, not meaning to give up on the conversation, but out of passion:

*I can't help but think that we're sitting here debating theology while there's a whole bunch of people in that restaurant back there who are going to Hell. I think we should go talk to some of them.*

I got up, took my water cup, and turned towards the restaurant. I had committed myself. Now what was I going to do?

I walked into the restaurant, refilled my water cup, and started back. I saw people at each step. People I had proclaimed might be going to Hell. Did I care enough to do the uncomfortable work of starting a conversation? Would I risk offending someone's sensibilities in hopes that some might be saved?

I looked out the glass doors. My friend John, somewhat more gregarious and daring than I, appeared to be mixing it up with people on the patio. I opened the door and asked him what was happening. As he started to explain, a young man walked out the doors after me, and John immediately brought him up to speed:

"I was just talking with your friends here about who God is. Do you want to weigh in?"

The man's name was Luke. A thirty-minute conversation ensued...while Luke's food began to get cold.

John's account of the story includes details of the conversations we had that night at Beefy's, and Tim's account includes some sobering lessons for all of us as ambassadors for Christ. I encourage you to read both. You can find them at [www.jfaweb.org/Beefy](http://www.jfaweb.org/Beefy). For now, I want to tell you about one of the things I learned that night — something that gives me both peace about my own fears of talking to people, and a next step to compensate for them.

How did the outreach happen that night at Beefy's? I don't know that it would have happened if we hadn't



Once I'm in the conversation, I'm evidently right at home. It's starting the conversation that's hardest for me. Instead of giving up on ever having conversations, though, I work together with others who are more comfortable with starting them. During campus outreach, Justice For All dialogue tools help, too.

To see what's animating me in this conversation, see the last section of the paper I recently posted at [www.jfaweb.org/DFG](http://www.jfaweb.org/DFG).



JUSTICE FOR ALL TRAINS THOUSANDS TO MAKE ABORTION UNTHINKABLE FOR MILLIONS, ONE PERSON AT A TIME.  
WEB: [WWW.JFAWEB.ORG](http://WWW.JFAWEB.ORG) BLOG: [WWW.HBMM.NET](http://WWW.HBMM.NET) EMAIL: [STEVE@JFAWEB.ORG](mailto:STEVE@JFAWEB.ORG) OFFICE: 316-683-6426

spent time talking theology, orthodoxy, and soteriology. I don't know that it would have happened if the people in our group hadn't been passionate about those things. The pressure wouldn't have built up in all of us to do something with the great truths we were discussing.

I don't know that the outreach time would have happened either if I hadn't gotten passionate enough to throw my hands in the air and get out of my chair. And if John hadn't followed right after me and started asking people what they thought about the topics we had been discussing, I might never have had the nerve. This was what I had said I wanted to do, but I didn't know how. In fact, I was scared stiff to start the conversation with any of those people.

Once I'm in the conversation, I'm right at home. Before it begins, though, I fear I'll be interrupting something. Doesn't talking about abortion or Jesus always interrupt something? So I hesitate. I ponder the first question I'll ask. I try to judge from appearances who might welcome the conversation. I'll do *anything* to avoid breaking the ice and starting the conversation.

That's the beauty of this time at Beefy's, though. I could beat myself up for being afraid to start the conversation and needing John to play that role. But I won't. God made the Body of Christ to function in *just* this way.

So, I suggest you stop beating yourself up if you are afraid to accomplish any one part of the conversation. Instead, find at least one brother or sister in your church body who shares your passion for the lost. Perhaps this brother or sister will feel more comfortable starting the conversation. Perhaps you will excel at asking the right questions that help the person get closer to the truth. Another friend might play the role of praying for you during your conversations. As it happens, none of you may be adequate at sensing the relational dynamics in the conversation. You can then look to God to provide someone who has more confidence in this area.

The team here at JFA also wants to help you make that outreach conversation happen. Although not everyone on the JFA team is gregarious like John Michener is, every one of us is purposeful in starting the conversation in our outreach events. The members of JFA's staff also have strengths that can fill in where your weaknesses cripple you. So, if you need encouragement, come and spend a few days with us on a mission trip. The heart of our mission trips is the heart of our mission: training you to create those unforgettable conversations that make abortion unthinkable, one person at a time.

What's the solution, then, for those of us who are afraid to talk to people? Body building. You won't have to pump iron at a restaurant with a name that sounds like a gym, though. Build the body of Christ. Whether on a JFA mission trip or in your church community, this is the key to taking your passion for the lost and turning it into real conversations that help people find Christ. I pray that the Holy Spirit will help you see the brothers and sisters that he's placed in your midst to function with you as the Body of Christ. Perhaps in order to find them, you'll need to throw your hands up one evening over dinner and see who will follow you into an unplanned outreach event.

Looking for the next opportunity,

*Stephen*

Stephen Wagner

P.S. Reflections by John and Tim are linked along with mine at [www.jfaweb.org/Beefy](http://www.jfaweb.org/Beefy). Use the link to share the story of how our out-of-reach discussion became outreach.

**Thank You for Your Support!**

# Jordan Crosses the Jordan

*Training thousands to make abortion unthinkable for millions...*

## Impact Report

JUSTICE  
FOR ALL

May 2014

Jordan Newhouse has been participating in JFA Seat Work and Feet Work events for years in Arizona. Recently, she was inspired to start a conversation with a total stranger without the aid of JFA events or JFA mentors. In this *Impact Report*, you'll hear about what motivated Jordan to take this next step of ministry that we call "Repeat Work."

Jordan has also decided to take an additional next step of serving as a one-year intern with JFA in Kansas. We're elated. Please pray with us for her safe journey next month. Pray that God will use the year ahead to help her grow in her ability to pass on to others the skills of dialogue and the heart for people that she expresses in the story below.

- Stephen Wagner, Director of Training

*...one person at a time.*

Jordan Newhouse, a JFA volunteer in Tucson, Arizona recently sent me this email message:

Tonight I saw [a] movie...that made me ask myself the question, "If I believe God's not dead, but the people around me will be sooner or later, what am I doing about it?" This question made me think of the one you posed to your colleagues at Beefy's. I had read all three newsletters some time ago, but went back and reread them tonight. [See [www.jfaweb.org/Beefy](http://www.jfaweb.org/Beefy) to read the story.]

I believe I need to talk to someone tomorrow—start a conversation with a stranger and see where God leads it. Tim, in his newsletter...suggested Starbucks. You suggested not going alone. My friend and I are going out tomorrow, and she suggested Starbucks.

So all that to say, would you please pray for me and my friend, that we would be bold to follow God's leading? I'm asking you in writing because if I do, then I'll have to update you—so it's for accountability.

I read Jordan's email with interest. The story about our impromptu evangelism at Beefy's on the Green was special to me. I was glad to hear that the story inspired Jordan to think that she, too, could reach out to a stranger in her own neighborhood. But here's something that's even more exciting: *Jordan followed through!* She reported:

My friend and I did go to Starbucks, and I talked with two people. The first conversation lasted only a couple of minutes, but the second was longer—about a half hour!

I asked Kristen...if I could sit with her, and she said I could.



**Jordan helps a student at Arizona State University (ASU) learn to use the JFA Exhibit Brochure to change hearts.**

Photo: Cheryl Caffarella Wilson — [ccwdigitalartistry.com](http://ccwdigitalartistry.com)

To dive into the conversation, I said, “Last night I went to see a movie with a couple of friends, and it got me thinking. I wanted to ask a complete stranger a question, just to get a different perspective. The movie was called *God’s Not Dead*. What do you think of that idea—is God dead?”

Basically, her answer was that it depends on what you believe. You can choose what to believe, and it will affect your life, but it can be different from what someone else believes, and “it’s all good.” That’s the sort of thing she kept coming back to as we talked about everything from how things were created to what happens after you die. It was a very interesting conversation with good give and take. I left her my email, so maybe it will continue. She did say she thought it was cool that I was crazy enough to start the conversation!

Engaging friends, family members, and total strangers in conversation about the things that matter most is a challenge. It’s the sort of boundary that the Jordan River was to the Israelites. It feels impassable, for emotional and spiritual reasons. Whether we’re discussing abortion or what happens after death, we don’t want to mess things up, so we often don’t start the conversation at all. We also don’t want to bother people, and as a result, our politeness helps them only to languish in a life without God, in a life without truth.

How was Jordan able to cross this Jordan River into a Promised Land of seeking to save the lost? While it’s not apparent on the surface of her two emails, Jordan and her community worked hard to prepare the way for this seemingly simple moment. Jordan took part in many Seat Work and Feet Work events with JFA in Tucson and Phoenix. Faithful JFA supporters Paul and Cheryl Wilson encouraged her and created frequent opportunities for additional local outreach where she could continue to practice. Because Jordan invested her time wisely in the right kinds of training activities, Repeat Work became more than possible—it became her next natural step as an ambassador for Christ.



**While another JFA volunteer listens, Jordan visits with a student at ASU in February. Jordan is coming to JFA’s Kansas office next month to begin a one-year internship!**

Photo: Cheryl Caffarella Wilson — [ccwdigitalartistry.com](http://ccwdigitalartistry.com)

*-Stephen Wagner, Director of Training*

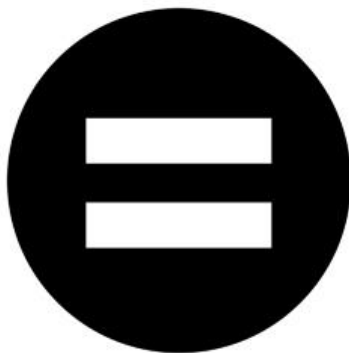
Note: Jordan’s poem “I can agree...with him?” illustrates the heart of JFA’s approach to dialogue, and the poem synthesizes two influences especially important to Jordan in her formation as an ambassador for Christ: the Bible and outreach. Find it here: [www.jfaweb.org/Jordan-Poem](http://www.jfaweb.org/Jordan-Poem).

**Read the Story that Inspired Jordan.**  
[www.jfaweb.org/Beefy](http://www.jfaweb.org/Beefy)



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Justice For All trains thousands  
to make abortion unthinkable for millions,  
one person at a time.

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