

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.

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.

