



The Kulas Kronicle



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When they are heartless, how will you respond?

In March, as part of a full month of small outreach events, JFA surveyed students at Wichita State University (WSU). It was the same day that an “Abortion Positive” rally was being put on by a pro-choice organization at WSU.

I approached “Zane” and “Pablo,” but initially Zane didn’t want to participate in the conversation. He said, “I am from another country, Yemen, and my views likely are very different than yours. Most people are offended when I express my opinions.”

After I assured Zane that I was interested in hearing his perspective, he shared his belief, that, “Abortion should be legal through all nine months of pregnancy and for any reason.” While I have heard this view many times over the years, it is not shared by the vast majority of people.

I challenged Zane’s extreme statement by asking a question. “I assume you agree that killing a child one day after birth is wrong. What significant difference is there in the child one day before birth and one day after birth?” Again, Zane shared another extreme view. He said that he didn’t see a difference, but added that he believed it would be permissible for a mother to kill her newborn even up to one or two years after birth.

I was struck by how callous Zane seemed to be. I wasn’t certain if he was serious about his comments at first, but ultimately I concluded that he was. His ideas about human life were not just uncommon, but also dangerous. We

continued to discuss abortion and infanticide for a good bit. Then at one point in the conversation, he shared a disturbing example of his perspective saying, “Imagine if my friend and I were both given guns and were instructed that we had an option: Either one of us could kill the other person, or both of us would die. If I had to make the choice between me and my friend right here, I wouldn’t have a second thought. I would kill my friend and save myself.”

Dumbfounded and uncertain of how to help Zane, I turned to Pablo. Earlier on, Pablo had shared that he was a Christian and totally pro-life. I had asked him if he was aware of his friend’s extreme views. At that point, they had both sort of laughed and acknowledged that they knew they held vastly different beliefs on a lot of topics. Pablo had said he hoped to help Zane change his outlook.

By this time in the conversation, I was becoming very concerned about Pablo and told him as much. It didn’t seem like Zane was willing to reconsider his position and he certainly wasn’t looking out for Pablo’s best interest. While it’s good to befriend people with different views, Zane’s willingness to put Pablo’s life at risk was a big red flag to me. I was not only worried about Pablo’s safety; I was also worried that he was becoming callous himself to the evil his friend supported. As views like this become more common, it’s too easy for Christians to lose their urgency in responding to them.

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When they are heartless, how will you respond? (cont.)

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To help Pablo consider that, I posed a more obvious scenario: "Imagine you had a friend that not only supported someone else's right to molesting a child, but confided in you that he would also be willing to do it, too. If he was serious about what he said, and uninterested in changing or getting help, wouldn't you take urgent action? You might alert authorities who could prevent him from harming others. You probably couldn't remain that person's friend in the same way because his views are dangerous and immoral. Now Zane isn't saying that he would kill a two-year old child, but would allow someone else to. And keep in mind, Zane did just say, that in a certain case, he wouldn't hesitate to kill *you*. That is dangerous."

I had no idea how that scenario would change the course of the conversation. Instead of Pablo responding, Zane jumped in. He then shared that he had been molested as a child.

Thinking of what Zane had been through, I immediately said, "It's very wrong that someone did that to you. I'm so sorry that that happened to you."

Zane went on to tell me, "It's an accepted kind of thing in my country and there's nothing you can do about it." However, he said he did believe that child molestation is wrong. For the first time in our conversation, he admitted that a harmful action toward another person could be wrong. Although at first it seemed like his conscience was beyond human reason, a glimmer of a moral clarity showed up at that moment.

Sensing that this might be a good opportunity to draw a clear connection between different parts of the conversation, I carefully said, "I understand that it's probably difficult to change that situation immediately. However, if this happened to someone you knew, wouldn't you feel compelled to step in on behalf of the child?"

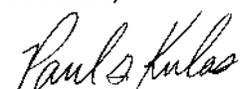
I was hopeful that, knowing what Zane had been through, he would see the importance of speaking up for others. I was additionally hopeful that he'd see that the underlying principle is the same with abortion - that violence against an innocent human being is wrong, and that we need to speak up for the vulnerable.

Sadly, although Zane responded that he'd be willing to intervene in certain cases, for the most part he seemed unmoved. However, I learned something from our conversation. Extreme views often stem from a history of pain, of being devalued by others in one's life. I believe that Zane was callous, partly because he had been treated unjustly. It seemed at first that Zane had no emotion and that he didn't care about anything. But in reality, he does care and he has feelings and concerns, especially when it comes to the injustices to which he's been subjected.

This is one reason JFA emphasizes compassion and listening. People who have been hurt often have trouble seeing what hope is there for them. It makes sense that their worldview would reflect this lack of hope and heartlessness. If we become annoyed in conversations with them, and respond by being heartless right back, we miss an important opportunity to break this awful cycle. We are not only trying to reach the mind, but also the heart.

Please pray for Zane, that he would see the value of human beings at all stages of life. And please pray for Pablo, that he would be wise and strong in the Lord, helping to replace Zane's callous outlook with the hope of Christ.

In Christ,



Paul G. Kulas