



# And Now...The Rest of the Story

*What's the Point of Open Mic?*



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STEPHEN WAGNER'S MONTHLY UPDATE

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Dear Friend,

Take a look at the [September 14 edition](#) of the daily paper from the University of Nebraska (Lincoln). I was pleasantly surprised to see my work on the open mic featured on the front page.

As with many images, though, this one doesn't tell the whole story.

Students were gathered in groups on the stairs outside of the Nebraska Union. The Justice For All Exhibit loomed large enough to be understood from 75 yards away. With the help of my colleague Paul, I turned on a wireless microphone and invited anyone in the university community to come and share anything they wanted to regarding abortion or the Exhibit.

The gentleman pictured at right walked up and shared some comments from his notebook. From time to time, he looked to a female friend for advice on how to respond to my questions. Finding it tiresome to try to communicate through him, she then started to explain her arguments to me directly (off the mic).



I invited her to share *on* the mic, and we began to discuss her views. Since she was sitting, I knelt down to be on her level, both literally and figuratively. I wanted to create a dialogue where we were equals seeking truth together.



JFA's open mic is very different from the dueling monologues of a typical radio or television talk show (or, the more common *monologue + captive-listener-posing-as-a-guest*). We invite people to join an interactive discussion where they present ideas and consider challenges. No cheap shots or talking over them. Instead, we listen to understand, ask questions with an open heart, and find common ground whenever possible. One of the most refreshing things is that we spend the time necessary to attempt to really understand what the person is trying to communicate.



The open mic format is similar to radio in that it's more fast-paced than a normal one-to-one conversation, but we don't sacrifice respect for the person in the process. It allows us to create dialogue with the campus student and model for our trained volunteers how they can do the same.

Thanks for partnering with me as I lead our team of mentor-trainers to pass on this dialogue approach to every volunteer, both during our seminar and through models like the open mic on campus.

In Christ,  
*Stephen*

LINKS:

- [Hear a similar open mic session to the one pictured above.](#)
- [Pray for upcoming events in Colorado, South Dakota, Oklahoma, and Texas](#) (click link for details)
- [Give a gift to help Steve train pro-life advocates to dialogue with those who disagree.](#) (designation 601)