

# Feet Work Changed My Life



JFA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY LETTER

JULY 2014

Dear Friend,

I can still feel it. There was this great sense of anticipation, the same excitement I felt when I was walking into my first rock concert as a youngster.

This was no concert, though. I was on a mission to save unborn children. It was June 2002, and the place was UCLA. I was walking onto Bruin Plaza for my first Justice For All Exhibit project.

Four years before, I had heard Greg Koukl on the radio for the first time. Through Greg and his organization, Stand to Reason (STR: [www.str.org](http://www.str.org)), I was amazed to find Christians who confronted doubts honestly and were careful not to make claims beyond what their evidence could support.

I volunteered at STR for a few years, devouring STR's tapes, articles, and books, including those of another STR speaker, Scott Klusendorf (now president of Life Training Institute: [www.prolifetraining.com](http://www.prolifetraining.com)). Soon, at the encouragement of Greg and Scott, I started raising support and working as a pro-life speaker for STR. Greg, Scott, and the STR community deeply influenced my approach to defending the unborn and interacting with those who disagree, and much of their influence is reflected in JFA's work to this day.

A few months into my work with STR, Scott introduced me to David Lee, the founder of Justice For All. I didn't realize it then, but David and Justice For All would soon dramatically shape my work as an apologist. How? By luring me out of the books and onto campus.

**“How can you train people to dialogue if you aren't engaging in dialogue yourself?”**

Now, stepping onto Bruin Plaza, I helped raise the 18-foot panels of the JFA Exhibit. Asking “What do you think about this Exhibit?” quickly led to “What do you think about abortion?” and I was immediately engaged in conversations with people who disagreed with me, practicing what I had been preaching in my presentations. I was soon hooked.

The next spring, I traveled to Kansas, carrying a portfolio of JFA training module drafts to show to David. I also joined JFA for outreach to the University of Kansas Medical Center, the University of Northern Colorado, and UCLA, training JFA volunteers in each city. Over the next five years, STR graciously allowed me to spend much of my time as a consultant to JFA, partnering with David Lee to craft the JFA training program. We focused on fine-tuning the seminar (the part of training that JFA now calls “Seat Work”) to prepare pro-life advocates to have conversations around the Justice For All Exhibit and beyond.



During those five years, there were a few instances in which I proposed that I should sometimes help JFA only with the seminar presentations, just like a public speaker. David was adamant that this would not work for JFA, and he maintained that outreach was essential to the training process. “How can you train people to dialogue if you aren't engaging in dialogue yourself?” he would ask.



JUSTICE FOR ALL — TRAINING THOUSANDS TO MAKE ABORTION UNTHINKABLE FOR MILLIONS, ONE PERSON AT A TIME

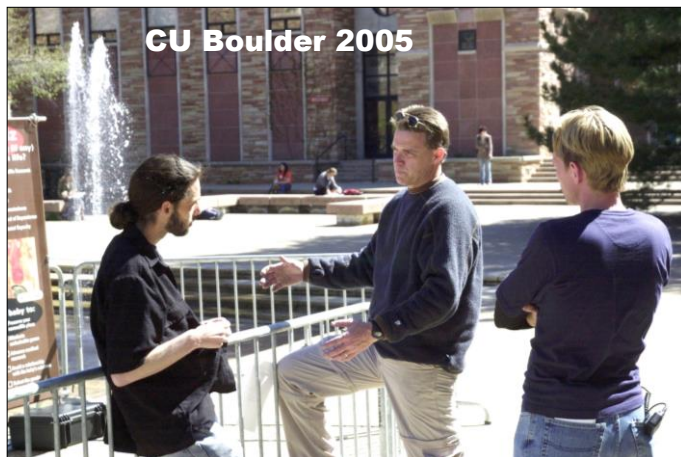
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David's question proved to be insightful. As I spent hour upon hour in front of the Justice For All Exhibit, I became convinced that outreach (what JFA now calls "Feet Work") is essential to training. Outreach events allowed me to study under skilled pro-life mentors like David Lee (see photo below), and they allowed me to engage in my own conversations.

I was energized. I saw the great need to change minds about the unborn, and I found I could help. But something else happened. I was sobered. My arguments didn't always work. As I looked people in the eye – people whose viewpoints I had been reading about, hearing lectures about, and indeed, teaching others about – something happened. I started to listen.

**I was forced to try to make my arguments persuasive, not just to myself, but also to other people, within the context of their worldviews.**

When I listened, things weren't always as simple as I had thought. I was forced to confront nuances in arguments that I hadn't read about or imagined. I was forced to try to make my arguments persuasive, not just to myself, but also to other people, within the context of their worldviews. I had to try to find common ground with them. In short, when I listened, I had to temper all of my arguments with a concern for the person to whom I was speaking.



These experiences at Feet Work made me a certain sort of person, one who can create a different kind of conversation about abortion in which people shift in their thinking. Sometimes the shift is slow; sometimes it's immediate.

JFA has always emphasized outreach, and over the years, I have completely adopted this model of training. It changed my life and changed my teaching. And now it continues to change the lives of hundreds each year. You can see the results for yourself by joining us for a Seat Work and Feet Work project or by reading the reflections of JFA volunteers.\*

For me, JFA made outreach something I *could* do. It also made outreach a nagging priority – something I *would* do purposefully. My connection to JFA made it impossible for me to settle for telling others to go out and talk to pro-choice advocates; I had to do it myself.

Perhaps you remember the first time you stepped foot on campus with JFA. Perhaps you remember that first conversation – the anticipation, the excitement, and the chance to actually do the work of changing hearts and minds. We thank God that by his grace and with your help we will be able to pass that same experience on to hundreds more at our outreach events in the coming months.

Looking for the next conversation,

Steve Wagner  
Executive Director, Justice For All

**\* More on this Topic, including JFA Volunteer Reflections:** [www.jfaweb.org/Steve-July-2014-More](http://www.jfaweb.org/Steve-July-2014-More)

**JFA's Next Feet Work Event:** Oklahoma State University (September 8-10)

**JFA's Upcoming Seat Work Events:** See Dates and Register: [www.jfaweb.org/Register](http://www.jfaweb.org/Register)

**Recent JFA News:** JFA's Board Announces New Executive Director: [www.jfaweb.org/JFA-Board-Letter](http://www.jfaweb.org/JFA-Board-Letter)

**Learn More about Steve:** Steve's June Letter Discusses His Priorities: [www.jfaweb.org/Steve-ED-Letter](http://www.jfaweb.org/Steve-ED-Letter)