

## Demolishing Arguments

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Early in my involvement with CHP Canada, twelve years ago, I included in my e-mail signature: 2 Corinthians 10:5, “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

I may not have realized then just how necessary this verse is for Christians to simply exist in the public square. Who would have imagined that a time would come when there would be any serious consideration given to the concept of men marrying men, or men becoming women—or that pre-born children would not be considered as human or persons?

On June 15, the Judicial Review of the City of Guelph’s decision to remove three pro-life ads placed by Guelph and Area Right to Life (GRTL) from their buses took place; it was both an eye-opener and an exciting event to watch via live-stream. At stake is the right of Canadians to express their views on the humanity and personhood of pre-born child and to do so on public property. This is not just another silly argument—especially to pre-born children.

It was revealed, during the review, that the City of Guelph was unwilling to take any responsibility for making the decision to remove the three pro-life ads; rather they deferred their decision-making to Advertising Standards Canada (ASC), a private, self-regulating body that is not required to apply the Charter of Rights as part of its ad screening process. However, the City of Guelph, as a government body, does have a legal obligation to uphold the provisions of the Charter. The City’s failure to adequately consider the protections of the Charter should be deemed a fatal error by any Canadian Court, but we will have to wait for the ruling.

Our lawyer, John Sikkema of the Acacia Group, argued aggressively on behalf of pro-lifers and more importantly pre-born children. He argued that the basic pro-life message affirms the value and humanity of pre-born children, and that while the City of Guelph may hold to an opposing view, that does not make the language of the ads misleading (as was claimed by the lawyer for Guelph). John submitted that the three ads contained no bad words or gruesome pictures, only views and expressions of wishes for laws that recognize pre-born children for who they are—human beings, real persons regardless of their size or location. He emphasized that **if pro-life Canadians are prohibited from appropriately expressing their views, then the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is empty of value to them.**

The lawyer for the City argued that the suitability of the ads, for which complaints were received, had been left to the judgment of the ASC. The City admitted that they had originally approved the ads, but that after complaints were received, they accepted the opinion of the ASC that the ads were misleading and disparaging, not only to women who may have had an abortion, but also to all people capable of attaining pregnancy!

The three judges grilled the City for lack of any evidence indicating that the Charter rights of GRTL were considered in the decision-making, especially when the judgements were made by ASC. The City lawyer said this was considered but not documented; poor response. The judges also questioned GRTL's lawyer on whether the Charter should be used to shelter misleading ads from scrutiny; fair question. The judges were not necessarily stating that these ads were misleading.

One judge, who seemed concerned about a fair process for pro-lifers, asked: How do pro-lifers speak out publicly if their language is censored? He also stated that the ASC process does not take into account Charter values and **if an appeal cannot be made based on the Charter, then how is the process fair?**

There were approximately four hours of presentations and questioning; now the outcome is in the hands of the three judges—but ultimately in the hands of God.

I wish that life could be easy and arguments were not necessary, but Freedom comes with a price and if you want peace you have to fight for it.

CHP Canada exists for several reasons, but I assert that presently our most significant value is being a light in the world of Canadian governance—and when necessary we use words. Yes, it takes effort and costs money—effort and money not just spent, but invested. This is why I invest my time and money with CHP Canada—please join<sup>1</sup> me.

## **Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup> [www.chp.ca/get-involved/](http://www.chp.ca/get-involved/)