

LOVE *unleashes life*

March-April 2016

Dear Friends,

On March 22, at the exact time bombs went off in Brussels airport, I was descending in a plane that was landing just a 3-hour drive away at Frankfurt airport. I was en route to Vienna, Austria, to speak at an elite program called Arete Academy. The following morning, when I participated in prayer and Praise & Worship with the students of this program who I would be training that afternoon, I was struck by the contrast of different worldviews. The day before the world was reminded, yet again, of the danger and destruction that come from a worldview grounded in violence. But 24 hours later, when I listened to the voices of 50 highly skilled Christian students from 14 nations singing “How Great Thou Art,” I had much reason to be hopeful.

Arete Academy describes itself as follows: “[It] combines biblical worldview training with specialized professional development. This one-week student training is holistic, focusing equally on the spiritual, intellectual, and relational development of each attendee. **Its name derives from Philippians 4:8, which refers to the moral excellence and virtue that accompany a life lived to its full potential and God-given calling.**”

Where some worldviews preach violence, Arete’s delegates are trained to model the Prince of Peace. Where some worldviews preach personal gain, Arete’s delegates are trained in servant leadership. Where some worldviews preach false gods, Arete’s delegates will work to build Christ’s kingdom here on earth.

These students I trained in pro-life apologetics will pursue careers of great influence, positioning them to do much good in our broken world. In fact, alumni of this program have already gone on to pursue careers in law, business, medicine, government, foreign affairs, academia, politics, economics, national security, and intelligence. It was a joy to be a part of the teaching team, fulfilling Love Unleashes Life’s mandate to *influence the influencers*.

What else has happened since my last update? Here are some highlights:

- I gave two **40-minute sanctity of life messages during the Sunday worship services** at Chilliwack Baptist Church and Cross Connection Church.
- The Chilliwack Pro-Life Society, who I do some contract work for, produced my **FAQ on euthanasia** in booklet form, and has already distributed hundreds of copies.
- My book *Love Unleashes Life: Abortion & the Art of Communicating Truth* continues to help form people to talk well about abortion. One reader wrote, “Thank you for writing this ‘how-to’ on the pro-life argument. You give great tips and facts on how to have and handle an argument. I will read your book again before giving it to my husband, and then mother to read—they were in the same boat as me at my sister’s house [when a family discussion about abortion revealed her sisters’ pro-choice views].”
- I gave an **apologetics talk on euthanasia and assisted suicide** at the Chilliwack Pro-Life banquet dinner, alongside my best friend Dr. Julia Bright. An attendee messaged, “Just wanted to thank you for the



▲ Me (left) with my friend Dr. Julia Bright at the talk we gave on euthanasia and assisted suicide.

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encouraging talk tonight in Chilliwack with Dr. Bright. You gave us powerful points on how to defend life in a positive way.”

- I taught at three “Parent Support Meetings” at Catholic schools in the Lower Mainland, **forming parents on how they can speak with their children about human growth, development, and sexual morality.**
- I’ve been **mentoring** various people long-distance, including a student in Alabama and pro-life leaders at an American pro-life organization.
- I taught a **speaker training seminar**.

At one of my presentations, I met a man who told me his daughter had an abortion almost a decade ago. He was struck by a part in my presentation when I had said that even if we haven’t committed abortion, through silence we may have *permitted* abortion.

He later wrote me, “*Thank you for speaking last Sunday because you spoke right into my heart about being silent and I never want to be silent when it comes to the life of the unborn again. I often think what my big empty home would be like with a precious little girl in it. I pray that God will give me an opportunity to share His forgiveness and healing through the cross of Christ to my little girl. Thank you again for coming to speak to my heart.*”

As a result of my encounter with this man, and others, I’m in the process of developing a memorial service for pre-born children and will soon be piloting it at a church.

What else is coming up? For April and May I already have eleven presentations scheduled which will involve travelling to 8 cities in 3 countries in 2 continents!

Thank you for supporting this speaking and formation ministry! With gratitude for your financial and prayer partnership,



Stephanie Gray

P.S., Stay updated with my latest reflections and insights here: www.stephaniegray.info/blog/

P.P.S., Would you consider a donation this month? Contribution information is in the footer. Thank you ☺

The Culture of Encounter

“...[W]e are promoters of the culture of encounter... Dialogue is our method, not as a shrewd strategy but out of fidelity to the One who never wearies of visiting the marketplace, even at the eleventh hour, to propose his offer of love.”

—Pope Francis

This “Culture of Encounter” stirred in my heart several years ago. I felt the Holy Spirit prompting me to contact my debate opponents to see if they’d be willing to meet for coffee before our events. I said I believed it would give us an opportunity to get to know each other as people and build an atmosphere of respect. I offered **one ground rule: No discussion of abortion (because that’s what the debate was for)**. Every single abortion supporter (**including the abortionists**) gladly welcomed this opportunity (except for one who couldn’t meet for schedule reasons). As a result of forging these unlikely friendships, I felt comfortable contacting several of my former debate opponents when my book was released, offering to send them a free copy. One pro-abortion professor said he would be happy to have a copy, and shortly after I mailed it he sent me this message:

“I have received and read your book. If you don’t mind my saying so, it is a well-crafted piece of work. Would you mind if I offered it to the [name of university] library, so that the issue of abortion will be represented more broadly than it currently is?”

Of course, I said yes! To think that one of Canada’s most liberal universities will have a pro-life apologetics book on its shelves—all because someone who doesn’t share my worldview provided it, all because I sent it to him, all because he and I forged a connection, all because of *The Culture of Encounter*.