

HeartBeats

Service From the Heart Since 1984



From the Director...

A recent editorial in the San Diego Union-Tribune - published the weekend of Sanctity of Human Life Sunday - confirmed something that we've been noticing over the last year. The article was entitled: "So much to do, so little tithing," and shared a study showing that giving to God's work has been steadily shrinking since the late 1960's.

In 2004 (the latest numbers that are available), the average U.S. congregation member gave 2.56% of personal income to the church - a decline for the fourth straight year. That's down 18% from 1968 and below giving levels from the early 1930's at the height of the Depression.

The authors stated that as financial contributions founder, more of the available funds are taken up by building projects and staff salaries. The result of this is that the donations that do make it into the collection plate are spent on serving the congregation. A study of eight members of the National Council of the Churches found that benevolent efforts have borne the brunt of the decline in giving, dropping 46% since 1968, while congregational funding has remained stable.

In some ways it was comforting to know that Silent Voices isn't alone in the decline of revenue. However, that "comfort" doesn't help us when we're faced with increasing costs for everything we do.

Please hear me when I say that we are VERY grateful for those who support us regularly - every gift is appreciated and put to use serving our clients. And we KNOW that God is our provider - and He has always provided for us. We feel that He has done for us what He did for the children of Israel by appointing Joseph to his position in Egypt before the days of famine swept through the land. We have money in the bank, and we're not in danger of having to close our doors. BUT - it does concern us when we end the year having spent \$30,000 more than was given! We won't be able to do that every year.

We don't know what the answer is - do we do more fund raising? Do we take time away from serving our clients to raise money to provide services to our clients? The three of us who work in the office are stretched to the limit just serving the families who count on us. I can speak for myself and say that I do not believe that my gifts are best used for fund raising - and I think Kaye and Stephanie feel the same way.

One area of the ministry that we could downsize - and it would save us a considerable amount of money - is our international outreach. It would break our hearts to do this, though, because we've been to these countries - we've seen first hand the need for what Silent Voices does. We believe that God has uniquely called us to international ministry. We don't know of one other center in the country that has the level of international involvement that we have. We're not saying this out of pride - just as a statement of fact. Abortion is a world wide scourge, and we've been privileged to bring the light of the Gospel - and the Light of Life - to countries drowning in death and darkness.

So - what are we going to do? The Board has decided that for this year, we will watch our spending carefully (which we always do anyway), we won't cut back on our services, and we'll see what happens. We had already planned to go to Zambia in June, and we're moving forward with those plans. If we end this year in the same financial situation as we did last year, then we'll have to rethink what we do, and whether we'll be able to visit our international centers annually.

In some ways, I'd welcome a rest from travel - but that's just my flesh. I know how important it is for our International Directors to see us - and we're only seeing them once every 3 years. Our travel is for THEM - not for us. If you've not been involved in the work of a center like Silent Voices, you have no idea how much spiritual oppression and warfare is involved - and how many times you're tempted to give up and walk away. We're lucky in San Diego - we have an Association of all of the mainstream pro-life groups that we can turn to when we need encouragement. None of our international offices have that luxury - they toil away - in isolation - looking forward to the day when someone from Silent Voices can come and bring love and encouragement.

Please pray for us this year - pray that God would show us what to do - where to cut back - that He would provide "above all that we could ever ask or think." We're committed to trusting Him - to serving Him - to being His witnesses for life - for as long as He chooses.

In His Service,

Sharon Pearce
Director

Yellow Page Ad Campaign...

Have you ever looked in the Yellow Pages to see our ad? If not - go get your AT&T Yellow Pages, and look under "Abortion Alternatives." You'll see that this is where the life supporting services are advertised. The next heading is "Abortion Providers" (take a look at their ads, too - you'll see that several of them offer abortion up to 24 weeks - so, the next time someone tells you that abortion is only legal for the first 12 weeks, you'll know where to go to prove them wrong). We have a long term vision for taking over this page with an ad large enough to push all of the abortion providers off - in all five books published in San Diego County! To do this, we've been working with the other pregnancy centers, encouraging them to pool their advertising dollars to purchase a larger ad. Would you pray that we could come together in unity on this - and that the funds needed would be provided?

Silent Voices believes that God is the Author of life, that all human life is valuable - born and preborn - and that abortion is never the answer to an unplanned, "crisis" pregnancy. We are dedicated to giving compassionate, practical assistance to women experiencing unplanned pregnancies, providing accurate information about the realities and possible consequences of abortion, and offering help, hope and healing through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ to women already struggling with the trauma of abortion.