“God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.” I’ve heard this statement many times in my Christian walk but didn’t truly understand what it meant.

Since my new appointment as President of Life Matters Worldwide, I’ve developed a better idea.

For the last 15 years I coordinated the Willing to Wait leadership team for the Pregnancy Resource Center in Grand Rapids. The time I spent there was a training ground for what God has for me to do now.

As I more clearly understand my own direction and course, I hope to, with God’s help, similarly lead Life Matters Worldwide in a clearer direction and course.

For the last fifteen years Tom Lothamer has diligently led this organization. His leadership is both trusted and admired in the pro-life movement. This foundation of leadership is critical for our moving forward as an organization.

Together as a staff and board, we hope to develop a laser-like focus on our mission and vision. As we help the Body of Christ articulate the biblical pro-life message, we want to raise the value placed on human lives—all of them.

Compassionate pro-life ministry is part of our heritage and will always be a part of our mission. Looking at everything Life Matters does, I’d like to sharpen our focus on helping pregnancy care centers reach out to men and helping local churches care for people in their congregations and communities who are elderly, terminally or chronically ill, or disabled. These populations are underserved, yet critically important to the pro-life movement.

Eric and his wife Rachel are raising six sons, 37 chickens, five turkeys, two cats, and an untold number of garter snakes on 10 acres in Greenville, Michigan.

QUESTIONS ABOUT ABORTION

Whenever “Pray for me” or “Question about abortion” appears in the subject line of an email, Michele Shoun, our director of ministry outreach, knows the sender has visited the Need Help? area of our website. With a quick prayer for wisdom, she opens the message.

Some writers have had abortions and want to know if God will forgive them. Others describe complicated relationships and want to know whether God will forgive them if they use abortion to solve their problems. Having visited such pages as, “Does God care about your unplanned pregnancy?” and, “Can women who’ve had abortions be right with God?” God is on their minds.

Women are encouraged when they consider God’s hand in their pregnancies and how He has a purpose for them and their babies. They need to be reminded that He knows everything about them and cares deeply for them. No circumstance in their lives is too difficult for Him (Gen. 18:14). We know that if they ask Him, He will help them avoid abortion (1 Corinthians 10:13).

One “way of escape” may be through a local pregnancy care center, with which it’s our aim to connect them. Please pray with us for the desperate women (and men) who contact us.

PREGNANCY CARE MINISTRY

Pregnancy care centers (PCCs) in South America (Iquique, Chile) and Africa (Togo) have recently reported many decisions for Christ—including among Muslims! This is one reason it’s so exciting to partner with them.

This past February, we joined our missionary partner Evelyn Stone in hosting the 8th biennial Summit in Latin America. Over 200 PCC directors, volunteers, pastors, and missionaries from...
five countries came to the 3-day conference in Lima, Peru—our largest ever! We helped put together a team of speakers, including Raul Reyes (Greater Phoenix CPCs) and Jeanne Pernia (PassionLife and Heartbeat of Miami)—pictured here with Evelyn (center).

This trip was combined with a stop in Santiago, Chile, where our Ambassador Tom Lothamer met with missionaries, pastors, and church members to discuss the establishment of PCCs. The response was encouraging, with one church offering a room on its facility’s third floor for a center.

In May, we held our annual Summit for U.S. centers near Muskegon, Michigan. We hosted 183 representatives from 67 organizations in 10 states. Featured speakers were Jor-El Godsey from Heartbeat International, David Bereit, founder of 40 Days for Life, and Derrick and Julie Tennant from The Love Chromosome.

We also heard from three missionary partners attending The Summit: Holly Friesen from Choose Life in Odessa, Ukraine; Aaron Garyemah (with Eric) from New Hope Pregnancy Center in Gbargna, Liberia; and Joseph and Francisca Akakpo, whose daughter directs four pregnancy care centers in Togo.

In June, Tom delivered ultrasound equipment from Pregnancy Services of Greater Lansing (MI) to Genesis PCC in Pottstown, PA (Tom is pictured with director Wendy Burpee and board chairman John Caperilla). He also conducted board training with them since they’re recently under new leadership.

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EVENTS

NEW EVENT By the time you read this, our first Lift Life Disc Golf Tournament will be history. We invited church youth groups and the young at heart to join us on June 30 at Cornerstone University. Our aim was to have fun while raising awareness of why life matters worldwide.

THE CLASSIC AT PILGRIM’S RUN is Monday, August 13. Register as an individual golfer or as a team at store.lifemattersww.org/golf-classic-at-pilgrims-run. You can also learn about underwriting opportunities. The event helps Life Matters raise funds for developing and strengthening pro-life ministries around the world.

ENGAGING OUR AGING This fall we’ll host another one-day conference, Saturday, October 27. Dr. John Mulder of Faith Hospice and the Trillium Institute in Grand Rapids, Michigan, will speak on the theme of dignity and dying. To learn more, visit lifemattersww.org/LIFT/Engaging-Our-Aging.

PLANNED TRAVEL

A team from Life Matters is planning a trip to the PHILIPPINES October 30 through November 10. They’ll partner with Dr. Mae Corvera and others to put on a conference focusing on LIFT.

One goal is to train church members how to develop ministries that help people who are chronically or terminally ill. Another is to build networks within and between churches that will serve people who are elderly or disabled and their families in the community.

FINANCIAL REPORT

INCOME & EXPENSES At an April meeting of the board’s executive committee, CPA James Quist summarized his 2017 audit findings by affirming the ministry is on solid financial footing.

Here’s an overview of Life Matters’ fiscal year ended December 31, 2017:

- Total support & revenue .................. $ 358,204
- Program expenses .......................... 272,322
- Management & general expenses .......... 77,516
- Fundraising expenses ..................... 46,662
- End of year net asset balance .............. 89,568

Download our latest 990 from the website: Go to lifemattersww.org, click the ‘Donate’ button, and select the link beneath ‘Recent reports.’