When life loses

While the pro-life side lost in the presidential election, there were wins in state legislatures this year. Even though the year began with the passage of extreme pro-abortion laws in Virginia and the District of Columbia, other pro-abortion measures were defeated (including one in Maryland that would have legalized physician-assisted suicide). Thirteen states passed 19 new pro-life laws. As a result of laws like these, the rate and numbers of abortions keep going down.

We have to be diligent, not only about candidates and legislation, but more importantly about providing alternatives to abortion. In other words, we have to keep doing what we’ve always done. Life Matters must continue strengthening pregnancy care centers and encouraging them as viable Gospel outreaches.

Even when life has won at the ballot box, this has been our mission. People need to reach out to others with the truth about life—where it comes from, why human life is special—and what God wants us to do to help people.

One thing the pandemic has brought home to us is that it’s not fun to be alone all the time. We need each other. We can’t function well on our own.

We know we matter to God, but it also helps to know that other people think we matter. And they need to know they matter to us (and to God). So, in whatever way we can reach out to others, let them know we care, and help them in small ways—let’s do it!

Ministry in a time of COVID

The planning and execution of events have been challenging this year, to say the least. The pandemic forced changes in dates and venues.

ASCENT: We had planned a mini-conference called Ascent for area pregnancy care centers to be held in April at West Cannon Baptist Church, but that date had to be pushed off to August. The one-day event was to be in-person, but we had to shift it to virtual and shorten it to a couple hours.

That disappointed some centers but enabled others to join in from farther distances. In addition to PCCs in Michigan, Ascent attracted interest from centers in New Jersey, Minnesota, Alabama, Indiana, New Mexico, Texas, and Kentucky, to Canada, Kenya, India, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Ukraine. Some had connection problems, but they are now looking forward to future events of this type.

THE SUMMIT: Our main conference, usually held in May at Maranatha Bible & Missionary Conference in Norton Shores, Michigan, had to be moved to November 12–13. With the venue’s input, we decided we could hold it in person—with many changes.

We had to wear masks at all times and practice social distancing. COVID kept our overall numbers down and required us to strictly limit workshop room capacities. We also cut the number of workshops offered. Only 50 people could be in the largest room at a time, so plenary sessions had to be live-streamed into an overflow room.

Being separated wasn’t optimal, but those who came were glad we didn’t go virtual. It seemed as though these dear PCC directors, staff, volunteers, and board members were longing...
to be together. So while this Summit may not have been as large as in previous years, it made up for the losses by providing much needed interaction and uplift.

Nancy Lincoln, executive director of The Pregnancy Center in Clinton, Iowa, had this to say at The Summit: “Life Matters’ ministry is life-changing. It’s not only saving lives, it’s changing generations.”

We got good comments about the workshops and our plenary speaker was a powerhouse. Stuart Carver of Family God’s Way led four sessions about the vital connection between local churches and pregnancy care centers. Stuart says, “It’s time for the church and life-affirming ministries to ‘hold hands’ and work together.”

All PCCs have had to weather the vagaries of COVID, not knowing what it would mean to their day-to-day ministries or their bottom line. They’ve had to be creative and courageous as they’ve adapted to pandemic restrictions. Many have seen increases in calls and visits from abortion-minded clients.

The Alpha Women’s Centers of Des Moines and Ankeny, Iowa, report that they are praying more with clients. “Prolonged uncertainty tends to weigh heavily on people, and they’re more open to prayer. They’re worried, they’re lonely, and they need encouragement. We may be one of the few places they feel it’s ‘safe’ to go. When you see fewer people, those visits are more important to you. We are having deeper conversations, and clients are asking us to pray for them.”

According to reports from other centers, this is not unusual. Please continue praying for these front line workers!

**EXPANSION:** Even in the midst of a pandemic, some of our pro-life ministry partners are branching out.

Missionary Holly Friesen in Odessa, Ukraine, reports that a group in a nearby seaport has invited the leadership team from Choose Life Women’s Center to help start a similar ministry there.

Missionary Stephanie Garcia in Iquique, Chile, was asked to share via Zoom with pastors in a town about four hours away how God brought the Florece center into existence. She explained the need for churches to partner with pro-life ministries and now a new center might open in that area.

In a similar way, missionaries Carlos and Karen Feijoo of Salva Una Vida in Quito, Ecuador, are helping a group start a new center in Sangolqui, about an hour away.

Growth is both natural and supernatural! It’s gratifying to see the Lord working through these ministries that Life Matters had a hand in starting. Please pray that God will guide.

**SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE SUNDAY.** Life Matters also receives many requests for prayer from people who have visited our website and are worried about an “unexpected” pregnancy. From the little information they give us in their initial prayer requests, we can’t tell much about their walk with God, or even if we serve the same God. As we attempt to counsel and comfort them, we point them to the God who hears prayers, who wants them to take refuge in Him, who has all power, and who loved them enough to send His Son Jesus to die for them. Pregnancy is a very good time to pray, and for faith to grow.

This led us to use “Bring a Child to Jesus” as our theme for 2021’s Sanctity of Human Life Sunday (January 17). Our bulletin insert shows parents how much Jesus cares for them, and invites them to bring their children—born and unborn—to Him in prayer. They can ask Him for wisdom and “daily bread” before and after birth. They can seek His help to avoid abortion.

One way Jesus helps is through His people. Jesus’ disciples today adopt His attitude of love for all children. Even though our world treats children as commodities with little value, Christians sacrificially welcome all parents and children to the Master.

**President search**

The board of directors of Life Matters is currently accepting applications for the position of President. Interested parties should download the job description from our website (www.lifemattersww.org) and submit resumes with three references to Rich Dorsey, rich@lifemattersww.org. Please ask God to guide this search.