EVANGELISM

I like straight talkers. Sharing the Gospel calls for straight talk. We need to know what we believe and know how to articulate it. It also means that for me, I must confront my fears. The Scripture tells me that “Perfect love casts out fear.” Am I ashamed of the Gospel? I don’t think so. If I am honest, I am afraid of men, mostly, and what they think. Although not a Roman Catholic, I have a great deal of respect for the candor of leaders of that church, particularly when the issue is abortion. Archbishop Angelo Amato, Secretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, denounced abortion as “terrorism with a human face.” The Archbishop doesn’t mince words, not should be. In another straight-talking news item, Cardinal Renato Martin, head of the Pontifical Council on Peace and Justice, said Roman Catholics should not contribute to Amnesty International because it had adopted a new policy endorsing abortion.1 How much more straightforward can you get? And refreshing for a change, especially during a presidential election season here in the States.

Our cover story this month features Kurt Entsminger, president of Care Net, discussing the role of evangelism in the local Care Net crisis pregnancy center. This is a preview of his keynote speech to be delivered at our national conference in Louisville this fall. (For more information about that, please log onto www.care-net.org). The Music Report features the work of the late tenor saxophonist John Coltrane, A Love Supreme. Coltrane, addicted to drugs and alcohol, had what might be described as a “born-again” experience, and subsequently produced one of the most remarkable jazz recordings ever. CNR is also pleased to report one of the most remarkable jazz recordings ever. CNR is also pleased to report

Matthew J. Waters

CARE NET REPORT

JULY/AUGUST 2007 VOL. 8 NO. 3

CARE NET REPORT, a bimonthly publication, has a three-fold mission. We aim to notify and update supporters involved in the work and mission of Care Net. Secondly, we raise public awareness and provide factual information on the complex and often tragic issues surrounding crisis pregnancies. Finally, we seek to encourage Christians in their daily faith walk by reviewing music, literature, and other resources they may find valuable for the short journey here as “foreigners and exiles” (I Peter 2:11).

CARE NET NATIONAL OFFICE

P.O. Box 1644

Merrifield, VA 22116

CARE NET MISSION STATEMENT

Care Net is a Christian ministry assisting and promoting the evangelistic, pro-life work of pregnancy centers in North America.

CARE NET REPORT STAFF

Kurt Entsminger, President

Matthew J. Waters, Editor

Annie Martin, Associate Editor

Writers: Joy Crosby, Molly Ford, Annie Martin, and Joy Moore

Todd Dickinson, Production & Advertising

Good Works Creative Group, Design

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LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK

Your letters must include your name and address if intended for publication and may be edited for space or clarity.

CARE NET REPORT EDITOR

200 Century Park S. Suite 116

Birmingham, AL 35226

cnreport@care-net.org

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Matthew J. Waters

Editor, Care Net Report


(2) “Vatican City: Cardinal Wants Catholics to Halt Aid to Rights Group,” Associated Press, 6/14/07.

REPLY: There is always the danger of giving false assurance of salvation or an overly simplistic gospel presentation in the short amount of time our counselors have to speak with clients, and your concern is well-founded. Option Line counselors sometimes pray, or share the Gospel, depending on whether it seems relevant to the call or situation. Please see President Kurt Entsminger’s inside this issue.

WANTED TO COMMEND you on your excellent editorial which I read in the May/June Care Net Report today. It was compelling, concise and convincing. May God continue to bless and expand your ministry.

– Greg Jerwesik, Galion, OH

I AM WONDERING if I can put the article that you have in the Care Net Report “Multiple Bills Introduced Aimed at Closing Pregnancy Centers” on page 8 of the May/June Care Net Report? Are we allowed at any time to use these articles to convey the same information to our donors?

– Robin Savard, Executive Director, Southern Tier Pregnancy Resource Center, Elmira, NY

REPLY: Yes, you may use the articles for donor communications.

CARE NET REPORT READER SURVEY RESULTS

HOW THOROUGHLY DO YOU TYPICALLY READ EACH ISSUE OF CARE NET REPORT?

All of it 40%

Only items of interest 28%

Skim it 25%

I don’t get to it 7%

DOES CARE NET REPORT HELP YOU BETTER UNDERSTAND THE MINISTRY OF CARE NET?

To a great extent 66%

To some extent 30%

Not at all 4%

WHICH TYPES OF FEATURES DO YOU FIND MOST INTERESTING?

Articles about Care Net 39%

News From the World 30%

Movie/Book Reports 13%

Cover Story 18%

IN GENERAL DO YOU THINK THE STORIES ARE:

Too long 4%

Too short 2%

Just right 94%

HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR INTEREST IN (MARCH/APRIL 2007) ISSUE?

Very Interesting 35%

Somewhat Interesting 29%

Not Interesting 27%

Didn’t Read 1%

Cover Story 48%

Editor’s Report 31%

Urban Report 37%

Option Line Report 35%

News 60%

Book Report 39%

Movie Report 39%

CONSIDER BECOMING A CARING PARTNER TODAY.

LOG ON TO WWW.CARE-NET.ORG TO LEARN MORE.

I WROTE A FEW MONTHS AGO to complain on the tone of the Care Net Report and what I felt was a liberal bias in your movie review which detracted from the message Care Net is trying to convey. You probably get a lot of mail both pro and con, so it is only fair if I write to rake you over the coals that I should also write to commend you when a job is well done.

In my opinion, the most recent Report is extremely well written and to the point. I’m sure you will get mail from others saying “How dare you!” but thank you for correctly identifying what we face. It is evil and nothing less which seeks to destroy life, especially that of the innocent. Your “Axis of Evil” was right on target: a nation that cannot believe in the reality of the source of evil must find other explanations for its presence in our lives, allowing it to continue to wield its power. Thanks for a job well done.

– Tom Wennem, Pflugerville, TX

I WAS A BIT DISTURBED by the Option Line Report wherein the counselor “leads a girl to Christ” in five minutes (or even 25). I definitely approve of bringing one’s faith into a discussion about life and pregnancy. But this kind of “commitment for Christ” (also reported in the Top 5) seems so shallow. “If you prayed that prayer…You’re now a child of the King.” Did Stacey really have any idea what she was praying about or to whom? Things like that need time explanation, prayer, a recognition of what sin is, etc. I don’t want to minimize the work of the phone consultants. I’m wondering what the first goal is when a girl/woman calls in.

– Ellie Palmer, Wayne, NJ

REPLY: Yes, you may use the articles for donor communications.
A CULTURE WAR is raging across America for the hearts, minds and bodies of the next generation. We live in a sex-saturated culture dominated by Hollywood, pop musicians, and others who promote easy sex and abortion on demand. Our young people are fed a steady diet of messages that grossly distort the truth about sex, marriage, and the sanctity of human life. As a result, sex and pregnancies outside of marriage are rampant, and nearly 3,000 unborn children are aborted every day. All would appear hopeless if we didn’t believe in the God of all hope.

But we do. And the purpose of Care Net and our 1,090 pregnancy centers in North America is to bring hope to the next generation. More than 25,000 employees and volunteers serve within our network to offer compassionate support and share God’s truth. As a result, young women facing unplanned pregnancies are being empowered to make positive choices. Teenagers are being taught about sexual purity. And women and men struggling with past abortions are finding God’s healing and forgiveness.

Last year, our affiliated crisis pregnancy centers helped more than 350,000 women in need. Ninety-five percent of pregnant women who come to our centers leave with a renewed or initial commitment to Christ.

Our History

Care Net was influenced by the evangelical leadership of former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop, and the late Christian apologist, Dr. Francis Schaeffer. The Christian Action Council was established in 1975 by Dr. Harold O. J. Brown and in 1993 changed its name to Care Net. Today, Care Net has grown to become the largest network of pregnancy centers in North America, serving over 350,000 women each year. The primary purpose of Care Net is to assist and promote the evangelistic, pro-life work of crisis pregnancy centers. As Care Net has grown, so has our mission. For the very first time Care Net is now ministering directly to women in crisis through our Option Line Call Center & Website featuring America Online’s (AOL) Instant Messaging service, dubbed IM. The Call Center is open 24/7, and has over 30 trained phone consultants. The website is currently garnering over 20,000 unique visits each week, or over 1,000,000 each year. Phone calls to the center average over 15,000 a month, and emails and Instant Messages are both growing components of our pro-life outreach.

Support and Revenue

Support and revenue for Care Net are generated from contributions, affiliate fees, conference seminars, and other income. In 2006, Care Net’s total revenue was $13,130,828. Support and revenue in 2006 included:

- Contributions: $7,803,290
- Net Sale of Publications/Films: $360,756
- Conference/Seminar Income: $481,444
- Affiliation Fees: $167,271
- Other Income: $8,855,779

Expenses

Care Net’s expenses in 2006 were $10,934,937. Expenses included:

- Program: $2,474,692
- Center Services: $4,220,211
- Campaign of Compassion: $341,735
- Supporting Services: $120,900
- Management/General: $201,533
- Cost of Goods Sold: $217,672

Balance Sheet (June 30, 2006)

Care Net’s total assets were $2,017,978 as of June 30, 2006. Current assets were $1,207,998, and current liabilities were $128,237. Total liabilities were $311,749.

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Net Assets

Care Net’s net assets as of June 30, 2006 were $1,706,229. Unrestricted net assets were $1,363,054, and restricted net assets were $343,175.

To view Care Net’s complete annual report visit www.care-net.org
COLUMBUS, OH – The Option Line Call Center & website released first quarter 2007 numbers. The number of contracts, which include email, phone calls and Instant Messaging conversations, totaled 48,320 in the first three months of 2007, for an average of 525 interactions with women and men each day. The website received 225,350 visitors with 673,666 total pageviews. Roughly 50% of the visitors found the client website through Care Net’s internet keyword advertising campaign taking place on search engines such as Yahoo and Google. Internet advertising remains the top contributor to our call volume at 60.8%. Yellow pages and television advertising round out the top three with 10.2% and 9.5%, respectively.

The following are actual reports of conversations Option Line consultants had in their first three months:

•A 14-year-old girl called in the middle of the night looking for the Morning-After Pill. After speaking with a consultant, she agreed to hold off on looking for it until she could speak with a pregnancy center the next morning. She IM’d us later the next day to let the consultant know that she’d decided not to take it and had decided to practice abstinence.

•An emailer, who only spoke Spanish, emailed the Option Line looking for pregnancy help. She wasn’t sure if what she and her boyfriend had done could result in a pregnancy. The Option Line was able to answer her back, in Spanish, with information on how pregnancy occurs, as well as refer her to a center in her area. She wrote us back thanking us and told us she was scheduled to take a pregnancy test the next day.

•A 45-year-old woman from Texas called us crying late at night because she was looking for someone to talk to about a past abortion. We were able to connect her with an after-abortion program provided through a center in her area.

Molly Ford, Director of Campus Outreach and Pregnancy Support Initiative, said, "We hope that the NCAA’s decision will be part of a growing trend among organizations and institutions to determine how to support students desiring to carry their pregnancy to term. Villagers and visitors to several counties of the Guangxi Autonomous Region in southwestern China said rioters smashed and burned government offices, overturned official vehicles, and clashed with the riot police in a series of confrontations over the past four days. They spoke on the condition of anonymity, fearing retribution. They gave varying accounts of injuries and deaths, with some asserting that as many as five people had been killed, including three officials responsible for population-control work. A local government official in one of the counties affected confirmed the rioting in a telephone interview but denied reports of deaths or serious injuries.

The violence seemed to stem from a one-month crackdown in Guangxi to punish people who violated the country’s policy that sets legal limits on the number of children families are allowed to have. According to accounts posted on the Internet by villagers and witnesses, officials in several parts of Guangxi mobilized their largest effort in years to roll back population growth by requiring mandatory health checks for women and forcing pregnant women who lacked approval to give birth to undergo abortions.

Conceive measures, including forced abortions and sterilizations, were common in the 1980’s, when the so-called one-child policy was first strictly enforced. More recently, many parts of China have been relying more on financial penalties and incentives to limit the growth of its population, which is 1.3 billion.

Beijing "— An intensive campaign to enforce strict population control measures, including forced abortions, prompted violent clashes between the police and local residents in southwestern China in recent days, witnesses said, describing the latest incident of rural unrest that has alarmed senior officials in Beijing.

Local officials who fail to meet annual population control targets can still come under bureaucratic pressure to reduce births or face demotion or removal from office.

Several people said in the Internet accounts of the campaign in Guangxi that officials had issued fines starting at 500 yuan and ranging as high as 70,000 yuan, or $65 to $9,000, on families who had violated birth control measures at any stage of pregnancy.

The so-called "social child-raising fee," was collected even though most violators had already paid fines in the past, the people said. According to an account on Longtan, a Web forum, officials in Bouji County in Guangxi boasted that they collected 7.8 million yuan in social child-raising fees from February through the end of April. Many families objected strongly to the fees and refused to pay.

Witnesses said that in such cases villagers were detained, their homes searched, and valuables, including electronic items and motorcycles, confiscated by the government.

"Worst of all, the gangsters used hammers and iron rods to destroy people’s homes, while threatening that the next time it would be with bulldozers," said a peasant who identified himself as Nong Sheng and who faxed a letter complaining of the abuses to a reporter in Beijing. Mr. Nong said the crackdown was widespread in several counties in Guangxi. He said local courts had declined to hear any cases brought by opponents of the policy, citing an edict from local officials.

"I suspected that there might be negative effects of early sex for some groups," said Ann M. Meier, the study’s author and an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Minnesota. "And that’s what I found — but only under very specific circumstances.

The findings, the authors say, may have relevance for the assistance education reform act of 1996. Programs that are financed through the legislation
The New York Times, JULY/AUGUST 9

NATIONAL STUDY

The Claim: Caffeine Can Increase the Risk of Miscarriage

With more than 80 percent of Americans consuming it in some form or another every day, caffeine is easily the nation’s most popular drug, far ahead of nicotine and alcohol. So when studies first suggested decades ago that caffeine could increase the risk of miscarriage, it raised alarm. Why exactly it might pose such a risk remains unclear, but numerous studies in recent years have investigated the link.

One of the more unnerving studies was published in the New England Journal of Medicine in 2000. It looked at more than 1,000 pregnant Swedish women and found that those who drank the equivalent of one to three cups of coffee a day had a 30 percent increased risk of miscarriage, while those who had the equivalent of at least five cups had more than double the risk.

But a majority of studies have suggested that any risk might apply only to high levels of caffeine intake. One study carried out by the National Institutes of Health in 1999 looked closely at the blood levels of caffeine in tens of thousands of pregnant women and found that those who consumed the equivalent of more than five cups of coffee a day did have an increased risk, while those who drank one or two cups did not. Other studies have had similar findings.

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, there is now general agreement that low caffeine intake during pregnancy — about 150 milligrams daily, or roughly 1.5 cups of coffee — is safe.

The bottom line: Low caffeine intake during pregnancy appears to be safe, while the risk of high intake is unclear.

(Source: Excerpted from The New York Times, By ANABAD O’CONNOR, 6/5/07)

NATIONAL NEWS

A Move for Birth Certificates for Stillborn Babies

Last summer, three weeks before her due date, Sari Edber delivered a stillborn son, Jacob. “He was 5 pounds and 19 inches, absolutely beautiful, with my olive complexion, my husband’s curly hair, long fingers and toes, chunky cheeks and a perfect button nose,” she said.

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FRUSTRATED, Ms. Cacciatore began a support group for mourning parents. She said she received 250 e-mail messages a day through the group, and her foundation has 27 online support groups with 25,000 members.

However, they have no problem crossing the line between legal protest and... illegal acts, to include even murder, to succeed in their goals,” she said.

Eric Johnston, president of the Alabama Pro Life Coalition, said he was concerned over the assumption that people doing social justice work may use terrorism to achieve their goals.

“Our group’s main mission is educational,” the thought that we would somehow be harboring terrorists escapes me,” he said.

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Department director Jim Walker said the site was taken down after his agency received a string of calls and e-mails from concerned individuals who complained the list was unfairly targeting certain groups on the basis of their beliefs.

Pro-life organizations were included in a section of the list describing “single-issue” terrorists, who were identified as “people who feel they are trying to create a better world.”

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“Any way that acknowledges the parents' deep need for validation of their beliefs... they have no problem crossing the line between legal protest and... illegal acts, to include even murder, to succeed in their goals,” he said.
Gov. John Lynch has said he would sign the measure. The vote in the Senate was 15 to 9. The House vote, in March, was 217 to 141.

The parental notification law was the strictest in the nation when it was passed in 2003. The vote to repeal it reflects, in part, a sea change in New Hampshire politics since the 2006 elections, which swept a Democratic majority into the legislature for the first time in over a century.

"Having this Democratic legislature and Democratic governor for the first time really does change the playing field," said Dean Spiliotes, director of research at the New Hampshire Institute of Politics at St. Anselm College. "However, New Hampshire has always been a little bit of an outlier, somewhat libertarian and increasingly kind of moderate, with less of a focus on these social issues where you have government getting involved."

Soon after the law passed, it was challenged by Planned Parenthood of Northern New England and other groups, which argued that it was unconstitutional because it did not allow an exemption from parental notification if the girl’s health was in danger.

"The law’s supporters had intentionally omitted such a medical exception, saying that it could be used as a loophole to allow many girls to skip telling their parents."

Just before the law was supposed to take effect, Judge Joseph A. DiClerico, Jr. of Federal District Court in Concord, N.H., struck it down. The United States Supreme Court then heard the case and ruled unanimously last year that an exception for medical emergencies had to be included. The justices sent the law back to Judge DiClerico, instructing him to see if it could be retooled to include a medical exception or if it needed to be thrown out altogether.

Soon after the November election, Democrats began an effort to repeal the law, and Judge DiClerico delayed his decision. If the repeal passed, the court case would be moot; if it failed, the judge would decide the law’s fate.

That gave repeal advocates an edge in lobbying lawmakers — they were able to persuade even some legislators who favored parental notification that it would be better to remove the matter from the courts.

“Our opponents said, ‘If you vote for repeal, you’re voting against parental notification,’” said Dawn Tuxin, vice president for public policy and governmental affairs at Planned Parenthood of Northern New England. "We said, ‘No, you’re not.’ The issue is, do you want to leave it in the hands of the judge or shouldn’t it be something that’s decided by the legislature?’"

State Senator Joseph A. Foster, the majority leader, said he favored a law similar to those in Maine and Connecticut, which do not require parental notification, but require abortion providers to counsel girls to consider involving a parent or a trusted adult in their decision. He said he did not support an exemption from parental notification if the girl’s health was in danger. The law’s supporters had intentionally omitted such a medical exception, saying that it could be used as a loophole to allow many girls to skip telling their parents.

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A spokesperson for Mr. Lynch, Colin Manning, said the governor “would like to see parents involved if possible” and “is open to having a discussion” about a law like Maine’s and Connecticut’s.

But anything more restrictive seems unlikely to succeed, said Dante Scala, a political science professor at the University of New Hampshire.

"I think it’s going to take a Republican resurgence to get that put back on the front burner," he said.

(Source: Excerpted from The New York Times, By PAM BELLUCK, 6/8/07)

CORRECTION: The May/June edition of Care Net Report erroneously reported that Care Net held a rally in Salem OR on 4/25/07 to support CPC’s. In fact, the National Institute of Family Life Advocates (NIFLA) planned and held this rally with financial and other support from Care Net and with attendance by many local Care Net pregnancy center representatives.
As pro-life Christians serving in pregnancy centers, we sometimes have difficulty defining our real mission. Are we here first and foremost to minister the compassion of Christ, or are we here first and foremost to stop abortions? I believe the proper way to resolve this question is to recognize that we have both a mission and a mission field which together embrace our duality.

What is our mission? Our mission is the same as every other Christian missionary who has ever lived – to share Jesus Christ with the hurting and broken people we encounter in our mission field. In pregnancy center ministry, sharing Jesus Christ means far more than explaining God’s plan for salvation to sinners. It means being the hands of Christ that reach out to embrace and comfort women who are scared, lonely and confused. It means speaking God’s truth into situations where people have been deceived by the lies of the world. It means helping to restore believers who have stumbled into a wayward lifestyle. And most importantly, it means being willing to come alongside needy people and to love them unconditionally just as Christ loved us.

So what then is our mission field? Traditionally, Christians think of a mission field as a geographical location in a foreign country. However, for pregnancy centers, our mission field is not a designated place. It is instead the arena of special issues that arise in our own communities from a particular social evil. Our mission field encompasses abortion, sexual brokenness, and the duality. We recognize that we must continue to step up our efforts and to expand our outreach so we may reach many more abortion-minded women in the future.

When we aim to reach more abortion-minded women, we are ensuring that our ministry is well-placed in the desired mission field. But, in all of this, we must be very careful not to confuse the critical needs of our mission field with our initial mission. While reaching more abortion-minded women is a laudable goal, we must remember that reducing abortion is not our ultimate mission. Sharing the love of Christ is our ultimate mission. The very moment that somebody decides to save the lives of babies as the most important thing that a pregnancy center does, they have inevitably placed Jesus Christ into a secondary role.

One story may help to illustrate the point. In 1855, Emma Roberts and a group of Christian women began a new ministry in London to reach out to young women. Mrs. Roberts and her friends were concerned about the horrible conditions to which young women were exposed. London was filled with squalor, labor abuses, and an estimated one out of every fifteen women engaged in prostitution. The purpose of this new ministry was to share Christ within this mission field of brokenness.

Mrs. Roberts initiated Bible studies and prayer groups for young women all across London. Intercessory prayer became a critical component of this new ministry as prayer warriors vigorously prayed for women’s physical and spiritual safety. Mrs. Roberts and her friends even went into the factories of London to read from Scripture and to sing hymns. As a result of this outreach, thousands of women were introduced to Jesus Christ, and thousands were delivered from lifestyles of debauchery. Between 1855 and 1872, more than 100 new chapters of this ministry were established in other cities across the world, including many cities in the United States.

But over time, something happened. As new leaders took control, they began to focus more on the practical needs of women rather than upon their need for Christ. Eventually, a decision was made by this organization to remove Christian ministry as a focus all together. Today, the YWCA (Young Women’s Christian Association) proudly declares: “We were founded by Christian women but our work is no longer faith based.” Not only has the YWCA openly abandoned its initial Christian mission, its official positions, including its strong support of abortion rights, are directly antithetical to Christian belief.

The legitimate call for pregnancy centers to reach more abortion-minded women must never lessen our need to remain Christ-centered. For this very reason, a Christian pregnancy center that is committed to serving people within the mission field of abortion, unplanned pregnancy, and sexual brokenness should not subordinate the needs of some clients just because they are deemed to be less “at risk” for abortion than others. Jesus commands us to love everyone that we encounter in our mission field. The teenager who has already made the courageous decision to carry her baby to term is just as deserving of our compassionate support as the woman still considering abortion. The new mother struggling to make ends meet who comes for free formula and other material help should not be turned away. And the thirty year old woman distraught over her past abortions should be invited to learn more about the love and forgiveness of Christ. For pregnancy centers committed to sharing Christ, serving “at-risk” clients ultimately means helping women find Jesus at their point of greatest need. This point of need varies with every woman in crisis.

At Care Net, we prioritize evangelism because it is the bedrock upon which the success of our ministry rests. Listening to a woman’s story, responding with accurate medical information, offering compassionate support, and yet, sharing the Good News of Jesus, is the most effective way to transform lives so that more babies can be spared from abortion. Our clients are hungry for love, and God is love. When we focus our mission on sharing God’s love with our clients instead of saving the unborn, we empower more women, and we ultimately save more babies.

Pregnancy centers that add medical services are particularly wise to heed this advice. The use of ultrasound machines has proven to be a very effective tool in reaching more abortion-minded women and helping them choose life for their unborn babies. For this reason, Care Net supports the current trend of more and more centers adding ultrasound services. And we commend and appreciate the work of other organizations that have committed to making ultrasound services and trainings more widely available to our Care Net affiliates.

Yet, adding ultrasound services should not alter the mission of a pregnancy center. It is Jesus and not the ultrasound machine that must remain at the core of pregnancy center ministry. An ultrasound machine may produce a powerful picture that will help persuade a woman to choose life for her baby. For this, we should rejoice. But what every client still needs most is to choose the everlasting and transforming life available in Jesus Christ.
By Matthew Waters

**Knocked Up**, the new film by Judd Apatow (*The 40-Year Old Virgin*) is a crude, albeit enlightening, social commentary on the generation known as Millennials (those born between 1977-1995) according to several critics. The film's premise, a couple facing unplanned pregnancy who chooses life, has also raised the curiosity of many pro-lifers.

But, according to Marc Newman of MovieMinistry.com, curiosity is the only thing it should raise. Says Newman:

"Identification of this ‘pro-life’ angle in *Knocked Up* should in no way be considered an endorsement for the film. Sure, there is a redemptive aspect to the movie, but you have to slog through an awful lot of garbage to get to it. Do not go to see it – is that clear enough? But, that said, millions of people will go see it, laugh, and throughout the film view compelling images of an unborn baby."

_World Magazine’s_ Megan Basham says that although there is a “surprisingly pro-life underbelly…none of it is enough to overcome the film’s lax attitude toward sex nor its dim view of marriage."

So, a number of critics recommend not seeing *Knocked Up*. (I have not seen it.) That being said, what could Christians possibly glean from the views presented in it?

_The New York Times_ film critic A.O. Scott made several interesting observations about *Knocked Up*, some of which give us insight about how Christians can minister to Millennials.

Scott says, "It may be a bit, um, premature to say so, but Judd Apatow’s *Knocked Up* strikes me as an instant classic, a comedy that captures the sexual confusion and moral ambivalence of our moment without straining, pandering or preaching. Like *The 40-Year-Old Virgin*, Mr. Apatow’s earlier film, it attaches dirty humor to a basically upright premise." Later he comments, "The wonder of *Knocked Up* is that it never scolds or sneers. It is sharp but not mean, sweet but not soft, and for all its rowdy obscenity it rarely feels coarse or crude."

So, according to Scott, *Knocked Up* preaches without being preachy. It communicates using humor, but it is biting. What can we learn from this? To be relevant, to be heard, to be effective communicators, we need to be extremely aware of how the Millennials are communicating (myspace.com, facebook.com, IM, texts), what and who they are talking about, how to answer their questions, the need to be honest about life’s realities rather than overly saccharine, and perhaps how to inject some humor into our interaction with them.

Scott’s other key insight is that regarding the film’s target audience.

"Mr. Apatow’s critique of contemporary mores is easy to miss — it is obscured as much by geniality as by profanity — but it is nonetheless severe and directed at the young men who make up the core of this film’s likely audience. The culture of sexual entitlement and compulsive consumption encourages men to remain boys, for whom women serve as bedmates and babysitters. Resistance requires the kind of quixotic heroism Steve Carell showed in *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* or a life-changing accident, like Alison’s serendipitous pregnancy.”

Commonly called the “Peter Pan” principle, sadly many Millennials, Christian and non alike, have never had a father or role model to teach them how to grow up. As CNR has asserted before in this space, the greatest problem facing young women today may in fact be the dearth of courageous, virtuous and visionary young men. This is not a problem easily remedied by pregnancy centers, but by parents and secondarily, churches. May we in the life movement take to heart this cry whether it comes from a laudable, Christian source or a common, worldly one.

“No rationale is given in the film for her decision to keep her baby, but certainly seeing the evidence of her child’s beating heart must have played some role. Images of children in utero can help to overcome our culture’s irrational idea that the physical fact and moral worth of the human person that is in a woman’s womb from the moment of conception should be determined solely on the basis of whether or not she is happy about her pregnancy at the time. Sure, Alison cries at this first, conclusive evidence of her untimely pregnancy. But it is not long after that she commits to carry her baby. “Knocked Up” is an outstanding argument for the need for women to see what is going on inside their bodies when they are pregnant. If your local pro-life pregnancy counseling center is not equipped with an ultrasound machine and a licensed technician to run it – help them get both – quick!” — Mark Newman, “A Diamond in the Raunch: Pro-Life Positions Emerge in ‘Knocked Up’ and ‘Waitress’”, MinistryMovies.com.