

September 10, 2006

Dear Heartfriends,

Our Hearts Center Multimedia team is the group responsible for the website, live broadcasts, AV at conferences and the editing and publishing of video and audio content. This group has been comprised of Stephan, Luke Campbell and Boyd Badten, with help from Damiaan Kletter since the beginning of the Hearts Center activity. All of us have full time jobs and families and so our efforts to provide you with these services have been in our evenings and weekends-what most people call their spare time.

We'd like to think that we've done an OK job; we've tried our best. But we know that at times there have been frustrating circumstances for the people who enjoy and use these services of the Hearts Center. For example, sometimes people email or call us with problems listening to the broadcast or using the website, but nobody responds. Sometimes people send ideas for new features for the website or for conferences and it seems like those great ideas don't get done very fast or maybe not at all. Sometimes it takes weeks or months for some dictations to get published in either audio or text format.

We want you to understand that we care deeply about these shortcomings and we wish that we had the manpower to do a better job with all of these needs. In fact, we have ideas for features and services which many of you would really like, but don't know about yet. It's daunting to find ways to get it all done in our spare time though and with just a few people.

We have tried and we continue to try to use the services of other Heartfriends who want to pitch in and we appreciate the sacrifices that they have made and the work they have done. The challenge with the "many hands make light work" theory here is that almost all of this work needs a fair amount of technical aptitude and/or experience in order to make much progress and avoid accidents. And even when a person has the equipment and aptitude needed, it takes a lot of time and effort to get them up to speed with the website architecture, protocols and other details. We're continuing to work with those who want to pitch in and we apologize to anyone who has come forward to volunteer, but who hasn't been contacted yet. The documenting of these processes and the training of additional people takes time, and our regular duties are still there.

We have a particular challenge right now which is that Stephan cannot continue to serve as he has. He is the architect of the website and has done all of the real programming and higher feature design for the site as well as most upkeep and new content additions. We haven't found another person in our community who has the time and experience necessary to completely fill Stephan's shoes, so we're attempting to fill it with a subteam of people who will together perform some or all of the duties that Stephan has been responsible for.

We've identified at least two people who we'll be working with in the coming weeks to be on this team and we might need more still. It will take substantial time to get these folks up to speed on how to do this job and so we are asking everyone to bear with us in the coming months. There will be times when this team will seem unresponsive to requests for info, web changes, help or other requests-please don't take it personally. We're trying our best. If you need to communicate with us about the areas which we are responsible for (referenced above), please try to be very accurate and succinct in what you're conveying. Please try not to burden us with issues of a general, technical nature. We don't have the manpower to help people with problems with their computers, getting online and things like that.

In addition to the webmaster change, we're working on a new version of our website which will have many new features. The main reason for an entirely new site is that we need it to appeal to seekers who do not have a lot of prior experience with other Ascended Master organizations. This is a mandate from the Masters themselves which will be what attracts many new people to this activity eventually.

In addition to a new look and feel, we've been working on a database infrastructure which will drive much of the website and provide us with features which cannot be accomplished with the present architecture. Progress has been slow-this initiative was announced quite a while ago and people want to know where the new site and features are. This kind of change could have been made a lot faster if we were full time employees of the Hearts Center. But an organization as young as this cannot afford to pay for that kind of manpower or to simply buy this kind of professional service right now. Fortunately, we have an individual in our community, Damiaan Kletter, who is a professional in this field and who has donated a lot of time and effort to building this database. Much of the basic work is done but we're still some months away from rollout.

If you feel the call and would like to volunteer to be part of the Multimedia team, the following are some areas that desperately need more manpower:

1. Website maintenance, adding new features and content to the site
2. Helping new HeartsCenters get their audio equipment and people going on broadcasting
3. Editing and publishing dictation audio
4. Editing decree and song audio and maintaining the Prayers/Mantras portion of the website
5. Managing the online bookstore
6. Filming, editing and publishing video
7. Web/database integration (SQL 2000/20005)

For those who are ready to pitch in and work in any of these areas, please email Boyd Badten at: boyd@theheartscenter.org and tell us what you can do to help this effort. Please describe the experience and equipment you have which fits you for this work and tell me what commitment in hours per week you can pledge to this team.

If you have no experience or software or equipment to do any of the above, I hope that you will understand that your offer of help will probably be much more difficult for us to accept. Teaching people not only how to interface with our systems, but how to actually do the work (such as audio editing or web editing) is something which we simply don't have the resources for right now-we're barely keeping things together. If you will do some research on your own (hint-get good with Google), find the necessary software and teach yourself some of the skills needed to do this kind of work, you will be offering something which will yield a much higher return on our training investment-which is something this team can use right now.

Likewise, if you feel that you can give no more than 1 or 2 hours per week, then you must understand that it is difficult for us to amortize the dozen or more hours of training it might take to get you up to speed and productive at things. The math doesn't work out when the need is so great now. We need people who can commit to and give 3 or (preferably) more hours per week to this work, and over a sustained period of time also.

Please consider giving to this effort and/or joining this team. In your mind, try to imagine the Hearts Center without a website, without live decree and conference broadcasts, without an enormous library of audio/textual dictations, without an online bookstore, etc. It's easy to see that these and other technical functions form a major part of the cohesive structure of this organization. They are the key to how the Hearts Center activity will enable the Masters to reach thousands of Their students in their outer, waking awareness. The Masters are just waiting for us to get our act together.

Thank you so much for listening and supporting the Hearts Center.