

# Christian HealthCare

## NEWSLETTER

### MEMBER LETTERS:

#### I find it a form of worship to send a check

**It might sound strange** but I find it a form of worship to send a check to someone I will never meet. Lately we have been sending a gift to those with Special Prayer Needs when we can, and on at least one occasion received back a nice thank-you note that brought me to tears. People loving people whether across the street or across the nation. That's what it's all about.

*Daniel E. Bennett  
Ainsworth, Nebraska*

#### I had a Special Prayer Need

for a pre-existing condition and thankfully tests show all is ok. I was overwhelmed by the generosity of my Samaritan brothers and sisters in Christ. Their notes of encouragement were a glimpse into the Kingdom of God. It was a growing and humbling experience to receive such blessings. Thank you for this Biblical ministry.

*Cynthia Zimmer  
Billings, Montana*

### Patients Rights Action Fund fights assisted suicide

by Michael Miller

**T**erminally ill patients as well as the elderly, the poor, and the disabled can be victims of assisted-suicide laws. The Patients Rights Action Fund works to protect them.

"We work to prevent laws that would allow physicians to prescribe lethal medication to their patients with the express purpose of ending their patient's life by that patient's request," says Matt Valliere, PRAF development director and a member of Samaritan Ministries. "We work politically against laws that push this stuff forward as a medical 'treatment' option."

The topic was in the news with the assisted suicide of Brittany Maynard last year. Maynard had terminal brain cancer and moved from California, where assisted suicide isn't legal, to Oregon, where it is. Other states with similar laws include Washington, Montana, and Vermont, with more considering it.

"It's very important to be educated on the issue and to speak to the issue," Matt says. "So many people in the United States don't realize this is sneaking up right behind them. This is a huge deal. It is being pressed by the organization 'Compassion and Choices,' being funded by people like George Soros."

Maynard committed suicide on November 1, 2014, with her situation being used by assisted-suicide advocates to promote their position.

"Not a few months later, there was a

breakthrough on her very specific kind of cancer that she could have very easily benefited from," Matt says.

A *60 Minutes* story by Scott Pelley that aired in March detailed the remissions that the new treatment has led to.

"It's really kind of a tragedy, but they use that kind of thing, difficult cases, folks who are suffering, to sway the hearts and minds of Americans, and people aren't necessarily thinking it all the way through," Matt says.

Yet assisted-suicide advocates appear to be gaining ground as a result of the Maynard case. A May 27 Gallup poll shows that 68 percent of Americans "believe physicians should be allowed to help terminally ill patients hasten their death," *World* magazine reports. That's

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**Sharing Summary from June**

Shares:	\$13,698,313	Personalized prayer requests of the members with Needs are in the Prayer Guide. Please use your version of the Prayer Guide to support the members assigned to you.
Needs:	\$12,661,153	
In Negotiation:	\$ —	
New Needs:	1,965	
Total Needs:	3,643	
New Rewards:	128	Member Households: 47,285 (as of 5/21/15)
Miscarriages:	34	
Final Rewards:	15	

**Contact Us: 877-764-2426 [samaritanministries.org/members](http://samaritanministries.org/members)**

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Your medical need

[needs@samaritanministries.org](mailto:needs@samaritanministries.org)

1 - 1

Shares you are sending or receiving

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1 - 2

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**Remember:**



**SEND A NOTE—**

Burdens can be lightened emotionally as we encourage one another in the Lord.



**PAY YOUR SHARE—**

Burdens can be lightened physically as we do our part to financially meet others' needs as they would in our time of need.



**ALWAYS STAY ALERT IN PRAYER—**

Burdens can be lightened spiritually as we unite to call upon the God of the impossible.

## ~~Sex~~ Marriage education—Part 2

by Rob Slane

In last month's newsletter I recounted the beginnings of sex education in Western nations, starting in 1919 with the radical Béla Kun regime in Hungary, where the Deputy Commissar for Culture, György Lukács, attempted to wrench the teaching of sexual matters out of the hands of parents and into the hands of the state by introducing compulsory sex education in schools throughout the country.

I also pointed out that the very term "sex education" separates sexual intercourse from the Biblical institution of marriage, sowing in the minds of students the idea that it can, and perhaps even should, take place in any configuration they can think of. In its place, I argued, we ought to think in terms of "marriage education."

I finally asked where the responsibility for teaching these things to children lies, and concluded that it is a responsibility of the parents and should not be done by the state.

"That's all very well and good," you might say, "but how in the world do you suppose I should teach my children something which—frankly—I'm embarrassed to talk about with them?"

Before answering that, I want to give an important caveat—I have six children from ages eleven down to one. I am writing as someone who is in the middle of working through these issues, and I am in no way suggesting that I have found all the answers. I would really welcome and encourage feedback on the Samaritan Ministries blog, not only because I think this is a neglected area of Christian discipleship, but

also because I'm interested in hearing the thoughts and practices of others. So, please do log on and comment, critique, and discuss in the interest of healthy dialogue.

This month I want to make three basic points:

1. Continually talking with your children about anything and everything is the best way of ensuring that both you and they are ready to talk about sexual matters.
2. Talking with them about marriage, and witnessing to them through marriage, will help you to not be embarrassed to talk with them about sexual matters.
3. By following points 1 and 2, you will have facilitated an open and trusting relationship with your children, and conversations about sexual relations within marriage will be likely to arise spontaneously.

Let's start with the notion of "healthy dialogue." I have been a Christian for about 12 years, and one thing I have often noticed among my brothers and sisters in Christ is what you might call an unwillingness to "talk about stuff." One of the places this is seen most clearly is in the home. On numerous occasions I've heard people saying things like, "She could never really discuss that sort of thing with her parents," or "They don't really talk about things like that in their family."

Where does this attitude come from? I don't think it's Biblical. Yes, we are many times admonished to guard our tongues. Yes, there are

certain things which are "out-of-bounds," such as "filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking" (Ephesians 5:4). But other than that, there are no subjects that we need to avoid. We are allowed to discuss, and we are allowed to disagree. In fact, we should be able to discuss any issue, safe in the knowledge that we are still brethren and Christ still loves us, even though we may profoundly disagree with one another.

Being people of the Word, Christians more than anyone else, should understand this and therefore ought to be able to talk about anything and everything—Paul's boundaries excepted. The same goes for our children. Yes, there are age-appropriate boundaries to subjects, but as our children are growing up in our household, they need to know that there is nothing they can't talk to us about. Whether they are everyday things, questions about the faith, struggles they are having—whatever—we need to converse with them. It is through cultivating an environment where you properly converse that both you and they can feel confident to discuss sexual matters without fear or embarrassment.

Think of it like this. Suppose you had a boss at work who never talks to you. He passes orders down to you by proxy, but he has never bothered to cultivate a relationship. Then one day there is a situation where he has no choice but to talk to you about a delicate matter. How easy do you suppose that will be both for him and for you? Such a situation is bound to feel awkward,

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## Phil Newton

### Perennial Partners

by Michael Miller

Phil Newton's overhead for his business comprises a laptop, a tablet computer, and a phone. He has a corner in his basement to work from, but is more likely to be found doing that at a popular local coffeehouse, where he gets free Wi-Fi, not to mention good tea.

The low overhead suits the co-founder of Perennial Partners, a two-man fundraising consulting firm started in February. Phil likes to stay "nimble," which is what he says the ministerial entrepreneurs he helps have to be as well.

"You need to be able to move quickly and adapt to a changing environment," Phil says.

He's adapting to a very new environment after serving as executive director of South Side Mission in Peoria, Illinois, for 12 years and work-

ing at another rescue mission in Bloomington for six years before that. Seeking funds was a key part of those positions, and he is turning that experience into service to nonprofits large and small. Phil is the fundraiser, and his business partner, fellow believer Rick Richardson, is a CPA who helps clients manage the funds that Phil raises.

"We help charities, churches, and schools anywhere in the country raise more money, keep more money, and plan for the long term," Phil says.

For instance, "I've got a wonderful, small charity on the South Side that specializes in building wheelchair ramps for the elderly, the handicapped, and veterans," he says. "But I'm also consulting with larger organizations, too. I'm writing a lot of grant applications. With diminishing government money, nonprofits are looking to me to help them get some money that is not necessarily affiliated with the government."

He learned to do that at South Side Mission, which takes no government money so that requirements or restrictions accompanying the money can't impede the mission's purpose. "We became adept at figuring out funders who didn't have those strings: companies, family foundations."

Perennial Partners also helps new ministries get nonprofit status from the government.

"Once you get that, you can build on top of it," Phil says. "So many young ministries get bogged down in that step."



Taking the step out of secure employment to Perennial Partners didn't frighten Phil.

"I would love to say that it was a really scary thing, but I've always felt like it was a God thing," he says. "My wife, Jilleen, saw it before I did. Our wives are so discerning. She was pointing me in this direction for months before I decided. And when I finally joined my wife and the Lord, then I had peace about it."

The new partnership has given Phil more freedom, too.

"My priorities have always been God, family, work, in that order, so I won't let this get in the way of those priorities," he says. "But it's the ultimate in flexibility. If I want to, I can work a 12-hour day and then not work again for two days."

He's getting his family involved in the business, too. He trained his daughter, Grace, in grant writing. She wrote more than \$20,000 in grants for South Side Mission in one year as an intern.

"This may end up being Grace's summer job (with Perennial



Partners),” Phil says. “All of my kids are good writers, so it could end up being a family business before it’s all over.”

The flexibility extends into the future.

“I don’t ever intend to retire,” he says. “This is something I can do when I am at retirement age also, writing a few grants here and there, doing a campaign here and there, and taking the afternoons off to go fishing with the grandkids.”

In the meantime, though, his job consists of going to foundations or corporations and asking them to give money to the nonprofits he represents.

“If you think about it, especially in a ministry context, I’m just asking somebody to do what the Lord wants them to do anyway. He says, ‘I’m the Lord. With the firstfruits of all your crops, bring your tithes and offerings into the storehouse. See if I will not give you so much blessing that you can’t even hold it all’ (paraphrase of Malachi 3:10). So I’m just giving people an opportunity to invest in things that God might be tapping them on the shoulder for. It’s cool to be a conduit for the Lord in that regard. It’s really exciting for me to see a donor get so excited about making something possible happen.”

Phil didn’t think he’d end up here. After graduating with a degree in public relations, he thought he’d work at a Fortune 500 company or big PR firm, “but the Lord had other plans”—ministry and nonprofits.

“And it’s a lovely career, it’s just a really great thing to be a part of the end product being a changed life, and knowing that in some small part I helped contribute to that. As

## Why SMI?

**Phil Newton applies** the flexibility and initiative that comes with being an entrepreneur to providing health care for his family. When he left his job running an inner-city mission and co-founded a two-man business, he and his family turned to Samaritan Ministries.

“Entrepreneurs are naturally people who take initiative, and Samaritan Ministries is one of these organizations that thrives on that,” says Phil, co-founder of Perennial Partners. “I can take initiative with my own and with my family’s health care. I can call doctors and find out who’s got the best rate. When my daughter needed an MRI recently, we were able to call around all over town to find out who does the cheapest MRI. It didn’t matter if they were in network or not. We did the same thing recently when another daughter needed to have some blood drawn.”

Health care sharing “makes it really easy for me to be an entrepreneur,” Phil says. “I was working full-time jobs for 23 years and always had insurance through my regular employer, but both my business partner and I went with nontraditional health care plans, and it became that much easier to become entrepreneurs knowing there were some great choices out there.”

He says he was “nickel and dimed to death” by health insurance plans through employers.

“We would pay a co-pay and then sooner or later, you get these follow-up bills for things that weren’t covered, and then you’d pay those, then you’d get more and more bills, and pretty soon you didn’t even know what you were paying and when. You just took the insurance company’s word for it. At least, I did.”

Samaritan, Phil says, is an “easy button.”

“It’s one check,” he says. “We know what it’s going to be for every month.”

Cash-pay discounts have been a pleasant surprise, Phil says.

“We showed up to Walgreens the other day and some kindhearted pharmacist said, ‘Now, you do know we have a prescription card, don’t you?’ I said, ‘No.’ So now we’re on this Walgreens prescription card that has paid for itself over and over and over.”

The better informed a health care sharing ministry member is, the better deals they’ll get, he says.

“There are lots of discounts out there that people don’t even know about. If you take a reasonable amount of initiative in your own health care questions, you can discover those.”

Another thing Phil was happy to discover as a Samaritan member was the ability to choose a health care provider without worrying about it being “in-network.”◆

## Media Choices

### Entertainment: Handle with care

by Phillip Telfer

*Every song is a sermon,  
Every movie a message,  
Every TV a teacher,  
Every word a weapon,  
And a picture is worth  
a thousand words.*

So many things in this world run on fuel. I live out in the country so gasoline comes in handy around my place, not only for my vehicles but also for my riding mower, push mower, trimmer, and chainsaw. It occasionally makes an effective fire starter for idiots who should know better.

Once I had to dispose of a dead animal carcass, but I didn't want to take the time to bury it in the yard, so I placed the dead animal in a steel burning barrel and doused it with gasoline. If you are not familiar with a burning barrel, it is simply a 55 gallon steel drum with an open top and several holes punched in the side to allow a fire to get oxygen. They are not uncommon in the country, and I thought I would make good use of mine. I was about to toss in a match when another thought crossed my mind. This might be a good time to burn that growing pile of chicken feed sacks in the barn.

I blew out the match and marched off to the barn. We were raising over thirty chickens at the time and they ate a lot of feed, which accounted for the mountain of paper feed sacks. I grabbed as many as I could handle and stuffed them into the burning barrel. I was pretty ignorant of what I was doing at this

point. I literally crammed as many of those bags into the barrel as I could. I packed them in tight and added a little more fuel for good measure, and then stood back. When I tossed the lit match, I was prepared for a quick flash and a nice fire to accomplish its work.

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**So then do not be foolish,  
but understand what the  
will of the Lord is.**

Ephesians 5:17

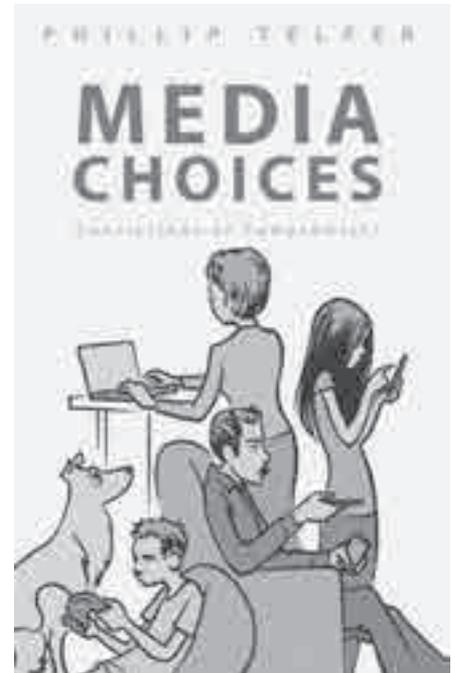
**But as for me, my feet came  
close to stumbling, my steps  
had almost slipped.**

Psalms 73:2

**Set your mind on  
the things above, not on  
the things that are on earth.**

Colossians 3:2

If you know anything about ballistics, then what happened next won't be as shocking to you as it was to me. The trapped gas underneath the packed bags combusted like gunpowder in a giant cannon setting off an epic explosion! My heart felt like it momentarily stopped from the loud and reverberating sound of the terrifying chicken bag bomb. My sight had been temporarily interrupted, my ears were ringing, my heart was now pounding, and when I started breathing again I gazed up. I had shot all of those chicken feed sacks about fifty feet into the air. It was almost impressive until I realized that I had to run for cover because



CreateSpace 2015, 252 pages  
Available from [www.mediatalk101.org](http://www.mediatalk101.org)  
and in Kindle edition at [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com).

the sky was now raining large fragments of flaming feed sacks. After dodging the fiery debris, and running around to stamp out small fires, I was left to ponder my careless use of fuel, which had put me in danger. I was really glad no one was around to laugh at my idiocy.

In the same way, have you ever thought about entertainment as a kind of fuel that should be handled carefully? If not, you should. Media plays a large part of what fuels the hearts and minds of our generation. We mistakenly think, "It's just entertainment," or, "It's innocent amusement." On the contrary, it has become one of the biggest stumbling blocks of spiritual growth and family health, and is one of the most neglected subjects to be addressed from a Biblical worldview in homes and churches. The dramatic and sudden change in our society that has come about through this electronic age has unfortunately left many families in a confused stupor, won-

dering how to approach the subject of media in their homes.

Like gasoline, it must be handled with care, and we must start by finding help and direction from the Bible. Too many people have the mistaken idea that the Bible doesn't have anything to say about the unique issues we face today. It doesn't mention TVs, DVDs, PS3, or Nintendo Wii. You won't read about PCs, MP3s, 4G, or Xbox 360. The apostle Paul didn't preach about Facebook, Farmville, Foursquare, or flat screens. There's nothing about Pinterest, reality shows, Instagram, or downloads. Peter didn't preach about Google searches, YouTube channels, movie ratings, or media multi-tasking. The first Jerusalem council didn't address texting, tweeting, Android, or i-Anything. These things are unique to our time, but the Bible contains timeless truths that apply to these modern marvels. There is Biblical guidance to help navigate this technical landscape.

The escalating changes of the 21st century haven't taken God by surprise. "His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him Who called us by His own glory and excellence..." (2 Peter 1:3).

With such a monster of a topic, where do you begin? For over six thousand years, mankind has been faced with sin, temptations, and distractions that can take a person's focus off of God and His plans. Electronic entertainment has brought about new conduits for temptation and time wasting, but the age-old battle for our hearts is nothing new. ♦

## According to recent studies

- More than 700 billion videos were watched on YouTube in 2010
- 81 percent of Generation Y uses Facebook
- *World of Warcraft: Cataclysm* sets PC game sales record—3.3 million sold in first day
- If Facebook were a country it would be the third largest in the world behind China and India (Over 500 million users)
- Americans now spend as much time on the internet as they do watching TV
- The average American watches 4.7 Hours of TV each day
- There are more TVs than people per household in the U.S.
- One out of five toddlers have TV in bedroom and 43 percent of 3-4 year olds
- Babies cognitive development delayed when babies watch TV
- 40 percent of children under 11 going online
- American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that no child under 2 years should watch any TV
- Teens spend 7.5 hours each day consuming media (Kaiser Family Foundation report)
- Video games and TV impacts children's sleep patterns and memory performance
- Developing brains in teens becoming habituated to distraction and difficulty to focus
- The average age of a video game player is 34
- Video game *Call of Duty: Black Ops* sets sales record of \$360 million in first day
- 2 Billion videos watched on YouTube every day & 24 hours of new content added each minute
- Internet surpasses 2 billion users worldwide
- The average mobile teen sends and receives 3,339 texts per month
- 92 percent of U.S. toddlers have an online presence
- People spend more than half their day consuming media
- More than 2000 years of cumulative time spent in game play during first week of *Halo: Reach*
- Cellphone related driving deaths on the rise
- Digital devices deprive brain of needed downtime
- Digital diversions leave teens & parents sleep deprived
- Addictive internet use tied to depression in teens

For sources visit [www.mediatalk101.org/index.php/videos/media-consumption-in-the-us.html](http://www.mediatalk101.org/index.php/videos/media-consumption-in-the-us.html)

Copyright © 2015 by Phillip Telfer. Reprinted by permission. Samaritan Ministries member Phillip Telfer has ministered to youth and families for over 20 years, sharing at camps, retreats, schools, conferences, and churches across the U.S. He is the founder and president of Media Talk 101, which is a non-profit organization dedicated to teaching media discernment in the light of following Christ. Phillip produced and co-directed the award-winning documentary *Captivated*. He also serves as a co-pastor at Living Water Fellowship in Bulverde, Texas. He and his wife Mary have been happily married for 23 years and have been blessed with four children.

## Terminally ill patients need protection from physician-assisted suicide

by Michael Miller

**T**erminally ill patients need protection from physician-assisted suicide because of their vulnerability, whether it be from a new or old disability, an economic situation, depression, pain, or a lack of information about available help, says Matt Valliere of Patients Rights Action Fund.

For instance, Matt says, government-funded health care may not pay for a cancer patient's treatment that can cost thousands of dollars per month, but would cover the cost of drugs for assisted suicide, which can sometimes cost less than \$100.

"Once it's in the law, it affects every person in a state," Matt says. "Insurance companies just code it the same way they code every other single treatment in the world. It's just another option, and they will offer that option and pay for

that option, because it's so much cheaper."

That's what happened with retired school bus driver Barbara Wagner in Oregon. When her doctor prescribed a new chemotherapy drug for her in 2008, the state-run Oregon Health Plan declined to pay for it, but added that it would pay for comfort care, including "physician aid in dying," according to a story on KATU.com.

Oregon also offered prostate cancer victim Randy Stroup coverage for assisted suicide instead of pricey treatment. The health plan's policy at the time, according to FoxNews, was to not cover "life-prolonging treatment unless there is better than a 5 percent chance it will help the patients live for five more years."

Also at risk are those who have lost mobility due to illness, Matt says. "They've lost their independence, they've lost mobility, they can't use the bathroom themselves, you name it," he says. They have, in other words, become disabled. As a result, they sometimes request assisted suicide, possibly unaware that organizations are ready to help them adjust to their disability.

"You're saying that those who are disabled are actually unable to live a dignified life or that their life isn't worth living," Matt says. "We aim to protect those lives because they truly are dignified and they are worth living."

The elderly "can oftentimes be coerced by their children or others," he says.

The problem in this case is with the assisted-suicide laws' process

of requesting lethal drugs from a doctor. Requests must be made verbally and in writing with witnesses, but without a doctor needing to see the patient. The prescription is then mailed directly to the patient's home and can be filled at a local pharmacy.

**The terminally ill are vulnerable to assisted suicide for many reasons, and Christians have to be proactive to help protect them.**

"Once that person leaves the pharmacy with the prescription, there's no oversight," Matt says. "Nobody has to be there. Nobody has to watch whether he or she is forcing these pills down grandma's throat."

Others are asking for the pills because they're depressed. In some cases, Matt says, people making the request had decades of mental illness. People turned away because of that are able to go doctor-shopping until they find one who is willing to give them the medication. There is no requirement for a psychological evaluation, and most doctors aren't qualified to make one anyway. Matt says that studies have indicated that while a low percentage of those ask-



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patientsrightsaction.org

facebook.com/PatientsRightsAction

twitter.com/PRAFund

Search "Patients Rights Action Fund"  
on YouTube

ing for lethal drugs in Oregon and Washington state are referred to psychological evaluation before the prescription is made, many more of them may be depressed.

Probably one of the most common arguments made for allowing assisted suicide is to end suffering.

“Say somebody is of perfectly sound mind but they’re suffering terrible pain, et cetera, why not let them kill themselves?” Matt says. “That’s a question that’s different than the one other patients are trying to ask. It’s a moral question.”

And it’s one that can be answered with palliative care, which is “specialized medical care for people with serious illnesses” that “focuses on providing patients with relief from the symptoms and stress of a serious illness,” according to [getpalliativecare.org](http://getpalliativecare.org).

“If a patient is suffering at the end of life, they need a new doctor,” Matt says. “That kind of physical suffering is generally treatable. You can be made comfortable.”

Dr. Ira Byock put it this way when he testified against Vermont’s assisted-suicide law: “Alleviating suffering is different from eliminating the sufferer. Allowing a person to die gently is importantly different from actively ending the person’s life.” ♦

#### **Patients Rights Action Fund...**

*Continued from page 1*

up 10 percent from a year ago. The poll also says that 56 percent of Americans believe assisted suicide is morally acceptable, while only 37 percent say it’s morally wrong.

PRAF helps state-level coalitions to form and oppose legislation or ballot measures that would allow physician-assisted suicide. The fund also raises awareness of the problems with legalizing it.

“We can provide experts on the issue, tried-and-true talking points, methods, ways to win on both the legislative side and on the ballot measure side,” says Matt, who lives in Oklahoma.

But the key is creating a “very strong, broad-based coalition.” Special-interest groups across the political spectrum frequently oppose physician-assisted suicide, but, without the help of PRAF, would be unlikely to unite to fight legislation that would allow it.

“The basic groupings are pro-life groups, family institutes, the Catholic Church often, disability rights groups, hospice groups, palliative care folks, the medical community, and nursing associations,” Matt says. “These groups all have a myriad of issues, and they will come together to work on this one issue even though they don’t agree on many other things. There’s a little bit of distrust there sometimes, but as long as everyone is able to come to the table recognizing that there’s no other issue that we’re going to talk about here, we’re all on the same page with regard to this issue, then they come together quite well.”

Many in what are typically left-

leaning organizations, like disability rights groups and church denominations with liberal agendas, are able to make arguments against assisted suicide that show other leftists “that assisted suicide is regressive and contrary to what they would see as positive movement forward.”

Dr. Ira Byock, a Vermont physician who confesses to left-wing positions on every other issue, testified against physician-assisted suicide in 2013, when that state’s law was being debated.

“Giving doctors the authority to write lethal prescriptions represents acquiescence to well-documented social failures and unmet needs of ill people and their families,” he said. “While masquerading as progressive politics—‘the right to die’ is an effective slogan—legalizing physician-assisted suicide is regressive social policy.”

With 20 states considering legislation that would legalize assisted suicide, most of PRAF’s time is spent on defensive efforts.

“The big win was Colorado,” Matt says.

A suicide bill died in committee there on an 8-5 bipartisan vote in February partly due to the effort of Coloradans Against Physician-Assisted Suicide. Carrie Earll, vice president of government and public policy for the Colorado-based Focus on the Family, says PRAF “helped organize the kick-off call to connect key members of the coalition and provide resources.”

Besides Focus on the Family, those members included such groups as Not Dead Yet, Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund, Colorado Family Action, Christian

*Continued on page 13*

## How God is teaching me to trust in Him while I struggle with diabetes

by Mary Kay Rumbold

*Editor's Note: Mary Kay Rumbold is a Samaritan Ministries member who gave this testimony at her church.*

I am amazed at the way God has worked in my life, and I would want others to see how He has glorified Himself. I feel like I have been so stuck in where I live in my life with the Lord, that I knew He would have to do something pretty big to pull me out of it. He did. He has come and shown me Who He really is, and the relationship I can have with Him.

I would describe much of my Christian life as very “familiar.” I was familiar with God, I was familiar with church. But I did things more out of duty, because I thought I had to, and not so much out of love and gratitude for His love for me. That’s how I lived.

God has given me the kind of personality that sets my mind to do something and does it. I didn’t really feel like I needed Him very much. Yes, I would pray little prayers of “help me, help me, help me,” but then I would get up in the morning, and make a list and check off the things on my list. I could be frustrated if I didn’t get them all done and be excited if I did, but I was mostly thinking I had done it.

Last July, my husband, Gary, and I had gone out to Ohio to see my stepmom, and we’d come back home and gone to bed that night. During the night, I was lying in bed, and suddenly realized I had no feeling in my arm. I tried shaking it, thinking that it would all come back.

I got up and walked around a bit. I told Gary I was going to get up for a few minutes and go the bathroom, and I’d be right back. After I was up for a while, I realized that I still couldn’t do anything with my arm.

When I got back to bed, I found I wasn’t able to talk to Gary. I couldn’t say anything. It was really a strange feeling. It really scared Gary, so he called an ambulance, and one thing led to another. At the hospital, they thought I might be having a stroke, except that I knew everything. Even on the way to the hospital, I started regaining the ability to talk and to use my arms, so they really didn’t think that’s what it was.

I’m a person who likes to avoid scary situations, so when I was in the hospital, surrounded by all these people looking at me while I was trying to figure out what was going on, it wasn’t very comfortable.

Finally, they switched from a neurological team to a kidney team, and determined that I had very low kidney function. I’m a diabetic and take insulin. Apparently I had not been as disciplined as I thought.

With me believing that I can control everything, I had thought that if I just ate right and did the right things, everything would be okay. I had ignored all the warning signals of being really tired and really weak.

I was in the hospital for about a week, and I had very high blood pressure. I’ve always said that I have “white coat syndrome.” It seems like when I hear the cart coming down the hallway to take my blood pressure, it automatically goes up. They kept increasing my medications to

try to bring down my blood pressure. Finally I told them I thought that if they would let me go home, my blood pressure would come down. They did their best to get everything regulated, then they allowed me to go home.

I remember telling Gary, “I’m going to be perfect.” Instead of looking at the fact that I have a perfect Savior, my thought for everything has always been, “I have to do it right; I have to do what I’m supposed to do; I have to be perfect.”

So I told Gary, “I’m going to be perfect.” We started eating mainly vegetables and fruit, and did away with the desserts and all the sweets. A week later I had a blood test, then I got a phone call, “You need to go back into the hospital immediately.” I had no idea what was going on.

I found out that things you think are good for you, like vegetables and fruit and meat and even nuts, are high in potassium. When you have a kidney problem and your potassium goes up, you can go into heart arrhythmia and die. So here I am in the middle of life, being told I need to go in to the hospital or I might die.

I went back in, they had to regulate some things, then I returned home. When I got home, I was face-to-face with, “what do I do now?” I have never been so depressed in my entire life. I knew people were praying with me, but I felt completely alone. I didn’t know how to reach out to God. I would pray. I loved to read the Bible. I would journal, and sketch everything out. But my relationship with God, really trusting,

resting, and believing that He would take care of me, was not there like it should have been.

When I came home, I kept an iPad by my place at the table, and looked up every single thing I ate. How much potassium is there in a cup of green beans? How much potassium is there in broccoli? I would just sit there and cry. I saw the world going on around me, but I felt like I wasn't in it. Most of the time, I was very discouraged and depressed.

The things that followed continue to amaze me. I remember praying that God would help me through this, then thinking He was asking, "Are you going to trust me on this one, or not?" That was significant to me, because there were many times I didn't trust Him. I'd think "I should trust You, but perhaps this idea I have is better."

I found myself saying "I'm going to trust You," but then giving up and feeling I was completely without hope, because I didn't know how to do things with Him leading me instead of me leading.

We made several adjustments and completely changed the way we were eating. My life has always been about food. When I go to someone's house, I look forward to it, wondering what they are going to have to eat. It was very different for me to be saying "I can't have this, and I can't have that."

As I went on, I found that God was gradually taking away my cravings for everything except wanting to know what He wanted. This amazed me, because I had never been like that before.

Besides changing our diet, I now soak in Epsom salt baths to pull toxins out of my body. Because I have a

kidney that doesn't work, the toxins stay in my body. You actually get to the point where you can't get out of bed and you can't do anything, which leads to the part of this story that is so amazing to me—that is where I should be now.

On paper, it doesn't look good. Blood tests show that my kidneys are functioning at 7 percent. People with kidney problems go on dialysis when they are in the teens, going down to 14 or 15 percent. My doctor also does not know why test images of my kidneys look so good.

I have been dealing with this for nine months, and every day I find myself coming before the Lord and saying, "What do you want me to do today? Where should I go today? What should I do?" The way He has laid everything out has been amazing to me. I'm not on dialysis. My kidneys appear to be working fine in every other way. I don't know what God has in store, I honestly don't.

I know that I treasure each day more than I have before. I'm excited each day to think about what is ahead.

When I first found out about this I would go to bed at night thinking, "Oh no, I have to go to bed again." I would lay awake, and then I'd get up and walk around. Gary would reach for me, see that I wasn't there, and come looking for me.

I was very afraid, and I didn't know what to do. I felt very alone. I had an extremely supportive family and husband, and yet I felt really alone. When I woke up I'd think, "Oh good, it's morning," even though I'd had only a couple hours of sleep.

It's incredible to me how much strength I have and how good I feel every single day.

I don't know how long it's going to last, but it's amazing to feel like I do and to know that God has brought me this far.

He's taken away cravings for food. He's given me great contentment. He is training me especially in trusting and resting in Him.

Every day I pray, "Lord, if You want me to tell my story, please bring somebody to tell it to." It sometimes is awkward to tell how excited I am, when there are so many people who are having problems, and there's no reason I should be doing well. One thing I'm really convinced of is the truth of 2 Corinthians 4:7, "But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show the surpassing power belongs to God, not to us."

I found the treasure I have, when my health brought me to my knees. It's in a jar of clay that is nothing. The power belongs to God, not to me. My strength comes from God, not from what I'm doing or where I'm at, but from the fact that God is choosing to sustain me each day.

My story is actually God's story, just as all of our stories are God's story, because He's the One Who orchestrates our lives and plans things, yet we can miss it for so much of our lives.

I don't mean in any way to portray what I'm doing as the only right way, or that others should look at my story as the correct way to do things. I'm simply telling how God chose to work in me, and how it has made a huge difference in my life. God reveals His treasure in many ways in the many jars of clay He has created. ♦

## **Wait Till It's Free**

by Colin Gunn and Phil Olsson  
reviewed by Jed Stuber

**H**ow did our health care system get to be such a mess, and what can ordinary people do to navigate it? Why is health care often expensive, inefficient, and ineffective? What effect will the Affordable Care Act have on it? What are some of the little known bright spots in health care, offering solutions that you can take advantage of? These are just a few of the questions *Wait Till It's Free* addresses.

Documentary maker and Samaritan member Colin Gunn teamed up with Samaritan Member Advocate Phil Olsson to write *Wait Till It's Free*, a book that takes a look at health care using an approach similar to Colin's film of the same name. First-hand accounts from regular Americans—patients, health care workers, businessmen—along with insight from health care experts—authors, doctors, politicians—are woven together to create a compelling story about health care than we can all learn from.

The title harkens back to the early 1990s push to pass a national health reform law. To point out how ridiculous it was to claim that the government could provide everyone free health care, columnist P.J. O'Rourke wrote, "If you think health care is expensive now, wait until you see what it costs when it's free."

As Colin captures a wide variety of perspectives on health care, several themes emerge. Wherever regulation is instituted or increased, perverse incentives are created and things worsen: third parties interfere

and layers of bureaucracy multiply. Innovation stalls, quality declines, prices increase, corruption and cartels develop. Inversely, when freedom and competition are allowed, health care improves. Innovation is unleashed, quality affordable choices abound, and charity thrives.

*Wait Till It's Free* also explores the little known history of health care. Deliberate attempts to eliminate freedom and nationalize health care date back more than a century. At each step along the way the industries that stood to benefit most lobbied heavily for increased regulations that allowed them to eliminate competitors and consolidate power. They are now some of the most powerful influences in America, and yet most Americans don't realize it.

Even more concerning is the moral agenda being pushed through health care, a significant threat to religious freedom. *Wait Till It's Free* explores the connections between the so called "pro-choice" movement and health care reform laws. Can a movement really be considered pro-choice when it seeks to force people to subsidize lifestyles they disagree with—from contraception, to abortion, to gender reassignment?

After presenting all these very serious concerns, *Wait Till It's Free* goes on to explore some positive trends in health care. Direct primary care clinics and price-transparent surgery centers have cut out third parties. Not only do they keep third parties from interfering in the doctor-patient relationship, but they also provide high quality services at affordable prices.



Read the first 20 pages free at  
[www.wtifree.com/book](http://www.wtifree.com/book)

As tax-subsidized programs designed for the poor continue to deteriorate, charitable clinics are leading by providing affordable and free care. And yes, as a Samaritan members themselves, Colin and Phil present Samaritan Ministries as an innovative solution to the health care challenges we face.

The takeaway message is that when we have the faith to apply Biblical principles to health care and the courage to cut out third-party interference, we can receive much better health care.

You can get the book or film version of *Wait Till It's Free* at [wtifree.com](http://wtifree.com). Click on "Host your own free screening" to learn more about how to show the movie at your home, office, church, or local theater. You can even invite Colin to personally attend your event. ♦

Legal Society, American Academy of Medical Ethics, Center for Rights of Parents with Disabilities, and Hospice Analytics.

“The coalition came together quickly to do an important work of defeating the physician-assisted suicide bill,” Carrie says. “It represented organizations and individuals who understand the threat physician-assisted suicide poses to society and dedicated time and energy to lobby and speak against the bill. It was important to have a diverse and broad coalition with representation from the medical community, hospice, disability rights groups, and faith-based groups.”

A PRAF-backed coalition in Vermont is trying to, at the least, keep safeguards against abuse in that state’s assisted-suicide law, and possibly overturn it. In Montana, where a court ruling allows a doctor to use a patient’s request for assisted suicide as a defense if prosecuted, two bills to allow assisted suicide and one to outlaw it are in play this year.

The fund is also concerned about proposed laws in California and New Jersey.

PRAF was formed in 2012 after a ballot fight in Massachusetts.

“What opponents saw during that work was that there was a need for a kind of a national organization that would be something of a counterweight to an organization that used to be called the Hemlock Society,” Matt says.

That group, which now calls itself “Compassion and Choices,” is a “top-down, centralized organization, very well-organized and well-funded,” according to Matt.

As development director, fund-

ing is Matt’s job. He was brought on board after a friend who had helped to start PRAF asked for help to present the group’s principles in an effective way.

“He asked me to come give them a hand with the fundraising side of it, but that’s turned into other things, a variety of roles that I end up filling,” Matt says.

**Christians need to form and join coalitions when assisted-suicide legislation is on a ballot. If there isn’t one in your state, educate yourself and give Patients Rights Action Fund a call.**

New Jersey-based Greg Funstein is president and oversees strategy and day-to-day operations. Tim Rozales, PRAF’s political director, is based in California. Barbara Lyons is coalitions director.

She’s the one who helps groups assemble that promote laws to protect against assisted suicide or defend against proposed laws, Matt says.

“Those folks are helping to direct the strategy on the ground and what they typically will do is send out an email saying, ‘Call your legislator

today; this is a big deal,’ or ‘Show up at the statehouse,’” Matt says.

Coalitions are even more necessary in terms of numbers when assisted-suicide legislation is presented at the ballot.

“There are so many more people making the decision, and you have to try to reach all of those voters,” he says.

Another good resource Matt points to is the Patients Rights Council.

Their website, [patientsrightscouncil.org](http://patientsrightscouncil.org), is “very thorough and would be a great resource for anyone trying to learn about the issue.”

Matt urges members interested in the issue to contact PRAF to find their state coalition.

“If there is none, go ahead and educate yourself and contact us to get one going,” Matt says. ♦

*Hebrews 13:3 tells us to “Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.” Our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world are being persecuted for the sake of the Gospel. We need to remember them in prayer. Each month, the Christian Health Care Newsletter will provide updates gleaned from such sources as World Watch Monitor and The Voice of the Martyrs and offer prayer points. Please use them in your personal or group prayer time.*

### **Survivors face food shortages**

Displaced Christians returning to their homes in Nigeria face starvation, International Christian Concern reports. No food is growing on farms because fields were left unattended after the terrorist group Boko Haram drove the people out. Farming equipment also has been burned up and vandalized, bridges have been blown up, and mines “litter the landscape.” *Pray for provision for those returning to their homes. Praise God that Boko Haram has been driven back in parts of Nigeria. Pray also for revival in the nation.*

### **Ghafur remains in prison**

Imran Ghafur continues to read his Bible, fast, and pray, Voice of the Martyrs reports. Imran is in a Pakistani prison, serving a life sentence on charges that he burned a Quran. His brother, Naveed, told VOM that several members of Imran’s family were able to visit him before Easter. An appeal of his sentence has been filed, but no hearing date has yet been set. *Pray that*

*Imran will be released, that he will remain safe in prison, and that he will be spiritually strong.*

### **Homes burned after message**

The homes of an evangelist and several of his neighbors were burned in India after “Santosh” presented a Gospel message that resulted in several professions of faith and several healings, VOM reports. One person was killed and three others injured. *Pray for provision for Santosh and the others who lost their homes and all of their belongings. Pray also for protection of Christians in India, where persecution has been increasing for the past few years.*

### **Turkmen Christian released**

Turkmenistan authorities released Umid Gojayev early on February 17 under a prisoner amnesty, VOM reports. Umid was sentenced to four years in prison in 2012 after a disagreement over the use of a local well. He was prosecuted after investigators found out he was a Christian. He is now at home with his wife and children, but is still required to report to a local police station each week. *Praise God that Umid has been released. Pray for encouragement and just treatment of Christians in Turkmenistan.*

### **Police threaten Chinese pastor**

Provincial Chinese authorities threatened a house church pastor on May 8 who planned to welcome a church official at his congregation. Anhui province police monitored a phone call between Pastor Wu Changle and Pastor Zhang Mingxuan, president of the Chinese House Church Alliance, in which plans for Zhang to preach at Wu’s church

were discussed. The next day, according to ICC, police told Wu he must not welcome Zhang. *Pray that Chinese authorities will stop monitoring phone calls and will allow Zhang to preach at Wu’s church. Pray also for Chinese Christians who are under persistent harassment by police.*

### **Islamists poison Ugandan doctor**

Islamists poisoned a Christian doctor in Uganda, VOM reports. The doctor provided medical treatment to a teenage girl they had attacked because her father, a pastor, had ignored warnings to stop worship services. Muslim extremists have also issued death threats against the girl’s entire family. *Pray for complete healing for the girl and the doctor. Pray also for protection for the girl and her family.*

### **Refugees find cold reception**

Christians fleeing persecution in Pakistan by going to Thailand are encountering hostility upon arrival in the East Asian country, ICC reports. Thai authorities have arrested many Christian refugees and kept them in “terrible prison conditions.” *Pray for encouragement for the asylum seekers, for better conditions for the Christians in the Bangkok Immigration Detention Center, and for provision for churches trying to help them.* ♦

*For more information on the persecuted church, contact The Voice of the Martyrs ([www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com), 877-337-0302), International Christian Concern ([www.persecution.org](http://www.persecution.org), 800-422-5441) or World Watch Monitor ([worldwatchmonitor.org](http://worldwatchmonitor.org)).*

and both of you will wish to be “out of there” as soon as possible. How much easier would it be for both of you if he had taken the time and effort to build a good relationship and rapport?

Next I want to emphasize what I have called “marriage education” rather than “sex education.” We shouldn’t be aiming to teach our children “sex education.” We shouldn’t even be aiming to teach them “abstinence education.” Rather our aim should be to teach them about marriage, its point and its purpose, within which sexual matters are clearly a big thing, and we should be aiming to do so in a way that presents our sexuality as a thing of beauty and glory in the eyes of our children.

And indeed it is glorious. It is the foundation for all society; it is the promise of children; it is the place where the closest human intimacy occurs; it is one of the main places where we learn to give and to forgive; it is where we learn that selfishness, if not destroyed, will kill our marriage. If we are teaching these things by both word and action, we are not going to find it embarrassing to teach on sexual matters.

In fact, if we have been teaching our children what marriage is, why it exists, and why it is so important, speaking to them about sexual matters will not be an embarrassment, but will be the exact opposite. Sexual intercourse is a gift from God, and in many ways represents the apex of the marriage covenant. If we have glorified that marriage covenant in the eyes of our children, we will be thrilled rather than embarrassed to talk to them about it, when the appropriate time comes.

But when is that appropriate time? My final point is that conversations on sexual matters will, if we have been open with our children and if we have sought to beautify marriage, arise as a matter of course and we will instinctively know when they are ready.

In the past, many parents have dreaded having “the talk” with their children, and it may well have been the fear and the dread of this that led to the responsibility being passed on to paid strangers in the schools. But “the talk” is a mistaken way of thinking about it. If we have to have “the talk,” it may indicate that our communication with our children has been inadequate.

By laying the groundwork—talking to our children about anything and everything, and promoting marriage to them through our words and actions—then it is pretty certain that at some stage they are going to approach us and ask questions. At that point we can simply talk to them quite naturally. They trust us, because we have been open with them. They already understand the proper context for sexual relations, because we have taught them about the goodness and glory of marriage. And so we are ready to answer their questions when they come.

Of course we need to be wise in knowing how much to say at what age. I recently had to answer this type of question from my 8-year-old daughter. I consider her to be too young to know or even need to know many of the details, but I also consider putting her off with a “You’re too young for that” response as likely to produce defensiveness and less trust between us. So I gave her as much as I thought she

was ready for, explaining that she will learn more as she grows up. As nearly as I could tell, she went on her way secure and happy: secure in the knowledge that I hadn’t put her off, and happy that I had told her as much as her age would allow.

With the sexual free-for-all that is occurring in modern society, partly thanks to the radical ideas of the heirs of György Lukács, it is really crucial that we take responsibility for teaching our children about sexual intercourse, with wisdom and tact, in the context of marriage. Let me encourage any parent reading this to do just that. ♦

*Rob Slane lives with his wife and six home-educated children in Salisbury, England. He is the author of *The God Reality: A Critique of Richard Dawkins’ The God Delusion*, contributes to the Canadian magazine *Reformed Perspective* and blogs on cultural issues from a Biblical perspective at [www.theblogmire.com](http://www.theblogmire.com).*

And now, Lord, look  
upon their threats and  
grant to your servants to  
continue to speak Your  
Word with all boldness...

Acts 4:29

From the beginning of the Church, unbelievers have tried to silence the followers of Jesus Christ. They did the same to Jesus. In fact, God's people have faced this kind of opposition for much of the history of the world.

How did the early believers respond when told not to speak the truth? They prayed.

What did they pray? Did they ask for an easier life? Did they ask for relief from hardship or suffering? Did they ask for protection from their enemies? No. They asked for boldness to speak the truth.

Today, unbelievers still oppose God's truth, and they attempt to silence those who follow Jesus Christ and believe the truth of His Word. What are we asking God to give us?

For the Kingdom,



Ray King