

# Christian HealthCare

## NEWSLETTER

### MEMBER LETTERS:

**It's refreshing to hear from fellow believers**

**God has blessed** us not only by providing financially for our medical bills and healing Daniel's foot completely, but also by encouraging us with wonderful notes from other believers.

Living in such dark times, it is refreshing to hear from fellow believers around the country. It's a great reminder that we are not alone in our faith. And some day we will get to meet all the people who prayed for our family and all the dedicated staff of Samaritan Ministries.

*Ynacio and Marlana  
Mascarenas  
Brighton, Colorado*

**I recall the** truth from the story of the Good Samaritan, that genuine saving faith leads you to love God and love others. "Love" is the word that best describes what goes on in the actions of this ministry's members. Our hearts are humbled. Thank you all.

*Andrew and Christy Silvas  
Okeechobee, Florida*

### **Are we too satisfied with life to be interested in prayer and repentance?**

by Pastor Mike McCartney

**I** believe that the Church in America is not praying as much and not repenting as much as it should, by and large, because we're satisfied.

I think that people are just satisfied with life right now, and I see that they're busy building "bigger barns" (Luke 12:16-21). I think that a lot of folks are chasing after Satan's trinkets instead of God's treasures. So I think that there's a desire to build these bigger barns, and what Satan's really offering is like a cubic zirconia compared to God's unsearchable riches (Romans 11:30-36; Ephesians 3:6-21). And yet, most Christians are busy all week long.

My wife and I went out on a drive one Sunday afternoon right after church, and milled around, and saw soccer fields full of kids and families out there, and they had time for that! And then we saw people mowing their grass, and washing their cars, and all these types of things. And again, I believe that the reason that they're not in church and they're not praying and repenting and are doing these types of things, is because they're satisfied! When someone takes their car they'll get upset. When there's no soccer fields to play on Sunday they'll be upset. When there's no boat that goes to the lake, they'll begin to get upset.

And I just think right now, as long as we're satisfied, it's sort of like a person

sleeping in a nice warm bed in a cold house, and the burglar breaks into the house and they're hoping that maybe the dog will take care of that burglar. They just don't want to get out of bed, and you hear the burglar climbing up the stairs.

Christians: the burglar's in the bedroom, and it's time to wake up!

It's soon going to be too late. We have to no longer be satisfied with the way things are going. It's up to us—we can't rely on anybody else to do something. There's not going to be anybody else. We need to wake up before it's too late. ♦

*Mike McCartney is pastor of Chester Gap Baptist Church in Virginia.*

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NEWSLETTER

Volume 21, Number 8

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## Sharing Summary from July

Shares:	\$13,866,302	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:	\$12,544,835	
In Negotiation:	\$ —	
New Needs:	1,897	
Total Needs:	3,920	
New Rewards:	185	Member Households: 47,843 (as of 6/23/15)
Miscarriages:	48	
Final Rewards:	11	

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

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Your membership

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## Remember:



### 1 SEND A NOTE—

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



### 2 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.



### 3 ALWAYS STAY ALERT IN PRAYER—

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

## Can we thank God for the Supreme Court's decision on same-sex 'marriage'?

by Rob Slane

*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?*

*As it is written, "For Your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."*

*No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

—Romans 8:35-39

When I heard of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to legalize same-sex "marriage" across the United States, I must confess that a sense of gloom and despondency welled up inside me. It wasn't only the decision's effect on America itself that bothered me, although I grieve about that. It was also the fact that this decision is likely to have major ramifications throughout the world, with a host of other countries facing pressure to follow suit.

My fears were confirmed when I read Secretary of State John Kerry's reaction to the vote:

The Court's decision also sends a clear message to every corner of the globe: no law that rests on a foundation of discrimination can withstand the tide of justice.<sup>1</sup>

This wasn't a statement of "fact" he was making. It was a threat. If you couple this with what Mr. Obama said in an interview back in January—"We have to twist the arms, when countries don't do what we need them to"—then you will understand that the pressure being put on countries around the globe to conform to this new "norm" will from now on be enormous.<sup>2</sup>

Despondency should lead us to prayer, and so it did with me. And as so often is the case when we pray, I found that my whole perspective began to change. I was praying with these words from Psalm 53 in my thoughts: "Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion! When God restores the fortunes of His people, let Jacob rejoice, let Israel be glad," when it suddenly it dawned on me that the Supreme Court decision might not necessarily be the calamity it first seemed to be.

Don't misunderstand. I am not about to condone the vote and all that it signifies. It was a terrible decision, both constitutionally and morally. It may have been exactly what we needed. Think about it.

What would have happened if the decision had gone the other way? We can be certain that it would not have been the end of the matter. The same-sex "marriage" lobby is on fire for their "gospel," and they do not intend to let up any time soon. If the vote had gone against them, there would have been another case, then another, then another—until the "right" answer was reached.

There would have been another effect as well. Huge numbers of Christians throughout America would

have fallen back into a false sense of security, believing that they still live in a country where fundamentally everything is sort of OK, and that America is still a Christian country.

But if a 5-4 victory the other way would have put us back to sleep, what does this 5-4 ruling do? I think it has the potential to bring about remarkable results:

**1. It provides a clear distinction between those who are committed to the Word of God's teaching about marriage and same-sex unions, and those who are prepared to capitulate.** This is a Joshua 24:15 moment: "And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

**2. It ought to dispel the belief among Christians in America that the United States is still a Christian nation.** Yes, there are many legacies from past days when the Gospel really prospered; yes, there are still millions of people who follow Jesus; and no, things are not as bad as they could be. But if you live in a nation where the leaders think that two men together makes a marriage, we must concede that it is no longer a Christian country.

**3. It will cause many Christians to more earnestly seek the LORD in prayer.** Just as the decision drove

*Continued on page 15*

## This Hope

by Michael Miller

**F**ive Samaritan Ministries members take the hope of the Gospel nationwide.

This Hope, a vocal group that started in the early 1990s in the small town of Soldotna, Alaska, and is now based outside of Atlanta, Georgia, seeks to “direct people to Jesus Christ and to present the Gospel through song and through the Word,” says group member Mikah Boudreaux.

In the '90s, that mission was carried out mainly around south-central Alaska near Anchorage, with occasional forays several hours north to Fairbanks. The group—Mikah, David Inabnit, Tim Inabnit, Daniel Johnston, and Jeane Bope—grew up together in Soldotna, attending church and school together. They performed in different combinations during high school and college before melding



**This Hope members are, from left, Mikah Boudreaux, David Inabnit, Daniel Johnston, Tim Inabnit, L.J. Rysdyk, and Jeane Bope.**

into This Hope. The quintet started traveling as they also started careers and families, until it became apparent they were being called to something larger.

“The Lord continued to open doors for us,” Mikah says.

They prayed about going into full-time ministry and leaving Alaska, and after a year felt that the Lord was leading them to do just that. The men and their families chose Atlanta, heading there in 1997. It’s a good location, Mikah says, because, besides having a solid church base, Atlanta is only a few hours away from Nashville for recording, and the South and East Coast are within reasonable driving reach as well.

“It was quite a shock moving to Atlanta, because we were probably just young and didn’t know any better,” Mikah says. “It was a huge leap of faith for us to uproot our families and move to Atlanta. There were moments along the way that He definitely tested our faith and there were days when we were wondering if this was really a wise choice. But through all those early years, God

continued to confirm what we were doing through how He was working in our concert ministry and how He was continuing to provide for us.”

This Hope communicates its message through a combination of a *cappella* and instrument-backed performance as well as spoken testimonies.

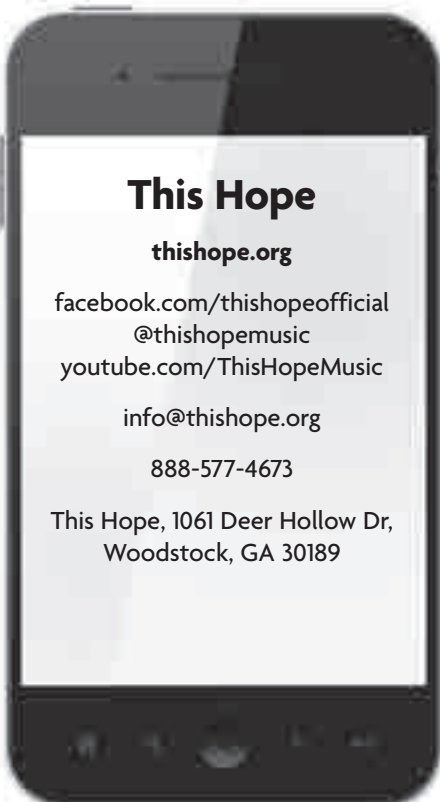
Besides performances at churches, conventions, and conferences, This Hope has produced 13 albums. Most feature original music and covers of Christian songs, but they also have a couple Christmas CDs and one album of only hymns.

“It’s been neat to see how the Lord has brought song ideas to us and how they’ve encouraged and blessed people along the way,” Mikah says.

“One of our most recent albums

### Free album for pastors

*This Hope offers a free album download to any pastor or music minister. All they have to do is send an email to [mikah@thishope.org](mailto:mikah@thishope.org) requesting the download and This Hope will oblige.*



included a lot of well-known worship songs,” he says. “It’s great to have that aspect of leading corporate worship and having songs everyone’s familiar with.”

While *a cappella* music is pretty basic—vocals without instrumentation, such as popularized by groups like Take 6, Glad, and Pentatonix—their performance of it has developed over the years. Each of the men sings, but they have different strengths.

“We try to use all of us together to accentuate individual strengths musically,” Mikah says.

He also plays piano and keyboard. Tim plays electric and acoustic guitars, while Dave also plays acoustic. Daniel plays electric bass, and Jeane adds some auxiliary percussion. The newest member, L.J. Rysdyk, mainly handles sound but also helps out by interjecting spoken word and a little taste of rap into the concert.

“In Alaska, we did *a cappella* the old-school way—just gather five guys around a microphone and hit ‘record’ and see what comes out the other side,” Mikah says. “Through the years technology has increased and changed to make it so that it’s a lot more complex, a lot more technical now. But we’ve always kept that vocal harmony as a centerpiece of what we’re doing musically, which I think a lot of people relate to. With five singers, we can create some interesting harmonies.”

Relating to people comes easy for This Hope. The guys still look like the people they’re trying to reach, probably a result of their Alaskan days of trying to keep warm and comfortable, Mikah says. During those Alaskan days, they

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## Why SMI?

**For the first** several years after the original five members of This Hope stepped into full-time ministry and moved from Alaska to Atlanta, they bought health insurance for their growing families.

But it was always a financial struggle.

“Being a small nonprofit, we’ve had challenges with health care and other costs,” says Mikah Boudreaux. “Our health care costs were increasing so exponentially, it was making it impractical for us to continue to do that.”

They started searching for a different way to take care of health care. One member had had experience with health care sharing while they lived in Alaska, so they explored that possibility.

“We considered different choices,” Mikah says. “We just felt like Samaritan was a great choice for us. We like the grassroots aspect of it, the personal connections and the prayers. Just the way it was set up seemed like a great fit for our ministry.”

So each member of the group—Mikah, Dave Inabnit, Tim Inabnit, Daniel Johnston, and Jeane Bope— joined Samaritan in 2011. A new member, L.J. Rysdyk, who runs sound and performs spoken word and rap, hasn’t joined. Yet. (No pressure, L.J.)

“From our perspective, it’s just a great example of the Body of Christ serving each other,” Mikah says.

He referenced Galatians 6, which contains Samaritan’s signature verse—“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

“It talks about the fact that each of us is to carry his own load, but before that, it says we are to bear one another’s burdens. Samaritan is a great picture of that. Each of us does have a load to carry and we should do that, but there are burdens that come up that are meant to be shared among everyone. So that’s been a great thing to see and be a part of.”

Mikah and his wife, Kynda, have also enjoyed the process of health care sharing.

“We’ve had several needs that have been processed through Samaritan,” he says. “One for my family was the birth of Hudson in 2013. Hudson had another medical issue that was addressed in the first year of his life. For my family, those were processed so smoothly. It’s interesting to go through the process of communicating with hospitals and doctors. It’s been surprising to see how flexible they are with pricing and different aspects of the administration when you describe what Samaritan is and how it functions. It’s been a very positive experience in my family.” ♦

## Vacation with purpose

### God-honoring creation museums across the nation (and more to come)

by Brian and Carla Estell

Whether it's dino digs, fossil beds, creation museums, canyons, or petrified forests, America is full of God's handiwork just waiting to be explored. Our family has been so blessed to be able to travel coast to coast, presenting creation seminars for churches, Christian schools, camps, home school groups, etc. All along the way we've been able to explore God's amazing creation. Here are some of the treasures that we've discovered.

Our first article in April 2014 ([samaritanministries.org/helens](http://samaritanministries.org/helens)) focused on the geological features formed at Mount St. Helens. I am happy to report that in August 2014 we were able to return to the

mount. Although we only had 2½ days, we were able to explore all three sides of the volcano, update our displays, and put together a new PowerPoint presentation. While there I was constantly reminded of our first trip to the mount in 1992. Unbeknownst to us that trip would lay the ground work for the creation ministry we have today. During that 40-day camping tour across America, we visited many geologically significant areas and national parks. They all had one thing in common: a steady indoctrination in evolution. Whether it was a nature center or a roadside sign, evolution was woven throughout the interpretive information. Even the museum at Mount St. Helens ignored the evidence for catastrophic geology and focused on evolution. But, scattered across America, the number of God-honoring museums is on the rise. Christians are beginning to take science back and once again show how the heavens declare the glory of God. I'm sure there are many we have yet to discover, but here are the ones we have had the privilege of visiting and highly recommend.

#### **Mount St. Helens Creation Center** Silverlake, Washington [mshcreationcenter.org](http://mshcreationcenter.org)

On Highway 504, the gateway to Mount St. Helens, is the Mount St. Helens Creation Center, founded by Lloyd and Doris Anderson in 1998 as the Seven Wonders Museum. We were thrilled to discover their museum and have enjoyed spending time with the Andersons over the years.

Today the work continues under the directorship of Paul Taylor.

#### **The Creation Museum**

Cincinnati, Ohio  
[answersingenesis.org](http://answersingenesis.org)

The tip of Kentucky just across the Ohio River from Cincinnati Ohio is home to The Creation Museum. It is a one-to-two day stop complete with gardens, petting zoo, and state of the art "EPCOT like" museum. Begun by Ken Ham, co-founder of Answers in Genesis (AIG), it attracts visitors from all across the country.

Forty minutes south of The Creation Museum construction is in progress at the Ark Encounter ([arkencounter.org](http://arkencounter.org)) on a full-size replica of Noah's Ark that will house another museum.

#### **Creation and Earth History Museum**

Santee, California  
[creationsd.org](http://creationsd.org)

In Santee, California, there is a wonderful creation museum originally founded by Dr. Henry Morris of the Institute for Creation Research (ICR). The scientifically based, Scripturally sound Creation and Earth History Museum is free to the public. It is located in southern California just east of San Diego, so if you are headed to the zoo, make plans to stop by the museum, too. And while you are there please tell the director, Jason Payne, that the Estell family said hello.



## **The Creation Store**

Pensacola, Florida

[creationtoday.org/pensacola](http://creationtoday.org/pensacola)

On the other side of the country there is a small museum and bookstore in Pensacola, Florida. The Creation Store is part of Creation Today, the ministry founded by Eric Hovind. Eric teams up with Paul Taylor from the Mount St. Helens Creation Center to produce the *Creation Today Show*. During the summer the museum has free activities for kids on Friday afternoons, using experiments, crafts, and activities to walk them through the Seven C's of History.

## **Creation Adventures Museum**

Arcadia, Florida

[creationadventuresmuseum.org](http://creationadventuresmuseum.org)

In southern Florida in the small town of Arcadia, Dr. Gary Parker and his wife, Mary, have turned their home into a creation museum. They offer fossil camps and fossil float trips down the Peace River. It is a learning experience for the whole family.

## **Creation Discovery Museum**

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

[creationstudies.org](http://creationstudies.org)

Further south and east there is the Creation Discovery Museum in Fort Lauderdale. We have not made it to that one yet, but hope to go there in February 2016. Creation Discovery Museum was founded by Tom DeRosa and Dr. D. James Kennedy.

## **Glendive Dinosaur and Fossil Museum**

Glendive, Montana

[creationtruth.org](http://creationtruth.org)

In eastern Montana right off Interstate 94 in the border town of Glendive, there is the Glendive Dinosaur and Fossil Museum. Begun by Otis Kline, it has the appearance

of a state-funded, state-of-the-art earth history museum and is well worth the small entrance fee. As you start reading the signs and talking to the volunteer guides you will soon know it is teaching the truth of creation. Focusing on dinosaurs, they offer day-trip fossil digs into the badland hills of Montana.

## **Grand River Museum**

Lemmon, South Dakota

[thegrandrivermuseum.com](http://thegrandrivermuseum.com)

Just two hours southeast of Glendive in the small town of Lemmon, South Dakota, there is a jewel of a city park, all constructed of petrified wood, and the Grand River Museum which features dinosaur fossils from the area all interpreted from a creation/flood perspective. Sometimes there are week-long fossil camps and dinosaur digs.

## **For even more, go to VisitCreation.com**

These are just a few of the places our family has visited. Others can be found at a new website, [visitcreation.com](http://visitcreation.com), and there need to be many more. Even a small

nature center or creation room can be used by God to open the eyes of the blind and point people to the Creator and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our family would love to come and spend a week or two painting murals, making dioramas, and displaying fossils. As we have traveled our fossil collection has grown, coupled with the artistic abilities with which God has blessed our family, we are ready to help establish creation centers across America.

It is important to arm yourself and your family with the facts, and what better way to do so than to enjoy a day learning together at a God-centered museum. The God of the Bible is real. Not only the heavens, but all of nature declares His glory.

If you cannot travel to a museum, you can attend lectures, watch DVDs and read books to strengthen the faith of your family. Organizations like Creation Ministries International, Answers in Genesis, Institute for Creation Research, Creation Today, and many others offer an abundance of resources that clearly show God's creative power in nature. ♦

## **Stones' True Story can bring the museum to you**

[StonesTrueStory.org](http://StonesTrueStory.org)

If traveling is not your thing, we can bring the museum to you. We have a miniature ark complete with hand-sculptured animals, petrified wood, dinosaur bones, models of Mount St. Helens, and much more. For the upcoming year we will be concentrating on sharing throughout Michigan, but will also be in West Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Please contact us at [stonestruestory@gmail.com](mailto:stonestruestory@gmail.com) or 678-644-0879 if you would like more information about arranging a presentation for your group.



## 40 Questions you can ask fellow Christians now waving rainbow flags

by Pastor Kevin DeYoung  
from TheGospelCoalition.org

For evangelicals who lament the recent Supreme Court decision, it's been a difficult time. We aren't asking for emotional pity, nor do I suspect many people are eager to give us any. Our pain is not sacred. Making legal and theological decisions based on what makes people feel better is part of what got us into this mess in the first place. Nevertheless, it still hurts.

There are many reasons for our lamentation, from fear that religious liberties will be taken away to worries about social ostracism and cultural marginalization. But of all the things that grieve us, perhaps what's been most difficult is seeing some of our friends, some of our family members, and some of the folks we've sat next to in church giving their hearty "Amen" to a practice we still think is a sin and to a decision we think is bad for our country. It's one thing for the whole nation to throw a party we can't in good conscience attend. It's quite another to look around for friendly faces to remind us we're not alone and then find that they are out there jamming on the dance floor. We thought the rainbow was God's sign (Genesis. 9:8-17).

If you consider yourself a Bible-believing Christian, a follower of Jesus whose chief aim is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, there are important questions I hope you will consider before picking up your flag and cheering on the sexual revolution. These questions aren't meant to be snarky or merely rhetorical. They are sincere, if pointed,

questions that I hope will cause my brothers and sisters with the new rainbow-themed avatars to slow down and think about the flag you're flying.

1. How long have you believed that gay marriage is something to be celebrated?
2. What Bible verses led you to this conclusion?
3. How would you make a positive case from Scripture that sexual activity between two persons of the same sex is a blessing to be celebrated?
4. What verses would you use to show that a marriage between two persons of the same sex can adequately depict Christ and the church?
5. Do you think Jesus would have been OK with homosexual behavior between consenting adults in a committed relationship?
6. If so, why did He reassert the Genesis definition of marriage as being one man and one woman? (Gen. 2:24, Matt. 19:5, Mark 10:7)
7. When Jesus spoke against porneia what sins do you think He was forbidding? (Matthew 15:19, 19:9 etc.)
8. If some homosexual behavior is acceptable, how do you understand the sinful "exchange" Paul highlights in Romans 1?
9. Do you believe that passages like 1 Corinthians 6:9 and Revelation 21:8 teach that sexual immorality can keep you out of heaven?
10. What sexual sins do you think they were referring to?
11. As you think about the long history of the church and the near universal disapproval of same-sex sexual activity, what do you think you understand about the Bible that Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin, and Luther failed to grasp?
12. What arguments would you use to explain to Christians in Africa, Asia, and South America that their understanding of homosexuality is Biblically incorrect and your new understanding of homosexuality is not culturally conditioned?
13. Do you think Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama were motivated by personal animus and bigotry when they, for almost all of their lives, defined marriage as a covenant relationship between one man and one woman?
14. Do you think children do best with a mother and a father?
15. If not, what research would you point to in support of that conclusion?
16. If yes, does the church or the state have any role to play in promoting or privileging the arrangement that puts children with a mom and a dad?
17. Does the end and purpose of marriage point to something more than an adult's emotional and sexual fulfillment?
18. How would you define marriage?



19. Do you think close family members should be allowed to get married?
20. Should marriage be limited to only two people?
21. On what basis, if any, would you prevent consenting adults of any relation and of any number from getting married?
22. Should there be an age requirement in this country for obtaining a marriage license?
23. Does equality entail that anyone wanting to be married should be able to have any meaningful relationship defined as marriage?
24. If not, why not?
25. Should your brothers and sisters in Christ who disagree with homosexual practice be allowed to exercise their religious beliefs without fear of punishment, retribution, or coercion?
26. Will you speak up for your fellow Christians when their jobs, their accreditation, their reputation, and their freedoms are threatened because of this issue?
27. Will you speak out against shaming and bullying of all kinds, whether against gays and lesbians or against Evangelicals and Catholics?
28. Since the evangelical church has often failed to take unbiblical divorces and other sexual sins seriously, what steps will you take to ensure that gay marriages are healthy and accord with Scriptural principles?
29. Should gay couples in open relationships be subject to church discipline?
30. Is it a sin for LGBT persons to engage in sexual activity outside of marriage?
31. What will open and affirming churches do to speak prophetically against divorce, fornication, pornography, and adultery wherever they are found?
32. If “love wins,” how would you define love?
33. What verses would you use to establish that definition?
34. How should obedience to God’s commands shape our understanding of love?
35. Do you believe it is possible to love someone and disagree with important decisions they make?
36. If supporting gay marriage is a change for you, has anything else changed in your understanding of faith?
37. As an evangelical, how has your support for gay marriage helped you become more passionate about traditional evangelical distinctives like a focus on being born again, the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ on the cross, the total trustworthiness of the Bible, and the urgent need to evangelize the lost?
38. What open and affirming churches would you point to where people are being converted to orthodox Christianity, sinners are being warned of judgment and called to repentance, and missionaries are being sent out to plant churches among unreached peoples?
39. Do you hope to be more committed to the church, more committed to Christ, and more committed to the Scriptures in the years ahead?
40. When Paul at the end of Romans 1 rebukes “those who practice such things” and those who “give approval to those who

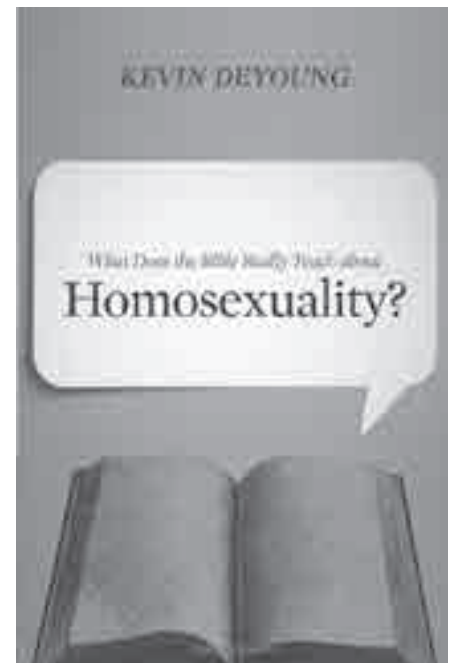
practice them,” what sins do you think he has in mind?

Food for thought, I hope. At the very least, something to chew on before swallowing everything the world and Facebook put on our plate. ♦

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*Kevin DeYoung is senior pastor of University Reformed Church in East Lansing, Michigan, near Michigan State University. Kevin and his wife Trisha have six young children.*

*Kevin’s most recent book is What Does the Bible Really Teach About Homosexuality?*



Crossway, April 30, 2015, 160 pages

### More Resources

Same-sex “marriage” advocate Matthew Vine responded to Kevin DeYoung’s questions with “40 Questions for Christians who oppose marriage equality.” <[bitly.com/40morequestions](http://bitly.com/40morequestions)>

Author, pastor, and Samaritan member Doug Wilson responded to Matthew Vine with “Time for a Little Q&A.” <[bit.ly.com/WilsonQandA](http://bit.ly.com/WilsonQandA)>

## Media Choices

### Convictions or compromise?

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.*

There he sat, face grimacing, hands trembling, his pulse rising, and sweat starting to bead on his forehead. The glow of the television reflected off the form of a young man in a dark room flanked by a few peers cheering him on as his thumbs accelerated to keep up with his racing mind fixed on the euphoric sense of accomplishment. On this occasion the points were not coming from a yellow circle swallowing up little dots while eluding little blue ghosts, but of a city thug who is stealing cars, bludgeoning people to death, picking up prostitutes, working drug deals, and shooting police. Could this even remotely be a description of Jesus Christ? Absolutely not! Yet it is a woeful description of many young people today who claim they are following Him. If it's not one of the *Grand Theft Auto* games, it's killing zombies or aliens, or portraying an assassin. It's not just the M-rated video games, vile gangster rap, toxic top 40 songs, crass country music, or raunchy rock music. It doesn't stop there. Consider the banal blockbuster films, trashy TV programs, and the endless hours of inane YouTube videos. There seems to be something wrong with this picture.

I heard a story about a man who was shopping at a Christian bookstore and saw a display of hats that had the letters "W.W.J.D." on them, but he didn't know what it stood for. He was curious so he asked the lady behind the counter what it meant. She explained that it stood for "What Would Jesus Do" and the idea was to inspire people to think about that before making decisions. He thought about it for a moment and replied, "I don't think Jesus would spend \$16.95 for that hat."

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**Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.**

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

**For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.**

**When Christ, Who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.**

Colossians 3:1-4

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His response is amusing but it is also worth contemplating. Though we can't know for certain that his assumption was right, it does make me think seriously about other choices Jesus would face in our culture.

Have you ever taken the time to consider what Jesus would or wouldn't do when it comes to



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

today's media choices? Wouldn't you love to get a glimpse of His plate after walking through our generation's all-you-can-eat entertainment buffet? Would His plate be empty?

We have a tendency to want a comprehensive list of do's and don'ts but the real key is found in Biblical principles that can encourage and help strengthen convictions about entertainment in a culture plagued with compromise.

I introduced a couple of words just now that I would like to make sure we understand ... principles and convictions. A principle is a "general law or truth from which others are derived." A simple definition of conviction is something you believe so strongly that it will guide your

actions even when under pressure. Convictions seem to be rare in this age of convenient beliefs. What are those? They are beliefs that people hold as long as they are convenient.

It makes me think about the story in Acts when the apostle Paul is testifying to a pagan Roman governor while under arrest. “Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, “Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you.” Notice that Felix was afraid of the principles and convictions that Paul was declaring. What were those convictions? He spoke about “righteousness”—what is right as opposed to what is wrong. He taught about “self-control”—that we have the ability to make good or bad choices. He emphasized “the judgment to come”—that one day, each and every one of us will stand before Jesus “Who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead.”

Those were not necessarily seeker-sensitive subjects for the pagan Roman governor. They are not convenient subjects, and the topic of having convictions about media choices in the 21st century can cause fear, like Paul’s talks with Felix. One more important note to make in this story about Paul is that he “reasoned” about these tough subjects, and it is my hope to take that same approach. I hope you do not follow Felix’s footsteps by responding with a knee-jerk reaction.

I earlier explained the words “principles” and “convictions,” but what about “compromise”? This versatile word can refer to different ideas depending on the context. I went to a dictionary to find an appropriate

definition for compromise in this particular context. Here are three that apply: “to undermine or devalue somebody or something by making concessions,” “to expose somebody or something to danger or disgrace,” or, “something accepted rather than wanted.” Do you realize that compromise in your media choices can potentially undermine your spiritual health? Did you know that compromise can expose you or others in your sphere of influence to spiritual or moral danger and disgrace? Are you aware that compromise may be something you are accepting that God may not want in your life? Compromise is giving in to pressure. It is like the weak link in a chain that will break when tested by force.

This generation is under a lot of pressure to go along with the world without thinking twice about the impact that poor media choices and poor use of time are having on our relationship with God and with others. It’s time to think more deeply about these issues and not brush them off because they are inconvenient. It’s time to set a new trajectory and begin to adopt convictions based on Biblical principles. The next important step on that journey is to make sure we have the right goal in mind. ♦

*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.*

**I am thankful** for God’s plan at work through Samaritan Ministries. If I had not talked to a fellow volunteer at our local Christian radio station, I would not have known about Christians helping Christians through health care sharing.

I was very discouraged when government regulations forced me off my insurance policy because it didn’t meet the new requirements. The cost for replacement plans was truly excessive, and for really poor coverage. Then I found Samaritan Ministries after a solid recommendation from a friend. And she was right.

I have found that Samaritan has God-honoring staff that reflect His compassion and love in each phone call. When chronic pain forced me to have arthroscopic knee surgery, it was not shared because it was pre-existing, but Samaritan published it as a Special Prayer Need. It is amazing what happened next.

Cards and notes and encouraging words began to arrive in my mailbox. Each one is a blessing, and yes, the gifts to defray my expenses are wonderful, but even better are the prayers of my fellow Christians all over the country. I took a moment to pray for each family that has extended themselves to share their resources with me—a stranger in need.

This is the heart of Samaritan Ministries. The blessings of God passed around through the body of believers. Thank you, each and every friend, for your prayers and for your sharing.

Holly Van Dyk  
Mahwah, New Jersey

## **Audacity: Speaking the Truth in Love to Homosexuals ... and Others**

by Ray Comfort

reviewed by Jed Stuber

**E**vangelist Ray Comfort produces films showing his interactions with non-Christians on the street. His latest film, *Audacity*, focuses on his encounters with homosexuals.

For three decades Comfort has pointed out that American evangelicalism is ineffective because it tends to skirt around key aspects of the Gospel, particularly uncomfortable topics like sin, law, judgment, and hell.

His films demonstrate that when those essential aspects of the Gospel are included and communicated well, hearts and lives are truly changed. A half-gospel is no Gospel at all if it leaves people in their sins. Ultimately, Comfort is making this point: you don't actually love non-believers if you don't have the audacity to bring up sin and present the Gospel. Love can't stay silent.

Some of the people Comfort speaks to react very negatively to his approach, saying that he is intolerant, judgmental, or bigoted, but that response is a lot less common than you might expect. Even when there is that kind of negative reaction, it is often diffused as the conversation progresses. He manages to present the complete Gospel in a way that is winsome and attractive, causing people to eagerly, genuinely engage in discussion with him.

In previous films Comfort focused on his interactions with atheists, evolutionists, and pro-choicers. In many cases they walked away acknowledging that they had a better understanding of God, the Bible, and Christianity. In a few cases, they

actually became Christians.

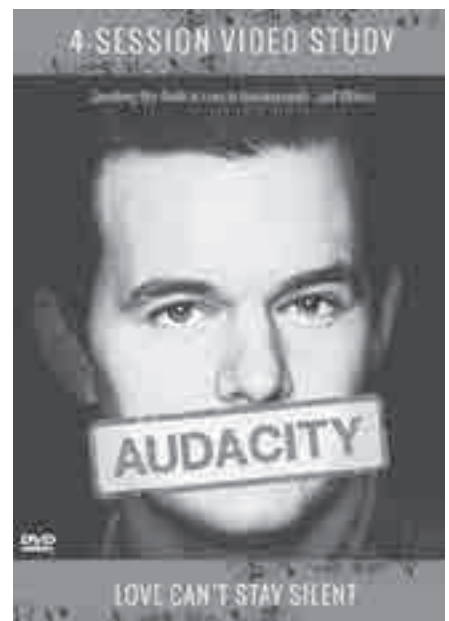
How does Comfort pull it off? There are a few strategies he employs. He asks lots of questions and genuinely listens to the answers. He really does care what people think and really does want to hear what they have to say. He allows people to express their views. In the beginning stages of conversation Comfort might ask questions like "Do you believe in God? What do you think about abortion? Do you think homosexuals should be able to marry?"

Comfort also establishes some common ground with people by asking questions about the Ten Commandments. "Do you know what the commandments are? Have you broken any of them? Do you think lying, cheating, theft, murder, and adultery are wrong? Have you ever told a lie?"

It's actually pretty easy to get people to acknowledge something for which there is inexhaustible empirical data: that we all do bad things sometimes, and we instinctively believe these things are wrong.

By this time Comfort has built enough rapport to direct the discussion toward what the Bible indicates God's standards are. Again, Comfort isn't pushy, and uses questions. "Did you know that there's a verse in the Bible that says X? What do you think about that? How do you know if something is true or not? What if what the Bible says is true?"

Finally, Comfort frankly addresses the danger of eternal judgement in hell, and gives people the good news that Christ's death and resurrection establishes a way to be



[audacitymovie.com](http://audacitymovie.com)

reconciled to God. Again he uses questions, "How do you think God judges sin? Do you think you will go to heaven or hell? How would you answer to God for your sins? Do you know what Christ did about your sins?"

*Audacity* is a timely resource in light of the recent Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage, but also a great resource on Biblical evangelism for any situation.

Comfort is asking Christians to fund the film and his evangelism training ministry by buying a pre-release download of the film at [audacitymovie.com](http://audacitymovie.com). On August 19 he will release the film completely free, and he is asking Christians to help spread the word by sharing it with friends via social media.

When you buy a pre-release copy you'll also receive behind-the-scenes videos and a free ebook titled *Mark Twain: A Christian Response to His Battle With God* ♦

worked jobs like their audiences did. Running construction equipment, civil engineering, managing fast-food restaurants. On the weekends they'd squeeze in some recording or rehearsing before going to churches on Sundays.

Travel was a group and family affair as well, and still is as much as it can be. The group drives a bus with 12 bunk beds in the middle of it. In the early days, that meant whole families go could on trips. With an increasing number of children, however, that has changed. "Now there's 26 of us," Mikah says. "We don't all fit on the bus anymore."

But Mikah's 6-year-old, Heidi, "took her first trip with Daddy all by herself on the bus" last month.

"That's been an important part of what we're doing so the families can feel like they're involved and so they see the impact of the ministry," Mikah says.

When family members have to stay home, they're well supported by This Hope's church family at First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Georgia, led by former Southern Baptist Convention President Johnny M. Hunt.

"They've been so supportive of our ministry through the years," Mikah says. "As much as we would want our families to come with us all the time, the reality is a lot of times they're at home on a Sunday when we're out traveling. So to have a great home church that is there to minister to our families is so important."

This Hope's members stay connected with their church base, too, serving in the Awana ministry "so when we're not away from home we're serving there ministering to

our kids and all the kids of the church," Mikah says.

Dave's children have been involved in the church's music ministry and Tim's daughter is active in drama there.

There are other family ties as well within the group: Dave and Tim Inabnit are brothers, the sons of Ted Inabnit, who pastored the Soldotna church that birthed This Hope; Dave married Daniel's sister, Carrie; and Daniel married Jeane's sister, Shelby.

"So we like to say that Tim is Jeane's brother-in-law's brother-in-law's brother," Mikah says.

Each of the singers carries responsibilities within the group: Mikah coordinates their schedule and communicates with churches, as well as handles administrative duties. Jeane works on the group's website design ([thishope.org](http://thishope.org)) and social media presence. Tim does a lot of the sound engineering and mixing in the studio. Daniel is the main vocal arranger and helps with scheduling. Dave works on social media, nonprofit administrative duties, and insurance concerns. They each contribute to the songwriting process as well.

"There's all kinds of behind-the-scenes work," Mikah says. "It's pretty amazing the amount of man hours compared to the amount of time we're actually ministering. It's probably at least 10 hours of labor to every hour that we're ministering."

Traveling and rehearsing takes up much of This Hope's time. A week in July saw the group ministering at two different churches in North Carolina on a Sunday, spending Monday at home catching up on a few things, back on the road Tuesday to minister at a LifeWay Worship Week in North Carolina,

then on to New Hampshire, Vermont, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. The following week they were to be back in the studio working on Christmas music, have a couple days off and then head back to the churches on Sunday.

"Our schedule is kind of crazy," Mikah says. "We could be out one day a week, or we could be out for a full week. So it's always fluid."

This Hope's members have committed to try spending two days a week with their families, though.

"Because we're kind of our own business, per se, we have the flexibility to go and do things during the day," Mikah says. "If someone has a school program or a sporting event, we try to make allowances for that around our work schedule. That's really a blessing because there are times when we're gone and we miss things, so we try to make it a priority to be available and to be able to encourage and to love on our families whenever we're at home." ♦

## Prayer for the Persecuted Church

*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.*

### **Government, churches meet**

Chinese government representatives met with leaders of the underground church in a closed-door meeting recently, International Christian Concern reports. “This news could indicate a new phase of relations between the growing Christian church in China and the Chinese government,” ICC writes. *Praise God that the meeting took place. Pray that God would be with all parties involved in the talks, that they would continue to take place, and that they would open the doors for Christians to be able to live out their faith with less regulation.*

### **Couple arrested in Morocco**

A Christian couple from France was arrested at a restaurant in Morocco on June 3, Voice of the Martyrs reports. A waiter at the restaurant reportedly notified police after seeing them with Bibles and other Christian materials. Authorities took them and their children to a police station and questioned them for several hours, confiscating their materials before releasing them. *Pray*

*that the family would be able to share the Gospel without hindrance. Praise God for their faithfulness.*

### **Sri Lankan pastor beaten**

A Sri Lankan pastor was kidnapped and beaten on May 24 in Sri Lanka, VOM says. His abductors threatened to kill him if he didn't beg for forgiveness for his Christian activities. They also threatened to destroy his church. The men have not been caught. *Pray that they will be brought to justice and also that they will hear the Gospel. Pray for healing for the pastor and courage to continue his work for Christ.*

### **Syrian pastors minister**

*Please continue to pray for church leaders in Damascus, Syria, as they face the threat of violence from Islamic State militants. Although many have fled, some pastors have remained to minister to other people who have stayed.*

### **Eritrean Christians kidnapped**

ISIS militants also kidnapped more than 80 Eritrean Christians in Libya in June. The Eritreans were in a people-smugglers' caravan. ISIS terrorists stopped the caravan and separated Christians from Muslims. *Pray for the safe return of the Eritrean Christians and that God would send confusion and disagreement to the ISIS forces to stop them from further violence against the innocent.*

### **Uzbekistani man tortured**

A prominent Christian was tortured by police in Uzbekistan until he lost consciousness recently. Murot Turdiyev was stopped at a checkpoint and arrested along with three other Christian men, VOM says. Murot continues to be under police surveillance and is listed on a registry subjecting him to police

“preventive measures” for a year. *Pray that Murot will remain strong in his faith in the coming days and that he will be able to continue his ministry.*

### **Egyptian released from prison**

An Egyptian Christian teen has been released from prison on bail, ICC reports. He and four other students were arrested on charges of defaming Islam in a video made on a school trip. Violent protests broke out after the video was discovered and shared. *Pray that the charges will be dropped immediately, that rioters will be held accountable for attacking homes, and for Christians in Egypt being targeted by Egypt's blasphemy laws.*

### **Ugandan man threatened**

Members of a Muslim family have threatened to kill a Ugandan man and his two daughters because they have become Christians, VOM says. Caleb's Muslim wife was taken from him and married to another man. *Pray for protection and encouragement for Caleb and his daughters.*

### **Sudanese pastors arrested**

Two South Sudanese pastors are being held for “crimes against the state,” VOM reports. Pastor Yat Michael and Pastor Peter Yen were detained several months ago by Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Service. Their attorney says the men were likely arrested because of their faith. *Pray for protection for the pastors while they are in prison, and for favorable outcomes that would allow them to continue to share their faith.* ♦

*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)).*

## Can we thank God for the Supreme Court's decision on same-sex 'marriage'?

Continued from page 3

me to prayer, it is likely that millions of others have been praying more fervently in these past few weeks than they have in the past few years. Setbacks, calamities, and attacks on the faith cause God's people to depend on Him, and this ruling is likely to have that effect.

### **4. It will cause many Christians to be more determined to abide in Christ, seek His will through His Word, and walk in His ways, no matter what the cost.**

While some Christians might wobble and even capitulate on this issue, it will have the opposite effect on others, making them more determined to hold to Biblical teaching, even to the point of defying the law (although I hope they remember to do so with love and grace, and not just defiance).

### **5. It will cause many Christians to remember what marriage actually is.**

Let me expand a little on this last point. What is the reason that we now have the Supreme Court of the United States of America ruling in favor of something that the Bible plainly says is wrong, which all of the Founding Fathers would have vehemently opposed, and which would have been unthinkable just a decade or so ago?

One foundational reason is that we have, as a people, lost sight of what marriage is. One of the mantras repeated *ad nauseam* by proponents of same-sex "marriage" is that "if two people love each other a lot and want to commit to each other, why should they be denied that right?" Where did this come from? Sadly, it came from the

false view of marriage that already exists between many heterosexuals, including some Christians.

What is marriage? Is it simply a relationship between two people who love each other very much and want to commit to each other? I would define it as "a one-flesh covenantal union between one man and one woman, for the duration of their lives, built on a foundation of mutual self-sacrifice, with the hope of fruitfulness through children, and with sanctions attached for breach of covenant through infidelity."

Somewhere along the line, we have lost sight of this. Too many marriages are built a foundation of emotional attraction, and when this attraction wears off the marriage breaks down. In fact, many marriages are actually built on a foundation of individuality, where the two people involved have their own interests, their own friends and their own lives. And many marriages have rejected fruitfulness in marriage to the point that many Western nations have a sub-replacement fertility rate.

In other words, we have turned a mutually dependent, fruitful, lifelong covenant union between one man and one woman into a self-centered relationship where each partner seeks fulfillment from the other. So we really shouldn't be surprised that some would consider homosexual relationships—the ultimate in fruitless sexual relations—to be equivalent to the unfruitful, self-centered heterosexual marriages that have become common.

While abhorring the Supreme Court decision, we nevertheless need to give thanks for it (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Not grudgingly, but joyfully. We should not do so in any way approving of the decision or what it represents. These things we

should lament. But we should do so knowing that God—in His sovereign majesty—is behind this and is not only using the decision to judge the nation for its abandonment of Him and the marriage covenant, but is also using it to stir up His people to stand steadfast, seek Him more earnestly, and rediscover the true meaning of marriage.

Time and again, God brings victories out of what look like defeats (Calvary being the supreme example). It may well be that the Supreme Court decision will one day come to be seen as a turning point in the history of the Kingdom of God. I firmly believe that same-sex "marriage" will one day be nothing more than a bizarre footnote in the history books, from a time when the world lost all reason. Ironically, the decision which may fill us with despondency today could end up being seen by future historians as a defining moment in this battle when God began to—in the words of Psalm 53—"restore the fortunes of His people." ♦

*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).*

1 <http://london.usembassy.gov/society210.html>

2 <http://www.vox.com/a/barack-obama-interview-vox-conversation/obama-foreign-policy-transcript>

And they have  
conquered him by the  
blood of the Lamb and  
by the word of their  
testimony, for they  
loved not their lives  
even unto death.

Revelation 12:11

Believers in Jesus Christ can overcome satan and his angels. When we put our trust in Him, we have everything we need. But one thing can keep this from happening—loving our lives.

In Luke 9:24-25 Jesus says, “For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?”

Today we have many opportunities to resist the forces of evil for the sake of our Lord. He shed His blood for us, He has worked in our lives, and He will enable us to overcome. We are more than conquerors, if we do not love our lives.

For the Kingdom,



Ray King