

Christian HealthCare

NEWSLETTER

MEMBER LETTER:

**God bless this ministry
and all its members**

Our family began with Samaritan at the beginning of 2015 after the cost of our insurance was going to double. We were very apprehensive, but after speaking with a member and much prayer, decided to follow God's leading. My son proceeded to dislocate his knee in July. The process worked exactly as described. We were able to receive discounts on bills for the ambulance, ER, and doctors. Our need was published, and we received prompt shares to completely pay our bills.

The bonus was the wonderful words of encouragement from members. We read each one to our son, who couldn't believe so many people were praying for him. Even our initial call to Samaritan was met with genuine concern for him. After some rehab time (my wife and I are physical therapists) he has returned to full activity. God bless this ministry and all its members.

*Timothy and Carla Belill
Vassar, Michigan*

When judging others is ok

by Mark Leeming

We hear it so often that well, we assume it must be true. From Hollywood actors to university professors and even from preachers. Judging others is wrong. Don't judge. Well, I happen to believe that judging can be a good thing. That having the ability to judge, to question, to evaluate the beliefs and behaviors of others, especially those in authority, is fundamental to a free and democratic society. The moment that ability is taken away, the society is no longer free and is on the road to tyranny. Our own culture is now traveling on that same road.

Unfortunately many mistake judging with being judgmental. Many envision a stern, angry, self-righteous person. Someone with a "holier than thou" attitude who goes around pointing the finger of judgment at those who don't measure up to their particular standards of right or wrong. And nine times out of ten, most would associate such a person with being a religious conservative. But judging is completely different. Judging, at least in the true sense of the word, is simply coming to a decision about something.

And every single one of us, every single day, in every single area of our lives, make decisions. For example, when you're in the grocery store and you have decided that product A is better than product B. And when it comes to human behavior, it's choosing between

what you perceive to be moral over the immoral. And let's not kid ourselves: no matter what side of the culture war we're on, whether we're conservative, liberal, churchgoer or non-churchgoer, we all make judgments when it comes to human behavior.

Take television as an example. At the beginning of the television era, any scenes of the bedroom had to show two separate beds—one for the husband and one for the wife—because it was considered scandalous to show even a husband and a wife together in the same bed. Now, contrast that with today where sexual references can be found even in children's movies. And

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Sharing Summary from February

Shares:	\$14,740,577	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:	\$14,564,747	
In Negotiation:	\$450,651	
New Needs:	2177	
Total Needs:	4,215	
New Rewards:	199	Member Households: 56,988 (as of 1/22/16)
Miscarriages:	27	
Final Rewards:	11	

Contact Us: 877-764-2426 samaritanministries.org/members

Questions about?

Email

Phone Menu

Your medical need

needs@samaritanministries.org

1 - 1

Shares you are sending or receiving

shares@samaritanministries.org

1 - 2

Your membership

membership@samaritanministries.org

1 - 3

Your Member Services Leaders



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msvicepres@samaritanministries.org



Cameron Easley
Member Services Manager

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.

The high cost of fatherhood, part 2

by Rob Slane

In last month's article, I said that while there is much said about the problem of fatherlessness in our society, a lot of what is said tends to focus on the quantitative side of things and not on the qualitative side. Having more fathers that begin and remain in the home throughout their children's upbringing would certainly be better than the current situation of mass fatherlessness, but it is only part of the issue. What we really need are fathers who truly love their children and who are prepared to sacrifice themselves on a daily basis for their children's wellbeing.

This month I want to address a couple of qualitative issues. The first is our relationship with our children, and then the challenges we ourselves face as we attempt to fulfill this role. Last month I ended by saying that fatherhood is a costly business, and I think that by the end of this article most readers will know what I mean if they didn't already!

How does the Apostle Paul instruct fathers to behave towards their children? "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4, KJV). Is that it, Paul? Is that all you have to say to fathers? Don't make them angry and bring them up in God's ways? Not really. Paul's one-liners are like opening a treasure chest, and we need to dig deep if we are find the gold.

As he often does, Paul begins with a negative, moves it to a neutral, and

then takes the whole thing over to a positive. So, in Ephesians 4:28 he says, "Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need." Imagine a dial with three markings. On the left hand side is stealing. In the middle is not stealing. On the right hand side is labouring to give. Moralistic Christianity only sees the need to

the middle? No, he says, dial it all the way to the right-hand side. So just as the antidote to stealing isn't "not-stealing," but rather giving, the antidote to provoking our children isn't "not provoking our children," but rather nurturing and admonishing them (some versions have this as training/discipling and instruction/correction, but the sense is roughly the same).

What might sound odd here is that having turned the dial from the negative notch—provoking to wrath—to the positive notch, we find Paul speaking of admonition (or correction). But isn't admonishing (or correcting) a negative action? Of course it can be, and I'm sure we can all think of examples of ways fathers can rebuke their children in a wholly negative manner (if you're anything like me, you will have done this yourself). And if such a way of rebuking becomes the norm, then it can clearly lead to exactly what Paul tells us to avoid—exasperating and provoking our children to wrath.

So, how can admonition or correction be positive? It's surely a question of *why* we do it and *how* we do it. If our wholehearted desire is to see our children corrected and restored, and if we deliver the admonition or correction in a way that reflects that, then it is undoubtedly a positive thing, and our children will generally respond positively to it.

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**And he will turn the hearts
of fathers to their children
and the hearts of children to
their fathers, lest I come and
strike the land with a decree
of utter destruction.**

Malachi 4:6

turn the dial from the left to the middle. "Don't do this." "Don't do that." As if the absence of stealing is all that is required. But Paul says that's not all that's required. God doesn't want only "non-stealers." He wants cheerful givers.

Paul does the same with the father passage. The notch on the left is marked "Provoking, Exasperating, Frustrating, Angering Your Children." And there's a whole range of different ways that this can be done. Paul says to turn the dial. Where to? To the "No Longer Provoking, Exasperating, and Angering Your Children" spot in

Dan and Yvonne Celia

Financial Issues Stewardship Ministries

by Michael Miller

Dan Celia entered the radio business “kicking and screaming” in 1997.

“I hated every minute of it,” he says.

He kept it part time at first, preferring to spend his time on his businesses, including a \$900 million trust that he managed. But, in 2006, God nudged him to do the radio program full time as a use for all of the “useless information in my brain.” Information like what DuPont stock sold for five years before and what coffee futures were in previous years.

Now *Financial Issues* is in nearly 400 radio markets and on three television networks, putting Dan’s wisdom into potentially 80 million homes from 9 to 11 a.m. Eastern time Monday through Friday.



And he doesn’t hate it anymore.

Financial Issues focuses on the economy, politics as it relates to the economy, and individual investment strategies for people who call the program.

Most importantly, Dan, who lives with his wife, Yvonne, in West Chester, Pennsylvania, talks about being good stewards with the money God has given us.

“My goal is to teach and to encourage God’s people to be Biblically responsible with their money,” he says.

That includes prudent investment strategies and, especially, investment in companies and funds that do not violate Biblical principles.

“We can’t put our money in funds and companies that support abortion and pornography,” he says.

As a result, Dan openly promotes and partners with organizations like the Timothy Fund for investors and Samaritan Ministries for health care.

His emphasis on values has gotten the attention of major corporations when they’ve adopted policies to

appease the cultural Left, too.

“In the last 18 months, I’ve spoken to seven major corporations that have called me, five of them Fortune 50 companies,” Dan says. “They would say, ‘We saw you took us off your list (of investments).’”

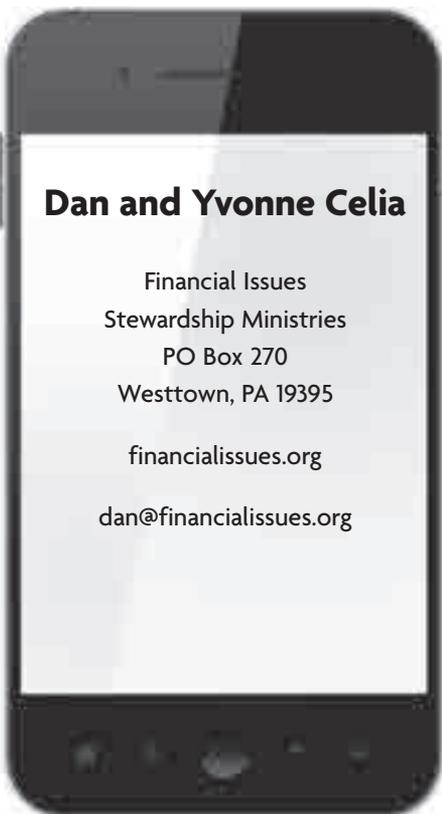
For instance, when he met with Caterpillar Inc. officials, he told them that “All I’m asking is that you build the best bulldozers you can build. Stay out of the Left. Stay out of the Right. Let the cultural warriors on the Left and on the Right defend and fight for what they want, and you guys stay out of it.”

He’s had the same conversation, he says, with Wal-Mart, McDonald’s, and DuPont.

“I think that God is using what we are doing in a powerful way, because above all else, we’re going to be a Christ-centered organization no matter what,” Dan says. “We’re doing what is right for His people and the country, and we’re going to stick to it.”

Dan has studied or managed

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Dan Celia of *Financial Issues* talks money and investments

Honor God with your investments. “When you’re honoring God, and you’re using God’s money in a way that would be pleasing to Him, it’s amazing how you feel, the blessings that come from it. I’m not a prosperity preaching kind of guy. I make that clear to people, but God’s going to provide as long as we continue to honor Him and keep Him at the center of what we’re doing.”

Don’t get excited about 2016.

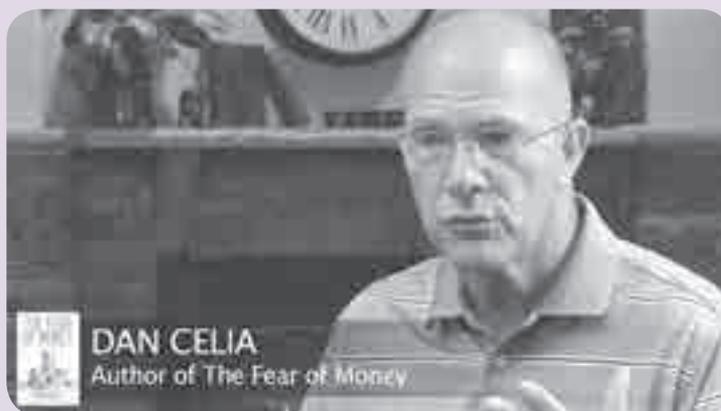
“This year is going to be a lot like 2015. There are some who believe that because it’s an election year, things are going to be better. Not this election. The fundamentals of the economy are still very bad. Globally, there’s a lot of trouble, many storm clouds on the horizon, so I think we’re going to have more of the same.”

Market performance in the next five to 10 years depends on this year’s presidential election.

“If we don’t get fiscal policy that makes sense, we’re in big, big trouble. I can say that I believe with all my heart that the mess that we’re in today is due to failed government policy. I think there’s going to be a lot more to come. From an election standpoint, this is the most important year of this nation. I spend a lot of time in Washington, and there has never been this kind of dysfunction, and it’s only going to get worse if we don’t get some leaders.”

Always have a broker and investment advisor. “I don’t think the average person can do it themselves unless they are following something that is very defined and trustworthy. In the case of my ministry, it would be the website and what I’m talking about. I don’t think you should try to figure it out and do

it all yourself. You don’t have the time to do it, and you’re not going to ever understand it. I’ve lost a great deal of faith in brokers and investment advisors. There are still some very good ones. I always tell people if you have someone that has treated you well, that has done well for you, that you’re happy with and you’re well-informed, then there’s no need to ever change.”



Be firm with your broker.

“My number one call this summer was people saying, ‘I did what you did, I told my broker to get out, and he wouldn’t. Now I’m down.’ The first thing they have to do is change their broker.

It’s your money. This

is what God entrusted you with to be a steward of. You need to be firmer when you talk to your advisor, and follow your instincts. If God’s nudging you, you need to follow that instinct.”

It’s OK for churches and ministries to invest in the market, but it should be done long term.

“I always discourage churches only because the vast majority of the money they want to invest is short-term money. It’s always money ‘I might need in two years’ or ‘We’ve got our missions budget covered for the next three years, but then we’re probably going to be dipping into this.’ And ministries are very similar. So the notion of investing is usually not a good one. I don’t believe anybody ought to be investing unless they have a fairly long-time horizon to leave that money and forget about it. There are investments for short-term strategies, but there’s still risk with that. And they’ve got to be very careful.” ♦

See page 7 for information about how to access Dan’s financial wisdom.

Why SMI?

Callers to Dan Celia's *Financial Issues* radio program wanted to know what to do about health care costs—and so did Dan, whose show goes into 80 million homes.

Health insurance costs were rising after the Affordable Care Act went into effect, and the Christian financial advisor needed to know what to do for his own family and what to tell his listeners.

He knew about health care sharing because some friends had been using it.

"I was always fascinated by it," he says. "I knew my premiums were going up dramatically. I said, 'It's time. It's really time that we take a long, hard look at health care sharing ministries.'"

He placed calls to the three largest ministries as part of his research, but only one called back—Samaritan Ministries.

"I said, 'I'd like to go through a vetting process, see what you guys are all about, see if you have some interest in coming alongside my ministry,'" he says.

Samaritan invited him to Peoria, showed him the facility, and explained how the ministry handles health care sharing.

After taking some time to study, think, and understand, Dan and his wife, Yvonne, became members in January 2015.

"This is what God intended, getting back to the book of Acts," he says. "I still think it's amazing how well it works."

Yvonne, who is a nurse and was working in hospital administration, was skeptical about how health care sharing works.

"When we moved over, she still said, 'I don't know about this,'" Dan says. "Now she's sold out."

Dan says he understands why people would

be hesitant to join a health care sharing ministry, but it helps to put it in the proper context of the Christian life.

"I always tell them, 'We always talk about the good old days, what the church ought to be doing. Here, this is it, this is what it's all about, this is exactly what we've read about in the Bible.'

"The biggest fear is, 'You mean I'm depending on somebody I don't even know to write a check to me? Are you out of your mind? I can't depend on my next door neighbor to return my rake.'

"I say, 'Well, if you are a Christian, if you believe other Christians are as sold out for Christianity and for Christ as you are, it shouldn't be a problem, it shouldn't be an issue.'"

Dan even thinks that health care sharing can play a role in a U.S. revival.

"If we are ever going to have revival in this country, then we're going to get back

to where God's people are dependent on God's people," he says. "Samaritan is a way in which we can be God's instrument to fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. My wife and I have taken it upon ourselves to look at the ministry that way and take great joy in praying through the prayer list we get every month. I tell people that on the radio all the time.

"We also always give to a Special Prayer Need because we have this attitude that we would certainly want people to do it if we were in that place. And my wife writes notes to people we send shares to. She feels connected to a part of the Body of Christ she doesn't even know." ♦

“Samaritan is a way in which we can be God’s instrument to fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.”

Celia Member Spotlight

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money all of his adult life. After serving in the military from 1971-77, he studied economics and finance, gravitating toward the former.

"It's research oriented," he says. "I love doing research."

After graduating with a degree in applied economics, he got a job with an investment firm and commuted from Philadelphia to New York City as a bond trader. The commuting ended with his marriage to Yvonne in 1980. He started his own investment firm and then a trust company.

"I consider myself a behavioral economist," he says. "It's a lost art on Wall Street."

A "behavioral economist" looks at the behavior of corporate America, its view of macroeconomics, and how corporations are reacting to it.

"I'm doing the same with the consumer side of it," he says. "What I try to do is keep an ear to what's happening on Main Street. I do all the fundamental economics I have to, but I take it a step beyond that."

Dan aims to empower the common investing Christian by first telling them it's OK to make money, just manage it in a way that honors God. That's done by ethical investing. Then he guides them, through his program, web site, partnership program, DVDs, and newsletter.

"I try to teach them how to be prudent, conservative, and honor the Lord with their investments, and be satisfied with what they're making," he says. "If they're making 3 percent when everybody else is making 5 percent, that's fine. In the case of 2015, if they're making 2 percent and everybody else is losing 5 percent, they're doing very well."

Above all, Dan says, have firm

footing on the Gospel. Without that, anyone's investments are going to be shaky.

He says the "pivotal verse" of *Financial Issues* is 1 Corinthians 4:1-2:

This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.

"Paul is saying after a very long discourse in chapter 3, 'OK, now that you are believers, you have a responsibility for the sacred mysteries of God.' He's talking about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If you aren't first trying to understand and look towards being a good steward of the Gospel, of your testimony, of your walk, I don't know if you can be a good steward of your finances. You have to have a cornerstone on which you're standing to be a good steward of your finances."

Dan strives to stay grounded on that cornerstone. Yvonne helps.

"She is just such a big part and always has been of everything that I've ever done," Dan says. "She's my reality check for everything. She does everything she can to make sure I'm understanding that everything I have or everything I've done is of God and for God."

"I pray that I never ever forget what God has done." ♦

Dan Celia's financial wisdom can be accessed with just a little investment of time.

Listen to or watch Dan

On the radio from 9 to 11 a.m. Eastern time M-F on American Family Radio affiliates or on networks like NRBTV (10-11 a.m. EST), BizTV and the small Shenandoah Valley Network in the District of Columbia area.

On the podcast of his program, available through iTunes.

At his web site, financialissues.org, under "Listen Now."

Watch him on the 30-minute DVD *Fed Up*, a program about the Federal Reserve featuring Dan, Steve Forbes, Ben Stein, T. Boone Pickens, and others.

Subscribe to his weekly newsletter detailing market trends, under "Resources and Tools" at financialissues.org

Read Dan's books

Fear of Money explains that the fear of losing money can be lost by giving it all to Jesus. Dan's working on a study guide for small groups.

All for the Master is a 30-day devotional to help Christians realize that everything we have is God's. "It's all the Master's: your time, your work, your goals, your objectives, your finances, your children."

Bigger Kingdom or Bigger Barns? addresses estate planning.

Taking direct primary care to a new level

Members in Michigan launch Christian Healthcare Centers

by Mark Blocher

Health care in America has severe problems. Everyone knows it. As each election approaches, politicians promise to “fix it.” Some within the health care community exploit it for their own benefit. Both doctors and patients are frustrated. In the end, everybody suffers.

We live in a health care paradox, where we have available the best medical technology the world has ever known, but may face a crushing financial disaster when we have to use it. Although modern health care can do amazing things to restore physical stability, acquiring it can be extremely expensive. Health care itself is amazing. The appetite created for it is increasingly hard to feed, and everyone feels the pain.

What is broken in health care? Consider this: when a doctor gets paid more if he performs a prostate exam on an office visit separate from the patient’s annual physical, there is a problem. When removing earwax requires two separate office visits because the doctor is paid a fixed amount so he examines only one ear at a time, there is a problem. When doctors have to hire staff to do nothing but work the medical billing codes to maximize the cap-

ture of revenue, there is a problem. A substantial amount of the cost of health care has nothing to do with patient care.

Doctors like those above are not the only problem. Hospitals and insurance companies position themselves to recover their losses from the taxpayers through clever state and federal programs designed by lobbyists and hidden in congress-

Entrepreneurial Christian doctors who move to this model can practice medicine according to their beliefs, without interference from insurance companies, big corporations, or government regulators.

sional funding legislation. Litigators actively recruit litigants to go after doctors and health care organizations for quick cash settlements over dubious “injuries,” and we all pay the price when doctors feel compelled to practice “defensive medicine.”

Some of the problems in health care funding are just plain foolishness. Recently, an elderly woman in her eighties underwent an outpatient orthopedic surgery that involved staying in the hospital for less than 24-hours. Following a short period of recovery, she was to be

transferred to an intermediate care facility for physical therapy and other post-operative care prior to returning to her home. However, she discovered that the intermediate rehabilitation facility to which she would be released could not take her until she had been in the hospital for three full days because Medicare would not pay for intermediate rehab until then. Therefore,

this widow unnecessarily spent an additional three days in an expensive hospital (which Medicare Part A paid for) because her Medicare Part B would not pay for her intermediate rehabilitation until she had been hospitalized for three days. Such atrociously bad stewardship is more the rule than the exception. Is

it any wonder that so many doctors and patients are fed up with the American medical system? Few doubt the health care system in America is broken. However, a new day in health care is coming.

Despite many flaws in the system, we are fortunate to have excellent medical professionals dedicated to caring for their patients. These practitioners are strong advocates for their patients and frequently battle with insurance bureaucrats and business offices to get the medical that care patients need. They often face opposition on multiple fronts. Too

many have given up and left clinical practice altogether, while many bright young people choose a profession other than medicine.

Readers of this newsletter will recall earlier articles describing a growing number of physicians “opting out” of medical insurance and taking their medical practice into what has come to be known as “direct primary care.” This is a model where patients either pay the doctor directly for each medical service provided or, in some instances, pay an annual membership fee to gain ready access to a particular physician without incurring any additional out-of-pocket cost or co-pay.

Some call this approach “boutique medicine” or “concierge medicine,” and criticize it because it often means catering to wealthier patients who can afford to pay more for access to their physician. Many doctors dislike the notion of limiting their medical knowledge and skill to only those individuals who can afford them. However, a new day is coming to health care.

Despite its critics, direct primary medical care serves both patients and physicians well, and there is good reason to expect the trend toward this model of medical service delivery to grow. For those entrepreneurial Christian doctors who have moved their practice into this model, most find it liberating since it enables them to practice medicine according to their Christian beliefs without interference from insurance companies, big health care corporations, or government

regulators. Doctors with direct pay practices report experiencing greater satisfaction among their patients, greater professional satisfaction, and an improved home life.

As a pastor and member of Samaritan Ministries, I’m excited about a hybrid form of direct pay medical care that takes the best



CHRISTIAN HEALTHCARE CENTERS

chcenters.org

of concierge medicine, makes it accessible to patients regardless of income, and captures the Christian distinctives of Christian communities like Samaritan Ministries. I’ve teamed up with Jeff Woo, an internal medicine physician, and Brian Aenis, a certified orthoptist, both of whom are also members of Samaritan, to launch Christian Healthcare Centers in Grand Rapids, Michigan. CHC adapts the direct pay medical services model to become one of the first overtly Christian not-for-profit organizations in the nation to direct its services to the Christian community. Our mission

statement says, “Christian Healthcare Centers is committed to providing exceptional comprehensive health care services to the Body of Christ, guided by Biblical values.” The organization’s statement of faith and the criteria for membership mirror that of Samaritan Ministries, thereby providing Samaritan Ministries’ members in Michigan with a true medical “home.” Samaritan members can be assured that their medical care will

be provided to them by Christians who share their beliefs and values, and who share their participation with Samaritan Ministries.

We have three principal motivations behind the launch of Christian Healthcare Centers. First is the desire to improve patient care, resulting in better medical out-

comes. Since the Center is overtly Christian, we engage our patients as “whole persons created in God’s image,” says Dr. Woo, who serves as CHC’s Medical Director.

“How often does someone see a doctor who not only asks questions about their physical well-being, but enquires about the quality of the patient’s prayer life, how often they read Scripture, whether they regularly participate in the ministry of a local church? Numerous published studies in the medical literature support our belief that a patient’s spirituality plays a significant role in a person’s overall wellness,” he says. “We integrate that research with our Christian theology to create a very distinct type of caring in our centers. We believe the whole person

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is the whole image, so we endeavor to care for the whole person.” The Center’s medical team believes this will lead to improved wellness among its members, fewer people admitted to the hospital or developing chronic medical conditions.

The second motivation for the organization’s formation is stewardship of all that God entrusts to His people. Everyone knows that insurance premiums have increased as coverage has decreased. Many doctors are frustrated with mountains of paperwork that require additional hours away from their own families and distract from actual patient care. Patients are frustrated waiting for insurance company bureaucrats to authorize treatments that their doctor says they need. Foremost in this broken system is the cost of health care. It has consistently risen faster than any other sector of the American economy, with much of that cost having little to do with improving patient care.

I know a pastor in Michigan whose church pays over \$20,000 per year to provide insurance coverage for his family, which includes both parents and three school age children. Over the last five years, they have met their annual deductible one time with insurance covering one claim of a little more than a thousand dollars. What did he get for his church’s expenditure of so much money? Pre-negotiated discounts on medical services and medications. Imagine what a small church could do with \$20,000.

Christian Healthcare Centers and Samaritan Ministries share a desire to improve stewardship of financial and human resources related to health care. In short, God’s people

can avoid spending thousands of dollars on insurance policies that often provide little more than a medical service discount. The money currently spent by thousands of Christians on medical insurance that a Christian family seldom uses could be better-spent furthering God’s mission for His people.

Stewardship of finances is only one aspect of stewardship. Brian Aenis, who is Director of

We live in an increasingly post-Christian culture. Christians need each other, and we should expect that need to grow.

Center Operations, says, “Christian Healthcare Centers is committed to helping God’s people become better stewards of their own health. Through health and wellness education initiatives, publications, and care plans established between Christian physicians and their patients, believers can model for the country how the practice of Biblical Christianity directly impacts personal wellness.” Although non-Christian wellness models are well-intentioned and see some modest improvements in some patients, there is no substitute for the person enabled by God the Holy Spirit to make changes in her life to “steward” her spiri-

tual, and mental wellbeing. This is an important aspect of the CHC medical model.

The Christian Healthcare Centers’ model also provides a pathway for medical professionals to apply their medical knowledge and skills within an environment that shares their Christian values, which enhances their belief that what they do makes a real difference for both this life and the one to come. It enables them to maximize the impact on people’s lives from birth to death, and all along the human life continuum.

“Like any professional, doctors want to know that their work makes a difference. Like our Great Physician changed people’s lives, we strive to change lives too, not by performing miracles, but through pushing back the effects of the Fall through good medical practice, prayer, and Christian caring. It makes me a better doctor knowing I can do this for people. It makes me a better Christian knowing that I can rely on faith in the Lord to provide the wisdom I need to help my patients,” Aenis explains.

The third motivation for launching Christian Healthcare Centers is to spark a movement toward a deeper practice of Christian community. The history of Samaritan Ministries demonstrates it is possible for Christians from a broad spectrum of churches to come together around shared beliefs and values in order to create a genuine caring community. Christian Healthcare Centers shares this important aspiration and intends to build upon the foundation that Samaritan has already laid.

Medical care is unique in its ability to get very personal with people, for

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Mandatory depression screening would be depressing

by Dr. Ron Paul

The United States Preventive Services Task Force recently recommended mandatory depression screening for all Americans. The task force wants to force health insurance companies to pay for the screening. Basic economics, as well as the Affordable Care Act disaster, should have shown this task force that government health insurance mandates harm Americans.

Government health insurance mandates raise the price of health insurance. Consumers will respond to this increase by either choosing to not carry health insurance or by reducing their consumption of other goods and services. Imposing new health insurance mandates will thus make consumers, many of whom are already suffering from costly mandates, worse off by forcing them to deviate from their preferred consumption patterns.

Mandatory depression screening will not just raise insurance costs. In order to ensure that the screening mandate is being properly implemented, the government will need to create a database containing the results of the screenings. Those anti-gun politicians who want to forbid anyone labeled “mentally ill” from owning a firearm will no doubt want to use this database as a tool to deprive individuals of their Second Amendment rights.

If the preventive task force has its way, Americans could lose their Second Amendment, and possibly other, rights simply because they happened to undergo their manda-

tory depression screening when they were coping with a loved one’s passing or a divorce, or simply having a bad day. As anyone who has been mistakenly placed on the terrorist watch list can attest, it is very difficult to get off a government database even when the government clearly is in error. Thus, anyone

The government will need to create a database containing the results of the screenings.

mistakenly labeled as depressed will have to spend a great deal of time and money in what may be a futile attempt to get his rights back.

Mandatory depression screening will endanger people’s health by increasing the use of psychotropic drugs. These drugs often have dangerous side effects. Their use has even been linked to suicide. The fact that almost every mass shooter was on psychotropic drugs is another good reason to oppose any policy that will increase reliance on these medicines.

The Preventive Services Task Force’s mandatory depression screening mandate is based on the fallacy that diagnosing mental health problems is analogous to diagnosing cancer or diabetes. Even mental health professionals acknowledge that there is a great deal of subjectivity in mental health diagnosis.

Consider that until 1973 homosexuality was considered a mental disorder by the American Psychiatric Association. Today, some mental

health professionals think that those who believe in limited government, free-market economics, or traditional values suffer from mental disorders. If mandatory depression screening becomes a reality, it is likely this mental health screening will be expanded to cover screening for other mental illnesses. This could

result in anyone with an unpopular political belief or lifestyle choice being labeled as “mentally ill.”

Even if mandatory health screening could be implemented with-

out increasing costs or threatening liberty, it would still be a bad idea. Government health care mandates undermine the basic principles of a free society. If it is legitimate for government to tell us what types of health care we must receive, then it is also legitimate for the government to tell us what to eat, when to exercise, and even how to raise our children. To paraphrase C.S. Lewis, a tyranny imposed for our own good is the worst form of tyranny because it is a tyranny without limits. All who love liberty must therefore oppose mandatory depression screening, or any other health care mandate. ♦

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Dr. Ron Paul earned a Doctor of Medicine degree from Duke University and served as a flight surgeon in the Air Force from 1961 to 1963. As a specialist in obstetrics and gynecology he delivered more than 4000 babies.

He served 11 terms as a Congressman from Texas in the United States House of Representatives.

obvious reasons. When the provision of medical services and the funding for those services is guided by Biblical values and a common bond in Christ, a platform for greater personalized ministry exists. Just as Samaritan provides access to pastoral counseling, prayer partners, and other services that meet

needs and move people toward spiritual maturity, so does Christian Healthcare Centers.

I believe our ministry will become an important resource for local churches as pastors and doctors find ways to bring their unique gifts to bear on the needs of people in local congregations. As a pastor, I know how much it helps to work with physicians and other practitioners to minister to hurting people. I'm excited to see how God uses us to add this important piece to the caring ministry of the local church.

The Centers will be a place to whom churches can refer pastors and missionaries for physicals, medical care, counseling services, and even help when the pastor or missionary is "burned out." Too many vocational Christian workers are permanently lost to full-time ministry because the stress of ministry left unchecked eventually takes a toll. Pastors and missionaries need a safe place to off-load some of the weight of ministry. Since we are a Christian organization, we partner with a number of qualified, dedicated Christian counselors who can help when needed. As a pastor, I

We serve a big God Who has a big mission for His people.

know how important it is to have someone who ministers to me.

Within this vision of enhanced Christian community is the recognition that we all live within an increasingly post-Christian culture; one that is expressing a growing hostility toward the Christian faith. In short, we

Christians need each other and we should expect that need to grow. With that in mind, Christian Healthcare Centers offers a pathway for collaborating with local churches to strengthen the Christian community.

The vision for Christian Healthcare Centers is to establish a center in virtually every major city in America and in every state. This is obviously an ambitious vision and assumes the success of its first center in Grand Rapids, Michigan, which is projected to open in late summer 2016. However, it is a new day in health care, and since we serve a big God Who has a big mission for His people, there is no reason to think that it cannot be done.

If you would like more information about Christian Healthcare Centers, contact us on the web at www.chcenters.org or email us at info@chcenters.org. ♦

Member Mark Blocher is the President/CEO of Christian Healthcare Centers. He is a Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies at Cornerstone University. He is the author of The Right to Die? Caring Alternatives to Euthanasia and Vital Signs: Decisions that Determine the Quality of Life and Health.

those who have spoken out over the years against this increased sexualization of TV have been told by others to "shut up." If they don't like what's on TV, they can turn the channel.

Yet in recent years, when there have been shows espousing more socially conservative values, many of these same people that told the others to mind their own business demand that these shows be taken off the air. Well, whatever happened to "turn the channel if you don't like what's on TV?"

So the issue isn't whether we judge, because we all judge. Rather it's if we're willing to judge the values on which we base our own judgments. But in our society today, are the values of everyone open to scrutiny without fear of retribution? Or are there some people's values that are considered untouchable? Despite all of the talk of how tolerant our society is becoming, the reality is quite different. In my lifetime, I've seen how judgmental and authoritarian our culture has actually become. At one time, you were able to pretty much speak what was on your mind. But now you have to carefully guard what you think, say, and do.

On the one hand, we're sure that there is no right or wrong way to live our lives. But on the other hand, our behaviors are carefully judged as to whether they are politically correct or not. They say that we live in the "Golden Era" of free speech, and yet our speech is heavily censored, and the penalty for saying something wrong can be disastrous. From politicians to CEOs, from pro-athletes to university professors, one wrong word, one careless Tweet, can

ruin an entire career that has taken decades to build. And where's the media in all of this? Where are the defenders of free speech and free thought? Well, they're the very ones policing our speech and thoughts.

Now if there could only be one thing that you take away from this article, I'd like it to be this. Take a good, hard look at the culture around us. Who are the self-righteous finger-pointing moralists who are going around telling people what they can and cannot do? Well, nine times out of ten they're not your stereotypical religious people. So, think about that. Really ... think about that. ♦

Mark Leeming is a pastor of New Hope Christian Fellowship in Belleville, Ontario, Canada. This article is adapted from his video on his Youtube channel, segue2reason. You can also follow him on Facebook and Twitter @segue2reason.

Mark grew up in a Christian home, attended Bible college, and served as a missionary, but then lost his faith and became an atheist for a season of his adult life. After he was restored to faith, he became passionate for using Biblical apologetics to help those struggling with the big questions in life.



Haters

by Nancy Wilson

The exhortation to love one another is the most basic Christian doctrine there is, and we are to be known for our love for one another. But some see us as haters. In fact, not long ago a woman came up to my husband and me while we were out to dinner, and she called him a hater. At the time I chimed in and contradicted her. He most certainly is not a hater in the way she claimed.

But as I thought about it later, I realized that actually he is a hater. And so am I. And so are you. And so is that woman. We all hate something. She apparently hates haters. But being a hater is not a bad thing in itself. It all depends on what it is we are hating.

God Himself hates lots of things. He hates sin. If He did not hate sin, Christ would not have gone to the cross to redeem us from it. God is the ultimate hater because He hates sin more than any of us do, and we would do well to hate what He hates more than we do. Consider these seven things that God hates:

- A proud look.
 - A lying tongue.
 - Hands that shed innocent blood.
 - A heart that devises wicked plans.
 - Feet that are swift in running to evil.
 - A false witness who speaks lies.
 - One who sows discord among brethren.
- (Proverbs 6:16-19)

Do you hate these things? Then I guess you are a hater, too. And we

are all in good company because our Maker loves the world so much, He hates sin so much, that He sent His only begotten Son into this world.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

If you love the right things, you will necessarily hate those things that threaten them. Do you love your liberty? Then you hate tyranny. Do you love the baby in the womb? Then you hate abortion. Do you love marriage? Then you hate adultery, fornication, and sodomy. Do you love the truth? Then you hate falsehood.

In this momentarily upside-down world, if you hate what God hates, you are called a hater. It reminds me of the man who was simultaneously screaming at my husband and flipping him off with one hand, while holding a large sign with the other that said, "No hate here!"

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! (Isaiah 5:20)

If you are called a hater, be sure it is for the same things that God hates. Just as we love imperfectly, so we hate imperfectly. But nevertheless, we are called to do both, and all to the glory of God. ♦

Member Nancy Wilson and her husband, Doug, are from Moscow, Idaho, where he is pastor of Christ Church.

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.

30 evangelicals expelled

Thirty evangelical Christians were expelled from Chiapas, Mexico, and their homes destroyed on January 4, according to International Christian Concern. The Mexican government continues to ignore requests from Protestant villagers to enforce freedom of worship laws. *Pray for the protection of the 30 believers who lost their homes, that they will stand strong for Christ, and that the government will take action against the village leaders.*

Woman dies in Thai custody

A Christian woman who had fled from her home in Pakistan died in police custody in Thailand on Christmas Eve, ICC reports. Samina Faisal, 30, was prevented from taking medication for a heart condition. Thousands of Pakistani Christians have fled to Thailand recently due to persecution in their homeland, but Thai authorities do not recognize the Christians as asylum seekers and imprison them as illegal

immigrants. *Pray for comfort for Samina’s friends and family. Pray also for all the Pakistani refugees fleeing persecution, and that Thai leaders will have compassion on those that come to their country.*

Mali Christians harassed

Christians in Mali’s Sikasso district are facing hostility from government officials and village leaders, Voice of the Martyrs reports. Their homes and fields have been burned, property stolen, and death threats made. They are also forbidden from meeting for prayer, and many of their leaders have been arrested. *Pray for encouragement for all Christians in Mali, the ability to worship together, and new leadership.*

Church razing continues

Chinese authorities demolished the Yulin Christian Church on January 6, VOM reports. Government workers took believers away before the destruction. This was the first church destruction of 2016 in China. *Pray for Pastor Chang and all who attended the church, for bold faith, and for guidance for a new place to worship.*

Lawyer arrested in Vietnam

A Vietnamese Christian human rights lawyer was arrested in December while he was trying to engage European Union diplomats following a human rights meeting. Nguyen Van Dai and a colleague face prison terms of three to 20 years if convicted. *Pray that Mr. Nguyen will be released immediately, that Vietnamese believers will persevere, and that the Gospel will continue to reach the Vietnamese people.*

Asia offers forgiveness

Asia Bibi, a Christian woman imprisoned for her faith in Pakistan,

has forgiven those who have falsely accused her, ICC reports. Asia got into an argument in 2009 with Muslim co-workers over use of a water bowl and was accused of making “blasphemous” remarks against Islam, resulting in a death sentence. The Pakistani Supreme Court agreed to hear her appeal last year. *Praise God for Asia’s Christian witness. Pray she will be released and reunited with her family.*

Afghan opportunities

“Brother Zechariah” trains fellow believers in Afghanistan to share the Gospel, VOM reports, despite risks and challenges. *Pray for training opportunities and new connections for Zechariah, his students, and his fellow workers in the dangerous nation of Afghanistan.*

Canadian pastor held

A petition calling for the release of 60-year-old Canadian pastor Hyeon-Soo Lim has been created on the change.org advocacy website (www.change.org/p/get-canadian-humanitarian-out-of-north-korean-prison-freepastorlim-bringlimhome), ICC reports. Pastor Lim has been held in North Korea since February 2015. The petition calls for national and international authorities to work for Pastor Lim’s freedom. *Pray for the success of the petition, for the thousands of Christians held in North Korean concentration camps, and that North Korea will become open to the world for the benefit of its people and the Gospel.* ♦

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

What of nurturing? That has a more positive ring to it than admonition, but what does it mean? Perhaps an illustration might help. At a home education co-op recently, some of my children and their friends did an experiment where they put six different seeds into six different jars, subjecting each seed to different conditions. The first was given air, water, soil, light, and warmth, while the others had one of these elements missing. Some didn't grow at all. Others grew a little, but were very weak and stunted. No prizes for guessing which one grew properly!

Just as the nurturing of plants needs all the elements in order to grow properly, so do our children. And just as the seed that is deprived of one or more of the elements will either not grow at all, or perhaps produce stunted growth, so is the case with our children. Although I don't want to belabor the analogy too much, there is a fairly close correspondence to the elements that are needed for the seed to grow, and those with which we need to be nurturing our children. For instance, it is possible to give them the light of God's Word, both in the home and at church, and think that this will suffice. But if the environment at home or in the church is frigid, or if we so stifle their characters, gifts, and creativity that they feel suffocated, they may well come to despise the teaching. There are countless "testimonies" out there of people who have gone through that.

Nurturing is about making sure our children have all the elements they need so that they thrive and grow up into men and women who really love God and who have a

genuinely loving, servant spirit. So we need to aim not just to teach them from God's Word, but to do so in an environment that is warm and wholesome. We need to have a home where Christ is honored, both in teaching and example, but we need to do so making sure that we do not stifle our children or place heavy burdens on them. They need air to thrive, and I've seen a good many people reject the faith of their parents chiefly because their parents tried to squeeze them into a particular mold of what they thought Christians ought to look like.

Fathers, can I urge you to strive to get closer to your children? Cuddle them more (especially girls). They need to feel wanted and secure, even the ones who don't communicate this very well. Talk to them more. Be interested in them and their lives. Speak kindly to them and well of them. Get rid of any hindrances in your life which might be a stumbling block for them, or which might breed resentment and create a distance between you and your children. Strive to teach them from God's Word, both by words and example. Seek their forgiveness, not just God's, if you have wronged them, or shouted at them, or failed them. Make them know that you would give your life for them. Fill your home with love and with grace.

Having said that, the wind seems to be taken out of my sails somewhat. Thinking of what nurture and admonition ought to look like is one thing, but if your house is anything like mine, the reality falls short. Occasionally I might approximate to some of these things, but there are too many times of miserable failure

to recall. What then?

The things I have listed are hard things which require self-sacrifice, determination, and above all the Spirit of God. We are bound to mess up, bound to fail. But this realization should make us press on, not give up. Christianity is not a religion of beating ourselves up over such failures. Rather, it is getting down on our knees, seeking God's free and full forgiveness through Jesus, and then asking for His Spirit to enable us to be a better father to our children.

Fatherhood is the most important social issue of our day, and the lack of good fathers is behind so much of what has gone wrong in our society. If you haven't already, will you join me in making it a regular practice to pray for fathers? Pray that every child in the land would know their father throughout their childhood. Pray for every child to know the love and the warmth of a good father. Pray for fathers in your church to be enabled to lead their families, and to "nurture and admonish their children in the Lord" with love and grace. Pray for good fathers to become better fathers. Pray for absent or poor fathers to repent and be given God's grace to succeed where they have previously failed. And above all, pray that God would reform our churches, our communities, and our society by turning "the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers" (Malachi 4:6). ♦

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.

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 8:38-39

We Christians face many challenges in our lives. The challenges can be more difficult sometimes than others and can come at us from many sources, as we see in the verses above. We may sometimes wonder if God loves us.

If we are God's children, we should expect suffering (Romans 8:16-17). We should also expect the pain of His discipline (Hebrews 12:7-11). Are you facing difficulties in life that you wish would

go away? Carefully, prayerfully think about these Scriptures and how they apply to your life.

There are many things that come into our lives that could make us wonder if God really loves us. The passage above assures us that there is nothing that can separate a believer from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Nothing.

For the Kingdom,



Ray King