

Christian HealthCare

NEWSLETTER

MEMBER LETTER:

Following God's principles is the solution

When my husband was hospitalized for a serious infection, we were faced with tens of thousands of dollars in unexpected bills. We had only been members for a few months and didn't know what to expect.

Wow! What a surprise! Not only were we able to pay all our bills in a timely manner, but more importantly, every time we opened an envelope we read notes of encouragement from our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We also want to thank the staff at Samaritan. When we made that first phone call, the advocate asked if he could pray with us for God's healing. We knew at that moment everything was going to work out.

It's no surprise that following God's principles of helping each other is the perfect solution to the problem of medical costs.

*Elmo and Lisa Conner
Cookville, Tennessee*

All elections involve voting sinners into office

by Darrell B. Harrison
from BlackCommunityNews.com

Stop whatever it is you're doing and take a few moments to think back to the very first promise someone made to you.

What thoughts immediately come to your mind? Who made the promise? Was it fulfilled as promised or is it yet to be realized? If the latter, how does it make you feel today? Disappointed? Unimportant? Perhaps even unloved?

Now, think ahead to November 8, 2016.

What thoughts come to your mind now? What expectations do you have of the person for whom you're planning to cast your vote for president (assuming you are planning to vote)? Are you more hopeful in their promises than in the ones made to you at other times in your life? Why or why not?

Everyone has commitments to a certain way of seeing life. Some people call this a worldview. Whatever the label, it is a vision about life, what it is, and how it works. This vision of life may be wise or foolish. People may or may not be self-conscious about their vision of life. But everyone possesses such a vision. — *Heath Lambert, A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry, p. 16*

At the risk of making you feel as if you're being interrogated under a heat

lamp from a fast-food restaurant, the reason I posed the aforementioned questions is because, if nothing else, elections are about promises...

...and hopes...

...and expectations.

And why do we hope?

Why do we believe?

We hope because something inside of us longs for righteousness in our political leaders. We know it is right that those who are in authority over us should exercise that power with integrity and equity.

We believe because, as Christians, we trust in the veracity of a God Who has so purposed that worldly governments

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Sharing Summary from October

Shares:	\$23,345,251	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:	\$22,895,353	
In Negotiation:	\$ --	
New Needs:	3,055	
Total Needs:	6,280	
New Rewards:	172	Member Households: 62,968 (as of 9/22/16)
Miscarriages:	38	
Final Rewards:	10	

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

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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.

Modern totalitarianism

by Rob Slane

Modern totalitarianism offers subjective substitutes for objective reality, and then insists that everyone accept those substitutes, or else. There are many examples of this. For instance, there is the idea that there really are no differences between men and women, and that either sex can perform all tasks equally. There is the idea that marriage is something that can take place between two men or two women. There is the idea that a person who was born biologically male can transition to become female, and vice versa.

Transgenderism offers a good example. Take the recent *Gender Identity Guidance* issued by the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination. According to Eugene Volokh, writing in the *Washington Post*¹

Under Massachusetts law, refusing to use a transgender person's preferred pronoun would be punishable discrimination. (At least this is true of "he" or "she"—I saw nothing in the document about "ze" and other newly made up pronouns.) The Massachusetts document² ... makes that clear in the employment context, and it also makes clear that the antidiscrimination law rules apply to places of public accommodations (including churches, in "secular events" "open to the public") just as much as to employment.

Now, let's notice the sleight of hand that has taken place in the whole transgender issue. Take the imaginary case of Bob, who is transitioning to become Carol. He is

objectively male, right? That is his objective biological sex. By that I mean that at some point in the past, the midwife present at his birth pronounced him to be a boy, and we can assume that she made this assessment on the basis of objective data, rather than on a personal whim. Indeed, had she pronounced Bob to be a girl, or even non-gender specific, despite the clear evidence to the contrary, Bob's parents would no doubt have corrected her and, had she still insisted on ignoring the evidence, made a complaint.

But at some point after that, Bob came to believe that the objective data was wrong, so he chose to undergo a process of bodily mutilation. Note, however, that the objective data was not wrong. How could it be? It is objective, including physically provable characteristics and XY chromosomes. As a recent report from the American College of Pediatricians puts it:

Human sexuality is an objective biological binary trait: "XY" and "XX" are genetic markers of male and female, respectively—not genetic markers of disorder.

They go on to say that:

No one is born with a gender. Everyone is born with a biological sex. Gender (an awareness of oneself as male or female) is a sociological and psychological concept; not an objective biological one.³

So we can state with absolute certainty that since biological sex is a demonstrably objective reality, Bob's decision to transition away from this

must be a subjective one. Indeed, the very fact that Bob needs surgery to make the transition rather proves the point. (As an aside, those arguing for transgenderism need to answer the question of why the body, which is objectively one thing or the other, should be made to conform to a subjective decision of the mind, rather than the other way around.)

But having made this demonstrably subjective decision, what happens next? Having taken a decision which is contrary to objective reality, Bob now not only identifies as a sex which is opposite to his objective biological one, but now expects everyone else to accept his decision as objective reality.

Do you see what has happened? We've gone through four stages:

1. Objective reality
2. Denial of objective reality
3. The creation of a new subjective reality
4. The insistence that this new reality is now objective truth to be assented to and obeyed by everyone.

Oh, and there is now a fifth stage, which is that if we don't consent to go along with the new reality, we get a label pinned to us—hater, transphobe, bigot, etc—and possibly are accused of a "hate crime."

Here are a couple of questions that we should be asking those who insist on this:

1. If someone acts contrary to objective reality, what grounds do they then have for insisting that everyone else treat their

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Dave and Ally Wilton

Coalesce Audio

by Michael Miller



Dave Wilton's goal is to minister to others to help them make beautiful music.

The fact that he's able to make his own beautiful music to the Lord is a bonus.

Dave runs Coalesce Audio in Lafayette, Colorado, where he lives with his wife, Ally, and their three children. For several years, he has produced, recorded, mastered, and mixed albums by a variety of indie artists like Josh Garrels, Latifah Phillips (Page CXVI, *The Autumn Film*, *Moda Spira*), and Jason Upton.

"Everything involved in the making of a record, I love to have hands on," Dave says.

He also has recorded his own music in the form of the groups Loud Harp (with Asher Seevinck) and A Boy and His Kite.

Dave's production work isn't simply a business venture, though. In

line with many other musicians in the Boulder, Colorado, area, Dave's aim is to make sonic art, whether his own or someone else's. As a Christian, he also tries to minister to the artists and their families to make the process itself a witness to his faith. That's why he has made Coalesce Audio, which is in his own back yard, a family friendly place. It not only allows him to be closer to his own family, but is a comfortable space for artists' families to be during the recording process.

"There aren't too many studios—I don't really know of any—that are family friendly," Dave says in a phone interview while waiting to be served at a Colorado DMV facility. "A musician already will be out of town touring to promote and to make a living for their family, and they're gone a lot. When it comes time to make a record, they leave their family again and go to the studio and

they're away. It's very difficult for marriages to grow and for family relationships to mature and to grow as a musician. So what we wanted to do as a family is to offer a space where artists like Josh Garrels could bring his wife and children, where we could do good creative work but also have family there.

"The ministry I'm excited about is providing an atmosphere of faith, family, and art."

Ministering isn't restricted to family relationships, of course. He's focused on getting the most out of the people he's recording.

"It begins with getting to know someone, what they're passionate about," Dave says. "Making music is difficult. It's definitely a sacrifice of time, energy, and money. It's all about 'why.' Getting to know someone and finding out the 'why' is most important to me. I want to discern what they need. If an artist is trying to express something simple and honest and humble, then that's the type of music we're going to make. If someone wants

to express something very bold and grandiose, then push them when they need to be pushed. As a producer, I want to make sure that the music matches the artist's desire to push boundaries."

He also created the new studio to be "a relaxed and comfortable environment ideal for the creation and capture of music" that "offers a wide variety of musical instruments as well as analog and digital recording equipment." In a website photo at davewilton.com/recordingstudio, Coalesce Audio looks bright and airy with beautiful rugs and wood flooring.

Over the years, mainly at St. Ida's Recording Studio, which he ran at his previous church in Lafayette, Dave has produced albums for several Christian artists, like Phillips, Garrels, and Upton, but non-Christians as well. That, too, is a ministry opportunity, especially in the Boulder, Colorado, area, which is home to a religiously diverse population.

"I love those interactions and conversations where I can encourage someone who is seeking God with

all their heart in ways where they can meet and engage with Jesus, and meet and engage with the Holy Spirit, meet and engage with God the Father," he says.

Dave's own music chronicles his experiences meeting and engaging with the Lord.

A musician since he was young, Dave and his twin brother, Dan, started "with the good old mandatory piano lessons," Dan says. When their father, third-generation funeral director Bob Wilton, taught them some guitar, Dan says Dave "immediately took to it." They eventually formed their own group, Lucid Chrysalis, while attending Peoria Christian School in Samaritan's home base of Peoria, Illinois, recording a full-length album when they were 16 and getting paid to play concerts.

"I think that's when my brother fell in love with, 'Wow, I could do this for a living,'" says Dan.

Dave recalls not looking to be the lead of the group, but "they all looked at me and said, 'You're the singer.'"

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Why SMI?

Dave and Ally Wilton watched Dave's sister, Marci Gilliom, and her husband, Ben, be blessed by Samaritan Ministries members for more than 10 years.

When their health insurance dried up a couple years ago, the Wiltons decided it was time they joined.

"We had had a decade of watching their family be blessed through your ministry," Dave says. "We thought, 'Man, this seems like a perfect fit for us, to send our money to people in need.'"

"Thankfully, we haven't had any needs since we've been with Samaritan Ministries. If that time comes, our trust is in the Lord, that if we ever have a need, that we'll be taken care of, that through your ministry the word will get out and our bills will be shared."

He's excited about the impact of Samaritan's 2017 national sponsorship of Winter Jam, Christian music's largest national tour.

"I think the main people who are going to Winter Jam are younger families and youth groups," Dave says. "What I get excited about is you guys are offering a way for people to meet each other's needs personally, without a middle man or corporation that has their own bottom line. What I love is Winter Jam's going to bring you guys exposure to people just going into the work force, people who are just learning about what it's like being independent apart from their families.

"Reaching the younger ones, I'm excited about that, because, man, it's needed." ♦

Will the right to die become a duty to die?

by John Stonestreet

In a recent article at National Review Online, George Weigel tells a chilling story about just how far the culture of death has advanced in some parts of the West.

Three elderly parishioners at the Canadian church he attends during the summer were diagnosed with cancer. Now, that's bad enough. But what followed was even worse. The first thing they were asked after being told their diagnosis was, "Do you wish to be euthanized?"

While this story should upset us, it shouldn't shock us. Despite all the promises made by supporters of physician-assisted suicide, the so-called "safeguards" against pressuring vulnerable people to end their lives "have proved to be inadequate and have often been watered down or eliminated over time."

Or, as Belgian law professor Étienne Montero observed, "What is presented at first as a right [to die] is going to become a kind of obligation."

Thus, in fourteen years Belgium went from euthanizing terminally-ill adults, to killing chronically-ill adults, to offing adults who had lost their will to live, to finally disposing of children.

As Weigel's story suggests, Canada seems literally hell-bent on catch-

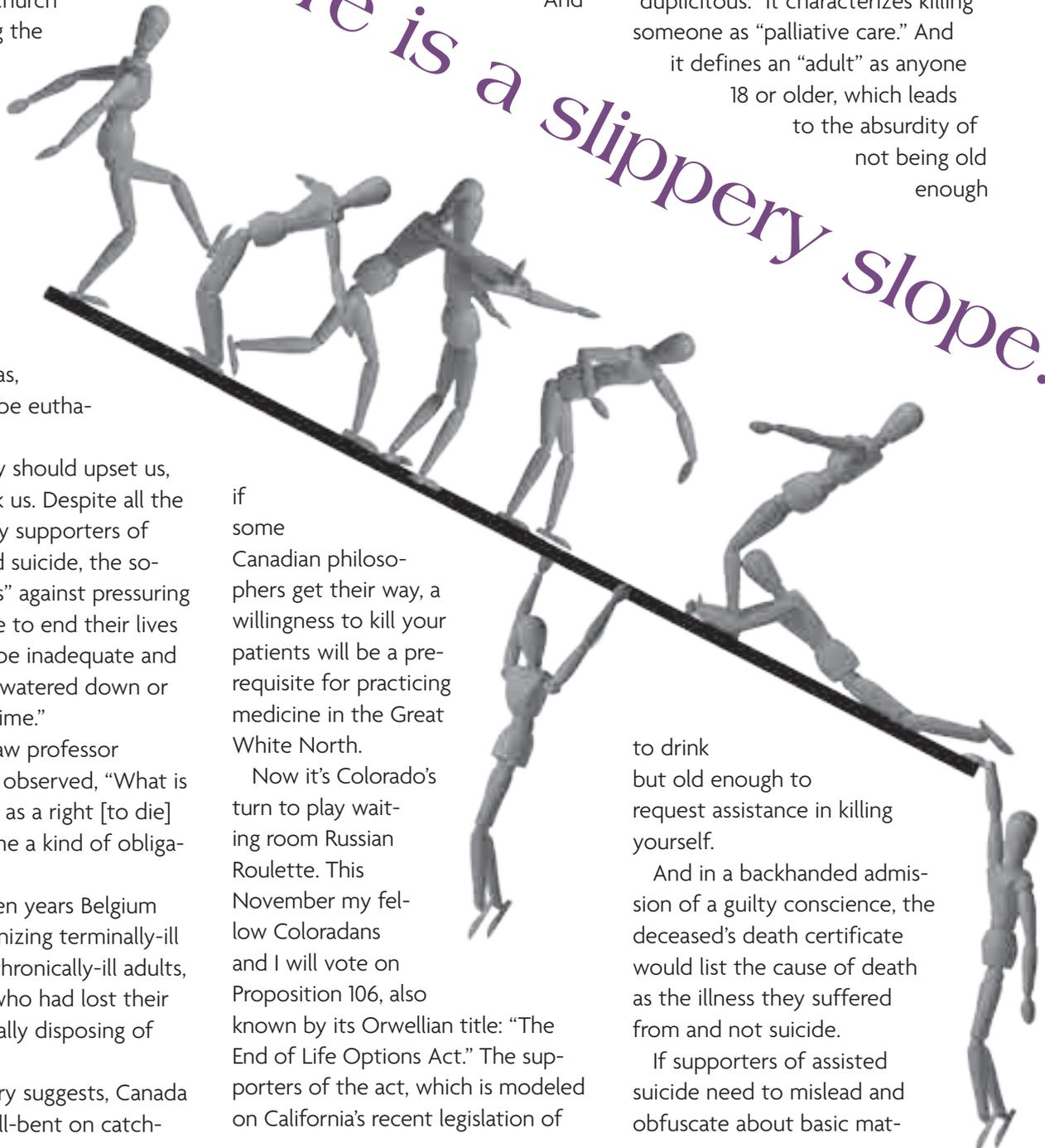
ing up with Belgium in this regard. Physician-assisted suicide has only been legal there since this spring and it has already transformed the practice of medicine in Canada.

And

the same name, assure voters that a vote for physician-assisted suicide is a vote for "compassion." They assure us that it will remain limited to cases of extreme suffering.

But as Weigel points out, the language of the proposed act is "duplicitous." It characterizes killing someone as "palliative care." And it defines an "adult" as anyone 18 or older, which leads to the absurdity of not being old enough

There is a slippery slope.



if some Canadian philosophers get their way, a willingness to kill your patients will be a prerequisite for practicing medicine in the Great White North.

Now it's Colorado's turn to play waiting room Russian Roulette. This November my fellow Coloradans and I will vote on Proposition 106, also known by its Orwellian title: "The End of Life Options Act." The supporters of the act, which is modeled on California's recent legislation of

to drink but old enough to request assistance in killing yourself.

And in a backhanded admission of a guilty conscience, the deceased's death certificate would list the cause of death as the illness they suffered from and not suicide.

If supporters of assisted suicide need to mislead and obfuscate about basic mat-

ters such as these, why should we believe their assurances that no one will be coerced into killing themselves? Little wonder that disability advocates oppose the measure.

Colorado history should also give us pause. Thirty-two years ago, then-governor of Colorado, Richard Lamm told a group of health-care lawyers that the terminally-ill elderly have “a duty to die and get out of the way” instead of trying to prolong their lives. He compared the fulfillment of this “duty” to “leaves falling off a tree and forming humus for the other plants to grow up.”

It would be foolish to think that the “right-to-die” won’t, much less can’t, one day become the “duty to die,” especially in an aging society where health care costs as a percentage of the GDP are projected to double over the next 25 years. By

the way, also on the Colorado ballot this year is state-run healthcare.

The only way to prevent the “right to die” from becoming a “duty to die” is to reject the “right to die” from the start. Anything else places

The proposed law characterizes killing someone as “palliative care.”

the most vulnerable—the elderly and especially the disabled—on an already well-greased slippery slope.

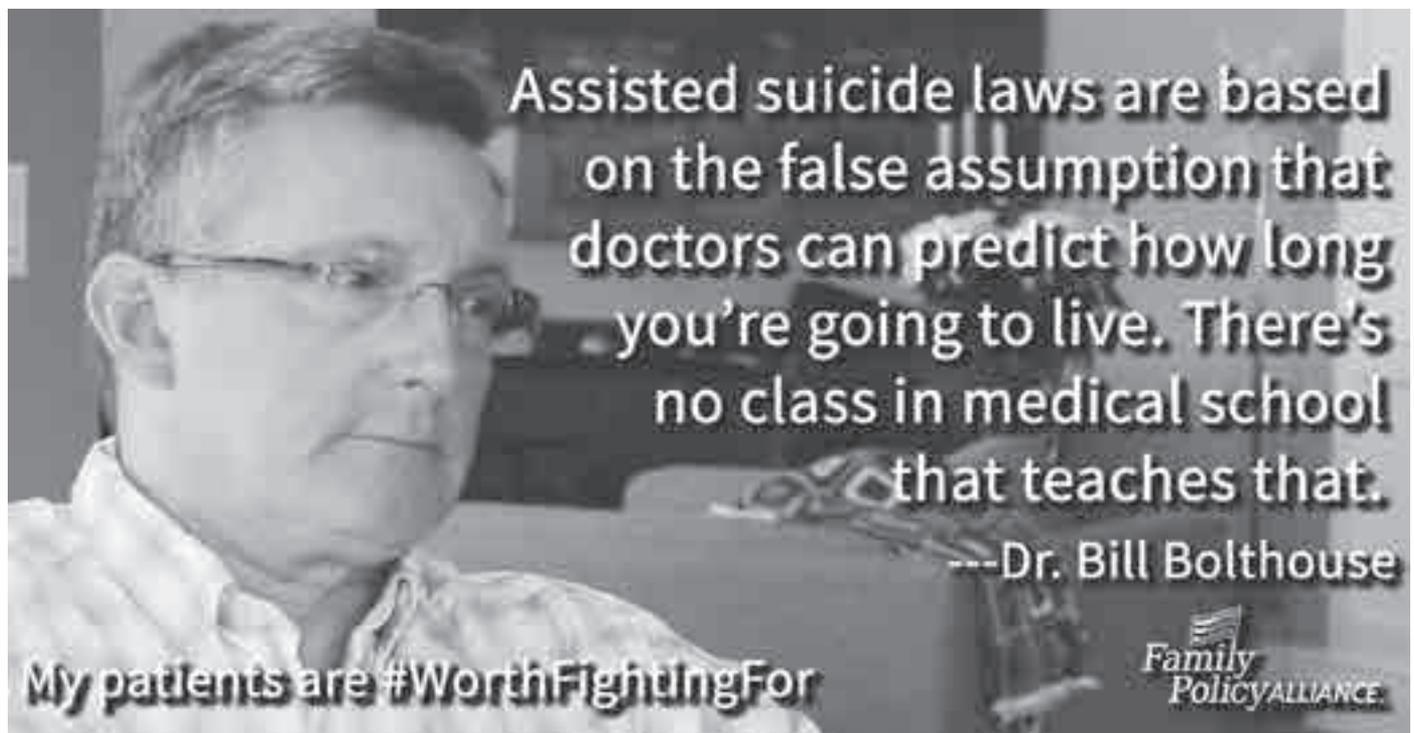
Unless the Lord returns, each and every one of us will die of old age, disease, or tragedy. And except in

the case of tragedy, if the advocates of so-called compassion have their way, you, I, and our loved ones will end up facing the same question George Weigel’s fellow parishioners were asked: “Do you wish to be euthanized?” ♦

John Stonestreet is the host of The Point, a daily national radio program, which provides thought-provoking commentaries on current events and life issues from a Biblical worldview. John holds degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (IL) and Bryan College (TN), and is the co-author of Making Sense of Your World: A Biblical Worldview.

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For resources on why and how we should oppose physician assisted suicide, visit www.ColsonCenter.org/prop106. We have assembled articles, videos, and even church bulletin inserts to help you make the case for life.



New research makes case for “deprescription”

by Bill Sardi

A deprescription program among elderly patients was recently shown to reduce the risk of death by 38 percent.¹ For comparison, statin drugs reduce the risk of mortality from heart disease by around 3 percent compared to taking an inactive placebo pill.²

The term deprescribe first showed up in the medical literature around 2007.³

Since then numerous reports have been written about the idea of doctors actually reducing Rx medication use or even taking patients off drugs altogether.

The case of a 76-year old woman admitted to the hospital for investigation of fatigue, malaise, emotional instability, muscle weakness, cough and dizziness upon rising from a chair, had been taking seven medications and had recently completed a course of antibiotics. A diagnosis of adverse drug reactions was made and all medications were withdrawn. Her symptoms gradually resolved on their own.

Reviewers of this case said: “Adverse drug reactions are a common cause of avoidable hospital admissions in the elderly, estimated to cost billions every year. The single greatest risk factor for adverse

drug reactions is the number of medications a person takes. Deprescribing to reduce potentially inappropriate medication is a possible way forward.”⁴

The problem of overmedication, also called polypharmacy, has grown in a medical culture where patients are presumed to have a drug deficiency. How do you introduce a deprescription program into a culture of medication?

Just look at the horrendous medication mess reviewers found when

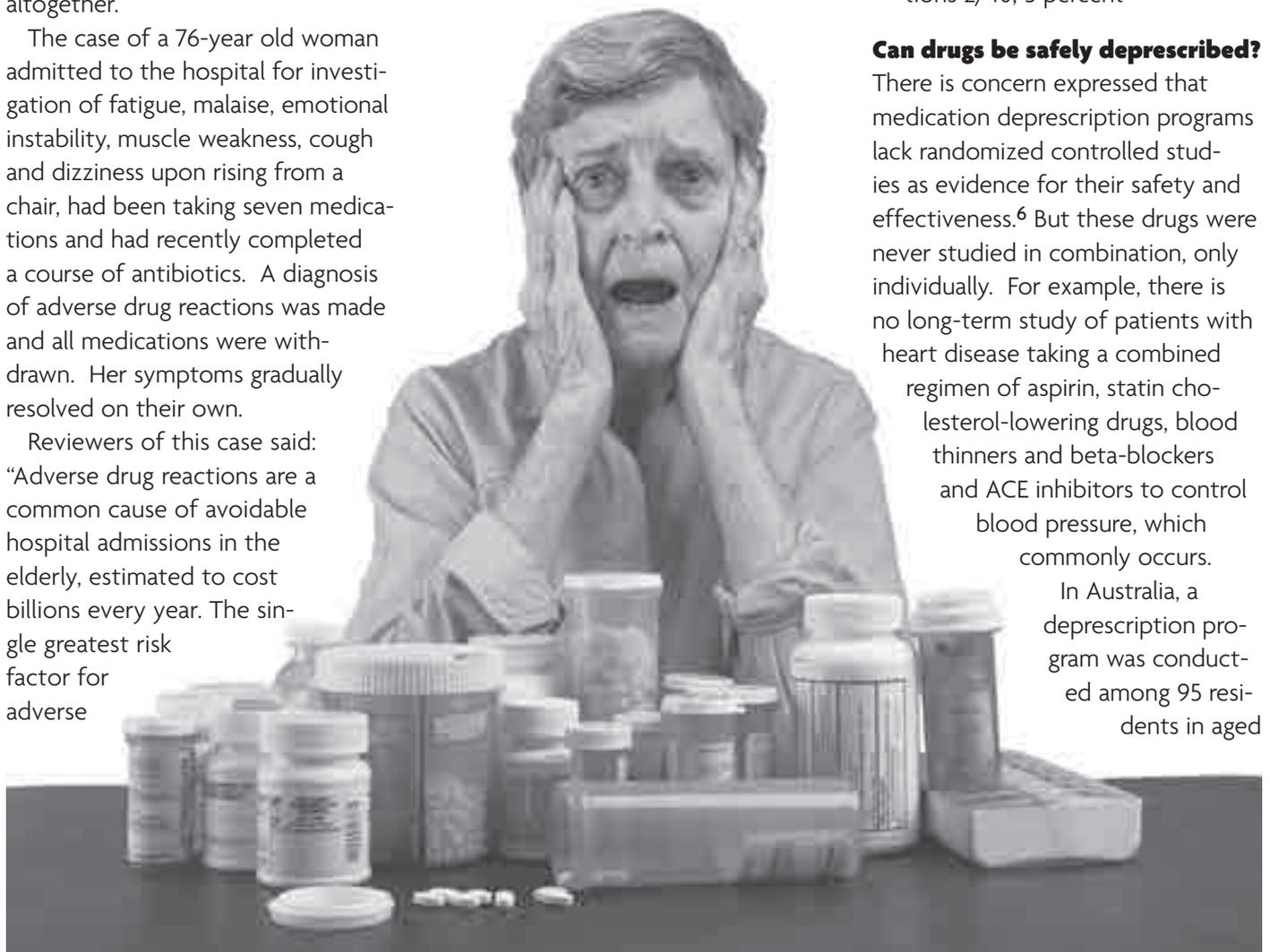
they examined the records of just 40 veterans age 65 and older. Here is what they found:

- Inappropriate medications 23/40, 58 percent
- Compliance problems (mental impairment) 10/40, 25 percent
- Potential overtreatment of high blood pressure 20/40, 50 percent
- Potential overtreatment of diabetes 17/40, 43 percent
- Inappropriate dosing excreted drugs 2/40, 5 percent
- Patient-reported adverse reactions 2/40, 5 percent⁵

Can drugs be safely deprescribed?

There is concern expressed that medication deprescription programs lack randomized controlled studies as evidence for their safety and effectiveness.⁶ But these drugs were never studied in combination, only individually. For example, there is no long-term study of patients with heart disease taking a combined regimen of aspirin, statin cholesterol-lowering drugs, blood thinners and beta-blockers and ACE inhibitors to control blood pressure, which commonly occurs.

In Australia, a deprescription program was conducted among 95 residents in aged



care facilities. Their mean age was 84 years and they averaged 9.5 medications each. A deprescription program modestly reduced medication by about 2 medications per resident and did not increase mortality.⁷

Statin drugs overprescribed

Statin drugs tend to be a throw in, another drug prescribed after all the other drugs are scripted. Many older adults in the last days of their life are taking statin drugs for no purpose whatsoever. They will not die of cardiovascular disease but from other causes.⁸

Statin drugs have been so boldly prescribed and claimed to save lives that a study had to be undertaken to see if older patients would be willing to cease taking them given there is no evidence they are beneficial in older age. Surprisingly, 89 percent of patients surveyed said they would be willing to withdraw from the use of statins and 94 percent said they were always concerned about the side effects of statins anyway.⁹

Origin of the problem

A report published in a Canadian medical journal described the origin of the problem of overmedication. Overlapping clinical guidelines, often written with the aid of drug companies, end up with elderly patients taking a bag full of drugs prescribed by different physicians and the patient is unsure of why they are taking them.¹⁰

The size of the problem

If one drug is good, more is better, right? Finding a senior American who

isn't taking a prescription drug is a difficult task.

Almost four in ten seniors (39 percent) take five drugs or more.¹¹ With about 45 million senior citizens, that means 17,550,000 senior Americans are taking five or more prescription drugs.

In 2009, 63 percent of Canadian seniors were taking more than 5 medications and 30 percent of those older than 85 years of age were taking more than ten medications. Overmedication often results in mental confusion, delirium, falls and hip fractures that result in avoidable hospitalizations.¹²

One published report says patients referred to a medication reviewer are typically taking 15 medications per day and have an average of nine drug-related health problems!¹³

Don't anticipate a rapid change of prescribing habits among physicians. The problem of overprescription of antibiotics was addressed as early as 1978 but little was done about it till now.¹⁴ ♦

Disclaimer: The information in this article is for educational purposes and not meant as medical advice. Consult with your personal physician before making any changes in your medication.

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Bill Sardi is a consumer advocate and health care research analyst. He is a member of Light House Church in La Verne, California. Read about his latest research at knowledgeofhealth.com.

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As time went on—after the tall brothers had starred as the Twin Towers on a well-regarded PCS basketball team in the early 2000s—Dan gravitated toward mixing music with traditional ministry, while Dave continued with creation and production. Dan is now worship pastor at Living Hope Community Church outside Peoria. Dave eventually headed to Colorado to marry Ally and, entranced by the Rocky Mountains, ended up staying.

It was there in spring 2011 that he got together with his friend Asher Seevinck of the band Seafinch. Asher was struggling with writer's block, so Dave invited him to Colorado to work on some material.

"I love to encourage writers who are going through a hard season, like they don't have anything to say," Dave says. "I was going to help him work through some songs."

He also intended to finally develop some of his own work.

"I just felt it was time," he says. "I also felt freed up by my family and also in my faith. In Christ, I really felt commissioned to do the work."

In the course of praying and seeking God, "we just got kind of Holy Spirit-ransacked a little bit," Dave says. "We ended up in two nights

entering into spontaneous worship. We opened up the Bible and drew all the songs from the Psalms. But these were also very reflective of Asher and myself going through



Dave Wilton designed his new studio, Coalesce Audio, in Lafayette, Colorado, "to be a relaxed and comfortable environment ideal for the creation and capture of music."

fairly difficult times in our lives."

The result of those two nights was the core of the first *Loud Harp* album—ethereal, emotional, indie-flavored songs based on various Psalms. The music is described on loudharp.com as "Shoe-gaze, meets Peter Gabriel, meets the Holy Spirit."

The recording of the album, titled after Dave and Asher's partnership,

took the rest of that first week. But they weren't done. The next two weeks resulted in Dave's self-titled *A Boy and His Kite*, songs that weren't explicitly Christian but are

definitely fueled by his faith. The tunes include "Cover Your Tracks," which was used on the *Twilight: Breaking Dawn, Part 2* soundtrack. Both *Loud Harp* and *A Boy and His Kite* were released in 2012.

Then came the second *Loud Harp* album, *Asaph*, in 2014.

"We (Dave and Asher) were on the road in Idaho, driving to worship, when we both started talking about how we'd been reading the psalms of Asaph, how God was really hitting us hard," Dave says. "Asaph's psalms are very intense. They're not easy psalms to read. But he really talks about the nearness of God."

During that worship event, Dave and Asher started to sing "spontaneous

songs from the Psalms that we had read and kind of prayed through on the drive." They ended up recording an entire album of songs based on Psalms written by Asaph.

"We picked the Psalms of his that really spoke to us and even some that we didn't quite fully understand," Dave says. "Psalm 50 is a pretty aggressive Psalm, pretty

violent. We were trying to explore what that looked like in music, so we have a song called 'The Fire and the Flood,' talking about some of the ways of God that are pretty aggressive."

Asher and Dave are working on their third Loud Harp album, to be

called *Hope Where There Was None*.

"It's a similar scenario, just getting together as friends, kind of praying over whether we should continue making music, and what should we sing about?" Dave says.

The theme is based on Emmanuel, "God with us."

"It's about God being with us in hard times and in good times," Dave says. "His presence is always with us." ♦

Helping people connect to God through music

You probably won't hear Loud Harp's music in the mix of the praise-and-worship part of your service this Sunday. It's not really meant for that.

"The songs that we write, we never think about other people singing them in churches," says Dave Wilton, one half of the group.

That's because of how most of Loud Harp's songs were conceived spontaneously by Dave and band-mate Asher Seevinck, also of Seafinch.

"We really want to make sure (the songs come) from our hearts to our Savior," Dave says. "most of the worship music used is written by a team of writers, like 10 writers, and that feels a little disingenuous to me."

That doesn't mean Loud Harp's songs aren't performed in churches occasionally.

"We get emails weekly about worship pastors playing, sharing our songs with their community," he says. "More than that, we hear about people who are in the midst of life, people who are struggling. There is a need for lamentation in worship. Eighty percent of our songs are lamentation, and most churches' services are just wonderful celebrations

and praise music, and I really love that. However, there is something beautiful about giving God our honest thoughts and prayers like the psalmists did.

"People who have never been able to connect with God through normal worship music, our songs are a little bit more geared toward how the psalmists wrote. People go through rough times. Using our songs is a way of worshipping God through the questioning, through the mourning, through the difficulty."

Such songs include "Hold Me Together" ("I cry out to the one/The one that holds me/Holds me together") and "Hide Me Away" ("Hide me away, Father/In You I have no fear/I'm safe in Your arms").

Dan Wilton describes his brother's music as "speaking to the Lord's beauty."

"There's a lot of melody and countermelody and rhythm that lifts the soul," he says. "I think Dave's heart was always to make music that would cause theological reflection. It doesn't have to be a tried-and-true praise-and-worship song to do that."

He called Dave's music "a big, sonic landscape filled with beautiful reverb and echoes and delay."

"I'm a fan." ♦



operate and function “as a minister of God for our good” (Romans 13:4a).

Nevertheless, we must not be naive to the fact that underneath all the pomp and circumstance of presidential politics is the universal truth that, like each of us, politicians are sinners by nature (Romans 3:23). That any man or woman should, by God’s sovereign will (Romans 13:1b), attain to the highest office in the land—or any office for that matter—won’t change that.

‘The Lord is my portion, says my soul.’ Therefore I have hope in Him. — Lamentations 7:24 (NASB)

My pointing out the fallen nature of politicians is not to suggest that Christians should hold such a thing against those who seek political office. Such logic would be both misguided and hypocritical, as no human being could then even run for office let alone be elected to one.

Which is why spiritual discernment is so critical.

Consider the counsel given to Moses by his father-in-law, Jethro, concerning the governance of the people of Israel during the Exodus from Egypt:

Now listen to me: I will give you counsel and God be with you. You be the people’s representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God, then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the

work they are to do. Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens.” — Exodus 18:19-21 (NASB)

When we consider that the very concept of government was established by God (Romans 13:1), then, to the Christian at least, voting is seen as not just a civic duty but a spiritual discipline.

Then there is David, whom God ordained to be king over the nation of Israel while he was but a shepherd boy, looking not at his external attributes as qualification for the office, but at something far more important:

When they entered, he [Samuel] looked at Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before Him.” But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” Then Jesse called Abinidab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “The Lord has not chosen this one either.” Next Jesse made Shammah

pass by. And he said, “The Lord has not chosen this one either. Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen these.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Are these all the children?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, and behold, he is tending the sheep.” Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and bring him here; for we will not sit down until he comes here.” So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the Lord said, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he.” — 1 Samuel 16:6-12 (NASB)

Whether we realize it or not, the reason so many people—Christians and non-Christians alike—are so concerned about this presidential election is because it is fundamentally a matter of biblical theology, not political ideology.

Regardless of one’s political persuasion or party affiliation, each of us has an innate awareness of our capacity as human beings to commit evil. It is this shared but unacknowledged awareness of our penchant to sin against one another that is causing such an unprecedented level of angst among voters across the nation. Our problem is we simply refuse to treat it as the spiritual issue it is.

It has been said that the elections of 2016 are the most crucial in our nation’s 240-year history.

I can’t say that I disagree.

Given what is at stake in this election, particularly as it relates to potential implications to the church and our ability as Christians to continue to freely practice our beliefs, as followers of Christ we must ask ourselves:

- Have I attempted to see these presidential candidates as God sees them; not merely looking at the external, but considering what kind of values and character these candidates have on the inside?
- What biblical evidence is there that either of these candidates is endeavoring to live a righteous life before the God Who created them in His image?
- Am I viewing this election as a spiritual matter with spiritual implications to our nation or do I see it merely as my civic duty to perform?
- To what degree, if any, does my professed Christian worldview shape my political ideology?
- Do I compartmentalize my Christianity so that it applies only to certain areas of my life and not others?
- Have I spent time alone, before the face of God, seeking His divine wisdom as to how I should cast my vote?

Righteousness exalts a nation. But sin is a disgrace to any people.” – Proverbs 14:34 (NASB)

Needless to say, there is no “perfect” political candidate.

There has never been nor will there ever be.

Whether president or dog catcher—all are sinners alike.

But, you see, perfection is not the standard.

God’s standard of perfection was met in His Son Jesus Christ. It is in Him alone that perfect righteousness can be found (2 Corinthians 5:21).

But though God does not require perfection of us, He does require holiness (1 Peter 1:15-16). And if God requires holiness in the lives of we who profess to believe in Him, how then can we discount or disregard it in the lives of those we choose to govern us (Proverbs 29:2; 2 Corinthians 6:14)?

Holiness is the habit of being of one mind with God, according as we find His mind described in Scripture. It is the habit of agreeing with God’s judgment, hating what He hates, loving what He loves, and measuring everything in this world by the standard of His Word. He who most entirely agrees with God, he is the most holy man.” – J.C. Ryle, *Holiness*

When we consider that the very concept of government was established by God (Romans 13:1), then, to the Christian at least, voting is seen as not just a civic duty but a spiritual discipline.

Yes, all politicians are sinners. That much is true.

And yet we can still pray that God will have mercy on our nation so that the right sinner is elected to office in November. ♦

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Having three surgeries in three months—my shoulder and both of Dave’s knees—we were tempted to worry about the finances. We had never sent in a need before.

We were so blessed when our needs were shared and every expense was paid. We’ve been able to concentrate on healing and “giving thanks in everything.”

We also appreciate how kind the Samaritan staff is. We are telling our friends about it all the time.

*David and Laura Folsom
Bozeman, Montana*

As I see others in my family struggling through an insurance claim, I once again thank God for Samaritan Ministries. I never worry about my need being met or spending hours on the phone trying to figure out what went wrong.

This is just the practical side of Samaritan. Then there are the spiritual blessings.

The kind notes are so uplifting! Knowing other Christians are praying for you lightens the burdens that come with sickness and pain. Thank You, Jesus, for touching lives through this ministry.

*Christine Thorson
Stevensville, Montana*

We recently submitted a need for our 9 year old son’s broken finger. It was such an awesome feeling when his face lit up after we gave him cards from complete strangers saying they were praying for him. He couldn’t understand why people he didn’t even know would do that for him. It was a great teaching moment about Jesus! We love being part of Samaritan.

*Matthew and Karen Fletcher
Charlottesville, Indiana*

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.

Building permit protested

A group of Islamic fundamentalists and others recently protested outside a Protestant church in the Indonesian province of South Sulawesi, International Christian Concern reports. The protesters were objecting to the renewal of the church's building permit, instead claiming that the church lacked the proper papers. The Rev. Daur Sanpe Rurun, however, says that the paperwork is in order. *Praise God for the faithfulness and steadfastness of the Bunturannu congregation. Pray for churches to continue springing up in Indonesia and for the Gospel to go forth there.*

Girl, 15, holds to her faith

A 15-year-old girl in Nepal is being told that her father's illness was caused by her conversion to Christianity, Voice of the Martyrs reports. “Leah” has held strong to her faith, walking four to five hours to attend church. *Please pray for her family, which is now attend-*

ing church with her, and that she will stay strong in her faith despite opposition.

Wife kicked out of home

A new believer in India was kicked out of her home by her husband after converting from Hinduism to Christianity, VOM reports. Manjula, 37, began attending church with her mother and two teenage children after learning about Jesus. She refused to remain silent about her faith, leading 10 other families to salvation, so her husband reportedly beat her and demanded that she and the children leave. Manjula and her children are now living with her mother. *Pray for the family, for spiritual and physical healing, and for the children to be able to continue in school.*

21 Iranian students arrested

Twenty-one students were arrested in Iran in May for working with house churches, VOM says. They are part of a ministry that trains and equips them in missions work and the persecuted church. *Please pray for them to be released, for their safety, and for their work.*

Parents ban girl from church

A young Christian girl in Mexico has been banned from attending church by her parents, who are leftist rebels, VOM reports. Carla has been attending church with her grandparents against her parents' wishes since they became believers. After discovering where she's been going, her parents forbade her from attending church. *Pray for Carla's faith, for the conversion of her parents, and that she may resume attending worship.*

Imam encourages killings

A top Saudi imam has called for blessings on Muslims who kill Shia Muslims, Jews, Christians and “hypocrites,” ICC reports. The call was revealed in a video of a daily prayer service at the largest mosque in the world. *Pray for the imam's conversion to Christ, for courage for Christians in the region who are at risk, and for anyone affected to turn to Jesus for protection.*

Chinese leader jailed

A Christian leader in China has been sentenced to seven years in jail for defending his faith, ICC says. Hu Shigen was in prison until 2008 serving a 20-year sentence, and is one of 20 lawyers and activists who have been detained since last year in China. *Pray for Hu's safety and spiritual comfort while in jail, that he will have open doors for the Gospel there, and that other Christians in China who are being intimidated or are suffering will be encouraged.*

Pakistani Christian killed

A Christian man in Pakistan was killed recently in an attack on a small Christian colony in Peshawar by four suicide bombers, VOM reports. Samuel Masih was shot in the leg as he left for work on September 2. He tried to warn the colony's guards of the attack, but was killed. Five others were wounded, and all four attackers were killed. *Pray for the survivors as well as the remaining Christians in the colony.* ♦

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).

subjective reality as objectively true?

2. If someone chooses to make their identity a matter of subjectivity, what grounds do they have for saying that the rest of us cannot also make it a matter of subjectivity and call them “him” or “her” depending on how we feel?

The answer to both these questions is that they have no grounds whatsoever. Having denied objective reality in favor of subjective feelings, they have no grounds to then demand that we all accept their subjective decision as being objective. Secondly, having insisted on their own subjective reality as being the ultimate authority, they have no grounds for denying anyone else the same right to exercise their subjective feelings on the subject.

So if someone believes Bob to be a box of breakfast cereal, for instance, I can say that they are wrong, and I can do so on the basis that the objective data shows clearly that Bob is not a box of breakfast cereal, but rather a human being. However, if Bob tries to deny someone the right to believe and openly state that he is a box of breakfast cereal, this flies in the face of the logic he used in the first place to proclaim against his own objective biological sex. Who knows? Perhaps denying people their subjective rights to call other people boxes of breakfast cereal might even be a new hate crime. Bransphobia?

And yet despite having no grounds to insist on these things, they are insisting on it in increasingly vitriolic tones, and with the threat of the law behind them. This is how the new totalitarianism works.

It tears up objective reality, then imposes a new subjective reality in its place. But it doesn't stop there. It then insists that society embraces that subjective belief as now being objectively true, and punishes those who refuse to play ball.

Another way of stating this is to say that the Cultural Marxists who have created these new realities see themselves as the final arbiters of what is real and what is true. Not only this, but they are prepared to censure, shout down, and even prosecute those who defy their new reality.

The bad news is that things may not get better anytime soon. Those who are busy creating these new realities have invested too much in them to give them up. They aren't suddenly going to say, “Hey, I guess it is really rather stupid to insist that there are no differences between men and women, or that two men can marry.” No, they will double down and triple down on it for the foreseeable future. And as they do, there will come more assaults on objective reality, more attempts to create alternate realities, and more efforts to get us all to put our stamp of approval on this folly. Those who dissent will be stigmatised, penalized, and coerced into silence. This is what the modern totalitarians do.

But the good news? It is not the Cultural Marxists, but the Triune God of Heaven and Earth Who is actually the final Arbiter of what is real and what is true, and He will not allow this situation to go on indefinitely. It's His world and His reality, and He will at some point overthrow those who attempt to overthrow His order. Time and time throughout

history, He has risen up to overthrow His enemies and deliver His people. And He will do so again. However, these deliverances ordinarily come when His people truly “cry out to the Lord.”

So let me finish up by asking a very searching question. I recently held a discussion group with some Christian friends, where I covered a little of the history of how we ended up with transgenderism, same-sex marriage, no-fault divorce, family breakdown, tolerance and diversity, sex education, egalitarianism, feminism, “homophobia,” and “hate” crimes. Having gone through it all, and having unanimously agreed that it was all quite mad and more than a little disquieting, I then said, “Raise your hand if you are praying fervently to the Triune God on a regular basis to come and save us and our culture from this mess.”

No hands.

How about you? ♦

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.

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You shall not hate
your brother in your
heart, but you shall
reason frankly with your
neighbor, lest you incur
sin because of him.

Leviticus 19:17

Keeping quiet may not be loving. It can be sinful. When we are silently hoping for bad things to happen to someone because of what they have done or what they are doing, we are hating them. We should speak to them to save them from harm.

In Ezekiel 3: 16-21, the Lord told the prophet that if he failed to deliver His warning to the people, the guilt for their disobedience would fall on him. Hebrews 3: 13 tells us to “exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” Ephesians 4:15 says to speak the truth in love.

James 5: 19-20 encourages us, “if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”

Do you need to “speak frankly” with someone?

Heavenly Father, please give each of us the love and courage to not sin by remaining silent.

For the Kingdom,



Ray King