

Christian HealthCare

NEWSLETTER

MEMBER LETTERS:

This ministry helps people follow God's calling

When my husband became self-employed, the scariest part in taking the step of faith was losing his employer-provided health care plan.

We recently had our first Need with Samaritan Ministries, and tears filled my eyes when the checks started to come in.

I once described myself as “a little hesitant” about Samaritan, but now I’m just “blessed.” We are so thankful that this awesome ministry helps people like us follow God’s calling.

The glory goes to Him.

“And my God will meet all your needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory forever and ever.”

Phillipians 4:19-20

Camrand & Angie
Indiana

Welfare state turns ‘charity’ into ‘entitlements’

by Walter E. Williams

Before the massive growth of our welfare state, private charity was the sole option for an individual or family facing insurmountable financial difficulties or other challenges. How do we know that? There is no history of Americans dying on the streets because they could not find food or basic medical assistance. Respecting the Biblical commandment to honor thy father and mother, children took care of their elderly or infirm parents. Family members and the local church also helped those who had fallen on hard times.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, charities started playing a major role. In 1887, religious leaders founded the Charity Organization Society, which became the first United Way organization. In 1904, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America started helping at-risk youths reach their full potential. In 1913, the American Cancer Society, dedicated to curing and eliminating cancer, was formed. With their millions of dollars, industrial giants such as Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller created our nation’s first philanthropic organizations.

Generosity has always been a part of the American genome. Alexis de Tocqueville, a French civil servant, made a nine-month visit to our country in 1831 and 1832, ostensibly to study our prisons. Instead, his visit resulted in his writing *Democracy in America*, one of the most influential books about our

nation. Tocqueville didn’t use the term “philanthropy,” but he wrote extensively about how Americans love to form all kinds of nongovernmental associations to help one another. These associations include professional, social, civic and other volunteer organizations seeking to serve the public good and improve the quality of human lives. The bottom line is that we Americans are the most generous people in the world, according to the new *Almanac of American Philanthropy*—something we should be proud of.

Before the welfare state, charity embodied both a sense of gratitude on the behalf of the recipient and magnanimity on the behalves of donors. There was a sense of civility by the recipients.

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Do you have the power of Christ?

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Sharing Summary from July

Shares: \$27,487,083
Needs: \$27,496,382

Unshared Needs in Negotiation: \$ —

New Needs: 4,188
Total Needs: 8,954

New Rewards: 348
Miscarriages: 33
Final Rewards: 10

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.

Member Households: 78,218
(as of 6/21/18)

Contact Us: 877-764-2426 Dash.SamaritanMinistries.org

Questions about?

Your medical need
Shares you are sending or receiving
Your membership

Email

needs@samaritanministries.org
membership@samaritanministries.org
membership@samaritanministries.org

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Health Resources

Have a Need? Use the Health Resources app on Dash.

- Compare quality and cost of health care services in your area using Healthcare Bluebook.
- Use Medibid to receive bids from doctors for tests or treatments you are seeking.
- Email a medical professional or call a nurse (free), or call a doctor who can write a prescription (\$25).
- Access discount tools for prescriptions and lab tests.

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.

A Practical Guide to Culture: Helping the Next Generation Navigate Today's World

by John Stonestreet and Brett Kunkle
reviewed by Brian Estell

What do you do when cultural hot buttons come up in conversation with your teenager? Do you dread having to navigate these topics: racism, the hookup culture, gender identity, money, addiction, pornography, movies, music, politics, religion? John Stonestreet and Brett Kunkle say we should actually view these conversations as *opportunities* to help our children develop a Biblical worldview.

A Practical Guide to Culture: Helping the Next Generation Navigate Today's World is essential reading for every parent. It explains Biblical principles parents will need to help their kids navigate life, and also equips parents with specifics to help them tackle the challenging topics.

Parenting can feel like trying to navigate a minefield. Technology has accelerated the rate of cultural change to the point that we can barely keep up. The challenges of social media and the internet bring a dimension to parenting unheard of a generation ago.

At times parents can be intimidated by teens' questions and arguments, but this book explains how we should guard against giving our kids the impression that sincere questioning is doubting, or that doubting is necessarily sinning. Many of the Psalms are full of honest questions and complaints toward God, and the Word of God is sufficient to help us answer any challenge.

What exactly does this often used and ambiguous word—"culture"—refer to? Stonestreet and Kunkle

begin the book with a helpful discussion of its meaning, and they use a great analogy: "Like the oceans, culture is all around us. Just as fish swim in the ocean, culture is the water in which we swim."

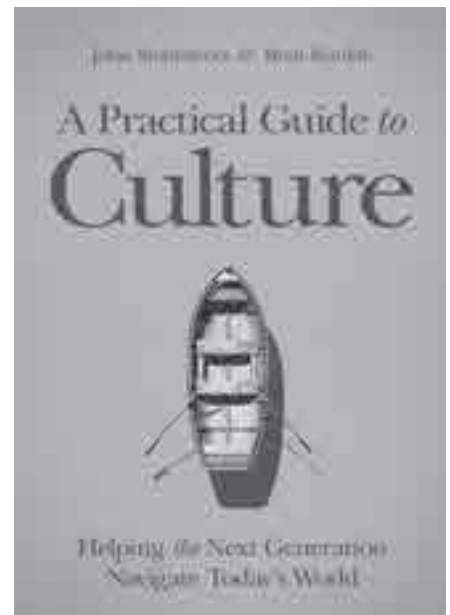
A Practical Guide is divided into four parts. Part one focuses on why culture matters. Culture includes the key ideas that inform and inspire us. These ideas spread through "champions"—the individuals who are

We can keep the cultural story straight because Christianity is the ultimate Story.

major influencers driving trends and causing change. Artists, storytellers, entrepreneurs, and educators play their part in spreading the ideas through institutions of society—such as education, business, and even the Church.

Stonestreet and Kunkle deal with two common ways we fail to apply our faith to culture. We either withdraw from it or capitulate to it.

It can be tempting to think we can ignore culture or escape from it, but we can no more escape than the fish in the ocean. Another error is to just throw up our hands in disgust and conclude that all culture is bad and worldly. These takes on culture fail to perceive the Biblical view. God created us to glorify Him, and



culture is a big part of how we do that. Plus, God sovereignly ordains the time and place that we happen to live, so by faith we must accept that and determine to positively impact those around us for Christ.

Of course it is also possible for Christians to naively be captured by culture. The stats about kids leaving the faith during the high school and college years really are appalling, and succumbing to negative cultural influences is a huge part of the problem. To consume whatever filth the culture produces and justify this behavior because there might be some way to claim that it has cultural value, is not navigating culture wisely. It really is worldliness and souls are at stake. The Lord Jesus calls Christians not to be "conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind."

The biggest problem with our present culture is its antagonism

Continued on page 11

Getting second opinions saves lives and saves money

by Jaclyn Lewis

When you're injured or sick, the first medical diagnosis your doctor gives may not be accurate.

"The main thing a second opinion can give you is hope," said Samaritan Ministries member Dr. Jane Orient, executive director of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons, in a MediBid webinar, "Second Opinions that Save Lives." You can watch the webinar recording featuring Dr. Orient and other panelists at bit.ly/opinionwebinar.

A Mayo Clinic study shows that 88 percent of initial hospital diagnoses are changed or refined due to diagnosis error. This change in diagnosis also changes the patient treatment plan.

"It's a healthy environment where different docs have different diagnoses for the same condition, if they will come together and talk," said another webinar panelist, Dr. Kenneth Mattox, chief of staff and surgeon-in-chief at Ben Taub Hospital in Houston.

Doctors consider many factors when determining a patient's diagnosis and treatment plan, including recovery time, implications of treatment, and cost. Getting a second opinion can ensure that you or your loved one gets the best diagnosis and treatment for their unique medical condition.

Dr. Mattox recalled a friend who contacted him for advice after his doctor had recommended heart transplant surgery. After reviewing his friend's charts, Dr. Mattox explained to his friend that, if he were his patient, he would recommend discontinuing certain medi-

cations to see if this resolved the heart problem. Four years later, Dr. Mattox's friend never had heart surgery, is no longer on any medication, and feels better than when he first went to his doctor.

It's crucial that hospital patients with common diagnoses, such as heart failure or pneumonia, get second opinions as well, since this often determines important end-of-life care. You may find yourself in a

88 percent of initial hospital diagnoses are changed or refined.

situation where you don't feel your hospital physicians are "working in your best interest, do not know you from your past," or "are not communicating with you," Dr. Orient said.

"It could be that you're elderly, but you were completely with-it, you were involved in life, you were taking care of yourself, until you became ill," Dr. Orient said. "But you're being taken care of by a hospitalist who doesn't know you from before, who's saying, 'You really look like death warmed over. You're not going to make it. We're going to rush you into the hospice program.'"

Dr. Orient said this practice "may be to save the hospital money, or to save your managed care company or your ACO (Accountable Care Organization) money, when in fact someone who had some acquaintance with you before may

say, 'Well, let's give this patient a chance.'"

She said that many of her colleagues report "that they've had patients they felt would've survived with normal ... medical care."

Dr. Orient said that "having somebody who knows the patient and is willing to intervene and to maybe fight with the hospital doctor if necessary, just to have a little patience, just to do a few regular things, can really make a difference between an early death and having years of participating in the family and having a life that is valuable to the patient, even if it's not of value to the government or the managed care company."

"But now they're being rushed off to hospice where they're being denied fluid management, or routine cardiac drugs," Dr. Orient said. With "a little bit of patience and a little bit of hope," many of these people could continue to enjoy their lives and families.

"The main thing a second opinion can give you is hope," says Dr. Orient.

"For some reason doctors these days are actually considering hope to be a bad thing to offer people because it might lead them to do things that are not going to work," Dr. Orient said. "Of course, anything we do in medicine might not work.

"But many of us have had the experience of standing by a patient's bedside at 2 o'clock in the morning. She looks like she's going to die, lungs are filled with fluid, call the son to let him know that things are not looking good, maybe get a 'Do Not Resuscitate' order. But then I

decide, ‘Well, as long as I’m here I’m going to give her a tad of morphine, and a little touch of a diuretic (which causes urination).’ And within two minutes the patient is pinked up, is breathing, is talking to me. She lived a fairly comfortable life for two or three years (more).”

Dr. Orient said it’s important to develop a good relationship with your doctor while you’re healthy. When your doctor knows you well, she can best advocate for you in the event you are injured or sick. ♦

Samaritan members can get a second opinion via Medibid from the Health Resources Center by logging into your Dashboard account.



Dr. Jane Orient has served as executive director of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons since 1989, and has been in solo private practice since 1981. She is president of Doctors for Disaster Preparedness and has been chairman of the Public Health Committee of the Pima County (Arizona) Medical Society since 1988. She has written six books and over 200 papers and op-ed pieces in scientific and popular literature, including YOUR Doctor Is Not In: Healthy Skepticism about National Healthcare. You can read her Member Spotlight at SamaritanMinistries.org/drorient.

Dr. Kenneth Mattox is distinguished service professor at Baylor College of Medicine. Since 1973, he has served as chief of staff and chief of surgery at Ben Taub Hospital. He has written 600 articles, over 1,000 abstracts, and has written and co-written internationally bestselling medical textbooks, including Top Knife: Art and Craft in Trauma Surgery, a practical guide to trauma care translated into 10 foreign languages and praised by physicians in war zones as their “bible” in the operating room.

Second opinions made the difference

I developed a lump on my throat so my doctor ordered an MRI. It confirmed swollen lymph nodes but couldn’t rule out cancer activity. I also had a chest X-ray because of my cough, but there was still no diagnosis and my doctor wanted to send me to an ear, nose, and throat specialist. I was feeling bounced around.

I decided instead to go to Dr. Paddock, a naturopathic doctor. I am grateful to the Lord for this kind, patient, and extremely competent doctor, who accurately discovered the cause, restored hope, and carefully walked me through the healing process.

I had been on the medical merry-go-round for many months. After listening to me, asking many questions, and thoroughly reviewing my history, Dr. Paddock shared his predicted diagnosis: a serious viral infection known as Epstein-Barr. Some specialized blood tests confirmed his prediction.

Since it can’t be treated with antibiotics, Dr. Paddock focused on nutritional treatments to strengthen my immune system. He also noticed that my thyroid levels were very low and included some supplements to help it self-correct. He also helped with some gut health problems I had developed.

I’m so thankful for Dr. Paddock and I pray that he gets saved. He is in the Baltimore area, but he does take some patients through his website, charmcitynaturalhealth.com.

*Antonia
Maryland*

I struggled with hormone problems that resulted in spotting, frequent periods, and long periods. I was prescribed birth control pills and also tried hormone replacement, but the condition did not resolve and the symptoms actually became worse.

I spent a lot of time researching, as well as time in prayer asking the Lord to make the solution known to me. I found out that I also had gut problems, so I was not absorbing nutrients I needed. A possible magnesium deficiency might be a big part of the problem.

After increasing my intake of magnesium with supplements and foods, a four day detox to flush excess estrogen and toxins from my body, and increasing my intake of Omega-3 fatty acids and healthy fats which are the building blocks for healthy hormones, I had a normal cycle with no issues. Praise the Lord!

I am praying that my health continues and I now monitor my diet carefully to help my body function as it should. This experience helped to inspire me to create the website fulfilledwellness.com where I share practical ways to improve wellness.

I am thankful to Samaritan and the members for all the help along the way.

*Crystal
Pennsylvania*

The immorality of government-mandated health care

by Paul A. Cleveland, Ph.D.,

from *The Freeman*, November 1994

Editor's Note: This classic article from 1994 has become timely again. Forbes magazine just published a "primer on Medicare for all," noting that "focus groups found the 'Medicare for All' label sells better than 'Single Payer' and that we should expect to see another push for a universal federal health care system during the fall campaign season. (bit.ly/fomedall)

As America's politicians debate the issue of health-care reform, one element seems strangely missing from their deliberations: the question of the morality of government-mandated health insurance. Is it moral for government to institute such insurance or to force employers to provide it? The current debate assumes that it is. Discussion has centered primarily on how far coverage can be extended, with no effort to defend the morality of mandated coverage.

To examine the morality of a proposed health reform we must ask the following questions: What is the role of government and what are its moral bounds? Also, how do these bounds apply to the current healthcare reform debate? If, in this examination, it is discovered that government has no proper authority to insure the availability of goods and services generally, then all healthcare reform proposals seeking to establish the provision of health insurance should be rejected.

The uncritical acceptance of the proposition that a major purpose of

government is to insure the provision of some goods or services is related to another popularly held proposition. That notion, either conscious or unconscious, is that government can miraculously generate resources to provide for people's needs. But, how is that pos-

To examine the morality of a proposed health reform we must ask the following questions: What is the role of government and what are its moral bounds?

sible? Can government actually create material prosperity where none existed beforehand? Can it cause by fiat an increase in the number and kinds of products produced without harm? It should be self-evident that the answer to these questions is no. Government cannot create by mandate. It relies on its power of taxation and coercion to provide material benefits to selected citizens. In order for it to provide some benefit for an individual it must impose a cost of equal or greater

value either on that individual or on someone else. Nevertheless, the mythical concept that government can provide cost-free benefits continues largely on the basis of wishful thinking and covetousness.

No consumption without production

In reality there is no effortless production of anything. We can only consume that which is produced by the sweat of someone's brow. Furthermore, our government was not primarily instituted for the purpose of production. Its primary role with respect to the economy is to punish people who use force and deceit for their own gain. History is testimony to the extent to which some individuals will inflict pain and hardship on others in order to obtain what they desire. Thus government's primary role as an institution is to thwart this behavior by punishing the perpetrators of injustice. To that end, government uses force. Citizens are required to pay taxes to support the police function of government since society benefits from the ensuing order and peace which allow for civil relations among people.

Regrettably, this same force can be put to illegitimate ends. This occurs when the government begins to play favorites among the citizens by extending benefits to some while confiscating property or curbing the rights of others. The most obvious contemporary cases

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Wait Till It's Free

by Colin Gunn

reviewed by Jed Stuber

How did our health care system get to be such a mess, and what can ordinary people do to navigate it? How does government regulation inevitably make health care expensive, inefficient, and ineffective? What are some of the little known bright spots in health care, offering solutions that you can take advantage of? These are just a few of the questions that veteran filmmaker and Samaritan member Colin Gunn addresses in *Wait Till It's Free*.

Samaritan President Ted Pittenger appears in the film to share the ministry's story. Even though it was made a few years ago, *Wait Till It's Free* remains remarkably relevant. If you are one of tens of thousands of members who have joined since it came out, do yourself a favor and watch it this weekend. You can stream the film for just \$4.95 at ColinGunn.com

First hand accounts from regular Americans—patients, health care workers, businessmen—along with insight from health care experts—authors, doctors, politicians—are woven together to create a compelling story about health care that we can all learn from. The title *Wait Till It's Free* harkens back to the early 1990s push to pass a national health reform law. To point out how ridiculous it was to claim that the government could provide everyone free health care, columnist P.J. O'Rourke wrote, "If you think health care is expensive now, wait until you see what it costs when it's free."

As Colin captures a wide variety

of perspectives on health care, several themes emerge. Wherever regulation is instituted or increased, perverse incentives are created and things worsen. Third parties interfere and layers of bureaucracy multiply. Innovation stalls, quality declines, prices increase, corruption and cartels develop. Inversely, when freedom and competition are allowed, health care improves. Innovation is unleashed, quality affordable choices abound, and charity thrives.

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

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

After presenting all these very serious concerns, *Wait Till It's Free* goes on to explore some positive trends in health care. Direct primary care clinics and price-transparent surgery cen-



ColinGunn.com

ters have cut out third parties. Not only do they keep third parties from interfering in the doctor-patient relationship, but they also provide high quality services at affordable prices. As tax-subsidized programs designed for the poor continue to deteriorate, charitable clinics are leading by providing affordable and free care. And yes, as a Samaritan member himself, Colin presents Samaritan Ministries as an innovative solution to the health care challenges we face.

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

In addition to the streaming option, DVDs and a companion book, co-authored with Samaritan member Phil Olson, are also available at ColinGunn.com. ♦

Members running for elected office this fall

by Michael Miller

We are encouraged whenever Christians take part in the political process, bringing Biblical values to a divisive but essential part of American life. This fall, four Samaritan members will be on ballots in four different states. Below are brief bios of each. Please pray for God's will to be done in the fall elections on all levels—federal, state, and local.



Randy Hultgren, 52, of Plano, Illinois, is running for his fifth term in the U.S. House of Representatives, representing the state's 14th District.

Randy has also been elected to the DuPage County Board, Illinois House, and Illinois Senate. A graduate of Bethel College and the Chicago-Kent College of Law, he served as a vice president for a securities company.

He serves on two committees in the House—Financial Services, and Science, Space & Technology—and four subcommittees.

Randy and his wife, Christy, have four children.



Larry Rhoden, 59, a member of the South Dakota state Senate, has been picked by Kristi Noem to be her running mate in the race for governor in that state. Larry, a resident of Union Center, South Dakota, is serving his first term in the House. A rancher by trade, Larry and his wife, Sandy, have four children. Larry served in the South Dakota House from 2001-2008 before being elected to the Senate in 2010. He currently serves on the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee and the State Affairs Committee.

Larry ran for U.S. Senate in 2014 but lost. Noem picked him as her candidate for lieutenant governor on June 20.



Gregg Schmedes, 36, of Tijeras, New Mexico, is running for election to the New Mexico House of Representatives in the 22nd District.

He is currently the New Mexico director for the American Academy of Medical Ethics and assistant professor of surgery at the University of New Mexico. He also taught surgeons in Cameroon for two years for Samaritan's Purse.

A Texas native, Gregg met his wife, Kelly, while attending the University of Texas. They have five children.

I strongly believe that Samaritan and health care sharing ministries point us in the direction that we as a nation need to go in solving our health care policy problems.

Some people have asked me, “How can you trust people you don’t know rather than a triple A rated insurance company?”

I reply that it is far easier to trust the faithfulness of 70,000 Christian families, people who pray for me and WANT to serve their brothers and sisters in Christ, than to trust an enormous corporation that tries to find ways to not pay or a corrupt government that wastes billions of health care dollars. Thank God for Samaritan Ministries!

*Bob
Texas*

We have been so blessed since the Lord led us to Samaritan. After we were informed our insurance plan could no longer be offered because of Obamacare, we searched the qualified plans, but they were not affordable at \$1100-1500 a month and they had mandated coverage we did not want.

Samaritan offered an affordable option for us and now after years of sending checks and notes of encouragement to others who needed help, we submitted our first Need. It was humbling to receive help from others, and a step of faith for us. When the checks and notes arrived it was such a blessing. We were so thankful to be able to choose our doctor and decide for ourselves what really needed to be done instead of being subjected to government-controlled restrictions.

*Larry & Deb
Illinois*



Ted Budd, 46, of Advance, North Carolina, is running for re-election to the U.S. House of Representatives. He was first elected to represent North Carolina’s 13th District in Congress in 2016.

He and his wife, Amy Kate, have three children, who are home schooled. They own a shooting-sports retail store in Rural Hall, North Carolina. He has also worked in his family’s facility services business, The Budd Group.

His website’s bio says that “Ted is committed to strengthening the family and recognizes the cultural battle we face to protect it. He is a member of the Home School Legal Defense Association and has served as a board member of North Carolinians for Home Education. He met his wife Amy Kate in the former Soviet Union on a mission trip in 1991, the week before the collapse of communism. They still enjoy mission trips and serve in their church, Harvest Bible Chapel.”

He is a graduate of Appalachian State University and Wake Forest University.

Ted serves on the House Financial Services Committee and three subcommittees.

We feel so blessed by Samaritan Ministries. The letters of encouragement gave a personal touch that really meant a lot to us in a difficult time of healing after surgery. That there are other Christians willing to give beyond their Share to help us in our pre-existing condition was truly encouraging and relieving.

Even though the bills were not eligible to be shared people gave and gave—even beyond the suggested amount—and prayed for us, and about 3/4 of our financial expenses were met.

The prayers are being answered and my body is healing, and I've been discovering more ways to help treat cancer naturally through proper nutrition and wisdom.

We also feel blessed when we give our Share each month, knowing that people are receiving help directly from us to their mailbox. I really appreciate this ministry. It allows believers in Jesus to follow Jesus's command to love one another and to participate in the Kingdom of God.

*David & Sarah
Texas*

This was our first time submitting a Need. We were a bit unsure how it would go, but it was amazing. I am so glad we dumped insurance and became part of God's service through Samaritan.

My family loves sending our Share and giving to the Special Prayer Need each month. I tell my coworkers and friends that this is such a blessing compared to paying a HUGE insurance premium.

*Ryan & Ashley
Florida*

Welfare state turns 'charity' into 'entitlements'
Continued from page 1

They did not feel that they were owed, were entitled to, or had a right to the largesse of the donor. Recipients probably felt that if they weren't civil and didn't express their gratitude, more assistance wouldn't be forthcoming. In other words, they were reluctant to bite the hand that helped them. With churches and other private agencies helping, people were much likelier to help themselves and less likely to engage in self-destructive behavior. Part of the message of charitable groups was: "We'll help you if you help yourself."

Enter the federal government. Civility and gratitude toward one's benefactors are no longer required in the welfare state. In fact, one can be arrogant and hostile toward the "donors" (taxpayers), as well as the civil servants who dish out the benefits. The handouts that recipients get are no longer called charity; they're called entitlements—as if what is received were earned.

There is virtually no material poverty in the U.S. Eighty percent of households the Census Bureau labels as poor have air conditioning; nearly three-quarters have a car or truck,

and 31 percent have two or more. Two-thirds have cable or satellite TV. Half have at least one computer. Forty-two percent own their homes (tinyurl.com/448flj8). What we have in our nation is not material

poverty but dependency and poverty of the spirit, with people making unwise choices and leading pathological lives, aided and abetted by the welfare state. Part of this pathological lifestyle is reflected in family structure. According to the 1938 Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences, that year 11 percent of black children and 3 percent of

white children were born to unwed mothers. Today it's respectively 75 percent and 30 percent.

There are very little guts in the political arena to address the downside of the welfare state. To do so risks a politician's being labeled as racist, sexist, uncaring, and insensitive. That means today's dependency is likely to become permanent. ♦

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Walter E. Williams is the John M. Olin Distinguished Professor of Economics at George Mason University. He is the author of many books including More Liberty Means Less Government: Our Founders Knew This Well.

80 percent of households the Census Bureau labels as poor have air conditioning... three-quarters have a car... two thirds have cable...

What we have in our nation is not material poverty but dependency and poverty of the spirit.

toward Christianity and Biblical truth, and this is the primary area where parents must be vigilant. Many Christians in the past were privileged to live in a Christian culture, often referred to as Western Civilization, but the values of that culture have been under attack over the past few centuries and many of the institutions have crumbled.

Our children can be influenced both by Modernism, which openly attacks God and the Bible, and Post-Modernism, which deceptively promotes the idea that all religions are equally legitimate paths to God. We have to help our children see that everyone has a worldview, and each worldview makes competing claims about the nature of reality, God, man, salvation, and what lies beyond this life. We need to proactively teach our children the truth of Christianity, while also helping them see through false religious views, and that means having frank conversations about evolution or atheism when they come up.

Thankfully parents do not have to keep up with every last detail of our ever-changing culture, which isn't possible. But we can keep the cultural story straight because Christianity is the ultimate Story. We can always point our children back to the big ideas of the Biblical narrative: Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration. No matter what cultural moment, medium, or influencer your child is talking about, you can always bring them back to the ultimate Story.

Part two of *A Practical Guide* emphasizes the powerful and subtle undercurrents of contemporary culture that often go unnoticed: The information age, the concept of "identity," the trend toward individu-

alism and isolation, and how perpetual adolescence has replaced maturity.

In this section Stonestreet and Kunkle offer five ways to shape a worldview.

1. Talk about worldview early and often.
2. Explain non-Christian worldviews.
3. Strongly encourage your kids to read good books.
4. Discuss ideas whenever possible.
5. Ask good questions such as, "What do you mean by that?" or "How do you know that is true?"

Part three of *A Practical Guide* tackles eight contemporary cultural challenges that are pounding away at our young people, such as racial tension, entertainment, and gender identity.

In the chapter on gender identity, the authors demonstrate how using questions can identify the illogical nonsense of current thinking:

If we self-identify as a sixty-five year old man, should the federal government start sending us Social Security checks? If we self-identify as six-year-old girls, should we be able to enroll in a first-grade class at the local public elementary school? If we self-identify as a particular minority, should we be able to receive college scholarships earmarked for that minority group? (page 208)

Part four of the book directs us back to Biblical essentials with topics like "How to Read the Bible," and what is "The Right Kind of Pluralism." Here are some of the practical tips from part four:

- The Bible, like the uniqueness of Christ, sets Christianity apart from all other worldviews.

- Emphasize truth first and then experience.
- Our goal in conversations with non-Christians is not to win an argument but to win the person.

A Practical Guide to Culture comes highly recommended by other Christian leaders.

Dr. Kathy Koch, founder and president of Celebrate Kids (celebratekids.com), and also a Samaritan member, wrote this endorsement of the book:

Using illustrations, data, and ideas, John and Brett masterfully explain why we're facing the contemporary cultural challenges we are. They uncover what God wants us to understand about them and what we can do. Their explanation of the Bible and the way they consistently frame issues with the Bible story is a refreshing perspective I haven't seen or heard. It's compelling and extremely valuable. You and your children can move from anger to love, despair to hope, apathy to involvement, fear to confidence, ignorance to wisdom, and isolation to collaboration. You'll be empowered and full of hope.

Here is what Dr. Jeff Myers, president of Summit Ministries, had to say:

"*A Practical Guide to Culture* is a profound, witty, and forthright manual written by two concerned dads who also happen to be two of the most effective worldview and apologetics experts of our day. Based on their deep experience working with tens of thousands of teenagers, John and Brett show how to stop giving in to a degrading culture that makes kids unhealthy and sad and how to start raising kids who love Jesus and live without fear and regret." ♦

revolve around the many welfare programs established by the government. Benefits are extended to some by taxing away income from others. The costs of such benefits always exceed the costs of purchasing the benefits directly because of the bureaucratic overhead needed to administer the programs. Current healthcare reform plans follow the same approach. Therefore, the question of the morality of any government provision of health care, or of mandated health insurance, can only be resolved by considering whether or not government redistribution of wealth is justified.

Do the ends justify the means?

It is tempting to say that the ends aimed for are good and argue, therefore, that such government action is good. After all, what decent person would not desire to see some basic provision of food, clothing, or needed medical care provided for all those who could not pay? But to conclude that government intervention is good on this basis is to argue that the ends justify the means. The ends, in and of themselves, are not a sufficient reason for concluding that government provision of goods and services is just.

I recently had a conversation with a fellow professor about the health care situation. My colleague expressed the common view. She argued that adequate health care is a right, “because we are human.” But such a statement begs the question: How does being human, in and of itself, generate any rights? It is clear that being human alone cannot justify any rights for humans. David Hume once noted

that “the rules of morality are not the conclusions of our reason.” Therefore, if we carry Hume’s statement to its logical conclusion, we must conclude that if any human rights exist, they exist only as they have been endowed. Thus rights must be defined apart from ourselves. Ultimately they must be defined by the One Who has the

The Bible prohibits the use of force to obtain what we wish to consume for ourselves. But this is exactly what transpires when government mandates a plan to provide health care services to everyone!

power of being in and of Himself, since He alone is in a position to establish such license. We are then dependent upon His proclamation of right and wrong to discern the rights of the individual. Apart from such an endowment, there are no rights! This view was expressed in the Declaration of Independence as well as many other writings and documents of the time.

Rights of Individuals

What are an individual’s rights? As expressed in the Declaration, the individual is endowed with the right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. These rights allow each individual to use his talents and his property freely to the ends he personally has in mind so long as he does not violate the rights of others. In this context, people can voluntarily interact and trade with others on mutually agreeable terms to further their own interests.

The Judeo-Christian heritage substantially affirms this understanding of individual rights. The Bible requires its reader to respect the property rights of others. “Thou shall not steal,”¹ and, “Cursed is the man who moves his neighbor’s boundary stone,”² are its admonishments. In other places the Scriptures encourage hard work and honest dealings with others. Taken as a whole, the Bible prohibits the use of force to obtain what we wish to consume for ourselves. But this is exactly what transpires when government mandates a plan to provide health care services to everyone! As already shown, the government by definition employs force. It is a coercive institution. Thus when government begins the process of providing, or mandating the provision of goods and services in society, it ceases to perform its primary function of thwarting and punishing wrongdoers and actually begins to participate in the very plunder that it was supposed to stop. By using force to take from one person in order to give to another, it is involved in stealing.

Why has government more and

more compromised its position by engaging in legal plunder when it is clear that such action is wrong? There are two reasons.³ The first is selfishness. People would rather have someone else pay for their consumption than work hard and purchase things for themselves. This is as true for health care as it is for any other consumable. This was demonstrated during the 1992 presidential campaign when a man phoned a radio talk show. Bill Clinton was well ahead of George Bush in the polls and he had promised to bring about government-mandated universal health insurance. To this situation the man proclaimed, "I can't wait 'til Bill Clinton is elected president and gets his health care reform through

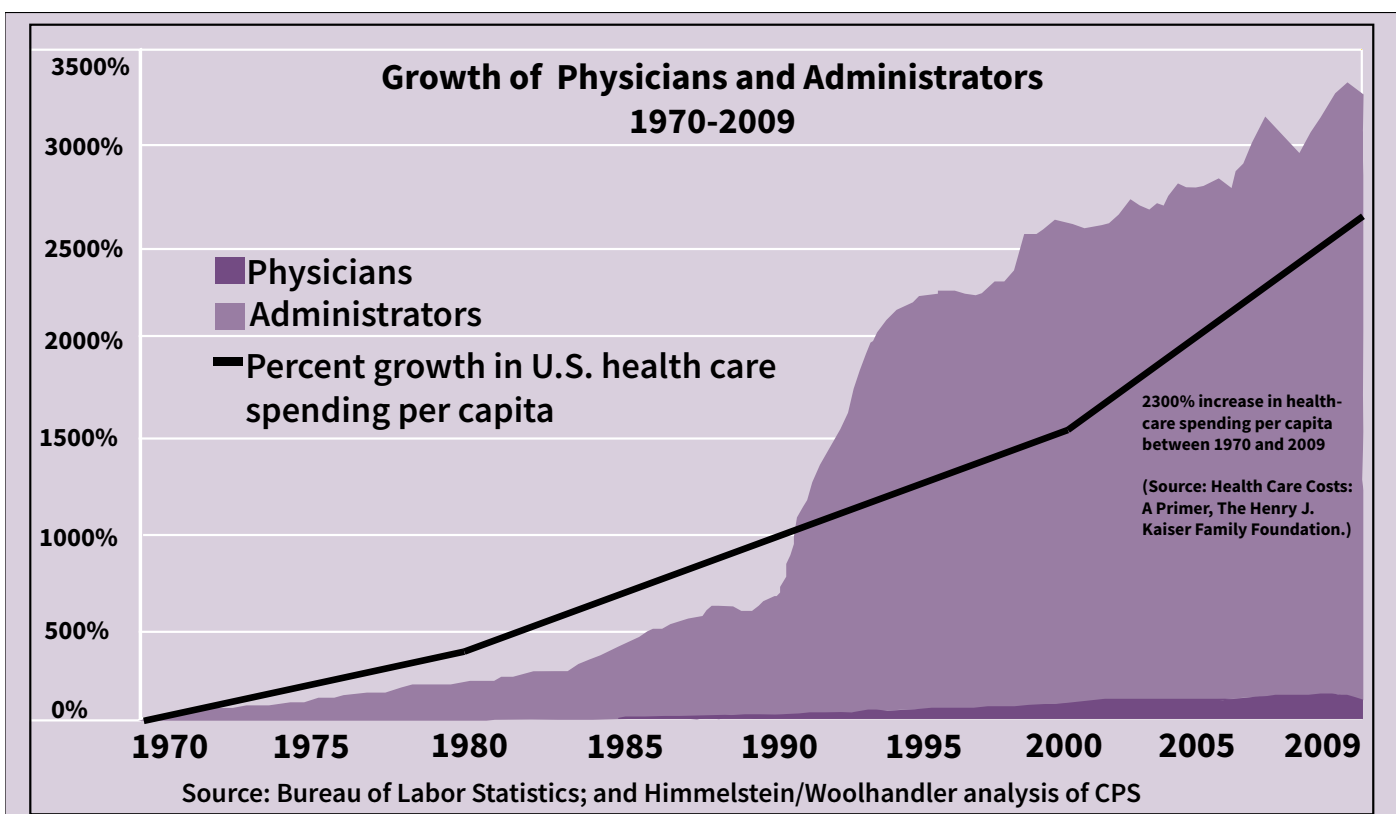
Congress. Then I won't have to pray to God that my children don't get sick."

The caller had no intention of revealing his true character that day; but he did. In his proclamation we find a deeper problem. It is not that he lacks health insurance or that he cannot afford medical care. The real problem is that he does not want to pay for it himself. Rather, he wants someone else to pay, not as a matter of mercy shown to him, but as a matter of coercive force. Selfishness which leads to systematic thievery will destroy a nation. A nation can survive and prosper when there are a few thieves, but as more people leave productive endeavors to participate in government largess, production wanes and economic

hardships increase. This is the inevitable outcome of all government schemes aimed at providing some benefit for some citizens at the expense of others.

The second is perhaps the most pervasive reason for the government's drift toward promoting welfare programs in general, and for its current consideration of mandating the provision of universal health insurance. Americans have traditionally been compassionate. Generosity for those in need has been a hallmark feature of the American experience. Private charities, churches, nonprofit organizations, and the volunteerism associated with them have been a salient feature of our culture. Stated simply, the American people have a passion for helping

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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, we will provide updates and offer prayer points gleaned from a variety of sources. Please use them in your personal or group prayer time.

Leader lashes out at God

The Philippines president recently launched a public tirade against God, International Christian Concern reports. Rodrigo Duterte questioned the logic of the creation story and called God “stupid” at a technology summit on June 22. Duterte has been battling church leaders who have criticized his administration’s policies. *Pray for the conversion of President Duterte and protection of Christian leaders in the Philippines.*

Eritrean pastor released

Pastor Oqbamichel Haiminot has been released from prison in Eritrea after 11 years, Mission Network News reports. He may have been freed due to his need for medical care. But thousands of other believers have also been jailed simply for their faith. *Praise God for Pastor Oqbamichel’s release. Pray for the other Christians still in Eritrean jail, and for Christians in Eritrea who are having to worship and fellowship in secret.*

Kidnappings on the rise

Kidnappings of Christian girls in rural areas of Egypt continue to rise,

MNN reports. Many are forced to convert and are sold as a way to humiliate the Christian community. *Pray for the Egyptian Christian community to be viewed with more respect at local levels, and for the kidnappings to stop. Pray also for the well-being and faith of the girls already kidnapped.*

4 Iranians headed to prison

Four Iranian Christians whose 10-year prison sentences were upheld by an appeals court in Iran in June were expected to begin those terms in early July, World Watch Monitor says. Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani and fellow Church of Iran members Yasser Mossayebzadeh, Saheb Fadaie, and Mohammad Reza Omid were convicted of “promoting Zionist Christianity” and operating house churches. Nadarkhani and Omid also were sentenced to two years’ internal exile. *Pray for safety and favor for the four men as they enter prison; for their family members, friends, and fellow church members; and for the men’s early release.*

Christian pastor kidnapped

A Christian pastor and three members of his family were kidnapped in the west African nation of Burkina Faso, the second Christian leader kidnapped in two weeks there, WWM says. Pierre Boena, an Assembly of God pastor, was kidnapped on June 3 along with his son, daughter-in-law and granddaughter. Islamist militants are known to be active in the region. A catechist about 70 miles away was abducted along with his wife on May 20. *Pray for Boena and the other kidnap victim to be released soon without harm. Pray also for*

protection for all residents in the nation from the Islamists.

Zanzibar church still closed

The Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa Church in Zanzibar remained closed in late June following complaints of excessive noise, ICC reports. The pastor was arrested while delivering a message on May 6. *Pray that the church will be allowed to reopen and that the intensified persecution of Christians in Zanzibar will end.*

Students ordered deported

The “anti-missionary” law adopted by Russia in 2016 led to fines and deportation orders for two African students who appeared in videos of church worship services recently, ICC reports. The video apparently violated the law, which technically was adopted to fight terrorism but has been used against Christians. *Pray that Christians in the Nizhny Novgorod area will not be harassed by authorities implementing the law, and that believers also will continue to be bold in expressing their faith.*

Uzbek Baptists arrested

Four members of a Baptist congregation in Uzbekistan were punished recently for meeting for worship without state permission, ICC reports. One was jailed for objecting to the arrests and the others were fined. *Pray that Christians in Uzbekistan will find ways to worship without harassment and will hold strong to their faith. ♦*

For more on the persecuted church, contact International Christian Concern (persecution.org, 800-422-5441) or World Watch Monitor (worldwatchmonitor.org)

out those in need. This spirit is the reason why most of our hospitals developed as nonprofit institutions. Yet it is this very passion which threatens to undermine the fabric of our society when charity is pursued by way of governmental mandate.

It is not hard to see how this situation can arise. At any given point in time, the available resources to meet our ends are always limited. That is, we can always imagine a better circumstance than the

one we are presently in. If this is true for individuals, how much more true is it for voluntary groups seeking to do good? It is, therefore, easy to see the temptation facing people who desire to show mercy and compassion toward others: to use voluntary contributions to lobby for government action rather than devoting them directly to the cause in mind. If the efforts are successful, the

organization can tap into the much larger pool of resources available in the public treasury to promote their cause. If passion for the cause blurs their vision, then they may well use government force and, as a result, inflict harm upon the neighbors they aim to help. Such is the state of American “do-goodism” in the 20th century—coercive charity.

This movement has been greatly aided by the religious community.

One cannot read the Bible for long without realizing that it calls its followers to show mercy and compassion toward others. As a result, well-meaning people have often pushed for government intervention because they see the public treasury as the only institution which has a pool of funds large enough to meet the need. However, the Bible never suggests that the govern-

Selfishness which leads to systematic thievery will destroy a nation.

ment is the means through which mercy is to be shown. Actually, the evidence indicates that such action is more than inappropriate. When Satan offered to place Jesus in political control of the kingdoms of

A nation can survive when there are a few thieves, but as more people leave productive endeavors to participate in government largess, production wanes and economic hardships increase.

the earth, Jesus rejected the offer, arguing that it was sin to have other gods above God.⁴ Jesus understood that mercy and compassion are voluntary responses motivated by love and that no government is capable of forcing people to love their neighbors. He understood that any such attempts were nothing more than a false image intended to mimic the real thing.

National health care insurance, or

its mandated provision, is unjust. It is nothing more than a forced charity, which is no charity at all. In this vein we might flatter ourselves into believing that we are doing good works, but it simply is not true. True mercy is extended as a matter of voluntary choice. It is not forced. Government mandates which require some to provide for others is false philanthropy. It is fundamentally selfishness unleashed and it will thwart future prosperity. If health insurance is extended, the quality of medical care will decline. The end result will be exactly the opposite of what such schemes purport to offer. Instead of provision and prosperity, pain and hardship will follow. ♦

Paul Cleveland is professor of economics at Birmingham-Southern College and adjunct faculty at the Ludwig von Mises Institute. His books include Unmasking the Sacred Lies and Understanding the Modern Culture Wars. He also writes on the relationship between Christian faith and economics.

1. Exodus 20:15.
2. Deuteronomy 27:17.
3. Frederic Bastiat refers to these two reasons for government involvement beyond its real purpose in his book *The Law* (Irvington-on-Hudson, N.Y.: The Foundation for Economic Education, 1950).
4. See Luke 4:1-13.

Therefore I will boast
all the more gladly of
my weaknesses, so that
the power of Christ may
rest upon me.

2 Corinthians 12:9b

It is natural to want to be spiritually strong, but trying to produce that strength through our own goodness or effort is futile. No matter how strong we are in ourselves, our greatest strength is puny weakness compared to the strength of Christ. Placing confidence in our own strength will actually keep us from having the power of Christ.

The passage above, and the verses surrounding it, tell us we can be content with the weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities we

face. Paul said he would boast in his weaknesses. His power is made perfect in our weakness. When we are weak, then we are strong.

It is only when we understand and acknowledge our weaknesses that we recognize our need for Christ's strength and rely on Him. And it is only when we rely on His power, and not our own, that we have real power—His power—resting on us.

For the Kingdom,



Ray King