

Christian HealthCare

NEWSLETTER

MEMBER LETTER:

We're glad we don't have to support abortion

We've been members of Samaritan since 1999, and have been so blessed by the notes we received with each Share when we had a Need.

We also appreciate the newsletter articles. Many have pertinent information that helped us with our medical issues and discussions we were having with our doctors.

We also feel very blessed to participate in a ministry where we help fellow believers with their Needs each month. By going with the Scriptural guidelines to bear one another's burdens, we are so glad that we do not have to be involved with insurance companies that support the abortion industry.

*Ron & Carolyn
Idaho*

The State of the Ministry

by Ted A. Pittenger, Founder and International President

As Samaritan Ministries enters its 25th year I am amazed at how God has guided, protected, and blessed us. We've come a long way from humble beginnings when a small group of friends gathered around my dining table to discuss how the Body of Christ could minister to one another through health care needs. We recently passed the 80,000 member household mark, and we are sharing more than \$28 million dollars in Needs each month!

God has faithfully seen us through many challenges along the way, and we must continue to trust in Him as we face the challenges ahead.

Looking back over the years I recall how God provided growth and gifts from members at just the right times so that we could purchase four different buildings completely debt free. And how in 2010 He orchestrated events so that key language protecting health care sharing was inserted into what is likely the most heavily lobbied law in history, the ironically named "Affordable Care Act."

And of course, we should not forget to thank God that our share amount has remained affordable, despite the very difficult health care environment where relentless inflation and steep rate increases are common. It's now been more than two years since our last share increase.

And here's the latest victory we can thank God for: Just last month a four-year-long federal lawsuit brought by six Christian organizations—including Samaritan Ministries—was finally resolved. A federal judge issued an order permanently blocking the government from enforcing an ACA provision that compelled Christian employers to cover sterilization and abortifacient contraception in their employee health care plans.

Looking ahead I wonder how we will see God's hand at work when new public policy challenges arise or as we con-

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Sharing Summary from December

Shares:	\$28,289,772	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:	\$28,422,151	
Unshared Needs in Negotiation:	\$ —	
New Needs:	4,403	
Total Needs:	9,037	
New Rewards:	391	Member Households: 80,513 (as of 11/20/18)
Miscarriages:	67	
Final Rewards:	19	

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

Questions about?	Email	Phone Menu
Your medical need	needs@samaritanministries.org	1 - 1
Shares you are sending or receiving	membership@samaritanministries.org	1 - 3
Your membership	membership@samaritanministries.org	1 - 4



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:



SEND A NOTE—

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



PAY YOUR SHARE—

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



ALWAYS STAY ALERT IN PRAYER—

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

Will mail order abortion pills be approved in the U.S.?

by John Stonestreet

Abortion clinics are facing a new challenge, but this time it's not from the pro-life movement. Mail order abortion pills could be a game changer.

A few months ago on BreakPoint, I mentioned how the easy availability of the drug misoprostol has rendered anti-abortion laws almost unenforceable in some Latin American countries. Closer to home, if a group called "Women on Web" has its way, the same could happen here in the United States.

"Women on Web" is the creation of Rebecca Gomperts, a Dutch physician who was the principal subject of a 2014 *New York Times Magazine* article entitled "The Dawn of the Post-Abortion Clinic."

In the article, "post-abortion" doesn't refer to what happens to women after they have an abortion, or to a world after abortion has been made illegal. The article foresaw a world where abortion would be available in new ways, specifically ways that allowed women to get around abortion-restrictive laws and societal norms.

After focusing on the rest of the world, Gomperts and "Women on Web" have turned their attention to the United States, after being, or so they claim, "flooded with requests to provide their services" here.

The American version is called "Aid Access." According to the article's description, "Women take an online screening to see if they are eligible to take misoprostol and mifepristone," which means, among other things, whether or not they are more than seven or eight weeks

along in their pregnancy.

If they aren't too far along and are approved, "Aid Access" would send an electronic prescription to "an Indian pharmacy she trusts," who would then send the drugs to the woman, along with a tracking number and instructions on how to use the drugs.

The cost? Ninety-five dollars, as opposed to the usual cost of the abortion pill, which is between \$300 and \$800.

Aid Access does face some formidable hurdles. The first is logistical. On average, it takes between one and two weeks to receive a package from India, depending on what U.S. Customs does with it.

Second, the entire scheme is under investigation by the FDA, which told the *Daily Beast* that one of the drugs, mifepristone, cannot be purchased legally over the internet. The legal loophole that Gomperts and company thought that they had found may not exist after all.

Even so, it would be a mistake to declare this "crisis averted." For starters, as the *Daily Beast* reports, "numerous medical groups, including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, have challenged the protocol" that bans selling mifepristone over the internet. Under a different administration, the FDA could simply lift the ban.

Even it doesn't, the fact remains that misoprostol, the other drug Aid Access seeks to ship to women, is legal and, more importantly, is 90 percent effective when used in the first trimester.

And, even if Aid Access' plans are thwarted, it's very likely that someone else will succeed. As USA Today recently put it, it's as easy to buy the deadly opioid fentanyl online as it is a book. The same could quickly be true of mifepristone and misoprostol. There are already places online that walk women through the process of what *The Verge* calls "DIY Abortions."

All this is more proof that even while we work to change the law, including working to overturn *Roe v Wade*, we should always remember the real goal is, as my friend Scott Klusendorf likes to say, not simply to make abortion illegal, but also unthinkable.

The debate over abortion cannot be won only in the courtroom or the legislature. After all, the other side allowed itself to believe that, and here we are, 45 years later with the pro-life cause still going strong. The culture must be persuaded that the taking of innocent human life is always wrong, no matter how it's done.

Do that, and there will be a lot fewer Google search results on DIY abortions. Don't do it, and our courts and legislatures will continue to make abortion possible in new and deadly ways. ♦

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John Stonestreet, the host of The Point, a daily national radio program, provides commentaries on current events and life issues from a Biblical worldview. He is the co-author of A Practical Guide to Culture: Helping the Next Generation Navigate Today's World.



Steve and Teri Maxwell

Titus2.com

by Kathryn Nielson

When God led Samaritan members Steve and Teri Maxwell to homeschool their kids 30 years ago, they had no idea that adventure would turn

into Titus2.com, a thriving ministry to families that reaches thousands through their website, speaking engagements, and multiple books.

Steve and Teri are passionate about helping families reach “their goals of peace and productivity in their homes.” Titus2.com exists for that purpose.

Prolific writers, they publish books based on their family’s experiences, first facing problems and then solving them. Their books cover everything from quiet time with God to parenting help, helping kids excel in school and at chores to teaching kids to buy a house debt-free, and much more.

Perhaps the best example of teaching others after learning the lessons themselves is Teri’s book *Managers of Their Homes*. *Managers* takes struggling moms living in chaos step by step through a process of how to implement a schedule anchored in specific daily habits to bring peace and calm. She

eagerly teaches moms how to cultivate a peaceful and orderly home, using lessons learned from her own struggles in the first years of her parenting journey.

Steve and Teri themselves grew up in nominally Christian homes, worldly young people who “liked church,” says Teri.

They met their freshman year of college at the University of Missouri-Rolla. Teri was a psychology major, and Steve was studying electrical engineering. They married between their freshman and sophomore years. Not long after, the newlyweds found themselves in a Bible-believing church and were saved a year later.

A few years and three kids later, Teri found herself struggling with being a mom and looking forward to the day they would all be in school. Somewhere else.

“I wasn’t doing really well as a mom, and then of all things, the Lord called me to homeschool,”



says Teri. “Our hearts were to follow Him.”

They obeyed, but it came with more frustrations than they could have imagined. Teri struggled with depression and anger.

“Things were really desperate,” Steve says. “A dad’s worst heartbreak is when he’s got a young wife, with three children, who is so discouraged and depressed, even though she knows the Lord and is in the Word.”

They decided children were the problem, and Steve had a vasectomy to ensure they had no more.

At the same time, they started to do some research and were learning about the negative effects of white sugar and a life devoid of exercise. They also knew that spiritual disciplines of prayer and meditating on Scripture were important. But all of these things added more to the list of what needed to be done, and it was overwhelming.

As Teri persevered and grew spiritually God started to show her step by step how a schedule could transform her day.

“God, in His mercy, gave us this,” says Steve.

God also began to convict Steve of the choice he’d made with the vasectomy. One day while home sick, he opened his Bible and began reading what God said about children. He remembers the Lord communicating to him, “Wait a minute. You broke something I had fixed.”

Convicted, he had a reversal, and God gave them five more children. “In His faithfulness, God provides for what he orders and where He calls,” he says.

With eight children to raise and educate, Teri jumped in armed with a schedule that was designed to both maintain her physical and spiritual health and to accomplish the day’s necessary tasks. The more she used

it the more she found that wasting time didn’t fit in. The Maxwells took an approach very different from the culture with their kids.

When the children were growing up, they would never be found in different parts of their home watching televisions, playing video games, or scrolling through their phones. In fact, Steve and Teri shunned most forms of “harmless” entertainment in favor of developing a love of learning and doing everything—from exercise to work to ministry—as a family.

“For us, it was always a family thing,” says Steve.

Aware that their methods may be unpopular with some, they make no apologies, not only because it worked for them but because the methods were born out of deep conviction that a love for God, work, and learning can be cultivated

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Why SMI?

When Samaritan member Steve Maxwell left the corporate world where he worked as an engineer from 1983 to 1997, and started Titus2 Ministries with his wife, Teri, he left his insurance behind. They needed something, so they joined a health care sharing ministry.

When their son, an entrepreneur, found himself in the same boat, he compared the ministry his parents had joined to Samaritan Ministries and chose Samaritan.

“We watched our kids participating in Samaritan for 13 years, seeing the help they received with their medical bills, babies being born, etc,” Teri says. “It wasn’t just the financial aspect. It was coming alongside one another in ministry.”

Eventually the Maxwells grew dissatisfied with the ministry they had joined. “Everything they did was as if they were insurance, like a sterile corporation,” says Steve.

“We felt tied into it because of a pre-existing condition and felt like we couldn’t change, but the Lord

said, ‘Go. I’ll take care of the pre-existing conditions,’” says Teri.

The Maxwells switched and have been with Samaritan for three years now. They love that it is more affordable and also appreciate the Save to Share program. They encourage everyone they tell about SMI to join Save to Share. “It’s not that much more,” says Teri. “And you never know what can happen.”

Though they have not had any Needs yet, they love being able to participate in Member Assistance to help others with unsharable bills that are pre-existing.

“We just love Samaritan, personal contact and ministry-minded,” says Teri. “It’s not just an organization or a business.”

“We love the whole heart thrust of Samaritan,” says Steve. “It’s the Body of Christ being what it should be.” ♦

Titus2.com offers wide variety of resources

by Kathryn Nielson

Visitors to Titus2.com will find a plethora of resources from the Maxwell family, starting with the numerous books they've written over the years.

The Managers series

The Maxwells are likely most known for their *Managers* series: *Managers of Their Homes*, *Managers of Their School*, and *Managers of Their Chores*.

"Each mother has a choice: Will she be a home manager or a daily victim of circumstances?" Teri says in *Managers of Their Homes*.



After being asked multiple times how she "got it all done"—that is, homeschooled eight children, led a local homeschool group, and had time to make matching clothes for her daughters—she and Steve wrote *Managers of Their Homes*. The book begins by explaining why a schedule is so vital to the peace and harmony moms want in their homes.

"I think the schedule ties in well with what Samaritan is doing because that is what helps moms to do things that are going to help them to be healthy," Teri says. "It gives them time in the Word. It

gives them the spiritual nourishment that they need and grounds them emotionally. I love when moms can get hold of that instead of being overwhelmed and burdened, pulled down by all the things they have to do."

If *Managers of Their Home* is the what and why of homeschooling, *Managers of Their School* is the how. In it, Teri breaks down how she organized the homeschool day and created the schedule sheets. She even breaks down each grade and subject and tells the reader what she used. "I take 30 years of homeschooling experience, with eight children, and narrow it down to 200 pages," she says.

Getting their kids to do chores didn't come without some work. In *Managers of Their Chores* Steve and Teri share with the reader what they learned to help them finally have success in this area. They explain how to make a master chore list, how to assign chores, how to teach them to do their chores, how to schedule chores, how to implement the chore system, and more. They've recently launched an online software companion to the book at ChorePacks.com

Working chores into the schedule "helps moms get a handle on the scheduling and lightens the burden for moms," Teri says. "And it teaches kids to learn to help with the workload."

Help for tough times

Sweet Journey was written while Teri was going through depression and learning what God was teaching her about having daily time with Him.

"I needed to learn to take every thought captive based on the truth of His Word," Teri says. "I had to take his Word and speak it out loud."



She began collecting verses to use in the tough times. At different times in her life, she has found herself going back and applying what she learned then.

"*Homeschooling With a Meek and Quiet Spirit* was the story of what God was teaching me through those emotional struggles I was having," Teri says. "There are a lot of moms struggling with that, and it's helpful for them to know they aren't the only ones who struggle. I love to give moms hope. If God can do what He did in my life, He can do it in their life."

Providing for families

Homeschooling and keeping house aren't the only subjects on Steve and Teri's minds. They have written extensively on raising sons who will be able to provide for their families and on how to buy a house debt-free before getting married.

The Maxwells are firm believers that fathers should be the primary breadwinners, which provides the

opportunity for mothers to focus on nurturing young children in a home environment that is optimal for raising up children to love and follow the Lord. Although many factors have undermined what was once considered the norm, they have seen in their own family and many others that it is worth pursuing and can be achieved.

In *Preparing Sons*, they emphasize that it is possible for sons to be able to provide for their future family on a single income, despite the widespread belief in our culture that two incomes are necessary.



Their goal in the book is to “first form an understanding of the real issues that affect a son’s ability to provide for his family.”

“Then you should come to see what God has to say about these difficulties and what your responsibility is in it all,” Teri says.

Those “real issues” include choosing a vocation, pursuing education, and developing skills that cater to the goal of providing for a family, all things that they encourage parents to start instilling in children at a young age.

Steve and Teri are often asked what the “plan” is for teaching sons to buy a house debt-free. In *Buying a House Debt-Free*, they write, “It is not a plan; it is a way of life. A debt-free house is not the ultimate goal in life, but it can be a byproduct of an abiding life in Christ.”

From a young age, they encouraged their children to develop an appetite for God and His Word, for learning, and for work, all things that contribute to their ability to purchase a house outright. All five of their sons have purchased their homes with cash.

More resources

The prolific Maxwells offer the books mentioned above in a MegaPack, with these additional titles:

- *Summer with the Moodys*
- *Keeping Your Children’s Hearts*
- *Redeeming the Time*
- *Sweet Relationships*
- *Making Great Conversationalists*
- *Homeschooling with a Meek and Quiet Spirit*
- *Encouraging the Homeschool Family* audio set
- *Feed My Sheep* audio

One of the Maxwells’ daughters, Sarah, has penned a 12 volume set of Moody Family children’s books. Her latest book, *Finding Change*, the first in a new series, was just released.

Titus2.com also features more than 500 free articles and a blog with the latest goings-on of the Maxwell family. ♦

in children, and that children don’t have to be victims of the culture.

The result?

A tight-knit family with eight children who love the Lord; are employed, self-taught entrepreneurs; and are in debt to no one. All five of their boys have purchased their houses outright after working and saving to avoid debt.

It started with a mom feeling overwhelmed and in need of structure to do what God had called her to do. Out of their own needs, they wrote *Managers of Their Homes*, never imagining it would lead to the ministry they have now.

“In our minds when we published the first book, we didn’t know if it would collect dust in the basement or end up in the trash,” Teri says.

Their numerous books and resources cover every conceivable topic related to marriage and parenting, including time management, homeschool help, and so much more—all a direct result of what God taught them during a time of specific need.

During much of the children’s growing-up years, Steve worked in corporate America as an engineer. After being laid off from his last job because of his refusal to participate in corporate espionage, he started his own business doing print brokering. These days family life and ministry keep both him and Teri busy and employed.

Titus2.com is full of resources for families wanting help in becoming more organized, disciplined, productive, and more like Christ. ♦



Helping pay for my girlfriend's abortion seemed like the right thing to do at the time

by Dustin Garrett

Helping to pay for my girlfriend's abortion 20 years ago at the age of 14 seemed like the right thing to do at the time. It would get rid of a bad situation, and we wouldn't have to deal with the "problem" anymore. After all, we were told, and we believed, that having a baby would "ruin your lives."

But the opposite was true. The abortion sent each of us into a downward spiral fueled by drugs, depression, and denial.

By God's grace, I was rescued from my addiction. Sadly, Julie died of an overdose before she reached her 30th birthday.

I am still dealing with the scars of that abortion over two decades later. I know things won't completely heal until eternity. I wonder about my daughter (I don't know for sure if it was a daughter, but I often think it was). What would she have looked

like? What would her name have been? How old would she be now?

Growing up near Chicago in the early 1990s, I was a wayward teenager. Julie and I had no real moral framework to live in. None of our

The abortion sent each of us into a downward spiral fueled by drugs, depression, and denial.

parents were around home much, so we spent a lot of time alone together. Plus, I had been kicked out of eighth grade and she spent a lot of time ditching school.

One night, as we were talking on the phone, she told me she was pregnant. I remember being scared. We had no idea that one of her parents had picked up another phone in the house and was listening in.

It was tense. My parents kept asking how she knew for sure the baby was mine. Her parents were insistent that she could not have this baby, especially since her sister already had a baby out of wedlock and was struggling to raise it. Their solution? To abort it, with me paying half the cost to the tune of a couple hundred dollars.

At the time, I felt a sense of relief. The notion of having a child terrified me. Being a father had never crossed my mind. According to all the adults around me, it meant was that life was over. Not appealing to a 14-year-old.

What did appeal to me was the idea of paying a little bit of money to

get rid of a big problem hanging over my head and threatening my “freedom.” It would be a thing of the past.

Except it never would be. I remember the call I got from Julie after the abortion. She was crying. Not a soft weeping. It was like something traumatic had just happened (because it had). She was sobbing, distraught as she briefly painted a picture of the doctor using cold, metal instruments to perform the abortion. It wasn't like they put her somewhere, knocked her out, and the baby was gone. I'm pretty sure she was conscious for it.

That phone call changed things for me. Afterward, I started to wonder about the baby, who this child was and whether it was a girl or boy. I was struck by the truth of what had just happened, that it didn't just “go away.” They had to forcibly pull a human being from her. I remember wondering what they had done with the body.

I went to talk to my dad about it, and to console me, he told me that before I was born, my mom had had an abortion.

I remember thinking, “OK, well, he knows what this is like then.” But it triggered more questions: If my mom hadn't had an abortion, would I have been here?

When I pressed my parents for more information though, they couldn't even bear to talk about it. To this day, it's a source of shame and pain.

After the abortion, Julie and I broke up and plunged into truly ruining our lives. Both of us started to use hard drugs, graduating to heroin. Within five years, she had become a prostitute on the South Side of Chicago, selling her body for drugs. I remember one time getting off the expressway there and seeing her on the roadside soliciting.

At the point she had the abortion, she was very attractive, a Christina Aguilera look alike. When I saw her that day, she was almost unrecognizable.

Not too long after that, at age 23, I ended up at a rescue mission, where God changed my life. I began to wrestle through some of these

I began to wrestle through these hard things, and see God's sovereignty and grace, even over my terrible choices.

hard things and to see God's sovereignty and grace even over my terrible choices, over my parents' terrible choices. I realized that God still had a plan for me, that God still can make beautiful things out of the ash heap of sin.

A few years later, in 2010, I found myself at Bible college in Kansas City, Missouri. My first year there, I got a call from Julie. We hadn't talked in years. She claimed she was getting clean. I told her about what God had done in my life.

A few months later, I got a call that she had overdosed and died.

I continue to heal and am grateful that my family doesn't have to continue down the path of abortion. God has provided for me in so many ways. I'm now married to my beautiful wife Kyndra who loves the Lord. I have a job at Samaritan where I get to serve Him everyday.

But the wounds of the past still

do affect me. It affects my relationship with my mom. It affects my outlook on children. I have to continually bring lies into the light of Scripture—lies that I don't deserve kids, that I didn't have anything to do with the abortion in the first place, the lie that my family can't begin to work through healing on this, or the lie that no other men are going through this.

Looking back, the abortion was the most significant event in my childhood, and, even to this day, talking about it is weighty. But I can't imagine I'm the only guy who is wrestling through the guilt, shame, and consequences of abortion.

It seems like one of the errors we can make is to not talk about this in the Church. Not only do we need to address the evil being done to these precious babies, but we also need to give attention to the countless men and women who live with the shame and guilt from past abortions. Many need help working through the implications of what's been done in the context of loving Christian community and Christ-centered counsel. There is healing and much hope through the Gospel of Jesus.

God's grace is greater than our sin! ♦

Dustin Garrett works in Membership Development and represents Samaritan Ministries on the Winterjam tour, sharing the message of health care sharing with thousands of music fans.

Resources:

MenAndAbortion.net

“Will you forgive her, as God has forgiven her?” by Samaritan member Ryan C.

MacPherson. <hausvater.org/articles/245-will-you-forgive-her-as-god-has-forgiven-her.html>

Member helps abortion workers leave the industry

by Michael Miller

When an abortion clinic worker needs out of the industry, they also usually need support.

Financial support, counseling support, career support, spiritual support.

The ministry *And Then There Were None* (abortionworker.com) is there for them.

Founded in 2012 by former Planned Parenthood health center director Abby Johnson in 2013, ATTWN offers transitional assistance to former abortion clinic workers, says Meagan Weber, personal assistant to Abby and a Samaritan Ministries member.

“Our tagline is ‘Nobody grows up wanting to work in the abortion industry,’” Meagan says.

The ministry primarily is geared for former clinic workers, since they usually have suffered the most trauma of anybody involved in the industry.

“We desire to get them out of the industry and into healing as soon as possible,” Meagan says.

That help can be in the form of:

- Transitional financial assistance, such as help with groceries and utility bills.
- Career assistance, including resume creation, job leads, and interview coaching skills.
- Help from a Christian counselor.
- Help with substance abuse.
- Prayer. Prayer. Prayer.

“We care about the whole person,” Meagan says. “We want them to reconnect with their walk with

Christ. We know that through Jesus, everything else will fall into place. Clinic workers are just like you and I, they just sin differently than us. It’s a spiritual issue and nobody’s beyond the redemption of Christ.”

None of the workers being rescued from abortion clinics are likely to have experienced anything differently than Abby Johnson. Abby left her Texas clinic in 2009 after she

And Then There Were None has helped more than 475 abortion workers and seven doctors transition out of the industry.

assisted with an ultrasound-guided abortion. According to abbyjohnson.org, “She watched in horror as a 13-week baby fought for, and ultimately lost, its life at the hand of the abortionist.”

After leaving Planned Parenthood, Abby faced the wrath of both Planned Parenthood and, strangely, pro-life Christians.

“I stumbled upon her Facebook page and saw people making terrible comments, so I felt the need to defend Abby against those criticizing her on social media,” Meagan says.

She and Abby formed an instant bond, and soon Meagan found herself helping Abby with details like

shipping conference materials and resources as well as serving as a travel buddy.

“I volunteered myself into a job,” Meagan says. “I wasn’t looking for a job. I was a stay-at-home mom who was passionate about being involved in the pro-life cause.”

But she is excited about being able to use her God-given talents to serve the pro-life movement. Meagan also says that it proves that kindness, like she showed Abby on Facebook in those early days, always works best to reach those on all sides of this issue.

“You don’t have to know somebody to stand up for their dignity,” Meagan says. “The person doesn’t have to be innocent. Nobody deserves death threats.”

That’s the same approach of grace that has allowed ATTWN to help over 475 abortion workers—“Anyone from a nurse to somebody who answers the phone”—and seven abortion doctors make the transition to working in pro-life medical centers.

When clinic workers first leave the industry, they frequently continue to hold pro-choice views, at least for a while, Meagan says, and they might be living a rough life. Plus, the emotional and spiritual baggage is considerable. But ATTWN staff strives to be patient and grace-giving.

And Then There Were None also works with several other pro-life ministries. Its association with Sidewalk Advocates for Life in particular is close, since that ministry refers so many former abortion workers to ATTWN.

Meagan and her husband, Kyle, moved to the Austin, Texas, area “on faith,” she says, so that she could work full-time with the ministry. The Webers and their four children lived with Abby and her husband for four months until Kyle found a new job and they were able to secure their own housing.

Meagan’s work as an assistant to

Abby includes various administrative tasks to “lighten her load so she can do the more important work.” Meagan is also the coordinator for healing retreats and representation at conferences, and directly works with clients “who have been out of the industry for quite some time and just need healing resources.” Meagan also has a brief cameo

appearance in the upcoming movie *Unplanned* (unplanned.com), based on Abby’s first book about her involvement and exit from Planned Parenthood. *Unplanned* is set to hit theaters in March.

“I look at what I do in this ministry as a ministry of service,” Meagan says. “I serve God through this ministry.” ♦

Grace goes a long way in helping people become pro-life

Grace goes a long way in attracting those who work in the abortion industry or find themselves in an unintended pregnancy, says Meagan Weber, a Samaritan Ministries member and assistant to Abby Johnson of *And Then There Were None*.

Meagan works with former abortion clinic workers at the Austin Texas-based ministry, but she has also walked in the shoes of an unmarried woman who found herself pregnant not once but twice.

“I chose life reluctantly the first time,” she says.

What turned her toward not only a fervent pro-life stance but also toward Jesus was the way she was treated by the women at a local church.

“They threw me a baby shower when I had nothing and no one to support me,” she says. “After, I lacked nothing. They simply loved on me and provided for my needs.”

She became pregnant out of wedlock a second time, and the women threw her yet another baby shower.

“It was through that type of love, grace, and patience that I realized abortion would never again be an option for me to consider but, also,

I realized that I couldn’t keep having kids from multiple fathers,” she says.

Her heart had to change first and then her behavior followed. After two years of abstinence, she met and married her husband in 2006.

“I thought abstinence was just for virgins, not promiscuous people like me,” she says. “But because my attitude toward life in the womb had changed, my behavior had to follow.”

She encourages churches to adopt the Embrace Grace ministry, which says it “equips churches to provide a refuge and spiritual support to women with unintended pregnancies.”

“They do Bible study with unwed moms in church, host baby showers, offer information and resources regarding parenting and placing children with adoptive families,” Meagan says. “They love on her and empower her to embrace the grace of Christ. The heart of Christ is not to cover up your sin by committing a worse one (abortion). The pregnancy and baby are never to be viewed as sins.”

Many women who face unintended pregnancies outside of wedlock may experience judgment from their

churches, Meagan says, but that should change.

“They don’t need a lecture,” Meagan says. “They know we don’t approve of premarital sex. We need to embrace them just as they are in that moment and offer them life-affirming resources.”

That kindness works outside the Church, too.

“People can certainly help to save lives just by being kind,” Meagan says. “Before we stop on the side of the road to help a woman with young kids in crisis, we don’t ask her about her sins and condemn them for what they’ve done. We just show kindness and help with her immediate needs.”

Churches in general need to be talking more about abortion.

“Sixty-five to 70 percent of women who have abortions say they attended church on a regular basis at the time that their pregnancy and abortion took place,” Meagan says. “We’re surrounded by people who have been wounded by abortion in our churches. It’s our problem. This is the No. 1 issue in our country and we need to step up our game.” ♦

Member doctors join growing Direct Primary Care trend

by Kathryn Nielson

The Direct Primary Care model of practicing medicine is known for three things: more time with patients, lack of government involvement, and low pricing on services.

It is the promise of being able to offer better patient care that lured Drs. Brandon Alleman, Nick Tomsen, and Kent Zieser to the DPC model.

Antioch Med

Dr. Nick Tomsen would never have guessed he'd end up starting Antioch Med in Wichita, Kansas. He was planning on working with a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) before Dr. Brandon Alleman approached him about starting a DPC clinic instead.

Affordability is made possible by cutting out middle men and red tape.

"It became clear that I couldn't offer the type of care to the patients I was hoping through the typical insurance model, even in a subsidized clinic model like an FQHC with lots of community resources," he says. "Transparency of pricing for patients, affordability by cutting out middle men and red tape, and ultimately time to build meaningful relationships with patients—none of these things could I have accomplished in the insurance practices

that I looked into and considered prior to starting DPC at Antioch Med."

The Antioch Med patient load is kept light, serving 600 patients as opposed to the more common 2,500, to ensure that each one gets the care they deserve. By doing this, they are able "to work around the patient's schedule and give unparalleled access."

Dr. Brandon Alleman knew while still in medical school that practicing medicine in a DPC clinic was the way he wanted to go. The best care at the best value was his goal with the DPC model.

"It is the type of practice that best aligns the incentives of patients and physicians," Dr. Alleman says. "Everyone agrees that there are many problems with health care. I think one of the main ways that this can be fixed is by patients spending their own money for health care and searching for the best value. Our clinic has been successful because we have always tried to deliver value to our patients. Not only in the cost, but also in the quality and caring they receive from our clinic. Starting in a more traditional practice would have made delivering this value impossible."

To that end, Drs. Alleman and Tomsen offer "unparalleled access" via instant message, video chat, face-to-face interaction around a patient's schedule, house calls, phone calls, and even middle of the night office visits to avoid the ER.

"It really is the closest thing to having a doctor in the family," they say.

They also offer services outside of what is included in membership at 50 to 90 percent off by cutting out third parties and negotiating directly with facilities that provide those services. For example, a blood count only costs \$1.70, and a metabolic panel \$3.75. Similarly, a chest X-ray through Antioch is \$50 and an MRI L-Spine is \$375.

And because procedures such as biopsies, stitches, EKGs, and more are often able to be done in the office, patients save even more money.

The DPC model best aligns the incentives of the patients and the physicians.

Antioch Med also offers a pregnancy package that includes prenatal care and inpatient deliveries for both current practice members and non-members.

Dr. Alleman and Dr. Tomsen believe the DPC model is the only way to achieve the level of care and cost-savings that their patients desire.

"DPC is a return to the good old days of medicine when family doctors did house calls, knew their patient's whole families, delivered babies, and treated their patients as people and friends instead of a number or a disease," they say.

Exactus Physicians

Dr. Kent Zieser began practicing internal medicine in 2004. In 2016 he switched to the DPC model like so many other doctors “because I saw the practice of medicine from both sides of the fence declining in value,” he says. He blames decreasing patient satisfaction in his previous practice on long wait times, both for an appointment and in the waiting room, and shorter times with the doctor.

At Exactus Physicians, his DPC practice in McKinney, Texas, Dr. Zieser will typically spend 30 minutes with a patient, but a visit can extend up to 90 minutes.

“Good health care takes time,” he says.

For issues not requiring an in-office visit, patients have direct access to Dr. Zieser 24/7 via email or phone call.

Dr. Zieser says this type of “unprecedented access” to a doctor often helps to prevent the need for hospitalizations and other specialty referrals.

Part of great patient care is being able to offer services for much lower prices than a traditional doctor would be able to. At Exactus Physicians, services such as unlimited office visits, chronic disease management, rapid tests for strep, flu, and mono, and much more are offered to patients as part of their paid monthly membership.

Dr. Zieser has also negotiated lower prices for labs and radiology services, with savings up to 90 percent on imaging and lab fees. Annual bloodwork runs less than \$30, and

patients can get an MRI for \$400, a far cry from the regular price of \$2,600.

“If we had contracts with insurance companies, we would be legally obligated to charge higher prices,” he says.

“If we had contracts with insurance companies we would be legally obligated to charge higher prices.”

When Dr. Zieser chose the name Exactus Physicians for his DPC clinic, he did so deliberately. Right now he’s the only doctor at the practice, “but as the name suggests, the plural name gives me room for growth as I foresee more and more doctors looking to move to this kind of model,” he says.

“Later I plan on bringing in more providers and services as needed. ♦

Editor’s Note: This article is not an endorsement of a particular medical provider. Members are free to choose their own providers.

Members may be able to have some of their Direct Primary Care membership fees shared when they are receiving treatment for an illness or injury. Contact Member Services for more information and see the “Direct Primary Care” item in Section VIII.B of the Ministry Guidelines.

For resources to find DPC doctors near you, visit SamaritanMinistries.org/dpc



Dr. Nick Tomsen
antiochmed.com

In his own words:
SamaritanMinistries.org/drtomsen



Dr. Brandon Alleman
antiochmed.com

In his own words:
SamaritanMinistries.org/dralleman



Dr. Kent Zieser
exactusphysicians.com

In his own words:
SamaritanMinistries.org/drzeiser

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.

Asia still threatened

Asia Bibi remained in protective custody in Pakistan in early December after her blasphemy conviction was overturned on October 31, Fox News reports. Protests have been held and assassination calls issued by Islamic leaders. There are reports that Islamic hardliners are going house to house trying to hunt her and her family down. *Pray that Asia and her family will find asylum and that they will be safe until then.*

Christian worker still missing

Nigerian community leaders have called on the nation's president to secure the release of American Christian aid worker Jeff Woodke, who was abducted two years ago, World Watch Monitor reports. Jeff was kidnapped in October 2016 by men believed to be from an extremist Islamic group. Two security guards were killed in the abduction. There has been no news from Jeff or his kidnapers since then. *Pray that Jeff Woodke will be located soon and released.*

Pastor detained 5 days

Pastor Huang Xiaoning from Guangzhou Bible Reformed Church was held by police for five days for “disrupting public services on November 10, International Christian Concern reports. Huang is the fourth pastor detained for disobeying new regulations on religious affairs. The next morning, a Sunday, police were stationed outside the church to discourage members from attending. Chinese authorities are pressuring independent churches to close or join a state-sanctioned church body. Those that don't cooperate face constant harassment. *Praise God for Pastor Huang's witness. Pray for strength for Christians facing harassment from the government and for the restrictions to be overturned.*

Pastors, others killed

Two Congolese pastors and several other Christians were killed in attacks by an Islamist militant group in November, WWM says. The Rev. Kausa Kaule Yosua and his 27-year-old daughter, Masika, were killed in the attacks. Thirteen people were also kidnapped. One of them, the Rev. Josias Kapanga Katembo, was found dead later in a forest. The attacks took place in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. *Pray for those kidnapped to be freed, and for the families of those killed. Pray also for protection for Christians and others from Islamist attacks.*

Nepal church shut down

High-caste Hindus have pressured a new church plant in Nepal to shut down, ICC says. Members of the Pakhluwa Eternal Life Church are now forced to worship in secret. The Hindus used threats and social pressure, threatening to accuse the

pastor of converting villagers to Christianity if the church was not shut down. *Pray for the congregation to remain unified and strong in faith, for protection against false accusations, and for the church to be able to reopen its doors.*

Evangelists arrested

A pastor and his team of five evangelists were arrested in Uganda in late November, ICC says. Pastor Tom Palapande and his team were arrested in eastern Uganda on charges of causing a public disturbance because they were using Quran to undermine Islam. The pastor is known for answering questions about Islam and Christianity. *Pray that the charges will be dropped against the six men and for freedom in Uganda to answer questions truthfully in public without repercussions.*

4 arrested in Malaysia

Four Finnish Christians were arrested in Malaysia on November 20 on charges they passed out Christian pamphlets on the streets there, ICC says. More than 300 pamphlets were found in their room, police say. *Pray that the men's efforts will bear fruit in Malaysia, and that they will be allowed to continue to evangelize.*

Refugees still detained

Christian Montagnard refugees from Vietnam remain arrested and detained in Thailand after two months, ICC reports. Of the 181 refugees, 47 children and infants are being held at one location, with adults at another. *Pray for the release of the refugees and for the experience not to have a traumatic effect on the children.*

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

tinue to work on our important pilot project to help members get more competitive pricing on health care.

Through it all, it is good to remind ourselves that Christians should be applying a Biblical worldview to all areas of life, including health care. Many people today are placing their hope for health care in things that are finite: doctors, hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, new technologies, insurance contracts, and government programs.

But Samaritan Ministries' first foundational principle is this: "Jesus Christ is our Provider for every need. As the Creator of all things, He is the only One with all the resources necessary to meet every need that occurs in His creation."

This principle compels us to covenant together in faith to bear one another's burdens in a way that gives the glory to God. This is why we ask each household each month to commit to praying for the member you are assigned to send your Share to. Apart from Jesus Christ we can do nothing. If we abide in Him we will bear much fruit.

Another of Samaritan's foundational principles is this: "God has made us stewards of His resources. As a first line of defense, members of the Body of Christ are responsible to use the resources they've been given by God to care for themselves, their family, and others."

This principle prevents us from succumbing to the entitlement mentality so prevalent in our culture, especially in our health care system. To the contrary, we are called to steward resources prudently and give sacrificially to help one another.

The many notes we receive from members living out this principle

are so encouraging. Here are some highlights:

- Alicia wrote to say she was using Healthcare Bluebook to guard against being overcharged for her maternity ultrasounds.
- Phil did research ahead of time to get a fair price on his surgery and minimize time spent in the hospital.
- Pamela did a lot of reading about her stubborn foot problem and decided that surgery was not going help. She found a much less expensive therapist who solved the problem.
- Paul was told multiple times by hospital personnel that he would have to pay list price for his wife's maternity bills. He persistently asked until he got to the right person, who was happy to work out a package deal.
- Terry accumulated \$600,000 in bills for a bone marrow cancer, but stayed in touch with providers by email until the bills were down to \$200,000.
- Dave was referred for an MRI but was appalled at the \$3000 price quote. He found an independent facility that did it for \$600.

So many of the problems in our health care system stem from third parties that disconnect the consumer of health care from price and quality considerations. I'm thankful we have engaged members who want to steward resources well for the sake of each other.

Here are three simple ways we can bear one another's burdens:

1. Visit Dash.SamaritanMinistries.org to sign up for eSharing so that shares can be more easily

and quickly received by a member with a Need.

2. If you require medical services, use the Health Resources app on Dash to proactively evaluate the quality and cost of health care providers.
3. Participate in Member Assistance to help members with unsharable bills, either by giving directly to the member or the Member Assistance Fund.

I believe that following the principles of trusting in God and stewarding resources carefully have been integral to Samaritan's first 25 years of successful ministry, and they will remain just as important in the next 25 years.

As we continue to trust in God and walk in faith, please pray for God's continued guidance for this ministry. Pray for the Samaritan Board and staff as we work on three strategic goals:

- Enhancing member to member connections
- Refining processes and developing even more online tools to improve the health care sharing experience
- Achieving fair pricing and improving the member-provider relationship.

Finally, pray that more Christians would catch a vision to glorify God with health care, and that we would have positive a influence on our country and spread the Gospel as we bear one another's burdens.

For The Kingdom!

Ted A. Pittenger
Founder & International President

I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.

John 15:5

A vine has branches, and it produces fruit through these branches. The branches cannot produce fruit on their own. If they lose their connection to the vine, there won't be any fruit. They just wither.

Jesus is our Vine. He is our Source of life. If we remain connected to Him, we bear fruit. Much fruit, not just a little.

If we don't remain connected to Him, there will be no fruit at all. Nothing. No matter how hard we try.

Much fruit or no fruit. It all depends on staying connected with Him.

For the Kingdom,



Ray King