

# Christian HealthCare

## NEWSLETTER

### MEMBER LETTERS:

#### A witness to unbelieving relatives

**I've been getting** Shares and notes from all over the United States! How comforted I feel as God uses a blanket of prayers to soothe my troubled soul.

I have shared this Biblical approach to health care with my family, and I believe it is a witness to unbelieving relatives. It's a message of the power of God to turn things meant to harm me into a blessing.

I was also blessed by the Samaritan staff when I called in and the woman I spoke to ended our conversation by praying for me. How encouraging to know that this ministry is committed to trusting God and the principles found in His Word.

After being on the receiving end, sending my Share to a brother or sister in Christ every month has taken on new meaning.

Annette  
Illinois

### The State of the Ministry

by Ted Pittenger, Founder & International President

**H**eading into 2020 Samaritan Ministries is celebrating 25 years in ministry at the same time we are working on the largest undertaking in our history: Samaritan Given, a completely new online sharing program. It is also a challenging time in public relations for health care sharing ministries, and the federal elections this year could impact the religious liberties that affect our ability to practice our faith through health care sharing. I hope you will join me in taking these important matters to the Lord in prayer.

As I write this, we are at a critical stage of Samaritan Given development with a few hundred members participating in an early release. Nearly two years ago, we began exploring the possibilities for Samaritan Given based on input from members. Many of you requested the ability to handle both the sending of your Shares and the payment of your bills completely online. We didn't know if that was feasible, but we prayed for the Lord's help and began investigating.

The past few months have been an exciting time of seeing God bring together new technologies and services to make this vision a reality. Samaritan Given will allow you to hook up your bank account to an online sharing system and use a mobile app to send your Share with a swipe.

Samaritan Given also features a membership card you can present to provid-

ers so that electronic billing information immediately flows into the system. This allows all parties to have the same information so we can quickly work out a fair price and get the bills paid.

But that's not all. Samaritan Given also seeks to enhance the heart of Samaritan Ministries: direct connections between brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ. The online sharing system allows members to instantly send messages of prayer and encouragement back and forth to each other.

You can visit [SamaritanMinistries.org/given](http://SamaritanMinistries.org/given) for the latest information about Samaritan Given. Of course, direct sharing remains the heart of Samaritan Classic as well, and if that is the experience you prefer, you can simply continue sharing in Classic as you always have.

The importance of our direct member-

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**Sharing Summary from December**

Shares:	\$30,645,398	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:	\$30,594,411	
In Negotiation:	\$5,072,847	
New Needs:	4,518	
Total Needs:	9,034	
New Rewards:	277	Member Households: 83,289 (as of 11/20/19)
Miscarriages:	30	
Final Rewards:	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

**Phone Menu**

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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.



## Why culture clashes with God over the sacredness of human life

by member Susanne Maynes

The man behind the podium addressed the group with a fairly personal question: “How many of you were ‘unplanned’ as far as your parents were concerned?”

A number of hands shot up, illustrating the speaker’s point.

Whether or not a woman or a couple plans on a particular baby arriving at a particular time has no bearing on whether that person is supposed to be here.

This issue is theological at heart.

God refers to Himself by various names in Scripture, and each of His names reveals something of His character and attributes.

One of the names of God which carries great significance for the pro-

life cause is mentioned three times in the book of Revelation, including Revelation 22:13:

I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

**Our issue with God goes back to the beginning, when we bought the lie that He was somehow holding out on us and therefore we should take matters into our own hands.**

Alpha and Omega, Beginning and End. God tells us something important about Himself here—something which directly concerns us and our choices.

The Bible is the story of God, and He is the Author of all of our stories. He decides when our lives should begin. He decides when it’s time for the last chapter to wrap up.

Paradoxically, our sovereign God has given us free will—a mysterious tension of faith. This means we can choose to abort babies, eliminate the “undesirable,” and euthanize the terminally ill.

In other words, it’s possible for us, out of selfishness, to drastically alter the stories God is writing.

When we play editor in this way, we violate the will of God. We devalue what He cherishes. We anger Him and break His heart (Jeremiah 7:31; Ezekiel 16:21).

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## Mark Schlatter: Christian Community Health Care

by Brittany Klaus

When patients walk through the door of the Christian Community Health Care clinic in Grabill, Indiana, near Fort Wayne, they know something is different.

That something is the Holy Spirit, says Mark Schlatter, CCHC executive director.

“There are a lot of people praying for that building and for the ministry,” Mark says.

Mainly staffed by volunteers, CCHC serves more than 1,000 patients a year, providing acute care for all ages, work and sports physicals, and treatment for simple hypertension and for simple depression. It also offers ear, nose, and throat clinics, nutrition classes, and



Mark and Koleen Schlatter, center, and their family.

women’s health fairs—all of it free.

Ministry, however, has been at the forefront of what happens at the clinic during its 23 years. CCHC’s services are not only free, but intentionally personal and compassionate, Mark says. The volunteer staff is always seeking ways to expose patients to the love of Jesus Christ, including praying with them, sharing the Gospel message, and offering free Bibles. They are also very intentional about having a chaplain on duty every time the doors are open.

“The clinic was founded 23 years ago with the idea that health care could be used as a platform to reach people for Jesus,” he says.

A local church had just moved into a new building in the town of Leo, Indiana, and its members were considering ways they could use their new facility to reach out to the surrounding communities. One idea was to open a free health clinic, and, on the night of their first meeting to discuss it, they met with a doctor to see if he would be interested in getting involved. The doctor had been

praying about such an opportunity, and it wasn’t long before the clinic opened.

“Within a year, we had our non-profit status and had started seeing patients,” Mark says.

For eight years, the clinic operated at that church building and was opened to the public every Tuesday night. Traffic was low, but once the board realized that “the success of the ministry does not hinge upon the number of patients that we see, but on each individual patient that we treat,” doors began to open for expansion of the ministry.

In the adjoining town of Grabill, a former doctor’s office had sat vacant for a while. Without the necessary funds to purchase it immediately, the CCHC board approached the hospital that owned the building and were told that the hospital would give them an entire year to raise the funds. The Lord provided, and, through grants from local foundations and fundraising in the community, the clinic purchased the building and moved in.



This move has allowed the clinic to “blossom quite a bit” over the past 14 years by adding more hours, increasing the number of volunteers involved, and broadening the scope of services offered.

“We’ve been trying to find as many creative ways as possible to use the platform of health care to reach people for the Lord in all that time,” Mark says. “We’ve been keeping our model and our approach the exact same as we did back when we opened 23 years ago, and that was to offer everything totally free to whoever walks through the doors.”

CCHC does not require patients to meet any specific qualifications in order to receive treatment, including income, insurance, or even geographic.

**“The clinic was founded with the idea that health care could be used as a platform to reach people for Jesus.”**

Most of the patients they see are lower income, with around 80 to 85 percent falling within the federal poverty guidelines. But, even if they aren’t, the doctors, nurses, administrative staff, and chaplains who volunteer at CCHC still view it as an opportunity to share Christ’s love and the Gospel message, Mark says.

“We realize there are people going through different periods in their life,” Mark says. “Even if their life looks good on paper, they may be going through a time of struggle at that point. Maybe they’re in over their heads with debt or they just don’t have the expendable cash to go see a doctor.”

CCHC currently has around 100 volunteers, including doctors, physician

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## **Why SMI?**

**Since joining SMI**, both Mark Schlatter and his daughter, Laura, have seen large reductions in their medical bills as self-pay patients. Mark had a surgical procedure that was recommended by the clinic’s ear, nose, and throat doctor, which normally costs \$23,000. Mark says, “Because of the fact that I was paying my bills as a non-insured patient, it brought that \$23,000 cost down to \$8,000 for that procedure, and when I saw that happen, I thought, ‘Wow, this really does work!’”

Laura received dramatic reductions on the bills for her knee surgery for a torn meniscus. She says, “Because I presented myself as a self-paying patient, I was able to get some sizable discounts on my medical bills. The cost of my surgery came out at just over \$16,000!”

After a successful surgery and physical therapy, Laura was able to return to dancing for Ballet 5:8, a Christian ministry that uses the arts to present the gospel. “Praise the Lord for Samaritan staff who genuinely care about my health and healing from an injury, rather than making a buck off of a paying member,” says Laura. “It was so refreshing to have

a phone call with a Samaritan representative who, after discussing the next steps for my Need, was able to pray with me for continued healing and clarity. Samaritan has been an encouragement to me.”

Mark heard about Samaritan Ministries from another member of the board of directors of Christian Community Health Care, who was also an SMI member. The board was wanting to provide Mark, one of two employees of the volunteer-staffed medical clinic, and his family with a health care plan. Based upon the testimony of the other board member and the fact that SMI is a Christian ministry, Mark and the board members were intrigued.

“I personally looked into it and found that the approach Samaritan Ministries takes with its members is very intentional, as far as having the spiritual accountability with your church,” Mark says. He also appreciated that he would be investing in a Christian ministry as opposed to an organization that may support causes he would not agree with, and that the monthly Share amount is a lot less than many monthly insurance premiums out there. ♦



## Thirteen kids and one more!

by member Dr. David Sylvester

**T**herese struggled to handle her 13 kids and the daily grind of washing, cleaning, cooking, and trips to school. Who wouldn't? She breathed a sigh of relief when the twins, kids number 12 and 13, entered the local preschool.

And then she discovered she was expecting number 14.

It was a shock indeed as the stark realization hit her that yet another infant would need her constant attention. She met with her local priest looking for counsel and consent to pursue an abortion. Her priest gave counsel that ending the life of the unborn child was not God's plan and was in opposition to nature as well. She gave birth to a baby girl, number 14.

Many in today's culture would

quickly advise and encourage a woman such as Therese to terminate and enjoy what some have referred to as the "unencumbered life," suggesting that babies are burdens. In general, pro-choice activists favor abortion for multiple reasons such as rape, incest, the life of the mother, potential fetal deformity or special needs, and emotional distress. In recent days, an additional justification has been proposed—the future prospect of economic limitations for the unborn child. In 1980, *The New York Times* reported that President Reagan quieted a crowd by saying, "It has come to my attention that those in favor of abortion have already been born."

A central and critical issue at hand is whether the unborn baby

is a person. Some contend that the unborn is human but a non-person, suggesting that life only begins as functionality becomes apparent. Interestingly, when the crazed gunman entered the worship center at the Southerland Springs Church in South Texas and killed more than 25 worshippers, the official report listed those murdered as 26 to include the unborn child of Crystal Holcombe, who was eight months pregnant. Texas, along with 37 additional states have "feticide" laws which support the full personhood of the unborn, and good for them.

The renowned pro-life group, Live Action, cites an informative article, "The Rights of Personhood" to contend that, in at least two episodes in American history, certain groups

of human beings had their rights seized, allowing the confiscation of that which others wanted. African-Americans had labor in their possession but at one point in our history were viewed as “human, non-person.” Native Americans possessed land but were considered in the same manner. In both cases, forcing this artificial, sinful, and inhumane distinction on them gave rise to abuse and eased the collective conscience of the guilty.

Unborn babies have no such possessions to be seized but do serve to create the responsibility of time, money, and attention which some future parents (both women and men) would rather not give.

Unborn babies demonstrate miraculous functionality, even in the womb. Dr. Bernard Nathanson, former director of the largest abortion provider in our nation, shockingly wrote, “I put Mozart in a tape player and held it up against a womb at, say, seven months, and the baby moved a little, but when I put Van Halen on, the baby was jumping all over the place.” Dr. Nathanson further wrote in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, “There is no longer serious doubt in my mind that human life exists within the womb from the very onset of pregnancy.” Other studies have shown unborn twins playfully patting the hands of each other, reacting to light in their eyes, and to their father’s voice. They are both

fully human and fully person.

Those of us who are staunchly pro-life must complete the definition and put our money where our collective mouths are! Believers and churches must step up and help relieve the load and fear that expectant mothers often have—fears of a lack of money, support, housing, employment, acceptance and compassion. For Christians and churches to do less and proudly rest

on our rhetoric is something less than pro-life.

My family has been Samaritan Ministries members for many years, and we are thankful that is one way to support pro-life causes. Samaritan Ministries is actively pro-life, especially via the Morning Center

ministry that pays for the medical expenses of expectant mothers in underserved areas.

Jeremiah, the Old Testament prophet, received this affirming word from God, “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you, before you were born, I set you apart ...” Some of us are accidental parents, but there are no accidental children!

And who was that 14th kid born to Therese? Celine Dion. ♦

*Dr. David Sylvester is a writer and teaches business executives in the DFW area. He publishes teaching resources for pastors at [www.todayspulpit.com](http://www.todayspulpit.com).*

## Believers and churches must step up and help to relieve the load and fear that expectant mothers often have.

### Six ways you can contribute to the pro-life cause

- 1. Pray:** Any effective ministry must be dependent upon God.
- 2. Support the Morning Center,** a ministry Samaritan launched to provide free maternity care to women in crisis pregnancies. Visit [MorningCenter.org](http://MorningCenter.org) to learn more.
- 3. Get involved with a Pregnancy Resource Center in your area:**
  - Donate clothing.
  - Help get the word out on social media.
  - Answer hotline calls.
  - Teach a parenting class.
- 4. Minister at an abortion clinic:**
  - Simply pray.
  - Distribute literature.
  - More than 12,000 babies have been saved as a result of peaceful campaigns. Participate in 40 Days for Life campaigns ([40daysforlife.com](http://40daysforlife.com)).
- 5. Talk to your church leaders:**
  - Encourage awareness and Biblical teaching.
  - Get others from your church involved.
- 6. Contact your elected officials:** You can send an email to all your officials at once with this tool: [FRCaction.org/contact-officials](http://FRCaction.org/contact-officials)
  - Ask them to end government funding for abortion.
  - On the state level, ask your representatives to support measures that require ultrasounds before an abortion.

**When I hear** others talk about insurance, I realize how blessed we are to have found a better way through Samaritan. It seems to me that so much more is shared than with insurance. Plus, we are able to choose our doctors and almost always get substantial discounts. The best part of Samaritan though is the notes from other members. They encourage and remind me that I'm in God's hands.

*Barbara  
Idaho*

**We have been** blessed to have so many people in our corner praying for healing and relief for my husband. We are so thankful for the financial provision during this difficult time.

Samaritan Ministries has been a blessing for our family and many friends have chosen this option for their health care. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for being such a beautiful demonstration of God's love.

*Josh & Brittany  
Arizona*

**I needed to** schedule a test, but the place my doctor referred me to was going to cost over \$500. I used MDsave.com and found the same test nearby for only \$155. Wow! Such a difference. Everybody should check out that site.

I'm very grateful that Samaritan is looking out for the members with resources we can use to save money and that we can support one another in prayer as the Body of Christ.

*Lori  
Texas*

**Every time we** send a Share, pray for a Need, pay our bills, or read the newsletter, we thank our God for Samaritan Ministries. We are self-employed, and about six years ago God convicted us to explore options for health care needs. We prayed and investigated, and God heard and answered.

Little did we know that our health care needs would have devastated us financially and added an unimaginable amount of stress to our lives had we not responded to God's leading. This ministry and all the kind letters of encouragement and prayer have made a way for us to grow in our faith in Christ and in our brothers and sisters in Him. What a blessing to be part of His body as we minister to one another.

*Cary & Jan  
Montana*

**Going through cancer** has been very trying and scary, but the Lord continually reminded me that He will not leave or forsake me. I was even reminded of His presence on the 7th floor of the hospital. All I could see when I looked out the window was a cross on top of a church, and it was lit up at night, shining through the darkness. One of my doctors was named Dr. Godby (to God be the glory) and my nurse was named Angela (the angel). My other nurse was a young man who grew up on a Native American reservation and had just come back from a two-year term as a missionary in Africa. He and his wife were going to seminary and planning to start a church on the reservation. We prayed together a lot and praised God for His grace that is evident everywhere if we have the faith to see it.

The 7th floor was for people who were bad off and in so much pain, but I am thankful I was able to recov-

er without medications, and I never had more pain than I could handle. He will never leave you or forsake you, and you can take that to the bank! The expenses for my surgery and treatments were astronomical, but the hospital cut them in half and the bills are 100 percent paid, including the doctor bills. Samaritan members were awesome in coming through with the Shares! We are so blessed to be part of this ministry of believers helping one another. We tell everyone that this is the best health care plan we have ever had. To God be all the Glory!

*James  
Wyoming*

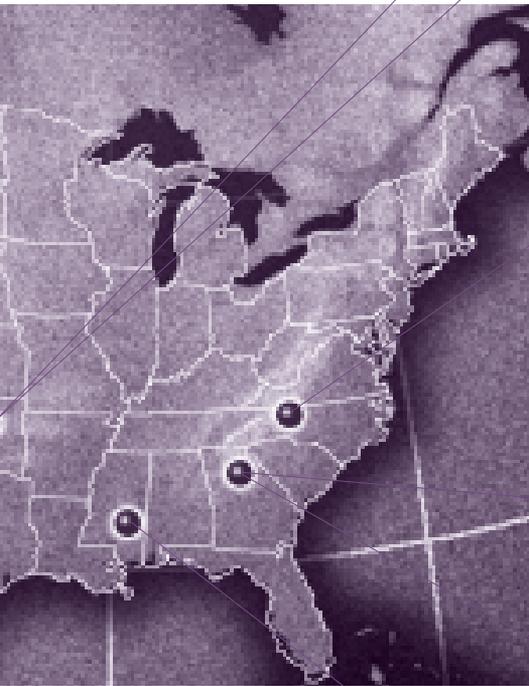


**I still can** hardly believe I had this accident where I nearly died from electrocution, but I wouldn't trade this experience with the Lord for anything. He saved and touched my life! I have had the opportunity to share my testimony at five different churches now, giving all the glory to God. I am so impressed with Samaritan Ministries from the model to the whole operation.

I am honored to be a part of Samaritan now more than ever having been on the other side of the sharing process. I must say that the notes and cards of prayers and encouragement just brought tears to my eyes as I felt the warm kindness and love from brothers and sisters in Christ. Praise God!

Thank you very much to the members for your faith and to the Samaritan staff for your hard work every day. This ministry truly is a blessing from above. I'm a strong advocate for Samaritan. I tell everyone I know about how wonderful Samaritan Ministries is.

*Doug  
Oklahoma*



**God is always** good even when we don't understand life's circumstances. I'm so thankful for Samaritan Ministries and the faithful believers who shared with me. And they take the time to pray for and encourage people they have never met because we are connected by faith in Jesus Christ. It would be easy to become overwhelmed with all the health challenges and medical bills,

but Samaritan makes it possible for me to concentrate on healing, knowing that others are bearing my burdens. What an amazing gift Samaritan is to me, and I'm so blessed to be part of God's design through this ministry.

*Teresa  
Oklahoma*

**My wife and** I have been members for five years, and this April she was diagnosed with colon cancer. It is obviously a scary diagnosis from a life perspective but also because of financial questions. So far the original bills have totalled more than \$250,000, but with cash-pay discounts we've only had to pay about \$125,000. All Shares have arrived in a timely manner and all of our bills are being paid by our wonderful Samaritan family. The Samaritan staff has been extremely helpful when I have questions.

What a blessing it has been for us to be connected to this ministry. We tell people all the time about Samaritan and encourage them to check it out and join. Thank you Samaritan family for ministering to our needs the way you have.

*Steve & Ronda  
Georgia*

**Stepping out in** faith to leave insurance and trust our spiritual family of believers in Christ was difficult for us. To God be the glory! His faithfulness to guide us has been proven through Samaritan Ministries.

I'm so thankful for the staff, too, for developing an easy online way to submit bills and for praying for me when I called in. I pray that many other Christians will find liberty and provision through this ministry.

*Shellie  
Mississippi*

**For many years** I talked and prayed with my friends about the cost of medical insurance. I always thought there ought to be a way for Christians to share each other's bills. Finally we found Samaritan Ministries, and now many in our church have also joined. We love Samaritan Ministries and trust that God will take care of us as we support one another.

*Jeff & Didema  
North Carolina*

**In 2017 my** husband was diagnosed with brain cancer and the next year-and-a-half was consumed with his care. I had put off having a recommended colonoscopy at age 50, but after he passed, I thought I should do it, especially since I do have some other health problems, too.

Unfortunately, the doctor perforated my colon, and within 24 hours I was in severe pain and running a fever. I had to have emergency surgery to repair the puncture.

I was very discouraged and struggled with thoughts that perhaps it was best if I could just go on to join my husband in heaven. I am already disabled to the point that I am a burden on my children. But God brought me through it, and my family reassured me they still want me here with them. I am so thankful for the encouragement of Samaritan members through this extremely trying episode, and I thank God for His gift of life!

I do have a suggestion that members should be wary of routine colonoscopies. They may not be necessary, depending on the type of cancer that runs in a family, and doctors are starting to do stool samples instead to spot problems. There is serious risk from sepsis if something happens like what happened to me.

*Nina  
Georgia*

## Common Ground Without Compromise

### 25 Questions to Create Dialogue on Abortion

by member Stephen Wagner

*Steve Wagner has mastered the art of pro-life communication, and I can't think of anyone better suited to winsomely engage hostile critics. He's a tough-minded thinker with a gracious attitude, one who charms rather than repels. Please, don't just read this book. Consume it. Lives will be saved because you did.*

—Scott Klusendorf, President,  
Life Training Institute

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Abortion is not a sporting event. It isn't a theoretical issue to be debated for fun. Abortion is a moral issue that profoundly impacts people and culture. It's a decision that's difficult to make. The truth about abortion matters because it changes the course of people's lives. Unlike football, it's not enough to just root for your team, ignoring other viewpoints. The stakes are high, so it's important to make sure we've listened to all sides and considered whether we might be mistaken about some things.

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With this book, I'm suggesting we can strike a happy balance with an attitude of goodwill. I believe that you and I are both seeking truth, so we have at least one item of common ground. I'll bet we have more. If we discover those first, then hopefully we can resolve some of our differences, too. That process requires asking good questions, listening, and believing the best about the other person in the process.

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May I humbly suggest that we try to be humble? We believe we're right,

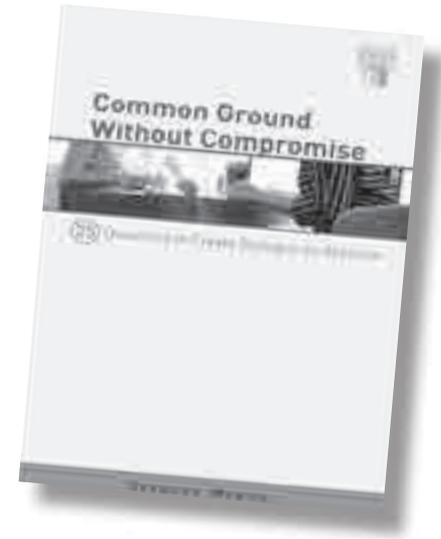
especially when we have good reasons for our views, but let's remember some things we believe are false, so we should take the mode of a learner and listen to opposing opinions. After all, they may reflect an aspect of the truth that we have ignored until now. Instead of standing toe-to-toe, ready to beat on each other, let's stand shoulder-to-shoulder and look at the abortion question together. Instead of assuming the other person is wrong, let's make sure we hear each other.

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Common ground is the place where two sides of a dispute intersect and agree. It comes in two forms. I can attempt to point out things in my belief system with which you can agree, even if you haven't considered them before. I can also point out things in your belief system with which I can agree. I can actively pursue both forms of common ground, even if you are not as vigilant as I am. Of course, if we both seek common ground, we'll find it quickly.

I try to agree with people whenever possible, especially if they disagree with me about something important. For starters, we have common ground with every human being, just in virtue of being human. In addition, most people share many common-sense notions about morality, knowledge, and the law. We can certainly find at least one belief in common with anyone we're talking to.

Many of us think that in order to agree on anything, we must agree on everything. This is obviously false. We



may agree on principles and not on applications. We may agree on a conclusion but disagree on reasons that support that conclusion. We may be able to find common ground on a solution to the problem of unplanned pregnancy, even if we disagree on everything else. Any point of agreement can be useful to dialogue.

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Why are we afraid to talk about abortion? First, we don't want to offend people or hurt someone's feelings who has had an experience with abortion. Not only that, we think it's a mistake to say anything good or positive about our "opposition." We're afraid of giving up too much ground, of giving up something important by acknowledging another point of view. We also know that if we hear an opposing view, we may change our minds. Really, discussing abortion is an exercise in considering how we might be wrong about it. That's uncomfortable. ♦

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Member Stephen Wagner is the Executive Director of Justice For All ([jfaweb.org](http://jfaweb.org)), a ministry that helps pro-lifers talk respectfully and persuasively with those who disagree with them.

## The 25 Questions to Create Common Ground

*In the book, Stephen models how to discuss each question with a friend or acquaintance. It also includes additional questions for reflection and helpful endnotes to aid study of each topic. It is written as a letter to both pro-choice and pro-life people, so you can encourage a friend to read the book in order to start a conversation!*

1. What do you think about late-term abortion?
2. Should abortion be used as a form of birth control?
3. Do you believe men should have the choice to abort their fetuses?
4. What do you think about aborting a fetus simply because she is female?
5. When a wanted fetus presents a threat to the health of the mother, should we avoid abortion if possible?
6. Would you prefer that there were fewer abortions?
7. Do you believe some reasons for abortion are more understandable than others? Which ones?
8. What do you think about callous, light-hearted, flippant abortions?
9. What do you think about a situation in which a woman goes against her deeply held beliefs to have an abortion?
10. What do you think about abortion if the unborn has been diagnosed with Down syndrome?
11. Should abortion be legal through all nine months of pregnancy and for any reason?
12. Should we encourage women to view pictures of the results of abortion before they have one?
13. Do you believe what is removed during an abortion is a new whole organism of the human species?
14. Is abortion wrong if it causes pain to the fetus?
15. If a couple gets pregnant, should the man shoulder half of the responsibility of caring for the child?
16. Is it right for boyfriends and parents to pressure women to have abortions?
17. Should parents be allowed to weigh in when an underage daughter is seeking an abortion?
18. Should women be encouraged to consider adoption?
19. Would you support education on how to prevent pregnancy?
20. Do you support the sort of abortion that protects children?
21. Do you think some women should be forced to abort?
22. Are you opposed to sexism and racism?
23. Do you believe it is sad and tragic when a woman dies from an abortion, whether it is an illegal back-alley abortion or a legal abortion?
24. Do you believe it's important to respectfully consider the opinions of those who disagree with you?
25. If we avoid discussing abortion in public, does that help the men and women struggling with past, present, or future abortion decisions?



to-member sharing model became even more apparent in the past year as the reputation of health care sharing was tarnished. A few organizations got into disputes with their members and drew the scrutiny of the media and government officials. Unfortunately, the concepts of direct sharing and insurance were often confused. We have responded by publishing a new section on our website outlining best practices for health care sharing.

Samaritan Ministries has always communicated that dependence on God in faith is the foundation for all of life, including health care. We want everyone to know our ministry is based on our shared Biblical convictions, not contractual obligations to pay for certain treatments at certain facilities like insurance. Galatians 6 teaches us to “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ,” and that’s why we faithfully share with each other every month.

The best practices are intended to help communicate how we carry out our ministry in responsible, sustainable, and transparent ways. Here are some highlights:

- Direct sharing from one member to another
- Governed by a member-led Board of Directors
- Annual independent audit
- Stewarding administrative costs well so more sharing dollars can go to meeting medical needs
- Not using insurance agents or representatives for marketing
- Clearly communicating to members about potential changes in the Share amounts

I’d encourage you to check out the best practices page on our web-

site, and also to view our annual report, which is available through your Dash account in the Member Connect app in the Board of Directors section.

As we enter the presidential election year of 2020, please pray for God’s favor on our country and government leaders and that God would protect our religious liberties and our reputation as a ministry. First Timothy 2 teaches us that prayers of supplication, intercession, and thanksgiving should be made for our government authorities so that “we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.” The passage also indicates that as we demonstrate godliness and holiness we are pleasing God and playing a part in people “coming to knowledge of the truth.” People could be saved because we share one another’s health care burdens and give Him the glory!

I am often encouraged by member letters that give God the glory even during difficult health care trials. I hope you’ll take the time to read a few examples in this month’s newsletter:

- Annette wrote to say that talking about her experience with Samaritan is a witness to unbelieving family members.
- Doug told how a traumatic accident gave him the opportunity to share his testimony at five different churches.
- James shared that while in the hospital he was able to connect with and pray for his caretaker who is also a missionary and seminary student preparing to plant churches on Native American reservations.

- Steve wrote that even during his wife’s battle with cancer they are telling everyone they meet how the Body of Christ has ministered to them through Samaritan Ministries.

I hope you will be encouraged by these examples of how God uses us to spread the Gospel when we simply love and encourage one another in faith.

First Timothy 2 also encourages us to pray for “all people,” so in 2020 let us ask God to awaken all Christians and Americans to these truths:

- The only hope for reforming our health care system is turning to God and obeying His Word.
- More regulations, mandates, insurance, and taxes aren’t going to make a better health care system.
- In order to have quality health care at an affordable price, we must turn to Biblical understandings of private property, personal responsibility, free markets, and the generous charity of a free people inspired by Christ-centered compassion.

May God continue to be glorified through Samaritan Ministries as we trust in Him and faithfully minister to one another.

For The Kingdom!

Ted Pittenger  
Founder & International President ♦

We also wreak horrific collateral damage with the ripple effect of our sinful choices.

It's quite strange, really, that society would argue with God about the value of human beings. We're like rebellious children, stamping our feet and shouting at our Father, "I'm not special because YOU say I'm special—I'm special because I say I am! You're not the boss of me!"

Our unbelieving culture argues with God about human value and our purpose in multiple ways.

Culture says humans are an accident of evolution; God says we are His specially created image-bearers (Genesis 1:26-27).

Culture says the earth and the animals would be better off without humans; God says we are His representatives, placed here to tend creation for Him (Genesis 1:28-31).

Culture says we're just a higher form of animal; God says we are created just below Him—above, and distinct from, the animals (Psalm 8:5).

Culture says we've damaged this planet beyond repair; God says that, as the Alpha and Omega, He will renew the earth one day (Revelation 21:5-6).

Culture says man is the measure of all things, therefore humans decide their own worth; God says we have worth and dignity because, as His image-bearers, we are the crown of His creation (Psalm 8:5).

Culture says children are a burden; God says they are a blessing (Psalm 127:3; Psalm 128:3).

Culture says the preborn are disposable; God says He forms each person in the womb and writes their story—and He even knows us before we are conceived (Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5).

Culture says we should help people die once they become an inconvenience; God says our times are in His hands (Psalm 31:15).

Culture says we have to make choices we were never designed to make (like sacrificing our unborn

## **God, the Alpha and Omega, sees and knows and loves every image-bearer, whether born or unborn. He orchestrates our beginnings—and we have no business erasing a human story.**

children); God says that for us to make such choices never even entered His mind (Jeremiah 7:31).

In these ways and more, our society denies that human value is intricately linked to being created in God's image.

Our issue with God goes back to the beginning, when we bought the lie that He was somehow holding out on us and therefore we should take matters into our own hands (see Genesis 3).

Here's how I put it in *Unleashing Your Courageous Compassion: 40 Reflections on Rescuing the Unborn*.

Every time a baby is aborted, another human being has decided that God can't be trusted. A destiny is denied and a life taken

because, fundamentally, a mother doesn't believe God will take care of her and her baby. She can't see past her circumstances to a trustworthy heavenly Father.

Yet God, the Alpha and Omega, sees and knows and loves every image-bearer, whether born or unborn. He orchestrates our beginnings—and we have no business erasing a human story.

I often read the following verse by imagining it as the prayerful plea of a preborn person:

My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me. (Psalm 31:15)

We cannot simultaneously claim to worship God, the "Alpha," while allowing babies to be destroyed in the womb.

We cannot claim to worship Him as "Omega" while allowing our elderly or disabled neighbors to be intentionally killed.

Let's continue bringing honor to God, the Alpha and Omega, by protecting the most vulnerable among us. ♦

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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.*

### **Teacher suspended in Turkey**

A Christian teacher in Turkey was suspended in November after a newspaper accused her of missionary activities in social media promoting her faith, Middle East Concern reports. The story about Esmâ Bağcı Kaya, who taught at a private school, led to an investigation by the country's National Board of Education. She has filed a court case against media outlets and the board. *Pray that the truth will be revealed through Esmâ's case and that Christians in Turkey will find ways to share the Gospel effectively.*

### **Nigerian pastor released**

A Nigerian pastor was freed in November by Boko Haram terrorists after seven months in captivity, International Christian Concern says. Moses Oyeleke was kidnapped on April 10 and pressured to convert to Islam during his captivity. *Praise God for the pastor's release and pray for safety for Nigerian Christians.*

### **Armenian priests killed**

Two Armenian Catholic priests were gunned down and a deacon

wounded on November 11 in Syria, ICC says. ISIS has claimed responsibility for the attack. The church leaders were on their way to inspect an Armenian Catholic Church that suffered damage in the Syrian war. Authorities believe the car was targeted because of a window tag that identified it was being used by Armenian Catholic clergy. *Pray for a full recovery for the deacon, Fati Sano, and for protection for Christians remaining in or returning to Syria.*

### **Indian pastor arrested**

An Indian pastor has been accused of insulting Hindu religious sentiments, ICC reports. Pastor John Britto was arrested November 2 after burned images of Hindu gods were found near a fence surrounding his church near Coimbatore. *Pray that the charges will be dropped and that Pastor Britto can continue to serve his church.*

### **Egyptian family attacked**

A Christian family is unable to return to their home in an upper Egyptian village following a knife attack on November 17 by a known Islamic extremist, ICC reports. The mother, Houda Hana, received 20 stitches in her head. One son required surgery and the other was treated for minor injuries. The attack occurred after the Muslim questioned why the family was sitting outside the entrance of their home, a common custom in the villages. *Pray for complete healing for the family and freedom for Christians in Egypt.*

### **Pakistani journalist resigns**

The only Christian journalist registered with a Pakistan press club has

resigned due to harassment and discrimination from co-workers, ICC reports. Gonila Gill says the harassment began after her marriage to a Muslim journalist and their decision to raise their son as a Christian. *Pray for Christian professionals in hostile nations to be treated with respect and for Gonila and her family to live in peace.*

### **Christian poisoned**

A Christian man was reportedly poisoned by extended family because of his own family's newfound Christian faith, ICC says. Ronald Nayekuliza was attending a memorial service for his father on November 10 when he was poisoned with pesticide in his food. His wife says the attack has created fear among Christians in the community. *Pray for Ronald's complete recovery and for peace in the Christian community in Uganda.*

### **Christian teen girl killed**

A Christian teenager was killed in a November 16 mob attack of 50 Muslim men intended to drive 10 Christian families out of a neighborhood in Lahore, Pakistan, ICC says. Sonia Sarwar was killed and six others were wounded. Ironically, the attack was allegedly instigated by a Christian man trying to steal the Christian families' properties. A report has been filed by police, but no arrests have been made. *Pray for healing for those wounded in the attacks, for the family of the slain girl, and for peace and safety for the Christian families involved.* ♦

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

assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, receptionists, chaplains, and maintenance workers. They also have volunteers who help outside the clinic with special events and fundraisers.

The clinic is open Monday mornings, and Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings.

CCHC leadership is always open to the possibilities of new services as well. The clinic has partnered with a women's pregnancy ministry called A Hope Center as well as Living Free Recovery, a weekly addiction counseling program.

"We're also taking a look at some future potential specialty clinics, such as a diabetes clinic, dental, prescription drug assistance, and a women's health clinic," Mark says.

They've even been approached by a local surgeon about starting a surgical clinic.

"It's as creative as we want to be," Mark adds.

They are also considering mental health services, having done some community assessment and screenings.

"Most of our patients who come in will have a dual issue in their life," Mark says. "They'll have the medical need, but then they'll also have a spiritual need or a mental health need that comes along with that."

Central to CCHC, though, is that difference from other free clinics. Secular social agencies may not have the same compassion offered at the CCHC, which is a Holy Spirit difference, Mark says.

Another important aspect of the clinic's mission is the one-on-one interaction patients get with the medical providers at the clinic, who are more than willing to take the

time to listen to a patient's story, and hear about what's going on in their life.

Despite the responsibilities of leading the clinic and also running his own business—Mark and his wife, Koleen, run the Olde Church Shoppes, which consists of several small businesses inside a historic church building the couple restored in a nearby town—he's still just as passionate about the outreach opportunities at CCHC after 23 years.

"It's still something that just really gets me excited," he says, "because we're actually making a difference in people's lives and sharing the Gospel with a lot of people who would not normally go to church or open up their hearts to anything having to do with Christianity or religion." ♦

## **Interested in starting a health clinic? Mark Schlatter can help**

**Just as he** is passionate and excited about using health care as mission outreach, Mark Schlatter of Christian Community Health Care near Fort Wayne, Indiana, is passionate about helping other churches that are seriously considering starting their own local clinic.

CCHC, which offers basic, free medical care at its location in Grabill, Indiana, has helped other organizations get their own free clinics started and has been approached by churches wanting to start CCHC satellite locations.

He suggests:

- Get together with others who share this interest and pray about it, seeking the Lord's guidance.
- Ask people to volunteer. "I think you'd be surprised how many people will come out of the shadows and would want to be involved in the ministry, especially being able to use their talents for the Lord," Mark says. "There are a lot of doc-

tors out there who are just really hungry for that opportunity."

There are also resources available to help keep costs low for anything from medical liability to pharmaceutical drugs to equipment.

"Many times, you will be able to start a clinic like that on a shoestring budget by asking a church to provide the facility for it, so you wouldn't necessarily have to rent or purchase a building to start the clinic. You can start off small like that," Mark says.

He adds that he would be very happy to talk with anyone who is interested in starting a free clinic and would even be willing to travel to help start a project for those who are seriously interested.

For more information, you can send an email to the clinic at [info@ChristianCommunityHealthCare.org](mailto:info@ChristianCommunityHealthCare.org); call 260-627-2242, ext. 7; or join the CCHC email contact list at [christiancommunityhealthcare.org/contact\\_us](http://christiancommunityhealthcare.org/contact_us). ♦

Delight yourself  
in the Lord, and  
He will give you  
the desires of  
your heart.

Psalm 37:4

**T**he prophet Jeremiah says that our hearts are deceitful and corrupt (Jeremiah 17:9), so how can our Holy God give us the desires of our hearts? By changing our hearts.

When we delight in the LORD, our hearts are transformed so we desire the good things God wants to give us. Then we pray to Him and He gives them to us. When

we delight in Him and seek Him, we will lack no good thing (Psalm 34:10).

The key is for us to worship the Lord and delight in Him, not anyone or anything else. When we delight in Him, seeking Him above all else, He will give us the desires of our hearts.

For the Kingdom,



Ray King