

AUGUST 2020

Christian Health Care Newsletter

COVID shows we should deregulate telehealth—and much more

by Wayne Winegarden, Pacific Research Institute

THE COVID-19 CRISIS has tested America's health care system like no other event in recent memory.

One irony during this pandemic is that America has actually experienced the promise of health care innovation in an important way, namely through telehealth.

Telehealth allows patients to talk with their doctors online using video-conferencing platforms. Doctors can see patients, discuss their symptoms, order tests, and even prescribe medication.

Earlier this spring, as the coronavirus was becoming a serious problem across the country, Congress temporarily suspended regulations that restricted health care services from being provided virtually. Some of the relaxed regulations included setting aside Medicare's prohibition on the types of services offered through telehealth. Another regulation required parity in payments between in-person and virtual doctor visits. There was also a prohibition on doctors who were licensed to practice medicine in one state from seeing patients virtually in other states unless they also had a license to practice there. These temporary reforms have enabled medical offices to offer patients unprecedented access to telehealth services.

As millions were being asked to shelter in place, many patients with chronic conditions or who had a regular check up scheduled were not seeing their doctors. Telehealth enabled patients to keep these important doctor visits in a virtual format, allowing for health care with social distancing. Thanks to telehealth, patients received needed care, avoided having to go into medical facilities that may have had COVID-19 patients, and avoided the potential medical problems that could have arisen had these appointments been missed.

Telehealth has proved extremely popular with patients. A Kyruus survey found that three-quarters of those surveyed wanted "virtual care to be a

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Samaritan™
MINISTRIES

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Completely equipped for life

Member Letter:

DIRECT SHARING IS BETTER
FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

It is amazing how well Samaritan's model works! Insurance cannot compare to bearing one another's burdens through the Body of Christ.

When I tell my friends about it they are often skeptical, but after hearing how our Needs are met and how we send Shares directly to others they are curious and want to know more. We're so thankful that as small business owners, we found a better health care model with Christian values.

**Josh & Bambi
FLORIDA**



Sharing Summary | July 2020

NEEDS

\$29,632,421

IN NEGOTIATIONS

\$8,067,033

SHARES

\$29,632,421

MEMBER HOUSEHOLDS

80,541

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.
membership@samaritanministries.

PHONE MENU

1-1
1-2
1-3

Have a Need? Use the Health Resources App on Dash



- Compare quality and cost of health care services in your area using Healthcare Bluebook. Receive a \$250 reward when you submit a screenshot showing you chose a green fair-price provider.
- 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.

Send a note. Pay your share. Always stay alert in prayer.

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Risk assessment and crisis intervention in light of Psalm 91

by John Ensore, PassionLife

How I equip myself with the scandalous promise
'No evil shall befall you.'

THE UNSPEAKABLE WOES of this world include deadly pandemics, earthquakes, floods, mass shootings, urban violence, genocide, famine, enslavement, and the blood-letting horrors of war itself. We must each decide how to respond. What will we say? What will we do? How do the Scriptures guide us?

Consider the example of the Samaritan in Luke 10. Following the law of love, which prompted one action and then another, the Samaritan gave his person and his purse to rescue a man from an unjust death. Quite a paradigm for crisis intervention.

Consider China, where the story of the midwives in Egypt is inspiring Christians facing a forced abortion policy. For 40 years the policy has demanded unmarried women kill their unborn babies. Married couples are limited to one or two children, which for cultural and economic reasons, usually means having sons and aborting baby girls.

In recent years, leaders in the unregistered, underground churches have cried out, "Let us be like the midwives in Egypt. Let us fear God and save our babies."

The midwives defied the law and deceived Pharaoh to let the babies live. God not only protected them from harm but also poured out blessing, greatly multiplying the Israelites and giving the midwives their own families (Exodus 1:20).

How many believers in other times and places have suffered much in rescuing the innocent,

In one sense this promise seems absurd—provably false and open to mockery from this world.

tending to the sick in the midst of plague, or working in war zones, or other relief work?

As I think of these amazing examples of faith and meditate on Scripture, I'm struck by Psalm 91 and its breathtaking assurances of protection:

I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress,

my God, in whom I trust.
For He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence" (verses 2-3).

What a beautiful promise of divine protection for those who trust in Him. He is able to foil the traps set to harm us and protect us from stalking diseases that would kill us.

In verses 9-10, God promises to protect those who trust in Him against all harm:

Because you have made the Lord your dwelling place—
The Most High, who is my refuge—no evil shall befall you, no plague come near your tent.

In one sense this promise appears to be absurd—provably false and open to mockery from this world. After all, COVID-19 kills Christians and non-Christians alike. If Psalm 91 teaches that God always protects those who trust Him from all harm all the time, then

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Member Spotlight

Tom Evans | Family Radio

by Michael Miller



Member Tom Evans

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TOM EVANS STRIVES to keep Family Radio “laser-focused on our mission to spread the Gospel and comfort the saints.”

The CEO is leading the network ([familyradio.org](https://www.familyradio.org)), which has 76 stations with a potential market of 70 million people throughout the U.S., into a digital future and new headquarters as the reach and influence of over-the-air radio fades.

“We call ourselves a 60-year-old startup and we’re looking for ways to capture the changes but keep the essential part of what we are,” Tom says. “Our challenge as a Christian broadcaster is how can we go where people are? Our job is to present the Gospel. There are so many digital opportunities now. The digital marketplace is opening like crazy. Every Christian broadcaster needs to embrace technology for new ways of bringing the Gospel.”

Family Radio has seen “a tremendous amount of growth” on its streaming sites. Right now, it has two streams but is looking to multiply those by three or four times. More people are tuning in to those streams, using the FR app on their phones.

Smart speaker usage to listen to

Family Radio is also increasing, Tom notes.

“It’s just becoming more apparent that more and more people, young and old, are gravitating towards these types of things and using radio less and less,” he says. “How much longer is radio going to be viable? We don’t know. Five years, maybe? Ten years? It’s a transitional step. That’s why

‘Our job is to present the Gospel. There are so many digital opportunities now.’

we’re putting more emphasis on podcasting and on-demand content.”

Some of that content will soon include regionally focused storytelling along the lines of NPR’s *This American Life*. Right now, Family Radio is a “hybrid.” “We’re about 65 percent music and the remaining portion is talk and teaching,” the latter divided among syndicated programming from such teachers

as John MacArthur, Alistair Begg, and Ken Ham.

Growth and controversy

The network has come a long way since Tom began his tenure there in 1987.

The California native first became aware of Family Radio, started in 1958 in the San Francisco Bay Area, while he was a history major at University of California-Berkeley. During his night shift with the campus parking service, Tom would work on term papers—“even my senior thesis!”—and listen to Family Radio’s open forum featuring founder Harold Camping.

After establishing a friendship with Camping, Tom landed a job at Family Radio when he graduated. His first job was supervisor of the print facility, then facilities manager, and then media manager, overseeing Camping’s interviews. He eventually became assistant general manager and then the GM in 2014.

But Tom’s time at Family Radio also has been marked by turmoil over Camping’s infamous predictions that Jesus would return on a

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Why Samaritan Ministries?

As FAMILY RADIO dropped below 100 employees, the Christian radio network could no longer offer group health insurance.

"That forced us to look for other options," says Tom Evans, CEO at the Franklin, Tennessee-based ministry.

His wife, Christina, "being the type of person she is," did due diligence on health care sharing and landed on Samaritan Ministries, according to Tom.

"She felt it was most in line with us," he says. "She has always remained impressed with your newsletters, how much Samaritan members care, and how amazingly God provides."

Christina says that she loves "that the Lord is using my Share to help someone else in need."

"I feel like I am part of His plan in helping and loving the Body of Christ," she says.

Christina sadly had a miscarriage around the time the Evanses joined Samaritan, making it pre-existing. But members stepped up through donations to the Member Assistance Fund and sent almost enough to pay for expenses.

"That kind of sold us on the whole concept of the Body sharing one another's burdens, which is one of the most gratifying things," Tom says.

Then, when Christina became pregnant again, it was the Evanses' first opportunity to see the Need process in action.

"Being new to Samaritan, I was a little concerned how it would work, but we were certainly blessed when Samaritan shared my pregnancy all the way through," Christina says.

She also says she appreciates the newsletter.

"It is full of wonderful stories, current events and analytics," she says. "It is always interesting to me to see how God has provided for all the Needs of members."

The Evanses' Samaritan membership has led to other connections, as well.



When the family of Bob Starnes, co-founder of Brentwood Studios and the subject of the June Member Spotlight, was assigned a Share for one of the Evanses' Needs, Sara Starnes biked from their home in Franklin to the Evans home.

"She was so gracious," Tom says. "We talked to her on our porch for at least an hour. That led to my talking to Bob, and we interviewed him for one of our 'Family Connection' programs."

Christina agrees.

"It was great learning an SMI member lived in my neighborhood," she says. "That was splendid."

Family Radio also runs Samaritan's *Family Health Checkup* spot, a one-minute informational radio program featuring SMI's Doug Chamberlain.

"When we first started with Samaritan, I thought it would be great if you guys started a short medical informational spot, and lo and behold you guys were doing that!" Tom says. "We wanted to inform our listeners and help them find resources that would be a benefit to them. That program is a perfect complement to our programming." ♦♦♦

Book Excerpt

Weak is the new strong

by member Todd Lollar, Mobilize Ministries



WHAT IF YOU didn't have to hide your weaknesses anymore?

Todd Lollar was never given that option. Slow-moving, speech-impaired, cerebral-palsied, and wheelchair-bound, Todd's physical weaknesses were always apparent. Escaping them was impossible. But, through God's movement in the trials of his life, Todd became deeply thankful for what most everyone else would consider devastating. Journey with Todd as he discovers, experiences, and lives the triumphant truth of 2 Corinthians 12:9: "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness."

Roll with Todd through the pages of his life. Lean on his weak frame. And let him guide you to the One who will also show you that weak is the new strong.

Be encouraged by how God has used Todd's speaking ministry around the world and learn about Mobilize Ministries, which Todd founded to mobilize missional living, helping Christians expand the good news of Jesus and His kingdom among their existing spheres of influence.

MY LIFE NEARLY ended just as it began.

Seconds after I was born, blue-faced and barely breathing, the doctors rushed me out of the delivery room and put me on oxygen. While I was struggling to live, my mother pleaded with God for my life. She shed no tears of fear or hopelessness. Rather, she trusted her creator. God calmed her soul and reassured her I would live. (Years later, he would fully answer her two-part prayer on my behalf.) ...

I am mobilized in a wheelchair. I specifically use that phrase because I am not totally or partially paralyzed. I could walk with a cane

or walker if I chose to, but I choose not to. Why? Because my calling in life is to make a difference in other people's lives, and I've discovered that society seems to be more accepting of someone approaching them in a wheelchair than someone who's struggling to approach them. That's the practical reason. More personally, my desire to help others far exceeds my desire to walk. Far from being a two-wheeled strait-jacket for my legs, my wheelchair frees me to do life.

Another issue I must daily deal with is my speed. Even though my physical challenges have drastically improved as I've aged, one reality

remains: I'm slow. I talk slowly. I move slowly. I do not get things done even close to as fast as you do. I've adapted, but my all-around slowness is still apparent, especially when I roll next to a friend on a walk. My gifts are much more relational—and slow. This slowness is an asset. Effective leadership isn't about how much you can get done; it's about how much of an impact you make. That doesn't require speed.

It's also amazing to see how God works when we just ... slow ... down. I've often noticed that people who claim to be too busy may be purposefully busy because they're

running away from deeper pain. They fill their time with things to do and places to be, and so God can't speak into the empty silence of their hidden hurt. I've seen the roots of such pain come into the light of Christ's healing simply because someone was forced to slow down when they spoke with me. ...

Abused

Not only was I born into a weakness I can't control, but I was also born into a household with an abusive dad. In addition to physically and mentally abusing my mother, my father would often lash out at me by trapping me in the bathroom as punishment. I never understood why.

To this day, all I can guess is that maybe my disability was too much for him to handle. Maybe he was abused as a kid. (Hurt people hurt people, right?) Maybe my biological father's weaknesses had been exploited by someone who had supposedly loved him as well. As an adult remembering that child trapped in a bathroom for no apparent reason, I didn't realize how that abuse had become a deep-seated part of my identity. That ongoing exploitation of my weakness was the first wall of my inner prison. This abuse confined my life and caused me always to feel entrapped by my weakness. My identity became the boy imprisoned by his disability. ...

Discovering my true identity

My daily quiet times with Jesus revealed to me that my identity was in Christ and would always be in Christ. In other words, I needed to stop looking in the mirror and

start looking toward God—always. Who I am was not scrawled on the walls of my weakness.

When the truth of my identity permeated my heart and mind, I wrote these life-changing words in my journal as a way to constantly remind myself of who I really am: "Life is more about who Christ is rather than who I am, because who I am is in Christ and Christ in me." I am not defined anymore by myself nor my limitation, but by Christ and Him alone! ...

Mom's prayer for my life

When I told my mom about my decision to go into full-time vocational ministry, she told me something she'd kept secret ever since I was born: "Todd, when you were born, you almost died. I asked God, 'Lord, if you will just let my son live, please, may he be a minister for you!'"

God was in the process of answering that prayer. He had allowed me to live, and now He was setting me on a path to become a minister. In time, I earned a master's in Biblical and related studies, which opened doors for me to become the full-time minister He had called me to be.

Sharing the Gospel through my life and words has become my greatest passion. I can't help but speak, share, and show the love of Christ every day. That this is my lifelong career amazes me. That God would choose to use someone like me amazes me even more. So I cling to Him in gratefulness. I worship Him in awe. And I share Him with others because what He's done with me, I know He can do with everyone else. You don't have

to be a minister to experience God's power in your weakness. You can just be you. ...

Weakness in community with your spouse

When Marissa entered my life and willfully, joyfully wanted to help me in so many different areas of my life and ministry, I didn't know what to do! ...

In choosing to believe that Marissa didn't want to be with me, let alone marry me, I had a startling revelation: I was robbing Marissa of the blessings that Moses's friends had experienced, that the paralytic's friends had experienced, and that my friends at Time Square had experienced of God's power in my weaknesses among community. It took time for me to realize that I was not going to be the only weak one in the marriage.

This biblical truth helped me see the vision of Marissa marrying me in a fresh perspective: "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up" (Ecclesiastes 4:9–10) ...

Are you passing on the power?

Some of you may be thinking, I'd love to disciple others, but I don't have _____. That blank could be filled by any number of apparent weaknesses:

- "I don't have time."
- "I don't have people skills."

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How you can gain revelation from hard times—and why it matters

by member Susanne Maynes

I'M LYING PROPPED up in a dimly lit room, curtained off from the other occupant. Lifting heavy eyelids, I see there's a man seated beside me.

Oh, right, it's my husband. He's been here the whole time they worked on me. I went under the knife around 10 a.m., so I think it's maybe 11:30. I ask what time it is.

"Two o'clock," Scott says.

Wait, what? I have no recollection of the recovery room. At all.

This whole experience has been bizarre.

First, the dawning realization that I'd need to get my hip joint replaced. Then the steps of preparation and planning. Get ahead at the office, plan to work from home for a while—check. Get ahead with schoolwork—check. Get medical equipment—check.

Finally, the mental push to jump off this high dive before I change my mind and climb back down the ladder (I'm a medical wimp).

So here I am, and it's done. I'm the Bionic Woman. Boom.

Recuperating at home, I recognize there's more to healing than what's happening in my body (although that's the only part everyone talks about).

How's recovery? How's your hip? Getting around okay?

Thankfully, that's all good. I'm healing up well and should get back into the swing of things quickly.

But how am I really? That's another question entirely.

Truth is, I just experienced significant trauma. Doctors sliced open my leg, sawed through my bones, hammered a piece of titanium into my femur, then sewed me back up.

Sure, it was all under anesthesia, but it's a big deal—and my body knows exactly what happened.

Don't fear the thin place. It's a glimpse into heaven.

For the ultimate sake of its healthy function, my body suffered a type of necessary violence against it.

I didn't see what happened. I didn't feel it at the time. But I feel so very vulnerable.

When the surgeon's scalpel made that six-inch incision on my hip, it opened more than just my flesh. It opened a portal to another dimension, spiritually speaking.

Being cut open transported me to what the ancient Celts called a "thin place"—a veil where earth and heaven meet. Where revelation comes easily.

Through this portal of pain, I see

the cross of Christ a little more clearly.

My body is wounded, my soul raw and tender. I'm overwhelmed by all the suffering around me.

A man requesting prayer for his wife's brain tumors. Friends with chronic health concerns. The local guy whose brother just died.

So many reasons to weep. We are small. Life is hard.

But also, beautiful.

A couple finds their lost little boy. Newly born twins reach out to grasp each other's hands. Two people disagree on social media with respectful kindness.

Such things, too, sting the eyes with tears.

On our difficult journey, we need the help and comfort of our Good Shepherd. We need each other's empathy.

Human fragility and pain and vulnerability are not realities which most of us are comfortable discussing. We'd rather help with something practical or share the perfect Bible verse. We'd rather stay busy, our drug of choice.

But the thin place offers more.

There, the upside-down turns right-side-up. Weakness is strength, trials are treasure, sorrow turns to joy. There, awareness of human mortality is a gift, transforming our perspective.

There, we encounter One who

suffered a necessary violence, not for the sake of his own healing, but for ours.

Jesus let the weight of our sins crush Him. He was pierced, hammered, and hung without so much as a sip of sour wine for the pain. He fully entered human suffering. He understands our fragile nature, our limitations, our wounds and scars, like no one else.

He invites us to walk with Him through this hard life, not to escape pain, but to gain the strength, joy, and beauty He provides along the way.

He warns us the way is narrow, that persecution will come. He makes no promises of a trouble-free life.

But He gives us Himself, and He is enough.

May I encourage you? Don't fear the thin place.

It's a glimpse into heaven. ♦♦♦

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Member Susanne Maynes is certified as a Biblical Counselor with the Board of Christian Professional and Pastoral Counselors. She blogs on church and culture, spiritual growth, and Christian parenting at SusanneMaynes.com and is the author of *Releasing Your Brave Love: Helping Kids to Change Their World* and *Unleashing Your Courageous Compassion: 40 Reflections on Rescuing the Unborn*.

Member Letters

God was merciful to us through our son's accident

As always, God was merciful to us in preparing what was needed ahead of time for our son Isaac's accident, which resulted in two broken legs, life flight, and emergency surgery. He received excellent care, and the Lord provided so that I was able to stay with him around the clock while he was in the hospital and then recovered at home.

We heard that the news of Isaac's accident and subsequent prayer requests reached all around the U.S. and as far as France!

Isaac was only weeks away from graduating from college and there was concern for him completing his school work, but the Lord worked in his professors' hearts to allow Isaac to make up the work and graduate on time. The hospital also wrote off \$300,000 in charges. Praise God! Isaac has now enrolled in seminary. Too many blessings to count, and we give our precious, loving Father all the glory.

Kevin & Teresa
TENNESSEE

I was skeptical of trusting in people

I have an extensive background in medical office billing practices, insurance, and compliance. When our insurance plan was coming to an end my husband was eager to join Samaritan, but I was very hesitant.

I trust in God—people not so much. For me joining Samaritan was a gigantic leap of faith. Praying for others after sending my Share was a simple thing, but it didn't hit home. I have now experienced others praying for my Need and my healing while sending me Shares. God has generously shown me how having faith in His ways is so vital. I am healed and feel truly blessed.

Carol
OREGON

A wonderful teaching opportunity for our 19-year-old son

Receiving so many Shares from all over the country has been an incredible blessing. It also provided a wonderful teaching opportunity for our 19-year-old son as he recovered from surgery. We showed him all the notes, cards, and prayers that accompanied the Shares. Our "know-it-all" teen was deeply touched. His response was, "All these people sent money and prayed for me? That's totally awesome, Mom. I mean it, totally awesome!" Thank you Samaritan members, for blessing our family in so many ways.

Bruce & Susan
KENTUCKY

standard part of their care moving forward — half stating they'd switch providers for the offering."

But, without this temporary regulatory relief, patients would never have experienced the benefits that telehealth and medical technology can offer.

To fully realize the health care revolution that can come through entrepreneurship, it's critical that government officials make these temporary regulatory reforms permanent. Elected officials must also go a step further and remove other government barriers to health care entrepreneurship like the broken health care payment system that puts insurers and government payers in charge of health care decision-making, not patients.

A new study by the nonpartisan Pacific Research Institute shows just how important it is to have a health care system driven by entrepreneurship.¹

Right now, if an entrepreneur comes up with a more effective or efficient way to treat patients, government overregulation will likely be a roadblock. This is wrong.

Instead, we should encourage

the development of future innovations that could solve many of the problems that have plagued America's health care system for generations. Removing regulatory roadblocks could lead to the next patient-focused medical advance-

If an entrepreneur comes up with a more effective way to treat patients, government is a roadblock.

This is wrong.

ment like telehealth that hold the promise of providing patients with better quality care at a lower cost.

Most important, we must fix the inefficient health care payment system that prioritizes the interests of government or insurance companies ahead of patients. By adopting one critical change to put

patients in charge through tax-advantaged health savings accounts, we can empower individuals to choose to spend their health care dollars at providers that offer cutting-edge medical services.

It's actually amazing that medical advancements like telehealth have been developed at all with the numerous government roadblocks that make it so difficult for patients to access these services in the first place. Future medical advances likely won't materialize unless state and federal policymakers get out of the way.

Government control is what's driving the problems with health care in America today. Bureaucrats can't revolutionize health care—only entrepreneurs can. ♦♦♦

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1. *Empowering Entrepreneurs to Address America's Healthcare Challenges*. <bit.ly/priempent>

Take advantage of telehealth options in your Dash account



24/7 nurse advice Line: Connect with nurses trained to help you evaluate your health concerns and determine next steps.

Not urgent: Use the free "Email a Medical Professional" option to connect with doctors who will answer your medical questions.

Need a prescription: Use the \$25 "Call a Doctor" option to avoid a more costly trip back to the doctor's office.

specific date in 1994, spelled out in the book *1994?*. When that didn't happen, the Family Radio founder set another date and then another. None of those predictions came to pass, of course, but, in 2005, Camping predicted the Second Coming for 2011. That didn't happen, but Camping did suffer a stroke in June that year.

In the meantime, ministries were pulling programs from Family Radio in objection to what they saw as unbiblical teaching by Camping. The network also took a hit financially.

In a March 2012 letter to the "Family Radio Family," Camping admitted his May 21 return prediction was a "sinful statement," though he asserted that many people were made aware of the reality of Christ's ultimate return through his failed predictions.

Around that time, Family Radio's rehabilitation in the evangelical mainstream began. First, Family Radio removed any endtimes books from its catalogue. Other books by Camping, who died in 2013, were allowed to be depleted from Family Radio's stock without being replaced.

"Then, in 2014, we onboarded new programming and basically removed Mr. Camping's teaching altogether," Tom says. "That caused great consternation to the Family Radio board, but nevertheless God put it on our hearts. By 2017, everything having anything to do with Mr. Camping was removed."

The current CEO of Family Radio admires his late boss's willingness to admit his errors.

"He still maintained his trust

in God and he still maintained his trust in the Bible," Tom says. "There were periods of time that he had clarity of mind after his stroke and he realized the damage that he and Family Radio had inflicted on the church and a lot of people."

Lessons learned at Family Radio

While the nearly 20-year-long controversy hurt Family Radio and its relationship with various Christian ministries, its resolution has strengthened the network's Biblical roots.

For one thing, Tom says, the episode emphasizes the importance of studying Scripture on one's own and listening to a variety of teachers.

"I think a lot of us assumed and really ceded our understanding of the Bible to an individual," Tom says. "Yes, God uses teachers, and we need to honor pastors and teachers God has raised up in the Body. But there are no shortcuts, and we ourselves need to be in the Scriptures. Ministries that depend too heavily on a single person can run into trouble. That's why God has given pastors and teachers to the Body. One is to edify the Body but also to help the members of the Body not be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine. That's one reason why we have a variety of pastors and teachers on the air now. It gives a broader cross-section of teaching.

"I would say that, in God's mercy, God never fails. He's always teaching us. We can't depend on ourselves. We can't look at ourselves. We really need His Spirit and good shepherds to guide us."

Now, Tom says, "we're one

among many ministries that God is using."

New programming about to launch

Family Radio is feeling God's guidance as it shifts headquarters from the San Francisco area to Franklin, Tennessee. For one thing, since most of Family Radio's employees were already working remote, the network was able to continue operating without skipping a beat as stay-at-home orders were issued by several states due to COVID-19.

"We're all used to working remote just because of the nature of radio today," Tom says. "Most of it can be done from home studios."

But Family Radio also has built an audio production center in Franklin with several studios to help with original programming and, eventually, live programming.

"It's all with the idea of targeting regional markets to be more responsive to the needs of individual markets," Tom says.

The new programming created by the "small, dedicated, experienced, and savvy staff" of 39 went live July 1. And, although the approach to the content may be different, the essence will remain the same.

"We are trying to bring comfort and lead our listeners to focus their attention heavenward, to remind them of God's many promises and blessings," Tom says. ♦♦♦



your human experience proves it false.

But let's affirm the fundamental claim of Psalm 91. God is a secure defense for those under His protection. What God determines will not harm you, will not harm you. "Our God is in the heavens; He does all that He pleases," says Psalm 115:3. When it pleases God to protect you, "under His wings you will find refuge" (91:4). In verse 1, He is called "Almighty." Why? Because no other power—spiritual, biological, cataclysmic, military—can pierce His cover. They can try, but, as Daniel 4:35 says, "All the peoples of the earth are regarded as nothing. He does as He pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back His hand or say to Him, 'What have you done?'"

Seen through the lens of God's sovereign power, the extent and scope of the promise of Psalm 91 becomes clearer. Psalm 91 teaches you to trust God to protect you from every evil that would prevent you from accomplishing His sover-

eign purposes for your life.

Let's consider more examples from Scripture to see Psalm 91 in action. After 400 years of oppression at the hands of the Egyptians, it was God's sovereign will to deliver Israel and, at the same time, render judgment. Exodus 6:6 says, "I am the Lord ... and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched hand and with great acts of judgment." God sent deadly plagues throughout the land, but He protected the Israelites from harm.

When the final plague came God told them to put the blood of a lamb on their doorposts as a sign of their trust in Him. To this day, Passover reminds us that God is able (Almighty) to prevent all harm to those under his protection. And Christ, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, has the power to save us from the final enemy, death.

Consider another example. Psalm 91:13 points to triumph over predators. "You will tread on the

lion and the adder; the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot."

This bold promise does not make me want to join the snake-handlers (may they rest in peace). But the promise makes me bold to think that, in completing God's purposes for my life, God will protect me, even from poisonous snakes and other predators, if need be.

It was God's will that Paul would testify before Caesar in Rome. He was therefore under God's protection from all harm until His purpose was fulfilled (Acts 27:22-25). On the way, Paul was rescued from a shipwreck and treated to a warm fire. While adding sticks to it, "a viper came out because of the heat and fastened on his hand" (Acts 28:3). The people expected him to swell up and die. "He, however, shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm" (28:5).

I would sum up the Psalm this way: If you put your hope in God and trust in His commandments, nothing bad can happen to you that is not ultimately good for you.

Viewed through the lens of God's sovereignty, Psalm 91 becomes a sweet promise of protection designed to fuel bold obedience to God's calling. The amazing promises of this Psalm continue:

You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you (91:5-7).

Again, let's view these promises in 3-D. Throughout the ministry of Jesus, His enemies tried repeatedly to harm him. For example, John 7:30 says, "They were seeking to arrest Him, but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come."

Jesus was protected from all evil, right up until the hour when evil—being murdered—fit into God's sovereign good plan for Jesus. Then, as Peter says, "This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men" (Acts 2:23).

Throughout the ages, these examples have inspired people to risk their lives for the sake of the Gospel and make peace with the inherent dangers of serving others in crisis. John G. Paton, for example, went as a missionary to the New Hebrides Islands in 1858, where he lived in constant danger among the cannibalistic tribes.

He wrote in his autobiography:

"A wild chief followed me about for four hours with his loaded musket, and though often directed towards me, God restrained his hand. I spoke kindly to him, fully persuaded that my God had placed me there, and would protect me till my allotted

What God determines won't harm you, will not harm you. No other power—spiritual, biological, cataclysmic, military—can pierce His cover.

task was finished. Looking up in unceasing prayer to our dear Lord Jesus, I left all in His hands, and felt immortal till my work was done."

This is Psalm 91 in action.

In my role as president of PassionLife, I travel frequently to help Christians in countries plagued by abortion. Last fall I set off for my 29th trip to China the day after Thanksgiving. I was about 200 miles from Wuhan as a deadly outbreak spread. I returned home in mid-December with a planeload of people from China. I have not had a sniffle from Thanksgiving till now. God has protected me from

sickness and death.

Why? I assume (take by faith) that I am spared for now because He has more for me to do. Am I declaring that I am impervious to COVID-19 simply because I trust in God? No, I'm not saying that.

Psalm 91 calls us to trust in God's protection, not test it. Trusting in God does not make us impervious to dangers and foolish enough to try to prove ourselves invincible before unnecessary dangers. Psalm 91 simply makes us unafraid in the face of inherent dangers, of faithfully doing, as best as we can, what we perceive God has prepared for us to do for His name's sake. It is a risky, cross-bearing thing we do.

You have rightly got hold of Psalm 91 if you say, "God will protect me from all that would prevent me from doing what He has prepared for me to do." Let's call this the new normal! ♦♦♦

John Ensor is the president of PassionLife, a missions organization dedicated to teaching prolife ethics and crisis intervention strategies in countries suffering the highest rates of abortion and infanticide.

- “I don’t have deep biblical knowledge.”

Those may all be true for you, but they shouldn’t prevent you from discipling others. God wants to flow his power through these vehicles of weaknesses too!

For example, my son Oliver was born with the inability to have children. He’s too young to understand the ramifications of his body not being able to produce testosterone, but I’m not. His physical “weakness” could mean that Marissa and I never receive the joy of being grandparents through him. But if we take such a limited view of his limitations, we’re missing the bigger picture. In fact, if we allowed ourselves to believe that his “weakness” would prevent him from ever enjoying being a father, we may even be limiting God’s plans for his life.

I have hope for being a grandfather through Oliver (many years from now!) for two reasons. First, I can’t help but envision the children that our Oliver will save through fostering and adopting. If he’s forever saddled with the physical inability to produce children of his own, he can still have children in whom he invests his life, and they will be his children as much as Oliver is our child.

Second, just as I know that God can 100 percent heal me, I know he can 100 percent heal Oliver too. But believing and asking and praying for Oliver’s healing doesn’t change what God can do for him and through him in the meantime. His weaknesses are not useless to God! (Neither are yours!) We are never “in waiting.” My son will still be used by God. As I will encourage

him, so too do I encourage you: “You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). Oliver needs someone (like his father) to pass on the power to him. He needs me to tell him and show him that God will use his weaknesses as a conduit of God’s power. He’ll get to experience the blessing of passing this message on to his younger siblings, his friends, his future spouse, and children.

That’s what I’m challenging you to do too.

Maybe you don’t have enough time to invest in others. If that’s true, what can you sacrifice (TV, games, social media, sports, etc.) to make room for one-on-one mentoring?

If you don’t have people skills, how can you learn them? Maybe this is an opportunity for God’s power to pass through your weakness.

And if you feel that you lack Biblical knowledge, realize God will use your daily walk with him, your daily quiet time in his word, and the daily experience his Spirit gives to you to pass on to someone you know. Do you know weaknesses you have that God uses to flow his power through? I know you do. Pass on the hope you have that your weaknesses are not useless—they are a conduit for God’s power!

Ultimately, the question you should ask yourself is: To whom am I passing the power today?

This is our calling. God has empowered us in our weaknesses to be his heart, hands, and feet made real to the people around us.

The model of passing on the power

Do you now believe that weak is the new strong?

Will you revel in your weakness and delight in your frailties, and encourage a friend to do the same?

Will you praise God for your shortcomings and thank Him for your lack, and invite family to praise and thank God with you in their deficiencies?

Will you turn over what little you have so that He might make much of it, and share this investment strategy with one who needs financial freedom?

Will you empower someone with the ultimate power, teaching him or her that God loves to use weak people just like you and me? ♦♦♦



Weak is the New Strong: God’s Perfect Power in You will be released on August 11, and is available for pre-order at Amazon.com. Connect with Todd at ToddLollar.com.

Prayer for the Persecuted Church

Christian deaths in Nigeria part of 'religious cleansing'

Violence in Nigeria against Christians is being called a "religious cleansing" by Open Doors, Voice of the Martyrs-Canada reports. Christian leaders there say that over 6,000 believers have been maimed or killed in recent years in addition to kidnappings and destruction of property by Islamist groups. *Pray for Nigerian Christians and for the Nigerian government to take action to protect citizens of all faiths.*

12 Christians arrested in coordinated Iranian raid

Iranian intelligence agents arrested at least 12 Christians in a coordinated operation June 30 and July 1, VOM-C reports. Three were released after posting bail, but the fates of the others were unknown. *Pray for the release and protection of those still in custody and for just treatment of all.*

Indian man murdered for his faith; family escapes

A man whose family was the only Christian family in their village in India was killed June 7, VOM-C says. Kande Mudu was murdered after several men forcibly removed him from his house. His wife and children fled to another Christian's home. *Pray for Kande's wife, Bindu, and their children, and for Kande's death to stand as a testimony of his love for Jesus.*

Israeli regulators shut down Christian-based TV channel

Israeli regulators ordered a channel created by the UK-based Christian broadcasting company GOD TV to be taken off the air on June 28, International Christian Concern reports. Israel said the company hid a missionary agenda for its Shelanu channel, but a channel spokesman denied that. *Pray for restoration of Shelanu to Israeli TV and for Christians to be free to spread the Gospel in the land of its birth.*

Chinese congregation's meeting area destroyed

A house church in Xiamen, China, that had been raided in April and May was torn apart by local officials on June 11, ICC says. *Pray that members of Xiangguang Church will find alternatives for worship.* ♦♦♦



**Remember those
who are in prison,
as though in
prison with them,
and those who
are mistreated,
since you also are
in the body.**

HEBREWS 13:3

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.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON THE PERSECUTED CHURCH:**

International Christian Concern
persecution.org
800-422-5441

World Watch Monitor
worldwatchmonitor.org

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ
Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and
impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving
and being deceived. **2 Timothy 3:12-13**

&< Detach and use as bookmark or on your refrigerator

THE DOORPOST

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9; 11:18-21



Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.

2 TIMOTHY 3:12-13

Living a godly life will never be easy. It never has been. When there are evil people and fakers all around us, deceiving and being deceived, we should not be surprised or expect anything different. What can we do? The rest of II Timothy 3 tells us the answer.

We have answers breathed out by God. The answers He has given will meet our every need if we seek and accept them—teaching us what is right, showing us when we do wrong, telling us how to correct our wrongs, and training us in how to do right in the future—so that we can be completely equipped for every opportunity, challenge, and persecution we face. Completely.



For the Kingdom,
Ray King