

AUGUST 2021

# Christian Health Care Newsletter

## Missional medicine: restoring the soul of health care



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by Mark Blocher,  
Christian Healthcare  
Centers

### Part 1 of 2

**MODERN HEALTH CARE** has a mission problem.

Medicine is supposed to be about the patient—not the

payment, the doctor, a hospital, insurance companies, or government bureaucracy. It is not about the latest gadgetry in the medical arsenal, the newest drugs, or the latest therapy. It is the patient that matters most.

However, modern medicine seems to have lost its way.

The result is that many doctors, including Christian doctors, want to find a way back to a model of medical practice more aligned with the values and motives that led them to pursue a medical career in the first

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MINISTRIES

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### Member Letters:

OVERWHELMED BY THE LORD'S  
EXCEEDING PROVISION

We are overwhelmed at our Lord's exceedingly abundant provision for our needs. As I opened stacks of cards and checks, I was brought to tears over the love of my brothers and sisters in Christ. Many had similar battles with Lyme disease. Thank you, Samaritan, for enabling us all to bear one another's burdens in this way. We praise God for you!

Julia  
MAINE

# Christian Health Care Newsletter

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The Christian Health Care Newsletter is published monthly by Samaritan Ministries International, a 501(c)(3) charity. Subscriptions to the Christian Health Care Newsletter are available to non-members for a suggested donation of \$12 per year. The information provided is for educational purposes and is not meant as medical advice.

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## Noteworthy | From the Editors

August is here. With its arrival, adults and children turn their minds to the upcoming school year. Whether the children in your life are home-schooled, private-schooled, or public-schooled, preparing children for school goes beyond class schedules, lesson plans, and purchasing school supplies and clothes! God's Word is clear about the role Christian adults take in shaping the next generation: "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Regardless of where the children in your life are educated, your job is clear: pray daily for the children in your life, for your children's friends, and educators (even if it's you!); read the Bible with them; and keep communication lines open so, when your student hears something that contradicts the Bible, you can discuss God's perspective. Remember, no matter where you choose to plant your children for their education, they should "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). May we—adults and children alike—be salt and light in this dark world. ♦♦♦



Julia Ekstrom  
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## Helpful Resources

### ▶ Facebook.com/groups/samaritanmin

Reach out to other members in our Facebook Group

### ▶ Important emails

Medical Needs: [needs@samaritanministries.org](mailto:needs@samaritanministries.org)

Sending or receiving Shares: [membership@samaritanministries.org](mailto:membership@samaritanministries.org)

Your membership: [membership@samaritanministries.org](mailto:membership@samaritanministries.org)

### ▶ Health Resources App | Dash.SamaritanMinistries.org

- 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.

### ▶ Writers guidelines: [samaritanministries.org/writers-guidelines](https://samaritanministries.org/writers-guidelines)

# Helping our children keep God at the center of their education

by Kathryn Nielson and Michael Miller

Samaritan parents share how a Biblical foundation guides their families

**IMMERSING OUR CHILDREN** in the Word and in Christian activities is key to making their education a blessing, Samaritan Ministries parents say.

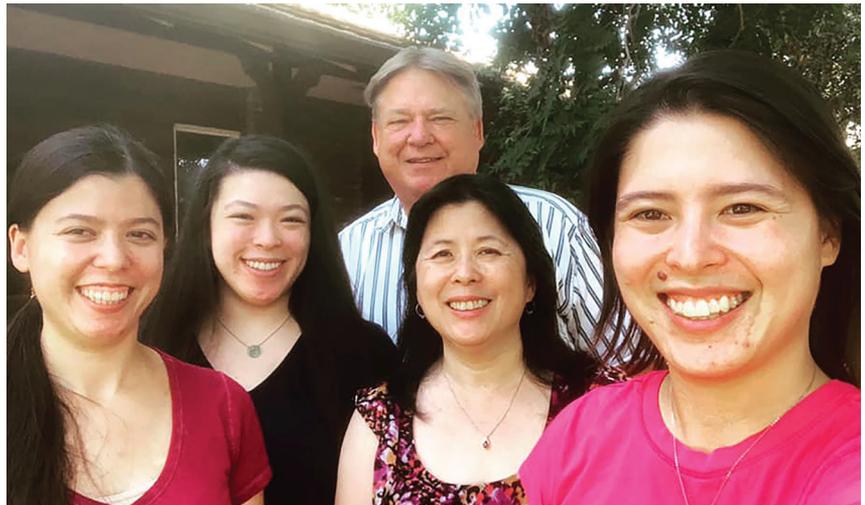
After reaching out in our Facebook Group, Samaritan Ministries Community, we spoke to parents who face the challenge of raising children in a world hostile to a Biblical worldview about how they prepare them.

## Cliff and Maureen Loeffler

When Cliff and Maureen “Re” Loeffler were choosing the direction to go educationally for each of their three daughters, their decision was based on the needs of both their family and each child.

“Every parent, and even every child, will have a different ‘what is right’ for them,” Re says. “As a parent, we need to pray and listen to what God would have us do for that child, in our specific circumstances.”

The Loefflers live in a rural area in California with high poverty, and Re and her husband wanted to help give their children a wider view of the world, to support the Christian teachers they knew, to make a difference in the lives of other children in that community, and to be a



Cliff and Maureen “Re” Loeffler with their daughters, from left, Grace, Audrey, and Victoria. (Supplied photo)

visible example of Christ’s love. So, they chose public school.

“It was a ministry choice for our family, and we taught our kids at home the things we knew they were not getting at school (educationally and spiritually),” Re says.

It wasn’t always easy. Because the girls have mixed ethnic heritage—Re’s is Chinese and Cliff’s is European—they were bullied, which was difficult enough, but they also faced hostility to their Christian beliefs.

However, Re believes, their daughters were prepared for challenges to their beliefs because of

the strong Biblical foundation they had at home.

“They were prepared to be able to stand up for their Christian beliefs in God and the Bible, when there were others—teachers, other students—in the school who did not share these same beliefs,” Re says.

Re says there are gaps in each type of educational choice, and that parents need to find ways to fill those gaps.

“It’s important to be intentional and purposeful knowing that whatever choice you make will not fulfill all of the educational and spiritual

*Continued on page 4*

needs of that child," Re says. "You need to go outside and look for opportunities. Let others minister to them; you may have to supplement educationally, morally, and emotionally."

For the Loefflers, any difficulties or extra work on their part was worth it because they met people with whom they could share the Gospel. They've been involved in taking children to church and vacation Bible school, sending them to church camp, and speaking Biblical truth into their lives.

### **Stephen and Michelle Tierney**

Stephen and Michelle Tierney's three children have all gone to public and private schools, but the Tierneys have made sure their family's foundation is their faith.

"I think the key is to have them in a great youth group," Michelle says. "Family also helps. Their aunts and uncles live nearby and are always pouring into them."

Stephen started a charity, Up and Running Again, in 2010 that was the subject of a 2018 Member Spotlight and has provided a unique way for his children to serve others. Up and Running Again helps people who might not otherwise have the resources to train for long-distance races.

"Our kids barely remember a time when we weren't involved in Up and Running Again," Michelle says. "They come and serve at the banquets and have all trained with the homeless. We've always served as a family, which is really important. Our oldest, Alyssa, is serving at a Christian camp this year. When she's at school, she's involved in a college group, a youth ministry



Stephen and Michelle Tierney with their children, Avarie, Aly, and Andrew. (Supplied photo)

team, and the church she attends."

The children's training started when they were young.

"We started them in Awana (child discipleship program) as Cubbies, started them early on memorizing verses," Michelle says. "We have a really strong family unit. Church has always been important to us, and serving in the church, going to church events, Sunday school—just having the solid faith and example of that in their lives at all times."

Curriculum at the California public schools the Tierney children have attended has been challenging on moral and ethical levels. However, the kids' and the parents' involvement in school activities has also allowed them to bear witness to their Christian faith. Michelle led the local moms' prayer group for 13 years, for example, and the kids have invited friends to church events.

"You don't even know when or where you're going to influence these other families," she says. But, she warns, "If you do put your kids in public school, you need to stay involved. We were on the booster

club, Parent Teacher Association. Everybody knew our face. Everybody knew our names. When things would happen, they would come to us and ask us to pray."

### **Michael and Laurie Fuller**

Michael and Laurie Fuller have done a mix of home schooling and community schooling for their two biological children and three foster children, but all of their family's lives have been permeated with Scripture, Laurie says.

"My way of thinking and communicating is to infuse Scripture into everything," she says. "When I'm talking with kids about their having a childish disagreement or when we're talking about doing their chores or about how they approach their schoolwork, I use a lot of Scripture. I grab a parable that Jesus taught or a story from the Old Testament, and say, 'Here's how this applies to this moment.'"

The Fullers home-schooled their two biological children until they reached junior high, then "God just moved in our hearts" and, after prayer and discussion, Henry

and Charlotte started attending a public school. They had a year and a half there before COVID-19 restrictions landed them back at home.

The foster system required their foster children to be in public school, but COVID disrupted that, too.

One thing that helped is that the congregation they attend “is good at addressing apologetics issues to our kids at their level for the kinds of challenges they’re going to face,” Laurie says.

“I would hope that they’re able to look back on their lives and see the truth of God and His presence, that they can see where He protected them, where He guided them.”

When their older children switched from home schooling to public school, “they really stood out from their peers,” Laurie says.

“One of the things was the coarse language,” she says. “My husband and I advised them to just kind of ignore it, ‘Don’t talk like that, because people will notice when you don’t.’ And, very shortly after that, their peers started noticing and started adjusting their own language and apologizing.”

She advises parents with children getting ready to embark on their education to “pray over the Scriptures.”

“Look for the stories that God impresses on your heart and what the angles are that stand out to you. The Holy Spirit works like that.

“Whichever way you go, you’re not going to do it all right, or feel like you’re doing it all right,” she says. “Be obedient with the moment you’re in.” ♦♦♦



Laurie Fuller, far left, and Michael Fuller, far right, with their children, from left, Jacob, Robert, Audrie, Henry, and Charlotte. (Supplied photo)

# Guide your children to good health habits as the school year begins

Suggestions for everyone to strengthen their immune systems



by Dr. Deborah Chisholm

**YOUR CHILDREN ARE** likely headed back to school (or home-school group) this month. Are you wondering about how to keep them healthy? Let's talk about it.

First, let me introduce you to your God-given innate immune system. Fortunately, most of us (and especially children) have a robust, response-ready immune system that operates as the first line of defense against invaders such as bacteria and viruses. It is composed of physical barriers (like your skin and the cilia in your nose), various secretions (including mucus, saliva, and stomach acid), and a plethora of immune-functioning cells that all have different jobs but work synergistically on your behalf.

Broadly speaking, it is impractical to try to shelter kids from exposure to pathogens (also known as disease-causing organisms). I acknowledge that there may be cases of severe immune compromise that require special precautions. However, whether your child has a robust immune system or immune-system deficiencies, there are ways we can help equip



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our children's immune systems to meet the health challenges they will face.

Ephesians 6:11 instructs us to "Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil." I like to consider this verse when I think about equipping our immune systems to be able to handle whatever comes our way. As the saying goes, the best defense is a good offense.

Here are some recommendations when it comes to equipping and enhancing your immune system:

- Vitamin C is an important antioxidant that supports immune

health and healing. While nutritional supplementation with vitamin C is generally safe, it's a water-soluble vitamin, and in excess it can cause loose stools. Ascorbic acid is generally well-tolerated. Many choose acerola berry powder as a more natural source of vitamin C. It can be added to smoothies or made into homemade gelatin chews. Avoid vitamin C preparations with artificial sweeteners and dyes. Extra credit: Take vitamin C with bioflavonoids.

- Vitamin D is another nutrient that strengthens your immune health. Supplementation with vitamin D is also generally

considered safe. Vitamin D deficiency is a common health problem; it would be ideal to know your child's vitamin D level (aim for 40-60 nanograms per milliliter, unless otherwise directed). Without lab guidance, I consider it generally safe to supplement with up to 2,000 IU (international units) daily for school-aged children. Since vitamin D is fat-soluble, it is best absorbed in the presence of dietary fat, so give it with breakfast before they head out the door. Be sure to use the D3 form. For children, it's easy to administer in liquid dropper form. Avoid soy or other cheap vegetable oil bases; higher-quality supplements will use MCT as the carrier oil in liquid or soft-gel preparations. FYI: Sensible sun exposure can also help your body produce vitamin D naturally.

- Practice effective handwashing. This doesn't require antibacterial products. Simply develop a family habit of handwashing several times each day. Effective handwashing involves lathering soap all over both sides of your hands and beneath the nails for a total of 20 seconds, then rinsing well.
- Stay well-hydrated. Sufficient intake of water will allow the body to keep its defenses up since cells are better oxygenated and function well in a state of adequate hydration.
- Simple, whole foods are a better fuel for the body than sugary or processed foods. If possible, learn to make homemade

meat stock and bone broth and incorporate these into your meals. These mineral-packed, digestion-supporting liquids are a powerhouse of nutrition for every cell in your body.

- Laugh often together as a family! Wake up your immune system with a healthy dose of humor worked into your home life. Numerous studies have pointed out the immune-boosting benefits of laughter, and it's even Biblical. Proverbs 17:22 says, "A joyful heart is good medicine, But a broken spirit dries up the bones."
- Make time for plenty of rest. Avoid sleep deprivation, which suppresses the immune system. This cannot be overemphasized. In general, school-aged children typically need nine to 11 hours of sleep, and parents can set a good example (and also maintain their own health) by keeping regular sleep hours for themselves.
- Seek the Lord. Ask God for wisdom in caring for your children. James 1:5 says, "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

### **Lean on the Lord**

While you won't be able to protect your children from encountering disease-causing organisms in all their environments, the Lord has also made provision for you as a parent to lean on Him and not be afraid.

Here is some Biblical encouragement (translations New American Standard Bible):

- Isaiah 41:10: "Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will also help you, I will also uphold you with My righteous right hand."
- Joshua 1:9: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not be terrified nor dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."
- Psalm 27:1: "The LORD is my light and my salvation, Whom should I fear? The LORD is the defense of my life; Whom should I dread?"
- Psalm 56:3-4: "When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"

God's blessings on your child(ren)'s upcoming school year!



Samaritan Ministries member Dr. Deborah Chisholm, MD, is a board-certified family medicine physician who created Chisholm Center for Health (ChisholmCenterForHealth.com) in Le Roy, Illinois, in 2014. She and her husband, David, have six children. Read more about Dr. Chisholm's approach to health care at [samaritanministries.org/blog/direct-care-q-a-dr-deborah-chisholm](http://samaritanministries.org/blog/direct-care-q-a-dr-deborah-chisholm).

The information provided in this article is for educational purposes and is not meant as medical advice. It is the opinion of the writer. The information is not meant to replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified health care professional.

## Member Spotlight

# Casey and Meygan Caston: Marriage365

By Michael Miller



### Members Casey and Meygan Caston

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**CASEY AND MEYGAN** Caston's marriage didn't start well. They got into a "big, ol' fight" on the night of their wedding, so Casey slept on the couch.

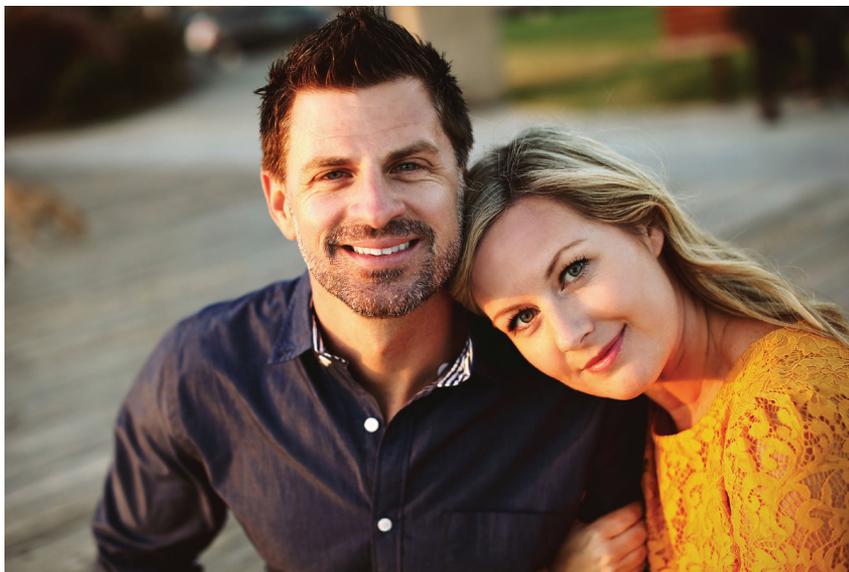
"We pretty much sprinted toward divorce," Casey says. "We didn't know how to communicate. With 12 marriages between both sets of our parents, we didn't have a good example of how to do marriage well."

But they redirected that sprint into a marathon and now coach other couples to redirect a wrong-way race using Marriage365 ([marriage365.com](http://marriage365.com)), an online service that reaches over 4 million couples per month, with close to a half-million followers on Facebook.

#### **A side gig became a site.**

The Castons started Marriage365 as a side gig in 2013 with a blog and Facebook Page. Meygan owned her own event planning company, and Casey was a nonprofit fundraiser.

"We said, 'Let's see what happens,'" Meygan remembers. "One follower became 10,000 followers. Then we said, 'Let's create more resources.' We've been



Casey and Meygan Caston (supplied photo)

doing this full time since 2015."

#### **Turning problems into resources.**

"What inspired us to start Marriage365 were our own mistakes and failures," Meygan says. "We want to provide resources for couples who are struggling just like we were."

Casey agrees.

"It's been amazing to see that God used our own marriage and our struggles to help so many people," he says.

Meygan adds, "The reality is that therapy is amazing, but most people can't afford it. We thought, well, what other resources are out there besides therapy for the average, everyday couple? There weren't many, so we thought, let's start our own."

#### **Overcoming shame is key.**

One of the reasons for Marriage365's success is that it's online, offering a private resource for people who feel they can't talk

to another person about their marriage problems to at least receive reassurance that they aren't alone in their troubles.

"Of course, within a troubled marriage, it's so lonely," Casey says. "You feel like you're the only one going through struggles. The one thing I would have loved to have known early in our marriage is that I'm not alone in my struggles. I need to hear someone share that they too struggled with communication and building trust. That they too had fumbled with the sex conversation as a married couple. The shame of feeling, like I'm the only one that struggles with this, is what keeps so many couples back. Shame puts them in hiding. Shame says you're not worthy of love."

It's like struggling in faith, Casey says.

"While the Bible has the answers we need for all of life, sometimes we get stuck in our understanding and need to ask for help," he says.

### **It starts with a checkup.**

Marriage365 addresses seven core categories: communication, conflict and repair, family, sex and intimacy, self-discovery, roles and responsibilities, and friendship.

"When couples sign up for our membership, they are given a Marriage365 checkup," Casey says, "answering 30 questions. Based off those answers, we give them a marriage score and then actually tell them, 'Here are the areas you need to work on first.'"

"A lot of times, couples don't even know where to start, so we guide them through that," Meygan says.

### **Membership explodes.**

Marriage365 membership offers a bevy of resources, including videos, courses, and worksheets. Membership starts with a free seven-day trial so, the Castons say, if you want to binge on videos and courses in that week's span, go for it. Or, it's a good way to

get a taste of what the site offers before joining.

While membership at \$11.99 a month was popular before the COVID-19 pandemic, it has boomed in the past year, perhaps because more couples staying at home together have had to acknowledge and deal with relationship problems.

"Our membership has grown 815 percent in the past year," Casey says.

### **It's more than a website.**

Besides the web material, the Castons lead marriage retreats, intensives, and live social media events. They have also released several books, like *365 Connecting Questions for Couples* and *365 Connecting Questions for Families*. Or, maybe most importantly, *365 Connecting Questions for Engaged Couples*.

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## **Why Samaritan Ministries?**

Samaritan Ministries health care sharing is bodybuilding, Casey and Meygan Caston say.

As in building the Body of Christ.

"It's bigger than protecting our family's health care," says Meygan, who, with her husband, runs Marriage365. "These other members are all people we're going to be in heaven with."

The Castons joined Samaritan in 2019 after their health insurance premiums for them and their two children, ages 13 and 9, reached \$2,200 per month.

"I thought, 'But we rarely go to the doctor. What in the world?'" Meygan recalls.

Casey says he appreciated the transparency and direct sharing that Samaritan practices.

"I do take a moment every month, when I see the member's name on the Share slip, to stop and pray for them," he says.

"And we invite our kids into that," Meygan adds. ♦♦♦

However the Castons choose to communicate, their goal is always to offer practical guidance for healing a marriage.

### **Look at yourself first.**

"The number one thing that we teach is if you want a better marriage, make a better you," Casey says. "Don't look at your brother's (or sister's) speck, look at the plank in your own eye. We have got to stop looking at our spouse's faults, because the reality is that we have zero control over what they do, how they respond, their attitude. That's on them. But what you do have control over is yourself. That mind shift for a lot of married couples is probably the number one success story we hear. 'I was so focused on what my husband or my wife wasn't doing or was doing that I wasn't even focusing on what I could do and how I could heal.'

"When you're spending time and energy on the other, you have to at some point give up that control and release that to God."

### **They stay in their 'lanes.'**

Casey is the visionary while Meygan calls herself the "task-manager-organizer-Type-A planner."

And they both work to keep their marriage fresh, despite working together full time.

"Knowing our 'lanes' was one of the best things we've done for our own marriage," Casey says. "Meygan and I literally spend a solid eight to 10 hours a day working face to face or side by side."

Meygan adds, "Then we leave the office and be parents to our two

children and make date nights."

"Many spouses who work together actually shouldn't," she continues. "It takes a special kind of marriage. Knowing your lanes, knowing what you're good at. But also saying, 'Do you want me to be your wife right now or your business partner?'"

Casey says that if their relationship is "disconnected," they "stop the business" and work on the marriage.

"We've canceled film days because of that," he says. "If we're not doing well, there's no way we're getting in front of a camera and faking it."

### **Steal from the best.**

The Castons are open about "stealing" their source material.

"We pilfered all of our content from the book of Proverbs," Casey says. "It's our job to deliver God's truth and speak that out, and then it's up to the Holy Spirit to take that content and convict or comfort those who are listening or reading."

He says Marriage365, which does not describe itself overtly as Biblical, is "a common-grace ministry of God as He seeks good will toward all men." That's different from the saving grace of God, "which is the work of the Holy Spirit, never the work of man."

"It is the heart of our team of 20 as we gather for weekly prayer to continue to pray for God's Spirit to convict emotionally lazy spouses or heal marriages," Casey says.

### **More content is coming.**

The Castons are bringing other voices into Marriage365, because it was "never supposed to be a

Casey-and-Meygan ministry."

"While we've led this charge for quite some time, we're really excited about other creators offering content for our platform for things that don't pertain to our specific story but affect marriages, like borderline personality disorder, depression, anxiety, porn addiction, trauma, or sexual trauma," Casey says. "We have several people who are creating content this year, and we're going to continue to expand that."

As the Castons continue to build their "Netflix for your marriage" platform, they pray the result is moving the needle on divorce and seeing marriages and families find health and thrive.

### **How to pray for the Castons.**

- For Marriage365 to have a profound impact on our culture by strengthening couples and families.
- For Casey and Meygan and their team as they create new areas of service to married couples.
- For the Caston family to grow closer to each other by growing closer to God. ♦♦♦

Michael Miller is editor of the Samaritan Ministries Christian Health Care Newsletter.

*For examples of Marriage365's connecting questions for couples, families, and yourself, view [SamaritanMinistries.org/blog/connecting-questions](http://SamaritanMinistries.org/blog/connecting-questions).*

# Q&A with Rev. Walter Hoye II of Issues4Life Foundation

by Michael Miller

A conversation about the abortion issue in the black community

*The Rev. Walter Hoye II is a well-known pro-life advocate in the U.S. black community. He is president and founder of the Issues4Life Foundation (Issues4Life.org), founder of the Frederick Douglass Foundation of California, a Core Member of the National Black Pro-Life Coalition, and a board member for the Morning Center, a maternity charity started by Samaritan Ministries. He also is the subject of the book Black and Pro-Life in America: The Incarceration and Exoneration of Walter B. Hoye.*

*We talked to him recently about how Issues4Life began, how it works, the abortion issue in the black community, and the pro-life message can be advanced there.*

**Samaritan Ministries International: How did the life issue become so important to you individually?**

**Walter Hoye:** It started with the birth of my first-born son, Walter Hoye III. He was born about three months prematurely, and he weighed in at 2.1 pounds. The doctor wanted me to sign papers releasing the hospital of any liability for the death of my son.

Well, I prayed all night long. I



didn't hear one word from God. So, I'm up early. I can't sleep. I'm back in the preemie ward. I'm holding my son literally in the palm of my right hand. He's down to 1.9 pounds. He's like a fork, some silverware. As I'm holding him, I can feel him move and twist and turn and, while as a man I'll never know what it's like to hold a child in my own body, now I know what it's like to hold a child in the palm of my hand who's supposed to be in the womb.

That's when God spoke to me. All of a sudden, I wasn't just looking at Walter III—all I had ever noticed was the needles, the bandages, the tubes, the hospital apparatus. This time I'm beholding him, and he looks just like me. That's when God spoke to me. He said, "Walter"—and that's what he does when he

talks to me, he says, "Walter"—"this is what's supposed to be on the inside of a woman."

That's all he said, but at that point everything was clear to me. I knew instantly what abortion was and I knew what abortion does, and since then I've never been the same. I've been fighting this pro-life fight since then.

Walter III is alive and well. He's 36 years old.

**SMI: How did Issues4Life get started?**

**Walter:** Some folks had seen me onstage at the Walk for Life West Coast in San Francisco. They were sidewalk counselors, right outside the abortion clinic in Oakland. They said we think it would be impossible or extremely difficult for a woman to walk by her pastor on into an abortion clinic, so they wanted me to be the first pastor to be there, and so I went. This was in 2009.

Sure enough they were right. I was out in front of the clinic, holding a sign that said, "God loves you and your baby, let us help you." When the sisters saw me, they would say, "Hey, preacher!" They

*Continued on page 12*

knew me, and I knew them. And it was hard and we talked and ultimately that got to be a problem for the abortion clinic.

They ultimately got with the city of Oakland, and they created a law to put me in jail. They made standing on a public sidewalk holding a sign passing out literature and having a conversation within 100 feet of an abortion clinic illegal. Ultimately, I did go to jail despite videotape evidence that they lied, and it was after that that Alveda King (of Alveda King Ministries) suggested that we do something in Oakland and that led to the birth of the Issues4Life Foundation.

I was facing four years in jail, but I only ended up serving 30 days.

**SMI: Where does the pro-life issue rank with other issues facing the black community?**

**Walter:** It's No. 1. There's no issue more important. Let me put it this way. In 2019 I put out a press release. I was looking at the 13 leading causes of death of black Americans in 2014 according to the National Vital Statistics Reports<sup>1</sup>. They list all 13—heart disease, diabetes, cancer, et cetera. If you combine all 13, deaths from abortion alone are more than from all 13 leading causes of death in the black community combined<sup>2</sup>. Abortion is the No. 1 cause of death in black America.

**SMI: What does Issues4Life do?**

**Walter:** We focus entirely on black American leadership, and we're really good at communicating the impact of abortion in the

black community. The reason we're so good is we understand the four reasons black leadership rejects the pro-life message. A pastor may have abortion somewhere in his life and his entire congregation is probably post-abortive in some way. He may be prejudiced. He may be compromised and feel pressured to ignore the issue from the pulpit. Or he may be uninformed.

**SMI: How well is your message received in the black community?**

**Walter:** It's received well. We don't do things the same way the larger pro-life movement does. We've got a couple programs that make us highly effective.

We take pastor and wife—if his wife can't come, he can't come—to a secret location and we host them for four days and we pour into them. There's a whole lot more to it, but after four days we've moved them from A to B.

**SMI: Have you seen change in the black community since you've started this?**

**Walter:** Oh, yeah. I've seen it in the leadership that we've impacted. We had one pastor come through our program. We finished on Friday. He was in his pulpit on Sunday. He tells his church, "Hey, from now on I'm a pro-life pastor. From now on we're going to be a pro-life church."

**SMI: How can the Church as a whole help what you're doing?**

**Walter:** The Church as a whole can continue to pray for our efforts.

After a while you become a target. Satan's attacks are real. After a while, because you are effective at what you are doing, you become a target. There are a lot of things that happen that are a result of that.

Second, we're about to take our ministry to a whole other level. There are a lot of churches that know that abortion is wrong and they really want to be free, but they can't afford the expense of bringing speakers in. But they can get 100 people in a pew, 500 people. So we've come up with a strategy called our Life on the Road ministry that will allow us to actually go and spend all the time we need. We're going to move our lives entirely into a van and we're going to put it all on the road. It will allow us to reach more churches, more pastors. We're asking Christians to lift up Life on the Road in prayer.

**SMI: What value do you think the Morning Center is offering to the communities that they're in?**

**Walter:** They're providing very high-quality prenatal care for free. I mean, oh my goodness, that can go a long, long way. There is a lot that the Morning Center has to offer. I'm oftentimes asked, "Can we trust a pregnancy care center, will they understand our situation, will they help us do A, B, C, D?" Because I'm intimately involved with pregnancy care centers and especially the Morning Center, I'm able to tell black leadership, "Yes." ♦♦♦

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.issues4life.org/pdfs/20160630-nvsr-vol-65-no-05.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://issues4life.org/pdfs/20180100-guttmacher-induced-abortion-fact-sheet.pdf>

place. We encourage Christian doctors to make medicine missional again, and for the Church—the Body of Christ—to return to its historical and strategic place in the vanguard of health care, because the practice of medicine and true caring for the sick suffers without it.

Fortunately, a growing movement in health care seeks to restore medicine’s mission: direct primary care.

Direct primary care is a model of health care delivery that restores the doctor–patient relationship, which leads to happier doctors and healthier patients. When this simple practice model is guided by a Biblical worldview, where medical practice is treated as ministry, the benefit for doctors and patients is immense. The doctors I interact with want to be part of a medical movement that integrates caring for the sick with Christ’s mission for the world, where patient care is a natural outgrowth of their faith.

Christian medical ministry is a noble profession with a long track record of impact around the globe. Missional medicine finds its origins in the earthly ministry of Christ, the Great Physician. The Gospels tell us that wherever Jesus went, He both taught and healed. The early Church followed that same pattern, ultimately transforming a pagan Roman culture, and the rest of Church history reveals that wherever the Gospel has gone, medical ministry follows. The modern hospital movement in the U.S. was led by Christians, and the impact is seen in the number of medical institutions that still bear Christian and church-related

**It is time to create a “dissident” Christian medical community that disrupts the status quo of fee-for-service medicine, impersonal health care systems, third-party payors, and layers of bureaucracy that have little to do with patient care.**

names. In many respects, modern medicine owes a lot of its success to Christian medical pioneers.

The extensive heritage of missional medicine is built upon the common values of spiritual wellness, mercy, and compassion—values that flow from the parable of the Good Samaritan. Few themes have influenced medical practice more than those found in the parable of the Good Samaritan, given the number of health care institutions throughout the world that have “Samaritan” in their name. Throughout medical history, the image drawn from this parable of a benevolent stranger caring for someone injured and abandoned has been viewed as the essence of medical ministry. This is a vision needed in modern health care now more than ever.

Unfortunately, that mission has been hijacked by powerful

commercial interests that appear more interested in maximizing profits than caring for the sick as well as by social engineers who want to use medicine to reshape society itself. We should be alarmed by both distortions of medicine’s mission, but what is the Christian response?

The response is to design a health care system defined by its distinctively Christian values and Spirit-led caregiving. It is time to create a “dissident” Christian medical community that disrupts the status quo of fee-for-service medicine, impersonal health care systems, third-party payors, and layers of bureaucracy that have little to do with patient care. It is time to demonstrate again that Biblical Christianity has a lot to say about how to care for the sick and hurting.

When we formed Christian Healthcare Centers in 2015 and saw our first patient in July 2017, we envisioned creating a health care system that would provide Christian doctors a platform to restore health care to its core mission as patient-focused ministry. CHC’s vision is “missional medicine”—a Christ-centered movement to restore the soul of health care. The driving force behind this effort is not simply to cut the cost of health care. Yes, health care costs too much, and our nation could practice better financial stewardship. However, fixing health care’s money problem will not revive its principal mission, and it will not reverse the harms that come from the alarming demise of Judeo-Christian values

*Continued on page 14*

within health care.

Exhibit A of medicine's drift from its core mission can be seen in doctors being pressured to abort babies in violation of their religious beliefs, or when they are expected to use their medical training to help gender-confused teens change their gender by mutilating their bodies and subjecting them to a lifelong journey of hormone medications. Hiding behind alleged "scientific research," respected medical associations have staked out politically motivated positions on sexual orientation and gender that defy biological realities. It is also becoming commonplace to instruct obstetrical sonographers to not speak of unborn babies as boys or girls unless the mother has assigned gender to her unborn child. This is ideology masquerading as science. The only "science" being followed with this sort of medical practice is political and social. Fixing the economics of modern health care will do little to correct this problem.

I frequently receive phone calls and emails from Christian physicians who are dissatisfied with what modern medicine has become. Their frustration is not just with the daily battles they wage with large hospital systems, insurance companies, or government regulators. They see where mainstream medicine is headed ethically and are increasingly concerned that they will be pressured by employers and peers to compromise strongly held Christian values or risk their medical careers. Many are looking for an off-ramp to a better model of medical practice, but the options

## Missional medicine's aim is restoring the soul of health care, liberating doctors to be doctors, serving the sick in collaboration with the Great Physician, for the well-being of every patient.

are limited to overseas medical missions, inner-city medical clinics, community health centers, private practice models such as direct primary care, retirement, or finding another profession.

In the years since launching CHC in Grand Rapids, Michigan, our faithful band of Christian medical professionals has sacrificially and tirelessly worked to prove that exceptional medical care does not have to be expensive and can be delivered in a manner compatible with a Christian worldview. We aim to build an on-ramp for both doctors and patients to participate in a model of health care delivery built on the foundation of a Christian worldview. Christian Healthcare Centers is a Christian response to an increasingly commercialized, secular, impersonal, corporate-oriented health care system that takes too much of our money and cares too little about our Christian values.

That is why we need missional medicine, which, at its core, is an approach to health care focused on how Christ, the Great Physician, is preeminent in the doctor-patient relationship. It is that simple. Missional medicine's aim is restoring the soul of health care, liberating doctors to be doctors, serving the sick in collaboration with the Great Physician, for the well-being of every patient. God

is the One who heals; sometimes He uses doctors. This does not mean missional medicine replaces science and reason with blind faith. Missional medicine is also evidence-based medicine. It is not a tug of war between faith and reason, or between science and theology. Missional medicine is a full-package, bringing all that faith, reason, and science offer to Christian physicians as they care for patients.

In addition to the enhanced professional and personal satisfaction missional medicine brings to physicians, there are numerous practical benefits for patients and sharing ministries, such as improved quality of care, better wellness outcomes, and significant cost savings. These are some of the practical aspects of missional medicine we will discuss in part 2 of this series. ♦♦♦

Samaritan Ministries member Mark Blocher is the president/CEO of Christian Healthcare Centers. He served as a professor of interdisciplinary studies at Cornerstone University for 15 years. He is the author of *The Right to Die? Caring Alternatives to Euthanasia* and *Vital Signs: Decisions that Determine the Quality of Life and Health*.

## Prayer for the Persecuted Church



Pastor Polycarp Zongo while in captivity. (Photo from video)

### **Nigerian pastor released after eight months**

Pastor Polycarp Zongo has been released by an Islamist faction in Nigeria after eight months in captivity, International Christian Concern reports. Pastor Zongo, of the Church of Christ in Nations, was kidnapped in October 2020 by Boko Haram as he was going to Gombe for a church conference. A Nigerian peace activist confirmed that no ransom was paid. *Praise God for Pastor Zongo's release. Pray for the other Christians still in captivity there.*

### **Pakistani couple acquitted of blasphemy**

A Pakistani Christian couple have been acquitted of blasphemy after being sentenced to death several years ago, ICC reports. Shafqat Emmanuel and his wife, Shagufta Kausar, were jailed separately on death row. *Praise God for the acquittal. Pray for the couple's safety and for Shafqat's health, which deteriorated while he was in prison.*

### **Preacher locked inside his home**

Police in Sichuan, China, have locked a preacher inside his home, ICC says. Early Rain Covenant Church preacher Wu Wuqing, who has been detained since April 1, was allowed to have visitors and food brought to his family. Police chained the only access door on June 4 and started blocking visitors on June 8. *Pray for provision for Wu's family and their witness to the police officers. Pray also for Wu's ability to spread the Gospel.* ◆◆◆



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**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**

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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](http://persecution.org)  
800-422-5441

World Watch Monitor  
[worldwatchmonitor.org](http://worldwatchmonitor.org)

# “... He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

## Acts 20:35b

### THE DOORPOST

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



“In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

#### ACTS 20:35

When we read these words of Jesus, do we actually believe them? Are we happier to receive or to give? Do we truly believe there is more blessing in giving than in receiving?

When we give, are we happy or do we have a sense of loss? Are we eagerly looking for ways we can give and serve, or are we trying to avoid them? When we become aware of a need, do we welcome the opportunity to help meet it, or do we hope someone else will do it?

During the three years when Paul the Apostle was establishing the church in Ephesus, he also worked day and night, day after day, to provide support for himself and his co-workers, showing the new believers that there is more blessing in giving and serving than in receiving and being served.

Paul was a good example for the believers in Ephesus back then—and for us today. He truly believed “it is more blessed to give than to receive.” Do we?



For the Kingdom,  
Ray King

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ray King". The signature is fluid and cursive.