

Classic/Basic Sharing Summary*

Member Households: 82,327

Bills: \$30,441,567

Shares: \$33,264,142

Both Samaritan™ Classic members and Samaritan™ Basic members submitted fewer bills than shares available resulting in a monthly surplus. The surplus has once again allowed us to share some Needs ahead and will help insulate both Samaritan Classic and Samaritan Basic from large spikes in bills similar to the one Samaritan Classic experienced last month.

Samaritan members and staff work hard to achieve medical savings on behalf of the membership. Since its inception two years ago, the Provider Relations team has saved Samaritan members over \$50 million through direct negotiations with providers.

The fair-price reward program and Bluebook CareConnectSM service continue to save almost \$550,000 per month. Check out Healthcare Bluebook™ via your Dash account to help you achieve a fair price as well. Using this tool assists the ministry in keeping Shares lower and qualifies you for the \$250 fair-price reward!

We will continue to work diligently on cost savings, monitor bill submission trends, and pray for God's provision and wisdom.

*The monthly sharing summary will now include figures from all three programs, as all active members who were former participants of Samaritan™ Given™ are now in Samaritan™ Classic or Samaritan™ Basic. Due to differences in sharing timelines, these numbers combine Given's sharing for November with Classic's and Basic's sharing for December. The Shares amount also includes managed sharing between programs.

Member Assistance Fund

By God's grace, the Samaritan community shares more than \$350 million dollars every year! At the same time, more than 12 million dollars of your fellow members' medical expenses do not qualify for sharing each year.

Please pray for your fellow members as they shoulder the financial, physical, and mental effects of ineligible medical expenses. The impact of ineligible medical expenses is daunting, but the faithful generosity of members like you helps ease the impact, one member at a time.

Though we were able to assist thousands of members this year, many financial burdens could not be lifted because of a limited availability of funds. If the Lord has blessed you financially this year, would you consider making an end-of-year, tax-deductible donation to support your brothers and sisters in Christ? Even a small amount can make a big difference!

Go to samaritanministries.org/donate to make your donation online. If you prefer to make your donation by check, be sure to make the check out to "Samaritan Ministries" and write "Member Assistance" in the memo line. For the check to be included on your 2022 donation receipt, it must be postmarked by December 31. Mail the check to Samaritan Ministries, P.O. Box 3618, Peoria, IL 61612.

This Month's Newsletter

- 1 Christmas nostalgia**
What if Christmas nostalgia led to joy all year long?
- 2 Noteworthy**
- 4 Member Spotlight**
Chuck and Diane Breznau,
Healing of the Heart Ministries
- 8 HealingStrong Network**
Support network for cancer patients and others
- 12 Book excerpt:**
Missional Medicine
- 15 Prayer for the Persecuted Church**
- 16 The Doorpost**
What should be our normal?

Win a copy of *Missional Medicine*

You can win a copy of Samaritan Ministries member Mark Blocher's book *Missional Medicine: Restoring the Soul of Healthcare*, excerpted in this month's newsletter. To enter, go to bit.ly/missmedbook. You'll be asked for your name and address so we can send the book to the winner. Samaritan Ministries staffers and members of their immediate households aren't eligible to win.

Jim Taggart, Michael Eastham elected to Samaritan Board!

Incumbent Samaritan Ministries Board of Directors member Jim Taggart has been elected to another three-year term, while Michael Eastham has been elected to his first term.

With 4,845 households voting for up to two nominees, Jim received 2,433 votes and Michael received 1,940 votes.

Also receiving votes were Brent Bradley, 1,466; Michael Faber, 1,421; Jamie Pyles, 1,381; and Kurt Hoffman, 766.

Michael Eastham thanked the members for their vote of confidence.

"I am honored to represent Samaritan members on the Board of Directors for the upcoming term," he says. "I look forward to experiencing all that God intends as I bring my ideas and perspectives to the ministry. As a representative of the members, I am also very interested to hear fresh perspectives and solutions from other members on how to continue to help Samaritan grow and provide more value to the community in the midst of our broken health care system."

Jim Taggart is looking forward to another term.

"It has been a pleasure to serve the Samaritan members the past three years on the SMI Board of Directors," Jim says. "It is a responsibility I take to heart. Thank you for entrusting me to serve you again for the next three years."

We appreciate all of the candidates' willingness to serve and ask for your prayers as Jim, Michael, and the other Board members serve the ministry.

HealingStrong resources available for Samaritan members

HealingStrong co-founders Cortney Campbell, a Samaritan Ministries member, and Suzy Griswold are making resources available to Samaritan members this month. HealingStrong is featured on page 8 of this month's newsletter.

- Cortney, who runs the website AntiCancerMom.com, is offering her e-book *The Anti-Cancer Lifestyle Guide* for half-price to Samaritan members. Go to etsy.me/3fAVVmE and use the promo code SAMARITAN at checkout.
- HealingStrong is offering resources to Samaritan members at healingstrong.org/samaritan.

Please note that Samaritan is not endorsing either resource.

December 2022 Save to Share™ Needs

- **Theresa** (3), daughter of Christopher and Pamela, is being treated for a lymphatic cancer called Burkitt's non-Hodgkin lymphoma.
- **Hazel** was born July 20 to Barry and Pamela. She weighed 5 lb. 12 oz.
- **Nathan** was diagnosed with cholangiocarcinoma, a rare cancer in the bile ducts. Surgery was required.
- **Nathan** (25), son of Mark and Holly, is being treated for a brain contusion and broken bones.
- **Patricia** is being treated for breast cancer.
- **Stephanie** was treated for cancer in her colon and is now receiving treatment for cancer in her liver and lungs.
- **William** was treated in the hospital for 27 days for endocarditis, an aortic aneurysm, an infection in his blood, and atrial fibrillation. Please pray for protection from further infection.
- **Daniel** (54) went to be with the Lord on October 27 after a battle with metastatic colon cancer. Please pray for comfort for his wife, Brenda, and their children.
- **Thomas** is being tested for numbness in both arms and hands due to a cavernoma in his spinal cord.

These Needs were assigned to members who participates in Save to Share™ for Needs greater than \$250,000. They have already been shared, so no additional giving is necessary. They are listed to encourage all members to pray.

DECEMBER 2022

Christian Health Care Newsletter

Samaritan™
MINISTRIES

In This Issue

- 2 **Noteworthy**
- 4 **Member Spotlight**
Chuck and Dee Breznau,
Healing of the Heart Ministries
- 8 **HealingStrong offers health path that includes the Lord's leading**
- 12 **Book excerpt: *Missional Medicine***
- 15 **Prayer for the Persecuted Church**
- 16 **The Doorpost**
What should be our normal?

Member Letter:

'I TOOK THE TIME TO READ EACH NOTE'

It is such a wonderful feeling when opening the Shares received for my Need. I really took my time in reading each encouraging note. Fellow Samaritan members not only sat down to write out a check to me for my Need, but took the time to write me a note and to pray for me. They were strangers, but I felt like I knew them. God has provided through Samaritan Ministries members, and I feel so blessed, both through the healing prayers and financially. I am healed and my quality of life is so much better.

**Keri
MISSOURI**



David Nielsen/Samaritan Ministries

Seeds of Christmas nostalgia can grow into year-long blessings

by Dan Dalzell, Christian Post contributor

PREPARATIONS ARE IN full swing all around the world to celebrate the miraculous historical event of the Messiah's birth in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago. The sights, songs, and smells of the season, along with childhood memories of Christmas, are already warming many hearts. What could be better than Christmas nostalgia, right?

continued on page 3

Christian Health Care Newsletter

Rob Waldo, Anthony Hopp
EXECUTIVE EDITORS

Michael Miller
EDITOR

Ray King
EDITOR EMERITUS

Julia Ekstrom
MANAGING EDITOR

Greg Feulner
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Brittany Klaus and Kathryn Nielson
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Ben Hawkins
DESIGN

David Nielsen
ILLUSTRATION

Follow us



@samaritanministries



@samaritanmin



@samaritanmin

Contact us

newsletter@samaritanministries.org
PO Box 3618, Peoria, IL 61612
telephone: 309-689-0442
telephone (toll free): 877-764-2426
fax: 309-689-0764

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.

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2016 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Capitalization of deity pronouns was approved by permission of Crossway.

Noteworthy | From the Editors

"So now faith, hope, and love abide ..." (1 Corinthians 13:13)

Ah, the Christmas season is in full swing once again, bringing to mind many cherished memories of laughter and celebration, worship and reflection, and delightful food and fellowship.

For many of us, the Christmas season brings to mind other memories, as well: Christmases filled with physical sickness and isolation, grief over the loss of loved ones who have passed away, or family conflict. Painful reminders of our human frailty. When can we cast off this brokenness and experience only the good?

As Christians, our Christmas joys and pains both point us to something greater—our future in heaven, filled with joy without sorrow and love without heartache. The baby in the manger is our promise that—come what may—God is always with us. Every beautiful Christmas memory is a glimpse into what we'll one day enjoy forever. With no pain, no brokenness, and no more tears.

Only faith, hope, and love abide. May your heart be filled afresh with them this Christmas!

Rob Waldo
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Helpful Resources

► [Facebook.com/groups/samaritanmin](https://www.facebook.com/groups/samaritanmin)

Reach out to other members in our Facebook Group.

► **Important emails**

Medical Needs: needs@samaritanministries.org

Sending or receiving Shares: membership@samaritanministries.org

Your membership: membership@samaritanministries.org

► **Health Resources App | [Dash.SamaritanMinistries.org](https://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.
- 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://www.samaritanministries.org/writers-guidelines)**

► **State disclosures: [samaritanministries.org/statedisclosures](https://www.samaritanministries.org/statedisclosures)**

While the warm and fuzzy feelings of the season are certainly enjoyable, many people long for more than just a week or two of festive exhilaration. There is a universal desire to experience lasting peace, love, and joy.

What if the nostalgia of Christmas led to deep joy and strength that filled your soul all year long? Imagine the Prince of Peace transforming your entire life. When God's supernatural power begins to change you from the inside out, it far exceeds the cozy feelings of Christmas nostalgia.

Have you had peace?

I suspect that over the past year you have experienced highs and lows, joy and sadness, victories and defeats. But to what extent was God involved in your daily life during 2022? And to what degree did you experience the power of the Holy Spirit?

The Bible describes the peace of God that passes all human understanding (Philippians 4:7). In order to experience the "peace of God," you must first be at "peace with God" (Romans 5:1). That is, you must first be in a relationship with God. Do you know Jesus Christ personally (John 10:14)? Regardless of your spiritual condition today, I want to invite you to try something.

Get alone somewhere and shut off your phone. Turn on some Christmas music or other Christian songs that inspire you.

As you sit in solitude, take a deep breath. Close your eyes and quiet your heart before the Lord. If it helps, open your hands heavenward as you prepare to receive God's healing love.



Begin to thank God for the many blessings you have received. "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise; give thanks to Him and praise His name" (Psalm 100:4, NIV).

After thanking God for His goodness to you, identify those things that are weighing your heart down. Bring your burdens and your sins to the Lord in a spirit of humility and repentance. Admit your shortcomings and ask Jesus to wash away your sins and heal your soul. Ask God to remove anything from your heart that is offensive to Him.

You could pray these words: "Jesus, you are my Creator and Savior. I need you in my life. Cleanse my soul with your forgiveness. Assure me of your love for me and help me to trust you completely. Strengthen my faith in you and in your Word. And fill me with the power of the Holy Spirit. Thank you, Jesus, for your grace."

Speak to God from your heart. Praise Him for His goodness and mercy. Worship Christ the King as your Lord and Savior. Speak

Continued on page 14

Member Spotlight

Chuck and Diane Breznau: Healing of the Heart Ministries

by Greg Feulner



Members Chuck and Diane 'Dee Dee' Breznau

HealingOfTheHeart.net

Facebook @healingoftheheart.net

Email contact@healingoftheheart.net

Phone: 810-245-7045

HEALING OF THE Heart Ministries (HHM), led by Chuck and Diane "Dee Dee" Breznau, is a Biblically based ministry of reconciliation healing hearts and families. Based in Lapeer, Michigan, HHM works with married couples, couples getting ready for marriage, and singles. Through one-on-one mentoring, seminars, and Christian radio, Chuck and Dee Dee mentor people to see their calling in Christ and find healing from brokenness.

Answering the call: In 2001, Chuck and Dee Dee's pastor asked their church's deacon and elder candidates and their wives to take a week off work to address issues in their marriages. Chuck and Dee Dee were one of those couples, and that was the seed of HHM.

Through that week, the Breznau's, who had been married 21 years, became aware of "problem areas we didn't even know were blocking our relationship."

"Even after much prayer and going to every conference through the years, we still hadn't addressed those heart issues that kept us from connecting emotionally



Diane "Dee Dee" and Chuck Breznau of Healing of the Heart Ministry (supplied photo)

and spiritually as God would have desired," Chuck says. "We began to face some of the issues and work toward resolution of them.

"It was amazing, really. Our children said near the end of the week. 'You need to keep going. This is good.'"

Budding ministry: As the Breznau's continued to experience life-changing benefits from what they had learned, the desire to

bring healing to others in the form of a full-time ministry grew as well. They were able to go through more training in 2004 and moved forward.

Dee Dee especially benefited, receiving healing for trauma she had experienced before marriage.

"I was set free of anger," she says. "I didn't start out as an angry person, but I think through the trials of life and in our marriage, I became that. And I was praying

so hard about that. God set me free and gave my husband a heart to come out of himself and come alongside me."

Others started seeing the difference in the Breznaus' lives, "and they started coming to us for help, and it has never stopped since," Dee Dee says.

After Chuck lost his job in 2007 due to restructuring at the company he worked for, the Breznaus prayed and followed God's

leading into full-time ministry.

"We began to see God fulfill everything in our hearts and bring the ministry to fruition," Dee Dee says.

Chuck says it was "kind of scary, starting a ministry."

But, stepping out in faith, Chuck and Dee Dee began going wherever God called them.

"We started off in really, really small places," Dee Dee says. "We have beautiful offices here now, and we've seen God provide for us

along the way."

They launched HHM full-time in 2007, and, since then, Chuck and Dee Dee have worked with hundreds of people ranging from 18-year-old singles to married couples in their 80s from all over.

"We're just about to put out our 15th-anniversary newsletter," Dee Dee says. "We're a ministry of reconciling people to God and to

Continued on page 6

Why Samaritan Ministries?

Chuck Breznau, who runs Healing of the Heart Ministries with his wife, Dee Dee, recently had a Need shared with other members of Samaritan Ministries. In one Share he received, members had sent a photograph of a beautifully serene river.

It meant a lot.

"They had taken the time to take this picture, make a copy of it, and mail it to me," Chuck says. "It really is heartfelt to get things like that and little notes on a nice card where a person took some time to just to say, 'We're praying for you.' That means a lot to somebody when they're really hurting."

Chuck and Dee Dee Breznau joined Samaritan in 2007 and they've loved it since.

"We recommend it to others, and we have Samaritan's materials in our offices to recommend to clients," Dee Dee says.

Before joining Samaritan, the Breznaus had health insurance through Chuck's job.

"We knew a family who was with Samaritan for years," Dee Dee says. "And they said all of their Needs were always met, and they had great experiences and shared those with us.

"We joined because we wanted to help the Body of Christ with medical needs while at the same time being assured that our money would only go towards things according to our beliefs. Samaritan Ministries members have a fantastic track record and has always exceeded our expectations. We always feel cared for, provided for, and prayed for. So, we are just excited about it."

They are encouraged by how Samaritan members have helped them with their Needs, like when Chuck had a burst appendix.

"With Samaritan, we didn't have to worry about the financial burden in addition to everything else that was going on, which was a huge relief to my mind, just knowing it was being shared," Chuck says.

"I called the hospital about the bill, not knowing that the hospital actually was being sold at that time, and they wanted to clear their accounts. So, they took my huge bill and they said, 'We'll cut it in half.' And then they even continued negotiating it. We ended up only paying a quarter of the original bill. And I was like, 'Wow, I can't believe this is a true story!'" ♦♦♦

one another. We've seen God do unbelievable healing in people's hearts, lives, and marriages."

Support: HHM does not charge a fee for services, wanting no impediments for anyone who needs help.

"HHM holds the conviction that this life-changing, intensive mentoring be offered by faith purely on a donation basis," Dee Dee says.

How it works: People come to HHM for an entire week. Chuck and Dee Dee work with them one-on-one for three hours each day. The Breznau's give clients tasks between meetings. HHM also provides customized tools and materials to work with that clients can take home after the week. They also help with follow-up as needed.

"Our materials are custom-made for whomever we're mentoring because we know that, while many of the issues are the same, people respond differently because everyone is different," Dee Dee says.

"You can't really put people in a box.

"Jesus Christ gets all the glory. We're witnesses of His power. Our clients discover the roots of their problems, and then the Holy Spirit works to draw them in to resolve these problems."

True reconciliation: "For lasting change in a person's life or marriage, a close heart relationship with Christ is vital," Chuck says. "That's the key thing, really. We help by leading them in that direction. Jesus truly does heal the brokenhearted and sets the captives free."

Dee Dee adds that "many have been Christians all their lives, but have never addressed the deeper

heart issues both spiritually and emotionally affecting their responses and reactions today."

"We can get stuck in our issues," she says. "But when we get free, we can become all that God created us to be and do."

Changing lives: One man they have helped was abused by his father "even while he was in the womb," Dee Dee says. He had "terrible physical trauma" as a result. The man even fled his country to escape the situation, and, by God's grace, "he was able to forgive and let go of those things that had angered him so much in the past."

One young lady grew up in a family deep in the occult, and, because of different traumatic experiences, she was afraid to go to school. Her home life was very difficult and her father took his own life, compounding the heartache.

"God set her free in our office," Dee Dee says. "She was able to go to school, and she's on fire for God now. She started a prayer group at her school, a public school, and it's just so amazing to see her grow now in her faith and how God's turning that awful, awful pain and situation around for good."

Another woman they helped "had every form of dysfunction imaginable," Dee Dee says.

"She had gone away to a Christian college and gotten involved in a cult. The cult leaders had really had her in servitude. She was caretaker of—basically the mother to—their six children, and they worked her almost to death. They were absent for their children, and she was stuck there. She felt very trapped, but at the same time, she

felt a responsibility to these children because in one sense she was their only mother. Eventually, she got out of there, but she was so distraught that she tried to commit suicide. And that's when I saw her. As a result of her week here, God set her free."

The young lady is an artist.

"She drew what God was showing her during that week of counseling," Dee Dee says. "And we have those drawings, and they help many, many people."

One drawing shows the young lady's heart in a box trying to get out. She was struggling so hard to break free, the Breznau's say.

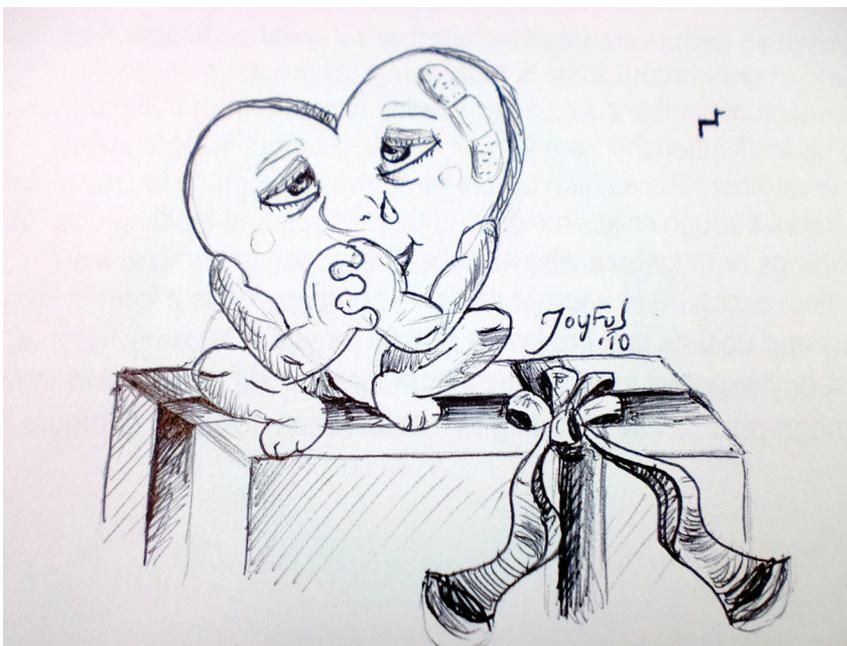
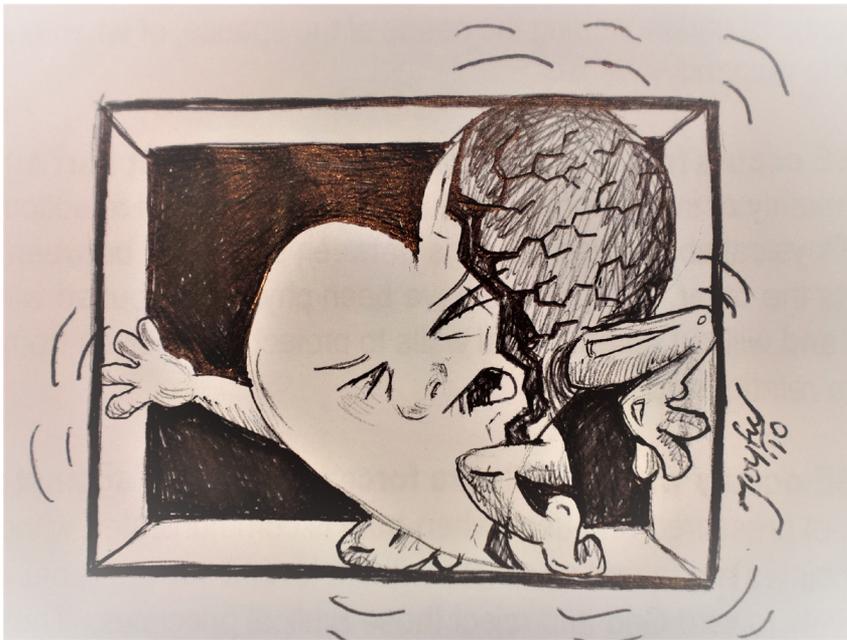
"Towards the end of the week with us, the Lord gave her a picture of her heart escaping that box, healing. And Jesus told her that that box was going to become a gift that she would give others. So it was like a gift box at the end of the week," Dee Dee says. "She went on to study art, and now she's a premier marine artist."

Family bonds: Childhood trauma, indwelling sin, and habits developed over time all hinder marriage intimacy. Mentoring not only helps a person to disentangle the mess but also allows a husband or wife to see what their spouse is going through.

"We really encourage both people to come because they can see each other's pain," Dee Dee says. "They learn about that other person and what they've experienced throughout their life," Dee Dee says.

A lack of understanding in a marriage can affect the whole family.

"Many parents realize they've



Drawings by a client of Healing of the Heart Ministries illustrate her feelings of her heart being "boxed in" before counseling (above) and escaping the box during counseling (below).

hurt their child, and they need to ask for forgiveness," Dee Dee says. "And when they do that, the child becomes more open to them, and then the child can share their own pain and receive healing."

Through helping parents, "we want to produce security and peace

in the hearts of children. We have seen this happen and we've had children say, 'Wow, this is so great.'"

Chuck and Dee Dee received a report from one young man in his 20s thanking them for the difference they made in his parents' marriage and, as a result, in his life

as well. One mended relationship can bond the whole family.

Help at church: HHM also works through churches.

Pastors refer people to HHM. Many of these former clients use the tools they've been given to help and encourage others.

"Tell others that there is hope," Chuck says. "So often, people don't have any hope. If you see a couple or individual struggling, let them know you care.

"God can make a way when there seems to be no way. We are privileged to see that over and over again with our clients and in our own lives."

"God answers prayer," Dee Dee says. "He listens to the heartfelt prayers of His people."

Prayer requests

The Breznaus requested prayer for:

- Revival in hearts and lives for the glory of God.
- Current and future clients to receive all that God has for them.
- Financial support. ♦♦♦

Greg Feulner is assistant editor of the Samaritan Ministries newsletter.

HealingStrong offers health path that includes the Lord's leading

by Michael Miller

Samaritan Ministries member Cortney Campbell of AntiCancerMom.com co-founded organization that focuses on rebuilding the body, renewing the soul, refreshing the spirit

HEALING STRONG IS one-third support group, one-third Bible study, one-third health class, and all about honoring God with our whole person, cancer or no cancer.

Co-founded by Samaritan Ministries member and cancer survivor Cortney Campbell and fellow cancer survivor Suzy Griswold, the international organization is a "community of volunteer-led groups that support our group members in living holistic, intentional lives that honor God and His Word."

This is done by focusing on three areas:

- Rebuilding the body.
- Renewing the soul.
- Refreshing the spirit.

The "rebuilding the body" aspect emphasizes a diet that removes processed foods and is rich in the consumption of raw fruit and vegetables, organic if possible. Appropriate fasting is also encouraged. HealingStrong teaches that such changes can help those going through or recovering from cancer and may even help strengthen the

body against it in the first place. Recipes and other resources for healthy eating abound not only on HealingStrong.org but also on Cortney's AntiCancerMom.com website.

Renewing the soul focuses on godly mental attitudes such as forgiveness, de-stressing, trust, and gratitude, including "believing that God's design for healing also includes rebuilding our body and refreshing the spirit."

The last goal of refreshing the spirit encourages prayer, Bible study, and discipleship, offered through weekly online community prayer and nightly online community Bible reading. Bible-based resources and devotionals can be downloaded for free on the HealingStrong website and are available on the YouVersion Bible app.

"God wants our minds strong and free of toxic thoughts and emotions," Suzy says. "He wants our bodies strong, too, so that we can be all He wants us to be. Our mission is Kingdom-focused, and our desire is to help others live a life that honors God with their whole being."

Down in Georgia

The network, with groups in the U.S., Canada, and even the South Pacific, was started 10 years ago when Cortney and Suzy connected through AntiCancerMom.com.

Cortney had been cancer-free for about three years after being diagnosed in 2008 at age 26 with stage 2 Hodgkin's lymphoma. Instead of going through conventional treatment, she practiced evidence-based nutritional changes, opting for a primarily raw-food, vegan lifestyle with "very targeted supplements" and detoxification. She and her husband, Kevin, opted for this route because their oncologist informed them that chemotherapy and radiation could likely render her infertile, and they wanted to start a family.

"When I first began my holistic cancer regimen, we decided on a three-month window to see how well I could do with just the natural therapies, monitoring the cancer behavior carefully through a new oncologist who was supportive of my decision," Cortney says.

When she got the news of her remission eight months later in

2009, she was pregnant with their first child.

In 2011, Cortney started Anti-cancerMom.com, which features encouragement for cancer patients and resources for a healthy lifestyle. The main goals are to help readers prevent cancer through diet and strengthen the bodies of those going through treatment or in remission.

Suzy, who had dealt with thyroid cancer that spread to her lymph nodes but has been in remission since 2011, was following much the same holistic approach as Cortney. She became aware of the latter's blog and reached out to her.

"And I ignored her for several months," Cortney says, laughing. "At the time, I had just had my daughter and was over my head teaching full time. I had many people reaching out to me about cancer through my blog and couldn't get back to everyone."

But Suzy wanted to put on a "holistic healing conference" and, like the persistent neighbor in Luke 11, kept reaching out to Cortney, who finally responded. The two women, who both live in Georgia, met for tea—green tea and stevia, of course—and hit it off.

Joining with other survivors, caregivers, and friends, the result was the first HealingStrong Conference and Retreat, a holistic cancer conference that attracted more than 150 people to Atlanta.

But a funny thing happened during the conference.

"We had groups of people that met there who wanted to keep meeting," Cortney says. "They formed little groups. The first was in Gainesville, Georgia, then we



Cortney Campbell, left, and Suzy Griswold (supplied photo)

had a second group in Marietta, Georgia, then we had a third group, and then it just kept multiplying. They just kept meeting."

Nearly 10 years later, what became HealingStrong has had 450 groups that have met at one time or another in the U.S. and Canada, with many still active.

Suzy and Cortney developed a 12-month customizable curriculum to give the groups guidance as needed and a training system for group leaders.

Healing their faith

Christian faith has been a foundational aspect of HealingStrong.

"We had worship and prayer at our first conference," Cortney says. "We gave out lots of Biblical materials.

"We believe you can follow God's leading in your healing journey, but it's Him who does the healing. You can't give credit to the food. You can't really give credit to 'I'm

Continued on page 10

going to make my life stress-free,' because God's the One who does it.

"We're not on this earth forever, so ultimately the most important thing is that we know the Lord."

While HealingStrong group leaders or members are not required to be Bible-believing Christians or to sign a statement of faith, they are expected to respect the Christian foundations of the organization and affirm its core values before registering to be a group leader.

HealingStrong's discipleship approach is that every point of contact is an opportunity to love as Christ loves and lead others into His Truth, resulting in many conversions.

"We have had many of our group leaders who were not believers when they started but who became believers through the process of leading the group," Cortney says.

HealingStrong members also created *Around the Word in 80 Days* (AroundTheWordin80Days.org) in August 2020, described as "a volunteer-led community Bible reading." Participants still gather online for an hour each night to read or hear the Bible read. They've been through the entire Bible eight times now.

Spiritual growth

The spiritual content of HealingStrong has grown over the years.

"We're having to go back and revise some of our early literature because it was so focused on the food, what goes in the body, and protocols, as if they were a 'one size fits all' thing," Cortney says. "What we have seen over the years

"We believe you can follow God's leading in your healing journey, but it's Him who does the healing."

is there's much more to it. Just to stay alive on this earth shouldn't be our goal. It's to ultimately grow closer to our heavenly Father.

"Our focus has become more geared toward that versus the importance of what we put in the body, although all that's very important. But since we've refocused on God, I feel like we've found a way that we can serve here on earth.

"Suzy and I have grown more in spiritual ways over the past 10 years than we've grown in knowledge of what phytonutrients are in cucumber juice," Cortney says with a laugh.

Suzy adds that, "If all we did was teach people how to juice and eat healthy and did not point them to the one true God, then folks would just be a little more comfortable in their darkness."

No judgment

While the HealingStrong network offers information on alternative health practices that it believes can help people avoid cancer, there's no judgment on the type of treatment current or past cancer patients involved in HealingStrong choose.

"We never tell people what to do," Suzy says. "What we teach are

principles that are fundamental to healing that will support a holistic or integrative approach."

Most people who attend HealingStrong groups are going or have gone through chemo and radiation.

"What we do teach them are ways to rebuild the body, renew the soul, and refresh the spirit," Suzy says.

There's no hostility toward the medical establishment, Suzy says. Groups have included participation of both allopathic and naturopathic doctors.

"We are not anti-medical establishment," Suzy says, "we are for supporting you through a community that will give you confidence along your path."

That concept of taking charge of your treatment was important for both Suzy and Cortney's experiences. Even though Cortney chose to do her own natural cancer treatment, she remained under the care of an oncologist. Suzy underwent surgery and radiation but declined chemotherapy.

"I dove headfirst into healing my body with plant-based nutrition, emotional healing, and drawing closer to God through the Word," says Suzy, who has 10 family members who have died of cancer.

After 18 months, she says, her lymph nodes showed no evidence of disease, and she's been cancer-free ever since.

HealingStrong meetings

HealingStrong meeting attendance is always free. The only costs involved are fees for those who want to lead a group or monthly donations for those who want to become website members.

Membership includes access to extra content and discounts.

And although the emphasis is on cancer survival and recovery, HealingStrong groups welcome people with all illnesses and diseases, “even people who are healthy that just want to learn more about nutrition or just want to gather with like-minded people who attend our groups,” Cortney says.

Meetings are in-person, online, or hybrid. They typically open with a prayer or devotion, then the lesson, which lasts 45 to 60 minutes. After that, each group’s meeting is different. There may be more discussion and distribution of resources, sometimes a meal together. Meetings typically last about 1½ to 2½ hours. Some groups take field trips or join other groups for conferences. Group leaders frequently meet up for encouragement and support.

Anyone can start a group by registering at HealingStrong.org, at which point they’re assigned a mentor. Right now, registration is a \$99 lifetime fee, but that will be changing to a monthly fee soon. After training, new leaders can order materials and start advertising the group’s existence. Their group will be listed on HealingStrong.org/groups so new members can find them. The leaders also continue to be mentored and supported through monthly training, community meetings, and even group leader conferences.

Cortney, who was a HealingStrong board member at one time as well as co-founder, has stepped back and focused on homeschooling her five children—with

another one due soon. She posts regularly on her Facebook Page (@anticancermom) and sends out an occasional email newsletter through her blog.

Through it all, her goal has been to educate readers to realize “how all the bodily systems are connected and are very aware of each other,” Cortney says.

“It’s not an isolated event when we get cancer. It’s a systemic event.”

Just like healing can be. ♦♦♦

Michael Miller is editor of the Samaritan Ministries newsletter.

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

How HealingStrong helped Angelica

HealingStrong’s open-minded approach to treatment for cancer first attracted Angelica “Gel” Pascual of Houston, Texas, to the group after she had been diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer in 2015.

Gel found out about HealingStrong from a flyer she came across while being treated at a nontraditional clinic in 2016.

“What pulled me in was the faith-based aspect,” she says. “Not only did I find people that were treating their cancer holistically, I also found them to be successful, faithful, and hopeful. We were all trusting God in every step of the way because this way is different from what most cancer patients are taking.”

HealingStrong inspired Gel so much that she felt comfortable sharing her own story, encouraging fellow warriors and collaborating with influencers. Within a few years, she became a co-leader for her local group, and eventually, a regional mentor for leaders in other areas.

She says HealingStrong helps her physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually.

“HealingStrong provides a safe place where I can pour my heart out and there is no judgment here,” she says.

“We need that emotional support and mental rest.

“Ultimately what we want is a closer relationship with the Healer, not just the healing,” Gel says. “That’s what I want to do also for the others.” ♦♦♦

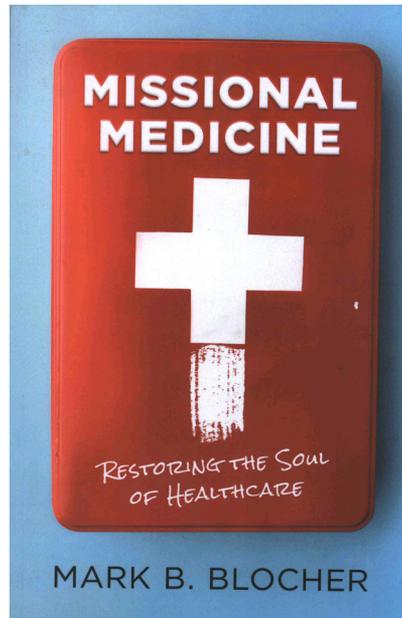
Missional Medicine: obstacles, threats

by Mark Blocher

The following is excerpted from chapter 11, "Obstacles and Threats to Missional Medicine," of the book *Missional Medicine: Restoring the Soul of Healthcare* by Samaritan Ministries member and CEO of Christian Healthcare Centers Mark Blocher. It was written before the state of Michigan, where CHC is located, interpreted a civil rights law to include sexual orientation and gender identity. See the sidebar for action CHC is taking in response.

AMERICAN SOCIETY HAS always respected individual conscience, which includes the right of doctors to refrain from participating in acts that are contrary to their moral or religious beliefs. This protection has been codified in law, codes of professional ethics, and institutional policies. Unfortunately, there is a growing movement in medicine to eliminate professional conscience protections. Although it is still illegal to force doctors to perform abortions or assist patient suicides, that may soon change. There are a growing number of instances where Christian medical professionals are pressured to use their training and experience to facilitate acts that violate their Christian beliefs and values. This is not fear-mongering; the threat is real.

In 2019, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) drafted rules to strengthen profes-



sional conscience protections for doctors. The action was initiated by the Office of Civil Rights within HHS and was designed to provide guidance on enforcing 25 statutory protections for healthcare professionals who decline to participate in medical procedures that violate their moral or religious beliefs. The rules were to take effect in July 2019, but several gay rights and abortion rights groups sued HHS to prevent them from taking effect, claiming they would jeopardize patients' access to care, particularly among women, racial minorities, low-income individuals, and people who are gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer. A federal district judge agreed with the plaintiffs, preventing the rules from taking effect.¹

Others among America's healthcare elites, which include prominent bioethicists at major U.S. universities, editors of influential medical journals, and medical editors for the major television networks, have been waging a subtle but potent assault on the rights of doctors to opt out of performing abortions, assisting suicides, or participating in gender reassignment procedures. Those who resist can find themselves unemployed, denied opportunities to advance in their career, and possibly lose board certification, resulting in the loss of hospital privileges and reimbursement contracts with insurers.

Physician and prominent bioethicist Ezekiel Emanuel, also one of the main architects of Obamacare, coauthored with Ronit Y. Stahl an unvarnished attack on professional conscience protections in an article from the *New England Journal of Medicine* where the authors assert, "Professional societies should declare conscientious objection unethical."² Their basic argument is that it is inappropriate to exempt physicians from having to provide elective procedures patients want, such as non-therapeutic abortions, because it is unethical for doctors to withhold medications, surgeries, or other medical interventions deemed to be appropriate and acceptable "standards of care." Ezekiel and Stahl would run object-

ing doctors out of the medical profession.

"Health care professionals who are unwilling to accept these limits have two choices: select an area of medicine, such as radiology, that will not put them in situations that conflict with their personal morality or, if there is no such area, leave the profession."³

If the aspirations of Emanuel and Stahl are realized, then the only people worthy of practicing obstetrics would be those doctors willing to abort unborn babies for any reason a pregnant woman might express. It means an endocrinologist who does not wish to provide hormone therapy to an adolescent girl who wants to be a boy should become a pathologist or choose a different career. Eventually, this corruption of medicine will spill over into medical education, so those individuals who might pose a threat to the new status quo can be stopped from entering medical school altogether. So much for liberal tolerance and inclusion.

As healthcare takes on some of the secular characteristics of big corporations, higher education, and government, many Christian doctors wonder how long it will be before being an open and vocal Christian jeopardizes their livelihood and professional advancement. Organizations such as the Christian Medical and Dental Society and the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists have engaged this concern in some of their recent conferences and publications.⁴

One example of anti-religious discrimination is a pediatrician whose practice partners forced her to accept a buyout because she was "too Christian," a charge leveled at her because she would not counsel or refer for abortion, would not advise teen girls to begin birth control, and was not willing to affirm teens wanting to gender transition or support their same-sex attraction. Other doctors to whom I have spoken shared their experiences of being discouraged from praying with patients,

reprimanded for leaving Christian literature in their waiting rooms, and essentially told to not discuss spiritual matters with patients. The secularization of medicine is not good for patients or doctors. Rather than stripping spirituality out of medicine, a substantial body of research supports the integration of spiritual care into the doctor-patient relationship.⁵ ♦♦♦

¹ Abutaleb, Y. (2019, November 7). Trump's 'conscience rule' for health providers blocked by federal judge. Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/trumps-conscience-rule-for-health-providers-voided-by-federal-judge/2019/11/06/39aa9b74-00b1-11ea-9518-1e76abc088b6_story.html

² Stahl, R. Y., & Emanuel, E. J. (2017). Physicians, not conscripts — Conscientious objection in health care. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 376(14), 1380–1385. <https://doi.org/10.1056/nejmsb1612472>

³ *Ibid.*, p. 1383.

⁴ E.g., see aaplog.org/physician-conscience-rights/

⁵ See M.J. Balboni and J.R. Peteet (2017), *Spirituality and Religion Within the Culture of Medicine: From Evidence to Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

To buy a copy of *Missional Medicine*, send \$20 plus \$3 for shipping to Mark Blocher, 1579 Spencer Ave., Hudsonville, MI 49426.

Christian Healthcare Centers files suit against Michigan

Christian Healthcare Centers in Grand Rapids, Michigan, filed a federal lawsuit in August against the Michigan attorney general's office over a new state civil rights law that is being interpreted to include sexual orientation and gender identity.

"This law now requires Christian Healthcare Centers to hire people who do not share their faith, to prescribe cross-sex hormones to

facilitate efforts to alter a patient's biological sex, and to use pronouns that do not accord with a person's biological sex," says a news release by Alliance Defending Freedom, which brought the suit. "All of this violates the ministry's religious beliefs and undermines its ability to provide safe health care to the needy and the rest of the community."

Please pray for a favorable resolution. ♦♦♦

directly to the Redeemer who purchased your salvation when He died on the cross.

“Thank You, Jesus, for going through the horrible agony You endured on the cross to pay for my sins. Help me, Lord. Forgive my sins. Live in me. Use my life to Your glory. Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me. Empty me of anything that offends You, and fill me with Your power, wisdom, and love. Touch my heart today, dear Lord.”

E.M. Bounds said, “Prayer fills man’s emptiness with God’s fullness.”

You might want to offer this specific request that David prayed

to God: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me” (Psalm 51:10-12).

As you bask in the presence of the Lord, trust Jesus to break the chains that bind you. Wait upon the Lord in prayer to heal your heart and mind, and to lift the pressure of those burdens you are carrying.

As you spend time every day meditating upon Scripture, the power of God will fill you with courage and wisdom. Jesus said,

“... Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

You’ll be blessed

Do you long for more than Christmas nostalgia? If so, you will be incredibly blessed to spend some quiet time with the Lord as you worship and adore the King of Kings and admit your need for the Savior of the world.

Jesus came to Earth to rescue us from sin, death, and the devil. Are you willing to come to Christ and be delivered? Will you humble yourself before the Lord as you spend time every day with your Creator?

If you want to experience change, you will need to come directly to the One who said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).

Ralph Sockman said, “The hinge of history is on the door of a Bethlehem stable.”

“She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins ... and they will call Him Immanuel—which means, ‘God with us’” (Matthew 1:21,23). ♦♦♦



Dan Delzell is the pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Papillion, Nebraska.

Originally posted at christianpost.com/voices/longing-for-more-than-christmas-nostalgia.html. Copyright 2021 by Christian Post. Reprinted by permission.

Prayer for the Persecuted Church



Ukrainian Christians Leonid and Tatyana Ponomarev, second and third from left, have been released by Russian troops. (Voice of the Martyrs photo)

Ukrainian pastor, wife released by Russians

Praise God that a pastor and his wife who had disappeared in a Russian-occupied area of Ukraine have been released, Voice of the Martyrs-Canada reports. Leonid and Tatyana Ponomarev of Mariupol disappeared in September. Their congregation, Kurchatov Church, was then closed and turned into a cultural sports and entertainment complex. The Ponomarevs were released on October 21.

Indonesian authorities impede church construction

Indonesian Christians have been denied the right to build a church on land that the congregation owns near Jakarta, Mission Network News (MNN) reports. There are approximately 10,000 Christians in the town. The local authorities are refusing to allow the church to be built despite the Indonesian government saying that the Christians have a right to build their own building. *Pray that Christians in this town will be able to build a church and that local authorities in Indonesia will begin to respect Christian rights.*

Belarusian church services dispersed, pastors fined

Members of New Life Church in Minsk, Belarus, who have been meeting outdoors have been forced to halt services, MNN says. Services were moved outdoors when their building was sealed by government authorities in 2021. Two pastors were fined the equivalent of two months' average wages. *Pray for the ability of New Life Church to meet without interference, especially as temperatures drop this winter.* ♦♦♦



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 and action.

Each month, we will provide updates and offer prayer points gleaned from a variety of sources. Please use them in your prayer time and possibly to seek other ways, small or large, to supplement our prayers with action.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE PERSECUTED CHURCH:

International Christian Concern
persecution.org
800-422-5441

World Watch Monitor
worldwatchmonitor.org

Be watchful, stand firm in the faith ...

1 Corinthians 16:13a

THE DOORPOST

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



Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong.

1 CORINTHIANS 16:13

When we face turmoil all around us, we may yearn for our lives to be calmer and less uncertain. We sometimes hear people (possibly even ourselves) wistfully ask, "Will things ever get back to normal?"

By that we seem to mean that we want others to "just do the right thing" so we won't face so many obstacles to doing what is right. We just want life to be simpler so we won't have to be so careful. That approach may have contributed to many of the problems we have been facing. We don't need to get back to that.

Instead, we should not drop our guard but should be watchful as we confront the challenges around us. We need to be strong, stand firm, and take action. That is the example set for us by godly people throughout Scripture, including Jesus Himself.

Our "normal" should not be wishing for something easier but living lives of active watchfulness, standing firm against evil, acting in faith.



For The Kingdom,
Ray King