

Transcript

A Roundtable Discussion with Dr. Rodney Harrison, Dr. Ron Mackey, & Joe Ulveling
13.03: "A View from 30,000 Feet"

Andy Braams: Welcome to *Biblical Perspectives on Aging*. And this is your host, Andy Braams. Today is a special episode. We have a roundtable, so to speak, and Dr. Rodney Harrison, the President of Baptist Homes and Healthcare Ministries is with me today. Rodney, you have a couple of guests with you. Would you like to reintroduce yourself and share who is in the room with you today?

Rodney Harrison: Well, thank you very much, Andy. It's a pleasure to be back on *Biblical Perspectives on Aging*. I'm Rodney Harrison, President of the Baptist Homes, a position that I have enjoyed now for just over for one year.

To my right, is Dr. Ron Mackey. Ron has been with Baptist Homes for over 20 years. He has been on an earlier podcast and he currently serves as our Vice President for community engagement. Ron has served both on the board of the Baptist home and has served on the corporate staff in various capacities. So we'll have him join us with his institutional memory.

And then to my left, is Joe Ulveling. [00:01:00] Joe is one of the newest team members of Baptist Homes, and I hope that we'll be able to talk about him and brag on him a little bit later in the podcast. Joe serves as our Chief Operations Officer [and] Joe comes to Baptist Homes after about 18 years working for the Missouri Baptist Convention, and, prior to that, over a decade of banking experience.

And so we are thrilled to have brother Joe with us serving as our operations officer.

Andy Braams: Well, great. I'm sure he would like for you to brag on him publicly as well. So that would be good. Well, today's episode [of] having you three in the room allows us to talk kind of big picture.

We're calling this particular episode, "A View from 30,000 Feet." And so allowing you to give a few details, but a little bit of an idea of where we are going, as Baptist Homes and Healthcare Ministries, could you start with a COVID update? I know we've had [a COVID update] in the [00:02:00] past couple of episodes; we've had some administrators on and one of the chaplains on to talk about that, but how are things going generally from a COVID perspective?

What has been the impact upon the long-term care rebounding as we're moving forward from the depths of COVID at least over the last several months and year; just give us an update on that, please.

Rodney Harrison: Okay, well, thanks very much, Andy. Well, you know, the Baptist Homes were really blessed to maintain a COVID-free environment through the fall of 2020.

It had been something that we had been praying for. In fact, ironically, I think it was in the September edition of our state newspaper, *The Pathway*, that I had written an article about the COVID miracle, the fact that on all four campuses we had managed to maintain a COVID-free environment. The month of October came and in October we literally saw every campus, or no, excuse me, three of [00:03:00] our four campuses, impacted by the coronavirus.

And of course, that is an opportunity to really practice what we preach: the recognition that sometimes things don't go exactly the way we want them to this doctrine of theodicy. Why does

God allow suffering? Why does God allow bad things to happen? Why doesn't he just keep illness from the world?

And yet during that season, it was really a sweet season for Baptist Homes. As we leaned on one another more, as we grew, I think more as an organization rather than four separate campuses, we really started functioning as a unit and as an organization with a common mission, a common purpose, and a common value.

We continued to have periodic outbreaks, but I am pleased to say we have not had any positive cases since early February. So, we've been COVID-free since February. [00:04:00] We were blessed to be able to start the vaccination program in late December, starting with Arcadia Valley. And like I said, we have now been able to be COVID-free since February, and that has opened up all types of opportunities.

When you think about the impact on long-term care, not only [with] the coronavirus, really for the last year and two months, nobody wants to move into a congregate care environment. Nobody wanted to do that for a while. We're actually seeing our rooms filling again. We're seeing our census rebounding.

It was down over 20% at one point. And now, as of last week, I think we're probably right about where we were year to date last year. So things are starting to rebound again, but also, I think we're a healthier environment and, a little bit later, we'll [00:05:00] probably talk a little bit more about some of the things that COVID has taught us, but [also], how things are going. I would say they're going well. I'm going to ask Ron just to kind of speak to that because Ron is actually one who spends a little bit more time working on the floor and with our administrators.

And so, Ron, do you want to just add your thoughts to how things are going, related to COVID?

Ron Mackey: Well, I think as Rodney said, it's been since February that we've had an outbreak on any of our campuses, which has created the opportunity for us to very slowly and incrementally begin to reopen our campuses.

Currently, all four of our campuses, we are open for visits by appointment, with family. They need to call, set up an appointment, and they are able to come and visit their loved one pretty much in that residence room. We are also open to pastors to be able to come in and [00:06:00] see their church members in our facilities as well.

So that is enabling us to move forward. And our residents are now able to basically have full freedom, within the campus. They're eating together. We still have the plexiglass shields. We still have a little bit of distancing. But we're beginning to realize that we may not need even those plexiglass shields because all of our residents, well, the vast majority of them, have had their full round of vaccines.

And that gives us the opportunity to get them back to a more normal life. I remember the day of our vaccine clinic here at Ironton when our first resident came out of the medical room where the vaccines were being given. And, you know, you have to come out and wait for 15 minutes before you go back through. Spontaneously when she came out, those were waiting to receive their vaccine just started applauding, and it was just kind of a [00:07:00] celebration that maybe we're going to get back to something normal. One of the things that we've learned from this is how to connect with our residents, families electronically, be it by via a phone [or] by a tablet.

We had to become much more knowledgeable about social media than we were before. And, you know, before it was like a nuisance, now it's a requirement. We are not going back to the way things were before. We are going to continue to have opportunities for our residents and their families to connect, electronically.

We had some family members who live hundreds of miles away from their loved ones. So this is a great avenue for us. And quite honestly, COVID is what taught us how to do that.

Andy Braams: Let's go down that path for just a moment; because obstacles and challenges that come our way lead to different innovations; lead to different opportunities.

Obviously, it's a mindset we can get trapped within the challenges themselves, or we can [00:08:00] seek a way forward; seek a way through them. And sometimes that's easier than others, but Ron, you just mentioned, and I'll throw this to anyone, that because of COVID you are now using technology. You are enabling families to visit with their family that are residents, even though they may not be [able] to come and to see.

So what are some other opportunities that COVID has provided during these last several months as you've adapted? What are some other lessons perhaps [you] have learned over this past 14 months that you will continue to put to good use in the days and years ahead?

Rodney Harrison: One thing that comes to mind is just how our campuses were able to be innovative; alternatives to maybe being in that facility; everything from having parades where families would get together and we would literally have a parade of cars going around the facilities where [00:09:00] families could wave at their loved ones. I think there's a heightened awareness of, you know, if you're not feeling well, if [it's] Sunday, you're at church and you kind of have a tickly throat, but boy, "Every Sunday we have to go visit grandma;" "We visited mom;" or "We'd always go see dad." Now we understand that probably if you've got that tickly throat, if you're not feeling well, it's wise not to come on campus. One of the things we discovered across the nation is that the number of infections among our residents, they decreased dramatically, because of the heightened awareness of things, like just personal hygiene of hand-washing and now visitors [who also] have that expectation.

When they come into a facility, they wash their hands, they prepare, and they're creating a safer environment for everybody. So that would be, I think, one of the things [00:10:00] that has improved. I think I'll let, probably Ron, and maybe Joe, say a few things, then I would love to...you know, you mentioned about opportunities...tell you; kind of continue with maybe some opportunities that have been presented to Baptist Homes as a result of this. But what else is happening on the campuses that are encouraging, Ron?

Ron Mackey: I think there's a greater sense of comradery among our staff. You know, they have each area of our staffing. We have dietary nursing, housekeeping, maintenance, social services, campus, pastor activities. They all have their little niche areas where they've worked. But what COVID has done is it's forced them all.

Not that they were really separated, but they each had areas of focus and they've all begun to realize [00:11:00] that these focuses are all integrated together. And the way they saw that was when one of those areas or several of those areas could not occur, like congregate worship, like dining together.

How do you then keep these people spiritually and emotionally healthy when they've pretty much been confined to their rooms? You know, your interview you did with Steve Moseley, I think, touched on that very eloquently as he talked about the residents would sit in their doorways while chapel was piped in through speakers, overhead for them to be able to worship together. Our staff had been very fluid in their response of how to serve our residents. And I think that has helped them become a more cohesive team together in one way.

Rodney Harrison: You know, one of the developments that [00:12:00] I think is somewhat unique too, is our industry was hit very, very hard. Starting with the news that came out of, you know, that the West coast of the original coronavirus invasion that came into the United States, it was in, early or late February, that that started in the nursing home. And so our nursing home long-term care, adult care communities were hit really hard by this. And I shared it did impact us. We saw the fact that because we did not have new residents moving in our census declined about 20, just a little bit over 20% at one point. It's rebounded, many facilities did not have that. Some facilities had 100% of their residents test positive for COVID. Many of them have not had a single person move back in, and that leads to some unique opportunities. As we look at a view from 30,000 feet, [00:13:00] when I became President, I cast a vision of really the ministry expanding.

If you look at the history of Baptist homes, we started 108 years ago. For a good portion of our history, Arcadia Valley was the sole campus. Back in the late 1980s, we added a campus in Chillicothe. Then in the late nineties and two thousands, we added the campus at Ozark and currently, we have a new campus under construction in Ashland, but what about opportunities to expand?

And COVID has created some very unique opportunities as we are currently, in really what I call now, the final negotiation process of acquiring two facilities in the Kansas City metroplex. One [is] in the city of Adrian, Missouri. These are facilities, a couple of them closed due to COVID that they just could not maintain, serving residents [00:14:00] with the decline in census and, one facility is still operating, but they're operating now at about 20% of their capacity, which is not a viable structure. And these are facilities that have really struggled and if you want to talk about kind of making a fire sale, it's a very unique environment. Facilities that, for example, might've been purchased for \$4 million about 16 months ago, are pretty much now going for 10 cents on the dollar. I mean, that's the literal amount, 10 cents on the dollar over what the purchase price was just 18 months ago. And so Baptist Homes is looking at acquiring some facilities that will allow us to do continuum of care.

We would envision eventually one of these facilities, particularly...[00:15:00] it's one in Smithville, Missouri...would potentially target veterans; and really be a home that would be very different than your traditional veterans home. If you think of a veteran's nursing home...I visited many veterans nursing homes...they're all the same. Yeah. Two beds per room. You have four beds per bathroom. And it's that old traditional model of the institutional nursing home.

Imagine a facility where every veteran would have their own bathroom, their own bedroom, their own living room in a community that also provides the spiritual support that we are uniquely able to give as Baptist Homes. And so, we're pretty excited about these opportunities. And, again, these are ones that the board has given us a blessing to move forward on.

And so we're just, again, right now we're not under contract, but probably [00:16:00] by the time this podcast is actually available, I would anticipate that we will be under contract with these facilities. So I would just encourage people to be looking and praying for us; praying that we will be wise as we look at how we can take what was bad.

You know, I think [of] Romans 8.28: “for, we know that God causes all things to work together for good for those who love him, those called according to his purpose.” You know, nobody would ever want to repeat 2020. We don’t want to repeat the pandemic, but can we see good coming out of it for Baptist Homes and Healthcare Ministries?

I think we can see quite a few things good coming out of this. It has also been an opportunity to accelerate our move into hospice and eventually to home health care because we [have] come to realize that in this environment that we live in today for Baptist Homes to be effective at being able to serve and [00:17:00] provide our unique philosophy and standard of care, to serve more of Missouri, we need to be able to be in the homes.

And so, a little bit later, I’ll hopefully get to share a little bit about some of our new staff that’s coming on and we’ll be helping to head up what will become a hospice ministry.

Andy Braams: Well, those changes that you just mentioned, kind of brings Joe into the equation here. And Joe, we’ll invite you to speak here momentarily as well, but, you know, with additional opportunities with additional expansion, new facilities coming on, that is a part of why it can’t just be called The Baptist Home. If, as we think about The Baptist Home in general, that would imply a singular home. Obviously there’ve been multiple homes over the past several years, as you just mentioned, Rodney, but now we’re to Baptist Homes and Healthcare Ministries that incorporates new homes; that incorporates new services, hospice, et cetera.

[00:18:00] So share a little bit about the name change, and then, Joe, as chief operating officer, obviously you’re coming in to oversee all of this. So, let’s start with you. How do you see your role coming in? We’ll get [more] from other staff and other expertise momentarily, but, how do you see your role fitting into this as these expansions are happening?

Joe Ulveling: Right now, I’m a big sponge thankful with these men.

The thing that really impressed me about the opportunity and, as we talked, was really two different things. The sanctity of life is one thing that really just stuck out to me, but then the dignity of the senior care. And that really stuck out to me because part of my journey...I don’t have the long experience in this particular industry, although I have some corporate experience, but part of my journey...is my mother passed away about four years ago.

[00:19:00] And then, at that time, my father, needed to go into independent living, [then] assisted living and then the memory care. So I was one of the customers, so to speak, on the other side: the family side. And so I learned a lot about that. I’m thankful that he had good care. I’m thankful for the love that he received in the home, where he was in the, for the service [he received], but that showed me how important that was.

From the family side, but then also the dignity. So that’s why those things really rang true for me, for being able to have this opportunity to serve, having the experience in the nonprofit, but then also in the commercial finance industry, really the way that God has wired me, Andy, is I say that I’m a corporate brain and a ministry heart.

To me, Baptist Homes is a ministry, [but] it also is a way that has to function [00:20:00] in order to stay a ministry and to provide the service for the residents. And so, to be able to help grow and improve teamwork, I love that. And that’s part of what I bring to the table, but then also working with systems and process management, how do we do that?

What's that look like? How do we involve team? How do we become more efficient? It's not just about pushing people, but what do we do to gain those efficiencies? But then, also, to get the campuses to function together as one unit. And so, that's some of my heart, some of my passion and what I look forward to, but right now I'm just a big sponge, learning as much as I can from, from these men.

And I look forward to making some, additional contributions as we move forward.

Andy Braams: Sure. Sure. Rodney, did you want to speak, then, to the name change and how that allows you to grow or to expand the opportunities from a formal perspective in that way?

Rodney Harrison: Okay. Well, thank you. [00:21:00] On becoming president, several people would come to me and they would ask, "Why do they call it the Baptist home? I understand you have a campus in Chillicothe. I understand you have a campus in Ozark. You're building a campus in Ashland. Wouldn't it be 'The Baptist Homes' or 'Baptist Homes?'" And so, you know, hearing that, not just from one or two, but more like probably 20 or 30 individuals in that first few months, they poised that question.

I also benefited from reading an article written by our communications director, Becky Barton, that had talked about, the various name changes throughout the history of this ministry. You know, back when [this] was first started...Dr. Riggs...it was called "The Baptist Home for the Aging." Another time it was "The Missouri Baptist Home for the Aging." [00:22:00]

There's a couple of different variations of that. So I, first of all, wanted to reflect that we are more than one campus, hence the plural, "Homes," but also we're much more than just, "Homes." We are moving into expanded healthcare ministries. For example, I've already mentioned hospice and [down] the road, probably home health, but one of the things that we're doing is memory care and inclusive memory care.

I'm going to have Ron just talk a little bit about what that will look like. And that is, again, an added ministry that we are providing.

Ron Mackey: Baptist Homes has practiced care for those with memory issues for 50 years. In that time period, a marketing technique referred to as memory care has come to rise and it has become the standard moniker [00:23:00] for what it means to care for somebody who has memory issues. However, if you were to call one of the Baptist homes and ask, "Do you have a memory care unit?"

Our initial reaction and our initial response has been to say, "No, we don't." Which means for that call, that person who's looking for help for their loved one probably is going to say, "Okay, they're off the list. I need to move on." When the reality is, I personally believe we do as good a job of caring with folks with memory issues as anybody out there.

What we've come to understand is it's been very difficult for us to define what we do by addressing what we aren't. Okay. It's very difficult to sell somebody who you are by telling them what you don't do, but the idea of inclusive memory care focuses on, first of all, memory care.

[00:24:00] We are experts in providing care for those with Alzheimer's and dementia. We have, historically, used a methodology referred to as validation therapy, which is built around a concept that as we age, whether we have memory loss or are just aging, God implants within us this desire to resolve the issues of life.

As we age, we begin to see the end of our lives coming clear into focus. And there are some issues in our lives we have with our family, our children, our spouse, someone else; [and] we want resolution to these problems. And that happens to couple with the same timeframe: when our physical character is declining; we're losing our hearing; we're losing our sight; we're losing our mobility. So that desire to resolve those issues may cause that resident or that elder to look confused. [00:25:00] So we've been practicing a way to help that resolution for 50 years now. It's just not called memory care.

And the idea of inclusive is the positive way of saying we don't have memory care units. Our people who have memory problems are not segregated into a collective, put into a facility where they are secured, basically locked in, and then activities and functions are designed that would be appropriate for them. Back in the early 1970s, the Baptist home here at Ironton experimented with a secured locked down section of our facility.

And the leader of the time, Ed Goodwin, he and I talked recently and he shared with me with great emotion and [00:26:00] great guilt, what that did to people. What happened was all of these people had different levels of memory loss and memory problems, but when they were all put together 24 hours a day, seven days a week in the same environment, in a locked secure area, there was a reduction to the means and capacity.

Everybody began to manipulate, not manipulate, but emulate the person with the least function. So the inclusive idea is our residents are free to go wherever they want to on our campus. All right. We have electronic security processes that alert us when a resident who might be a wanderer; who might walk off of our campus.

Those things let us know where they're at and that we need to go find them and look out for them. But on our campus, we don't have a unit where those with memory issues reside. So what that means is [00:27:00] is we, as a people, as staff, as residents, we're all in this together. So your next door neighbor might have dementia and they might know their name, but they might not know where they're at. What we find is the body of Christ coming to bear.

Andy Braams: Hmm.

Ron Mackey: People serve each other and care for each other. I'll never forget two ladies. One lady didn't know who she was and didn't know where she was. Her neighbor knew where they were knew how to get around, knew how to get work from one place to the other.

But couldn't remember the times of things and they came together and they would walk together. They would end up to dinner on time. They would end up [to] the activities on time. They could find each other's rooms together. Oh, one made that happen. They just, by God's design, found each other. So the idea of inclusive memory care is yes, we provide care for those with memory loss, but we do it very differently. [00:28:00]

That's the idea.

Andy Braams: It goes back a little bit to what Joe was saying a little bit ago about joining from a sanctity of life perspective, but that dignity of life, what you're just sharing there, Ron, is that dignity, that we can bring.

Rodney Harrison: And so that's really what the new name signifies; it signifies the fact that we are a multi-campus and growing ministry. We are expanding into hospice and home health and we are

providing services and resources. So, you know, not just for our, our residents and their families, but for our churches. That's why [for] this podcast and other resources [that] we make available, I think the new name simply fits who The Baptist Home is today.

Andy Braams: And again, we've used this several times. It's on the intro [and] the outro for the podcast, but it's Baptist Homes and Healthcare Ministries, for those that are still getting used to that name. [00:29:00] With the expansion, with the additional resources that are being provided, with the additional oversight that is necessary with additional facilities that may be coming online as a part of the overall ministry of the Baptist Homes.

Obviously new staff, Joe, you are part of that new staff. What are you needing? What are you looking at for, not that the we're doing a job promotion here. But what are some of the things that you were looking for? For the people that you are bringing on, what kind of expertise has been brought into the Baptist Homes over these last few months, as you've been thinking through and developing the ideas, to lead this ministry into the future?

Rodney Harrison: Well, I will unashamedly put in a plug if you feel called to Baptist Homes [and] ministry and, you know, would be interested in talking about a career ministry. We will be soon having everything from [00:30:00] facilities [and] operations managers of those who oversee the operations at the campus level maintenance and that facilities, administrative positions.

We're going to have multiple nursing positions: all levels of nursing staff and other roles. So there will be new opportunities as we develop these new campuses. I am pleased to announce that Dr. David Sundeen is coming on board as our, Executive Director for Baptist Homes Hospice. Dr. Sundeen brings, an almost 35-year track record of being an innovator as a church planter [where] he has been able to go and demonstrate [that] he knows how to start something from scratch and build it to sustainability. Dr. Sundeen is known by literally thousands as the Dean of Online and Distance Education at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Spurgeon College. [00:31:00] And he just recently has been appointed as our new executive director.

So we look forward to him coming online and his first task is to lead us through the accreditation process. Something that he's well-versed in from higher education. So he's one of our newest team members. David officially started with us on a part-time basis, on May 1st, [then] will be coming online full-time [on] August 1st. We also have Pam Workman. Ron, do you want to just tell us a little bit about Pam? She is our new administrator at the Ozark campus.

Ron Mackey: Pam came to the Baptist home of Ozark a couple of years ago with about 30 years of experience in long-term care and a variety of settings: dietary, social services, [etc.]; I believe even activities and work. And in her timeframe, at the Baptist home, Baptist Homes and Healthcare Ministries, excuse me. I have a guy been around long enough that I tripped over it. [00:32:00] Rodney had put out a challenge, that we find our replacement, that we raise up the next generation of leadership and our administrator at the time.

Sonia Newton took that to heart and did a really good job of preparing and mentoring Pam for that. A couple of months ago, Sonja announced her retirement, from Baptist Homes and simultaneously recommended Pam Workman as her replacement. Pam is now the administrator-in-training.

She is studying for her nursing home administrator's exam. And as soon as she passes that, she will become the administrator there. What that does for us is it creates some continuity in leadership. It also results in a real familiarity with the next leader. You know, you've watched this [00:33:00] person, for quite some time and you've been aware of that.

And it also says to the rest of our staff, we're pretty serious about raising up our own leaders. Right now, in the state of Missouri, finding a qualified, biblically-informed Christian administrator to lead our campuses is a difficult task and [to] have one homegrown, so to speak, is a great, great opportunity.

And that has created leverage, I think, over the rest of our campuses to kind of say, "Hey, we need to get serious about this. Who is the next RN?, who is the next DoN? Who's the next campus pastor? Who's the next administrator, on your campus?" And, you know, I think people are beginning to look at things and have an eye towards that, which will be very good for us long-term.

Rodney Harrison: Yeah. The final thing I would add is that we're about ready to complete the transition of the corporate office to Jefferson City. [00:34:00] Joe is already there full-time, probably by the time this podcast is made fully available. We'll have our staff accountants there [and] we'll have administrative assistants there.

I have an office there. Ron has an office there. Spencer Hutson has an office there. So we're excited about that. We're also nearing hiring the first campus pastor for our Ashland campus, so that it is a recently expanded campus with the opening of the congregate living community; I believe about a month ago, Derek Tamm was on the podcast and talked about that exciting project.

And so, we're just on the cusp of bringing on our first campus pastor for Ashland. So it's an exciting time at Baptist Homes. And yet, it's a time that we are looking for those who God is raising up to be a part of this ministry. So Joe, do you want to say anything about the openings that we have in Jefferson City and what kind of person we might be looking for there?

Joe Ulveling: [00:35:00] Really two openings that we have [are] an administrative assistant, which will be supporting the staff and office there and then also staff accountant, which will be a point person, kind of a medium level accounting position, but that'll be a point person that will be assisting the different locations and our other remote staff here in Ironton as well.

Andy Braams: So, if someone listening to this was interested in, or maybe they wanted to pass this on to a family member or something, how would they get in touch? Who would they reach out to about any of these particular positions?

Rodney Harrison: Probably the easiest way to do that would be to send an email to president@thebaptisthome.org. And we'll make sure that gets circulated to the proper person.

Andy Braams: Well, as we begin to wrap up this interview a little bit, [00:36:00] we've been looking at it from a 30,000 feet drop in here and there. There's a lot of ambitious goals and ambitious ideas that have been presented today. What else might each of you, or you collectively, like to share about the direction of Baptist homes and healthcare ministries in the days ahead?

Ron Mackey: Well, I would say this. The challenge as we expand and to grow is to always remember why we exist. We don't exist to be larger. We don't exist to have a greater variety in what we do. We exist to serve aging humanity with the concept and an understanding that all life is created in the image of God.

And that there is this beauty in His sanctity in human life, not [00:37:00] just at birth, but throughout life. And, as we expand, we are expanding so that we can serve more people, period; not just so that

we can be larger. Larger is just more work, but it does create opportunities for us to serve more of our seniors in that last journey of their lives.

Rodney Harrison: I would add that, we are also here just for the church. When we think about serving the aging, you know, oftentimes those references, those calls come from family members as they are navigating what they're observing, they're observing changes, or maybe observing concerns that, you know, "I'm not sure if, my loved one is taking their medications," or "Wow. I think they're wearing the same thing today that they were a week ago [00:38:00] when I was at their house."

And, you know, you start wondering what can we do? We want to be an advocate for the church, not just those who might come into the Baptist Homes or one of our campuses, but it might be that they're going to a care facility in their own community, but we would like to be there to help inform it. It's a very confusing industry at times with acronyms that could cause you to just kind of roll your eyes. You know, what is independent living versus assisted living versus intermediate care, skilled care, dementia care, Alzheimer's care; you know, we threw in the new title, inclusive memory care.

"What does all that mean?" and "How do we pay?" Those are the kinds of questions that people frequently really would like to have someone help navigate those questions. and we can do that. We have resources for children who might be wondering what's happening to grandma or great grandpa.

[00:39:00] "Why are they different? Why are they in this big house and not, you know, in the old home? Why do they have a nurse helping them?"; things of that nature. And so, we are truly about being advocates for the aging; advocates for the sanctity of life, with a conviction. Our residents are lifetime disciples, even those who might have an impairment that keeps them from appearing to be growing in Christ.

This is our opportunity to show Christ-like compassion and mercy and grace in an unconventional way. That means we're being Christ-like. And that really is our mission. Our mission is to be the Christ-like standard of care or the aging. And so, it's a really exciting time to be a part of what Baptist Homes is doing.

We're blessed with great partners with [the] Missouri Baptist Convention and with our [00:40:00] entities. We have partnerships with all of our Missouri Baptist entities of one way or another and we have a great board. So, it's an exciting time to be a part of this ministry. And we are so thankful for what God is doing, especially given the fact that what the demographics are showing is that for the next 15 to 20 years, the number of seniors is going to continue to increase.

And the number that will maybe at some point in their walk in life need a little bit of extra care is going to grow. And we would like to be there to provide that Christ-like biblically informed standard of care.

Andy Braams: Hmm. Well, thank you. Obviously with growth comes challenges. Ron, as you just said, you're not looking at growing just for the sake of growth, but there are more pieces that are moving.

And so, one of the ways as you all know, through each of the podcasts, I do ask our guests how [00:41:00] we can pray for the person individually for the ministry that they're involved in or for the facility, in this case. So I would ask each of you, taking it down from a 30,000-foot level to a very practical level for the moment, how would you have our listeners pray for each of you individually as

you lead and for overall Baptist Homes and Healthcare Ministries from a more corporate perspective?

Rodney Harrison: Joe.

Joe Ulveling: I would say, really, Andy, thank you for asking that. And it's really three things come to mind for me to just pray for wisdom. [In] everything that we do just to pray for wisdom and to seek God not to be our plans, but to be God's plans in his place to prevail. Secondly, I would say pray for our residents.

As I was walking through the hallway today, I stopped and spoke with [00:42:00] with the lady, one of the residents. Just to ask, you know, "How's it going? How are you doing? Is there anything you need?" She was very thankful for the great care that she gets. And that's one of the things that impressed me was the great care.

But for the residents, it's hard for them. You know, they're struggling, they've lost a loved one. She talked about her husband, how she misses him. And so, and then thirdly, I would say to pray for our staff and the caregivers, because they are the ones on the front lines and they are making a difference.

And, they are the ones who are able to minister to pray with, to care for, and to make a difference. So they really do make a huge difference.

Ron Mackey: Well, Andy, I would say that as we take on these new roles and a new name and new ministry outlooks, the art of that is communicating that with clarity, [00:43:00] with insight and understanding so that those around us aren't scratching their head, trying to figure out what are we doing? You know? But I am as excited today as I've ever been in my 20 years, being a part of The Baptist Home about what is on the horizon for us. But I know that that requires, a great deal of skill to help communicate where we're going and help people understand that. And I would just ask that people pray that we would be wise and understanding how to help people see the vision that is there and the opportunities that are there, for Baptist Homes, so that they understand the heart of why we want to be a part are these ministries.

Rodney Harrison: And I would ask you to pray for our workers, Healthcare is a very demanding occupation. You know, it's a lot more demanding [00:44:00] and a mistake is more significant than if you burn a burger or if you spill some soda at a restaurant. No, this, this is life and death at times. So pray for our healthcare workers.

We have an amazing team of caregivers, and I know that they would appreciate your prayers. And then on a personal note, pray for me as a leader. I think of the words of Micah that just talk about what is it is demanded [of] a leader, and I'm just reading it here from, the King James, "but to do justly to love mercy and to walk humbly with God." I would ask that you would pray for me that that would be true of me as a leader that I would do justice, love mercy and walk humbly before our God.

Thank you.

Andy Braams: Well, thank you all for joining us today on *Biblical Perspectives on Aging* and many blessings in the days and years ahead [00:45:00] as you continue to grow and minister, grow as an organization and minister to others as a part of that organization. So thank you all again.

Rodney, Ron, Joe: Thank you, Andy.