

## Transcript

### Brandy Parker Interview

#### Episode 28: "A New V.P. & New Opportunities for BHHM"

**Andy Braams:** Today, on *Biblical Perspectives on Aging*, we have Brandy Parker, the new Vice President of Workforce Excellence with Baptist Homes and Healthcare Ministries. Brandy, welcome to our team and welcome to the podcast. And can you just begin by telling people, telling our audience a little bit about yourself, about your faith and what brought you to Baptist Homes?

**Brandy Parker:** Absolutely. Thank you, Andy. As Andy said, I am Brandy Parker. I'm a licensed nursing home administrator. I've been in healthcare for over 20 years now. I started out in 2001 as an EMT. [In] 2009, I became a social worker. In 2016, I became a nursing home administrator. I just felt the calling to come to Baptist Homes.

I'm reading and learning about their mission and values. The vision is what stood out the most: "Making Christ-like ministries the standard care for aging." That's something that I feel we're missing in healthcare.

**Andy Braams:** Okay. Very good. Well, as you mentioned, you have served in long-term care for many, many years, including as an administrator [00:01:20] for these past several years.

What brought you into the long-term care industry? I know you have served and you had a challenging time for a variety of reasons, including staffing, and such, at your previous facility. Share a little bit about your previous experience, not only in long-term care, but in your previous facility, as well, if you don't mind.

**Brandy Parker:** Sure, Andy. I was in a 239-bed home. We had multiple units in that facility. We had Alzheimer's, rehab. COVID really hit. It was a very challenging time staffing, you know, across healthcare everywhere. Just having nurses, having all of it, we just, the staff just isn't out there anymore and more and more people are retiring.

They're getting tired of healthcare, so I'm hoping to bring to Baptist Homes...you know...to help build and create and mold people to be able to do better things and just continue to care for the aging.

**Andy Braams:** Yeah. COVID obviously effected a lot, but the medical field in general, the [00:02:20] healthcare related field in general, and certainly that would impact not only senior living in many ways, but Baptist Homes as well. So, you have now been with Baptist Homes for just over a month, right? At a month, I think. You visited several of the facilities. What are some of the highlights that you would reflect upon from your first month with Baptist Homes?

**Brandy Parker:** And I truly got to say, I'm just going into these facilities and truly seeing, comparing compassion and the care that the staff even being short-staffed, everything are giving these residents is amazing.

And I think it does go back to the values that Baptist Homes holds above other healthcare facilities.

**Andy Braams:** Anything in particular that jumps out at you in the visits that you've made thus far Brandy?

**Brandy Parker:** I will tell you, so we were actually in Arcadia Valley. There was a resident. She was just having a hard time struggling.

I mean, as soon as staff got into their room, I mean, you [00:03:20] could just see, you could just hear the compassion that they had. This lady which again, in healthcare being short-staffed, people are tired. It just really makes a difference knowing, you know, that they took that time to be able to see that they, you know, it's not just a job, it's a career and you have to have a career in healthcare.

**Andy Braams:** Christ-like care is obviously a big part of what we're trying to do, trying to mold in that way. Obviously, that is easier said than done for all of us just in life itself, trying to say that we want to live Christ-like and not being able to do it. There are challenges. What are some of the challenges that you foresee perhaps in the industry?

Maybe let's start there. What are some of the additional challenges? You mentioned staffing across the board, but what do you see for challenges in the future of healthcare and specifically as it relates to long-term care, Brandy?

**Brandy Parker:** Honestly, any staffing is going to be the biggest, I mean, just trying to mold these nurses, just trying to get [00:04:20] people to even want to do it anymore.

With the regulations, the federal and state regulations, it makes it hard. It makes it hard to be an administrator. You know, everything changes daily. I remember back during COVID during the height of it, you know, CDC gave us one form. This is what we had to follow. Literally, by the end of the day, it was something new.

It's just going...like I said, people have to have that compassion if they're going to stay in healthcare because you're not doing it for the glory instead of caring for them.

**Andy Braams:** Brandy. I'm not certain what happened there. You cut out on that. Just that last little bit. Would you mind repeating that for the sake of the audience, just maybe the last 30 seconds of what you said?

Sure. What I was saying is it's going to come down to the staffing. It's going to come down to, you know, the state and regulations in how stringent they're getting with that.

People don't want to deal with that every day. [At] the height of [00:05:20] COVID, it was, you know, we followed CDC guidelines, the moment we got to work. And by the end of the day, they were changing again. I don't see that stopping. I don't see it going anywhere. You know, there's so many, even state inspectors, that want to leave what they're doing,

because it's getting to the point [that] they just don't feel like we, in long-term care facilities, can care for the residents because the regulations are getting so stringent.

**Andy Braams:** Okay. So that's a global perspective on long-term care and some of the challenges that the industry faces. What are some things, even in your first month, that you see that need to be addressed, that might create a challenge within the Baptist Homes and Healthcare Ministries organization?

**Brandy Parker:** Again, I'm going to keep going back to staffing on this. Andy, just because we have to have people to care for the people, you know I mean a fifth, it's fine. Take as many people in to help them as we can, but we have to have staff to be able to care for them. I think for Baptist Homes, we're going to have to step it up.

We're going to have to get [00:06:20] people involved in what we're doing. Just outside of Baptist Homes to get them to want to come and work for us. They have to know who we are and what we do. And right now, I just feel like, you know, we're so new into this. We have to get it out there so people understand, you know, this is our mission and our values and here's what we're going to do to make it different.

**Andy Braams:** Yeah. It's fun to hear you say that we're new into this. I think you and I are the newest team members in any way. And yet, you know, this organization is 109 years old. So, we are old. We bring a lot of history and tradition into this as far as Baptist Homes. And so, that's wonderful, but the way the world has adapted over these last couple of years and all the challenges we faced were all new in some way and [we have to] deal with that.

So given your background, your specific background, given some of your strengths, what are some of the initiatives that you would like to pursue in the future as a part of the team here at Baptist Homes and Healthcare Ministries? [00:07:20]

**Brandy Parker:** Andy, I'm super excited about us getting the Alzheimer's dementia program started at Baptist Homes, letting people understand and learn what it's like, not only for that resident, but for the staff and the family members as well.

People just look...they kind of look at dementia as kind of like an old taboo, if you will. You know, they don't understand that they don't know. So, as hard as it is for that healthcare worker taking care of them, it's just as hard for them in that moment in the families as well. So, I think it's just getting the word out there, getting people to understand, you know, "Here's what we need to do to help them," instead of just saying, "Okay, you know, hey, we have an Alzheimer's unit, we'll put them back there. We'll, you know do the basics for them, but we're not engaging in them." We need to still engage and remember, regardless of what cognitive disabilities they have or they're going through, we need to still engage them. And remember that they're still people.

**Andy Braams:** You know, one of the [00:08:20] things that's been said about Baptist Homes for a while, that's not true, but it's been said, [is] that we don't have any memory care capabilities.

I mean, granted, there's different levels of memory care in such that will be a strain and a challenge that some facilities apart from Baptist Homes [can] provide that care [more] than we. But that is interesting that you bring that up because that is something that we do provide, at least to some degree. And many people don't know that.

Brandy, you are a preceptor. And that is a skill that is a strength that you have. You're also about to embark in some training to be able to help better equip those who want to do Alzheimer's care. So can you speak to the audience just a little bit about what a preceptor is, how that assists the industry, but [also how] it can assist Baptist Homes.

And then also about this care that this Alzheimer's care [00:09:20] that you're going to be able to provide for others in the near future.

**Brandy Parker:** Absolutely. As a preceptor, I am registered with the state of Missouri so I can train interim administrators, new administrators, [and] people that want to even become an administrator.

I can set with them. I can teach them all aspects of being an administrator. It's all done through Health and Senior Services to where they can get their administrators license [and] can pursue their career. And I would just be training them and instructing them and showing them kind of the "ways of the world" as far as how to be an administrator and all of that.

I'm doing it with Baptist Homes [and it] is very exciting. As you said, I am new, I've been here a month. But just to see how I can help, you know, the same way as Baptist Homes is helping me learn things, you know? I didn't come in with all this great knowledge and I'm not learning anything.

To me, knowledge is power and we all need it every day. So, I just hope to be able to help build and mold and create new administrators, in the future. [00:10:20] So as far as next Wednesday, I will be taking a certification. I will be a certified dementia practitioner, so I will be able to give seminars to people in the communities [and] within Baptist Homes, to teach them about dementia, the diagnosis, [and] all the different things that go along with it, how to help their family members cope; how to help them cope just with the difference compared to where, you know, where their loved one used to be to where they are today.

It's [a] different series, from the beginning of dementia to the end. Just so families kind of know what they're facing, in kind of how, like I said, how to cope and deal with it, because it is very different than just the normal aging process.

**Andy Braams:** Yeah, that's great. And it, Brandy, I think that really ties into something you said just a few moments ago, as far as helping people outside of Baptist Homes to realize who we are and to provide an entry point and [an] on-ramp, [00:11:20] so to speak, to know about us and to perhaps desire to work with us. And so, [that is] something that you bring to the table.

With that is not only your experience as an administrator, which I know our current administrators in our various facilities are happy to have that voice you know in their midst

now. But the preceptor, as you said, we can help train up others as a part of that. And also, not only training our own people towards dementia and dementia care, but training people apart from the Baptist Homes.

You'll be able to host these classes as your schedule allows, obviously, to train anybody [and] anywhere really. And perhaps some of those people might find an interest in what the Baptist Homes are doing overall. So, I think that's a very exciting, exciting thing from my perspective to see what you bring to the table in that regard and how that is good. So well, great. Thank you for sharing that.

[00:12:20] So, one of the new questions that we are asking here in 2022, and I believe I was the first person that was asked this when [Dr. Harrison] flipped the mic on me a few months ago.

And that is a favorite of yours. And I'm going to add one more if you want to throw it off the top of your head, but this could be a favorite movie. It could be a favorite book. It could be a favorite TV show or a favorite food. What is a, maybe a couple of favorites for Brandy Parker?

**Brandy Parker:** So, I will tell you, I would have to say I have two favorite movies, *Fireproof* and *The Notebook*.

Both of them are about unconditional love. *Fireproof* is more towards your personal relationship, your marriage, those kinds of things. The notebook is unconditional love with dementia. Those are two of my favorite movies. I've read both. I've watched the movies repeatedly, but I read both of the books as well. [00:13:20]

And I'm not a big reader. So, they're pretty good.

**Andy Braams:** Cool, cool.

**Brandy Parker:** Favorite food. It would probably have to be Mexican.

**Andy Braams:** Okay, well, there's plenty of options around here and elsewhere, you know, a few of those yourselves. So Brandy, as you move into the future of Baptist Homes, again, you've been here right at a month, a little bit, a couple of days beyond a month. I think at this point, by the time this airs, it'll be about six weeks or so that you will have been here.

How can the audience pray for you? As you think about going forward, what are some of the things that you're currently involved in? Some of the things like the class that you said you're taking in a week or so? What are some things not only in the immediate, but perhaps projecting into the future a little bit, as to how the audience might pray for you?

**Brandy Parker:** I would love to have them to pray for me to help me follow the mission of Baptist Homes. Help me help Baptist Homes [00:14:20] [to] create strong leaders and build this into what it can be. It's going to be one of the best healthcare ministries in the industry.

**Andy Braams:** Yeah, that's exciting.

That's exciting to hear somebody else say that. Oh, I think we think we believe all of that and we want to believe that, but sometimes the challenges rise up. So yeah, if that could be a prayer on behalf of Brandy, on behalf of our team here at Baptist Homes, not just the executive team and hopefully this podcast will continue to.

Share some of those things and reflect some of those things to help, you know, how to pray for the audience in that. But for all of our team, and especially for those who are providing that care and learning to better provide that Christ-like care as a standard, as we try to set that standard, according to the standard, the Christ set for us.

So Brandy, I do want to thank you for coming on today to *Biblical Perspectives on Aging* [00:15:20] and sharing a little bit about yourself, about your journey. And I'm sure over time we will have you back to talk more about Alzheimer's, and some other initiatives that you will be a part of in the future.

So, thanks for joining us today.

**Brandy Parker:** Thank you.