

12
Families at the Center
Myal Greene

18
**Creating a Culture
of Life**
Doug Clay

20
La Familia Latina
Samuel Rodriguez

23
**Scaling Up Whole-Life
Solutions**
Kelly Rosati

26
**Following the
Familial Caregiver**
Walter Kim

Evangelicals

Magazine | Fall 2022 | Vol. 8, No. 2

The Worth of Family

OFFERING LOVE, CULTIVATING ROOTEDNESS,
PROVIDING HELP

Rachel Anderson



“By this everyone will know that you are
my disciples, if you love one another.” ^{NIV}

John 13:35



Keep being the Church.
We'll be with you every step of the way.



Property & Liability Insurance | Commercial Auto | Workers' Compensation | Mission Travel Services | Ministry Payroll

6400 Brotherhood Way, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825 | brotherhoodmutual.com | 800.333.3735

Copyright 2022 Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company. All rights reserved. Brotherhood Mutual is licensed in most states.

The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

NOV. 14-21
NATIONAL COLLECTION WEEK



Send Good News and Great Joy in Jesus' Name

Thanks to the generosity of churches and individuals, Samaritan's Purse has collected and delivered gift-filled shoeboxes to more than 198 million children in need around the world since 1993. After hearing the Gospel clearly presented at outreach events, millions of shoebox recipients also participate in our 12-lesson discipleship course, The Greatest Journey, where they learn to follow Christ and share Him with others.

Declare His glory among the nations! Psalm 96:3



To learn more, scan the QR code or visit samaritanspurse.org/occ

GOOD NEWS. GREAT JOY.

VIEW SOLICITATION DISCLOSURE INFORMATION FOR SAMARITAN'S PURSE ONLINE AT [SAMARITANSPURSE.ORG/DISCLOSURE](https://samaritanspurse.org/disclosure).

Evangelicals

The Magazine of the National Association of Evangelicals



Also in This Issue

- 6 Comment**
Evangelicals comment on the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, and a record number of pastors want to leave the ministry.
- 9 Calendar**
Here's your guide to compelling evangelical events.
- 10 Worth Noting**
The NAE's updated report shows how climate change impacts the world's most vulnerable, and improvements to the child tax credit have expired.
- 24 Strengthening Marriages, Families and Children**
An excerpt from NAE's "For the Health of the Nation" captures God's vision for family life and the responsibilities of the church and government to support families.

Your NAE

For more resources and opportunities, visit [NAE.org](https://www.nae.org) anytime, anywhere — on your phone, tablet or computer.

PODCAST

Today's Conversation provides opportunities for you to hear from leading thinkers, theologians, activists, culture-makers and more.

EVENTS

Our breadth and diversity of partners allow us to organize unique gatherings that encourage and enrich leaders in the evangelical community.

MEMBERSHIP

We are the largest and most established network of evangelical Christians in the United States. Our membership includes around 40 denominations and thousands of churches, schools and nonprofits. Together we serve a constituency of millions.

EMAIL UPDATES

Subscribe to receive news and timely updates at [NAE.org](https://www.nae.org).

SOCIAL MEDIA

-  [/NAEvangelicals](https://www.facebook.com/NAEvangelicals)
-  [@NAEvangelicals](https://twitter.com/NAEvangelicals)
-  [NAE.org/feed](https://www.nae.org/feed)

Influence for
Good.[®]

Subscribe

Evangelicals magazine comes to you as one of many NAE resources to help leaders and their communities navigate complexity with biblical clarity. NAE member institutions can receive bulk subscriptions for their ministries at no charge. More at [NAE.org/membership](https://www.nae.org/membership). To receive a personal subscription, we invite you to partner with us at [NAE.org/give](https://www.nae.org/give).

The mission of the National Association of Evangelicals is to honor God by connecting and representing evangelical Christians.

Walter Kim President
Heather Gonzales Vice President & Chief Operating Officer
Galen Carey Vice President of Government Relations
Sarah Kropp Brown Vice President of Communications & Marketing
Steve West Chaplains Commission Executive Director
Jennifer Haglof Senior Director of Special Projects & Events
Brandon Doss Associate Endorser of Evangelical Chaplains Commission
Steve Eng Advocacy Director
Mekdes Haddis Director of Racial Justice & Reconciliation Collaborative
Toni Kim Director of Spiritual Care
Brian Kluth Financial Health National Director
Terri Miller Global Church Representative
Chris Paulene Accounting & Member Services Director
Cullen Rodgers-Gates Director of Development & Membership
Christine Sequenzia Policy Director
Diane Cokley Office & Technology Services Manager
Samantha Conway Sponsorship & Project Manager
Ashley Edmonds Communications Manager
Ginger Hall Data Manager
Marti Martinez Content & Engagement Specialist
Rebecca Gian Executive Assistant to the NAE President
Karis Watts Executive Assistant to the Evangelical Chaplains Commission

Sarah Kropp Brown Editor
Ashley Edmonds Associate Editor
Cross & Crown Design

Evangelicals Fall 2022 | Vol. 8, No. 2

Published three times a year by the National Association of Evangelicals for the benefit of its members, donors and friends.

For address changes, please send an email to Magazine@NAE.org or call 202.479.0815.

The National Association of Evangelicals
PO Box 23269, Washington, DC 20026

Articles and excerpts are published by the NAE with permission by authors and contributors. © National Association of Evangelicals. All rights reserved worldwide.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version[®], NIV[®]. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.[®] Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Advertising in Evangelicals magazine does not imply editorial endorsement. If interested in advertising, contact Samantha Conway, NAE sponsorship coordinator, at SConway@NAE.org.

The National Association of Evangelicals is registered as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in the United States of America.

With Support From **Youth Theology Network**



Attend any church small group and you'll notice how prayer requests revolve around family life — sleeplessness of parents with young children, a young son struggling in school, a working professional caring for an aging parent, the failing health of a spouse, a sister who has left the faith. Families are central to our lives. The strength of families has the power to uplift us; the brokenness of families can be debilitating.

Families are central to God's vision for human beings and human society (Genesis 1:27–28, 2:23–25). Today we see many families under stress. As many authors in this magazine issue note, the reversal of *Roe v. Wade* reminded us of the fragility of family life. Many women considering abortions do not have support from family in place. Many others do not believe they can make a healthy family life possible for their unborn child. Part of making abortion unthinkable, as Doug Clay writes in his article, is to support women and men in unplanned parenting.

Families have the power to provide love, connectedness and rootedness that empower children to become productive and emotionally healthy adults. Whether married or single, it is in families that we learn mutual responsibility and live together with our commonness and distinctions. In families

we learn the give-and-take of living together, love and trust, justice and mercy, and denying ourselves for the well-being of others. The worth of the family is incalculable.

If we, as Christians, truly value the family, we should throw out all the stops to care for them, support them and encourage healthy family life. When parents are not stressed by challenges to put food on the table, they are able to engage more fully with their children. When workplaces provide paid family leave, adult children are able to care for their aging parents. When churches double down efforts to show the gospel in word and deed, relationships can be redeemed and families can be restored. 📌



Overturing *Roe v. Wade*

“For too long, the *Roe* and *Casey* decisions have allowed our nation to turn a blind eye to the plight of those who have no voice — to view these lives as a burden instead of a blessing. While this ruling is a significant step toward establishing a true culture of life, the issue of abortion will now be sent back to the states. We must continue to use our time, talent and treasure to protect the preborn, care for their mothers, and advocate for state laws that protect them both.”

Chelsea Sobolik, senior director of policy and advocacy for Lifeline Children’s Services

“God is the author of life, and every human life from conception to death has inestimable worth. Under *Roe v. Wade*, our ability to consider policies that safeguard life at the most vulnerable stage was severely limited. While the *Dobbs* decision doesn’t resolve all the questions on abortion policy, it does remove an impediment to considering pro-life concerns.”

Walter Kim, president of the National Association of Evangelicals

“It’s not quite as simple as some folks make it out to be. Having the baby isn’t the only issue, and abortion isn’t the only issue. There are a lot of other factors that go into that when it comes to policies like paid family leave, health care issues — which this country still has not dealt with adequately. Those also play into the conversation.”

Justin Giboney, president of The And Campaign, in the Christianity Today article, “Pro-Life Black Christians Don’t Focus on Abortion Alone”

Pastoral Burnout

“Even in the best of times, pastoral ministry has always felt like a broad and heavy calling. But the events of the past few years have made it a crushing one. The presidential election. Unrest around racial injustice. A global pandemic that has taken the lives of over 800,000 Americans. ... All of this has injected a paralyzing degree of complexity and controversy into every single situation I face, every decision I make. And to make things worse, it feels as if everyone is on a hair trigger, ready to walk away at the merest hint that the church does not line up with their political or personal perspectives.”

Peter Chin, pastor at Rainier Avenue Church, in the Christianity Today article, “I Reached My Breaking Point as a Pastor”

“My own particular question for the book [‘The Resilient Pastor’] that I asked in October and November of 2020 was about vocational confidence and whether pastors were more confident about their calling now than when they first entered ministry. Barna had actually asked that question five years earlier so we were able to track it. What we found was that this number had gone down. Fewer pastors are confident of their calling now than when they first entered ministry compared with five years ago. And more pastors are less confident of their calling. ...vocational confidence is shaken.”

Glenn Packiam, author of “The Resilient Pastor,” in an interview with Christian Today

“Overlooking the command to pause is one of my regrets from 45 years of pastoral ministry. As a denominational leader, I insisted each pastor and elder team require a sabbatical. Denominational policy only strongly encourages it.”

Randy Heckert, past director of Evangelical Friends Church in North America, in the Evangelical Leaders Survey

Caring for God’s Creation

“The concept of stewardship guides our relationship to God’s creation. While God grants humanity dominion over the earth and its creatures (Genesis 1:26), dominion is not domination. We are called to exercise prudence because the earth belongs to God, and Adam displays such stewardship in the Garden of Eden “to work it and take care of it” (Genesis 2:15). Humankind has tragically not followed so. As a result, our poor stewardship of the earth is having dire consequences, particularly for those with the fewest economic resources to adapt.”

Myal Greene, president of World Relief, and Walter Kim, NAE president, in Relevant Magazine



It is absolutely critical for lifelong well-being that infants are held & nurtured and attended to. If they’re not, the amount of intervention required to repair the damage is enormous. This is a key reason for paid family leave. It’s pro-life, pro-child, pro-family.
Kelly Rosati @KellyMRosati

There are over 100 million displaced people in the world. I was a missionary in the UK in evangelical churches when I first was engaged with the creation mandate, stewardship of creation care and how this affects people. NAE.org/lovingtheleast
Christy Staats @christy_staats



I’ve been a pastor for most of the last 20+ years & I’ve never seen more discouraged pastors & church leaders than in the last two years. It’s tragic.
Micah Fries @micahfries

Every pastor and leader should print a copy of [the NAE’s] Code of Ethics and read it once a month. Make it a part of your devotional routine.
Rich Stearns @RichStearns



Committed to excellence and an environment where insightful conversations happen daily, the Wheaton College Graduate School is where you can enhance your professional education and holistic development—all from a distinctly Christian perspective.

JOIN A COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS WHO SEEK TO SERVE

[LEARN MORE AT WHEATON.EDU/NAE](https://wheaton.edu/nae)



WHEATON
COLLEGE
GRADUATE SCHOOL
For Christ & His Kingdom

EVANGELICAL CALENDAR

Please join the evangelical community at these events hosted by the NAE and its members. **Your prayers are welcome too.**

Many of these events include downloadable resources for promotion and participation.

NOVEMBER 8-10, 2022

Mosaix

Dallas, TX

Mosaix Global Network
MosaixConference.com

This triennial event brings together 1,200 multi-ethnic church leaders to deepen understandings of biblical theology, sharpen skills, and renew or establish key relationships with like-minded leaders. Mekdes Haddis, director of the NAE's racial justice & reconciliation collaborative, is one of the presenters.



JANUARY 30–FEBRUARY 1, 2023

Dwell 2023

Newport Beach, CA

Evangelical Covenant Order of Presbyterians
ECONationalGathering.org

Paul reminds us that God has strengthened us with his power through his Spirit as he dwells in us, and we dwell in him. At the 2023 National Gathering, ECO pastors and leaders will gather with the goal of deepening our discipleship and growing closer to Jesus.

NOVEMBER 30–DECEMBER 2, 2022

Jesus Now Summit & Denominational Executives Retreat

Dallas, TX

National Association of Evangelicals
NAE.org

NAE denominational executives will spend time together — learning from and encouraging one another in their unique positions of ministry.

JANUARY 30–FEBRUARY 3, 2023

Christian Student Leadership Conference

Washington, D.C.

National Association of Evangelicals
NAE.org/csclc

The way in which Christians engage in the public square is not always pretty. In fact, it is often a reason people turn away from the faith. This conference is for Christian college students who want to bring the light of the gospel to Washington, D.C., our nation and our world. During the week-long conference, students will be equipped and trained to be part of a new generation of faithful advocates who are motivated by love for others and sustained by the hope they have in Christ.



FEBRUARY 13-17, 2023

Multi-Academic Conferences

South Walton, FL

Council for Christian College & Universities
CCCU.org

The CCCU will hold two conferences in February to provide an opportunity for those in different disciplines in Christian higher education to cross-network with peers to share best practices, solutions and encourage one another.

JANUARY 18-19, 2023

Stand for Life

Washington, D.C.

StandForLife.com

The Stand for Life Conference will inspire, equip and mobilize a new generation that affirms and protects all human life. The conference will offer a vision of hope for cultural transformation that believes everyone is made in the image of God, has inherent value and should be treated with dignity and respect.

MARCH 28-30, 2023

Outcomes Conference

Chicago, IL

Christian Leadership Alliance
OutcomesConference.org

The Outcomes Conference is an experience for nonprofit Christian professionals who want to increase leadership capacity and build strength to become God's love in action.



WORTH NOTING

✓ Loving the Least of These

Record-breaking heat waves, widespread wildfires and other extreme weather events capture our attention. While the environment affects us all, the most profound impacts are on those in poverty. “Loving the Least of These: Addressing a Changing Environment” is an updated report showing how climate change impacts the world’s most vulnerable.

As evangelicals, we believe that caring for creation is part of our calling as stewards of God’s creation. We also believe that caring for the most vulnerable is central to the way of Jesus. “Loving the Least of These” explores the biblical basis for Christian engagement, the science of climate change, how climate change affects the poor, and practical ways to move forward.

“Loving the Least of These” was first published in 2011 after extensive review from scientific and evangelical advisors. In partnership with World Relief and the Evangelical Environmental Network, the report has

been revised and updated. Dorothy Boorse, professor of biology at Gordon College, served as lead author with several contributing authors, including Timothy Clarke, senior pastor of First Church of God in Columbus, Ohio; Mitch Hescoc, president of Evangelical Environmental Network; and Jenny Yang, senior vice president of advocacy and policy at World Relief; among others.



Find the complete report at [NAE.org/lovingtheleast](https://www.nae.org/lovingtheleast).

✓ Child Tax Credit Improvements Expired

Nurturing of children and the formation of mature citizens is first and foremost the role of families and churches. But other social institutions, including government, play important roles in encouraging healthy family life and the well-being of children. Census data show that child poverty was nearly cut in half from 9.7 percent in 2020 to 5.2 percent in 2021. A key driver was the success of the improved child tax credit.

The 2021 child tax credit provided \$3,600 for children ages 0-6, and \$3,000 for children ages 6-17 — up from the previous level of \$2,000 per child ages 0-16. The credit was also made fully refundable, allowing the families that needed the credit the most to receive the full amount. Beginning in July 2021, the credit was distributed in monthly installments, making it more available for recurring expenses like rent and food.

Unfortunately, the improved credit expired on December 31, 2021. Congress has yet to take up

legislation extending the higher benefit levels and full refundability of the credit. As a result, an estimated 3.7 million children fell back below the poverty line.

According to Galen Carey, vice president of government relations for the National Association of Evangelicals, the child tax credit is a bipartisan success story. “It reassures expectant parents that they will have help with the costs of parenting. For those considering abortion, this encouragement may be a pivotal consideration in the decision to choose life. For this reason, among others, Congress should reinstate the improved child tax credit,” he said.



Write Congress about the child tax credit at [NAE.org/take-action](https://www.nae.org/take-action).

✓ 'Bless Your Pastor' More Important Than Ever

Barna Group research indicates that pastors are discouraged and depleted, with 43 percent of pastors saying that they have given serious consideration to leaving vocational ministry. The National Association of Evangelicals created the Bless Your Pastor campaign to help churches support, celebrate and love their pastors.

Churches participating in Bless Your Pastor commit to sharing a list of "50 Creative Ways to Bless Your Pastor," taking up an appreciation offering for the pastor, and publicly celebrating the pastor by collecting notes, praying for them, or celebrating in some other way. For first-time participating churches that complete all three steps and collect an appreciation offering of \$100 or more, the NAE will email the senior pastor a grant-funded \$200 Amazon gift card. For all participating churches, the pastor will be given access to free and discounted retreat and vacation opportunities.

In addition, Brian Kluth, national spokesperson for NAE Financial Health and the Bless Your Pastor campaign, has been traveling across the United States to encourage pastors and church staff.



The Bless Your Pastor campaign runs through December 2022. To learn how you can bless your church leaders, visit BlessYourPastor.org.

Hear more about pastor burnout from Glenn Packiam, author of "The Resilient Pastor," at NAE.org/packiampodcast.

✓ NAE Passes Resolution on Helping Families Flourish

The Board of Directors of the National Association of Evangelicals approved a resolution at its semiannual meeting on Oct. 6 that recognizes the centrality of the family to God's vision for human beings and human society, and that calls on church, school, business and government leaders to take steps appropriate to their distinct callings to facilitate the vital work of mothers, fathers and guardians.

The Helping Families Flourish resolution contains direct responses to care for the needs of vulnerable families, including the child tax credit, foster care support and paid family leave. It also underscores the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their children's education and development, including in the sensitive areas of sexuality and gender identity.



Read the NAE resolution at NAE.org/helping-families-flourish.



Families at the Center

How World Relief's Programs Focus on the Family

In 2011, my friend and former colleague, Debbie Dortzbach, was preparing to launch an HIV awareness and prevention workshop through World Relief in India. Although HIV cases had decreased across India, the rates were still quite high. In spite of governmental efforts and those of NGOs like World Relief, we weren't seeing the results we'd hoped for.

That's when Debbie had an idea. She'd read a report that discussed how truck drivers in India were motivated to change their behaviors, not because they were afraid of contracting HIV, but because they wanted to return to their families.

If family is what was motivating truck drivers to change their behaviors, then why weren't we using that same

motivator in our churches to prevent HIV and strengthen families? Surely strengthening families is something the Church is called to do!

Debbie shared her revelation with her teammates, and over the next several years, our staff worked hard to develop Families for Life (FFL) — a unique program that works through local churches internationally to create strong,



flourishing, biblically-nurtured marriages where parents and children can thrive.

Families: A Sacred Reflection

At World Relief and the National Association of Evangelicals, we know that God created humans to live in relationship with one another from the very beginning, and that family is a sacred reflection of the fullness of life our Triune God intended for us. Just as God communes relationally with the Son and the Spirit, the eternal family of the Trinity, God designed us to live in unity and harmony in the midst of our unique individuality and in the context of the family.

The local church plays an integral role in God’s plan to bring reconciliation to a broken world, and our commitment to support families *through* the work of the local church drives much of our programming at World Relief.

Through FFL, church volunteers are trained to share critical lessons that reveal God’s beautiful vision for marriage. Using a combination of story, Scripture, interactive discussion and personal reflection, FFL seeks to strengthen the couple relationship as a foundation for a healthy family and calls for participants to be open to change and reimagine their futures together.

A fully intact family, when possible, has the best chance of a flourishing life.

A fully intact family, when possible, has the best chance of a flourishing life. Just like the Indian truck drivers whose families are happier and healthier when they are home, and the almost 20,000 couples who engaged in our FFL programming over the last two years, immigrant families that are reunited also have a better chance of success as they begin a new life in this country. Sadly, through a variety of circumstances in our immigration system, these families are frequently separated — oftentimes for years.

Reuniting Families

Our belief that the local church is key in bringing hope and restoration to the world is what drives us to reunite these families who have been separated through displacement, and to work through local churches to give them the support and community they need to adjust to a new life in the United States.

Families like Rafia and Abdinasir. Rafia and Abdinasir met and were married in a refugee camp in Kenya in 2015. Shortly after their wedding, Rafia’s visa was approved for resettlement in the United States. But because the couple had applied for resettlement prior to getting married, Abdinasir was left behind. Moreover, when Rafia arrived in the states, she discovered she was pregnant.

Rafia struggled to navigate a difficult pregnancy in Abdinasir’s absence with few resources and connections. Eventually, she moved to Memphis, where she connected with World Relief and started the process of bringing her husband to the United States. On February 19, 2021, after five years of separation, Abdinasir landed in Memphis and embraced his five-year-old daughter for the very first time.

Thanks to a network of local churches supporting our U.S. offices, we’re able to support families like Rafia’s well beyond their initial arrival, surrounding them with holistic services like housing set-up, job training, English classes and so much more through our church-based Good Neighbor Teams.

We believe in the strength, power and sanctity of families, and we believe that when local churches are equipped and envisioned to serve families in light of a gospel that transforms and redeems relationships, we can create cycles of healing and health around the world for generations to come. 📍



The Worth of Family

OFFERING LOVE, CULTIVATING ROOTEDNESS,
PROVIDING HELP

Rachel Anderson





The most awe-inspiring fireworks display has nothing on the tiny show taking place inside a newborn’s brain. Billions of neurons, already in place by birth, replicate and then tether themselves to each other, creating the foundational circuits that enable hearing, sight, thought, emotion. The world is, indeed, “charged with the grandeur of God,” as Gerard Manley Hopkins put it — even at the

Human development is not a solo act but rather a multi-part ensemble, taking place across bodies and minds. An infant develops through a multitude of tiny interactions with the people around her. Arms wrap around a floppy baby body. Adult eyes meet infant eyes. A voice names an object while fingers point. Each of these interactions affects a baby’s brain, sparking neural growth, lowering the stress hormones that inhibit development, establishing the inter-personal synchronicity from which comprehension, learning and problem-solving skills emerge.

The people who are most integral to the astonishing interpersonal process at the heart of human development have a name: family.

Science corroborates what Christian theology and practice has long embodied: the deep worth of family. Christ’s first miracle was in service of a family-forming ritual, a wedding (John 2:1–12). The letters shared among early followers of Jesus described the essential reality of life under God’s grace through a family metaphor: adoption (Romans 8:14–15, Galatians 4:5–7). Older biblical texts tell us that God embedded a divine covenant with humanity into the institution of family, assuring a once-childless couple that they would have descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and linking persistence in a God-given homeland with honoring one’s family (Genesis 15:5; Exodus 20:12).

“A Particular Kind of Love”

Allison Gopnik, a psychologist who spent decades studying child development concluded that we should not think of parenting as a verb. To parent is not only to execute a series of tasks. Instead, parenting should be understood, fundamentally, as a relationship, “a particular kind of love.” Familial love is both unconditional and specific, she said. When a grandfather bounces his grandchild, it is that *particular* child whose weight rests on his knee. When a mother locks eyes with a nursing baby, it can feel as if they are the only two beings in the world. Amazingly it is this kind of attention that seems to set off the microcosmic brain-building that is essential to all



other phases of human development.

This is not unlike the account of familial love referenced in the New Testament. Through grace, we're enabled to cry out to God, using the intimate term "Abba, Father" — a personal form of address that suggests the trusting dependence of a child. Elsewhere, Jesus describes God as gentle, anticipating our vulnerability, offering respite. "Come to me all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens," Jesus says, "and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Belonging to a Greater Narrative

If love is one of the intangible conditions of human flourishing that families provide, rootedness is another.

This summer, my parents, husband, children and I took a 10-day journey to my home state: Wisconsin. We visited the dairy farm tended by one set of grandparents and the small town where my great-grandmother taught dance for a living. The road trip idea emerged in response to pandemic-induced disconnection. To recover, we needed to encounter something about ourselves that we could not learn only by ourselves.

One of the crises of modern life is that of rootlessness. All manner of contemporary struggles — from the loneliness epidemic to deaths of despair — have been attributed to rootlessness. We cannot fully thrive when we see ourselves, as Jake Meador has explained, as "closed-off individuals, self-defined and self-determined." Although my children and I had not fallen into despair during the pandemic, we easily could have. Having spent hours attached to screens, we felt locked into the seemingly urgent present. Encountering family history reminded us that we belong to something larger than

ourselves and this present moment.

Church Support for Families

On certain Sundays, my church sets down a patchwork quilt on the sanctuary floor. Children play on its colorful squares while parents, grandparents and godparents listen to the sermon, sing praise and speak prayers. With the quilt, the church acknowledges and protects space for the families in its midst. Every congregation should, in its own way, roll out a welcome quilt for families. So, too, should our political community protect space for family life.

Many congregations extend welcome and support to families by offering child care and preschool programs. Several decades ago, at the likely high-point for congregation-based care, one out of every three churches in America hosted a child care program, according to a National Council of Churches study. Many families continue to entrust their children to faith-based child care. A 2020 survey by the Bipartisan Child Center indicated that 14 percent of parents would choose a faith-based child care center as their ideal arrangement for their youngest child, second only to the 22 percent who preferred to provide care for their own child.

The need for child care among American families is growing. The Center for America Progress notes that over half of the American population live in child care deserts: communities with more than three times as many children as there are licensed child care options.

Congregations can also organize support for families with intensive caregiving needs. Many adoptive and foster parents, particularly those caring for children with trauma histories, benefit from

consistent and capable support: regular meals, errand-running, friends who take the time to get to know and mentor their children. Families caring for a member with a major injury or long-term illness are often in a similar situation. In both cases, families report sometimes experiencing an initial burst of support that disappears over time even though their needs do not. All congregations should consider what it looks like to accompany families with caring responsibilities that extend long after the first prayer requests have been made.

Churches can also encourage families to cultivate rootedness. For some families, heritage and church life are implicitly connected. Sacred songs, the after-church potluck dinner, remembering a church's founders can help families retain a connection to their past. A healthy practice of rootedness does not simply preserve the past but also reckons with it.

Lisa Sharon Harper, a Christian author whose memoir, "Fortune," traced the impact of the intercontinental and transatlantic slave trade on her own family, encourages congregations to help members uncover family roots. She recently organized a congregational pilgrimage from Chicago to Charleston, South Carolina, to encounter places where many African Americans' ancestors had been trafficked. She is teaching another church the practice of genealogy.

Families should provoke our awe.
They are worth making space for.
They are worth protecting.

"The work of genealogical research," Harper says, "has the power to reconnect us with the stories of our people and with our ethnic heritage." We need family stories to confront the cost of sin, to lay claim to heritages of resilience, and to catalyze truth-telling, repentance and repair that can upend long-standing injustices.

Alleviating Stress on the Family

Political communities can support family life, too. During the second World War, several of the world's industrialized nations began to develop family pension systems to provide a regular income supplement to help families with the cost of raising a

child. Such a family-oriented benefit first became available in the United States in the 1990s with the establishment of the child tax credit (CTC).

The child tax credit provides a baseline financial resource to help families' meet needs. Surveys indicate that families commonly use their credit to pay off debt, to cover child care costs, or to purchase school supplies. But existing programs like the CTC or yet-to-be enacted ideas such as universal paid family leave could have an impact on families beyond material aid.

Persistent economic stress can affect foundational familial practices such as attention. Scarcity can orient parents' minds toward always solving the next problem: which bill to pay next, how to cover rent. Policies such as the child tax credit and paid family leave are valuable not because they offer a substitute for familial love but because they empower families to love well, with full attention.

A Legacy to Protect

The God who helped Abraham see his families' legacy within a vast sky, who invites people to call him, "Abba, Father," is a God who made humanity for love and belonging. The human need for relationship, interdependence and even vulnerability is not shunned by God but rather given to us by him. It should be no surprise to us, then, when science reveals human development as not a solo but rather a deeply interpersonal event. Connectedness is the default, the norm of human life.

Modern culture sometimes misdirects us away from connectedness. Online media and commerce captivate our attention with a constant sense of urgency. Advertising promotes personal perfection through consumption. Self-motivated striving and savvy negotiation are presented as essential to economic success. Families, in contrast, offer belonging regardless of one's accomplishments, potential, market value or brand. Families should provoke our awe. They are worth making space for. They are worth protecting. **E**



Creating a Culture of Life

7 Things American Churches Can Do

On Friday, June 24, 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*: “The Constitution does not confer a right to abortion; *Roe* and *Casey* are overruled; and the authority to regulate abortion is returned to the people and their elected representatives.”

Dobbs is a momentous legal decision. For too long, the Court’s rulings in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992) placed constitutional obstacles in the path of legal protections for unborn children. *Dobbs* clears the path.

It does not end abortion, however. Debates about our nation’s abortion laws now shift from courtrooms to legislatures. The law can restrict the *supply* of abortions, but it does nothing to limit the *demand* for abortion. Voting to change laws and public policies is not our only responsibility. As Christians, our larger responsibility is to limit demand by making abortion unthinkable.

Churches should continue to partner with community agencies to be the hands and feet of Jesus to an influx of women who will be searching for an alternative to abortion. The reality is, Christians have been operating pregnancy resource centers, food banks and other compassion ministries for decades. After *Roe*, our responsibility is to improve, expand and better publicize those ministries.

We must be ready and willing to take on the issues beyond the preservation of life in the womb and give attention to issues affecting the mother and her child’s trajectory of life after birth — realizing the term *pro-life* does not only mean

anti-abortion. Women will need churches more than ever to support them as they walk through unplanned pregnancies and, subsequently, unplanned parenting.

Being pro-life will take on a multifaceted meaning. Here is what it can look like for churches to become fully pro-life:

1. Pray.

The central petition of the Lord’s Prayer is “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). Killing a child in the womb is not God’s will. Asking God to help change people’s hearts and minds is appropriate.

2. Offer Pregnancy Resources.

Heartbeat International is the nation’s largest network of pregnancy resource centers. Each year, it serves 1.5 million clients, helping 300,000 expectant mothers choose life. The organization explains why pregnant women choose abortion:

Women’s reasons for seeking abortion included financial reasons (40 percent), timing (36 percent), partner-related reasons (31 percent), and the need to focus on other children (29 percent). Most women reported multiple reasons for seeking an abortion (64 percent).



These concerns need to be addressed *immediately*. According to Heartbeat’s research, “The average woman choosing abortion makes the decision within a day of confirming her pregnancy and obtains an abortion within the next week.” If she feels befriended and resourced, she is more likely to choose life.

3. Provide Post-birth Resources.

As noted above, financial concerns drive many women to choose abortion. Those concerns don’t go away just because they choose life. The Bible teaches us to put our time, talent and treasure in service of the poor:

If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? *Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth* (1 John 3:17–18, emphasis added).

4. Support Foster Care and Adoption.

As Christians, we want all children to be protected by law and welcomed in life. In any given year, there are approximately 400,000 children in the U.S. foster care system. These children need both foster and adoptive parents.

5. Disciple.

The Church’s mission is to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). A comprehensive discipleship program will include instruction about sexuality. Two elements of that program should be the sanctity of marriage (Hebrews 13:4) and the sanctity of life (Exodus 20:13).

Contemporary culture honors neither the sanctity of marriage nor the sanctity of life. For some, the freedom to have sex outside of marriage requires the right to abortion.

Our discipleship resources must include teaching about human sexuality, premarital and marriage counseling, and parenting classes. The NAE’s publication “Theology of Sex” is an excellent resource.

6. Evangelize.

The gospel is the divine solution to the human problem. Paul summarizes both the problem and the solution in Romans 3:23–24. The problem is that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” The solution is that “all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.” We receive this justification “by faith apart from the works of the law” (v. 28). Our goal should be to provide a clear pathway to repentance and restoration for people who have participated in the sin of abortion.

7. Collaborate.

Choosing life can feel like a daunting task. Women considering abortion may feel alone, under-resourced and overwhelmed. Local churches sometimes feel they don’t have the resources to meet needs in their communities. Local churches and organizations can partner with others to meet the needs. Together, they can come alongside women considering abortion with a message of hope and acts of compassion. Supportive public policies such as the expanded child tax credit and paid family leave can also play a vital role.

As we welcome the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, let us redouble our efforts to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for our bodies as well as our souls. Abortion will become unthinkable when we realize that “we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (Ephesians 2:10). **E**



La Familia Latina

If you know anything about Latinos, you know that we love our families. Latino families are closeknit, multigenerational, and large. And if you spend much time with us, you will soon become part of the family! There is always room for another seat at the table.

Latinos are now the nation's second largest ethnic group, and a growing percentage of us are evangelical Christians. We are the fastest growing part of many evangelical denominations. To understand the Latino community just look through the lens of the family, always. It is — and always will be — our first priority. For this reason, I believe God has raised up the Latino community to bless our nation and our churches for such a time as this.

Family Under Stress

You don't have to be a sociologist to know that the American family is under stress. More young adults than ever are delaying marriage — some in favor of cohabitation but nearly two in five adults ages 25–54 are neither married nor living with a romantic partner. Those who are married are having fewer children. As a result, our fertility rate has declined to 1.7, well below replacement rate. Our population is growing at the slowest rate in our nation's history. Were it not for the



infusion of new blood via immigration, much of it from Latin America, our population would actually be shrinking.

To compound the problem, more than 60 million American babies have been aborted since 1973. The Supreme Court action overturning *Roe v. Wade* offers hope that fewer babies will be aborted in the coming years, but abortion on demand will continue to be legal in many states. In this context, the growth of the Latino evangelical community in America is good news. Latinos are pro-life, pro-religious freedom and pro-justice, because we are pro-faith and pro-family.

Like other Americans, Latinos face the challenge of providing for their families in a time of high inflation. Our concerns generally mirror those of broader American life, with a strong focus on education. We value hard work, and care about economic opportunity, parental rights, school choice, religious liberty and the sanctity of life. Those who are first generation immigrants often face language and cultural barriers, and for some, challenges of immigration status. But most of us are American citizens who speak English fluently.

I would be so bold as to say that the future of America, in many ways, rests in the hands of our Latino brothers and sisters.

What Latinos Bring to the Family

Latinos, and especially Latino evangelicals, meet these challenges with strong faith, loving families and a profound commitment to the sanctity of human life. These virtues benefit not only the Latino community but all Americans. I would be so bold as to say that that the future of America, in many ways, rests in the hands of our Latino brothers and sisters.

Americans can learn from Latinos' political independence. Many of us came from countries that were oppressed by dictatorships of the left or the right. We came to the United States seeking freedom and opportunity, and we are wary of being taken advantage of by any political party.

Politicians struggle to put Latinos into neat ideological boxes. The average Latino in America is socially conservative yet sympathetic to justice issues. Political parties like to co-opt their constituents for partisan purposes, but historically, Latinos have been independent and likely will remain so.

Family immigration is an important issue that has touched virtually every Latino family in the United States. Latinos support a secure and well-managed border as a first step in comprehensive immigration reform. That's because we are often the first victims of smugglers and traffickers who prey upon vulnerable immigrants. We want to see our legal immigration system overhauled, so that immigrants who come here to work, study or reunite with family can do so efficiently and legally. Currently immigrants wait for years, and even decades, to reunite with close family members: parents, children and siblings. For Latinos who value family so highly, this is truly painful. We believe facilitating the legal entry of immigrant families represents a blessing to America not just economically but also spiritually.

Christians have sometimes been naive and deceived rather than following the warning of Jesus himself to be wise as serpents and gentle as doves. We must not be subservient to the agenda of the elephant or the donkey. Instead, we must come to terms with our status of being "in the world and not of the world."

The world will never fully accept us, and we shouldn't expect it to. The faith passed down to us is too true and too important to be squandered for a high five from the political left or the political right. The answer is to be all in on both the message of Billy Graham and the march of Martin Luther King, Jr. — the mission of the Great Commission and the compassion of the Great Commandment. This is an agenda that will bless all of our families.

HELP HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

YOUTH
THEOLOGY
NETWORK

TAKE THEIR

NEXT MOST FAITHFUL STEP

- Resources for and by leaders helping high school youth discover their purpose
- 100+ vocational discernment programs to help students explore their call
- Impact stories to remind you why this work matters



***LIKE YOU,* YTN IS DEDICATED TO SEEING STUDENTS LIVE OUT THEIR PURPOSE, PASSION AND CALLING.**

CONNECT WITH US TO LEARN HOW WE CAN PARTNER TOGETHER TO SUPPORT THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS.



The Youth Theology Network (YTN) is a coordinated initiative between the Forum for Theological Exploration (FTE) and the Lilly Endowment Inc.

youththeologynetwork.org



Scaling Up Whole-Life Solutions

We know from embryology that from the moment of fertilization, a new and distinct human organism is formed. As unborn humans grow, their personhood — inherent since fertilization — becomes even more obvious thanks to technological advances. Ultrasound imaging allows expectant parents to peer into the sacred place to see what was previously unseen: the faces of their unborn children.

We know from the Holy Scriptures that each one of these unborn babies, like all people, is fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139). Evangelicals believe every person, born and unborn, bears the image of God (Genesis 1:27). As believers, we are called to speak up for those who can't speak for themselves (Proverbs 31:8). Because of these truths, human rights for unborn children should be guaranteed in a just society.

Now that *Roe* is overturned, there are many needs and there is much more work to be done. Many evangelicals have yet to enter the arena in a way that costs them something besides screen time, political votes and an occasional fundraising walk. That must change for us to save lives.

It is Scripturally obvious that we need to advocate for life holistically, at every stage — from womb to tomb — because every person is made in God's image. Why would we suggest advocacy to ensure the unborn child has a right to life, but then not advocate for that same child's right to stay alive with clean water, nutrition and basic health care? Without those things, children die preventable deaths.

To take that approach is to advance a truncated pro-life ethic. With a limited pro-life witness, we fail to win over those in the middle on abortion. And without them, unborn lives will continue to be snuffed out in horrifying numbers, even in a post-*Roe* world.

We must work to provide women facing unexpected pregnancies all the support they need to choose life, and we must do this on a much larger scale than currently exists. Sensible public policies such as paid family leave and an improved child tax credit can help. Solutions need to be serious and creative and include public-private, faith-based partnerships.

To advocate well, we need every pro-life evangelical off the sidelines, living pro-life not just talking or voting pro-life. The next wave of the pro-life movement must be more broadly characterized by our actions and lives rooted in love, not by our words and votes alone. By the grace of God, we can do that. **E**

Strengthening Marriages, Families and Children

Throughout the Bible the family is central to God's vision for human beings and human society. At creation God established marriage and the family as one of his first acts (Genesis 1:27–28, 2:23–25). God revealed himself to us in the language of family: adopting us as his children (Romans 8:23; Galatians 4:5) and directing us by the Holy Spirit to call him Abba Father (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6).

The Church is described with familial language (Matthew 12:48–50; Colossians 1:2; Hebrews 2:11), indicating that we are to embrace fellow members as brothers and sisters in Christ. Marriage as a lifetime covenantal relationship between one man and one woman is a normative biblical symbol of God's relationship with his people (Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 3:20, 31:32; Ephesians 5:23, 31–32). We also celebrate the value of single men and women to the church family (1 Corinthians 7:32–35) who often dedicate themselves to vocations that bless the church and the world. Churches should offer them special care and support as they carry out these ministries. Family life reveals to us something of the nature of God as human families mirror, however faintly, the relational love of the Trinity.

The mutuality and service of family life stands in contrast to an emphasis on personal freedom and rights. Marriage, sexuality and family life are fundamental to healthy societies. Whether married or single, it is in families that we learn mutual responsibility and live together with our commonness and distinctions. In families we learn the give-and-take of

living together, love and trust, justice and mercy, and denying ourselves for the well-being of others. Thus the family is central to life together as diverse people in society.

Human beings are relational in nature (Genesis 2:18; 1 Corinthians 12:12). Nurturing of children and the formation of mature citizens is first and foremost the role of families and churches. But other social institutions, including government, play important roles in encouraging healthy family life and the well-being of children. Government does not have the primary responsibility for guaranteeing wholesome family life, but it should understand that people live in families and are more than autonomous individuals.

Good family life is so important to healthy human functioning that we oppose government efforts to trespass on the integrity of the family; for example, by encroaching on parental responsibilities and rights to educate their children, separating nuclear families through deportation or creating economic disincentives to marriage. Similarly, labor, housing, healthcare, tax, immigration and education policies concern not only individuals but can significantly affect families. We



commit ourselves to work for laws that protect and foster family life. Violations of the integrity of the family threaten public order. In order to strengthen the family, we must promote biblical moral principles, responsible personal choices and wise public policies.

God's design for marriage and family should be clearly expressed in our churches. Christians should model healthy marriages in which a man and woman honor their vows to lifelong sacrificial service to each other and loving nurture of any children that God brings into the family. At the same time we recognize the constitutional freedom of all citizens, knowing that in our democratic and pluralistic society this freedom may lead to legal rights and personal choices that undermine healthy family life. In the midst of such a culture, we seek to embody biblical standards and to be a voice for those standards, while recognizing that people may choose contrary paths.

Social policies should take into account both the dignity of human beings and families, as well as their brokenness. Many social evils — such as alcohol and drug addiction, gambling, credit card abuse, pornography, promiscuity, domestic violence, sexual abuse, easy divorce and abortion on demand — can represent the abandonment of responsibility

or the violation of trust by family members, and they seriously impair the ability to function in society.

The Church should play a vital role in restoring families to wholeness, and government should provide protection in cases of abusiveness and personal harm that can occur in families. Churches and governments should also support families and children who encounter societal challenges such as poverty, homelessness, racism, inadequate schooling and environmental degradation. We will work for measures that strengthen the economic viability of marriages and families, especially among the poor.

This is an excerpt from *For the Health of the Nation*, a resource for Christian discipleship designed to encourage thoughtful evangelical engagement as we respond to the call of civic responsibility. Download a free copy at NAE.org/forthehealth.



Following the Familial Caregiver

Many years ago, when my son was a toddler, we visited a store for some bonding time. When we topped the escalator to find the children’s section, he took off. I chased him, not with consternation but with pleasure, as I noticed that he was heading for a kiosk of books. Then I looked up and saw the prominently displayed title — “Parenting for Dummies.” Hmm ... just coincidence, or is he trying to tell me something?

To raise a child is not for the faint of heart. Even in the best of conditions, family life is complicated — full of the stretches and stresses of decisions about the limited reserves of time, money and emotions. In a post-*Dobbs* America, the Church has an opportunity, even obligation, to serve creatively and courageously. It is not simply a matter of protesting what we are against, but proving what we are for. Shall we ask parents not to abort babies but then abandon families in their time of deepest need? How can we promote the flourishing of families?

The psalmist David speaks of God’s own commitment to the family in a broken world:

Sing to God, sing in praise of his name,
extol him who rides on the clouds;
rejoice before him — his name is the LORD.
A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows,
is God in his holy dwelling.
God sets the lonely in families,

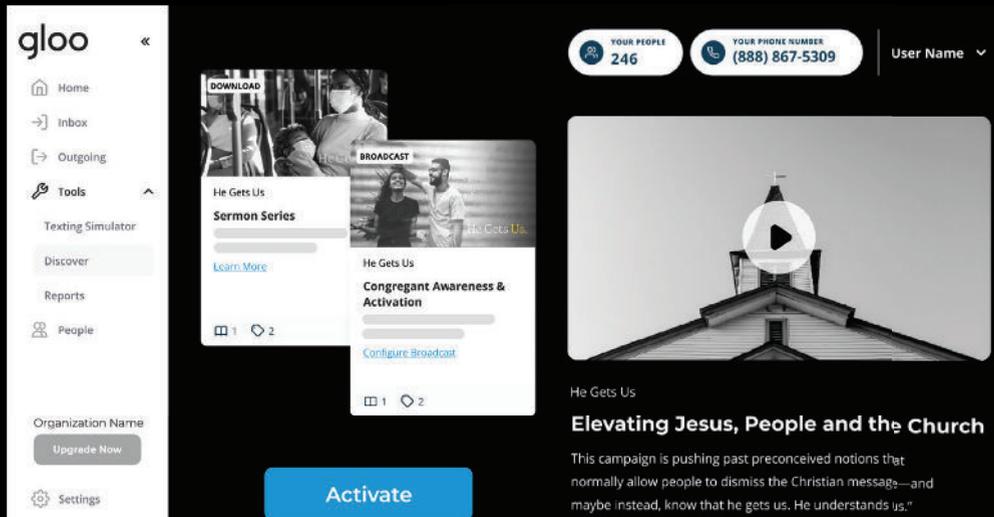
he leads out the prisoners with singing;
but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land
(Psalm 68:4–6).

While David extols God’s transcendence as the one who rides the clouds, he does not leave God in the clouds. The psalmist tenderly notes God’s intimacy as a familial caregiver: a father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, and a divine foster care worker who sets the lonely in families.

The early church lived this psalm as liturgy and as mission. In “The Triumph of Christianity,” the late professor Rodney Stark wrote that “in the midst of the squalor, misery, illness and anonymity of ancient cities, Christianity provided an island of mercy and security,” which was compellingly manifest in the counter-cultural and sacrificial care shown to orphans, widows, infirmed and destitute. The truth of the gospel was displayed by the beauty of its whole-life ethic. Beyond judicial rulings, the triumph of the gospel shapes our call in this moment. **E**

The He Gets Us Hub— Free for churches, always

Get everything you need to bring He Gets Us
to your church, all in one place.



[Sermon Series](#) | [Prayer & Reading Plans](#) | [Discussion Guides](#) | [Assessments](#)

Join He Gets Us on Gloop

Sign up now to access ready-to-use tools and resources that will help you bring the buzz from the nationwide conversation to your local church community.

Scan the QR code below to connect with our team.

He Gets Us™



The 2023 Bible Reading Guide

The Bible Reading Guide is a checklist of daily Scriptures that coincides with an engaging 8-minute daily podcast. Available in packages of 50, 250 and 500 — perfect to share with your entire church.



Order at NAE.org/brg



SCAN ME

2023 BIBLE
READING
GUIDE

For the Word of
God is
*alive &
active.*

Hebrews 4:12

3-65
16-18
19-21
22-24
25-27
28-31
Songs 1-4
5-68
Songs 5-8
Isa 1-4
Isa 5-8
Isa 9-12
-4
-7
9-71
-10
1-14

5-17
6-21
2-25
2-74

Isa 1-3
Isa 4-6
Isa 7-9
Isa 10-12
5-77
Isa 13-16
Isa 17-19
Isa 20-22
Isa 23-25
Isa 26-29
Isa 1-3
8-80
Isa 4-6
Isa 7-9
Isa 10-12
Isa 13-15
Isa 16-18
Isa 19-22
1-63
Isa 23-25
Isa 26-29
Isa 30-33
Isa 34-36