

The Home Undaunted by Future Challenges

Steven R. Jones, President

Challenges to The Baptist Home are nothing new. Throughout its history The Home has worked through difficulties that have little to do with its own initiative. The Home continues to face a number of crises.

The Values Crisis has led to the extremes of Liberalism and Fundamentalism. The media seems more than willing to cater to both, ignoring the vast majority of us who are neither and who seem to have little voice in the public debate. Unless we are willing to join one of the extremes, we are rejected by both. Baptists are profoundly engaged in this crisis. Although The Baptist Home is doing well, it has suffered the loss of donors and potential residents as it refuses to be identified with either extreme, while continuing its conservative course and embracing Christian values.

The Health Care Crisis and all of its complexity and lack of affordability, affect our ministry in many ways. Not only are employees faced with increased health care costs, but The Home is providing more acute care management for residents and much of it at The Home's expense.

The Regulatory Crisis adds stress, costs and confusion as staff are tossed back and forth from complex regulation, to deregulation. This requires flexibility for our staff to be in compliance. It is rare, but there are times residents and employees are upset with us regarding regulations which are beyond our control.

The Litigation Crisis causes The Home's leadership to always be looking over their shoulders to prevent any suspicious person from filing a fraudulent claim, thereby harming this great ministry. The Baptist Home has been very fortunate, but it is becoming an increasing threat. It is obvious to me that Southern Baptists have not taken the ascending liability threat serious enough.

And the Energy Crisis will force all of us to become better stewards of energy resources. Increased costs will cause us to work harder to provide more funds and control expenses.

In spite of the challenges, The Home will continue to work proactively to address the issues that face this ministry.

And we will do so by:

Developing employees through team building, esteem building and relationship building. This, hopefully, will make us more efficient and effective as caregivers. The values affirmed in our philosophy of care for residents must also be applied to our employees. In fact, I believe it should color all of our relationships. It is descriptive of the uniqueness of The Baptist Home ministry. It will make us a better people...with improved quality of life and more genuine compassion for those who receive care.

We are affirming our Baptist identity. Our passion and commitment are as strong as ever, but we have been thrown into an identity crisis as we struggle with "what it means to be a Baptist." This can be healthy for us because it forces us to reexamine the focus and scope of this ministry to aging adults. The challenge is to keep our historic Baptist and conservative Christian values in place as we explore new territory for ministry.

Controlling expenses, including benevolence to a level we can practically fund, investing and maintaining our property assets and doing effective development promotes sound fiscal operations and assures a future for this ministry. Providing for the capital needs of three campuses guarantees the “marketability” of our services. It is not just a secular “marketability” for which we strive. It is the right thing to do, to offer a secure, quality living environment for our residents.

Identifying the characteristics of the coming generation will help us to meet their needs. According to generational research, each generation, made up of 20 year spans, is different. We are at the beginning of a new generation of residents, ‘Adapter Types,’ also known as the ‘Silent Generation,’ born 1923 to 1943. Knowing what they and their Idealist, ‘Baby Boomer,’ children want and need in retirement is vital to our ministry for several years to come.

Offering aging education is as vital to what we do as giving a place for older adults to live. Again, it is not the “marketability” benefit we gain; it is what our mission, vision, ministry and core values are all about. Our experience, knowledge and skills about aging must be shared out there where folks live.

The next 20 years may be the most challenging in our history. The geo-political conflicts have potential for worldwide destruction. The battle of religions and values increase geo-political instability. The competition for limited resources will either destroy us or cause us to grow.

Perhaps the Lord will return. Nevertheless, I think we should do our calling until He comes. Do you agree? Nothing would please me more than to be found faithful doing His work at His coming.

Finding new ways to promote The Baptist Home ministry is a challenge. We must be open to God’s opportunity in this matter, not only in order for this ministry to survive, but as Frank Fain has often said “to thrive.”

Although I have shared many challenges, I am not afraid and I am confident that together with God’s help and direction we can meet and exceed that which is laid before us. We look forward to glorifying God together, with you, by demonstrating His Love to aging humanity.