

# BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

## Back to School, Back to Commitment



### Publisher

### Blue Ridge Christian News

By Brian Barrier  
Burke County



It is becoming more evident each passing year that the moral fabric that has made the United States of America so blessed and favored by God is rapidly deteriorating. I can think of no better time to talk about our children than now. It is September and our little ones (and some not so little) are just going back to school. What kind of environment will they be heading into this year and what kind of education and training will our children really be exposed to?

As the very far-left and radically liberal minority continues to be the "squeaky wheel that gets the grease", it seems like we conservative Christians sit complacently by and watch as our country undergoes a frightening shift away from the very principles that made us so great to begin with. Like many of you, I am becoming alarmed and wonder often what I can do about it. I am just one person, right? Well, I believe that first and foremost, each of us has an opportunity to make a difference, and we can start by becoming more involved in our school system.

Our children are the future citizens and leaders of this great nation, and if we want them to have the same opportunities that we have been blessed with, we must start paying attention to what's going on in our communities and especially in our schools. As they go back to school, let's get back to commitment!

Proverbs 22:6 "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it"

We've heard and read that verse of scripture many times. Each of us has a mandate from God Himself to "train up" our children. This includes monitoring and interacting with those who spend almost every day with them in positive and productive ways. Your child will most likely spend 8 to 10 hours each night in bed, and another 6 or 7 hours in school each day. That only leaves around 6 to 8 hours for family. Many of us work and aren't home when our children get home, and, between other activities our children are involved in (sports, dance, church, etc.), we are really getting just a few hours each day of our children's time. Your child could be spending more one-on-one time with those in the education system than they are with you!

Teachers and other school staff who are responsible for providing education to our children should be aware that you are a concerned and responsible parent, and they should also understand that you are there to support them, as educators, throughout the school year. We need to be concerned enough that we take the time

to really get to know each person that encounters our children and has influence over their learning and behavior each day.

Meet each of your child's teachers. Get to know the principal and other school staff. Parental involvement is a morale-booster for those educators. Most of them want your child to be successful and appreciate knowing that you are taking an active interest in your child's learning, that you are a TEAM united for the same goal – the success of your child. This will give you a chance to ask important questions about your child. What observations are the teachers making about your son or daughter? Which children are their friends? How can you help?

Take time to be involved with activities at your child's school. All Title I schools in the state are required to hold a Parent Math Night and a Parent Reading Night each year. Find out when these are taking place and be there. Also, most schools still have active PTOs or PTAs. Make sure that you join that organization and attend the meeting (usually they are incorporated into other events happening at the school at the same time). Is your child in the chorus or the band? Does he or she play a sport or are they involved with a club? Make every effort to attend these events. This shows your child that not only are you supporting them, but that you are also supporting their school and teachers!

Most importantly, you should pray for each teacher every day, by name, and have your child participate in these prayers as well so that they recognize the importance.

Another very important thing you can do is find out who is on the local school board. What kind of morals and values do they represent? When it's time for new elections, you have an obligation to know as much as possible about those running for the local school board. Get other parents and citizens around you involved as well. Then, you must vote for those that you know are governed by God in their personal lives. According to [greatschools.org](http://greatschools.org), "An effective school board plays an important watchdog role in keeping your local school on track and setting policies that affect your child and your school. The school board sets the vision and goals for the school district and holds the district accountable for results."

Being a parent is not easy today. In many households, both parents work full-time jobs, leaving very little time to practice the previously mentioned tasks. We are competing with technology and many other distractions. But, it's not up to the local church or local school to raise our children. Yes, they each play a very important role, but, ultimately, it is our responsibility as parents. God equips each of us to fulfill all that He has commanded us to accomplish. Joshua 1:9 says, "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

The very future of our way of life is at stake. You CAN make a difference!

Brian Barrier is a life-long resident of Burke County, U.S. Army Veteran, a member of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church and Publisher of the Blue Ridge Christian News.



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## Single Mom Strength

By Patti Brandt  
Mitchell County



I am a single mom. When I married it was not my intention to raise children alone. Yet here I am, part of a rising statistic. In Mitchell County, 28% of children live in a single-parent home. I became a Christian through my divorce and remarried a Christian man who left me pregnant with twins. Like most single moms, I have two jobs and make all the decisions for my children and me. For a long time, I avoided going to church because I felt like I didn't belong there. 70% of single mothers nationwide do not attend church, many for just that reason.

Everyone who attends church is a sinner, but a single mom who may never have been married to her child's father feels especially judged. But the God I know, the God who saved me, has mercy, and forgiveness for all. His word tells us not to judge. I feel strongly that we, as a church, are called to love the modern-day 'widows and orphans', the single mom and her children.

Parenting children in a committed marriage is hard enough. For the single mom it is one of the most difficult challenges she will ever face. Being the breadwinner, chief decision-maker, disciplinarian, and all the other roles is a lonely job. Many of us struggle with depression as well as loneliness. My twins are now 15. Those of you with teenagers will know that all the parenting struggles intensify during these years!

I would like to invite single moms in our area to attend a group just for us to get together and support our journey with friendship and guidance. We will meet at Western Carolina Church on Sunday mornings from 9:30-10:30 beginning August 25th. You do not have to attend church in order to join us. Our first video series will be Single Parenting That Works! by Dr. Kevin Leman. The church has a light breakfast available before class. Nursery and classes for all age children are also available, all free of charge.

We are also a certified The Life of a Single Mom ministry. For more information visit [www.thelifeofasinglemom.com](http://www.thelifeofasinglemom.com)

Western Carolina Church, 31 Cross Street in Spruce Pine.

Also, for more information on the group, contact Patti at 828-208-3862.

*Patti Brandt was born in Long Island, NY and lived in Florida and Colorado before moving to WNC in 2017. She has a passion for helping single mom families thrive.*



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*"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace: that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation: that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"*

Isaiah 52:7 KJV



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# Church Directory



## The Bridge Church of WNC

207 Pinebridge Avenue  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
www.bridgewnc.org

**Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin**

Sunday Service 10:30AM  
Wednesday Service 7:00PM  
Church Office M-F  
9:00AM-3:00PM

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## Berry Chapel Baptist Church

280 Chapel St.  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
828-765-6590  
www.berrychapelbaptist.com

**Pastor - Steve Williams**

Sunday School 9:45 AM  
Worship Service 11:00 AM  
Sunday Evening Care Meal/  
Ministry - 5:30 PM  
Wednesday Evening  
Service 7:00 PM

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## Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church

2187 Jamestown Road  
Morganton, NC  
828-584-8212

**Pastor Rick Mercer**

Sabbath (Saturday)  
Bible Study - 9:30 am  
Sabbath Worship - 10:45 am  
Vegetarian Buffet after church  
Wednesday  
Prayer Meeting - 7:00 pm  
www.morgantonsda.org

## Faith Fellowship Church

Champ Ray Rd.  
Morganton, NC 28755  
(828)-675-9284  
www.fccn.org  
www.fccradio.org

**Pastor: David Gillespie**

Sunday School - 10:00 am  
Worship Service - 10:45 am  
Wednesday Bible Study - 7:00pm  
"The steps of a good man are  
ordered by the Lord:  
And he delighteth in his way."  
Psalm 37:23

## Altapass Baptist Church

3631 Altapass Hwy  
Spruce Pine, NC  
828-765-0660  
altapassbaptistchurch@ccvn.com  
www.altapassbaptistchurch.org

**Dr. Marcus R. Benfield**

Sunday School - 10:00am  
Worship - 11:00am  
Sunday Evening - 7:00pm  
Sunday Youth Program - 7:00pm  
1st & 3rd Sunday  
(Conductors for Christ ages 5-11)  
2nd & 4th Sunday  
(Teen Discovery ages 12-18)  
Wednesday - 7:00pm

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## Grassy Creek Baptist Church

793 Old NC 226 Hwy  
Spruce Pine, NC  
828-765-4620  
www.grassycreekbc.org

Sunday School 10:00am  
Morning Worship 11:00am  
Sunday evening 6:30pm  
Wednesday:  
J.A.M. (Jesus and Me) 7:00pm  
Seekers (young adults) 7:00pm  
Mid-week worship 7:00pm  
"That Mitchell County  
may know Christ"

## West Burnsville Baptist Church

222 West Burnsville Church Rd.  
Burnsville, NC 28714  
(828)-682-3990

**Pastor: Terry Long**

Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.  
Morning Service: 11:00 a.m.  
Evening Service: 6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday Service 6:30 p.m.

Church vision: Glorifying God through  
knowing, growing, going, to build the church  
and impact the world.

## Burkemont Baptist Church

4668 Burkemont Rd.  
Morganton, NC 28655  
828-437-2357

For more information,  
please visit  
www.burkemontbaptist.org

**Dr. Luke A. Lane**

8:30am - Early Worship  
9:45am - Sunday School  
11:00am - Worship  
6:00pm - Evening Worship

## Plumtree Presbyterian Church

4527 Hwy 19E  
Plumtree, NC 28664  
828-765-6919  
www.plumtreepresbyterian.org

**Pastor Ryan Bridgeo**  
pastor@plumtreepresbyterian.org

Sunday School 9:45 am  
Worship Service 11:00 am  
Life Groups Tuesday-Thursday evenings, 7:00 pm  
Fusion Youth Wednesday's, 6:30 pm  
Healing Services 2nd Sunday of each month, 6:30 pm

John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you  
and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that  
will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you  
ask in my name.

## Bear Creek Baptist Church

327 Bear Creek Road  
Bakersville, NC 28705  
www.bearcreekbaptist.com

**Reverend Bruce Cannon**

Sunday School 9:45 AM  
Worship Service 10:45 AM  
Discipleship 6:00 PM  
Evening Worship 6:45 PM  
Wednesday Worship 7:30 PM

**"For God so loved the world, he  
gave his only Son..."**

## Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church

2907d US Hwy 70 E  
Morganton, NC  
828-475-2040

**Pastor Barry Mahorney**

Sabbath (Saturday)  
Bible Study-10:00am  
Sabbath Worship - 11:30am  
Vegetarian Buffet after church  
Wednesday - Praise, Prayer &  
Proclaim - 7:00pm  
www.greathopesda.com

## Pine Branch Baptist Church

48 Church Road  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
Phone: (828) 765-9101  
www.pinebranchbaptist.net

**Reverend Bobby Joe Greene**

Sunday School • 9:45-10:40am  
Worship Service • 10:45am  
Sunday Evening • 6:30pm

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## St. Lucien's Catholic Church

695 Summit Street  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
Phone (828) 765-2224

Sunday Mass 9:00 am  
Wednesday Faith Formation  
6:00 pm  
Food Pantry Wed. 1:00-  
4:00pm

## First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine

125 Tappan Street  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
828-765-9411  
www.sprucepinefbc.com  
www.splfbc.blogspot.com

**Dr. Rocky Branch  
Senior Pastor**

Sunday School - 9:45 am  
Sunday Worship - 8:30 and 11:00 am  
Sunday Evening - 6:00 pm  
Wednesday Evening - 6:30 pm

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## Spruce Pine United Methodist Church

11090 Hwy. 226 South  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
www.sprucepineumc.org  
spumc3@bellsouth.net  
828-765-7446

**Pastor Rev. Jeremy Troxler**

Sunday School - 10:00am  
Sunday Worship - 11:00am  
Choir Wednesday - 7:00pm

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## I Have Visions for You to See

By Alan Griffin

God's desire is for you to manifest something for others to behold: to make a way for His divine purpose to be revealed in the eyes of others. In most of the world, people spend their entire existence on survival, neglecting a relationship with God. In the USA we spend most of our life being entertained. In John 9 we have the story of a man born blind from birth. The disciples asked if the man was blind because of his own sins, or if he was blind because of the sins of his family. Jesus answered, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." This is God's desire for all Christians. Jesus took clay and spit, and anointed the blind man's eyes. The clay represents the earth from which we were formed, and the spit is the divine anointing of mankind. The man was told to go wash his eyes in a nearby pool. When he did, through faith, he received his sight. The water represents the Word of God and through faith in God's Word we receive the Holy Spirit.

When Adam was in the Garden of Eden he received daily visits from God. As they walked and talked, God revealed to Adam many things so their relationship grew on a daily basis. When Adam chose to please Eve over God he lost the spiritual connection between God and man—it was broken. So it is every time we sin, and every time we show no regret for our wrongdoings. This is why we do not have spiritual communion with God. He has made available to us through His Word, through meditation and prayers, and through visions and dreams, what He wants to reveal to every individual. Through our connected spirits, the works of God should be manifest in us.

When we accept the knowledge and experience the holy reverence of the awesome nature of God, bowing down before Him with all praise, honor, and glory, we permit ourselves to be a conduit to divine truth. When we marvel at the workings of His universe—the stars, the planets, the glory of all creation—we adamantly admit we know little about the operations of things around us. When we spend time daily with the Word of God, living obediently to His teachings, showing remorse for our sins, and placing our faith only in Him, we make ourselves available to the inner operation of the Holy Spirit. Through these channels, we receive new revelations and scripture becomes clearer and clearer. We permit ourselves to receive revelations from God.

These anointings can come through further understanding of the Bible, they can be received through visions and dreams, or they can come through past recollections. The important thing is to get your mind pure before God. A humbled heart, submitted to God, ready to be corrected and receive instruction on righteous living, will permit the Holy Spirit to reveal God's desires to you. All Christians are capable of receiving dreams and visions. We are to communicate this knowledge to fellow believers so that the entire family of God receives instruction. "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2:28).

Upright living is the key to getting our mind to pay attention to what God is trying to tell us. He doesn't try to push anything on us, but with a soft and loving voice, He instructs us in righteous living. Tune out for ten days. Turn down your phone, turn off your TV, and make your home quiet so you can hear. Empty your mind of all thoughts. This does not come easy at first so try meditating on some question you would like to ask God. With questions come answers, with answers comes growth, and growth brings us to our true purpose in life—sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others.

Bearing fruit is the responsibility of every Christian. In John 15, Jesus explains to us that He is the Vine, and His Father (our Father) is the Gardener. We are the branches, and if the branches do not bear fruit they are cut off and thrown into the fire. We can sit in a pew all our life and never make it to the Promised Land. We can have faith, but faith without works is nothing more than a bunch of dead branches that will find themselves cast into the fires of hell. The fruit is that fragrantly sumptuous and delicious knowledge of God's grace given to another person in all love and understanding so they too may become acquainted with the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. The greatest experience I have ever had is watching another person come into the understanding of the justice and righteousness of God.

Dreams, visions, and recollections are to be compared with scripture to certify their authenticity. Never let another person reveal to you what a dream or vision means; if your dream has meaning, the Holy Spirit will be the One who reveals it to you. Failing to follow these steps will result in false doctrines and ignorance. *Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keeps the law, happy is he* (Proverbs 29:18). Visions and dreams are your choices. God has already chosen to communicate with you in this manner. God's truth is shown throughout all of His creation. When the truth is properly understood, all scripture, visions, and recollections will be in harmony.

Alan Griffin started the kidsnchrist ministries in November 1997. He has worked with inner city kids for 21 years. He found a need for specialized Biblical literature that would reach people of all ages and has been writing since 2005. The ministry has expanded their websites to reach around the world. Kidsnchrist.com, millennialchristian.com, teensnchrist.com, seniorsnchrist.com, picture-verse.com, and soulworks-smallgroups.com. We had an outreach of over 13,000,000 people last year with 36,000,000 impressions. If you have any questions for Alan you can reach him at alan@kidsnchrist.com



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# Redeemed Freewill Baptist Church

## Mistake

By Patricia Jackson  
McDowell County

Merriman Webster Dictionary defines Mistake: To blunder in the choice of, or to make a wrong judgment. In this article, we will look at the life of a King of Israel whose mistake impacted a great nation. (I Kings, Chapter 12).

Rehoboam: Son of Solomon, grandson of King David. Following the death of his father, he became king over all Israel, at age 41. His first major decision came when men from the ten tribes of Israel came to him, led by Jeroboam. During Solomon's reign, they were forced to work basically as slaves, and pay taxes also. They asked Rehoboam to lighten their workload and pledged loyalty to him if he would do so. Rehoboam sought the advice of the old men, governors, who advised him to agree to lighten the workload. He then sought advice from his friends, the young men, who advised him to increase their workload and brutal treatment. We do not read that Rehoboam sought the Lord's wisdom and guidance in this decision. His decision was to follow the advice of his young friends. No doubt his decision was based on a number of things - his newfound power, his ego, his lack of experience as King and personal lack of compassion. Not understanding human nature or having insight into the future also resulted in the once glorious nation of Israel becoming divided, with ten tribes leaving. King Jeroboam would only have Judah and Benjamin to rule over. No doubt the decision not to follow the wisdom of the old man was a decision he lived to regret the rest of his life.

As I read these scriptures, I thought about when we are faced with a decision, we often consult our friends or co-workers. We usually get conflicting answers, leaving us to make the decision we prefer, often without considering the long term consequences. When faced with a difficult decision, we should pray about it first. Matthew 6:8 tells us "For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him". We previously read the Lord knew Rehoboam would not seek his face and would make a foolish decision. If we fail to seek the Lord's guidance, he might allow us to face unnecessary hardships and stress, in order to teach us a lesson. He always does this in love, but many times it is difficult to go through. We may also seek guidance from a trusted person of God, perhaps your Pastor or a Sunday School Teacher. No decision should be made until we weigh the immediate and long term consequences of the decision and the impact on others in our lives.

Patricia Jackson is the Assistant Teacher for the Ladies Class at Redeemed Free Will Baptist Church, Glenwood, NC. She is a grant writer for non-profits, a published author and retired Nursing Home Administrator. She lives in Rutherford County with her husband.



# 7th Annual Women Seeking God-Freedom Retreat

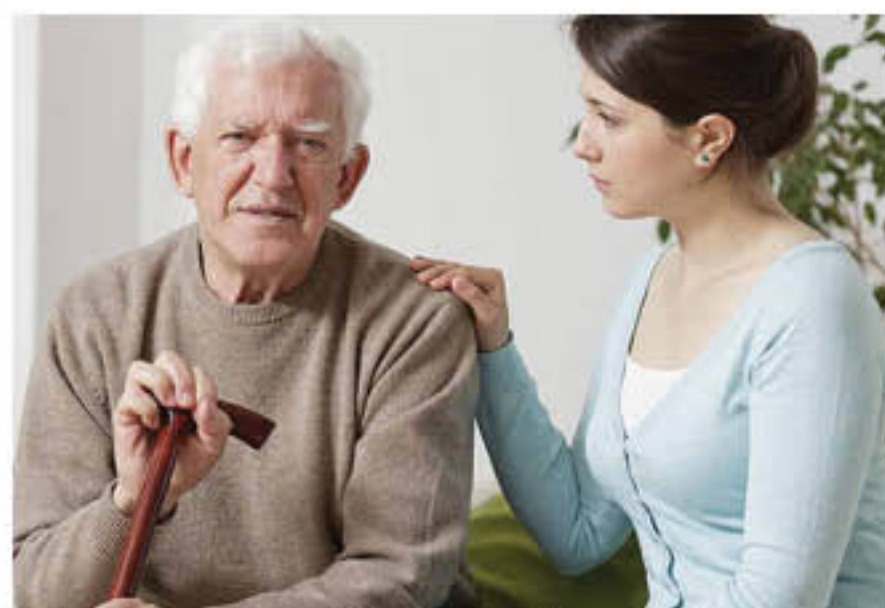
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Finding Joy In Your Journey

By Shelly Grindstaff  
Mitchell County



"Weeping may endure for a night BUT JOY comes in the morning" ...What about those seasons when the night is long and morning never seems to come? How do you, 'Count it ALL Joy' as Paul says in the midst of your worst suffering? If you have been in a season of despair, depression and hard battles come to join us as we worship the One who "for the joy set before Him, endured the cross" so we could have the joy of our salvation restored. Come find out what it means for God to give you the "Oil of Joy for mourning and a garment of praise for the Spirit of heaviness." Come experience the restoration of your Joy! This is a non-denominational event led by Shelley Grindstaff, who has a heart for seeing broken women healed and come to an intimate relationship with Jesus. She also has the heart to see women of all denominations and backgrounds joined together in one Spirit worshipping together. This will be held at High Pastures Retreat Center in Burnsville, NC. Dinner starts Friday, October 4th at 5:30, followed at 6:45 by an evening of Joyful worship led by Ryan and Maria Anglin and a testimony time sharing what God has done these past 7 years. At 9 pm you can enjoy fellowship and smores around the fire or a movie at the lodge. Saturday you will enjoy more worship and heart stories from some Women who have found Joy in the midst of some hard journeys. Kimberly Duncan, who radiated joy even in the midst of her battle with cancer and chemo will share her powerful story of God's grace and transforming power throughout her life. Sarah Rotecameto, from last year's conference with suicidal thoughts from years of battling mental illness but had a real encounter with the Holy Spirit and it brought forth a real transformation, not only to her but to her family. She was set free by the blood of Jesus and His Word and filled with a Joy. She loves to share her story now. Shelley Grindstaff will share truths from God's Word that will equip you to experience the true joy that is not based on circumstance or emotion. Staying at High Pastures is encouraged to get away from distractions. A Room with 3 meals is \$ 60. There is an option for retreat only for \$10 if you are unable to stay and you also can add individual meals as well. Registrations can be picked up or dropped off at The Bridge church in Spruce Pine or Higgins UMC in Burnsville. They need to be turned in by September 25th for a meal count. You can also contact Shelley Grindstaff for pick up at ssgrindstaff70@gmail.com or 828 284-6846.

Shelley currently attends The Bridge Church of Spruce Pine. She has been involved in children, youth and womens ministry, as well as leading adult small group bible studies in various churches of different denominations for 26 years.



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Serves the Lord with His Music

By Margaret Costner  
Burke County

In a day that we hear and read so much negativity about our youth, I would like to offer something positive to our readers. I would like to commend a very special young man for his outstanding dedication and commitment to the Lord as well as to his preparation for the Lord's work. I have long retired from my fifty years of teaching private piano lessons. However, with my sincere love for teaching as well as my heart for students interested in music, I find it very difficult to turn them away when they ask that I teach them.

In all my years of teaching, it was very seldom a high school student, and even more so, a young man came to me with a desire to learn church music so that he could serve in his church. Kenny had been greatly influenced by, at that time pianist, Mrs. Alma Smith, her service to the church and her ability to play so well. She played a tremendous part in Kenny's desire to learn. He had studied band as well as chorus in high school. His interest in music had been ongoing prior to this interest in church music. However, Mrs. Alma recognized his talent and his love for sacred music. She encouraged him to learn. Kenny's drive to serve in his church touched my heart, because I, too, had begun piano at the age of eight for that very same reason. I wanted to play piano for church. I became our church pianist around age twelve.

Needless to say, I took Kenny on as my student. He has been a joy to teach to say the least. On September 5, 2016, he had his first lesson. This month Kenny is celebrating his third year in piano with a concentration on hymn playing.

My experience and ability to teach had very little to do with Kenny's progress. His consistency in having regular lessons and daily practice, along with his determination, made Kenny the outstanding student he is, as well as the Pianist he has become. In the three years that Kenny has been with me he has missed only four lessons. These were unavoidable. A student must meet with his teacher regularly and have regular practice if he is to progress. Kenny has been faithful to call me each week to confirm his lesson time. He is the kind of student that teachers dream of having and the faithful servant that God would have us all to be.

Due to health reasons, Mrs. Alma found it necessary to retire her position as church pianist at South Mountain and Kenny became the pianist long before he had completed two years of lessons.

Kenny is now a college student and even with the heavy load he carries he continues his piano practice and has his lesson each week. Should you visit the South Mountain Baptist Church on Hwy 16, Morganton, you would no doubt be blessed by his performance as he serves the Lord with his Music. Chris Annas is the pastor of South Mountain Baptist. Kenny is the son of Ginny Clarke of Morganton.

Margaret Costner taught private piano lessons for fifty years.



Kenny Blanton

Foster Grandparenting –  
Ministry Opportunity for Seniors

By Carol Layton - Director of Communications, NC Baptist Aging Ministry



In 2018, 16,796 children were placed in North Carolina's foster care system. Baptist Children's Homes of NC (BCH) responded to these numbers by launching "Family Foster Care." While continuing to provide residential care, the ministry now trains and licenses individuals to provide foster homes to children.

BCH also trains churches to come alongside foster parents, as a church body, and provide support and Christian community to both them and the children who come into their families.

Providence Baptist Church in Harrisburg and Salem Baptist Church in Dobson have couples in their congregations who have become foster families through BCH's training and licensing process. Currently, seven children have been placed with foster families from Salem's congregation. Six of those children are siblings — two siblings each living with three of the families. These brothers and sisters are able to worship together and celebrate birthdays together. Co-parenting between the families adds another benefit.

Dr. Sandy Gregory, director of North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM), envisions senior adults supporting BCH Family Foster Care as "foster" grandparents. "All children need the special relationship that only a grandparent provides and foster kids desperately need it," says Gregory. He and his wife Renee received foster parenting training through BCH. They have fostered several children and are currently fostering to adopt.

Gregory offers a 90-minute workshop for senior adults who attend BCH Family Foster Care churches. The training includes information about the foster care system, the needs of foster families, responding to emergency situations, how to foster grandparents can serve as mentors and share their Christian legacy with a foster child—possibly changing a life forever.

One of NCBAM's newest outreaches, "One Hope," will also intersect with BCH Family Foster Care. One Hope engages socially isolated and lonely seniors with community activities, such as foster grandparenting.

NCBAM's newest "Passport" brochure provides more information on BCH Foster Family Care. The brochure provides ideas that churches, senior adults and all ages can use to support foster parents and the children they serve. Call 877.506.2226 to request your free copy today!

Interested in fostering through BCH? Call 800.476.3669 or visit [bchfostercare.org](http://bchfostercare.org).

Carol Layton is Office and Support Manager for North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM)



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## Gifts Mirror God's Generosity

By Marlene Houk  
Burke County

*James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*

I bent, twitched the washcloth from the cabinet and blotted my face. When I opened my eyes, the sight catapulted me back thirty-seven years. Draped over my hands lay a present from our wedding. It had survived unbelievable odds, incredible feats of cleaning, and two teenagers, its memories, helping me celebrate our wedding anniversary today. My hands had handled that same washcloth so many years ago, a gift from close friends who wished us well on our matrimonial journey. The power of that gift still gave me pleasure and sweet memories years later. How could a white washcloth last thirty-seven years? Through countless swipes at chubby baby cheeks, narrowly missed destruction by teens racing headlong through life, and precarious clinging to the same family proved miraculous. And, yet, here its somewhat faded glory lay calmly in my palms. But, oh the significance of that faded white proved priceless to me.

The lush pile, worn to a thin layer by two generations reminded me of a spiritual analogy in the Bible. There, gifts weave the threads of generosity, reconciliation, affirmation, and, most importantly, spiritual blessings into Bible stories of epic proportions. For example, the Israelites bestowed so much upon the builders of the tabernacle that they had to tell them to stop giving so generously. (Exodus 36:7) Jacob gifted Esau with 550 animals as a sign of his willingness to restore their broken relationship. (Genesis 32:14-15) And the wise men bestowed upon the baby Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, affirming that He was King, God, and Savior. (Matthew 2:11) Many times in the Scriptures, the word picture of a gift switches to a heavenly perspective. God lavishes gifts upon His children that empower them with hope, understanding, faith, and the ability to transcend petty earthly emotion. These include grace (Ephesians 4:7), righteousness (Romans 5:17), the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38), living water (John 4:10), practical spiritual gifts to offer in service to the body of Christ (Romans 12:5-6), and eternal life (Romans 6:23), etc.

The next time you ponder your choice of a baby shower, wedding or birthday gift, consider its potential to leave a fragrance of friendship and care, bringing a smile for possible decades after the event. And don't forget that we mirror the Giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17) as we present our carefully chosen treasures to others.

The companion to the washcloth, the towel, survived also, a testament to the friendship of its giver and a reminder to me of the LORD's rich spiritual gifts to us that we can enjoy for eternity.

*Marlene Houk is a regular contributor to Blue Ridge Christian News. Her passion is to delve deeply into the truths of Bible women and to discuss those in Bible Studies called Backstage Pass to Bible Women. She and her husband discover joy, nurture, and challenge in their church. Her contact is marlenehouk@bellsouth.net*



*Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Joel 3:13*

## Greater Love

By Jody Griffin  
Avery and Mitchell Counties

*"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13)*

Tragic flooding in the Midwest recently brought to my mind images from similar experiences in years past. One such image was a bit of a personal epiphany...

Two small children had been swept away from their father's hands by surging waters. The father ran to catch them and as he ran, he yelled for help. There was no sound with the video, but one could easily see what he said as he watched his children disappear from his sight. It was so horrible to witness that I almost shut my eyes, but I am so glad that I didn't because what I was about to see can only be described as a miracle.

Both children had become entangled in some obstruction in the waters and were struggling to keep their heads positioned to breathe.

Suddenly, the television screen was filled with people. A man grasped a nearby tree and a human chain formed before my eyes. Within seconds, a man reached out and took hold of the first child who instinctively climbed from person to person to land. Mere moments later, all were soaked-but safe and alive!

The testimonies of those who had become this chain of life for the children all said essentially the same thing.

When they heard the father call, they could do no less than risk their own lives for someone in need. One woman even said that she gave no thought to the fact that she couldn't swim, she just saw the urgency of need and responded.

I have witnessed similar miracles here in this community. We have had our share of tragedies in recent years. But with each tragedy, there has also been beauty. Human chains have formed, reaching out to those in crisis, reaching not just with hands but with hearts. Your selfless ministry is an inspiration to me. You hear the cry for help and give nothing short of yourselves in response.

Your financial support of this ministry and, for some of you, the time you spend volunteering within the gates, and for countless others of you who cannot give or serve in person, but who PRAY for us, we thank God for you!

Let us all be thankful for the privilege to live as friends and to reach out to those around us in crisis! And Thank you so much for your faithful support of this ministry! You are our lifeline!

*Jody Griffin is pastor of Central Baptist Church in Spruce Pine and Community Funded Chaplain at Avery-Mitchell Correctional Institution.*



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**The HEARTBEAT of the High Country**



By Doug Harrell  
Mitchell County



The years fly by at a tremendous pace it seems. We look out the window of time and before we realize it, we are coming to the end of the journey. For some, this might seem morbid, but it is a fact of life for all of us. Barbara and I attended a funeral yesterday for a friend of ours in a nearby community and upon arriving back at home that evening she made the comment, "You know Doug, funerals are a little more personal now than they used to be!" I had to stop and think about that for a few minutes and let those thoughts sink in. You know, it is different when the funerals you are attending are for those your age and younger. It is no longer just something out in the distant future that you know but never think about. This very week, I became the oldest living member of the Luther and Arizona Harrell family and that gave me a moment of reflection.

I say these things to get your attention because, without faith in a risen Savior, we are just facing death, dust to dust mentality. If there had been no resurrection, there would have been no future after the grave, but for those that have faith, we can lose that fear. Now none of us know when our date with destiny will be, or how it will take place, but belief in God's word gives us the ability to face each day with joy and gladness, rather than depression and gloom. If we really trust and obey, we can live each day of our lives to the fullest and not worry about tomorrow or what it may bring. We can face the day with joy in our hearts and a smile on our faces. Way too often, we tend to focus on the hurts and pains of our joints, our health situations of all kinds, our inability to do the things we once did rather than doing the most that we can with joy in our hearts. Now I understand some days are hard and the going gets rough, but even in the valleys the journey is 95% attitude. We can sit down on the couch and be afraid to do anything because we might overheat and have a heart attack or something else, or we can get up and do all we can possibly do. My dad, A D Harrell, used to tell me when I was growing up, if you feel bad get up and go out and do something constructive, you won't feel any worse and you might get something accomplished in the meantime.

When you are around others, don't try and outdo each other with the intimate description of all your illnesses and scars from the surgeries you have been through, talk about your dreams and goals. Make sure you have some, they will be different than they used to be, but always have something to strive for. Have a reason to get up, get out and get going. Nothing brings us to demise quicker than losing all sense of urgency in our lives. The Bible, to my knowledge, does not have one verse about retirement, but it has a lot about doing good, plowing your fields and feeding your oxen. About caring and sharing Jesus's love with those around us. Now don't misunderstand me, there is nothing wrong at all with stopping some of the daily grinds of a job or career to enjoy the fruits of your labor, but have productive plans for your life, or you will become bitter and stagnant like still water.

Focus on the world and the people around you, and what you can do each day to contribute to society and the community you are in. Be conscious of looking outward and upward rather than inward and downward. Commit to being and doing the very best you can for as long as you can, and the very best you can each day of your life, it could very well be your last day! Fill each day to the brim, let your cup run over with love and enthusiasm for the day and those around you. Continue to sow seeds of joy wherever you may go each day of your life, as long as you may live.

Doug Harrell is a life-long resident of Mitchell County, Owner of Harrell Hill Farms, Inc, a member of Bear Creek Baptist Church.

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### Churches and Politics: 'Doesn't Fit Their Vision'

By Dr. Mark Creech



Summer months for the Christian Action League of North Carolina can be fiscally challenging. It's the period when contributions are the lowest.

As the League's executive director, it's my responsibility to find the needed funds, which precipitates making some phone calls to individuals and churches for help.

Recently, I contacted a church that had once supported the Christian Action League but had reassessed their missions giving and stopped. They were under new leadership now, and their missions' director said the League "doesn't fit their vision."

I knew what that expression meant. "Doesn't fit their vision," was just a nice way of saying, "As a church, we intend to stay away from politics. We don't share your conviction that we should engage every aspect of the culture and shape it for righteousness sake." As I see it, this is a sad response, because churches unwilling to bring the terms of God's Word to bear on the great issues of our time are actually being quite short-sighted in their vision.

The gospel and Christian discipleship are much wider in scope than trying to get people into heaven and filling church pews. The gospel is about redemption for the whole man, and it stretches into every realm of life in which humanity operates.

In earlier generations, Christians in America understood this. Allow me to share a lengthy excerpt from what is now a book long out of print, *The Gospel and the American Dream*, written by Bruce L. Shelley. Shelley writes:

"In 1835, a generation before the Civil War, the well-known New England minister, Lyman Beecher preached one of his more popular sermons. He called it 'A Plea for the West.' The oration reveals Beecher's deep-seated belief that a vast new empire was opening in the American wilderness. Nothing less than a whole culture was at stake. Christians should seize the opportunity, he said, and shape 'the religious and political destiny of the nation.'"

"And how did Beecher propose to do all that? He called for the preaching of the gospel, distribution of Bibles, the planting of churches, the establishment of schools, and the reform of American morals."

"This vision of a Christian America dominated evangelical thinking and generated what historians have called the 'Righteous Empire.' ... As evangelicals faced the challenge of winning a nation to Christian obedience, two instruments were available to them: revivals and voluntary societies."

"America's first Great Awakening created an evangelical fixation upon revivals as God's special instrument for reforming the American people. As the nation spread westward, spiritual awakenings occurred in the newly settled regions between the Alleghenies and the Mississippi and proved to be a primary channel for the spread of Christianity and the civilizing of the wilderness."

"Since the then-recently adopted American Constitution and Bill of Rights rejected any thoughts of a 'holy commonwealth' by ruling out any direct influence of the churches upon the government, how were these growing numbers of Christians to fulfill their responsibilities for public life and morals? That is where the voluntary societies came in. William Carey and other English evangelicals had designed the voluntary society to carry the gospel to India and to fight the slave trade in the West Indies. The societies allowed individual Christians, without regard to denominational identities, to mobilize their efforts for moral and religious causes. They simply contributed their money, and in some cases, their lives, to advance their cause at home or overseas..."

"American evangelicals seized the idea for their own purposes. It seemed the perfect instrument for America's free society. Thus early in the nineteenth-century scores of societies sprang up to shape some aspect of American life: Bible Societies, Sabbath Societies, Mission Societies, Temperance Societies. 'One thing is becoming daily more evident,' said Beecher in 1830, 'the grand influence' of the church and the triumphs of the last forty years are the result of the 'voluntary association of Christians.'"

"That grand influence of the churches included the shaping of American morality and many commonly shared religious beliefs..."

"When [Alexis] de-Tocqueville visited the country in the 1830s, he expressed his admiration for the democratic process at work in the numerous small communities throughout the nation."

"He held that American democracy was always in danger of disintegrating into a selfish pack of mutually antagonistic individuals. But he found a bulwark against such a mass society in America's small towns, where most people were self-employed, civic-minded, and influenced, directly or indirectly, by the Christian faith."

"This vision of a democratic America, linking Christian values and republican principles, was probably the prevailing vision throughout the nineteenth century. Few dared to stand and challenge President Woodrow Wilson when he said, 'America was born a Christian nation for the purpose of exemplifying to the nations of the world the principles of righteousness found in the Word of God.'"

May I suggest that because this vision no longer fits much of the church today, America is on the brink of complete disaster, and Christians are starting to feel like aliens in their own country!

For a church to say that addressing what's happening in politics "doesn't fit their vision" is also a way of admitting to selective blindness.

*Reverend Dr. Mark Creech is Executive Director of the NC Christian Action League. You may contact him at [rev.markcreech@christianactionleague.org](mailto:rev.markcreech@christianactionleague.org) or 919-787-0606*



## God's Children: NOT Exempt from Suffering

By Shawn Thomas  
Burke County



In early 1865, hundreds of thousands of men from the North were being drafted into the Union Army to help finally bring an end to the war. President Abraham Lincoln's own son Robert was now also being sent. Lincoln's wife Mary did NOT want him to go. She said, "I am so frightened he may never come back to us!" But Lincoln replied, "Many a poor mother, Mary, has made this sacrifice ...". After sending so many others off to war, Lincoln could hardly exempt his own son. Just because he was the President's son, didn't mean he didn't have to go to war. (Sandburg, Abraham Lincoln, The Prairie Years and the War Years, p. 669)

And so it is with us. Just because we are God's children, does not mean we are somehow "exempt" from various sufferings. In fact, it may rather GUARANTEE them — because God will purposefully use these difficulties to grow us spiritually, and teach us important things He needs us to learn.

Hebrews 5:8, speaking of Jesus' time here on earth, says, "although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered." Being God's Son did not "exempt" Jesus from sufferings — and neither does being His child exempt US! Even though we are God's children, we will suffer in His will, because we will "learn obedience" from it.

Among other things, this means just because you are suffering, does NOT mean that you are not God's child — or that you are not in His will. Sometimes when we face difficulties we might be tempted to think, "Perhaps I am not in God's will? Perhaps He is punishing me?" But this is not necessarily so. God's children, right in the center of His perfect will, may suffer. Just like Jesus, "although (you) are a son, (you) are learning obedience from the things which (you) are suffering."

— So suffering doesn't mean you aren't God's child.  
— Suffering does not mean you aren't in His will.  
— It just means that God has chosen to use what you are going through to teach you something very important. So walk with God through that difficult time in your life, and be sure to learn the important spiritual lesson(s) your Heavenly Father intends to teach you through it!

Share this:

Shawn Thomas is Senior Pastor at Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church in Morganton. His messages and devotionals are available at [www.shawnethomas.com](http://www.shawnethomas.com)

And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end. Exodus 34:22

## Notes from The Shire

By Nancy Malik  
Avery County



Hello to the body of Christ of the High Country and those who want to know what that means! It is a joy to work with a newspaper committed to the Christian community in this beautiful area of the United States. BRCN and WECR radio in Avery County are working together to reach this entire region for Christ. Bits and Pieces, found in the middle of the paper, lists many events happening within this area of the mountains. Columnists are writing about the Christian life and so many ways to get involved and pray for their work. Starting in September I will be giving creation spots Monday-Fridays for children on WECR Glory Radio 1130.

God's creation is full of His glory and the Blue Ridge Mountains wear it so well. The four seasons hold delights of their own. With mountains, lakes, streams, forests, flowers, wonderful wildlife and Christmas trees, it is heavenly. In mid-August, I went to the top of a mountain before first light to view a month-long meteorite shower and was blessed with the view of two of them scanning the sky horizon to horizon. The skies truly declare the glory of God! He named each star in the sky. Also, heart shape rocks are found around this area. Another gift of The Creator to let the High Country know how much He loves His special place.

Fall is coming soon as a reminder of the seasons of the year and life with new growth in spring, fullness in summer, winding down in fall and then cold and dark in the winter. The four seasons here remind us of His promises in life with a cycle year in and year out. They remind us of His promises in life and who He is, The Creator. The six counties that BRCN's reaches out to encompass a unique place. Prayer power is the norm in this place. Sharing the Lord is a common event and it shows. The BRCN and WECR radio and two great formats to support to allow the High Country Body of Christ connect. Please consider placing ads, articles, participating in Bits and Pieces (free) and be involved with the Church of this "set apart" place to draw together. We live in an exciting time! Be blessed! You are loved, deeply!

Nancy Malik and her husband moved to Avery County in 2017. Her husband passed in 2018. She is a member of Heaton Christian Church. Nancy taught preschool, elementary school and middle school over many years. She is the grandmother of eight!



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# Bear Creek Baptist Church

By Bruce Cannon  
Mitchell County

*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. (Jeremiah 8:20)*  
It's hard to believe, but as I write this article summer is nearing its end. My how time has absolutely flown by! School is beginning again, fall colors are approaching and cooler weather is on the way.



Jeremiah in the above verse is lamenting the captivity of Judah by Babylon. He can't believe this has happened. The northern kingdom fell one hundred years previously to the Assyrians. Babylon rose to power, defeated Assyria and proceeded to take all the territories under Assyrian control. It was not content with that huge land and people grab and marched on Judah.  
As Jeremiah sees all this happening, and he also is taken into captivity, he laments. He also hears the Lord's lament in Chapter 2:12, 13: "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the LORD. For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."  
He is grieved. Time is dragging on and there seems to be no end to the captivity and no return to their homeland. He wonders why God's people do not seek forgiveness from the Lord. And why they are not begging for a return to their homeland.

As I think on these things my mind drifts onto the United States of America. I love our country. I was born here and have lived in America all my life. I believe America was founded by God as He moved upon the hearts of the founders to come here seeking a land where they could worship God in spirit and in truth. Upon arriving they began the process of establishing a government by the people and for the people...a government where they could worship God as they were led to do so. They acknowledged His divine sovereignty. They sought His counsel as they wrote our founding documents. They prayed to Him for leadership, guidance, protection, and blessings upon their new nation.  
But, my oh my, how we have fallen from that mindset! Our nation today has so many voices seeking to censor the name "Jesus". Innocuous prayers are prayed without using His name. His Word is being taken from oaths of office by so many. The phrase, "so help you God" has been removed from some courtrooms. The Ten Commandments have been removed from many public locations. The Cross, once standing guard over the tombs of deceased military and law enforcement personnel and others, has been removed in many places.

My question is, where will all this madness stop? How is it that we can mention the names of false gods without lauding the praise audibly, visibly and loudly to the One God who gave us this great land, blessed us in so many ways, and sent His Only Begotten Son to pay the ransom for our sins?  
The Lord thoroughly judged Judah and Israel for turning from Him! What will He do to a nation such as the United States who knew better yet, blinded and deceived by Satan, has done the very same things?

My heart breaks when I hear Jesus' name being censored and statements and symbols of our faith being removed from public buildings and locations. I long for days to return as when I was a boy. In that era the Pledge of Allegiance was honored, the Word of God proudly displayed by all, prayer passionately prayed IN JESUS' NAME and Church houses were full of passionate worshippers who gladly came to the House of God to offer Him praise for their blessings and well-being.  
Pray with me, "Lord, forgive us for not offering you our very best praise and worship. Forgive us for not standing boldly for your Word and your Name. Forgive us for allowing the removal of Christian symbols and statements in public places. You alone are worthy of all praise and worship! You made our land great. You protected it and prospered it! Please give us another opportunity to stand up for You. Please turn our nation back to you. Help us to teach our children the importance of honoring and serving you. Help us to show them the value of living for you and worshipping you. Lord, guide our hearts and protect our homes; give us the wisdom to sense you and follow you. Thank you for always being there for us and for hearing our prayers. In Jesus' Wonderful and Mighty Name, we pray! Amen"

Rev. Bruce Cannon currently serves as the Senior Pastor of Bear Creek Baptist Church in Bakersville. Formerly he served as Director of Missions for the Bladen Baptist Association and has served on the General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

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Making Decisions: What Should I do?

Dr. Jack R. Hodges, Jr.  
Burke County



*"Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude. See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ." Colossians 2:6-8*

God's people are faced with making decisions each day of your lives. Some decisions seem to be simple. They don't require much thought nor energy. Because we make these choices every day. For example: getting up, putting on our clothes, eating, working, and sleeping are the types of choices that we make each day. It appears that the decisions that give us the most trouble in life, as Christians, are probably moral, ethical, and spiritual decisions that have to do with relationships. Whether you are aware of it or not, you and I are probably going to make most of our decisions based on what we have learned, what we been taught, and what or how we have been conditioned to choose from our past. Some of that is probably good and helps us make good decisions—but much of it often sets us up to make questionable decisions that affect our life, our testimony, our relationships, and our fellowship with God.

Let me mention "Five Principles" that I have gleaned from a dear mentor, Dr. Clifton Black, that will help you make decisions that: honor God; keep you faithful; bless your loved ones, friends, and brothers and sisters in Christ; and make your testimony of your relationship and walk with Christ stronger.

The Ideal Test

The first question to ask is does my choice or decision line up with the will and ways of God? Does the choice that I am about to make follow the godly, spiritual ideals of God's purposes and plans? Does this choice line up with God's Word and allow Him to use you as a credible witness to His love, calling, promises, plans, and purposes? As a believer, God has called you into a relationship that allows the world to see the power and love of God in action.

Integrity Test

Integrity means what is on the inside matches what is on the outside. A person of integrity acts consistently out of the character of Christ. And, perhaps, the greatest description of the character of Christ is found in Paul's listing of the "fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:22-23. Integrity is a strong sense of right or wrong, and courageously choosing right no matter what the circumstances. Integrity is trading in our flesh for the working of the Spirit of Christ in our lives.

Paul wrote in 1Peter 2:16, "Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God." If whatever issue or question

that demands a decision bothers your conscience, then it is likely that the Holy Spirit is giving you an immediate testimony that you are facing a challenge to whether you are going to be a man/woman of integrity or not; whether you are going to choose to act like a disciple and follower of Christ or not; or whether you are going to be a spiritual leader and encourager of faith or not. If it bothers your conscience, you had better avoid it! Whether it's right or wrong, permissible or not—if it bothers your conscience, you had better forget about it.

A guilty conscience always tries to cover up by making excuses or rationalizing. When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, do you know what the first thing that he did? He ran and hid in the bushes. God knew where Adam was. The problem was that Adam didn't know where Adam was. Children of God, you can't hide from God. There is no use in trying to cover up sin. The Bible gives us this warning in Proverbs 28:12-13, "When the righteous triumph, there is great glory. But when the wicked rise, men hide themselves. He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper. But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion."

Improvement Test

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 6:12, "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." The great apostle and missionary of Christ says everything is allowable in the Christian life because we are free, but not everything is beneficial. Paul then gives a couple of tests in this verse that are aimed at guiding the believer through the decision-making process. Let me translate them into modern terms: Will it make me a better person? Is what I'm going to do constructive or destructive? Is it a help to my life or a hindrance to my life? Is it useful to my life or is it useless?

The longer I live my life I become more and more convinced that many things are not necessarily wrong, they're just not necessary. James Wright said, "Life's too short to give it up reading an inferior book." In other words, life is too short to waste it on nonessentials, on things that really don't make the most of your life. So, the third test in decision-making is, Is it beneficial? Is it helpful to my life? Often the good is an enemy to the best. Don't settle for being average.

Does it have a tendency to control me or do I control it? Does it dominate my life, or do I dominate it? Anything, any habit, any hobby, any activity, anything. Whatever controls your life is your god. God Almighty declared, "You shall have no other gods before Me." If it's addicting for you, it's out! If it tends to control your life, it's out! The bottom line is if it's not the most helpful thing for your life, then you must choose, "No!"

Influence Test

Here in America, we have freedom of speech. We are free to say anything that we want to say. We are also free to do any lawful thing that we want to do. But for the follower of Christ, sometimes it is better (for the cause of Christ) to not say what's on our mind nor do what we freely want to do. Why? Because our Christian influence and testimony of Jesus living in our life is at stake. Whether you like it or not, your testimony is always on trial. You are not on trial, as perhaps it so often seems—but rather the presence of Jesus and the credibility of Christ's call upon your life to discipleship and service is on trial.

Paul was asked by new believers what choice should they make concerning "eating meat that had been sacrificed to idols?" He responded (1 Corinthians 8:10-12), "For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died. And so, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ." Sometimes, is it an amazing spiritual opportunity to limit our freedom because we don't want to hurt another person or cause them to stumble over the most important decision that they will ever make in their life—what will they do with Jesus? Therefore, as a believer, there are legitimate and powerful reasons to limit your own freedom—your Christian influence and testimony for Christ.

Investment Test

Your decisions, whether you realize it or not, reveal what is important to you. They divulge, disclose, display and exhibit whether you are serious about being a man or woman of God, a follower, and disciple of Christ, and a witness of God's grace, mercy, and love. The decisions that you and I make daily concerning marriage, family, personal spiritual growth, finances, time, energies, and many more things—reveal whether you and I are going to live in Christ and walk in His Spirit—or we are going to live for self and ramble in the world. Each and every decision is important to the Lord.

And so, "...as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude."

Dr. Jack R. Hodges, Jr. is the Senior Pastor at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Morganton, Burke County. He has served as a pastor, a biblical counselor and a International Mission Board missionary.

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## How Not to Waste Your Life

By Steve Williams  
Mitchell County

The Bible tells us in James 1:22 *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.* See there are many good people, nice people with the potential to serve God. The only thing is they never move to apply their potential.

An Oklahoma football coach, who was once asked by a reporter about a star recruit, a high school running back who had broken all his school's records for rushing yards. The reporter asked the coach, "How good can this running back be: Can he break the college records? Does he have potential?" Many newspaper reporters ask multiple questions, but before the coach had time to answer even one question. The coach said, slow down buddy, is that one question or three? He replied to the nervous reporter, what I mean is, does this running back have more potential than any runner you've ever coached? The coach stared at the reporter, smiled a dry smile, and spit out an answer, Sure he does, buddy. But potential means you ain't done nothing yet.

See that is where a lot of Christians are today. They have the potential to do something, but they haven't done anything yet. See, most Christians today are like a car that's transmission is stuck in neutral; the motor sounds impressive, the lights, radio and horn are all in good working condition, and new tires, but the only problem is that it is not going anywhere. So, if one is not going to waste their life, they must be out doing something. You ask doing what? Doing what the Word of God tells us to do. To go and share the gospel and to practice living the Christian life out loud. God does not just look at our potential, but God is looking for our productivity. Too many times we are doing what we want to do instead of what God wants us to do and that means we are wasting our lives. If we're not going to waste our lives, we must become productive Christians. So many people have in their mind that if they are going to do something for God it's going to have to be something great. That's pride and pride will never be productive. Don't waste your time waiting and longing for large opportunities which may never come, but faithfully handle the little things that come your way.

### Words of Wisdom

- The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential... these are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence. N/A
- A word of encouragement from a teacher to a child can change a life. A word of encouragement from a spouse can save a marriage. A word of encouragement from a leader can inspire a person to reach their potential. John C. Maxwell
- God, our Creator, has stored within our minds and personalities, great potential strength and ability. Prayer helps us tap and develop these powers. N/A
- The dreams and passions stored within hearts are powerful keys that can unlock a wealth of potential. John C. Maxwell

I heard this one time and I have found it to be true. Raising teenagers and trying to teach them to reach their full potential, is like nailing Jell-O to a tree.

Steve Williams is the Pastor of Berry Chapel Baptist Church in Spruce Pine.



## Out of Darkness - No Regrets Family Ministry

By Dean Honeycutt  
Mitchell County



The Lord has blessed me tremendously and I just wanted to thank God for everything He has done for me. You know the Lord did not have to save me, but by His good graces, He came to where I was and rescued me.

The Bible teaches us that we were in the "power of darkness" before we got saved. Colossians 1:13 (KJV 1900): 13 *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:*

Therefore, I was in a dark place as an unsaved person. I did not realize where I was spiritually. Most people never consider their spiritual condition before God. We do not think of ourselves as being in the realm of darkness before we get saved. Could this be the reason many of us take our salvation for granted because we do not consider where God has brought us from?

To even begin to wrap our minds around what God has done for us is amazing. If it were possible to see ourselves in hell, then we could begin to understand the grace of God. We have an account of this in Luke 16 about a rich man in hell who lifted his eyes in torment and saw Lazarus comforted in Abraham's bosom. This rich man begged for a drop of water and for Lazarus to warn his five brothers of the horrible place he was in. It is obvious from this true account had the rich man been aware of the horrible terrifying place of hell he would have done anything to avoid going to this place of torment.

Only through the light of the Gospel and the conviction of the Holy Spirit are we made aware of our need for salvation. We do not come to this place of awareness on our own. By the grace of God, we are made aware of our sinful condition but rarely are we convinced of how dreadfully sinful and in darkness we are. John 3:19 (KJV 1900): 19 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

So, God comes into our darkness and rescues sinners out of a place we cannot get out of on our own. How does one expose what is in the dark? You expose what is in the dark by shining light into darkness. Jesus Christ is the "light of the world" and it is His light and revelation and work of the Holy Ghost that exposes and draws our sinful nature to Himself for Salvation. 1 John 2:8 (KJV 1900): 8 *Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.*

Thank God Jesus came to where I was in a dark place I could not get out of, and Jesus paid my sin debt on the cross of Calvary makes it possible for me to be saved. God loves you so much even when we do not even consider what He has done for us. When Jesus died on the cross there was darkness all over the land, because He was paying the penalty for my sin. The wages of sin is death, but thank God, the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Have you trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? God can meet you where you are at today, pray to Him today confess your sin to God and ask Jesus to be the Lord of your life. Romans 10:13 (KJV 1900): 13 *For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Live life with "No Regrets"

Pastor Dean Honeycutt shepherds Snow Hill Baptist Church in Bakersville, NC. He may be reached at 828-385-0213, snowhillbaptist@gmail.com, or visit their website at www.snowhillbaptist.com.

Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. John 4:35

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## Sudoku Solution

9	8	5	4	1	6	7	3	2
7	3	1	8	5	2	9	6	4
2	4	6	3	7	9	1	5	8
4	7	2	9	3	5	6	8	1
6	5	9	2	8	1	4	7	3
8	1	3	6	4	7	5	2	9
3	2	7	1	6	4	8	9	5
5	9	4	7	2	8	3	1	6
1	6	8	5	9	3	2	4	7

## Mine Creek Baptist Church

### Trusting God in Times of Change

By Chris Rathbone  
Mitchell County



For the most part, we like the familiar. What I mean by that is we do not care a whole lot for unplanned changes in our lives. We tend to get comfortable with how things are in our lives and we are pretty resistant to anything different coming along. I can honestly say that I am the same way. Even though there are changes that will often work out to be quiet a blessing, sometimes I have trouble looking ahead at how God will use a change to grow me spiritually. We especially do not like change when it takes control away from us. For example, we may not mind changing careers when we are the ones who decided we wanted to change. However, if we have to change careers because of being laid off or a company closes down, we get all upset because something has happened that we had no control over. Here are some things to remember that will help us during times of change or transition.

First, change is inevitable. Like it or not change happens. Even in different stages of our lives, it is absolutely going to happen. We go from grade school to college, from single life to married life, from a couple to parenthood, from parenting our children to empty nest syndrome, from working life to retirement life, etc. etc. See what I mean about change being inevitable. It is a fact of life that life is full of change! There are some things that we just must accept and these kinds of changes and many more are "par for the course".



Secondly, regardless of what may change, we are still in the hands of God. Instead of wringing our hands or losing sleep over things that we cannot control, why don't we simply realize that whatever comes our way, we still are God's children? Those changes in life that we didn't see coming did not take God by surprise. I believe that there is nothing that comes into our lives that God has not already seen and allowed. Even though I may not understand the reasons why, I do trust Him with what He may be doing. Sometimes circumstances happen in our lives that we want God to take away. We need to pray and ask the Lord what He may be doing in our life instead of asking why He allowed something in our life. One of my professors use to say this, "Faith is not if we believe enough God will deliver us from something. Faith is trusting and believing God whether He delivers us or not!" (Example: Shadrach, Meshach, & Abednego Daniel 3)

Last, of all, God may be doing something that we will realize later. Now I know that some things happen that never make any sense regardless of how much time goes by. But I also have experienced changes that did not make sense until later. Sometimes even years have passed and I may not have seen what God was doing behind the scenes, and then suddenly the Holy Spirit speaks and opens up my understanding to say something like this: "Chris, for you to be where you are today, this had to happen 4 years ago! Now, do you trust me?" Those are moments in our lives that we come to realize that we really can trust God with all those changes and unforeseen circumstances that come our way.

Now I need you to do me a favor. Promise me that you will remind me of this article I've written when I am going through one of those unforeseen changes in my life. When you hear me doubting and wondering why God has allowed something to happen, remind me that I can trust God in times of change!

Preacher Chris Rathbone serves as Pastor at Mine Creek Baptist Church.



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# Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

## The Rest of the Story:

This was the second Funny Farm Story that Clint wrote back in 2010. He was just getting his sea legs, so to speak, on writing these articles. As I read back through them, I see the supper table, a big home cooked meal that Barbara had prepared, and usually a cake of some kind to finish off the meal. This is where we had the pleasure of listening to Clint's tale of the day and the adventures he had been subjected to, in reality, had created for himself. One of his endearing qualities was his ability to poke fun at himself without reservation, and to revel in telling the story. I have often thought he would have been a winner at the story telling contest over in Jonesboro, Tennessee. I would have loved to have seen him participate in something like this. He was such a competitor in every walk of his life that I have no doubt that he would have been a winner here as well. It was always a laugh-a-thon around the supper table just listening to the events unfold. His description in real life was just as full of life, if not more so, than his written stories are. I hope you enjoy this one as much as I did when I reread it today. Have a blessed day.

Farmer Doug

## Funny Farm

Dear Friends,

As late as March of this year I believed I was a country boy. My home is Hendersonville, NC, a nice town of 20,000+ only 1 1/2 hours away. But my perspective changed dramatically in late March when I came to spend a few months with my friends Doug and Barbara Harrell at Harrell Hill Farm near Bakersville.

Doug and I go back more than twenty years, I was executive vice president for GTE Corporation (now Verizon) and Doug was a technology marketer. A "country boy" who done good is the way I often thought of me.

Well let me tell you, I have learned some valuable and unforgettable lessons since arriving in the real "country"...I've worked on the farm now for nearly six months and experienced things which could only happen in a Chevy Chase film – or to me.

Anyway, if y'all will tolerate me I want to share some of my hair raising farm stories. We'll call them "Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm" – names will be changed to protect the innocent, and chances are I may exaggerate the facts a wee bit. It will go something like this:

### A Beast In The Beans!

'Twas a beautiful day at Harrell Hill Farms, crystal clear sky, a torrid 93 degrees as I headed for the garden to harvest a couple bushels of blue lake bush beans. I had been nearly devoured by ticks and yellow jackets the day before – the most aggressive microscopic critters on earth. So I donned my overalls, long-sleeve shirt and high boots for an adventure in the bean patch.

Now what I found growing there I thought was a string bean but have since learned that there is no longer a string, just a snap. That was a pretty big disappointment to me, although I'm not sure why. Just so many new farm facts in my head these days I can hardly catalog them all!

Doug told me this was backbreaking work – that I might want to take a three-legged stool along for more comfortable picking. Well I did that but we'd had an inch of rain overnight and the three legs kept getting mired in the dirt so it was breaking my back moving the stool around; I tossed it aside. Besides, I've been on the farm 3 months now, have lost 63 pounds of chubby and ten inches in the waistline. I am fit like a fiddle, strong like a bull, poised and ready to again demonstrate my agricultural prowess.

I was hunched over piles and piles of bush beans, enjoying solitude with the Lord, the land, and the garden. A gentle breeze cooled my sweat soaked clothes, and I was humming praise songs and talking to Jesus. What a wonderful day He was giving me.

It is important, mind you, that I remain vigilant while harvesting these succulent little pods. For I know that bees, spiders, snakes and other killer vermin can attack without warning. It's simply one of the hazards of being Farmer Clint, yet one I gladly embrace. I chuckled to myself as I thought of the Scripture, "Be self controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." 1Peter 5:8. Not that I expected a lion, although a hungry bear was not out of the realm of possibility. Regardless, a farmer cannot be too careful.

Somewhere, about mid-bean-row, I heard a soft rustling in the sorghum cane field. I figured it must be a deer since they had been eating virtually every other crop we'd planted at Harrell Hill Farms. I never knew deer are such destructive beasts and was praying that he wouldn't come over and eat all the beans. It was such a glorious day, I continued to pick and pray, to pick and hum, to pick and thank God for the joy of being one with the farm.

Then, from nowhere and from everywhere a HUGE monster burst from the perimeter of the cane field...I heard it coming, running, stomping, growling, moaning – inhuman groans akin to those portrayed in Steven King novels. I stood my ground, poised for war, girded for battle, prepared to lose my life for the blue lake bush bean patch...then I FELT IT, it was on me!

My head dropped quickly, so quickly in fact that my straw hat fell to the ground. And there, I mean right there, moving across my steel-toed boots was

the ugliest monster I've ever met. It was BIG...it was BROWN...it had teeth like a SHARK...I screamed like a girl...it looked at me, made some guttural sound and darted away. My friends, in the midst of picking beans and praising God I stood shoulder to shoulder with my very first KILLER GROUNDHOG. (Okay, maybe not shoulder to shoulder but he was a whopper!)

I always thought groundhogs were like prairie dogs, or tiny and cute like Chip and Dale. Well, now I know...they resemble Simba, or Aslan, or King Kong, or any number of other prehistoric beasts. (You laugh yet you are reading this from the comfort of your easy chair, not staring Godzilla in the face).

I had spilled beans from one end of the garden to the other, lost my three-legged stool, tripping over and destroying many tomato plants, stumbling through young broccoli spears and squishing most of the tender beet sprigs... I jumped into my farm truck – an 1801 vintage Jeep but that's a story for another day – and slammed the door.

My heart was pounding like a sack full of angry opossums, my blood pressure sky high, I'm not sure I had taken a breath during the battle for the blue lake bush bean patch. Yet after a half hour or so, I again sensed the peace of the Lord; all was well with my soul; the monster had slithered into the woods.

I dismounted my jeep and resumed the harvest of blue lake bush beans – confident that I had survived yet another test on the Funny Farm.

Humbled in the Hills,

Farmer Clint



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HEAVEN'S DOOR  
By Joy Baldwin  
Madison County

Thank you Lord for hearing  
As we prayed a prayer today  
You're always listening for us  
As we walk this pilgrim way.

You long to hear from us again  
Each time we look above  
Help us see how much you care  
Each day you give your love.

Lord it seems like manna  
When we put our trust in thee  
And call your mighty name  
You send sweet grace continually.

As men look up from earth below  
And some from oceans shore  
Our awesome great creator  
Looks down from heaven's door.



One Body of Christ, Many Parts  
By Christy Young  
Mitchell County



I have always been amazed when studying the human body. Each body part depends on another to function and work at full capacity. We all have experienced something, maybe as simple as the common cold. Although our symptoms seem minor, it effects how our body works as a whole. Everything within our body has an important role to play, and no part is independent. All parts must work together for our body to function correctly. The Bible describes the church as the body of Christ. As believers, we make up the body of Christ. That is an important role to fill! Each believer is unique and special, but dependent on others to fulfill the purpose that God has called upon us. God has equipped each of us with special talents and abilities to uplift His kingdom. When we combine our talents and abilities, we become one in Christ. We must be spiritually in tune to understand the direction and purpose behind the talents that He has gifted us with. We must be connected with other believers, the church to combine our talents/gift to fulfill the work God has called us to do. 1 Corinthians 12:12 says, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also in Christ." Christ's body is the church. If the members are connected, great things are accomplished in the name of Jesus. Without connection, there is no life, no fruits to bear. Connection/ Unity as a body of believers is essential to leave a lasting impact and impression on our society, our world. As members of the body, we are called to serve Christ, each other, and the world around us. We are living in a world of darkness and despair, we must shine the light of Jesus throughout this land. Let's unify with other believers to accomplish great things! Our prayers should be, Jesus thank You for Your body, the church, because is it beautiful and wonderfully made. Thank You, Father, for allowing us to be part of Your body. May we be obedient to Your calling and a blessing to Your church and the world around us!

Christy Young is the blessed wife of Chris Young and proud mother of Hunter and Holden. She is a life-long resident of Mitchell County, bookkeeper at Young, Miller & Gillespie, PA, and a member of Bear Creek Baptist Church.



Joy is a resident of Madison County, where she now lives with her husband, Danny Joe Baldwin. She is currently a member of Mt Zion Baptist church in Marshall, NC. As a previous member, she calls Forks of Ivy Missionary Baptist Church in Weaverville, "home away from home". She is currently singing with the Gospel Group "Jonah's Voice" out of Mars Hill, NC. Her latest song "Home-coming" will soon be heard by many.





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# Prayer Warrior

## In Memory of Ms. Hattie Buchanan

By Chris Buchanan  
Mitchell County



All of you no doubt have a loving memory of Ms. Hattie. Seems like everyone called her that, Ms. Hattie. It's difficult to say when that started but every new church and community we would move to people would just start calling her that. She didn't ask them to. No one had told them to. It was just a natural act of endearment. And she embraced it. She loved children. She would always work with children at church when the opportunity would arise. She probably worked with many of you, in either Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Girls In Action, or Mission Kids. She loved them all. She also adored when children would come into our home. She would always have something for them to snack on, something to play with or do. And the elderly? She adored the elderly. She especially had a love for the elderly women of the church and community. Visiting them at home, in the hospital, or at the nursing home, she found joy in being with them and learning about them and from them. No matter who she met, Ms. Hattie made an effort to befriend them.

Ms. Hattie was a hard worker. Being brought up by a single, widowed mother and the youngest daughter of 5 girls and 4 boys, she learned about hard work early on. Married at 17, mother by 18, pastors' wife by 24, and mother again at 28 would mean hard work for her would continue for some time. She occasionally worked a public job: knitting mill, hardware store, florist shop, teachers aid, baby-sitting, etc. And she was educated. Even though she dropped out of high school to get married, she later got her high school diploma. She was a member of the first graduating class of Mayland Community Colleges (then Mayland Technical College) Nurses Aid program. She never worked in that field but the knowledge she gained from it served her and her family well over the years. She took a home course of Flower Arranging and Floristry through Lifetime Career Schools in California and turned around and taught Flower Arranging through Mayland's Continuing Education Program. She was artistic, not just with flowers but teaching herself and her family to do macramé and make baskets.

But her primary focus was family. She pursued it with diligence, love, and joy. It was what she was created for. She wanted the best for us. And she gave 'her' best for us. She was a cook, homemaker, maid, nurse, policewoman. She was storyteller, book-reader, game-player, taxi-driver, referee, mediator, detective, prosecuting attorney, defense lawyer, judge, and jury. She advised, counseled, soothed, comforted, mentored, hugged, kissed, patted, reminded, scolded and so much more.

But, most importantly, Ms. Hattie was a prayer warrior. You might think mom always knows and always has the answers. But Ms. Hattie knew she didn't. That's why she prayed. You see, sometimes mothers don't get the answers they want when they ask the questions. They worry about rashes, bumps, and scrapes. They may not know what all the medical terms are, but they know when you just aren't yourself. They worry about the older kids that come around their children, and what happens at school or the playground. In the case of Ms. Hattie, she worried if her sons would be bumped into in the hallway, causing them to lose balance and fall possibly getting hurt, and needing someone to help them get back up on their feet. She worried about her husband traveling to-and-from the hospital, visiting the sick, comforting families, or finding himself in some foreign land preaching to the lost. As her children got older, she would find herself troubled by her children's rebellious looks, hateful remarks, shifty eyes, strange words, reluctance to go to church and resistance to do the right things that had never before arisen. She knew about the vulnerability that comes as you enter changes in your life. She could see the pain when someone was cruel to either one of us. She saw our spiritual struggles and rejoiced the days we each decided to make Jesus our Savior. Sometimes, she didn't like the relationships we had. At times she would see the far-off look in our eyes, and it troubled her. But our spiritual well-being was the single most important thing in her life. And so she prayed. Sometimes, she felt like she just couldn't get through to us. She couldn't watch us all the time. She didn't know all the influences we might be under. And so, she prayed.

Ms. Hattie's last couple of years were more difficult than usual. Following surgery to remove her thyroid, her health started to deteriorate. Weakness grew, difficulty in eating increased and finally, she was unable to stand on her own and her voice was just a whisper. Still, a strong heart and a will to stay with her family she struggled on. But God wanted Ms. Hattie with Him. And that's where she is now. In the presence of her LORD and Savior. No more struggles, no more pain. She is perfectly healed. PRAISE HIS NAME! While she finished her race well, we encountered an overwhelming and unknown course: Facing life as sons without a mother, daughter-in-law without a mother-in-law and a husband without a wife.

Grief is a personal and intense journey that all of us have experienced or will experience at some point in life. Although death does not 'sting,' 'emotional hornets' still swarm around those of us left behind. Separation anxiety, loss of identity and immeasurable tears are just a few of those 'hornets'. As Christians, we rejoiced at her reunion with the Heavenly Father. As sons, as a daughter-in-law, and as a husband, we mourn our own great loss. We miss her.

Ms. Hattie was a tremendous woman of faith in Jesus Christ. Above all, she trusted Him in all things and you can too. The Bible says in Romans 5:8 "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Chris Buchanan is a current resident of Mitchell County and attends Bear Creek Baptist Church

*And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. Galatians 6:9*

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*Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them:  
because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the  
world. 1 John 4:4*



Get Over It

By Tracey Jessup

*"Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'"* — Luke 10:38-42

According to [nationaldaycalendar.com](http://nationaldaycalendar.com), there are over 1,500 national days. However, one, in particular, caught my attention this year. March 9th is Get Over It Day. Strategically the midpoint between Valentine's Day & April Fool's Day, Get Over It Day was conceived in 2005 by Jeff Goldblatt, an entrepreneur in Atlanta who was struggling to get over an ex-girlfriend.

Recognizing it was a universal concept to which many people could relate, Goldblatt wrote a Get Over It Day "Perspective Poem," and the concept quickly went viral. According to his website ([GetOverItDay.com](http://GetOverItDay.com)), the day has been featured on Good Morning America, ESPN's SportsCenter, and more than 1000 media outlets worldwide, and has reached over 27 million people as of March 9, 2019.

Today's passage follows the story of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, which began with a lawyer asking Jesus, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25). The lawyer was partially correct. Eternal life is something to be inherited. However, to receive an inheritance, one must be an heir, and no amount of "doing" will make one an heir. Keeping God's commandments is the way of life, not a way to life. The account of Jesus visiting Martha and Mary makes this clear.

As Jesus passes through the village where Martha and Mary live, Martha welcomes him into her home. During Jesus' visit, Mary sits at his feet and listens to his teaching. Martha, on the other hand, "was distracted by her many tasks." Thankfully, Jesus does not tell Martha simply to "get over it." Instead, he offers an important lesson that while practical service does have its place and certainly is acceptable to the Lord, God's call to follow him does not mean a fluster of service and religious activity undertaken in our own strength. Instead, it is the total surrender of our lives to be willing to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow Jesus (Luke 9:23).

In The Message of Luke, David Wilcock writes, "It is only when by God's grace we have become the right sort of people – his people, by the new birth – that we begin to do the right sort of things. The way of Jesus is one of devotion and dedication, both in following him and in heralding him. But the way is not... a matter of assiduous 'religion' and frenzied service, of busy-ness and incessant good works. It means not an achievement, but commitment; not activities, but attitudes; not quantity, but quality" (p. 123).

Prayer: Lord, we are worried and distracted so easily by many things. Give us the grace to choose what is needed most as we follow you.

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Dr. Tracy Jessup serves as vice president for Christian Life and Service and senior minister to the University. He is a graduate of Gardner-Webb with a B.A. in Music and earned his M. Div. degree at Sanford University's Beeson Divinity School. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He also teaches in the undergraduate department of religious studies and enjoys the opportunity to serve the local church through interim pastorates, pulpit supply, and preaching revival services. He and his wife, Teresa, have two children, Christian and Anna.



Why did Jesus die?  
The Sacrificial System and Creation

By Roger Birch

Courtesy of Creation Ministries International, [CREATION.com](http://CREATION.com)  
<https://creation.com/why-did-jesus-die>

In my article "An Evangelical 'Litmus Test'" I talked about the watering down of the term "evangelical". The "litmus test" I suggested as a mark of a true evangelical was an acceptance of a straight reading of Genesis 1-11 since an attack on Genesis 1-11 is basically an attack on the authority of the Bible, and hence God. Now many people calling themselves evangelical would dispute such a statement, claiming that the creation-versus-evolution issue is "not relevant" to their faith or that the creation account can be interpreted in different ways. However, I contend that both positions create major theological problems that undermine the Gospel at its foundations.

Here, I will not delve into the science of creation versus evolution as this is well covered elsewhere, but rather expand the theological issues surrounding a question left open in my previous article, namely, "Why did Jesus die?"

No genuine evangelical can suggest that Christology (the study of Christ) is "not relevant" and Millard Erickson states our "understanding of Christ must be central and determinative of the very character of the Christian faith. All else is secondary to the question of what one thinks of Christ."<sup>2</sup> However, a lot of theology has been affected by "science" and Christology, in particular, has ignored issues such as Luke tracing Jesus' genealogy back to Adam and Paul stating that death only came into the world with Adam's sin.

Christology is a massive subject in its own right, and space precludes too much detail. Suffice to say there are two main approaches to how we look at Jesus, i.e. from man's perspective (Christology "from below") or from God's perspective (Christology "from above"). The former approach, although technically valid theologically, tends to be the domain of liberal scholars who question the accuracy, and even authority of the Bible. Christology from above is more aligned to the evangelical position with its implied acceptance of the Bible as the inspired Word of God and so I will here focus on that approach and its implications.

If we take a "verse count" in the Gospels to suggest what God sees as important, then the primary emphasis is clearly the cross. There is no direct information as to Jesus' appearance, His likes, dislikes, etc. Two of the Gospels even omit direct details of His birth. Conversely, well over half the chapters of the Gospels are dedicated to the last week of His life, the events immediately leading up to it, or the events following His crucifixion.

The creation-versus-evolution debate is often fought on scientific grounds, but what about the impact of the creation account on the topic of Christology and, especially, Jesus' death? There are three issues in particular that need careful examination:

- What is death?
- Why did Jesus have to die?
- What "CV" did He need to fulfill the requirements needed to die for us?

All three topics are major and so the following arguments are, by necessity, very brief but hopefully sufficient to show both their importance and relevance to the creation account.

According to both theistic and humanistic evolutionists, death and suffering occurred for millions, or even billions of years before man either evolved or was created by some process omitted from the Bible. However, what is death and how did it originate?

Both Genesis and the New Testament (Romans 5:12) state that death entered the world through the sin of one man, with the clear implication there was no death before Adam. So why do we ignore what both Testaments say and take for granted the evolutionary assumption that death is "natural"?

Interestingly, evolutionists seem quite happy to accept death as an integral part of the natural selection process, and yet often accuse the so-called "God of the Old Testament" of being cruel for requiring animals' and then Jesus' blood to be spilled on our behalf. The reality is, though, that the author and creator of all life—according to the Bible—has the "right" (using modern terminology) to remove that life. When someone finally does what God has done and creates life from nothing, only then can they moralize over who is entitled to dictate the rules as to what happens to that new life form!

In fact, the first recorded (or implied) death in the Bible was when God killed an animal (a lamb?) to provide skins for Adam and Eve to cover themselves. By this act, God initiated the sacrificial system that required the spilling of blood to cover sin, a system that is then explicitly mentioned in the Cain and Abel narrative in Genesis 4. Furthermore, the first allusion to Christ crushing Satan is in Genesis 3:15. So, by Genesis 4, there is a linking of sin, death and the sacrificial system plus a reference to Christ coming and, linked with the sacrificial system, the need for Him to die.

Now most evangelicals would agree that Jesus Christ had to die and also had to be a) human; b) divine; c) male; d) first-born; and e) perfect without blemish. But why? Where do we establish these criteria? Standard evangelical theological works will readily provide verses to show Jesus' humanity and deity, but the latter three requirements are all part of the sacrificial system.

If the straight reading of Genesis 1-4 is removed, then not only is there no explanation, or justification for the sacrificial system ... but there is also no valid, biblical explanation for Jesus to die.

Although the sacrificial system was present from "the beginning", it is not until Moses that we find any codification and, with that, the "CV" that Jesus had to fulfill to be able to die for us, which provided a unique list of requirements. However, if the straight reading of Genesis 1-4 is removed, then not only is there no explanation, or justification for the sacrificial system (which, like many biblical topics up to and including the Flood is virtually universal), but there is also no

*continued on page 37*

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Freedom Through Truth

By Billy Graham

Men and women today are seeking various kinds of freedom. In many places of the world, people are gathering in crowds and shouting, "Freedom!"

Some time ago I was at a World Fair and saw the tremendous prospects of science presented in the exhibitions. I thought of what Einstein said shortly before he died. "I feel," he declared, "like a man chained. I get a glimpse of reality and then it flees. If only I could be free from the shackles of my intellectual smallness, then I could understand the universe in which I live."

Not only do we want political and intellectual freedom today, but we also want moral freedom. We have a sexual expression on a scale unknown in modern times. We thought it would make us happy, but we are miserable with it. We have found it destroying not only our morals but our souls.

We say we want freedom from prejudice, freedom from ignorance and freedom from poverty. We even say we're searching for religious freedom. There are groups in North America that want to throw out all Christian emphasis, all religious symbols. They wish to be free from such "bondage." They say, "Do away with the recognition of God in national life."

Our forefathers did not feel that way. They desired that we should have freedom of religion, but not freedom from religion. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 33:12). If we push God aside, may God have mercy upon our nation!

The Scripture teaches that the only truly free people in the world are those who have made Christ their Savior, Master, and Lord. Jesus Christ said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

What, then, is the truth? People seek for that, too, as they seek for freedom. The scientist seeks the truth about the physical universe. The philosopher tries to discover the truth about human existence. The psychologist looks for the truth about the action and reaction of the human mind. At the end of his life, Gautama Buddha said, "I am still searching for the truth."

But here is a man, a giant among men, who appears on the horizon. He stands before His neighbors and friends and declares, "I am the truth!" (Cf. John 14:6). What an astounding claim. "I am the secret of all truth—all psychological truth, all sociological truth, all scientific truth, all philosophical truth, all religious truth."

THE SECRET OF THE UNIVERSE

The Scripture says that "by him, all things were created" (Colossians 1:16) and "in Him, all things consist" (Colossians 1:17). There is something that holds matter together, and the scientist cannot tell you what it is. I believe that someday we are going to learn that the secret of it all is Christ: that if He took His hand off us for five seconds, we would blow apart. He is the truth! Ultimate truth!

Now, you can reject this truth and think that you are free. You can say, "I have rejected Jesus Christ, I have rejected God, and now I am going to live it up." But you will find yourself in bondage far greater than any you knew before. You end up with inner conflicts, guilt complexes, inferiority feelings, fears and neuroses, and your so-called freedom is a new enslavement.

When Christ told His disciples, "I am the truth" (Cf. John 14:6), He was either right and was telling the truth, or He was a blasphemous deceiver who knew that He was not the truth and was lying. Or He thought that He was God, and He did not know the difference. That would have made Him a maniac—a person who thought He was God when He really wasn't! Which was it? That is a decision you will have to make. You will have to decide who Jesus Christ is—a liar, an egomaniac, or what He claimed to be: God in the flesh, the ultimate reality, and truth in the universe. If He is God and the truth, and He tells me to follow Him, I would be a fool not to do so.

GOD DEMANDS A COMMITMENT

"We have sexual expression on a scale unknown in modern times. We thought it would make us happy, but we are miserable with it. We have found it destroying not only our morals but our souls."

We are all interested in truth, and Christ is the truth. When you give yourself to Him, He opens the doors of your mind in the most glorious way. You see a new dimension of life that you have been previously blind to. When you open yourself to Christ—to the truth—your life lights up. Your whole inner life glows, and there comes a peace and joy and security that only He can give.

So, God demands a decision, a commitment, a surrender, a conversion. Jesus said, "You must be born again." It wasn't optional. He said, "You must be born again" (John 3:7) before you can get into the Kingdom of Heaven.

When you come to Christ, He gives you a freedom that is real: "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

What is this freedom? First, He frees you from the penalty of sin. I could preach from morning until night, describing what sin is. But I do not need to. You know that you have sinned against God. We break the laws of God. We fail God. We fall short of His requirements. We are sinners. And this sin has done something—it has alienated us from God. Our sin comes between us and God so that He has to hide His face from us and will not hear us. You may laugh at this. But remember: The Bible says that "fools mock at sin" (Proverbs 14:9). You can say that your offenses are small and don't amount to anything. But God is a pure and righteous and holy God, and in His sight, you have caused offenses; you have caused a cloud to come between you and God. You are separated from God



so that your prayers cannot be answered, and all of our religious actions mean nothing in His sight. You can try to cover up your sins, but God says that you cannot get away with it.

But here comes the glorious part: Christ took the penalty of our sin. That is what the cross is all about. He died on that cross for people like you and me, sinners who had failed Him and had broken His laws. On that cross, God took all of our sins and laid them on Christ, so that He became sin for us. He took the judgment of our sin; He took the hell of our sin. And the moral accountability that you would ordinarily expect to face at the judgment, you will not have to face if you claim Him as your Savior.

I will not be at that judgment. Oh, yes, I have sinned; I have broken God's laws a thousand times, but I will not have to face the judgment. I will not have to give an account. Why? Because of the cross, the Lord Jesus Christ took accountability for me. He took the sin and judgment for me. That is the glorious grace and mercy of God that none of us can fully understand.

Oh, the depth of God's grace! Oh, the height of God's mercy, the breadth of God's love, that He is willing to say to you and to me, "I forgive you. You will never have to face the judgment!" When that gets through to you, you can go to bed and sleep a new kind of sleep.

The full penalty has been paid. The Judge will never say, "I pronounce sentence on you," because Christ has accepted that sentence for you. In Christ you are free. Accept it by faith and go your way rejoicing.

FREED FROM SIN'S POWER

Second, we are freed from the power of sin. Jesus said, "Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin" (John 8:34). Are you a slave of sin? In bondage to jealousy, to pride, to selfishness, to immorality, to gambling, to some drug, to sinful pleasure, so that sin has become your slave driver.

It may be that sin stands over you with a whip and lashes you across the back. You protest, "But I don't want to commit this sin. I don't want to tell this lie. I don't want to get drunk. I don't want to get involved with that person." But you yield to the domination of sin—you are a slave to sin. The very thing you say you will not do again, you do. It becomes worse and worse as you grow older. Your heart gets harder and harder until finally there is death and judgment and hell. But when you know the truth, the truth shall make you free. How wonderful! Sin is no longer in the throne room of my life. Christ sits there, and as I daily, moment by moment, yield my members to Him, He puts my life in order. Satan no longer has the power over my life that he once had. Sin is no longer in command. Oh, to be sure, I slip and fall, but Christ is there to pick me up and to put His arm around me and to love me.

Our Heavenly Father has seen everything that you have done. He is just waiting now for you to come and confess it, to acknowledge it and say, "Lord, here I am. I want a fresh start. I want a new day in my life. I want a new beginning. I want a new birth. I want to be yours from this moment."



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## Victory Church

### The Claims of the Cross

By: Dr. Ken Day  
McDowell County



Matthew 27:27-33

... Him they compelled to bear his cross

The cross upon which Jesus died was a pivotal point in the history of the world. It is a symbol of the suffering of Jesus and our redemption. Yet it is much, much more. Once the death sentence was pronounced, we are told that Jesus was led forth to Calvary, bearing his cross. The proceeding hours of suffering and torture were so great that the Roman soldiers thought Jesus would collapse under the weight of the wooded load. We read that, "... they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross." (Matt 27:32) Attention should be given to three main areas about the claims of the cross.

The first is the compulsion of the cross. We see in verse thirty-two, that Simon of Cyrene was compelled to carry Jesus' cross by the Roman guard, to a place called The Skull. The word compelled means to impress into service or asking someone to go the extra mile. We know very little about Simon with the exception of information that he is from Cyrene, a Libyan city in North Africa that is west of Egypt. It should be noted that on this day, he had a change of direction in his life. We too can learn from Simon regarding this change, because Jesus challenges us in Luke 9:23 when he says to his disciples, "... If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." We must look seriously at our lives to see whether we need to have a change of direction.

A change of direction also requires a change of devotion. Luke 14:27 tells us that Jesus requires us to bear our cross if we want to become his disciples. A disciple is one who follows the teaching. Not a pupil, but adherent, therefore one who is an imitator of the teacher. This change of devotion has great implications for one's personal life. Luke 9:26 says, "If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

The second claim of the cross is the costliness. This cost produces shame, suffering, and sacrifice. The shame of the cross is beautifully written by the writer of Hebrews when he said, "... Despising the shame..." (12:2). Jesus who was despised, beaten, ridiculed, and crucified, went to the cross as a sacrifice for all who would believe. A shameful way to die, much less a torturous physical death.

The suffering he endured by going to the cross has now become our example of the claims of the cross on our lives. 1 Peter 2:21 tells us, "For even here unto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." We must understand there is a required cost on our lives to follow Jesus.

The costliness of the cross is also a sacrifice. This sacrifice is of one's own life. Galatians 2:20 explains to us that we must live an extinguished life, meaning death to self and sin. This great cost to Jesus was to us a great inheritance. Now we can live in total dependence on him, and no longer depend on ourselves to live as Christ would have us live. We can reflect back on Simon of Cyrene, who was compelled to pick up Jesus' cross. He is our example of a selfless life.

The third claim of the cross is the compensations it has on our home, church, and The World as a whole. We read in Mark 15:21 that Simon was the father of Alexander and Rufus. It should be noted that Rufus is mentioned again in the book of Romans 16:13 as being chosen by The Lord, along with his mother. This affectionate phrase is given only to a Christian in Paul's writings. The cross has an impact for generations of the home, and families.

The cross also has a blessing in the church. The word church is a reference to the called-out ones or assembly. We might today refer to the church as a congregation of Jesus' disciples, regardless of the term we use. The vicarious death of Jesus, set into action divine blessing for the church then and today. Acts 13:1 tells that the church in Antioch had prophets and teachers, some well-known such as Barnabas and Simon of Cyrene. Also, Mangel a leader in the church who was the foster brother of Herod Antipus. The cross and its' blessing has attracted people from all walks of life.

The blessing of the cross penetrated the world. The Apostle Paul mentions in Colossians 1:23 that "... and was preached to every creature which is under heaven." He also addresses the Roman Church and says, "First I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world." (Romans 1:8) The brothers and sisters in Thessalonica were commended because of their evangelistic fervor had echoed not only throughout Macedonia and Achaia but had spread abroad. (1 Thessalonians 1:8) The blessing of the cross in the world, have the church marching orders.

There is only one conclusion that one could make about the claims of the cross. These claims require a decision from us about whether we are willing to be compelled and to count the cost of being an imitator of Christ. The cost is great, but compensation has many blessings for your home, church, and the world. Yet, our Lord made the ultimate sacrifice on the cross to die for us, to save us from the destruction of Hell. Will you become a disciple of Jesus? The Bible says in Luke 9:27, "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Are you his disciple?

Ken Day is an Agency Manager with Farm Bureau Insurance in McDowell County, and an Elder at Victory Church in Morganton.

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The Parable of Patchwork and New Wineskins

Dr. Terry Cheek  
McDowell County

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all give us an account of this parable. A parable used to illustrate fasting for the coming Kingdom of God. For our study we're going to use Luke 5:33-39, specifically looking at verses 36-39 to gain insight into the Lord's teaching.

The practice of fasting was widely used in Israel and its history reveals the practice while an individual was in mourning. The Pharisees had adopted it and perverted it to be an act of piety used by the religious elite as a tool to impress one another in front of the common man.

John the Baptist was using the fast to illustrate the nation's mourning for their sin. The fast of John and his disciples was a confession of their need for forgiveness of sin and spiritual cleansing.

The Pharisees were very observant of Jesus and how He taught His disciples in contrast to their practice and the practices of John the Baptist. The Pharisees were appalled when neither Jesus nor His disciples practiced fasting. It didn't take long for the Pharisees to confront the Lord about His neglect of their practice.

To answer their confrontation Jesus used the illustration of marriage. After the bride was presented to the bridegroom there was a massive feast. This was a time of joy and rejoicing. Christ depicted Himself as the bridegroom and that generation as those invited to the wedding. Those who accepted would attend the festivities with joy celebrating with the bridegroom. Christ was inviting them to share in His joy, thus there was no mourning and no reason for a fast. The purpose of this part of our study was to present the Kingdom of God was at hand. Both, John and Jesus were making this presentation, but for what purpose?

Jesus begins His parable to reveal the answer to our question. First, the Lord begins with the story of patchwork. There was an old worn-out garment one that was useless in its present condition. Certainly, it could be patched and made to last a little while longer. To do so would require sewing in a new piece of cloth. During the Lord's day, the new woven cloth was not dressed, in other words, they would shrink with the first wash. To patch the old garment would mean the work would only last until the first washing, at that time the shrinkage would tear the old garment and destroy the old garment.

To further illustrate the presentation of the Kingdom of God Jesus spoke of the wine and new wineskins. I sure know that new wineskins were very elastic. They would expand for the fermentation process as grape juice became wine. However, once a wineskin became old it was no longer elastic. They could be used as water bottles or other containers but not successfully as wineskins. To attempt this would cause the old wineskin to burst as the new wine fermented causing it to be ruined.

The two-fold illustration given by Jesus showed the Pharisees their old system of perverted religion was worthless, useless and outdated. It was impossible to patch it up or introduce the Kingdom of God through their old rigid packaging. The Kingdom of God had to be introduced through unspoiled doctrine. We find two kinds of people surrounded the Lord that day. Those who welcomed unspoiled doctrine like new cloth or wineskins. And, those who like the Pharisees were content with the old cloth, wineskins and religious rituals that were misused and destined to fail the men and women putting them to use.

Folks this parable speaks to the church also. As born-again Christians, we are born again with life. Paul tells us old things are passed away and all things become new. Don't try to repackage a new life inside of an old you. Put the old you away and follow Hebrew's 12:1 KJV *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.*

Until we meet again, either in print or in person, may God richly bless you.

Terry is the Executive Director and broadcaster of The Inspiring Word media ministry. You can contact Terry by email at [theinspiringword@gmail.com](mailto:theinspiringword@gmail.com) Or by visiting [www.theinspiringword.org](http://www.theinspiringword.org)



3 keys to being on Mission Together as Families

By Eric Simmons



I was at a church the other day and while looking at their promotional materials, I saw a tagline that read, "where faith and life collide." To be clear, I think this is an awesome tagline and this church is doing good work. Yet, I couldn't help but think this tagline would be more accurate in describing what happens in our homes, rather than what takes place in our churches.

Faith and life collide in the home long before any family shows up at their place of worship. The most influential people in a child's life are their parents, so what happens in the home Monday through Saturday has far greater potential at solidifying a Christ-centered faith in the heart of a child than what takes place for a few hours on Sundays. As such, it is essential for parents to live out their faith with their children, but what does that look like? How can families be on a mission to fulfill the Great Commission together?

Regardless of your season of life, there is no greater time to start living on mission as a family than right now.

Be present

Parents, if we are going to be on mission together as a family, we must make it a priority to be physically, and emotionally, present. We need to get off our phones. We need to engage our children (and neighbors) in deep conversations. We need to talk to them about the gospel, why they believe (or don't believe) God exists, what friends they have who are unbelievers, etc. In order to have these types of conversations, we have to be present in their lives.

Be intentional

Intentionally seek opportunities to live out the Great Commission. Take family walks around your neighborhood so you can meet your neighbors, and intentionally engage in conversation with those you don't know. Play in the front yard so you can interact with those people who walk by your house. Take your family where you know people are going to be (e.g. pool, public park, etc.). Allow your children to provide ideas on how — as a family — you can share the gospel in word and deed.

Be relational

Do you know the names of your neighbors? Do you know the names of your child's friends? What about their parents...do you know their names? Are you intentionally engaging them with the purpose of building a relationship? Are you praying for them? Being relational means making it personal. Host a cookout and invite your neighbors, your kids' friends, and their parents, and seek to build personal relationships that lead to gospel-sharing opportunities.

I know that we are all in different seasons of life. Some have toddlers, some have teens, and others have every age in between. While it is easier to cultivate a missional lifestyle as a family when our kids are younger, it is still possible to do when they are older. Remember, you are the most powerful influence in your child's life. Regardless of your season of life, there is no greater time to start living on mission as a family than right now. So, be present, be intentional and be relational — then watch how God moves in the hearts and lives of your children and those around you.

Eric Simmons is one of the Associate Pastors here at First Baptist. I have the privilege of working with our students in Alive Youth Ministries.



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## Depression: Hidden in Plain Sight

By Rick Hughes



I was a law enforcement officer on patrol on South Main Street when I got the call. The telecommunicator advised me to 10-21 (call) my residence. I heard my wife say between sobs, "I am so afraid of being alone and of what I might do."

I called my sergeant, was released from duty and raced home. There I found my wife, Kathy, sitting on the floor crying. I sat down with her and attempted to console her. I will never forget what she said next. "I have never been so depressed in my entire life."

Even she didn't understand what had happened to her. It just happened. For the next two weeks, I took a leave-of-absence just to be with her.

According to **The National Alliance on Mental Illness**, an estimated 16 million American adults — almost 7 percent of the population — have had at least one major depressive episode in the past year. People of all ages, racial, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds experience depression, though some groups are affected more than others.

Depression was very prevalent in Kathy's family, and she had seen her dad struggle with it all his life. When Kathy and I were first faced with it, we sought help from our pastor. He said it was an issue of faith. Next, we contacted her physician, who prescribed medication.

On church prayer request lists, we read about people who have cancer or heart conditions. There are others who have suffered traumatic events or consequences of sin, but depression is never mentioned. Is it because of shame and embarrassment, or have we failed to properly address depression in the Christian context? In the Bible, we see numerous examples. David, Elijah, Jonah, Job, Moses, and Jeremiah suffered from depression. These are the ones we know about. Even Jesus experienced anxiety. "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death," are the words He spoke in the garden of Gethsemane. Isaiah the prophet refers to the Lord as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3), which show us Christ's humanity.

Have we failed to properly address depression in the Christian context?

So, what can we do to help?

Group life is a beautiful way to encourage people who are depressed. Because of transparent relationships, groups can encourage those who suffer from depression while providing a safe, gospel-centered place for them.

Here are some specific ways your group can help those around you who may be struggling with depression:

- Begin with unconditional love. (1 Corinthians 13)
- Learn how "The Fall," and the consequences of brokenness, affect the total person — mind, body, spirit, and environment. (Genesis 3)
- Even after we are saved, we may have biological or medical issues in life. Though God is bringing healing to us, our complete healing does not take place until we have glorified bodies. (Philippians 1:19-26)
- Learn about depression.
- Be real but understand that depression masks the real person.
- Rather than trying to solve their problems, simply walk beside them.
- Encourage them to do things with you like sharing meals, exercising or attending a relaxing community event.
- Do small tasks for them. What is routine for you may be overwhelming to them.
- Stay in contact on a regular basis.
- Understand depression is one of the drivers of suicide.

It's been 35 years since the day I was called home from patrol. Kathy now leads a group of senior adults at our church who are transparent and real. They encourage and walk beside each other, wherever life may take them, and spur each other on for the glory of God.

Though Kathy continues to struggle with depression, she is able to deal with it in healthy ways, such as birdwatching, photography and frequent family gatherings. Kathy gave permission to share her story in order to help others who also suffer from depression.

People who are depressed can benefit from strong family relationships, medical assistance, hobbies and strong community involvement like small groups. Groups are the place where people connect to churches, so they offer unique opportunities to help people where they really struggle in life.

Sometimes people are hesitant to get involved in things they do not understand, but all of us suffer from various kinds of brokenness. Don't be afraid to get involved with people who are depressed. Remember the words of Jesus, "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world, you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

*Rick Hughes serves as a consultant for Evangelism and Discipleship for the BSCNC. He is also pastor of the King Cowboy Church and is involved in revitalization of a small church.*





# Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

## Just As I Am

By Lizzy Long

This year, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association's summer series is taking a look at five popular hymns sung at Billy Graham Crusades—and how those songs fit into our lives today. Known as the signature song of the Crusades, "Just As I Am" is the final hymn in our series.

*Just as I am, without one plea  
But that Thy blood was shed for me  
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee*

*O Lamb of God, I come! I come*

How many times have you sat in church feeling the urge to surrender your life to Christ?

The pastor has shared a pivotal message and the Holy Spirit is tugging on your heart, compelling you to walk upfront in response. But you hesitate.

The aisle seems miles long and you chide yourself for not being good enough to come before the throne of God. Doubt and fear creep into your mind, making you feel unworthy. Even if you repent now, you know you'll fail later.

How does God respond to us?

1. God welcomes us with open arms.
2. He pardons our sin.
3. Jesus cleanses us from filth.
4. He relieves us from guilt.

You've been told you don't have to be "better" before placing your hope in the Almighty; you simply have to come. Torn between the acceptance of God and man, your life depends on one decision: trust. Do you really believe God is who He says He is?

In 1835, Charlotte Elliott faced that timeless question.

After suffering from a serious illness that caused her to be disabled, Elliott felt purposeless and depressed while watching others constantly serve the kingdom of God. To combat those feelings, the British woman began to write out the reasons she trusted the Lord.

That list was the start of "Just As I Am," which would later become one of the most popular hymns of all time and the classic ending for altar calls at Billy Graham Crusades.

Maybe you, too, can be assured of God's promises by opening your heart to the lyrics of "Just As I Am."

*O Lamb of God, I Come*

Throughout the Bible, we see people who had an open invitation to follow God. Some of their journeys look different than ours: Moses kicked off his sandals as he encountered God through a burning bush, and Isaiah cried out from his uncleanness during a vision of God's throne. In both cases, we see the humility of sinful man before a holy God.

*"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool."*  
—Isaiah 1:18

As Elliott penned "Just As I Am," she recognized her flaws: illness, conflicts, doubts, and fears. Even so, God loved and accepted her just as she was.

According to How Sweet the Sound, a book by Billy Graham's longtime Crusade soloist George Beverly Shea, Mr. Graham once explained that "we have 'no plea'—no claim on God's love or forgiveness—except that Jesus shed His innocent blood to reconcile us to His Father." There's nothing we can do to earn salvation or freedom from sin; we simply must receive it through the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection.

Ironically, we live in a world that screams for acceptance through careers, social media, and peers, but we often have difficulty receiving acceptance from a Savior.

Like trying to stubbornly wipe a dirty stain off a favorite shirt, we attempt to fix our own problems, wanting to appear better than we actually are. We forget that God created us in His own image and doesn't desire our good intentions, but the very hearts that He designed.

Indeed, as the song "Just As I Am" says, He let us be "poor, wretched, blind," that He may become all we need, giving us "sight, riches, healing of the mind."

Behind the Music  
Ninety-nine years after Elliott wrote "Just As I Am," a teenage farm boy heard the hymn while attending a revival. He then stepped forward in surrender to God while another hymn, "Almost Persuaded, Now to Believe," was sung.

That man was Billy Graham, who would eventually select "Just As I Am" to play during his Gospel invitations. Chosen for its lyrics of response, "O Lamb of God, I come," and strong Biblical basis, Graham believed the Crusade hymn reflected the choice to follow God. His autobiography would later be named Just As I Am.

Similarly, an 18-year-old George Beverly Shea came forward to accept Christ after repeatedly singing "Just As I Am" during a special week of evangelistic meetings. "I could hardly wait to stand with the congregation and sing 'Just As I Am,'" he said. "I could sing and comfort my heart, which was so convicted, rather than make that public confession. I was satisfied just to sing and not go forward." However, that Friday evening, Shea did move forward, placing his hope in Christ alone.

### More Than an Emotion

In the 1960s, as thousands were responding to the Gospel at Billy Graham Crusades, the media reported it was due to "Just As I Am" playing on the crowds' emotions during the altar call. While certainly the forthcoming lyrics and gentle melody are comforting to one's mind, Billy Graham wanted to prove it was the Holy Spirit doing the work.

After praying through the situation and consulting with his music leader, Cliff Barrows, they decided to skip the hymn during his 1966 Crusade in London. For



30 nights, not a single note of the signature Crusade hymn was sung or played, but people still silently came forward.

"When the reporters began to write about the invitation at Earl's Court, they said that all they heard was a shuffling of feet on the floor," Barrows recalled. "Bring back Just as I Am! The silence is killing us!" they wrote."

The key to a Gospel invitation is not within "Just As I Am" or any other hymn but in the promises of God and power of the Holy Spirit. God's love doesn't change to the beat of a song but is an unconditional, steady rhythm flowing through our hearts.

All we have to do is come to Him, just as we are.

Lizzy Long is a writer and social media editor at Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.



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Front of the Book

By Jim Huskins  
McDowell County



One of the joys of my life is having been exposed to a number of challenging disciplines in math, science, language arts, other humanities, ministry, the building trades, mechanics, woodwork, leatherwork, and lutherie. I've devoted myself to fly fishing, music, sustainable agriculture, and the culinary arts. In a few of these fields I claim some competence, but I know enough about the others to realize that all difficult endeavors have something in common. In order to achieve mastery, one must first grasp the fundamentals.

Geometry, for instance, begins with a trio of concepts presented as the "undefined terms:" point, line, and plane. On the first day of physics class, Mr. Washburn taught us that, "Hot is a physical sensation." I learned the Greek alphabet before I could spell words in that language. Clear and convincing essays are built on a mastery of punctuation, grammar, syntax, diction, and logic. Without exception, the foundational concepts of any field are presented near the beginning of the book. No one begins studying biology or chemistry or trigonometry two-thirds of the way through the introductory text.

Why is it that Christians believe they can read only the last third of the Word of God and come to a clear understanding of what our Creator desires of us? Many regular church attenders do not even read the so-called New Testament. Instead of studying the Word for themselves, they depend on teachers and media personalities. Be assured that the discipline listed under the course heading: "Faith in God" has a final exam, and cheating will not be an option.

God expects us to love and serve him on His terms, but most of us follow the doctrines of men. Widespread misunderstanding of snippets plucked from Paul's epistles and the book of Hebrews lead many Christians to believe that when our Messiah died, God changed His mind about the clear instructions for living which He gave in the first five books of the Bible—His Torah. How can that be? Scripture makes it clear that God never changes. He says in Psalm 89:34: "I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips." Anyone of sincere faith has only two options: either God is wrong, and our common understanding of Paul is correct, or God is right and our perception of Paul's teaching is incorrect.

One of the most ignored passages in the New Testament is 2 Peter 3:15-17.

Peter cautions that some of Paul's teachings are difficult to understand. He goes on to warn against twisting Paul's words to make it appear that he is teaching "lawlessness." Peter makes it clear that only unstable people take that approach. He teaches that such a misunderstanding of Paul results in destruction. He does not teach that Paul is wrong, but he does say that Paul can be difficult to understand. Consider some examples:

Based on Galatians 5:1, many believe that Paul refers to the Torah as bondage. This cannot be true because Psalm 119:44-45 says that Torah is liberty.

Galatians 3:13 causes many to believe that the Torah is a curse. Deuteronomy 30:16 makes it clear that if we obey Torah, then God will bless us.

The common understanding of Hebrews 8:6 is that the Torah has been replaced by something better. Psalm 17:7 says that Torah is perfect. By definition, perfection cannot be improved.

Many believe that Hebrews 8:13 teaches that the Torah is obsolete and in the process of vanishing. Deuteronomy 29:29 makes it clear that Torah is forever.

First Timothy 4:1-5 does not teach against the dietary instructions found in Leviticus. For that to be the case, Leviticus 11 would have to be labeled a "doctrine of demons" and a "lie-in hypocrisy." I would be terrified to refer to any passage of scripture in such terms. According to the front of the Book—Psalm 119:142—God's Torah is truth.

It is impossible for Paul to teach against the Torah. To do so would not only put him at odds with Jesus, it would also make Paul a false prophet according to Deuteronomy 13. Paul was not unstable or schizophrenic. Romans 6:14 says: "For sin will have no dominion over you since you are not under law but under grace;" however, the next verse says that we must not use grace as an excuse to sin. Sin is defined by scripture as "lawlessness" or not keeping Torah.

Romans 10:4 says: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes," but Romans 3:31 says "Do we then overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary, we uphold the law."

In Romans 7:12, Paul teaches that the Torah is holy, righteous and good. Why would God take away something so wonderful? Is Paul talking out of both sides of his mouth, or is the difficulty in understanding him our fault because we are not familiar with the first two-thirds of the Bible?

In our fellowship, many Bible teachings begin with reading Luke 24:44. It says, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Jesus makes it clear that the Torah, the Prophets, and the Psalms all describe and point to Him. How can we understand Him, His mission, or our role in His Kingdom unless we are willing to master the entirety of the only valid textbook for a life well lived?

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## Using the Bible to Share the Gospel

By Rev. John B. Sorensen

We have many tools at our disposal to help us share our faith with others: tracts, story illustrations, and of course, our testimony. These are all great tools, but it is Scripture, not our words, that convicts someone of sin.

Hebrews 4:12 says, *"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."*

We cannot share the Gospel without pointing to the Gospel. While there are many scriptures that help us explain the Good News to others, here are a few that I have found work well:

Romans 6:23 - *"The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Like any gift, eternal life is not earned or deserved. The Bible tells us that we are saved through faith, not our works (Ephesians 2:8-9). Every other religion teaches that people must earn their way to Heaven. Christianity alone proclaims that God's favor and entrance into Heaven are absolutely free.

Romans 3:23 - *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

The Bible states that man is a sinner. Sin is anything that falls short of God's perfect standard: an action, a word, a thought, an attitude. Because we are sinners, we cannot save ourselves.

Exodus 34:7 - God *"does not leave the guilty unpunished."*

God is merciful and does not want to punish us. The Bible tells us that *"God is love"* (1 John 4:8), but it also teaches us that He is just and must punish our sin. This presents a problem. The problem is not God's, it is ours.

John 1:1, 14 - *"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."*

Jesus Christ is both God and Man. While Jesus had many great accomplishments, His most important was that He died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin... and rose from the dead to prove He had purchased a place in Heaven for us.

Acts 16:31 - *"Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved."*

Faith isn't simply knowing about Jesus. It also isn't trusting in Jesus for temporary things, like health, safety, and finances. Saving faith is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for eternal life.

Remember, each verse, alone, maybe a lot for someone to process. Be patient. While we should know the reference when we quote Scripture, all we need to say is that *"the Bible says,"* or *"We read in the Bible,"* and then quote the verse. The Holy Spirit will speak to the person hearing the Scriptures.

Rev. John B. Sorensen, D.D. is the President/CEO of Evangelism Explosion International, headquartered in Arden, N.C. EE has been a leader in equipping Christians to share their faith for more than 50 years. For more free tips and resources, visit [evangelismexplosion.org](http://evangelismexplosion.org).



## Press Release

### Local Physicians Assistant Appointed To Serve on the North Carolina Institute of Medicine, Board of Directors

Mitchell County

Lyndsay Jensen Edwards, PA has been appointed to serve on the North Carolina Institute of Medicine, Board of Directors. Lyndsay is a native of Mitchell County and is currently employed by the Mountain Community Health Partnership. (Bakersville Community Health Center.)

Lyndsay was recommended by Senator Ralph Hise and appointed by Senator Philip Berger, President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Lyndsay says, "I am honored to have been appointed to this position. It is a great opportunity to represent our community, the PA profession, and aid in improving healthcare in North Carolina."

The North Carolina Institute of Medicine has shaped health policy in North Carolina for more than 30 years by identifying solutions to the state's health challenges. (NCIOM) The goal of the North Carolina Institute of Medicine is to improve the health and well-being of North Carolinians by identifying evidence-based solutions with broad stakeholder support. (NCIOM)

Lyndsay will serve alongside Keith Holtsclaw, FACHE, who is also from Mitchell County. He also serves as a Mountain Community Health Partnership (MCHP) Board Member.

MCHP is honored to have Lyndsay represent Mitchell County, its residents, and our health center.

For more information about Mountain Community Health Partnership, visit our website, or call 828-688-6621.



Lyndsay Jensen Edwards



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## Kidney Needed

By Ryan Carpenter  
Buncombe County

Hello, my name is Ryan Carpenter. I am 23 years old and have been living with kidney disease my entire life. At birth, I had malformed, partially functioning kidneys and lived a life of normality until I was 1 year old. At that time, I develop acute renal failure. After a vigorous 6-day treatment with steroids, it was as if a miracle occurred. My kidneys began to work on their own. I was followed by the nephrology team at Pitt Memorial Hospital until I was 8 years old. I then began seeing a nephrologist in Goldsboro, N.C. After several years, I was referred to UNC-Chapel Hill's pediatric nephrology team. At that time, a kidney transplant was inevitable. The next step was to find a donor.

My Mother was a blood match, but she has diabetes and was not considered. My Dad is a universal donor, he was tested and become my donor. Shortly after taking transplant education classes, my transplant date had finally arrived. I was admitted to the hospital the night before to get me prepared for surgery the next morning. The next morning, the transport team arrived to take me to the pre-op areas, at this point, my anxiety really began to sink in. After my family wished me well, it was just the anesthesiologist, my Mom and me. The time came for Mom to leave, and me to travel to the operating room. The next thing I remember was waking up in ICU (Intensive Care Unit).

The next seven years were the best of my life. Other than not playing contact sports, I got to have a routine high school experience. After graduation, I was ready to follow my dream of being a chef. Nothing could have prepared me for the multiple bouts of organ rejection, serum sickness, and all the biopsies that came with it. I started peritoneal dialysis in 2016 and continued through 2018 until the nephrologist changed my life again. I developed two abscesses in my abdomen and in turn, started hemodialysis. I have been on this regimen 3 times a week for eight months.

I pray for a kidney that will match and take me to a life that I have longed for since I was a child. Thank you for reading this article, and I hope to inspire you to pass my story along for a much-needed kidney and blessing.

Should you be, or know someone who is interested in being a donor, use the information below:

Jason Kystofik  
Walter Reed Transplant Coordinator  
(301) 400-2516  
Amy Woodard, RN, BSN, CNN, CCTC  
UNC-Chapel Hill Living Donor Coordinator  
(984) 974-7568



## Something To Think About- God is Really There!

By Dennis Love  
McDowell County



Listen to what the Bible says in Psalm 37:23. *"The Lord directs the steps of the godly. He delights in every detail of their lives."* WOW, what a great promise and what an awesome assurance from our Lord. He is going to direct our steps and He delights in EVERY detail of our life. Don't miss that little word "EVERY." The Bible says that He delights in EVERY detail of our life. Now, this verse doesn't say that we delight in EVERY detail of our life, but it says that our Lord delights in EVERY detail of our life.

You probably recall the story of the two discouraged disciples as they walked on the road to Emmaus. These guys thought Jesus was dead and there was now no hope for them. But as they walked, Jesus suddenly joins them on their journey, but they were so down and out that they didn't even recognize it was Jesus. So, Jesus asked them, "Guys, why the long faces? What's the problem?" Do you recall what they said? They said, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about the events of the last few days." Jesus said, "What things?" They said, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth. How the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him up to be crucified. We were hoping that it was Him who was going to redeem Israel. And now, today is the third day since these things happened."

It wasn't until these guys arrived in Emmaus that they finally realized that it was Jesus Himself who was talking with them. Here it is, don't miss it! Life is often that way too! There are times when we sense the presence of the Lord in our lives and then there are times when we don't feel His presence. And it's those times when we don't feel His presence that we wonder if God has abandoned us. And the answer is NO He has not! The Bible says that He will never leave us or forsake us. The Bible says in Psalm 37:23 that the Lord directs our steps and that He delights in EVERY detail of our lives. There are times in life when God seems absent, but He never is! He is really always there! He is there to direct our steps and He even delights Himself in EVERY detail of our lives.

I don't know what you are facing today. I don't know what battles you are fighting today. I don't know the struggles you are having today. But I do know this. I know that God is really there with you even if it feels like He isn't. Why not take a moment today and say, "Thank you Lord that You are really there even though I can't sense You are there!"

*Dr Dennis Love is the Senior Pastor at Glenwood Baptist Church in Marion, NC. He and his wife Vicki have been married for 39 years and they have been in Marion for five years. They have two sons and three grandchildren.*

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## Two Mass Shootings In Two Days: God's Question For His People Today

By Jim Denison

Horror. Anger. Grief. Anguish. Heartbreak. Mourning. Shock.

These are some of my emotions this morning. But surprise is not among them. And that is one of the tragedies of these tragedies.

A man opened fire at an El Paso shopping area Saturday morning, killing at least twenty people and wounding twenty-six others. He was apprehended at the scene.

Early the next morning, another shooter opened fire, this time in an entertainment district in Dayton, Ohio. At least nine people were murdered, including the gunman's sister, and twenty-six others were wounded. The shooter was killed by police.

There have now been 251 mass shootings in America this year. And 2019 is a little more than seven months old.

### A murderer living twenty minutes from my home

Watching the national reaction to these tragedies, it seems to me that despair has captured our collective soul.

We are afraid that no place in America is safe today. We can't put metal detectors at every store, mall, movie theater, and office building. And even if we did, murderers would just attack us in the parking lot.

How do you know that wherever you're going today won't be next? The fact is, you don't. Dallas is not safer than Dayton. A garlic festival in California is not safer than a Walmart in El Paso.

A young man living in Allen, Texas (twenty minutes north of my home) drove ten hours to massacre people in El Paso and is now one of the most infamous mass murderers in American history. Perhaps someone living in your community will be next.

On a morning like this, it's easy to wonder how the Christian message can possibly be relevant to the crisis of mass shootings. How can the gospel protect us from the next massacre? How can it make a difference in this epidemic?

### What mass shooters have in common

Tomorrow, I plan to answer our question in the context of the racist worldview that reportedly motivated the El Paso shooter. For today, I'd like to respond more personally.

In the wake of the El Paso massacre, the Los Angeles Times published a vitally important op-ed by Jillian Peterson and James Densley. These university professors run The Violence Project, a nonpartisan think tank dedicated to reducing violence in society and improving policy and practice through research and analysis.

Working on a project funded by the research arm of the US Department of Justice, they have studied mass shootings since 1966, along with media, social media, manifestos, suicide notes, trial transcripts, and medical records. They have discovered four commonalities among the perpetrators of nearly all the mass shootings they have studied:

One: The vast majority experienced early childhood trauma and exposure to violence at a young age.

Two: Nearly every mass shooter reached an identifiable crisis point in the weeks or months leading up to the shooting.

Three: Most of the shooters studied the actions of other shooters and sought validation for their motives.

Four: They all had the means to carry out their plans by obtaining weapons legally, illegally, or from family members.

As a result, Peterson and Densley recommend tighter control of media sites that validate violence, improved security and weapons control, and proactive responses to those in personal crisis.

### The darker the night, the more crucial our light

While society should obviously take all effective measures to protect itself, here's my biblical point: Jesus can change any life he touches. He can heal any trauma. He can redeem any crisis. The God who turned a murdering Pharisee into a missionary of grace can transform anyone.

Do you believe that any person stands beyond the transforming power of our Savior's love? What about the person planning the next massacre?

The more secularized our culture becomes, the more evangelistic our churches must become. The more people during a crisis ridicule our prayers, the more they need our prayers. The more traumatized and victimized our society, the more vital our compassion. (For more, see Ryan Denison's "The Gilroy Garlic Festival: Moving forward by not moving on.")

The greater the threat of violence, the more urgent our message.

That's why we must do all we can to reach the next shooters before they strike. We must use our influence to permeate our broken culture with biblical truth and grace. We must share God's word and love with everyone we can in every way we can.

### God's question for his people today

Jesus is weeping beside twenty-nine graves today (John 11:35). He is calling us to join him with heartbroken compassion for the victims and their families and a renewed commitment to our gospel mandate.

We are still the only "light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). The darker the night, the more crucial our light.

One lesson of El Paso and Dayton is that every community is a mission field. As a result, every Christian is a missionary.

This morning, I hear our Lord asking, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (Isaiah 6:8).

What is your answer to him?



Jim Denison Ph.D speaks and writes on cultural and contemporary issues. His daily column is distributed to more than 113,000 subscribers in 208 countries. See more on the website [www.denisonforum.org](http://www.denisonforum.org). Copyrighted and printed by permission from Denison Forum.

# WANTED

## THE WESTERN SIZZLIN STEAK OF THE WEEK



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**Volunteers** needed to advocate, protect the rights of long-term care residents Boone, NC (June 26, 2019) – The High-Country Area Agency on Aging Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is calling for volunteers in Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey Counties. Volunteer ombudsmen, also known as Community Advisory Committee (CAC) serve as advocates for residents living in nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

CAC members are trained, certified volunteers who are assigned to a local long-term care facility to advocate for residents' rights.

To learn more about becoming a volunteer ombudsman or to request an application, call Stevie John at (828) 265-5434 Ext. 126 or visit the High-Country Area Agency on Aging website at [www.highcountryaging.org](http://www.highcountryaging.org).

## Burke County

**Grundy Reversing Diabetes** seminars are returning to Valdese in August. Yes, you can reverse it and yes, you can learn how to prevent ever having diabetes. Group setting, food sample each evening and door prizes. It's a fun way to learn to take charge of your health and live a better quality of life. IT'S FREE! Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2907 US Hwy 70 in Drexel (across from Foothills Thrift Store). Seats are limited so pre-register by calling Sharryn at 828-334-0084.

**Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church Events** - The Giving Heart Thrift Shop is OPEN every Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Like us on Facebook at [@thegivingheartthriftshop](https://www.facebook.com/thegivingheartthriftshop), The Giving Heart Thrift Shop is a ministry of the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church.

**God's Closet** - Morganton Free Shop Day! Sunday, August 4th., from 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., at the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C. There will be FREE clothes for children ages 0 - 18 years old. No documentation required. For more information visit our website [www.morgantonsda.org](http://www.morgantonsda.org) and Like us on Facebook [@GodsClosetMorganton](https://www.facebook.com/GodsClosetMorganton) and [@MorgantonSeventhDayAdventistChurch](https://www.facebook.com/MorgantonSeventhDayAdventistChurch)

## McDowell County

### Retirement Resource Management Education, Analysis, and Consulting

September Educational Events

o September 10th Retirement Tax Summit

o September 12th New Rules for Retirement Saving

o September 19th How to pay for Long Term Care

o September 26th McIntyre Law Firm Saving the Farm.

Join us as we help you understand these difficult topics. For more details go to my website [www.retireerm.com](http://www.retireerm.com) or [www.facebook.com/RetirementResourceManagement/](https://www.facebook.com/RetirementResourceManagement/)

Steve Gaito is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNERTM who specializes in reducing risk and taxes in retirement. McIntyre Law Firm is an Elder Law practice that specializes in helping people protect their estates and their founder wrote the Book Saving the Farm.

To reserve your seat call (828) 559-0299 or email [Steve@retireerm.com](mailto:Steve@retireerm.com) 68 South Main Street Suite 200 Marion, NC 28752

Join us for a local foods breakfast & tour a few McDowell County farms.  
7 \* September \* 2019

McDowell County Agricultural Center, 188 Ag Services Dr, Marion  
When 8:30 a.m. September 7, 2019, Where McDowell County Agricultural Center  
188 Ag Services Drive, Marion, NC 28752

Join us for breakfast made with locally sourced ingredients and learn about McDowell County agriculture! Breakfast and tour will begin and end at the McDowell Ag Center, 188 Ag Services Drive, Marion. Tour stops include Beekeepers Inc offering pollination services, Cannery Springs Farm producing hemp, and the Foothills Food Hub--future aggregation site of local food.

Transportation will be provided, but seating is limited. Call and reserve your spot today. Call 828-652-8104 for questions or to reserve your seat. \$5 donations are accepted and appreciated.

**Pleasant Garden Baptist Church** - Scorecard Event, October 12, 2019, 9:00 am - 3:00 pm, Marion, NC

About this event

To help raise the next generation of disciple-makers we need to begin by evaluating what we are, or are not doing, at church and within the home. Here are some of the questions we will answer:

- Does your church have a shared vision for making disciples from infants through senior high?

- Are your children's and youth ministries aligned with a foundational ministry plan for that purpose?

- Are your parents equipped to be the primary disciple-makers in the home?

Scorecard will assist your church leaders in developing a strategic ministry plan with checkpoints that will help you measure spiritual growth in your children and youth. Scorecard also includes specific ways your church can partner with parents to disciple their children at home.

The cost is \$25 per person and includes lunch. A special group rate of \$100 for five leaders is also available.

More Information

Cheryl Markland • (800) 395-5102 ext. 5645 • [cmarkland@ncbaptist.org](mailto:cmarkland@ncbaptist.org)

Janet Packard • (800) 395-5102 ext. 5646 • [jpackard@ncbaptist.org](mailto:jpackard@ncbaptist.org)

**New Community Outreach** Benefits McDowell Families with Children

Teens for Christ B.E.A.R. Closet

(Baby Equipment and Resource Closet)

Beginning Wednesday, August 1st, 2018 the youth group at Cross United Methodist Church located at 85 West Cross Street in Marion will launch a new outreach ministry benefiting families with children The outreach will be open the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. and the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. For more information or if you are interested in volunteer opportunities to call (828) 803-8790 or email [TeensforChristBEARcloset@yahoo.com](mailto:TeensforChristBEARcloset@yahoo.com).

**Clinchfield Baptist Church**- Clinchfield Baptist Church will be celebrating its 104th homecoming on Sunday, September 15th. We will be having a concert by "The Taylor's", during our morning worship service beginning at 11:00 a.m. We hope you can join us at 1150 East Court Street in Marion, N.C.

**Cross Mill United Methodist Church** - in Marion is now accepting donations of NEW items for an upcoming fundraising auction. Proceeds from the auction will go toward much-needed church building repairs and our 24/7 Sharing Food Pantry Ministries. Any business and/or individual donations would be greatly appreciated. Call 828-460-9257, 828-442-8098 or 828-803-8790,

**First Baptist of Marion** - The Children's Committee is creating a library for the children and families with the church and daycare. We are accepting donations of new and gently used books for children of all ages and reading levels, as well as resources for parents. The donations will supplement the selection of books currently on hand. Please leave donations in the main office. Thank you!!!

## 36th Annual Mountain Glory Festival

Now Accepting Craft Vendor Applications

Saturday, October 12, 2019, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Marion - Where Main Street Meets the Mountains

Vendor applications for Marion's largest craft festival are now being accepted. For 36 years, beautiful downtown Marion has hosted this popular celebration on the 2nd Saturday in October. This year make plans to be part of the Festival, Saturday, October 12th, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM.

Visitors will be looking for original handicrafts on Main Street three main blocks. Featured will be 150 craft, food, non-profit and sponsor booths of locally made arts and crafts; festival foods and local wines and beers. Plus, two stages presenting Marion's finest musicians.

Don't miss the annual Mountain Glory Quilt Show inside the McDowell Arts Council. The quilt show is the gallery's featured, October exhibit. The kids will have fun in the "Children's Arena" with hands-on activities and local entertainment.

You might even see Bigfoot, Marion's Official Animal!

The festival is sponsored by the City of Marion. For the festival, information visit [www.mtnlgloryfestival.com](http://www.mtnlgloryfestival.com) or call 828-652-2215.

## Mitchell County

**Mitchell County 4-H** - Tipton Hill Community Center Jamboree

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 6:30 PM, FOR A FAMILY NIGHT FILLED WITH MUSIC, FUN, FOOD, AND LAUGHTER AT THE TIPTON HILL COMMUNITY CENTER ACROSS FROM GRIFFITH'S STORE ( KNOWN AS JERRY'S ) IN THE TIPTON HILL COMMUNITY. FEATURING LOCAL PERFORMERS, IT WILL BE AN EVENING OF GOSPEL, COUNTRY, BLUEGRASS, ROCK AND ROLL, AND SOME " OLDIES BUT GOODIES " MUSIC. ADMISSION IS FREE, AND A CONCESSION STAND WILL BE OPEN AT 6:00 PM. FEEL FREE TO SING ALONG.

**Every Saturday in September, a prayer gathering at Riverside Park** at the amphitheater\* at 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, September 7th --- 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, September 14th --- 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, September 21st --- 10:00 a.m.

Saturday, September 28th --- 10:00 a.m.

Please mark your calendars for these important dates. We are praying for Franklin Graham's Decision America tour of North Carolina. Let's take advantage of our freedom to gather & pray for GOD to do amazing work across our beautiful state!!!

(\*The 2nd entrance into Riverside Park.)

**Celebrate Recovery** - This is a Christ and Biblical Based Program, giving help and help for men, women, and families suffering from addiction. Any questions contact Josh Wise@ 385-0061

There will be a meeting every Thursday night with someone there to talk to men, women, and their families. There is also a Children's program.

**First Presbyterian Church**- Women's Bible Study Fellowship -- Acts and Letters of the Apostles. Women's Day group meet @ First Presbyterian Church, Spruce Pine 10am-11:30am

Grassy Creek Baptist Church - Women's Bible Study Fellowship -- Acts and Letters of the Apostles

Women's Evening group meet @ Grassy Creek Baptist Church, Spruce Pine

5:45pm-7:15pm Contact:

Nancy Ball (843)597-1196 (Day Women) Angie Woody (828)467-3830 (Evening Women)



**YaYa Village** We are announcing the Opening of YaYa Village Commercial-Share Kitchen!

We've realized there's a gap that needs to be filled between the production of local food and their consumption. That's why we started YaYa Village Commercial Shared Use Kitchen so that we could provide a certified area at a reasonable cost for locals trying to sell their products. This way we strive to help community entrepreneurs with their part-time business.

So, if you have a product you want to market and sell (like jams, jellies, baked goods, etc.) or if you need a commercial kitchen for catering, having a private Pop Up dinner, hosting a class or whatever you're imagining; we hope our Shared Use Kitchen can provide you with a solution.

Come visit our space, get an application and let us talk to see what is that you have in mind!

We are also serving lunch on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

**Sign up for 2019 After Hours!** Business After Hours is held to provide an opportunity for Chamber members to network while allowing the Member to sponsor a chance to address and/or showcase their facilities. Business After Hours are held monthly to bi-monthly, and generally on a Tuesday or Thursday (unless other arrangements are made). The Member sponsor and the Chamber representative will coordinate the event. After Hours begins at 4:30 p.m. and ends at 6:00 p.m. (unless other arrangements are made). Send your questions and reserve your month by emailing Kelly at [kjones@mitchellcountychamber.org](mailto:kjones@mitchellcountychamber.org).

August: Mitchell County Animal Rescue

September: The Switzerland Inn

October-November: OPEN

We do not have After Hours in December.

**2019 Calendar of Events for Downtown Spruce Pine**

Summer Concert	September 7th Central Park
Walk A Mile Fundraiser	October (TBD), Central Park
Fall Clean-Up	October-TBD, Downtown Spruce Pine
Potter's Market	October 13 & 14th, Cross Street Building
Merchant Trick or Treat	October 31st, Downtown Spruce Pine
Small Business Saturday	November 30th Downtown Spruce Pine
Kiwanis Christmas Parade	November 30th, Downtown Spruce Pine
TRAC Studio Tour	December 6-8th, Mitchell & Yancey County
* Farmer's Market every Wednesday at Bank of America beginning in April	
For more information about any of these events, contact SPMS 765-3008	

**Toe River Arts - June Studio Tour Applications**

The Toe River Arts Studio Tour is perhaps the largest and the longest-running studio tour in the country; you will find craftspeople and artists in nearly every medium, many tops in their field and several new-to-the-tour participants. FREE, and self-guided, this adventure will lead you to some unique places situated between Mt. Mitchell and Roan Mountain. Visitors travel through valleys, past streams, across rivers, over hilltops, and experience breathtaking mountain vistas as they make their journey through the Toe River Arts region. Meet the artists, see where they create and where they live.

Toe River Arts will sponsor a Meet-The-Artist reception at their Spruce Pine location on Friday evening after the tour closes for the day. A sampling of participants will be on display geographically so one can plan a route for the rest of their journey.

For more information, please call 828.682.7215 or email.

**Tipton Hill Community Foundation (Tipton Hill)** – Country Breakfast, the first Saturday each month, 7:30 – 10:30 am, at the old Methodist Church, across from Jerry's Store. Come join us for homemade sausage, scrambled eggs, gravy, jellies, juice, and coffee. Eat-in or take-out, all funds support the Tipton Hill Community Foundation.

**Mayland Small Business Center**

**CLASS THREE: Finding Your Customers (2.5 Hours)**

This class will focus on growing and retaining customers. The presentation will discuss the typical customer in the area and how to build a customer profile to attract new customers. In addition, attendees will explore a variety of market research tools that provide critical information about competition, industry, and customers.

9/3, T, 4:00-6:30 p.m.  
Fee Waived Instructor: Lyden Mitchell 828.766.1295

**CLASS FOUR: Basics of Bookkeeping (2.5 Hours)**

This class will discuss common bookkeeping methods used for small businesses as well as popular online bookkeeping platforms. Attendees will gain a workable knowledge of how to properly record and archive transactions. The seminar will also discuss how financial statements factor into small business bookkeeping.

9/5, TH, 4:00-6:30 p.m.  
Fee Waived Instructor: Beam Mitchell 828.766.1295

**CLASS FIVE: Marketing your Business (2.5 Hours)**

This class will discuss common marketing practices for local entrepreneurs. Discover how to most effectively and efficiently use the many marketing tools available. Gain insights to understand and reach your customer, analyze your industry and business environment and differentiate between branding, advertising, and grassroots marketing techniques. Explore the components of an effective marketing plan in this comprehensive seminar.

9/10, T, 4:00-6:30 p.m.

Fee Waived	Instructor: Brossman	Mitchell 828.766.1295
<b>CLASS SIX: Your Small Business Taxes (2.5 Hours)</b>		
Attendees will become familiar with the common local, state, and Federal tax requirements typical to local small businesses. The seminar will also discuss tax planning and strategy for entrepreneurs. The class will be taught by a CPA.		
9/12, TH, 4:00-6:30 p.m.		
Fee Waived	Instructor: Sisk-Morris	Mitchell 828.766.1295

**A Walk To Remember – Service of Remembrance**

Blue Ridge Partnership For Children

Date: October 6, 2019

Location: Spruce Pine First Baptist Church

Time: 3:00 PM

There will be a Service of remembrance in the church sanctuary with refreshments to follow in the fellowship hall. There will also be a Walk and Reflection Ceremony following at Riverside Park. Please bring photographs and/or mementos you would like placed on a table in remembrance of your child. Contact Sylvia Buchanan at 828.682.0047 or Carrie Hall at 828.733.2899 for more information.

**Yancey County**

**Feed-A-Child Yancey County** - Higgins fills bags on the second Tuesday of each month. We have been fortunate to have enough volunteers to fill the bags so far. They are going to continue the program this summer through the churches in the county that have Wednesday night meals. If you have any questions about Feed-A-Child they can be directed to Bill & Nancy Watkins at 828-675-5367.

**Baptists on Mission** - Mission teams are needed to do Vacation Bible School, Evangelistic Outreach, and Construction projects in our partner states of Alaska, Vermont, Maine, and Pennsylvania. Mission teams can make a great impact in reaching these communities for Christ. Visit our website for full lists of projects at <https://baptistsonmission.org/Mission-Projects/United-States/New-England> or contact NC Baptists on Mission at 919-467-5607 or [mabernathy@ncbaptist.org](mailto:mabernathy@ncbaptist.org)

**Deep Impact Kids**, Are you looking for a mission opportunity for the children in your church? Deep Impact Kids will be serving in many communities across the state with hands-on mission projects designed for 1st-6th-grade children. Sign up your church now for a weekend, mini-week, or full week at one of these locations: Camp Cale, Red Springs, Shelby, Mundo Vista, Caswell, or Truett Baptist Camp. For more information contact Dollie Noa at [dnoa@ncbaptist.org](mailto:dnoa@ncbaptist.org). Website <http://baptistsonmission.org/camps/di-kids>

**Helping Hands of Yancey County** - Huge Fun Flea Sale, September 13 & 14 9 – 4 pm, 621 Micaville Loop in Burnsville, Intersection of 19E & Micaville Loop Furniture, clothing, jewelry, sports equipment, tools, office supplies, holiday and home decorations, books, kitchen items, toys, hobby supplies, appliances. Accepting donations until September 12

**Higgins Methodist Church** - Men's Bible Study Fellowship - Acts and Letters of the Apostles

In The Acts and Letters of the Apostles study we see evidence of God's Unstoppable Spirit, the growth of His Unstoppable Church, and the Unstoppable witness of His people. Join us for this incredible study. Tuesday, September 10, 6:55pm – 8:25 pm

**EMERGENCY NUMBERS**

1. When in sorrow	call John 14
2. When you have sinned	call Psalm 51
3. When you worry	call Matthew 6:19-34
4. When you are in danger	call Psalm 91
5. When your faith needs stirring	call Hebrews 11
6. When you feel down and out	call Romans 8:31
7. When you want peace and rest	call Matthew 11: 25-30
8. When the world seems bigger than God	call Psalm 90
9. If your pockets are empty	call Psalm 37
10. When you are lonely and fearful	call Psalm 23
11. When you grow bitter and critical	call 1 Corinthians 13
12. For how to get along with other men	call Romans 12
13. If you are depressed	call Psalm 27
14. If people seem unkind	call John 15



## El Paso

By Dr. Micheal Pardue  
Burke County



As my wife and I were shopping at Walmart, I noticed the diversity in the people around me. People with many shades of melanin. People from all around the world. People with heritages different from my own. As I observed them, my heart sank thinking of the tragedy at the Walmart in El Paso just two days before. Another community retail center with people from many parts of the world. A store is full of people, shopping and enjoying their day, terrorized by hate.

It is simple to blame an act of terror that claimed more than 20 lives in Texas on political ideologies, video game violence, firearm availability, healthcare access, or even the hatred inside the heart of the murderous terrorist that carried out this atrocity. The answer, spiritually speaking, runs much deeper.

These things happen because Hell hates Heaven. Hell hates that when I look around me and see people "from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Revelation 5:9), I think about Heaven. My heart rejoices knowing that God loves and redeems people from every skin tone and language group—Hell shudders at the prospect.

I find great comfort knowing that no matter what Hell unleashes on us—no matter what wickedness brings ugly terror—Heaven will look a lot like Walmart. No bigotry or hate or racism can change Heaven. Hell cannot prevail. Hell cannot overcome. The Gospel of Christ will transform the hearts of people from every tribe and language and people and nation. People from every race will comprise the Kingdom of Christ. Hate can rage and Hell can war, but they do so in desperation, not in victory. When Christ's Kingdom is complete, "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things, have passed away" (Revelation 21:4). This is the day I long for. This is the day I thought about as I strolled through Walmart.

Dr. Micheal Pardue is a pastor, educator, and author. He and his family make their home in Icard, NC.



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## Temple Maintenance - Brain Health

By Dr. Miguel Cruz  
Mitchell County



Last month we talked about our spiritual health and the necessity of spending time with God by reading and meditating on the word of God as part of a healthy lifestyle. I shared how I personally started on that path by getting up earlier in the morning in order to MAKE time for that to happen. Notice I said I had to MAKE the time instead of trying to find the time, finding the time will never happen. Life will make sure it fills every possible minute to keep you from spending that valuable time to "be still and know that I am God".

This month I want to talk about brain health. Let me start with this statement from the "British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology", 2013

The prevention of Dementias such as Alzheimer's is a growing public health concern due to a lack of effective curative treatment. Current epidemiological data are in favor of a protective role of certain micronutrients.

The micronutrients mentioned above are vitamin supplements, herbal combinations and amino acids, most of which can be purchased at our health food store and doctors' offices which specialize in natural health care. The reason this is important is that we can and MUST be taking control of our health and of our minds before it is too late. As the quote above states, we cannot go along as if nothing is happening and when it finally gets bad enough that everyone notices you go to the doctor expecting them to fix it for you. Hopefully, it's not too late. Just visit any nursing home and see the result of waiting too long.

Nothing much has changed since 2013 except that the research is showing positive changes in people who are willing to help themselves and take control of their health.

### Fundamentals of brain health

For our brain to be healthy we must have 3 key ingredients. Oxygen, a steady supply of blood sugar and stimulation. There is a relatively new term being used called brain plasticity. This refers to our brain's ability to develop multiple channels of communication which continues as we age. The key to good brain function is to maintain communication channels (plasticity). The opposite of plasticity is brain degeneration. Plasticity is dependent on stimulation and a good chemical environment. Studies have shown that people with Alzheimer's lesions had no symptoms when they remained mentally stimulated. Television does not stimulate the brain. Plasticity can improve at any age with a good environment. Mental stimulation can include brain games, puzzles, learning a new language or playing a musical instrument. So, the brain games you see advertised are capable of helping with stimulation.

Neurotransmitters – These are chemical messengers our neurons produce to communicate with each other. Inflammation, hormones and blood sugar can determine the health of neurotransmitter function. Neurons need oxygen, glucose, stimulation. Brain degeneration will happen if any one of these is compromised. Blood sugar is critical because it will also affect oxygen levels in the brain. (2 strikes) It has been my observation that many of the people we have tested have blood sugar problems. This hit home with me especially. When I had myself tested it was apparent that my blood sugar had been high for a while. I had no idea because I exercise regularly, and I thought I was eating well. It turns out my affinity for bread (even whole grain and sprouted grain) was part of my problem. People with swings in blood sugar are often labeled as bi-polar and put on psychotropic drugs. Imagine having an unsteady gas supply to your car. It can and will alter moods. A high carb diet not only affects swings in blood sugar, but it promotes inflammation and brain degeneration. A diet with good combinations of proteins & Healthy FATS prevents blood sugar swings, energy crashes & inflammation.

Stress - The brain can adapt to stress giving the illusion that you may work well under stress. If the high stress goes unattended long enough, brain inflammation will overtake you leading to brain degeneration – crash – burnout – nervous breakdown. Taking the time regularly to "be still and know that I am God" is the best prevention I know of.

### So, what can I do?

A regular blood workup is essential, but don't just take your doctors word for the results, I recommend you get a copy of the labs and see for yourself. I am constantly having patients bring their labs from other offices and they were told everything is fine when it clearly was not. It seems some things are ignored unless you are having obvious symptoms. Remember the key is to catch this BEFORE you have symptoms.

A normal fasting glucose should be 70-100, but even better have your doctor order an A1c which gives you a number indicating the average blood sugar over 90 days. A CBC which is a normal part of routine labs will usually pick up any anemia. Keeping your brain stimulated is essential but will be up to you. I recommend many brain games available free on the internet.

2 books I recommend for further study are "Why Isn't My Brain Working?" By Datis Kharazian and "The Brain That Changes Itself" by Norman Doidge

Email me with any questions you may have or for additional information. Chirromac2000@gmail.com

Dr. Miguel Cruz is in practice along with his wife of 35 years, Lesia Cruz who is a certified Integrative Nutritionist. They own Cruz Life Center in Burnsville NC. Dr. Cruz is a licensed Chiropractor since 1981. When asked what he does for a living he explains that he helps people get out of pain and improve their overall health without the use of drugs or surgery. Something everyone seems to want but nobody seems to know how to get there. Dr. Cruz accepted Jesus Christ in the summer of 1979 while in chiropractic school. He has since dedicated his life towards helping people grow in physical health and spiritual health.



# Faith Based Healthcare

## Annual Health Care Enrollment Ahead

By Steve Gaito  
McDowell County



It is almost that time of year. The time when people choose to overpay for healthcare. A 2016 Commonwealth Fund study said that healthcare accounted for over 10.1% of family budgets which is up from 6.5 only a decade ago. The study also said that healthcare was also outpacing income but had slowed slightly. Without getting into politics, and that is a challenge when you discuss healthcare, my goal is to help people understand the options available and to remove the risk that people have by simply choosing either substandard healthcare or none at all.

The first thing one should consider is whether or not you qualify for subsidies for the ACA plans. These plans offer unlimited coverage and have no restrictions on pre-existing conditions. Depending on your household income you could pay as little as 2.08% of your income to as much as 9.86%. So, if you made \$100,000 and had a family of 4 you would be expected to pay \$9,870 a year for your family healthcare. This is \$822.50 a month and if you are this close you may fall off what is known as the "cliff". This means if your income exceeds the maximum limit even by \$1 you could be responsible for the entire cost of the healthcare plan you choose. This comes as a surprise to many and will show up on your tax bill when you file.

Fortunately, there are alternatives that do not come with all the variables and you can sign up for them at any time. That is right anytime. This means if you are currently in a plan and one of these plans better fits your needs you can sign up today and start saving money. It is also beneficial if you think your income may exceed the limit and minimize the penalty that you will have to pay for making too much money.

So, what are the options I am talking about? These are Health Sharing Plans. They are not insurance but provide coverage to cover the cost of healthcare and they come in many forms. I think they break down into affordable options in three areas depending on what you can afford and what you need. Most come with limits for pre-existing coverage for major illness, such as hospital or surgeries. The most basic plan is a MEC, which means Minimum Essential Coverage. These are the most affordable plans and start at \$69 a month. They provide telemedicine for family, annual physical and a limited number of Doctor visits a year. They are designed to provide routine healthcare for cuts, breaks, and colds. They things you would normally go to your doctor or urgent care to treat. They do not provide any hospital or surgical care. They are a good option compared to no coverage at all and can save you money overpaying for routine care out of pocket. The next area is catastrophic care. This is the opposite of the MEC and provides only Hospital and Surgical Care. These plans are to provide a safety net for a major health event. They do have pre-existing condition limitations and a lifetime cap on the amount they will pay out but compared to the risk and cost of paying for a hospital stay yourself it is a good option. The last option is a comprehensive plan that combines both the Doctor and Hospital care in one plan. This is where if you are currently on an ACA plan you should compare the cost versus the benefits to see if you can save money with these plans.

I help people evaluate all these plans and determine which way to cover your healthcare is best for you and your family. There is no cost for this analysis. As healthcare cost continue to rise and budgets become more stretched it is critical that you evaluate one of the largest expenses that most people have in their budget. As a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER tm, I am always looking for ways to help people stretch their budget and accomplish their goals while protecting their families. Feel free to give me a call (828) 559-0299 or stop by my office in Marion on Main Street.

Steven W Gaito is a certified financial planner, owner of Faith Based Health Care and Retirement Resource Management, National Speaker on the topic of Social Security optimization, quoted in national publications like Money Magazine, US News and World Reports and Fox Business. Loves to educate and teach on financial topics like taxation of retirement accounts, long term care, healthcare, and efficient savings plans for small businesses. Has provided financial planning for missionaries through the International Mission Board.



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# YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

## US House of Representatives NC District 11

Rep. Meadows Introduces the "America Stands with Israel Act"

Washington, D.C. – Today, Rep. Mark Meadows (NC-11) introduced the America Stands with Israel Act—a bill to provide defense and security assistance to Israel.

The America Stands with Israel Act empowers the President of the United States to deal with imminent threats to Israel's survival in two ways. First, it authorizes the President to take whatever military steps may be necessary to protect Israel from an existing or imminent military threat. Second, it allows the President to send immediate and unrestricted defensive measures and services to Israel necessary to assist in its defense.

Rep. Meadows released the following statement on the bill:

"The Middle East region remains a hotbed of terrorism, largely dominated by a country hostile to America in Iran. Israel is one of America's closest and strongest allies. It is crucial that the Israeli-U.S. partnership remains strong for us to ever have hope for any stability in the Middle East. If Israel's survival is ever threatened by revisionist regimes, transnational criminal organizations, or extremist terrorists, the United States must stand ready to defend our friend with the full strength and force that our nation has to offer.

Today's global security environment is becoming more and more complex. The United States and Israel must work jointly to face modernized threats together.

I came to Congress to firmly stand for and defend our friend, Israel, and their right to exist as a peaceful, free, and prosperous nation. My hope is that this bill will be a step toward that end."



Congressman  
Mark Meadows  
202-225-6401  
www.meadows.house.gov

## NC House District 118



Rep. Michele D. Presnell  
Michele.Presnell@ncleg.net  
919-733-5732

**BUDGET IMPASSE STILL LOOMS** - Schools will be starting soon and it is only now that the teachers, staff, faculty, and others will begin to feel the "real effect" of operating without a current budget approved. As a result of the veto, we will be operating under a "CR" Continuing Resolution of a budget approved from the previous biennium. There will be no salary increases appropriated for Teachers and State Employees.

**BLUE RIDGE ELEMENTARY OPENS** - What a treat it was for me to visit recently. I got to spend several hours in this new crisp, clean, sparkling school. They put me right to work volunteering in the library, BOOKS, BOOKS, and more BOOKS to clean and assemble in the bookcases ready for the students! It was work, but meaningful work. This new school will incorporate Beelog, Bald Creek Elementary, and Clearmont Schools. I couldn't be more excited for the students, parents, and the new principal Andrea Allen.

### BILLS OF NOTE

**SB 380 - Reestablish NC Milk Commission**

The NC Milk Commission was initially established in 1953 and was repealed in 2004. This bill would re-establish the North Carolina Milk Commission. The Commission would be authorized to regulate the production and sale of milk in the State. This bill would provide needed support and relief to our dairy farmers. The bill was heard recently in the Ag Committee and unanimously was voted to move the bill forward to the House Judiciary Committee for a further hearing.

**SB 86 - Small Business Health Care Act**

This bill allows for small business, sole proprietors, and independent contractors to form large group plans that offer affordable insurance for association members. The bill has passed both Chambers and has been sent to the Governor.

**HB 615 - NC Consumer Fireworks Safety Act**

This bill would permit cities and counties to sell consumer fireworks. It would also levy a 5% excise tax on the sale of such fireworks. The bill ran into stiff opposition when discussed in the Reg. Reform Committee and ultimately the sponsor of the bill pulled it without a vote. The bill has now been sent to the Rules Committee. Many members spoke against this bill along with the Fire-Chiefs simply due to the danger of the products and lack of facilities to store fireworks once used.

We are continuing our sessions in hopes of getting passage on the Governor's veto of the budget bill. We are over a month into this process!

## NC Senate District 46



Sen. Warren Daniel  
Warren.Daniel@ncleg.net  
919-715-7823

Even as we wait on the state budget impasse to be resolved, there were some important pieces of legislation that were acted upon by the General Assembly.

First, Senate Bill 86 Small Business Health Care Act is now on the Governor's desk after passing both chambers with bipartisan support. The legislation allows small businesses, sole proprietors, and independent contractors to form large group health plans that offer affordable insurance for association members. These Association Health Plans (AHPs) would be subject to state and federal consumer protections, including covering those with preexisting conditions, and would expand access to coverage for working North Carolinians. The plans are expected to reduce the cost of healthcare coverage for hundreds of thousands of North Carolinians by treating small businesses the same as large corporations, through new insurance products regulated by the state Department of Insurance (DOI).

Another important piece of legislation is House Bill 74, Taxpayer Refund Act. If passed into law, the NC Department of Revenue would mail a refund to every taxpayer in the amount they paid in state taxes, up to a maximum of \$125 for an individual or \$250 for a couple. The refund will return \$663 million to the people and is not eating into any of the Reserve Fund appropriations that were in the vetoed budget. (The Reserve Fund currently has \$1.3 billion in it. The vetoed budget added another \$700 million.) The Taxpayer Refund Act instructs the Department of Revenue to issue checks as soon as possible. The Department must mail checks by December 15, 2019 for those who filed before August 1, 2019. As of publication, House Bill 74 is expected to pass the Senate and the House before going to Governor Cooper for his signature...or his veto.

The third piece of legislation was House Bill 370, Require Cooperation with ICE Detainers, which received final approval from both the state House of Representatives and Senate in late August and would require NC sheriffs to comply with federal immigration authorities when dealing with suspected illegal immigrants already in jail for committing other crimes that have detainer requests from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The bill authorizes the removal of a sheriff from office for failing to comply with ICE detainers and is supported by the North Carolina Sheriffs' Association as a "high priority," but Governor Cooper vetoed it anyway. Over 90 of the 100 sheriffs in NC supported the bill.



# God Bless America



# YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

## NC House District 86

### New Trails Provide New Opportunities



Rep. Hugh Blackwell  
919-733-5805

[Hugh.Blackwell@ncleg.net](mailto:Hugh.Blackwell@ncleg.net)

Recently, I was pleased to be the lead sponsor for state legislation that adds two trails to the State Trails System: the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail and the Wilderness Gateway Trail. The new law co-designates the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail with the federal government so that the trail is now both a state and federal one. The Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail is a project of the National Park Service to recognize and honor the important route of patriot militias in the Revolutionary War. It is located mostly in western North Carolina, with segments in both Tennessee and Virginia. The trail ends across the North Carolina line at the site of the Battle of Kings Mountain in South Carolina. Many historians refer to that battle as a turning point in the Revolutionary War in the South. It is my hope that North Carolina's authorization of this trail will result in mutually-beneficial collaboration between state and federal officials and lead to a partnership beneficial for the western North Carolina portion of the trail.

The Wilderness Gateway State Trail authorization directs the state's Department of Natural and Cultural Resources to establish it as a completely new trail. It would begin in Catawba County on the east and extend westward through Burke and beyond. The Jacob Fork and Henry Fork rivers both have their origins in South Mountain State Park in Burke County and flow east to a confluence in Catawba. Conceptually, the new trail would likely intersect or follow one of those rivers with loops and variations to provide access across and under I-40 to make it more user-friendly to those traveling or living north of the interstate. This new trail will hopefully create a "gateway" to the wonderful wilderness and recreation areas of the South Mountains. In turn, I hope this new trail will provide increased hiking, camping and other outdoor opportunities for both the citizens of our area and also for tourists.

## NC Senate District 47



Sen. Ralph Hise  
[Ralph.Hise@ncleg.net](mailto:Ralph.Hise@ncleg.net)  
919-733-3460

Achieving childhood literacy by third grade is foundational to desired educational outcomes for our children. I co-sponsored Senate Bill 438 – Excellent Public Schools Act of 2019 which was filed April 1st. Before the beginning of the school year, the bill was passed by both the Senate and House, ratified, then sent to the Governor on August 14th. As of this writing (7 days later), the Excellent Public Schools Act of 2019 is awaiting Gov. Roy Cooper's signature. The bill was created through coordination with Gov. Cooper's appointees to the State Board of Education. I certainly hope that Gov. Cooper will have signed the bill that his own administration was involved in writing. Possible outcomes are that he will sign the bill, not sign the bill (which will become law within 10 days without his signature), or veto the bill.

This bill, which focuses on early childhood literacy programs, was created with input from a wide range of educational stakeholders who looked with legislators at the best practices, as well as areas for improvement, here in North Carolina as well as in other states. Building on and fine-tuning the Read to Achieve Program, which was passed by the NC General Assembly in 2013, Excellent Public Schools Act of 2019 implements improvements and changes to several key areas which data shows contribute to early literacy in third grade, an important indicator of future academic success. Changes to the North Carolina Read to Achieve Program will do the following:

- Establish individual reading plans for students who need extra help in reading
- Establish a Digital Children's Reading Initiative
- Establish a Comprehensive Plan to Improve Literacy Instruction (Comprehensive Plan)
- Require the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching (NCCAT) to prioritize and provide aligned professional development in early learning and literacy instruction.
- Require educator preparation programs to provide literacy training in programs for elementary education teachers
- Require the literacy curriculum and instruction provided by local school administrative units to align with Read to Achieve and the Comprehensive Plan
- Require approval of plans for local reading camps
- Study phasing out some alternative assessments for third-grade reading
- Create a uniform reporting structure for Read to Achieve data
- Provide for continuing education credits related to literacy for certain reading camp instructors and allow retired K-3 teachers to serve as reading camp instructors
- Expand the Wolfpack WORKS program.

Please check the NC General Assembly website – [ncleg.gov](http://ncleg.gov), or feel free to call me at 919-733-3460, or email me at [ralph.hise@ncleg.net](mailto:ralph.hise@ncleg.net) if you would like to know the outcome of this important legislation focusing on early childhood literacy.

## Family Living

### Why Children Should Spend More Time With Their Grandparents

By State Point Media

(StatePoint) Play is important for everyone, no matter their age — and when grandparents, parents, and children play together, that's where the real benefits of unstructured fun are discovered.

"Playtime with adults of different ages is not just a chance for families to bond, these interactions with positive role models can help children develop a range of important social, language and problem-solving skills," says Dr. Amanda Gummer, child psychologist and an expert contributor to [TheGeniusofPlay.org](http://TheGeniusofPlay.org).

Adults benefit from playtime too. As one grows older, the free unstructured fun enjoyed in childhood is often replaced with structured activities like sports, card games and solving crosswords. Time spent with youngsters can keep adults young and give them a chance to relive more carefree days.

According to The Genius of Play, a national initiative whose mission is to raise awareness about the importance of play and help parents make play a critical part of raising their kids, here are three reasons why intergenerational play is good for



young children:

- Unstructured play tends to be collaborative, encouraging cooperation and honesty.
- Spending time with older adults helps children understand how aging works, and later accept their own aging.
- Grandparents are storytellers and their wisdom and experience can open children's horizons further, as well as ignite imagination and creativity.
- When it comes to adults, intergenerational play is beneficial in the following ways:

- Children bring innocence, joy, and laughter to any situation, helping adults reduce stress.
- Active, busy playtime can keep an older adult vital and healthy. Indeed, those that play with children burn more calories, experience fewer falls and become less reliant on walking aids, according to studies.
- Playtime is good for an aging adult's mental and emotional health. Games can help seniors maintain cognitive skills and retain memory, and the quality time with children can prevent feelings of loneliness and boost positivity.

Whether you're young, old or somewhere in between, these three tips from The Genius of Play can help you make the most of the time together:

- Share your favorite games with your grandchildren. From hide-and-seek to hula-hoops, introducing them to the games you played years ago is a great way to connect and make new memories.



## Preachers of The Gospel

By Dr. Tom Walker  
McDowell County



2 Corinthians 4:5 says, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

Being a preacher of the Gospel is not a mere vocation or a job opportunity, it is a calling from Almighty God. In 1 Timothy 1:12 the Apostle Paul said, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. According to what the Apostle Paul says in that verse, the ministry was not just something he chose, rather it was a calling from the Lord Jesus Christ." Being called, God counts on His servants to be faithful in preaching the Word, loving the people, while guarding and feeding the flock of God (the local church over which the Lord has assigned Him).

It has been my privilege to preach the Gospel of Christ now for some fifty-one and one-half years. Having experienced a call from God, I will keep on going on in the ministry when negative experiences are encountered. I have been a pastor in three different Baptist churches over those fifty-one and one-half years, but the good experiences have always dominated over the bad ones.

Preaching is a tremendous responsibility that no man should consider lightly. Many men who are in the ministry have been called by the Lord and some were not beckoned by the Lord to preach. Some take on the ministry on their own without God putting them into the ministry.

### Preach with A Born-Again Experience

If a man is to tell others how to be born again, he needs to have a born-again experience for himself (John 3:3). I know of an incident years ago when a pulpit committee was considering calling a certain man to be their pastor. He told this Baptist church search committee something like this: "I do not believe in being born again just like you do, but I have been trained in one of the best seminaries, and if you call me I will make you a good pastor." The tragedy is that some on the committee wanted to present him to the church for them to vote on him as their shepherd. What ignorance on the part of some!

### Preach with A Sense of Responsibility

Romans 14:12 says, "So then every one of us shall give an account of himself to God." One day we will answer to God for our ministry. Were we faithful to preach the whole counsel of God without the fear and favor of men? The pastor is accountable to the church, but his greatest accountability is with Almighty God Himself.

If we say we are "accountable" before God, that means we are liable to account

for our actions and our attitudes to Him. That should motivate us to do our best for the Master. One day when life is over when the last page of our lives is written, we will stand before the Lord in Heaven.

It is not only what we have done that will come into play on that day, but also the attitudes we had. Did we do what we did in life for the glory of God or did we do it to just further some agenda we had in mind? Did we help someone to advance ourselves or to help them along the way? Not only are our actions important in our accountability to God but our attitudes as well.

### Preach with a Clean Life

Isaiah 52:11, "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord." Note the words, "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord."

God's ministers should be physically clean and maintain the right attire and appearance before others, however, there is more in Isaiah 52:11 than that fact. We are to keep ourselves right spiritually.

What you do in private others may not see, still, God sees everything. Nothing is hidden from His gaze. Hebrews 4:13 tells us, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." We might hide wrong thoughts and deeds to others. In contrast, we cannot hide anything from our all-knowing and all-seeing God.

If God's servants do not keep themselves clean, they will forfeit God's power and the fullest of God's blessings, because the Holy Ghost is grieved in their lives (Eph. 4:30). God will not pour the richest of His blessings and the fullness of power into a life that is plagued by personal sins.

If a preacher does not have a clean life it will hinder his effectiveness for Christ.

### Preach with Divine Power

Zechariah 4:6 says, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." The way we accomplish things for time and eternity in the work of the Lord is to have the power of Christ upon our lives.

Acts 6:8 declares, "And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." How did Stephen accomplish great wonders and miracles among the people? He did it through faith in God and through the power of God.

In speaking of God's power, we make reference to His enabling us to be effective in our work for Him. Why preach and not be effective in doing so? We should greatly desire good results from our labor. That is impossible without the power of God moving and carrying us along in God's work.

In 1 Corinthians 2:4-5 the Apostle Paul wrote, "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

The Apostle depended upon God's power as he labored in the work of the Lord. Because of that power was successful in his spiritual labors and was one of the greatest men for the cause of Christ that ever lived.

### Preach with A Love For the People

Jesus told Peter in John 21:16 and 17 to "Feed my sheep." It is not enough to love to preach, but beyond that, we should love those to whom we do preach. Love means that you give yourself to take care of them. You seek the good of the congregation and their welfare, not merely your own.

That is why we do all three things Paul told young Timothy to do. We reprove, rebuke and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine (2 Timothy 4:2). Exhorting is easy but reproof and rebuking can be difficult to do, but it must be done. A man of God needs a balanced ministry of reproof, rebuking, and exhorting.

Love is tough. That means we do unpleasant things if it will better and further the members of the church. God has not called us to tiptoe through the tulips but to tell the truth.

### Preach with a Determination to Keep Going

God has blessed me to pastor the good folks at Zion Hill Baptist Church now for over 25 1/2 years. I do not plan to retire until they no longer need me or until my physical condition would not allow me to pastor any longer. If I do have to someday retire from being a pastor, as long as I have breath, I will continue to preach the Word of God. Don't let small, annoying matters that come up make you ready to throw in the towel and give up trying to minister.

### Preach with a Good Knowledge of the Bible

I will close our study today with a verse out of 2nd Timothy. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15). No man is qualified to lead God's people if he does not spend the proper time in study. With so many excellent study resources today, there is no excuse for being an unprepared preacher.

May God help us to be all we can for Him!

Tom Walker is President of Foothills Baptist Bible College and Pastor of Zion Hill Baptist Church in Marion, NC.

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Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. John 4:35



The Road Taken...

By Timothy W. Tron  
Burke County

Robert Frost so famously wrote in the final lines of his poem, "The Road Not Taken," "... Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."

As I stand at another crossroads of my own, God has prepared an unusual circumstance, in that both roads in my journey are "the one less traveled," regardless of which one I choose. Unlike Frost's divergence, where one path eventually proves morally significant over the other, with my choice, each has the potential to share the Word of God in the duties required. In other words, they both have the ability to become blessings to others, in that I will be serving the Lord on either journey; or that, yes, that fact truly makes all the difference.

As a matter of confirmation, I was afforded an opportunity to interview with a school the first part of this week. I had just got through sharing my testimony with a friend when the phone rang. Like Abraham at the altar, Isaac lying bound below his knife blade, the feeling of his muscles' tightening in his shoulders as he was about to drive the blade into his son; my path seemed perfectly clear, the decision to follow through with what God had provided was made, there was no turning back. But then, in my case, the phone rang. In Abraham's, God sent an Angel of the Lord. The parallel, as it ran through my mind, literally made me laugh as I answered the call. The caller was from a school that I had applied for many months ago, so it was a bit of a surprise when they called Monday morning asking if I could come in Tuesday for the interview. Knowing that God has prepared one path already, I was a bit hesitant, but thought that at least I should perform my due diligence.

"Was this God seeing how committed I was to finally accept the position at the Children's Home, and then providing me an opportunity to go on to a job that would allow me to more easily provide for my family?" "Was this like Abraham, where he could see that I was going to follow through with it, no matter the cost?" It was with these questions in mind that I drove to the school the next day for the interview. I felt wonderful, and it was a beautiful day; clear blue skies, low humidity, and a feeling inside that God was with me, no matter what. The interview went very well, and it seemed that I was always one step ahead on the panel's questions. They told me before I left that they would have an answer within a couple of days. By the next morning, Wednesday they had made a decision; one that didn't include me.

In many ways, the news was a relief. I thanked God out loud, for it was as if He had chosen for me. He knows us better than we know ourselves, and that being the case, would understand how hard it would be for me to decide between the two. Comforted once more that God is in control, I returned to work on the Retreat; there was always one more thing to be done.

Thursday came, and once more, there was another knock on the door. I opened the email, and there was another opportunity to interview with another potential employer that I had applied for many weeks earlier. They had moved my application to the next round of the selection process, which meant they were giving me 72 hours to perform the interview and submit it for review. Once again, making sure I performed my due diligence, I logged into the web site on Friday and began answering the question. Before beginning, I prayed that if this was God's way of holding the best until last, then so be it, but that I was already more than well pleased with the choice He had provided. The questions were not of the customary type, but rather, asked things like, "How do you grow and maintain your walk with Christ?" "What was your personal testimony with regard to accepting Christ, and how have you continued that walk?" In each case, there was so much I wanted to share, but the challenge was a one-minute time limit on each response. Needless to say, it took a lot of effort to pare down all that I wanted to say and get it to fit into the concise timeframe required.

Thankfully, there was no limit on the amount of time given to think about each question, and as I peered out the vista before me, I began to reflect on all that had transpired this past summer and how it had been one of the most challenging periods of waiting for God to speak to me in my life. My setting for the interview was at the Lodge, a place in our community that literally sits on top of a mountain that provides a 360-degree long-range view of mountains, as far as the eye can see. From my mountain top vantage, there was the feeling of being literally closer to God. One question after another, my reflection kept reminding me that I had never been alone, even when I felt the loneliest. Looking back, those solitary moments were steppingstones to the answers that would play out. In the waiting, there was the feeling that God was working on something big; something that would make it clear there was much to do in order to make it possible. Because, with God, nothing is impossible.

Finally, after the last question, I hit the submit button.

It was done.

Have you ever completed something and wondered how well it went? Did you get the sudden feeling that there many things you hadn't said that you could have? These questions and others began to form in my mind, but as they did, there was the comforting hand of God upon me, consoling me, assuring me that this was all that was needed. There was nothing left to be done.

Lowering my head in prayer, I began to thank God for the opportunity, regardless if I got the position or not. In my heart, it felt as if God was allowing me to see that He was covering all the bases. Should I finally, and ultimately land at the Children's Home, I will have the comforting sense of satisfaction knowing that all the other doors of possible paths had been covered and provided. Each one, even though they chose another candidate, allowed me to see that He was listening and that he had put me where he needed me the most. In the end, although I initially felt like Abraham at the altar, I realized that God was just letting me know



that there should be no other questions about his desire for me to be where he wants me to serve.

Talk about a feeling of God's hand upon your very heart; there is no greater satisfaction in this world than knowing you are being cared for by the Almighty God.

In every step of this long summer's journey, as my ability to provide for my family has diminished; when there was no more job, when we lost our medical insurance when health issues began to arise, God was with us. He was providing for us in each time of need; albeit finances, medical insurance, health, and strength.

The scripture from 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 keeps coming back to me. It can best summarize the recent course of events in, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

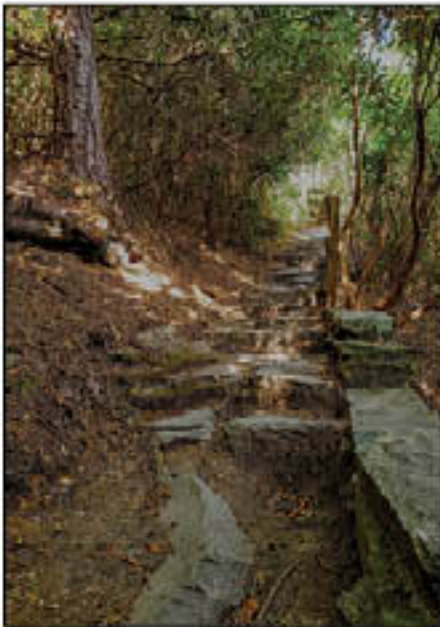
"I must decrease, so that he may increase," said John the Baptist, and for my walk of faith, it is the same. "When we are at our weakest, he is strongest," wrote the Apostle Paul, and it has never been clearer in my own life.

Where the next few days, weeks, or months will take me, I cannot say.


Ephesians 4:1 may be an indication of where God is leading, in that, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;"

But one thing I do know, wherever He leads, I will follow.

And in that, we can most assuredly say, "Thanks be to God."



Timothy W. Tron lives in Collettsville, NC. with his family. He is the former Director of the Trail of Faith in Valdese, where he still volunteers and helps with tours. He now teaches Math full time at Watauga High School in Boone. He is the author of a new Christian series, "Children of the Light," with the first book being, "Bruecke to Heaven," and his recent book, being the second, "The Light in the Darkness." He is an active blogger, artist, and musician. Timothy also has a BSEE from UF, and is a Lay Speaker. He can be reached at [twtron@live.com](mailto:twtron@live.com)



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September 2019 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 35



# Compassionate Care of Western North Carolina

By Ronnie Gregory  
Yancey County

WOW!!! Where to start? The RuthFest Cornbread Competition and Concert was a HUGE success! Over \$10,000 was raised from the outpouring of love and support for our organization and the patients/families we serve. We are humbled and so appreciative of the generosity and support from our community. RuthFest was truly a community effort!

There are so many thanks to convey, but thank you seems so inadequate. This event could never have been possible without the area individuals and business sponsors who donated raffle items, silent auction items and/or financial support. Thank you all so much!

Obviously, a Cornbread Competition and Concert must have cornbread entries, judges and music. Thank you to all the awesome cornbread entry participants and judges who had the difficult task of judging 27 different cornbreads! Thank you to Broke Holler and The Mid-Century Rockers for the entertainment. You guys were amazing!

It takes a lot of effort to pull an event like RuthFest off with such great success. To anyone and everyone who volunteered their time and/or efforts in any way; provided delicious food and desserts; attended the event; and/or participated in the raffles and silent auctions, thank you! You guys rock!

Special thanks to the organizers of the event. Lucy Doll, what can we say except We Love You! Vern Grindstaff, Compassionate Care WNC, Director of Development, you did an amazing job. We're so proud of you!

Thanks to Chad and the crew at the Burnsville Town Center for the use of the facility! You guys were very accommodating and we appreciate it.

Lastly, but most importantly. Thank you, Ruth Banks, for your positive impact and love for our community. It was so evident from the outpouring of love, testimonials, and stories shared throughout the event planning and event itself what an amazing person you were. Randy and Mike, thank you for allowing us to honor Ruth! It was an honor and privilege.

If anyone was left out, please know it wasn't intentional. We would like to thank everyone personally!!

So now for the Cornbread Competition Winners:

Best in Show: Birthday Cornbread Cake - Faye Presnell

Honorable Mention: Beverly Banks

3rd Place: Jim Edwards

2nd Place: Dan McNicol

1st Place: Kathy Ray

Everyone was a winner!

All proceeds from RuthFest is designated for patient care. No donations are used for administrative expenses. Your generosity helps us care for those within our community with no payer source. We turn no patients away for financial reasons.

I want to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you and appreciation to the Staff, Volunteers, and Board of Directors of Compassionate Care WNC. You guys amaze me how you unselfishly give of yourselves and always put our patients and families first. Six-year recipients of Hospice Honors is a true testimony of the excellence in the care you provide daily. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of this amazing team.

Plans for next year's RuthFest will begin soon!!!

Much love and appreciation.

Ronnie Gregory is from Burnsville, NC. He is the Executive Director of Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care.



# Anchored Ministry

## God's Birth of Anchored

By Carol Hicks  
Burke County



The birth of my middle child, Alex, would forever change our family's path in this life; although, we didn't know it at the time. Over the course of the first two years of his life, we started a journey that caused fear and heartache with lots of God's blessings in between. Alex was born with approximately 55 genes missing off chromosome 19. Technically, there is not a name for this particular chromosome abnormality. His speech is difficult to understand, and he'll need care for his entire life. We made the mistake of looking up chromosome disorders on the Internet- That was a mistake. Bad news after bad news. We ran from doctor to doctor looking for answers on how to help him. We tried everything! We were so scared and didn't understand. We were sad when we thought about what the future held for Alex and us. Since fear can be paralyzing, we knew we couldn't allow this fear to grip us anymore; so, we surrendered to God. That is exactly what He had been waiting for us to do. We started memorizing verses such as Jeremiah 29:11 and Psalm 139:14 and claiming them over our son. As we have watched Alex grow, God has blessed him with a heart of prayer. He is a prayer warrior. Anytime he hears sirens- no matter what time of day, he prays. Now, he doesn't even have to hear a siren, anytime he sees someone stopped on the side of the road or in trouble, he prays. When someone is sick, he prays. He has taught us to look for opportunities to pray for people. Of course, we also prayed to God to heal him. We read over and over of God's miraculous healings. We prayed that He would unloose Alex's tongue so that he could talk to us and sing praises to the Lord. Oh, how we wanted this for our son. For 13 years, this was our prayer. But one day, God told us in our spirits that He had a bigger plan in mind. Starting with a tiny seed in our hearts, we started praying and seeking God's will. This tiny seed would later reveal that God wanted us to take a step of faith to create a ministry at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church for kids with special needs and their families called Anchored, based on the Scripture- Hebrews 6:19. We didn't feel at all qualified for this endeavor; however, God has reassured us that He will do the impossible through us. Isn't it just like God? He asks us to do the impossible so that we know it wasn't us, but it is all Him. God wants to take the ordinary person and do remarkable things through him or her- all for His honor and glory! He just asks us to take a step of faith and believe He is who He says He is. This process of transformation had to happen inside of our hearts before God birthed Anchored. We learned to believe God in every area of our lives. He had to prune us to prepare us for this ministry. Since God is and has been our anchor throughout our earthly journey and has given us hope and peace, we know He will be an anchor for the families this ministry will bring into our church. The goal of this ministry is to empower and provide support to individuals and their families in an environment where individuals, regardless of their abilities, can grow into a relationship with Jesus Christ. We want God to be the anchor in other lives as well! We praise God and thank Him every day that He uses the ordinary person to do His amazing work! He constantly walks beside us every day to lead and guide us. We have seen God's supernatural hand in helping to launch this ministry. He continues to provide resources and funds for the classroom. Pleasant Hill Baptist Church has been very supportive and involved in raising funds as well as God's hand through two grants that were awarded to us through the NC Baptist Association and Joni and Friends. We are excited to begin this ministry opportunity for kids with special needs and their families. We look forward to the future in partnering with churches that share a common interest in special needs ministries to work together as a team.

Carol & Alex Hicks attend Pleasant Hill Baptist Church and have started the Anchored ministry.



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## Place to Start

By John McCoury  
Roan Mountain Tennessee

The Old Testament book of Nehemiah, along with Ezra and Esther, covers the period after the Babylonian captivity when Israel had returned to Jerusalem and had begun again the worship of Jehovah in the restored temple. Ezra, the priest, led an early return to Israel and restored worship in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem. Nehemiah, who was a contemporary of Ezra, led a later return. Nehemiah was a layman, a butler to the Persian emperor, Artaxerxes I. Persia is now the modern nation of Iran. Nehemiah is the historic account of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, which took place in fifth century before Christ. But Nehemiah did more than rebuild a wall. This book is also the story of restoring people from ruin and despair to a new walk with God. Jerusalem is not only a historic city, that for centuries has been the center of the life of the nation of Israel (and, in fact, the center of the biblical record), it is also a symbolic city. Jerusalem is also used in a pictorial sense throughout the Scriptures. What it pictures is the place where God desires to dwell. When God first designated to King David that Jerusalem was the place where He wanted him to build the temple, he was told that this was the place where God would dwell among His people. However, it is only a picture—it is not the actual place where God dwells—for, according to the New Testament, people are to be the dwelling place of God. God seeks to dwell in the human spirit. That is the great secret that humanity has largely lost today but which New Testament Christianity seeks to restore. Paul's great statement in the letter to the Colossians is, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27). This is God's provision and desire for us. Jerusalem-in-ruins, therefore, is a picture of a life that has lost its defenses against attack and lies open to repeated hurt and misery. The book of Nehemiah depicts the way of recovery from breakdown and ruin to a condition of peace, security, restored order, and usefulness. When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For many days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Nehemiah 1:4 Nehemiah clearly has a deep sense of personal concern. He is willing to face the facts, to weep over them and tell God about them. That is always the place to begin. There is nothing superficial about this. A famous song says, Don't worry, Be happy. But that is mere salve over deep cancer. What is needed is to honestly face the ruin, whatever it may be, and, without blaming or attempting to involve somebody else, telling it all to God. God always welcomes a broken spirit and a contrite heart. Follow the pattern of Nehemiah's prayer. First, he recognized the character of God. The ruin you are concerned with may not always be yours personally. You feel like Nehemiah, and you want to weep and mourn and tell God about it. That is always the place to start, for God is a responsive God. He gives attention to the prayers of His people. The second thing Nehemiah did was to repent of all personal and corporate sins. This was honestly facing his own guilt. Notice the absence of self-righteousness. He did not say, Lord, I am thinking of those terrible sinners back there in Jerusalem. Be gracious to them because they have fallen into wrong actions. No, he put himself into this picture, saying, I confess before you, Lord, the sins of myself and my father's house. There was no attempt to blame others for this. It was a simple acknowledgment of wrong. Then, third, Nehemiah reminded God of His gracious promises. In the book of Deuteronomy 28-30 Moses prophetically outlines the entire history of Israel. He said they would disobey God; they would be scattered among the nations; they would go into exile. But if they would turn and acknowledge their evil, God would bring them back to the land. Nehemiah reminded God of that gracious promise. The fourth thing Nehemiah did was request specific help to begin this process. It was not going to be easy, but he knew what he had to do. It was going to take the authority of the top power in the whole empire. That was not easy to arrange. But Nehemiah believed that God would help him. And so, he started to pray and asked for grace and strength to carry out the steps that were necessary to begin recovery. Thank You, Father, for this wonderfully practical book that sets out a safe guideline to recovery and usefulness. Help me to begin where Nehemiah began: to tell the whole story in Your ear and thus begin the process of recovery.

John McCoury is pastor of Evergreen church in Roan Mountain, Tennessee and also chaplain at Roan Highlands Nursing Center.

*He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame. Proverbs 10:5*



valid, biblical explanation for why Jesus had to die.

So, just how does Jesus fit the requisites of the "CV" set some 1,500 years before He came? In the New Testament, we find that Jesus was male and first-born (e.g. Luke 2:2). He was born of a virgin with the Holy Spirit being the 'father' (Luke 1:26-38) to break the line of inherited sin, and that He was without blemish (Colossians 1:22; 1 Peter 1:19). He was also human and divine, so we have a complete match!

However, this is where the creation-versus-evolution issue, and the associated issue of long ages, ceases to be "irrelevant" but is inexorably interlinked with the authority of the Bible, Christology and, ultimately, our own redemption.

Quite simply, to suggest the account of Adam and Eve (and the associated issue of sin and death) is a myth, or needs "reinterpretation", is both a direct attack on God and the authority of Scripture, and also brings into question the whole purpose of Jesus' death. It is an attack on both the Old and New Testaments since Luke traces Jesus' genealogy back to Adam (Luke 3:23-38), Paul refers to Jesus as the "last Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:45) and there are other New Testament references to Adam (1 Timothy 2:13-14; Jude 1:14). Sin, and with it the introduction of death, is also linked with Adam in the New Testament (Romans 5:12). So, if Adam is not a literal, historical figure, then effectively nothing of the Bible can be taken at face value, a fact that atheists seem to appreciate more than many evangelicals! Even worse, the whole justification for Jesus coming to die for us is destroyed and, with it, our redemption.

That only leaves long ages prior to Genesis 1:2—but for what purpose? If we are to accept the Bible from the creation of Adam onwards, why would we even question God with the remaining few verses?

But can God still have used evolution and what about long ages?

If Adam and Eve are historical figures, then clearly there is no need for evolution from that point on as evidenced by Jesus' genealogy in Luke. Furthermore, if there was no death prior to Adam (Romans 5:12), there is no room for evolution at all—it is completely ruled out.

That only leaves long ages prior to Genesis 1:2—but for what purpose? If we are to accept the Bible from the creation of Adam onwards, why would we even question God with the remaining few verses? Why would anyone want to concoct a "gap" between Genesis 1:1 and 2, or want to see the days in Genesis as being "God's days, not man's days" or some other "explanation", denying the straight reading of Genesis? The only reason is purely to adopt a non-biblical, non-supernatural, humanistic worldview into one's theology, which requires long ages for evolution to work!

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is the "last Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:45) who came to die for our sins and, by dying on the cross, has provided us with the means of being reconciled to God and to be able to spend eternity with Him. As Paul says in Galatians 1:6-7 any other "gospel" is not really a Gospel!

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**Women's Evening group meet @ Grassy Creek Baptist Church, Spruce Pine 5:45pm-7:15pm**

**Men's Begin Tuesday September 10**

**Men meet @ Higgins Methodist Church, Burnsville 6:55pm-8:25pm**

**Contact:**

**Nancy Ball (843)597-1196 (Day Women)**

**Angie Woody (828)467-3830 (Evening Women)**

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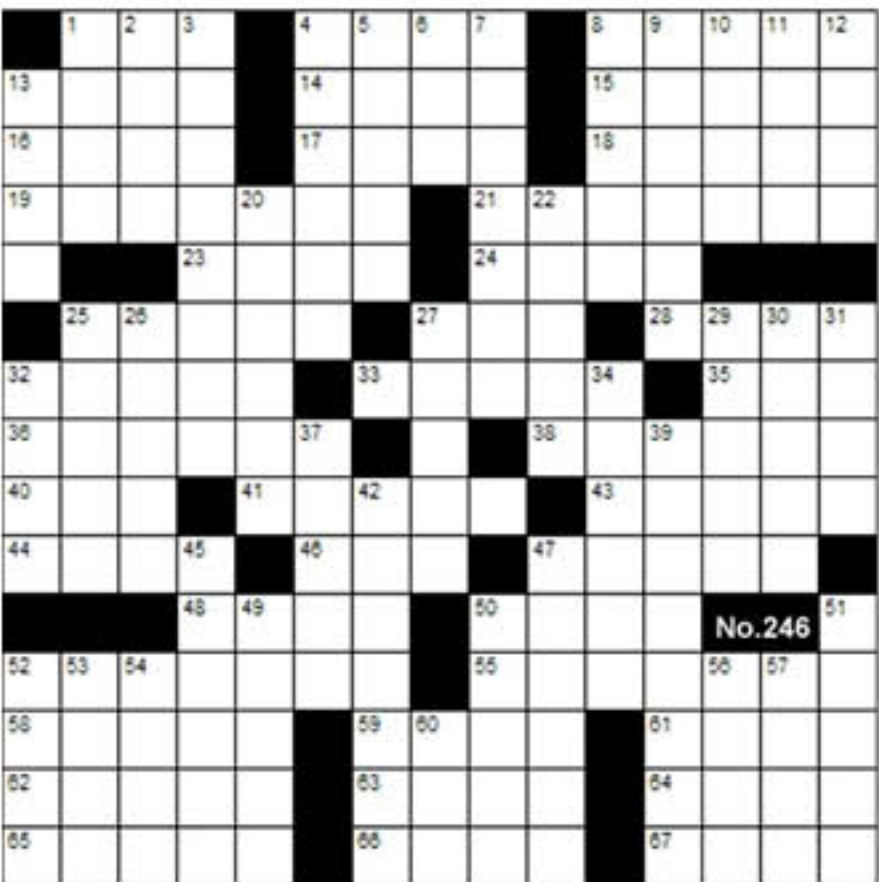


# Crossword

## ACROSS

1 back end of Peter's boat  
 4 A \_\_\_ answer turneth away  
 wrath (Prov 15:1) KJV  
 8 But Jesus \_\_\_ made no  
 reply, and Pilate was  
 amazed (Mark 15:5)  
 13 let us consider how we may  
 \_\_\_ one another on toward  
 love (Heb 10:24)  
 14 Likewise every good \_\_\_  
 bears good fruit (Matt 7:17)  
 15 and be killed, and after \_\_\_  
 days rise again (Mark 8:31)  
 16 lest he \_\_\_ thee to the judge,  
 and the judge deliver thee  
 (Luke 12:58) KJV  
 17 The fear of the LORD \_\_\_  
 length to life (Prov 10:27)  
 18 the next morning they \_\_\_  
 and worshiped before the  
 LORD (1 Sam 1:19)  
 19 Oh, that you would bless me  
 and \_\_\_ my territory  
 (1 Chron 4:10)  
 21 To one he gave five \_\_\_ of  
 money, to another two  
 (Matt 25:15)  
 23 Then will the lame leap like  
 a \_\_\_ (Isa 35:6)  
 24 they are not plagued by  
 human \_\_\_ (Ps 73:5)  
 25 Suppose he has a violent  
 son, who \_\_\_ blood  
 (Ezek 18:10)  
 27 How \_\_\_ is the candle of the  
 wicked put out! (Job 21:17)  
 KJV  
 28 They will neither \_\_\_ nor  
 destroy on all my holy  
 mountain (Isa 11:9)  
 32 Jesus crossed to the far \_\_\_  
 of the Sea of Galilee  
 (John 6:1)  
 33 in the morning there was a  
 \_\_\_ of dew around the camp  
 (Ex 16:13)  
 35 My beloved is like a \_\_\_ or  
 a young hart (Song 2:9)  
 36 with a blue cord on each \_\_\_  
 (Num 15:38)  
 38 I \_\_\_: Let no one take me  
 for a fool (2 Cor 11:16)  
 40 just as \_\_\_ was deceived by  
 the serpent's cunning  
 (2 Cor 11:3)  
 41 something rotten, like a  
 garment eaten by \_\_\_  
 (Job 13:28)  
 43 lips that speak knowledge  
 are \_\_\_ jewel (1,4)  
 (Prov 20:15)  
 44 For I was an hungred, and  
 ye gave me \_\_\_  
 (Matt 25:35) KJV  
 46 she answered and said unto  
 him, \_\_\_, Lord  
 (Mark 7:28)  
 47 he must deny himself and  
 take up his \_\_\_ and follow  
 me (Matt 16:24)  
 48 The young lions \_\_\_ after  
 their prey (Ps 104:21)  
 50 behold a man riding upon  
 \_\_\_ horse (1,3)  
 (Zech 1:8)  
 52 and to decide all cases of  
 dispute and \_\_\_ (Deut 21:5)  
 55 If a man \_\_\_ a virgin who is

not pledged to be married  
 (Ex 22:16)  
 58 Nevertheless he \_\_\_ to the  
 sins of Jeroboam  
 (2 Kings 3:3)  
 59 ninth letter of Greek  
 alphabet  
 61 brought the ass, and the \_\_\_,  
 and put on them (Matt 21:7)  
 (KJV)  
 62 He then fastened a \_\_\_ to  
 every pair of tails  
 (Judg 15:4-5)  
 63 The body is a \_\_\_, though it  
 is made up of many parts  
 (1 Cor 12:12)  
 64 now therefore \_\_\_ thou  
 somewhat the grievous  
 servitude (2 Chr 10:4)  
 65 Pleasant words are as an  
 honeycomb, \_\_\_ to the  
 soul (Prov 16:24)  
 66 if the \_\_\_ has faded and  
 has not spread in the skin  
 (Lev 13:6)  
 67 Terrors startle him on every  
 side and dog his every \_\_\_  
 (Job 18:11)  
 DOWN  
 1 In \_\_\_ it shall be made  
 with oil (1,3) (Lev 6:21)  
 2 Stephen, a man \_\_\_ of God's  
 grace and power, did great  
 wonders (Acts 6:8)  
 3 the \_\_\_ shall tread out no  
 wine in their presses  
 (Isa 16:10) KJV  
 4 The structure surrounding  
 the temple was built in  
 ascending \_\_\_ (Ezek 41:7)  
 5 but a man of understanding  
 and knowledge maintains  
 \_\_\_ (Prov 28:2)  
 6 But you would be \_\_\_ with  
 the finest of wheat  
 (Ps 81:16)  
 7 Do not \_\_\_ against your  
 neighbor without cause  
 (Prov 24:28)  
 8 you will go out and leap like  
 calves released from the \_\_\_  
 (Mal 4:2)  
 9 You will \_\_\_ the mountains  
 and crush them (Isa 41:15)  
 10 It had large \_\_\_ teeth; it  
 crushed and devoured its  
 victims (Dan 7:7)  
 11 \_\_\_ there be debates,  
 envyings (2 Cor 12:20) KJV  
 12 fat things full of marrow, of  
 wines on the \_\_\_ well  
 refined (Isa 25:6) KJV  
 13 Noah had three sons: \_\_\_,  
 Ham and Japheth (Gen 6:10)  
 20 To \_\_\_ them that were  
 under the law (Gal 4:5)  
 22 He shall not \_\_\_ it, nor  
 change it, a good for a bad  
 (Lev 27:10) KJV  
 25 a sharp sword and use it as a  
 barber's razor to \_\_\_ your  
 head (Ezek 5:1)  
 26 One of the minor prophets  
 27 They make many promises,  
 take false \_\_\_ and make  
 (Hos 10:4)



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29 Forts and towers in the  
 wooded \_\_\_ (2 Chron 27:4)  
 30 like a lion in the forest she  
 \_\_\_ at me (Jer 12:8)  
 31 you devise injustice, and  
 your hands \_\_\_ out violence  
 (Ps 58:2)  
 32 And there shall come forth a  
 rod out of the \_\_\_ of Jesse  
 (Isaiah 11:1)  
 34 Brought up or raised  
 (Lam 2:22)  
 37 Only the tribe of Judah  
 remained \_\_\_ to the house  
 of David (1 Kings 12:20)  
 39 land that \_\_\_ thorns and  
 thistles is worthless  
 (Heb 6:8)  
 42 I, \_\_\_, who wrote down this  
 letter, greet you in the Lord  
 (Rom 16:22)  
 45 while the meal was being  
 prepared, he fell into a \_\_\_  
 (Acts 10:10)  
 47 For, behold, I \_\_\_ new  
 heavens and a new earth  
 (Isaiah 65:17)

49 We \_\_\_ always to thank  
 God for you, brothers (2  
 Thess 1:3)  
 50 See how your enemies are  
 \_\_\_, how your foes rear  
 their heads (Ps 83:2)  
 51 there is only \_\_\_  
 between me and death (1,4)  
 (1 Sam 20:3)  
 52 The \_\_\_ of the sinful nature  
 are obvious (Gal 5:19)  
 53 The LORD is \_\_\_ to anger,  
 abounding in love  
 (Num 14:18)  
 54 the testimony of the LORD  
 is \_\_\_, making wise the  
 simple (Ps 19:7)  
 56 Who can strip off his outer  
 \_\_\_? (Job 41:13)  
 57 Salvation is found in no one  
 \_\_\_, for there is no other  
 name (Acts 4:12)  
 60 Eber, Misham, Shemed who  
 built \_\_\_ and Lod  
 (1 Chron 8:12)

Solution on page 14





Dave Says

By Dave Ramsey

Dear Dave,  
Why do I need a will if I'm still young and haven't acquired a lot of wealth?  
Laura



Dear Laura,  
In a case like yours, you don't need a complicated will. But you do need an inexpensive, basic will. The larger and more complicated your estate is, the more you'd spend on estate planning and a will in order to ensure everything is properly addressed—and to keep the government's hands-off everything.  
Let's say you're in your early- to mid-twenties and single. You have a car and a bank account, and that's it. In this kind of scenario, it's going to be easy to work through your estate. But it's going to take your parents—or whoever's left—a whole lot longer to get those few simple transactions taken care of if you don't have a will in place.  
The other thing you'll always want to have in your will package is a healthcare power of attorney directive. This includes things like who's going to make medical decisions for you if you're unable to make decisions for yourself. As a part of this, you'd want to fill out the paperwork on whether to disconnect life support systems in the event of a coma. These things aren't fun to think about, but doing it will take a huge burden off the people you love. And all this becomes even more important if you have children because the state will step in and decide what happens to them if you don't.  
Having these things laid out ahead of time, and sharing them with your family and close friends, is a very thoughtful and mature thing to do for those who would be left behind in the event of your death. They're already going to be distraught and grieving, and you don't want to make it worse by leaving them with a lot of important, difficult decisions to make.  
—Dave

Dear Dave,  
My wife and I are on Baby Step 2, and the only debt we have is \$90,000 in student loans. We bring home about \$90,000 a year. In addition to this, we have almost \$60,000 in equity in our home. We also have a toddler, plus another baby on the way. Do you think we should sell the house, and rent for a few years while using the money from the sale of the house to pay down our student loan debt?  
Chris

Dear Chris,  
No, I wouldn't sell your home in this situation. You're going to be out of debt in a couple of years or so, anyway. You'll just have to lean into it and make sure you're living on a strict, written budget. I'm talking about no vacations and no eating out. You shouldn't see the inside of a restaurant unless you're working there. And the new kid's crib may have to come from a garage sale, but so what? Mine did, too. Want to know something else? I survived without having a rich kid's nursery, and so did my kids.  
There's a price to be paid anytime you decide to get serious about gaining control of your money and cleaning up a financial mess you've made. You're going to have to work like maniacs and have no lives for a while. That might even mean picking up a part-time job at night or on weekends. You've got a tough couple of years ahead of you, but I think it's worth the tradeoff.  
Keep your house.  
—Dave

Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including *The Total Money Makeover*. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 14 million listeners each week on 600 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at [daveramsey.com](http://daveramsey.com) and on Twitter at [@DaveRamsey](https://twitter.com/DaveRamsey).

*But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth [it]; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Matthew 13:23*

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## The Jesus Christ Lizard

By Christy Lowman  
Burke County

Did you know that there is a lizard named after Jesus? The Basilisk lizard's nickname is "the Jesus Christ lizard." Can you guess why?

The Basilisk lizards can grow up to 2 feet, this is including the length of their tail. Their life span is about seven years if grown in captivity. They are related to the Iguana. The adult males have three crests, one each on their head, back and tail. The female has one crest on her head and can lay as many as 20 eggs at a time.

The Basilisk lizard lives in Central America and South America in the rain forests around streams and rivers. It lives mostly in the trees that hang over bodies of water. When a predator is after them while they are in the trees the lizard will fall from the tree limb to the water below and run across the water to the other side to escape.

Yes, you read that correctly! The Basilisk lizard is named after Jesus because it can run on water! They are able to do this from hatching age to adult lizard. The younger lizards are able to run the distance of 10-20 meters on the water surface while the adults can only run a few meters before sinking in the water because of their weight. They are also able to run supernatural speeds of almost 7mph on land and 5mph on water. This helps "the Jesus Christ lizard" be able to escape its predators and catch food. This is why they will always be found near the banks of a body of water. They are also able to hide under leaves on the ground and stay motionless for a long time.

Would you like to know how this lizard is able to travel on the water's surface? Being lightweight, and super-fast are just two of the contributors. The Basilisk lizard also has very long toes and small flaps of skin on their feet that open up in the water creating little air pockets under the lizard's feet lifting them to the top of the water. The lizard then pumps, and churns their legs rapidly like a bicycle, hitting their feet hard on the water's surface. If the lizard does sink in the water, there are no worries, they are strong swimmers and can stay underwater for up to 30 minutes!

All these factors are how the Basilisks can run on water. Jesus however, wasn't equipped with any special features. He came to earth as an ordinary person like you and me.

Did you know that it is a miracle that Jesus walked on water? Scientists have calculated that a person weighing at 175 pounds would have to run at 65 mph to stay afloat as the basilisk lizard does. But Jesus was able to walk on the top of the water with no effort at all! Jesus performed many miracles and answered many prayers while He was on earth. Did you know that He is still doing these things even today? Think about it. Can you remember a time that God answered your prayer? Or have you witnessed a miracle in your life or someone else's? If you can't think of an example look closely over the past week. I bet you will see God working in your life, answering prayers or performing miracles on your behalf. Sometimes these are not as large as walking on water but are very small. Look closely! Also never be afraid to ask God to answer your prayers or to perform a miracle for you. Remember the Bible says "I am the Lord, the God of all people. Nothing is too difficult for me." (Jeremiah 32:27)

At the same time, "God added his witness to theirs by performing all kinds of miracles and wonders and by distributing the gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his will." (Hebrews 2:4)

Dear Lord, we praise You and thank You for the answered prayers and miracles that You perform for us and others. We are so thankful that You are still in the business of doing these things for us! I pray that You reveal and show Yourself to each child. Let them see how you are working in their lives! In Jesus's precious name I pray. Amen

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Christy Lowman is a Christian author and illustrator that lives in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains with her husband and two children. She enjoys writing and illustrating books for all ages. Some of her short stories are published with Guideposts and HCI. Christy gives all the glory to God in everything she does. A portion of every book sold from the Small Bible Character Series will be donated to battle human trafficking. If you enjoy her books, 'like' her author page on Facebook and let her know! You can buy her books at [https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp\\_byline\\_sr\\_book\\_1?ie=UTF8&field-author=Christy+Lowman&search-alias=books&text=Christy+Lowman&sort=relevancerank](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&field-author=Christy+Lowman&search-alias=books&text=Christy+Lowman&sort=relevancerank) You can reach her at <https://www.facebook.com/authorChristyLowman/> or [christysoaps@yahoo.com](mailto:christysoaps@yahoo.com).



## Beside Still Waters

By Ken and Jan Merop  
Avery County

Three boys and their Dad out for a hike that led to a quiet lake with not even a ripple; it was a perfect day.

Then Dad said, "Watch this."

Picking up a smooth stone he sailed it out over the water where it skipped along making ripples appear that hadn't been there before.

"How do you do that?" they chorused. "I want to try!" they each exclaimed.

And, so, the skipping rock lessons began. Some just plopped into the water and sank. Others sent out a ripple or two. But, it took time for them to master the technique.

However, once they did, there almost weren't enough stones for them to skip. One after another he heard, "Watch me! Watch this one!"

The times when I was along, I loved sitting back and watching this display. I even tried it a time or two. But, the guys always had me beat.

That memory of still waters and ripples makes me think of the verse of Scripture found in Psalm 46: 10, NLT that says, "Be still, and know that I am God."

Besides our bodies being in constant motion, what other parts of us seem to go non-stop? I think it is our minds. If we aren't preoccupied with worries, to-do lists, schedules, meetings and more, we're trying to solve problems for our children and others. There's hardly a few moments when we can be as still and undisturbed as lake water on a calm day.

We have come beside still waters while hiking in Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado. These lakes so high into the mountains are gifts of God to each of us when we unexpectedly come upon them. Mirror images of trees and clouds reflect back in the stillness.

I wonder if God would like us to quiet our minds for at least a few minutes a day so that He can gently drop His thoughts across our minds. Think of the ripples such thinking would create...ripples of purpose, meaning, and values; ripples of love, forgiveness, mercy, and grace.

As such thoughts skipped across our minds from Him, we would be "fixing our thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable," as it says in Philippians 4: 8, NLT. If we continue to receive His thoughts, we will be thinking about things that are excellent and praiseworthy.

Then our minds will once again become like that peaceful lake reflecting Him clearly because "the God of peace will be with you." Selah

### REFLECTION

*Beneath majestic snow-dusted mountains,  
golden Aspen and Evergreens cast a reflection  
that feeds the eyes...while the Creator  
imprints His majesty on the soul.  
Let's reflect God's resplendence to others.  
"I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your  
Majesty, and on Your wondrous works."  
Psalm 145: 5*



Ken and Jan love residing in the mountains of Avery County. Visit Jan's new blog @ [pauseandconsider.net](http://pauseandconsider.net), Journeying with Jan; and Ken's photos at [kenmeropphotography.com](http://kenmeropphotography.com). [kenmeropphotography.com](http://kenmeropphotography.com) is currently off-line. But Ken's photos can still be seen at [ken-merop.pixels.com](http://ken-merop.pixels.com).



How Churches and Families Can Partner in Making Disciples

By Stephanie Jackson

"When I get home, I am going to talk to Jesus!" my redheaded preschooler son called out as we pulled out of the church parking lot after another robust Sunday at church. My husband and I glanced at each other. I responded, "Yes, little love, you can talk with Jesus anywhere at any time." We smiled because we knew these few words were God's gift to our family. They represented a partnership between our home and our church — one that we treasure, and one that we cannot parent without.

Busy family units

Hudson Taylor was a 19th-century missionary who said, "All of our difficulties are only platforms for the manifestation of His grace, power, and love." Many families that attend church each Sunday are in a season of life that is ruled by a difficulty called perpetual busyness. It's a season that is burdensome and overwhelming. Busyness can overflow into all areas of family life, and families need ministry leaders to come alongside them in support and encouragement. Therefore, children's ministry leaders must ask how they can partner with families who are in the grip of busy lives.

Called to encourage

Psalm 78:4 serves as a humbling reminder to those of us leading children in our churches. It reminds us of our calling, "Tell the coming generation the praise-worthy deeds of the Lord, and His might, and the wonders He has done." What a weighty and joyous gift that we have been given! Children's ministers hold a great responsibility to partner with parents in this task — the task is marked with the highest stakes imaginable but also the greatest eternal rewards.

Children will spend only an hour or two, at most, in church each week. While the timing may be short, it's invaluable in the hearts and minds of the kids. Take every opportunity to preach the gospel in every situation. Consider how your team interacts during parent pick-up. Use pick-up time to inform families of what their children learned at church while encouraging them to keep the conversation moving during the week.

Children's ministry leaders may have only an hour or two on Sundays, but parents have 167. Ministry leaders should be parents' greatest encouragers on Sundays and throughout the week as well.

Ministry leaders should be parents' greatest encouragers on Sundays and throughout the week as well.

Working together

As a ministry leader, you can equip your families for discipleship opportunities that parents might have when they are sitting at home, walking along the road, when they lie down and when they get up.

Ministry can be hard, and there is no perfect recipe. As you pray and ask how God may lead you to overhaul your family discipleship strategy, think about the kids in your ministry as you would an unreached people group. What do they love to listen to? Where do they hang out? Why do they read certain book series? Remind your parents to do what works best, when it works best, and how it works best to lead their kids to Jesus and grow in their relationship with our Savior.

J.C. Ryle once said, "He who has trained his children for heaven, not for the earth, for God rather than for man — he is the parent who will be called wise at the last." Ministry leaders, you are tasked to encourage and equip parents as they strive to train up their children for heaven as they are sitting at home, walking along the road, when they lie down, and when they get up. Do not grow weary!

Stephanie is the director of Children's Minister at North Wake Church.



How to Keep Back to School Time from Busting Your Budget

By Rachel Cruze



I remember as I was growing up, I always thought school was free. I mean, I understood that private school costs money, but I went to public school, and I didn't think a whole lot about the expenses associated with it.

Now that I'm older, I realize how much parents actually spend on their kids when they go back to school. In fact, the National Retail Federation reports parents plan to spend \$696 on back-to-school supplies this year. Isn't that crazy?

There are the obvious school supplies like notebooks, markers (my favorite!), and backpacks. And as a kid, I always needed new clothes and shoes. But there are not-so-obvious ones that nickel-and-dime you to death.

One of my coworkers told me that he had to buy football gear for his son that totaled \$260. Understandably, it gave him a bit of sticker shock. There's nothing wrong with paying for this kind of thing if you have the money, but you still need to have a plan for how you're going to pay for it.

As the school year is gearing back up, it's important to make a list of things you need to budget for. So, think about these categories and come up with a dollar amount you plan to spend in each one:

- School supplies
- Uniforms
- Sports equipment
- Fall clothes and shoes
- Meal plans
- Fees for clubs, sports, band, and other extracurricular activities

I'd like to point out that this is a great time of year to teach your kids that money isn't in infinite supply. Teach them the value of working within a budget! They don't need the trendy name-brand shoes or the flashy notebook that costs more. You're setting your kids up to win when they understand money can—and often does—run out.

Now, if you've already busted your back-to-school budget, here's what you can do:

Get your budget back on track. Where can you cut back this month to make up for the overspending? Is there anything lying around the house you can sell? Can you pick up some extra hours at work?

Plan for future school expenses. Once school is back in session, there will be other costs that come up. School pictures, yearbooks, field trips, and more extracurricular activities are just around the corner. And now you know how to get ahead of them!

I know paying for all these school expenses can feel overwhelming, but if you plan ahead and pay with cash, you'll feel a lot better when September rolls around!

About Rachel Cruze

As a #1 New York Times best-selling author and host of The Rachel Cruze Show, Rachel helps people learn the proper ways to handle money and stay out of debt. She's authored three best-selling books, including Love Your Life, Not Theirs and Smart Money Smart Kids, which she co-wrote with her father, Dave Ramsey. You can follow Cruze on Twitter and Instagram at @RachelCruze and online at rachelcruze.com, youtube.com/rachelcruze or facebook.com/rachelramseycruze.

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A New Look at Age-old  
Prodigal Son Story  
By Matt Carter

NASHVILLE, TENN. — Though the prodigal son story is one of Jesus' most well-known parables, pastor and author Matt Carter believes Christians need to take a fresh look at it to better comprehend God's radical love and forgiveness for his children.

In his new book, "The Long Walk Home: Discovering the Fullness of Life in the Love of the Father" (September 17, 2019, B&H Publishing Group), Carter shows readers how Jesus addresses core questions that often lie below the surface for many Christians, such as: "Does God really love me despite my failures? Can God use me for good in this world despite all my sin and shortcomings? Do my doubts and questions about faith make God think less of me? Do I have a future in the family of God despite my past?"

"The Long Walk Home" takes readers on a journey through the prodigal son story, showing the many parallels to struggles Christians face such as believing the lie that there is a better life outside of God's love and falling prey to the folly of sin. Carter writes vulnerably about how rediscovering God's never-ending, radical love for his sons and daughters drastically impacted his faith and points readers to the truth that God is a Heavenly Father who will always welcome his children home with open arms, no matter how far his children have wandered.

"If you're a Christian who has it all figured out, this book is not for you. If you're a Christian who's never really failed or fallen or struggled, there might be a better use for your time than reading these pages. But if like me, you love the Lord, but at times throughout your life you find yourself weary and broken, confused and questioning—maybe even hanging on by a thread—then this book is for you," Carter said.

"I pray this book guides readers into the arms of a loving Dad—maybe not the dad they had but the one they always longed for—a Dad who is ready to welcome them home, wipe them clean and call them his beloved sons and daughters."

Carter is Pastor of Preaching and Vision at The Austin Stone Community Church in Austin, Texas, which has grown from a team of 15 to over 8,000 since Carter planted it in 2002. He is the co-author of multiple books, including "Steal Away Home," "The Real Win," "Exalting Christ in John (Christ-Centered Commentary)" and several others.

B&H is supporting the launch of "The Long Walk Home" with a national advertising and publicity campaign. LifeWay Resources is also releasing an eight-session group study for both adults and students, "The Prodigal Son" (LifeWay Resources, December 2019).

For more information, visit [LongWalkHomeBook.com](http://LongWalkHomeBook.com)



Matt Carter serves as the Pastor of Preaching and Vision at the Austin Stone Community Church in Austin, Texas, which has grown from a core team of 15 to over 8,000 attending each Sunday since he planted it in 2002.

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## Hope & Help from Addiction Through Christ

By Carolyn Dotts  
Mitchell County



The Western Carolina Church ministry of GriefShare has been reaching out to those in grief since 2008. I'd like to share how this ministry came to exist in Mitchell and surrounding counties, but in doing so, I must revisit my own grief experience of losing my husband back in May of 2007. I have shared my story in BRCN in the distant past, and some of you may remember the actual event.

My husband, Jimm was a drafting and design teacher at Enka High School, which was quite a drive from our home there in Ledger. He left around 6:15 that Thursday morning. I was told the accident occurred only a few minutes later as he pulled out on to Highway 226. As he rounded the curve, a small truck carrying five men to their job crossed the centerline. It was a head-on collision with no survivors. I was getting ready to leave for my own job as a Special Education teacher at Greenlee Primary when I received a call from my principal that there had been an accident on the road I traveled, and he was checking to be sure none of his teachers had been involved. I thought of my husband and called his cell phone several times, but he didn't answer. I jumped in my car and arrived at the scene, but no one had any information. Emergency vehicle lights were flashing in the curve which was blocked from my view, and traffic was starting to back up.

I stood with several people I didn't know by the side of the road, and finally, two State troopers approached me. They showed me Jimm's license, asked me to identify it as my husband's, then informed me gently that he had died in the accident. Even this many years later, there are no words to adequately describe my anguish at that moment. My son arrived soon after, and I was taken back up to my house. Family, friends, and food began pouring in as is the usual custom when a death has occurred. The first few days I was in shock and welcomed the distraction of planning the Celebration of Life service. I had no real-time to focus on the grief—that would come later, when I was alone.

Fast-forward several months, when school began in August, and I had resumed my teaching position. When I would get home from work, I would allow the tears to flow. A friend had given me a stack of books on grief, which had been given to her when she had lost her own husband the previous summer. I devoured the books, seeking relief from the pain. It was in the appendix of the last book I was reading, late one Saturday evening, where I discovered a reference to GriefShare. The website explained the support groups, and eventually, I was able to locate one in Boone that fit my schedule. It was then about 8 months since Jimm had died. I attended with a friend, and by the end of the 13-week cycle we agreed that Mitchell county needed a GriefShare support ministry. We enlisted the help of a retired pastor and his wife to get started.

Over 11 years have passed since that first session, and many people attending have been able to find help, hope, and healing through this ministry. Some of you who are reading this may have been helped through GriefShare or have referred someone to the ministry. My own healing continues to this day, and the loss is ever-present, but the intense pain has subsided. Healing comes in stages, but ultimately, true healing is found only through Jesus Christ. GriefShare makes no apologies for a Christ-centered, Bible-based foundation on which the curriculum is built. Our community has suffered much loss in the last few years, but GriefShare is a vehicle God is using to help others find their way in their "new normal." I have been asked, "Why should I attend GriefShare, where people just sit around and cry about their loss? It would just make me feel worse." It's true, tears do occur, but GriefShare gives you permission to express your grief in a safe place where others truly understand your pain. Telling your own story is part of the healing process, along with the video and workbook.

I invite those of you who are walking this journey of grief to join us in the fall cycle of GriefShare at Western Carolina Church at 31 Cross Street, Suite 289. We have already met for Session 1, but you can join in anytime. We meet on Thursdays at 6:00 pm in the Wing of the church, which is in the old Hampshire Hosiery building. There are signs posted to guide you. A light meal is served, and you will be warmly welcomed. There is no charge to attend. If you would like to register or need more information, please call Carolyn Dotts at 828-765-4633 or 828-467-1433.

In future issues of BRCN, I hope to present more about the various topics that are covered in the videos.

Carolyn Dotts makes her home in Ledger and is a retired Special Education teacher. She is a widow with two sons and five grandchildren. She is a member of Western Carolina Church in Spruce Pine.





Beginning of the Year

By David Burleson  
Burke County

It is hard to believe that summer is over, and 354 students came back to New Dimensions Charter School on Tuesday, September 3. I do hope our students have spent time with their families, enjoyed their summer vacation, and are excited to come back to school to experience another year of learning.

New Dimensions is a North Carolina Public Charter School. Many of you may wonder "What is a public charter school?". Charter schools are public schools of choice that are authorized by the State Board of Education and operated by independent non-profit boards of directors. State and local tax dollars are the primary funding sources for charter schools, which have open enrollment and cannot discriminate in admissions, associate with any religion or religious group, or charge tuition. Charter schools operate with freedom from many of the regulations that govern district schools, but charter schools are held accountable through the State assessment and accountability system.

What makes New Dimensions special?

- Established in 2001, New Dimensions today enrolls approximately 350 K-8 students. Our school provides parents the choice to have their child(ren) in the same school from kindergarten through eighth grade.
- New Dimensions relocated to the former Shadowline manufacturing facility on 29 beautiful acres bordering the Catawba River
- New Dimensions offers small class sizes and the strong Core Knowledge Curriculum
- Music, Art, Computers/Technology, Spanish, and Physical Education are offered kindergarten through eighth grade further enriching our curriculum and developing a broad base of knowledge
- New Dimensions empowers students to make positive choices about themselves, each other, and our environment, producing Respectful, Responsible, Safe, Kind, and Good Learners
- Quality communication between teachers and families boosts each students' success
- The uniform policy creates a positive environment where the focus is on learning
- Middle School electives include: Band, Music, Art, Physical Education and Health, Technology
- Athletics include Indoor/Outdoor Soccer, Baseball, Basketball, Cheerleading, Cross Country and Flag Football.

I want to take this time to thank our entire community for their support of our school and each student we serve. I am especially grateful to the faculty and staff for what they have done to make me feel welcome and to prepare for another school year. We just finished New Teacher Orientation for six new teachers where we shared with them the philosophy of New Dimensions, provided them suggestions on how to become a master teacher, and gave them an opportunity to prepare their classrooms for their students. We are very excited about our new teachers and believe they will help us continue making a positive difference in the lives of students.

Our school is very appreciative of the BRIDGE crew for their work around our campus. The crew did an excellent job making our school look great for the first day of school.

I encourage each student to set goals this year to make this the best year they have ever had, to work hard, and to get involved in their school. I also appreciate the way our students represent our school and encourage them to continue to take the lessons they have learned at home, in the faith community, and at school to be good citizens in our community. It is always encouraging to hear the positive stories of how New Dimensions students make a difference in our community and in the lives of others.

Our major goals this year focus on students and their success. One important goal this year for New Dimensions is to make our school a true community school. We believe that our school should be the center of our community in regard to activities, sports, gatherings, events--you name it! We want to open our school up for our community's use. We also want our parents to feel comfortable visiting our school, involving themselves in the programs offered, and knowing the teachers and staff.

Another goal is to create a learning environment where students can be successful. New Dimensions cares about each child. We will continue a collaborative, cooperative working relationship between the school, the parents, the businesses/industries, and the community. When we set a goal to help students achieve success, and we expect our school to provide opportunities for success, then all of our students benefit.

My hope and prayer is that this school year will be the best ever for our school and for each student we serve. The successes we will achieve this year will be due to dedicated people, positive attitudes and the support of our entire school community. My door is always open and I welcome your calls, emails, or visits! I want to know how our school can better serve our students.

I am looking forward to the new school year and working with you to provide each of our students with the best education possible.

David Burleson is the Director of the New Dimensions Charter School in Burke County.

Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. Luke 10:2



Eddie Graham and Terry McKinney  
On Stage At The Orchard

By Kate Groff  
Mitchell County



On Saturday, September 7, at 6 p.m., Terry McKinney and Eddie Graham will join forces in one of the most memorable, high energy concerts at the Orchard this year.

Graham has led a star-studded professional life, working with such notables as Jack Jones, Elvis Presley, and Anita O'Day; touring with Roberta Sherwood, Vic Dana, and Kay Stevens. Settling finally in Las Vegas, he began a long-term professional relationship with Latin concert pianist, Esquivel.

While in Hawaii in the early seventies, he met, then worked with the legendary Earl "Fatha" Hines for several years. On concert tours around the globe and in the states, Graham has appeared with such artists as Benny Carter, Joe Venuti, Bobby Hackett, Red Norvo, Dorothy Donegan, Barney Bigard, Stan Getz, Rich Little, Sammy Davis, and Johnny Mathis. The list of accolades could go on.

Terry McKinney, by comparison, has led a life of quiet adventure, but just as full. A local boy, he grew up surrounded by music--pickin' on the porch with friends in the summers, playing the guitar in his living room during the winters. He remembers Scott and Lula Belle inviting him on stage to sing with them when he was a teenager. Never forgetting their generosity, McKinney continues to do the same with other talented youth. He's played with Clyde Moody, one of Bill Monroe's early guitarists, lead singer, and a Grand Ole Opry veteran. When drafted, he formed a band and played gigs in and around his Newport News base. On his return home,

he played with the Gate City Ramblers, performing in the Glenwood Opry House. Also, McKinney played traditional bluegrass with Clear Creek for 15 years. During the next two decades, he had a family band with his fiddle-playing brother Jack, and Jack's wife, Arzella. McKinney has been an Orchard standard and audience favorite for over 20 years.



Graham and McKinney come together on the Orchard stage for one night this season for some heavy guitar playing, mighty drumming and personalized renditions of new and old classic country. The concert begins at 6 PM. Suggested donation is \$10 and available at the door. Many have listened to the beat of Eddie Graham's drums, and many have heard the twang of Terry McKinney's guitar strings, but the two together is something altogether different and not to be missed. Get there early to get a good seat.

The Orchard is located at 1025 Orchard Road near Spruce Pine at mm 328.3 on the Blue Ridge Parkway and is a not-for-profit working orchard, music, and educational venue. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesday-Sunday. Family and pet friendly. Wheelchair accessible. Buses welcome. For information please visit [www.altapassorchard.org](http://www.altapassorchard.org), or call 828-765-9531.

Kate Groff is the Programs Coordinator for the Toe River Arts Council.

Sudoku

Solution on page 14

			4	1	6	7		
	3	1		5		9		
2		6						
4	7		9		5		8	
	5			8			7	
	1		6		7		2	9
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		4		2		3	1	
		8	5	9	3			

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## Morganton Seventh Day Adventist Church

### The Workshop Lesson

By Steve Bietz  
Burke County



My grandfather, my dad's father, was a farmer for much of his life. My grandparents, David and Edna Bietz, lived in the small farming community known as Cleveland, North Dakota. My grandparents owned right at 1000 acres of land where my grandfather planted and harvested barley year after year. I enjoyed my young years of mostly being in my granddad's way I suspect, as he let me ride in the cab with him in his green John Deere combine tractor. Up and down and back and forth we would go all day across the fields of barley.

But the day would come, while my grandfather was still in his 50s when he would have a severe heart attack. Though he would survive, it was felt that it would be best if my grandparents sell their farm. My grandfather would live into his 80s, no longer farming, but still active in retirement.

Actually, it was after my grandparents sold the farm that I saw the extent of my grandfather's gifts that went beyond farming. I discovered my grandfather was a carpenter. He could build you a house, but his passion was roll-top desks, footstools, end tables, china cabinets, rocking chairs, and on and on. Much of his work he sold, but so many times, he just gave the items away.

My grandfather's workshop was the basement of their home, which was now in town if you can call Cleveland North Dakota a town. There was a constant aroma, as you entered my grandfather's workshop, of wood stain. Scattered all over the place were the wood shavings and sawdust from his work.

One summer, I spent several weeks in Cleveland North Dakota with my grandparents. I was somewhere around 13 or 14 years old. As I got out of bed one morning, I heard noises coming from the workshop in the basement. Still, in my pajamas, I headed downstairs to see what grandpa was up to so early in the morning before breakfast. He was working on a rocking chair, but almost immediately I could sense that he was frustrated. I wasn't sure what the problem was, but finally, my grandfather sighed and set down on his stool.

He looked at me, with a slight grin on his face and said, "well Steven, this is why we call this place a workshop...because sometimes it doesn't work." After grandma fixed us breakfast, back to the workshop we went. I watched as my grandfather took apart the rocking chair that had not met his approval. He would remake several of the rocking chair pieces and then rebuild it. That late afternoon, I was pleased that grandfather gave me a brush so that I could help with the staining of that rocking chair.

I wish I knew what became of that rocking chair. But I have no idea where it sits today and who might be sitting in it and rocking away. But I do know the lesson of the workshop that I learned and how connected it was to the wisdom we find in a loving Carpenter named Jesus Christ.

This world is not heaven. However, it is a workshop where God's people are being chiseled, sawed, and sanded. The Great Carpenter, Jesus, tenderly builds our characters. He has had to do a lot of sanding on me and has also taken me apart and put me back together when I just don't fit right. But, like my grandfather, I sense a grin on my Lord's face as he says to me, "it's ok Steven, that is why we call this place and time, a workshop."

Christ, our carpenter, sands and saws and chisels away at each of us, until our characters are stained by His blood and sealed by His Character. There is a poem written by Paul Warren, that I like as it describes the work of a carpenter, in this case, the carpenter Jesus.

"He selects the wood very carefully/ The grain and color so beautifully/ Looking along the edge it's straight/ And feeling it, it has a good weight/ Remember to measure twice and cut once/ Is the rule of thumb before you pounce/ He knows the work and the craftsman's tools/ As He saws, planes and sands to carpenter's rules/ The joints are a woodworker's art and a pleasure to see/ When glued together with strong and straight it will be/ The last piece of the Carpenter's work is at hand/ To finish is to wax the wood for a look that's grand."

Thoughtful words. I sometimes forget that Jesus was a carpenter. Fortunately, the psalmist didn't forget. Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Psalm 127:1

May we gladly lay on the workshop table that belongs to our loving Carpenter, Jesus. May we welcome the necessary sanding, cutting, and waxing, till our Great Carpenter's Character glows in each of us each day.

Steve Bietz, Pastor, Morganton Seventh day Adventist Church.

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BCPS Ranks No. 22 On List Of Best Districts In The State No. 13 In Best Teachers And No. 14 In The Best Place To Teach

By Cheryl Shuffler  
Burke County

A national website that researches schools ranks Burke County Public Schools 22nd overall and tied for third compared to districts its size on a list of the best school districts in North Carolina. The site, Niche.com, released its new 2020 Best Schools rankings earlier this month. On its list, Burke County Public Schools is the 13th best district for teachers, the 14th best place to teach and the 15th safest district in North Carolina out of 115 school districts.

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam said, "Being ranked in the top 20 percent in the state overall and in the top five among other districts our size is something to be proud of, but I'm competitive and our district is competitive, and we want to be No. 1. We are proud of our teachers and disagree with this ranking as we know we have the best teachers in the state. As we begin our third year of our District Strategic Plan, I am reminded that the biggest reason for our high rankings is because we have committed teachers. Having dedicated people and a passionate board of education solidifies our success for students. The excitement as we look ahead to the next few years in Burke County Public Schools is contagious as together, we will continue to find new and innovative ways to better serve our students and the community."

Niche.com gives Burke County Public Schools an A in teachers and diversity and Bs in health and safety, academics, clubs and activities, administration, food, college prep, sports and resources and facilities. Reviewers on Niche.com praised Burke County Public Schools' teachers and administrators, saying they are nice and knowledgeable, show an interest in helping students learn, are nurturing and encourage families to get involved in their children's educations.

Cheryl Shuffler is the Public Relations Officer for the Burke County Public School System.



A Balanced Perspective

By Dan Qurollo  
Burke County



Most likely, you have had moments in your life when you questioned if things were truly worth it. To be sure, these moments were probably not moments of great answers to prayer in which God showed Himself to be God. These moments were probably not when the bank account had more than sufficient funds to meet the immediate demands. Nor were these times when God gave you the amazing privilege to lead a soul to Him. These were times when nothing seemed to be going right.

A man by the name of David can truly identify with this reality, and he recorded much of his feelings in the book of Psalms. One of the reasons we love studying Psalms is because of the candor with which the various psalmists wrote. They wrote what we often think. David was appointed by God to be the next king of Israel. This was not the result of some selfish ambition or aspiration of David; this was God's choosing. But the years leading up to his eventual assuming the throne were anything but favorable. He was forced to flee into the wilderness and live in undesirable locations. He was not granted the privilege of any degree of security, including the place from where his next meal might come. As we read through the book of Psalms, we find many examples of the inward struggles this man faced.

But David balanced these struggles with the reality of who God is and what God does. He wrote, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way" (Psalm 37:23). He acknowledged that every step he took was ordered by God. Therefore, God knew all that he was experiencing, including the internal struggles that perhaps nobody else knew. Contrary to what some have erroneously concluded, God is good. Inasmuch as His actions flow from His nature all that He does is good. James 1:17 reminds us, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Therefore, we can face challenges with the confidence that God will turn everything into something beneficial for my life (Romans 8:28).

Are you struggling today? Keep a balanced perspective by remembering it's not your problem; it's God's! Serve Him faithfully; His plan is always best.

Pastor Dan Qurollo is pastor Morganton Baptist Church. Check us out on our website [www.morgantonbaptist.net](http://www.morgantonbaptist.net) or find us on Facebook and YouTube.



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## Humor

By Buddy Freeman  
Madison County

"LAUGHTER IS HEALTHY FOR YOU" :

A schoolgirl telephoned her grandparents, whom she had not seen in a long time. "I had a terrible time," she told them. "First off I got tonsillitis followed by appendicitis and pneumonia. After that, I got rheumatism, and to top it all off, they gave me hypodermics and inoculation. I thought I would never get through that spelling bee!"

A new preacher had a large number of older people in the congregation. He told them, "I will be serving prune juice in the Holy Communion Service. When asked why he would entertain such a thought, he said, "If the Holy Spirit won't move you - then the prune juice will."

A woman looked out the window and saw her small son coming up the walkway carrying a little puppy. She met him at the door and commanded, "You take him back and bring your baby sister home!"

*Dr Buddy Freeman is now serving as the pastor at First Baptist Church of Marshall, NC.*



## Be a Risk-Taker!

Joyce Meyer



Throughout my years in ministry, I've discovered that living by faith requires us to take risks because God's plans for us are always bigger than what we could ever do on our own. I love Ephesians 3:20, which says that God "is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us" (NIV).

The bottom line is anybody who is not willing to risk anything will never do much in this world. I know this is true from personal experience.

When God put it in my heart to start teaching a home Bible study, I had a full-time job and made good money, so we didn't have any financial pressure. But I didn't know the Bible very well and needed more time to study. I couldn't do that with a full-time job and three children, and I knew God was speaking to my heart to quit my job.

Now I'm a responsible person, and that didn't make any sense to me because our bills would exceed our income if I didn't work. So, I bargained with God and quit my full-time job but got a part-time job.

It's like I was telling God, "I don't want to do that, but how about I do this? I'm still obeying You, but I've got a back-up plan." But God didn't want part-time obedience! I had to let go of my back-up plan and learn to trust Him completely.

Well, I got fired from my part-time job. I was a good worker and yet I couldn't do anything right at that job. It became obvious that God wanted me to totally trust Him and stay home full-time.

At that time, we were short \$40 a month to pay our bills. It wasn't a huge sum of money, but it meant we needed to believe God for a miracle every single month to meet our needs. And I had to take a step of faith to do that.

You know, sometimes we think when we take a big step of faith, God is just going to shower us with blessings right away. It's easy to have the attitude, "Look at this sacrifice I made today. I can't wait to see what God is going to do for me tomorrow!"

But for six years, we had to trust God to provide for our most basic needs. I found a journal where I had written a prayer list to God, asking for 12 new wash rags and a new skillet. I can't even tell you how excited I got when the doorbell rang one day and a woman I didn't really know was there and she said, "I hope you don't think I'm crazy, but I felt like God told me to bring you 12 new wash rags."

When you're learning to trust God, and He does something for you—even if it's a tiny thing—that's what prepares you to believe for bigger things later on in your life.

I didn't know then why I had to go through all those hard things, but I know now. In the ministry we have today, we need a lot more than \$40 a month to pay the bills. And God is faithful to provide everything we need! Our bills are paid on time and we aren't in debt.

I don't think that anybody will ever do anything of any magnitude without going through some tests. If you're going to live by faith, it means you'll have to take step one before you know what step two is. And you won't have everything figured out before you move forward, doing what you can do to follow God's plan for your life.

The amazing thing is that you get so close to God when all you have to depend on is Him. And that's when life is really adventurous and exciting!

I want to encourage you today to refuse to settle for a life that doesn't fulfill God's plans for you. Don't let the devil discourage you with his lies, telling you that you can't do it or you're not good enough for God to use you.

It's so important for you to see yourself the way God sees you, because what you believe about yourself is much more important than what anybody else believes about you. When you really know He loves you, then you can boldly approach God's throne of grace with confidence, knowing Jesus will give you grace to help you in your time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

The truth is God loves you and Jesus gave His life for you so you can be filled with His love, joy, and faith that will take you places you never thought you could go. Get up every day determined to follow God's leading, wherever He takes you. Step out in faith and watch Him do great things through you!

*Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 100 books, including Battlefield of the Mind and Overload: How to Unplug, Unwind and Unleash Yourself from the Pressure of Stress (Hachette). She hosts the Enjoying Everyday Life radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit [www.joycemeyer.org](http://www.joycemeyer.org).*



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