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Banner Elk NC 828-963-8340 Reverend Dan Brubaker Sunday School - 10:00 AM Contemporary Service - 9:45 AM Traditional Worship Service - 11:00 AM All Open House - Monday, 7:00 PM AATR Gathering - Monday, 7:00 PM UMW Meeting - 2nd and 4th Sunday, 7:00 PM English Classes - Tues., Thurs., 6:00 PM "Come grow with us"

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Ben Franklin, Liberty, and the Fifth Commandment
By Rev. Mark H. Creech

His mother was born in 1657, and his maternal grandfather was one of the first settlers of New England. His father owned a small business making candles and soaps. His family life was quite simple with an income just enough to support thirteen children.

This American statesman, writer, and inventor helped to draft the U.S. Constitution and signed the Declaration of Independence. In his memoir, he doesn’t say much about his beloved mother, but it’s quite clear he deeply loved and respected her. Perhaps the most important thing he ever said about his mother was in the epitaph he wrote for the headstone of both his parents. It reads:

Joseph Franklin and Abiah, his wife, lie here interred.
They lived to age together in wedlock.
Fifty-five years.
Without an estate, or any gainful employment.
By constant labor and industry.
With God’s blessing.
They sustained a large family comfortably.
And brought up thirteen children.
And seven grandchildren, reputeably.
From this instance, reader,
Be encouraged to diligence in thy calling.
And distrust not providence.
He was a pious and discreet man,
She a discreet and virtuous woman.

Benjamin Franklin is renowned for his considerable wisdom. So much of what he said is woven into the fabric of Americans. Most of us have heard many of his sayings, but we might not have known their origin.

It was Benjamin Franklin who said:
“Early to bed and early to rise
Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.”
“Well done is better than well said.”
“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.”
“God helps those who help themselves.”
“Honesty is the best policy.”

These are just a few of the better-known ones.
Franklin’s name is also synonymous with liberty and freedom.
It was he who said, “Without freedom of thought, there can be no such thing as wisdom — and so such things as public liberty without freedom of speech.”
It would do our colleges and universities well today to have these words erected on a monument prominently displayed on every campus.

“They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary security deserve neither liberty nor security,” said Franklin.

Or what about this word from the man who helped establish liberty not only for this country but for much of the world: “Rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God.”

Although there are exceptions to the rule, generally it’s true that “apples don’t fall far from the tree.” You don’t get great men without great parenting, and great people honor their parents.

Soon after the nation of Israel was delivered from slavery in Egypt, the Lord gave them the Ten Commandments.

The late Frank Pollard, a Southern Baptist pastor, denominational leader and author, has beautifully written:
“Never entertain the shallow notion that Moses was a preacher with ten suggestions for people who might want to be religious. He was the leader of a brand-new nation of people who were free for the first time in their lives. In the very positive preamble to the Ten Commandments, God said, ‘I made you free. I want you to be free. Now here are ten principles which must be obeyed if you are to keep on being free.’

The Fifth Commandment “Honor thy father and thy mother” is essential to sustaining liberty. In fact, the whole commandment says, ‘Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee’ (Exodus 20:12).

Say what you will, but this commandment has to do with national security. It’s not a remunerative economy, military, educational system, or anything else that keeps a nation free. Liberty can only be sustained by character.

The Great Wall of China was constructed over 2,500 miles and made up of mighty stones and troops to keep invaders out. No one, the Chinese thought, would ever be able to penetrate that wall. Yet once and again the enemy marched through because the gatekeepers could be bribed.
The Rotary of Spruce Pine

Hurricane Matthew Relief
By Doug Sudduth
Mitchell County

Rotarian Dr. Marvin Walker, of Appalachian Eye Associates, spoke to the Rotary Club of Spruce Pine at its regular meeting Thursday, May 11, about his recent Hurricane Matthew relief trip to Fayetteville.

Although seven months have passed, the recovery and rebuilding from Hurricane Matthew are still very much ongoing,” Walker said. “So, this past week a group representing our church and our community traveled to Fayetteville to spend a week doing what we could to try to help.”

The group put roofs on two houses—one belonging to a bed-ridden woman with three grown, low-functioning autistic children and the second belonging to a widow with one of her two children living at home.

“More people should be hearing about the devastation,” Walker said. “The group has another relief trip planned this coming November to a destination that has not been determined.”

Photos by Rotarian Brandon Roberts

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Witness
By Allen Buchanan
Mitchell County

"...Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Does this sound familiar to you? It should. It comes from Matthew 28:18-20 and is commonly known as "The Great Commission".

After high school, I went to Isothermal Community College in Spindale, NC and graduated with an Associate Degree in Business Administration. I worked several small jobs and decided to try community college again.

This time I transferred my credits to McDowell to work on an Associate of Arts Degree in Commercial Graphics. I have always had a passion for drawing much more than wanting a career in business.

Since age 8, I’ve been known as a preacher’s kid. You’ve all heard the jokes? I was never ashamed of being a PK. I also have had Muscular Dystrophy since birth which was apparent in the way I got around. I despised the peer pressure associated with classmates not understanding my handicap and being labelled a PK.

While in college the second time, I decided that I wasn’t going to tell anyone that I was a preacher’s kid and avoided discussion relating to my family. I felt that my relationship with Jesus should be based on my testimony and not my dad’s. By doing so, I felt that reason alone was why I had friends! Don’t get me wrong, I had awesome friends growing up with fellow classmates and teachers at Ledyard Elementary School. High School was much different. Some accepted me but most didn’t understand, so I was lonely too often.

With the end of summer rapidly approaching, I returned to McDowell for Fall Registration. As I was filling up, a fellow classmate, Tracy, asked if she could talk to me. The first thing I noticed about her was her glow. She lived a much different life than I, by hanging out with people who drank alcohol and took drugs. As she talked about her summer, she shared how she had given her life to Jesus and how He was her Savior and Lord. That was enough to cause anyone to "glow".

Tracy told me that she had observed my attitude and care for others and suspected something was different, but couldn’t figure it out. She said I had influenced her to seek out a different approach to life and that had led her to Jesus. Wow! At my age I had wanted to lead someone to Jesus. I never thought I knew how. I was afraid to try because I didn’t want to fail. My experience with Tracy had given me new hope. I prayed for other witnessing opportunities. I wanted to obey Jesus’ commandment which He laid out in Matthew 28:18-20.

On my journey through life, I’ve had other opportunities to share Jesus. I’m sad to say my witnessing never got instant results. Has that stopped me? No sir! I press on. I’ve been told to stay away, it’s none of my concern. That cuts deeply when speaking to a relative. Folks that I thought were friends tell me “in due time” or that they are “Christians in the Church of Life” and they don’t need any-thing. I’ve met people with more Bible knowledge than scholars and yet they don’t know the Master. As long as I continue to “Go and teach” while praying and with a willing heart, I’m hoping to sow seeds.

"...God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." 1 Corinthians 3: 7-8

Allen Buchanan is a freelance Christian writer. Allen attends Bear Creek Baptist Church.

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www.brcnews.com June 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 7
Lessons Of The Opioid Addiction Epidemic
E. Blake Fagan, Guest columnist
Mitchell and Yancey County

Opioids, which include Oxycontin, Percocet, Vicodin and morphine, are powerful painkillers. In the past, opioids were mainly used for patients with cancer pain, at the end of life, or after major surgery. But starting about 20 years ago, there was a big push for doctors to prescribe opioids for acute and chronic pain of all types, such as headaches, fibromyalgia, arthritis and back pain.

At the same time, doctors were told, incorrectly, that these medications were not addictive. As a matter of fact, doctors were told that less than 1 percent of patients on long-term opioid therapy became addicted or dependent on the medications. Furthermore, starting patients on these medications, doctors were told, would return them to normal function. They would get their lives back.

But prescribing opioids to millions of patients for non-cancer pain, we have learned the following: These medications ARE addictive. One third of patients prescribed opioids for 2 months or more — just 2 months — become addicted or dependent on the medications.

Moreover, when family members of these patients are polled, they believe that even a larger percentage of patients on long term opioids are addicted or dependent on the medication — 50 percent instead of 3 percent. Less than 25 percent of patients on long-term opioids return to full employment, so they are not the cure-all we were promised.

If you are a young person (younger than 25) and take an opioid for any reason — after a surgery, tooth extraction, etc. — you are 50 percent more likely to become addicted in your lifetime. The young brain should not be exposed to opiates unless absolutely necessary.

Now, pain is very personal and emotional for many people. There are many people who have been changed for the better because of opioid therapy, but the above statistics are sobering.

Furthermore, opioid medications and their cousin, heroin, have led to a surge in overdoses and overdose deaths. Deaths from opioids and heroin are even surpassing deaths from car wrecks, homicide or suicide in this country. It is a national and local crisis.

Because of evolving understanding of opioid pain medications and the drastic increase in people living with addiction, and overdose deaths, providers are becoming more cautious about prescribing these medications.

The Community response to Opioids
Local information supplied by Jim Haaga, MD

A recent article in this paper explored the reasons for the opioid crisis and the serious potential for addiction with the use of opioids (hydrocodone, oxycodone and others). Medical providers have become acutely aware of the crisis because of the exponential rate of opioid overdoses and overdose deaths in our community.

However, there is hope. Many individuals and organizations in WNC have been responding to this issue for years, but now there are collective, region-wide responses to this crisis. What are some of the actions these coalitions are taking?

In Mitchell and Yancey Counties, meetings have been held for the past several years as the Mitchell-Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force (MYSATF) has developed this group has worked under the Graham Children’s Health Services, now renamed “Partners Aligned Toward Health” or “PATH”. Currently leading the MYSATF are Jeff Sparge, program coordinator, Schell McCull, director of PATH, and Jennifer Haring, director of ChemBridge.

Prevention of substance abuse is a key goal of the MYSATF. An after-school program in both counties, STAR for middle schoolers in Mitchell, and the Conger Fit Club for high school students in Yancey County, have been working for several years to give a group of students healthy and constructive habits and lifestyles.

The Yancey County Municipal Drug Court, which began its work in 2011 under the leadership of Judge Jim Haaga, has gained national recognition for its success with opioid addiction. In Mitchell County, the Drug Court is new and already has seen positive results.

(We continue to focus on many drug issues in our reader area. We have received a request from a doctor associated with the Mission System that is more than willing to come to churches or other faith based organizations to talk about the opioid problem in the area.

Dr. E. Blake Fagan with MAHEC is asking for communication between the two groups and Jim Haaga, emergency room doctor in Spruce Pine, is coordinating this effort. If anyone is interested, contact us at Blue Ridge Christian News (barbarah@brcnews.com) 828-688-3644 or Jim Haaga (jmhaaga@frontier.com). Please take advantage of this as drugs are a major player in all aspects of our community.)
My Answer
By Dr. Billy Graham

Use your second chance to get to know God

Q. I just got out of the hospital after a bad car wreck. The police said they were surprised I wasn’t killed. I’ve never given God much thought. Is God trying to tell me something?” — W.W.

A. Yes, God certainly is trying to tell you something — and my prayer is that you won’t ignore it!” The Bible says, “If anyone hears the trumpet but does not heed the warning... their blood will be on their own head” (Ezekiel 33:4).

What is God saying to you through this experience? First, He is reminding you of the brevity of life. Yes, your life was spared, and for that I am very thankful. But what if it had not been spared? And in any case, some day you will die and enter God’s presence, even if it’s many years from now. Life is short, and the time to prepare for eternity is now.

I believe God is also trying to tell you of His love for you. So far in life you have ignored Him — but He has not ignored you! He loves you — and the proof isn’t only that He spared your life on this occasion, but that His Son, Jesus Christ, gave His life for you. He did this so you could be forgiven of your sins and go to be with Him in heaven forever.

By a simple prayer of faith thank God for sparing your life and then ask Jesus Christ to come into your heart and become the center of your life. Then seek out a church where you can grow in your faith and find friends who will help you spiritually. God’s word is for you: “God demonstrates his own love for us: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

Trouble getting into the Bible? Try this as a starting point

Q. One of my New Year’s resolutions was to read through the Bible. Well, I got started in Genesis, but I only lasted a few weeks. I just couldn’t get interested in things that happened to people thousands of years ago. Why am I missing?” — Mrs. L.P.

A. One thing you’re missing is an opportunity to learn more about God and His will for our lives. If we are ignorant of God’s Word, we’ll always be ignorant of God’s will.

Yes, the Bible tells about things that happened thousands of years ago, and these may seem strange or irrelevant to us. But God does not change, and neither does our human nature — and just as God worked in the lives of people then, He wants to work in our lives today. They lived in a different world — and yet they had the same problems and doubts we have. The Bible says concerning them, “These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us” (1 Corinthians 10:11).

But let me suggest that you’re also missing something else: a practical plan for unlocking the Bible’s treasures. Instead of starting at the beginning (as we do with other books), I suggest you start at the center — that is, with one of the Gospels that tell us about Jesus Christ (I often suggest John). He is the Bible’s center, the Old Testament points forward to Him, and the New Testament tells us about Him. You can discover other parts of the Bible later.

Ask God to help you as you read — not only to understand what is happening in a particular passage, but what it means for your life today. May Job’s attitude become yours: “I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread” (Job 13:12).
Sermon on the Mount

Pastor Terry Cheek Th.D.
McDowell County

Thanks for returning to another publication of “The Blue Ridge Christian News” and our article “The Inspiring Word”.

For this publication of the BRCN we will continue our study of God’s word and the Lord’s Sermon on the Mount. In May, we looked at what has been affectionately referred to as the golden rule. Many have spoken to me about how God’s word spoke to them from last month’s article and I truly humbled that God will use it to touch hearts and lives. That is truly an answered prayer. You see, before I write each article I pray about the content, then before I send it to the BRCN staff I pray again that God will use it to bring folks closer to Him and for His glory. God does answer prayer! I am still blown away when God sends me a message through these articles. I am so thankful for the impact these articles have had on others.

For June let’s take our Bible and turn to Matthew 7:13-14 where we read: “Every one that asketh receiveth; every one that seeketh findeth; and to every one that knocketh it shall be opened.” From there, I believe this verse is one of the most meaningful and important verses in the Bible. This verse is found in the Sermon on the Mount. This is where Jesus tells the parable of the sower and the parable of the mustard seed. In these stories, we see how God’s word can be planted in our lives. This verse is also found in Luke 11:9 where Jesus says, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”

Many of today’s popular studies of the Bible lump these verses into a passage with verse 13 as part of the Christ’s teaching on the character of those who follow Him. I tend to agree with some of the older scholars and theologians, I lean more toward a separation. I see this passage speaking to us about salvation. The Parable of the Mustard Seed speaks to us about salvation and the Parable of the Sower speaks to us about salvation. This verse is found in Romans 3:23 where Paul says, “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

In Romans 4:6 we find assurance that salvation comes only through faith in Jesus Christ. That faith is the image of Abraham which makes every born again Christian a descendant of Abraham’s seed. If nothing else was written that alone should bring us to humble praise of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I find it easily strange that during Jesus’ day the orthodox Jew claimed to have the final word on who would inherit the kingdom of God. The Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Doctor and Lawyer, all were looked up to in admiration, because they were expected to have and communicate the truth of God’s word. Yes, they possessed academic knowledge, but their heart was far from God. They not only walked through the wide gate, they deliberately led others in the same direction. Unfortunately, the very same thing is happening in places of worship today. The well-educated religious leaders in our places of worship are giving messages that proclaim salvation without the blood of Christ. We too, often hear messages of prosperity, passion, prestige and the all-inclusive statement that God will never send anyone to hell, that all will be saved. We are told the Bible contains error and it isn’t inspired by the Holy Spirit. We are told same sex marriage is accepted by God just as much as traditional marriage. The liberal and liberal religious pendulum is swinging just as wide today as it was when Jesus spoke these words.

Couple the width of liberal and legalistic religion with the movement of liberal socialist government imposing their agenda through judicial overreach, executive action and capricious pronouncements, and you find a very wide gate for many to walk through. A gate which leads to destruction and an eternal hell.

I thank God, the Church isn’t that place of worship, it’s a heart of worship! A heart which is found in only one place, it exists only in those who have experienced Romans 10:9-10 “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” The Lord tells us plainly there are few that will find this gate, though it is narrow and never wide open. Have you found it? There are Bible believing Churches in this area with pastors who preach the word of God as inerrant and infallible, with compassion yet without compromise. You’re invited to begin with us at Calvary Missionary Baptist Church at 4548 NC-226, Marion NC. We are one of several congregations found within the pages of the BRCN. And, don’t forget to read all the articles in the BRCN. God will touch your heart in ways you never imagined. Until next time may God keep you firmly in His grip.

Terry Cheek is Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Marion.
Daddy, This Is Life...

By Pastor Chris Rathanbone
Mitchell County

Sometimes there are moments in our lives that God uses to speak to us. Many of these instances are to remind us of what the important things in life are all about.

About a couple of years ago I had a tired riding mower up to work on the blades and had strained my back. (We do these things and then our body tells us a couple of days later that we shouldn’t have.) I had a lot of reading to finish for a couple of classes at school so I placed some pillows behind myself so I could recline on the bed without my back bothering me so much. Probably an hour had passed when the door to the bedroom opened and in came Reuben, about 4 years old at the time, and crawled up on the bed. We as parents have conditioned ourselves (especially with young children who tend to make a lot of noise) to tune out a lot of the noise around us so we can concentrate on what we are doing. This time my attention was pulled away from the book quite suddenly.

Reuben came in quietly. He never spoke a word to begin with. Sometimes the boys ask if I am finished or I will wrestle or play with them. Most of the time, unfortunately, my response is usually “Not right now, I have to do this or finish that.” Reuben proceeded to position some pillows next to me. He silently finished putting the pillows in place and reclined right next to me with his side touching mine. He placed his hands behind his head and said, “Daddy, this is the life.”

Spending time with my Daddy, this is the life.

I could hardly stop myself from crying! What this made me realize was that he wanted to spend time with me. Even if it wasn’t wrestling, playing, or something else he would rather be doing, he just wanted to be with me. My mind flashed back suddenly to all the times I said “No” or “I don’t have time” or “I can’t right now!” Even if it wasn’t going to be on Reuben’s terms or his ideal situation, he just wanted to spend time with me.

This message is for Dad, especially those with young children. There are a lot of things we say “need” to get done, but those things are not as important as spending time with our children. Our kids will not remember how great we look on the bed someday, but the times we played ball with them on it. They won’t remember that big stinger of fish we bought house, but the first fish they caught with Daddy standing next to them. They probably won’t even remember all the toys we bought them, but they will remember the time we took to get in the living room floor and play cars with them.

Paul wrote in Colossians 3:21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. As I studied this verse I learned that the word “provoke” means to stimulate, specially to anger. The ideal is to influence in a negative way.

This verse, according to Strong’s Concordance, is the only time the word “disourage” is used in the New Testament (KJV), it means to be quittless, disheartened, or dismayed. This simply means “Do not break their spirit.” How many times children come up to their Daddy with a high expectation only to get an answer that takes the smile from their face and causes them to walk away with their head hung down or even with tears in their eyes because Daddy doesn’t have time.

I have seen this disappointment in the eyes of my own boys. My heart is convicted to think that when I don’t take time for them they are walking away with a broken spirit thinking that their Daddy doesn’t want to spend time with them.

We need to understand that new clothes, new video games, new toys, or just some expensive gift is not what our children need. What our children need is us.

They need to know that they mean more to us than a job, a hobby, or our own selves. When they look at us, they should see a model of their Heavenly Father before them. Our kids need to know that they are loved unconditionally, cared for, protected, and provided for by an earthly father who shows them that they are important to him. We have the responsibility of raising the next generation of men. What they learn from us is what they will most likely pass on to their children and we can’t teach them if we aren’t with them! The most valuable gift we can share with our kids besides Christ is our time. They need to know that when their Daddy is with them he believes that “This is the life. Spending time with my children, this is the life!”

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

Foothills Bible College

Continued from page 39

the wife has opinions, ideas, desires, requests and she makes them known to her mate.

On any sports team or any other team, someone has to make the final decision about certain matters. The one who leads the team must be supported or no progress will be made. Instead, there will be confusion and frustration that will ensue.

Submission Has to Do with Attitude

It is not just her actions that matter. Submitting should not be a drudgery, but rather a delight. Let me stress again, the more the husband is what he ought to be, the easier it is for the wife to put herself under his authority. Doing what God tells us to do ought not be a matter of drudgery, neither should it be done with a spirit of heaviness. She should submit cheerfully to her husband knowing she is doing the will of God as she does so.

When a husband commands his wife to do something that is contrary to what God says, then she has a right to refuse to submit.

Submission Should Be Wide-ranging

According to Ephesians 5:24 the submission of the wife to the husband is compared to the church being subject to Christ. She is to be subject to her husband is everything. She is to obey him in all, but that which contradicts the Word of God. God is able to give strength to all those wives who want to do what the Lord wants them to do in regard to their husbands. Ephesians 5:25 says, “That he might grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.”

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

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Trips for June

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Wednesday, June 14th - Farmers Market and eat at Moose Cafe
Friday, June 16th - Thrift Stores/Publica/Walmart - Weaverville
Wednesday, June 21st - Clarence’s Diner - Ewin TN
Friday, June 23rd - Asheville Mall
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June 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 11
Avery County Schools

Dear Graduate
By David Burleson
Avery County

It is with great pleasure and honor that I congratulate you—the class of 2017. You accepted the challenge of a high school education, and now you are reaping the exhilaration of victory. As you celebrate this great milestone in your life, please know that I am proud of each of you for your dedication, your perseverance, your energy, and your determination to reach this memorable day.

You have passed one of the many great tests of life. Since kindergarten, you have been dedicated to the task of getting an education. Each step of the way, loving parents and committed educators have provided you with the guidance you have needed. You have had vision; you have been focused in accomplishing your dreams, and you have never lost sight of the importance of learning.

You have persevered. Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. During your educational career you have had to overcome many obstacles to stay in school and to give your own personal best. There have been times you wanted to give up but did not. You have held fast to your plans and goals.

Throughout your educational career, you have had as energy—a passion for learning and living. As such, you have successfully fulfilled many responsibilities as the student, the academician, the athlete, the leader, the worker, the musician, the artist, the son/daughter, the brother/sister, and the giver to the community.

It has been said, “The future belongs to those who believe in their dreams.” You have been determined to make your dreams reality through plans, goals, and actions. You have taken risks and believed in yourself. You have wanted more for your life.

Already you have in place the tools to meet the challenges you will face and other milestones you will experience. As you prepare for and experience new ways of learning and living, I charge each of you to keep in your mind and close to your heart your dedication, perseverance, energy, determination, and strong family and community ties.

May God richly bless you and keep you all the days of your life.

David Burleson is Superintendent of the Avery County Schools

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Hospice of Yancey County

Looking Back at a Good Harvest
A Father’s Father
By Jacob Wilis
Yancey County

“Father to the fatherless, defender of widows – this is God, whose dwelling is holy. God places the lonely in families; He sets the prisoners free and gives them joy.
But He makes the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.”

Psalm 68:5-6

Many times during the life of a father you may feel that your contribution is misunderstood, at best, and at worst just not appreciated. Sometimes it is easy to lose sight of the value of the contribution which we, as the children of a particular kind.

When we say a particular kind, we are specifically meaning Christ-like. Children who become contributors to society by their: love, meekness, generosity, kindness, and compassion. People of a particular kind as Peter says to the church in 1 Peter 2:9 KJV “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. This is the basis for Fatherhood, to mold children into the image of God. Therefore, by the power of God’s Spirit and the steady hand of an earthly Father, we equip our children for the advancement of God’s kingdom.

A successful Father is one who loves unconditionally. Successful Fathers love no matter what. They love their children not based on performance, but based on choice. When the child fails (and they will) a successful Father nurtures and admonishes Ephesians 6:4. Nurture means to gently show the way with an attitude of love, admonish means to mildly rebuke. It can be hard to find balance between the two, but when you learn not to take the offense of your child personally, but rather view it as teaching opportunity, that teaching will be leaving like God is a Father to the Fatherless. In other words be is choosing to love, and that is the deepest kind of love, which has the potential for the deepest impact. His love never fails. He loves us no matter what.

A successful Father liberates his children. He “sets the prisoners free.” How do I accomplish that as a Father? When I love them apart from their performance it sets them free. The greatest thing a Father can do for a child is believe in them. Believe in them even when they are messing up, from the time they are young till they are old. We need to believe in our children and God’s plan for their lives. Many times as parents we can circumvent God’s plan for our kids; by pushing them to be something they are not, by holding them back because we are afraid they will fail (embarrassing us or them), and lastly by being critical of their success.

As a Father we need to be encouragers. We need to be the biggest fan of our kids there is. We need to be supportive of their goals even when we don’t like them. We need to set them free. Free to live apart from our own skewed expectations. Free to potentially fail, because my Dad will love me no matter what.

A successful Father teaches his kids about joy. Joy is different than happiness. Joy isn’t dependent on people, circumstances, or things. Joy can be found in example. Every time when the rubber meets the road in parenting, so to speak. If my kids see me complaining about work, their Mother, the yard work, or Pastor’s and leaders; chances are they won’t become positive joyous people. When we are joyous apart from outcomes we demonstrate to our children the sovereignty of God. We teach them that it isn’t the paycheck and people, but is God. When they grow up hopefully they say, “Dad trusted God for his joy and peace.” Being a Godly example of sacrificial love works wonders in the lives of children.

A successful Father is a defender of who is right. In this case the widow. It is very important in our society to teach boys, especially, how to treat women. It is the Father’s responsibility to teach His son how to protect marginalized people. It is important children see them valeured. A Father who protects the marginalized leaves a great legacy for His children. In every man there is a hero, be that gay for your kids.

Finally, what can be said to the Dad who is in the trenches, worn out, and feeling devalued? “Yancey Hospice gives me a unique opportunity to observe people at this end of life and I am】【ed of you with these final aspects. The teenagers do grow up. It may seem that they don’t hear a word you say, but soon they will be hanging on your every word. You will go from being dumb to brilliant, almost overnight. Also, those batons won’t need you forever. It may seem they don’t want to sleep, you’re giving opportunity to this new era, but they will grow up. In fact they grow up too fast and they are gone. This is the way your goal. You want your child to grow into a leader and defender of the right. The greatest gift is a dying Father surrounded by the fruits of His labor, Godly children.

Jacob Wilis is an ordained pastor and Bereavement Coordinator for Yancey County Hospice. You may contact him at jacobi@hospiceofyancey.org

www.brunews.com

June 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 12
A Meditation

Healing
By Timothy Eller
AdDeWau County

I have found that we often fail to understand healing within the context of the scriptures. Peter explains it better than anyone else. He says in 1 Peter 3:24 that He is the 2nd Person of the Son in His body, on the cross as we being nailed to sin, should live unto righteousness, by whose stripes we were healed.

Why did Peter use the word “wound” often people are willing to believe that what Jesus did on the cross paid for our sins. However, people often fail to realize that what He did in Plent’s Hall paid for our healing. Just like the blood paid for our sins it also paid for our healing. So we don’t have to beg for our healing or wait until it manifests, we just accept what he did for us over 2,000 years ago.

Tim Eller graduated from Carolina Graduate School of Divinity and has been involved in prison and jail ministry for the past fifteen years. Currently he is operating in the capacity of a servant of Jesus Christ.

No Regrets Family Ministry:
The Death of Doctrine
By Pastor Dean Honeycutt
Mitchell County

When asked if the Bible is the only guiding force for relevant truth, many people will thumb their nose at the Bible and say the Bible is only one of many books for spiritual and moral truth. The Bible has been marginalized in our society and is no longer considered the number one source for Divine revelation. If the Bible is considered of equal or even less value than other religious books then what it teaches has no more relevance than a Sports Illustrated magazine. If, as Christians we start to embrace the world through ecumenical movements lay down our doctrinal distinction to keep from being offensive then we are like the man who built his house upon the sand. Early New Testament churches and Christians were distinguished by what they believed and taught; in Acts 17 they are described as being outside the synagogues and churches. Some have turned the world upside down. Eleven of the apostles, Paul, and many of the Apostolic fathers were martyred for the sake of the Gospel and the teachings of scripture. Doctrine that does not describe who you are and what you believe is no doctrine at all. Hence we see the death of doctrine.

In our tolerant-driven society we are asked to lay down the very foundations that our faith is built upon. As noted above the three contributing factors to the death of doctrine are one, the marginalization of the Bible, two, the failure to teach Biblical doctrine, and three, the vast ecumenical movements throughout the world today. One cannot have an ecclesiastical gathering of religious without laying aside the very doctrines that distinguish us. The doctrines that we hold dear as believers are very much what others find offensive. In order to be politically correct or religiously tolerant many find it easier to compromise rather than be true to doctrine. It will be through doctrinal deception that Satan will use in the end times, the very thing Jesus warned about in Matthew 24. Did you know that many denominations cannot pray in Jesus name because praying in Jesus name is offensive to many other religious beliefs? Be very careful, it will be through religious deception and a great cry for peace that the anti-christ will make a peace treaty with Israel. (Daniel 9:27, Matthew 24:15, 2 Thessalonians 2, Revelations 13:5).

Peace shall not, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape. 1 Thess. 5:3 (KJV; Jesus said in Matthew 10:34 that he “did not come to send peace on earth, but a sword”. in other words the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Bible are offensive to those who do not love God. The church does not intentionally try to be offensive, and we cannot lay aside doctrine just to get along with the world. Remember, we are to be in the world but not of the world. Jesus said “I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” Praise the Lord the Bible teaches in Ephesians 5 that Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. “That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without Blemish.” Eph. 5:27-28 (KJV). I realize that God will protect His church, but the Word of God will prevail with or without us. However, I do believe as a New Testament Christian we have the responsibility to uphold the foundations of our faith.

Doctrine is what the Bible teaches to be true. It comes from the Greek didaskalos which means to teach; therefore doctrine is the truths of scripture. Jesus said “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” This means that everything scripture says about Jesus is true and the revelation of Jesus Christ is directly from God. Jesus said “My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.” Jesus confirmed this when He said “If you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” I thank the Lord that the Bible is completely trustworthy and the only source of Divine revelation and knowledge of the Holy. All other so called religious books are false teachings and cannot be compared to God’s Holy Word. A few examples of important Bible doctrine are:

1. The Bible is without error and inspired by God.
2. Trinity is one God, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. Three in One.
3. God created from nothing existing in 5 days.
4. The virgin Birth of Christ. The chaste Son of God.
5. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross atoned for all sin.
6. The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.
7. Salvation and the promise of eternal life is in repentance and faith in Christ, saved by grace through faith.
8. Upon Salvation every believer is baptized with The Holy Spirit and gifted to serve the Church.
9. The rapture of the Church (Bride of Christ)
11. The Second Coming of Christ to earth.
12. Eternal punishment in hell.
13. Eternal Life in Heaven. (new heavens and new earth)

These are just a few truths we hold dear as believers. Thank the Lord for churches and Pastors who continue to teach Bible doctrine. I want to encourage you to teach these truths to your children and guard them in the Word of God because their faith will be challenged like never before. If you do this you will have “No Regrets” when you stand before Him one day.

Pastor Dean Honeycutt, shepherds Snow Hill Baptist Church in Bakerwile, NC. He may be reached at 818-385-0213, snowhillbaptist@gmail.com, or visit their website at www.snowhillbaptist.com.

June 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News
“His foundation is in the holy mountains.” -Psalm 89:1

Every Mountain Has Two Sides
By Tim Tron
Burke County

The sun was setting against the distant peak as he neared the mountain. The path was marked with stones, leading to the summit. He paused at the edge, looking out over the valley below. The mountains stretched out before him, their peaks silhouetted against the setting sun. The wind was cool on his face as he took a deep breath, feeling the fresh air fill his lungs.

As he continued up the path, the sound of his footsteps echoed in the stillness. The trees on either side seemed to part as he passed, revealing glimpses of the world beyond. The sun was now setting, casting long shadows across the earth. He reached the top of the mountain just as the last rays of sunlight disappeared behind the horizon.

Standing there, he felt a sense of peace wash over him. The world below was now dark, but the stars were beginning to twinkle above. He took a deep breath, feeling the cool night air on his face.

As he turned to leave, he saw a figure standing at the base of the mountain, watching him. He couldn’t tell who it was or why they were there, but he couldn’t help but feel a sense of connection.

The moon was rising now, its light casting a soft glow over the mountains. He turned and walked down the path, feeling content and at peace with his decision to come to the mountain. The world below seemed so small and insignificant in comparison to the vast expanse of the mountains stretching out before him.
Clint’s Chronicles on the Funny Farm

By Doug Harrell

Clint had many strengths, a vivid imagination was certainly one of them. He often said that Harrell Hill was his haven of safety and solitude. Clint had had his share of hard times, some of his own making, as we all do. His worldly wisdom came from his struggle to achieve a successful corporate life, and yet he was a little child in so many ways. He tended to see things with both fear and joy to the degree that escape most of us, and that is our loss. Oh, for the ability to exhibit the enthusiasm for life that Clint was able to do in life, and in death.

Farmer Doug

Clint’s Chronicles on the Funny Farm

By Doug Pollard

Many of you have written or called about Clint’s Chronicles on the Funny Farm. It seems that you take great pleasure in my monthly foibles and misadventures. Also, some of you question my view of the world. Well, I’m here to set the record straight on a couple of things. A couple of things you should know. Clearly the Lord is protecting me from myself, and the myriad monkeys and events that can send me out, and these stories are absolutely true (not to say I don’t exaggerate a tiny bit). Now let’s get on with this.

Coyotes in the Corridor

Since moving to Harrell Hill farm back in March my innumerable birds disappeared. At first, I considered it a miracle but I think it has more to do with a 4:00 am, working in a pack snail in the terraced sun, gorging myself on Barbara’s marvelous home cooking, fighting off all manner of vermin and dodging life-threatening equipment at every turn. Two nights later, (yes, one night in August I was snoozing peacefully at the Harrell’s farmhouse, a cool mountain breeze wafting through my open windows.

Doug told me a few days prior that packs of coyotes – I think he said packs – hmmm, or did he say bycists, or pods, or pods... just not sure. Anyway, I was awakened by howling, snarling, menacing howling I could only be the coyotes and they were very near the house.

With my newfound focus courage and a strong desire to protect Doug and Barbara I broke up in my muddy bed, sprung into my city slicker flip flops and galloped down the train to investigate the rustle.

I’ve never experienced true darkness before, I remember that the fact that there isn’t a light, an intense light pole, not even a stop light in the hotter makes nighttime real. In any event you get the picture... it was DARK outside. I stood on the porch listening as the howling coyotes moved closer and closer to me. (By the way, I was on the back porch because Barbara had seen a groundhog – and you remember what they do to me – on the front porch days earlier. I wasn’t stopping by invading his lawn).

So, it’s about 2:00 am and I can literally hear the coyote paws striking dew covered grass nearby. Well, it seemed the thing to do to get out of there now I quickly scurried, okay, hobbled and dashed, into the back door to escape what could have been a catastrophic event.

The inside of the Harrell farmhouse is dark like an underground coal mine so my hands are ‘feeling’ for the walls as I struggle to find the staircase and retreat to my warm bed. I was thankful to have escaped yet another vicious wild animal attack. I just have to admit that it seems that sometime during the early evening hours, long after farmer Cliff had passed out in my bed, the Harrell’s son, two granddaughters and their tiny baycoyorkie dog named Kringle had come for a visit.

Clint encouraged me to stay the course to see if the steep climb to safety, all the while contemplating the sheer terror of what might have happened to me had the savage coyotes managed to corner me on the porch.

Suddenly, out of the pitch black of night, an animal screamed, it jumped on my bare leg and growled like a grizzly bear... the snarl was true. I screamed out in terror, how my friends slept through the cries for help – and nearly plunged backward down the staircase. I sensed the soft fur and a very wet tongue attacking my legs. I knew it was only moments before the creature would take its first chunk of farmer Cliff flesh. I regained my balance, dropped to my hands and knees, and dog-walked quickly up the mountain staircase... arriving at the landing and frantically searching for the light switch. I knew this was the end; the carnivores would soon drag my lifeless carcass into the woods. But at least I would confront my attackers and put up a fight.

The blinding light shattered the pitch black night, startling me and the beast. When to my wondering eyes should appear... but the tiny bayorkie named Kringle, so glad to see me! I first thought it was a miracle, a possible out-of-body, near-death experience. So, this is what a coyote looks like? Not what I expected...

My heart nearly stopped... my breathing was labored... my nerves completely frayed... is there no safe place at Harrell Hill Farms? Can a farmer not feel secure in his own farmhouse? Well (it’s not actually my farmhouse but you know what I mean)...

I touched in the corner; unsure of the vision before me... was it where, it did come from, why was it now sitting in my lap licking my face at 2:03am? Where were the coyotes, they must be close behind!

That’s when I remembered Doug telling me that his son, Greg, and granddaughters were coming for a short visit and would arrive at 9:00pm or so. “That’s it!”

said about “This vicious terrier must belong to Greg.”

I rubbed Kringle’s belly, nursed his ear a bit, shook down the steps staircase and slunk back into my bedroom.

The beasts continued to howl outside, nearer than ever now, but I didn’t care. I was tired... I was safe... I was happy... I was home. I had cheated death once again, a new adventure on the Funny Farm.

Humbled in the hills

Farmer Clint

Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge

Hospice Honors Elite Recipient

Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge has named its 2017 Hospice Honors Elite recipient by Deyta Analytics, a division of HEALTHCAREfirst, the leading provider of Web-based home health and hospice software, outsourced billing and coding services, and advanced analytics. Hospice honors is a prestigious program that recognizes hospices providing the highest level of quality as measured from the caregiver’s point of view.

“Hospice Honors is a landmark compilation of hospices that provide the best patient and caregiver experiences,” said J. Kevin Porter of HEALTHCAREfirst. “I am extremely proud of achieving this highest of honors and I congratulate them on their success.”

Award criteria were based on Hospice CAHPS survey results for an evaluation period of October 2015 through September 2016. Award recipients were identified by evaluating performance on a set of 24 quality indicator measures. Performance scores were aggregated from all completed surveys and were compared on a question-by-question basis to a National Performance Score calculated from all partnering hospices contained in the Deyta Analytics’ Hospice CAHPS database. Hospice Honors recipients include those hospices scoring above the Deyta Analytics National Performance Scores on 20 of the evaluated questions. Deyta Analytics holds a special recognition, Hospice Honors Elite to honor hospices scoring above the Deyta Analytics National Performance Score on all 24 of the evaluated questions.

Christina Jenkins, CEO, affirms her staff’s commitment to always provide an exceptional standard of care. She states, “Hospice of the Blue Ridge is honored to have served our community for the past twenty-five years. This award reflects the pride we take in providing the excellent care we provide.”

Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge is a community-based, non-profit hospice, serving Mitchell, Yancey and Avery counties as well as upper McDowell and Burke.

About HEALTHCAREfirst

HEALTHCAREfirst provides cloud-based technologies and services to improve business and clinical operations for over four thousand home health and hospice providers across the United States. Based in Springfield, MO and one of the fastest growing providers of its kind, the company provides agency and clinical management software, outsourced revenue cycle management services (billing, coding and chart audits), CAHPS surveys, and advanced analytics, in any combination. HEALTHCAREfirst’s breadth of solutions offers agencies a single source to improve patient care, create operational efficiencies, increase profitability and simplify CMS compliance. With HEALTHCAREfirst, agencies can focus on patients instead of paperwork. For more information call 800.841.6050 or visit the company’s website at www.healthcarefirst.com.
Leader Honored At Smart Start Conference

By Ruthie Styles
Tri-Counties

GREENSBORO— Judy Stevens was awarded the Ashley O. Thrift Volunteer Award at the 2017 National Smart Start Conference. Stevens was a founding board member for the Mitchell-Yancey Partnership for Children, and served as Board Chair in 2015, as the organization completed a merger to become the Blue Ridge Partnership for Children, serving families and young children in Avery, Mitchell and Yancey counties.

The award named for the longstanding former chair of the board of The North Carolina Partnership for Children (NCPC), is given annually to honor a current or past Smart Start Local Partnership Board Chair who embodies Thrift’s dedication and service to young children and families in North Carolina. A $1,000 cash award will be made to the Blue Ridge Partnership for Children in her name.

“Judy’s commitment to developing the early education workforce has changed her community,” said Cindy Workman, President of NCPC. “Her leadership within early childhood education, early literacy initiatives, and for Smart Start is nothing short of inspiring.”

Stevens, in her role as Chair of the Early Childhood Department at Mayland Community College since 1986, made a tremendous impact on the development of an educated workforce in the region. Her former students note her preparation involved not only a strong foundation in child development, but also their aspiration to support families in their role as caregivers, and involvement in community efforts that celebrate young children.

“Judy’s years of commitment in the early childhood field made her a perfect candidate for the honor of receiving the Thrift Volunteer Award,” stated Jennifer Sampson, Executive Director of the Blue Ridge Partnership for Children. “She has dedicated her professional life to ensuring high-quality services are available to support the youngest children in our local community.”

Under Judy’s leadership, the newly expanded Blue Ridge Partnership for Children has enjoyed successes that include the introduction of new private funding partners, establishment of an annual signature fundraising event, and an increased public presence for Smart Start and the services provided by the organization.

Smart Start is a network of 73 nonprofit local partnerships that serve all 100 North Carolina counties. This network is led by The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. (NCPC) that ensures fiscal and programmatic accountability, and coordinates the statewide network to create better outcomes for children and families.

Ruthie Styles is Community Development Manager for Blue Ridge Partnership for Children serving Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties.
Passing Through
Brent Price, Chaplain
Every Care Team, Mitchell

The other day I was thinking about an old song from my teen-age years. The chorus is simple yet rings with a truth that is timeless. “We may never pass this way again.” It repeats three times as if to drive home the point that life as we know it is meant to be lived in the present, moment by moment. We may only get one opportunity to experience that which lies before us — one chance to know the love of a lifetime, one chance to do what we’ve always dreamed, one chance to experience the most beautiful sunset we’ll ever see.

We walk the same path every day believing that nothing has changed since yesterday. Numbed by routine and a vague sense that we’re living, we trade possibility and opportunity for a twisted sense of safety, security and stability. Many of the persons who have invited me to journey with them at the end of life tell me they don’t have any regrets. Perhaps they don’t. However, every one of them shares at least one thing they would have done differently, one opportunity they wish they had pursued. Some wish they had reached further, loved more deeply, shared more fully. Many say they always thought there would be more time to do whatever is tugging at their hearts.

Sometimes we all wonder what might have happened if we had chosen differently. Most of the questions are wiseful and wondrous. Simply wondering what might have been is not usually life-shaking or particularly disturbing. The real struggle is rooted in the words “if only.” If only I had been able to say “I love you” or “I’m sorry” if only I had stopped drinking. If only I could go back and start over. More than regret, “if only” borders on despair. Something vitally important has been lost forever.

Several years ago I served a patient who wasn’t sure he had ever really lived. He graduated from a prestigious college and achieved a successful career in business. His family never lacked for anything and was never touched by any significant struggle or hardship. However, facing the end of life, he experienced a profound emptiness. His success had come at a high price. All that he had raised haunted him. First steps and birthdays, school plays and ball games. He had spent more time in hotel rooms than he had spent in his own bedroom. After retirement he realized that they were strangers. Longing to know the woman who had waited for him for so many years, he wished he could go back and change the past.

God promises us abundant lives. Jesus expresses a desire for his joy to live in us so that our joy might be full. It all hinges on whether we choose to accept the gift. Hope that, wherever you are on the journey you’ll embrace the love that comes your way. Don’t wait for an invitation to dance. Steal a kiss. Open your heart and thank God while you’re passing through.

Reverend Brent Price is a chaplain at Hospice & Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge.
By: Joyce (Joy) Harwood Baldwin

An Old Man’s Prayer

The night was dark and stormy
And the lightning filled the sky
A lovely view arose in the distance
As the clouds moved swiftly by

An old cabin lit the darkness
From the burning lights within
The chimneys smoldering from the fire
Played gently in the wind

An old man rested on his porch
With Bible in his hands
He spoke to God with gentle voice
Lord here I am again

Thank you for my precious life
You’ve blessed abundantly
The often things don’t go my way
You speak your peace to me

The comfort of my home is gold
With loved ones just inside
Lord your power is amazing
Watching snow in open skies

The old man shut the big front door
And laid his Bible down
Then closed his weary eyes to sleep
As angels gathered round

Joy is a resident of Madison County, where she now resides with her husband, Danny Joe Baldwin. She currently is a member of Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Marshall, NC. As a previous member, she calls Forks of Fly Missionary Baptist Church in Weaverville, “home away from home”. She is currently singing with the Gospel Group “Johne’s Voice” out of Mars Hill, NC. Her latest song “Homecoming” will soon be heard by many.
Morganton Seventh Day Adventist Church

Leaving a Legacy
By Pastor Rick Mercer
Burke County

Oswald Ghiz repeatedly risked his life for Bible truths. Authorities captured him in 1545 while he was on an evangelistic mission in central Europe. He spent a year and six weeks in jail, until restrained at midnight by the midnight footsteps of soldiers marching down the hall. The mercenaries bound him hand and foot, dragged him through the city, and cast him into the Donzere. They little realized that the truth he gave his life for, like ripples created by a rock thrown into a pond, would rapidly spread throughout central Europe.

Oswald took the long view of life, looking beyond his immediate circumstances. He knew his influence would continue beyond his immediate death. He had confidence that the truth he died for would eventually triumph.

Most people live for the immediacy of the moment. They are concerned with the present. Their concern is with what happens to them now. They are absorbed in self-interest.

This great man of faith (and many others through the centuries) viewed life from a different perspective. Passing God absorbed their attention. Living for Christ consumed them. Faithfulness to His truth meant everything to them. With the apostle Paul they proclaimed, “I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14).

What kind of legacy will you leave for those whose lives teach years? Is it a legacy of compromise or commitment? A legacy of compromise or commitment? The witness of Oswald Ghiz echoes down the corridors of time, calling us to commitment today. It calls us to deeper dedication, to “stand for the right though the heavens fall.” Our Lord asks us not only to be willing to die for Him, but also to live for Him now and forever.

When I think of the word “legacy,” it turns me toward thinking about the men in our lives otherwise known as “Dad” or “Father.”

In this day and time, we must be intentional about “passing” a legacy consistent to our beliefs to our children. If our culture is true to do it without our permission which often has a negative end.

I am thankful for my dad and the many others who have made the effort to leave a solid legacy in my life. The following are just a few things to help foster “leaving a legacy.”

1. Make sure your children know that Jesus loves EVERYONE! And that God is personal, loving and will forgive us.
2. Make spiritual activities a routine part of life.
3. Clarify timeless truths—what’s right and wrong.
4. Incorporate spiritual principles into everyday living.
5. Make sure God is viewed as a personal, caring being who is to be loved and respected.

Have a Happy Father’s Day!!

Rick Mercer is the pastor of the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church at 2107 Jamestown Road, Morganton. They can be reached at 704-626-3549 or rjmcker@windmail.net. Check out www.morgantonadventists.org. Their purpose is to share the love of Jesus with all who will listen.

Bridge42 Church

The Floodlight of the Gospel
By Jason Koon
Burke County

If you’ve never spotlighted a deer, first, don’t try it, it’s illegal. I’ve never done it, but from what I understand, if you turn a bright floodlight on a deer at night, their eyes are so sensitive that it will be completely blinded by the floodlight. The deer won’t be able to see anything and will become disoriented, making it impossible for the deer to get away. As I read through some of the great heroes of the faith that came before us, I think this might be similar to what happened to many of them. They had been overtaken by the bright light of Christ and His glorious gospel, to the point that everything else seemed like nothing in comparison to Him. Everything faded into the background and the only thing they seemed to be pursuing was those who lived in the darkness.

Take John and Paul for example. In 1810 Adoniram Judson was preparing to be one of the first missionaries to go to India with the Gospel. He was prepared to propose to his fiancée Anna Hasseltine, but he was clear that their marriage would mean that she too would have to be living in the same manner of southern India. There was no thought in Adoniram’s mind to leave missionary work behind for the sake of marriage and family, so he wrote to John Hasseltine, his perspective future father-in-law to ask permission to propose to his daughter and take her into the mission field with him.

"I have now to ask whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring, to see her no more in this world? Whether you can consent to her departure to be nestle, and her subject to the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life… Can you consent to all this, for the sake of Him who left his heavenly home… for the sake of saving immortal souls… Can you consent to all this, in hope of soon meeting your daughter in the world of glory, with a crown of righteousness brightened by the acclamations of praise which shall resound to her favor from heaven?" They responded positively, and Hasseltine was not only agreed to this but joyfully gave His blessing to the perspective union between Adoniram and his daughter.

These people saw something clearly, that I know is true, but that I’ve only caught a passing glimpse of. The Floodlight of the Gospel. For a glimpse of this beautiful mystery, this white-hot, divine floodlight leading us, not beyond the boundaries of Christ and His church, but deeper into it, until the whole world fades from views. For my mind to apprehend those glorious truths until my heart is fully apprehended by them until all is Christ until Christ is all. For the overcoming faith of Adoniram and Anna Hasseltine.

Jason Koon is Pastor of Bridge42 Church in Morganton, NC.

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www.brcnews.com  June 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 19
Plumtree Church

Special Meetings with Rodney Hogue
By Pastor Ryan Bridgeo
Avery County

You are invited to Plumtree Presbyterian Church for special meetings on Saturday, June 20th at 7:00pm, Sunday, June 21st at 11:00am and Sunday evening at 6:30pm with Rodney Hogue.

Dr. Hogue has been in full-time ministry since 1977. He pastored over 22 years on the west coast in Washington state and California, his last being 23 years at Community of Grace in Hayward, California. Rodney began to minister in the areas of deliverance and healing in the 1980’s while pastoring in churches in Washington state. His passion is to equip believers to minister in power for healing, deliverance, and to see the restoration of lives to fulfill one’s destiny. Rodney now ministers internationally equipping believers nationally and internationally to walk out their identity and spread God’s Kingdom which includes demonstrating the Kingdom of God with power. You will be blessed by these powerful meetings.

Rodey Hogue
Pastor at Plumtree Presbyterian Church

Grace Community Church

Praying Through Anxiety
By Jerry Lewis
Mcdowell County

Every day I talk with someone who deals with fear or anxiety. If your personal life isn’t falling apart, 5 minutes of the news reveals a world seemingly spinning out of control. This week I discovered a resource from Eblenmytools.com. Use this as a prayer guide when you’re afraid.

1. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7) God, I acknowledge my need for you today. I pray that you would breathe peace onto me through your Holy Spirit. Guard my heart. Show me how to protect my mind. I am weak on my own and so I fall back on your strength today.

2. When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. (Psalm 56:3) Jesus, I put my trust in you today. Anxious thoughts are racing over my mind, and it’s easy to take my eyes off of you when I feel afraid. Remind me of who you are. Pour out your love on me, that I might remember you are always good and always faithful, especially when I am afraid.

3. So, do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10) Lord Jesus, thank you for always being with me. Your name, immemorial, means God with us. I am so grateful today that you are near me no matter what anxious thoughts try to creep into my mind. Thank you for being my strength when I am weak. You are faithful always. I love you, Lord, and I rely on you today and every day, Amen.

4. For God has not given us a spirit of fear but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7) God, thank you for this truth. Thank you for the gifts you bestow on us—gifts that help ease our anxious spirits and remind us of who we are in Christ. Thank you for giving us power to fight the lies. Thank you for loving us even in our brokenness.

5. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. (Joshua 1:9) Lord Jesus, we know you are with us whenever we go. Sometimes, it can feel so hard to believe that. We don’t feel strong or courageous, and we worry relentlessly about our lives and circumstances. Remind us today that we are strong in you.

6. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit. (Psalm 34:18) Lord, my heart is broken. My mind is racing and my spirit is uneasy. When I feel broken down or defeated, I want to run to you, knowing you are always present and always near. Comfort me, Jesus.

7. An anxious heart weighs down a man, but a kind word cheers him up. (Proverbs 12:25) Jesus, my anxious heart is weighing me down today. I confess that I have become consumed by my own struggles and I have lost sight of who you are. Speak kindly to my heart, Lord, and remind me of what is true. Thank you for your forgiveness and your endless grace for me.

8. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. (Colossians 3:15) Dear Lord, it is in your deep desire that your peace would rule in my heart. When I feel uneasy or unsettled, I want to know you are near me. Calm my fears, settle my spirit, and bring rest to my heart as I surrender myself to you today.

9. The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace. (Psalm 29:11) Lord, thank you for giving me strength. On the hard days help me to remember you are never far away. Your strength is always fighting for me—I used only to be still in your presence. Thank you for bringing peace to me. Thank you for every blessing. I want to share and remember them today, for you are always good.

I love songs. This one will serve as a good backdrop to this prayer.

Jerry Lewis is Senior Pastor at Grace Community Church in Marion.

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Africa
By Rev. George Patton, Jr.
Burke County

Columbus was called mad because he decided to sail the uncharted ocean. Martin Luther was called mad because he presumed to defy the entrenched religious hierarchy of his time. Patrick Henry was considered mad when he said, “Give me liberty, or give me death!” George Washington was thought to be mad when he decided to continue the war after the winter at Valley Forge, when thousands of his men had died and thousands had deserted, leaving him only a handful of men. We have become too sophisticated and respectable to be called mad in our generation. Christianity has become so respectable and so conventional that it is now unprofitable. The salt has lost its flavor. Would to God that the world around us was Christian enough to call us mad, in these days when materialism and secularism are sweeping over the world. Thank God there are those who sacrifice time, talent, social position, and lucrative posts, and who fling aside every advantage to serve the Church of God. On my last trip to Africa I found such Brothers and Sisters. They live in mud huts, farm for a living, take care of families and still have time to travel to remote villages to carry the Gospel message. One such man is named Pastor Kandanu Jeremiah Buwase. Pastor Jeremiah is a converted witch doctor who now calls to be a pastor and evangelist. For years, the trade of black magic had been handed down in Pastor Jeremiah’s family. His father practiced it, his grandfather, and so on as far back as they can remember. Jeremiah had been trained in the profession. One day 3 boys, who were friends, came to Jeremiah seeking love potions for the girls they had fallen in love with. It goes without saying in Africa, a witch doctor gives you a potion and it does not work, you get your money back. Two of the boys had success with the potions they had received from Jeremiah, but one did not. Jeremiah said, “what do you mean my potion did not work.” Who is this guy? The boy said, “She’s a Christian.” Jeremiah said, “I will take care of this one.” Jeremiah told me the only way to get a spirit to work against a Christian is to either get them scared or mad. So, Jeremiah hid in the bushes, and as the girl was walking up the path on her way to school, Jeremiah jumped out and threw vines he had in a bottle on her. With tears in her eyes, she said, “Jeremiah I am going to pray for you.” Jeremiah said, “what kind of power is this that not even 1, the great Jeremiah cannot fight against it.” That week Jeremiah went to the church and got the girl’s attention, determined to find out what kind of power she had and where she was getting it. He heard the message of Jesus. He heard how Jesus had all power. That night the church was holding another service. Jeremiah came to the service that night carrying the suitcase that contained all the witchcraft materials that had been passed down from generation to generation. He put it under the communion table in the front of the church. As the pastor began preaching a corner of the suitcase was sticking out. The preacher put his foot up on it. Jeremiah said, “I knew then he was going to die, but nothing happened.” He heard the message again about how Jesus even had power over death and He would give all those who trust in Him power from heaven. Jeremiah knew the power he had was not a match for Jesus’ power. When the invitation was given, Jeremiah felt the call of God to go forward. He said that the evil spirits he had been working with were outside the church calling to him, telling him that if he went up they would kill him when he came out of the church. Jeremiah told me that he knew if they were to kill him, Jesus had the power to either protect him or raise him back up. Jeremiah went forward and received Christ. Many is the village told Jeremiah to be mad and still to do it. He has become one of the most anointed preachers in East Africa now. I am so proud of him.

George Patton is an evangelist/missionary to the world from Grace Baptist Church in Morganton.
Accentuate the Positive
By Cheryl Shuffler
Burke County

Sunrise readers form club at Forest Hill
Every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning at Forest Hill Elementary School you’ll find a group of students who enjoy arriving at school early to read together. English Language Learners teacher Wendy Hammerstone sponsors the FHSS Sunrise Readers club, which got its start at the school 10 years ago. The club continues to grow as students learn about it through word of mouth. Interested students arrive at school at 7:30 a.m. three mornings a week, and reading mentors are matched with reading mentees who need a little extra help mastering the skill. The mentors pick the book to read and the two students read it together. Principal Sara LeCroy said, “The students love the program and consider it a privilege to be a part of it. Many students who were once mentees are now mentors. The mentors say they learn about responsibility, helping other students learn to read, and making new friends. The students take it very seriously and are very committed to the program. It is a beautiful thing.”

Trail receives backing from grant
The Roumefout Communities’ Caring New Economies Fund (CNEF) has awarded Patton High School $10,000 for the Enola Community Trail, which will stretch from Enola Road to Mill Elementary School.

The trail is the vision of Patton science teacher Noel Francis and is the designated project this year for the school’s annual Giving Games. This year, the Giving Games committee is hosting the “Memorial Merica Melon Run and 5K” as a fundraiser for the trail. The run is set for Saturday May 27 at the school. Visit “Memorial Merica Melon 5K” on Facebook or email Francis at nfrancis@burke.k12.nc.us.

The racecourse starts and ends on the track in the football stadium and circles the campus twice on about half asphalt and half grass. The two special running categories are the Melon Relay and the Band of Brothers (or Sisters). The Melon Relay will consist of three-member teams carrying a melon one mile each before handing it off to a teammate. The time is recorded when the melon carrier crosses the finish line.

The Band of Brothers (or Sisters) involves teams of three to 10 runners carrying a melon between them. The last of the team members to cross the line is counted as the group’s time.

The rules include the group must provide the melon and the term is disqualified if the melon is dropped and broken or even cracked.

Awards will be given for top three overall men’s and women’s categories, age categories less than 10, 10-14, and each 5 year increment ending at 70. Group awards for Melon Run and Band of Brothers (Sisters) will also be given.

The cost is $15 without a T-shirt and $25 with a T-shirt, $10 for the 1 mile Fun Run with a T-shirt and free for the Fun Run without a T-shirt. Donations are appreciated and will be used to build the Enola Community Trail.

Race time is 8 a.m. May 27 for the 1 mile run and 8:30 a.m. for the 5K. Registration and packet pick-up will begin at 7 a.m.

Icard wins: walking challenge
Burke County Public Schools nurses challenged employees to get moving and “walk across America” and 154 employees accepted the challenge. The employees recorded their steps each week Feb. 1 through April 30 with schools competing against each other. Oak Hill Elementary School had the most steps the first month and received a ribbon-shaped sign and a run bowl. The next two months belonged to Icard Elementary School, who in the three months of the overall challenge. Icard’s school custodian, Tina Buff, won the individual challenge. On Tuesday Icard employees who participated in the walking challenge enjoyed a duty-free lunch as well as a meal from Chartwells. Ms. Buff received a gift certificate for a one-hour massage from Therapeutic Massage and teacher Andrea Gladden won a drawing for a gift certificate to Beausou Tanning Zipline. All total, Burke County Public Schools employees recorded 104,067,485 steps, or the equivalent of making 10 round trips across America. Each school kept up with their combined total of steps by marking them on a map.

Contact: Public Relations Officer Cheryl M. Shuffler cs@chuck@burke.k12.nc.us 985-431-2000

Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge
Celebrates Blessing of the Hands
By Brent Price
Mitchell County

Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge celebrates the commitment and tireless dedication of our nurses. Last week we conducted a service to affirm their calling through a blessing of their hands. Each nurse offered their hands in a hand-washing ritual and draped each other’s hands to represent their dedication as servants to each person in their care.

The hectic pace of healthcare makes it difficult at times to stop and listen to our hearts. The Blessing of Hands reminds us of the importance of caring for the soul, especially at a time when patients are confronted with the end of life.

We Are Now Partnering Together
Bakersville Community Health Center
Celo Health Center
Spruce Pine Health Center

These three health centers partnered to form the Mountain Community Health Partnership (MCHP). Each health center will continue to provide the same high quality of care patients have experienced for many years. We are dedicated to offering exceptional care to our patients while striving for a healthier community.

Accepting Patients At All Three Locations

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<tr>
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<th>Spruce Pine</th>
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June 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 23
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REJOICE
By Faye W Boone
The dew is on the flower
The bird is on the wing
A gentle breeze is blowing
My heart begins to sing

Praise to our Heavenly Father
And to Jesus, His loving Son
And to the precious Holy Spirit
Who guides the race we run

We have no way of knowing
If our race be short or long
And sometimes the way seems hidden
As to what is right and wrong

But if our hearts are tuned to listen
To the Holy Spirit’s voice
We can discern His plan for us
That will make our hearts rejoice

So keep us Heavenly Father,
In that straight and narrow place
That leads us ever upward
Until we see Your smiling face

Faye W Boone is 91 years old, a charter member of Faith Fellowship Church in Newdale, NC. She is the 1st place winner of Poetry Contest at Yancey Senior Center.

Possible Closure
By Jerry Cade
Mitchell County

The Mission Hospital Board and administration are considering stopping obstetrical services at the Blue Ridge Regional Hospital in Spruce Pine. This would be a terrible loss to our community.

I speak about this as a father and grandfather of children who would have died or been damaged, if we hadn’t had the wonderful obstetrical care in Spruce Pine. Two of my children, who are now grown, living here, and serving in our medical community, were twins with overlapping and interlocking chains. One was head down, and one was head up with a foot coming out first. They required an emergency C-section or one would have almost certainly died.

3 years ago, my daughter was near term with our grandson, and was being checked at the hospital when she developed a massive hemorrhage. Within 10 minutes an emergency C-section was performed. She and Jack were saved. She never could have survived transport to Asheville or Marion.

There are many stories like ours. The change will bring an almost certain increase in infant or neonatal deaths and morbidity. Pregnant women with false labor and minor complications will be forced to make trips up and down the mountain to be checked.

I also speak as a physician who has served in our community for more than 40 years — both in family practice with hospital care and in the emergency department at Blue Ridge. I know how difficult and dangerous it is to transport pregnant women who are bleeding or losing their babies. I know how frightening it is to have to deliver a baby in the emergency room where none of us — doctors and nurses like — have been trained or are experienced in Ob/Gyn.

The loss of this critical service would mean there would be no obstetrical care for women and babies between Boone and Asheville. The number of deliveries in Spruce Pine have been on an increasing trend over the past year. If this department closes, the physicians, midwives, and nurses who have chosen this profession will move out of our community. Already, at least one family doctor who wanted to do OB decided against coming here to live and practice, because of this controversy. We will lose family practice and women’s health services, if the obstetrical department is closed. This is a significant health care, economic, and employment loss to our community. My observation has been that in rural hospitals, if the obstetrical services exist, it is easier to attract other health care providers.

Obstetrical services, and women’s health services bring young families to health care.

We have a wonderful, recently built facility, and a competent caring staff in this department. With advertising and nurturing these services would grow and flourish. Perhaps that is where the decision should be made — on how best to promote the obstetrical and women’s services at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital.

Those wishing to make their voices heard on this important issue should call the BRRH CEO, Rebecca Carter, at 828-765-1804 or the Mission CEO, Ron Paulus, at 828-213-1111.

Jerry Cade is a physician in Mitchell County.

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His Place Worship Center

Local Worship Center Celebrates 7 Years of Service
By Marion Stephan
McDowell County

“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” (1 Peter 4:10).

His Place Worship Center in Marion will be celebrating its seventh anniversary in June. To do so, the church is carrying out several projects that continue the church’s tradition of service to the community.

On June 3, the church will offer a “name your price” yard sale. Shoppers will be able to pick whatever they consider in their price range and if they cannot afford anything, says organizer Paul Boyd, Paul Boyd and his wife, Marita, are co-pastors of His Place.

The yard sale will be held at the church’s location at 1423 Highway 70 West in Marion. It will last from 9 a.m. until customers stop coming. All contributions will be given to Freedom Life Ministries in Marion. For Paul Boyd and his wife, Marita, Freedom Life Ministries helps meet the physical and spiritual needs of “current and former offenders” who have served or are serving time in prison.

On June 17, members of His Place and youth from Project Challenge in McDowell County will be wielding sponges, brushes, soap, and water in a fight against summer grime. The two groups will work side-by-side to offer free car washes to the community.

Cars will be scrubbed from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Auto Zone, 500 North Main Street, Marion. (in the local “tongue,” as expressed by Paul Boyd, Auto Zone is “on the five-bane in Marion,” next to CVS Pharmacy.)

Auto Zone will provide “brushes, soap, rags, all the equipment we need to wash your car,” according to Boyd. This company routinely provides its parking lot to charities and youth groups for car washes, he notes.

The car wash project was initiated during the church’s April Board of Direction meeting. Boyd says board members saw the effort as an opportunity to raise up and mentor McDowell’s young people, he adds. Any contributions given during the event will be donated to Project Challenge.

Project Challenge is a non-profit statewide program that provides youth with opportunities to “give their time and talent back to the community,” explains Phyllis Ennis. Ennis supervises the program in McDowell, Yancey, Ashe, Watauga, and Avery Counties, and carries out the program in McDowell.

In McDowell, Project Challenge youth have raised funds for the elderly, picked up trash on the Catawba River Greenway, and cleaned up classrooms during the summertime. Ennis explains. They have also cleaned yards and lawns for people through their Car Rocks program and helped families through their Project Challenge’s Christmas program.

Throughout the last seven years, His Place has also supported Aglow International and the McDowell Pregnancy Care Center. “All change given every Sunday is going to the McDowell pregnancy care center,” Boyd asserts. “We raised over $2,000 last year from our tithes.”

Marita Stephan is a Christian freelance writer and attends New Covenant Community Church in Marion.
New Exhibition in Spruce Pine
By Kate Groff
Townes and Mitchell County

On July 15, the Spruce Pine Gallery will host one of their most compelling 2-dimensional exhibitions. Entitled, “Inheritance”, the show will feature the works of Jill Sberla, Kiki Jane, Sarah Wall, and Jerry Jackson. Each has a story to tell about their relationship with master painting professor, Paul Hartley who died in 2010. Hartley taught at East Carolina University from the early to mid-70s through 2008. Not unlike hundreds of other successful artists around the country, these four artists benefited from his artistry. Jerry reflected that “He was a masterful teacher who possessed clarity of insight, which he could impart with few words...a teacher, mentor and friend.”

In January 2015, Jill, Kiki, Jane, and Jerry reunited for two weeks in a Winter Residency at Panumad School of Crafts. They spent uninterrupted hours connecting, creating and conducting critiques, which gave light to new ways of work, new materials, fresh ideas, and a welcomed refinement of friendships. In this exchange, each artist will present a distinct body of work that includes influences from that Panumad residency and their relationship with their former teacher. Their broad range of media and styles will engage visitors as they explore their common threads.

Over the past ten plus years, the four have grown as artists and friends. They now live in different parts of the state, doing different work in the arts, but each will acknowledge the commonality of being part Hartley trained in all his students. Lee Hanley, Raleigh art dealer who represented Hartley said, “He has influenced more young artists than anyone in North Carolina’s university system. That will be his legacy...”

The exhibition will include one of Paul Hartley’s large-scale paintings, My Room is Turning.

An artist’s reception is planned for Saturday, July 15 from 5 to 7 pm. The artists will toast Paul Hartley’s contribution, talk about their own work, and encourage and engage visitor comment. “Inheritance” continues through August 19. The Spruce Pine Gallery is located at 269 Oak Avenue and open from 10:30 am to 5 pm Tuesday through Saturday. For more information about the exhibit, please call 828-765-0250. For more information about the Toe River Arts Council and its programs, please visit www.toriverarts.org or call 828-582-7121.

Kate Groff is the Programs Coordinator for the Toe River Arts Council.
Avery County
Avery County Chamber - June 14 - Annual Birthday Party Grandfather Mountain, June 17 - Beech Mountain Cool SK Run, June 23 - Johnson Brothers Concert at Seven Devils, June 24 - Annual Cornmeal Cook-Off at Old Hampton Store & Tavern in Linville, June 25 - Singing on the Mountain at McRae Meadows on Grandfather Mountain, June 30 - July 4th-Fireworks at Sugar Mountain, Beech Mountain, Newland and Crossnore.

Lee-McRae College - BANNER ELK, NC holds two science-oriented summer programs. Registration is now open for two Lee-McRae College science-focused programs: the Wildlife Management Program and the Advanced Wildlife Science Summer Program. The first session runs from June 25 until July 1 and is designed to provide experiences to high school students with interests in conservation, animal medicine and wildlife studies. Participants will be introduced to active wildlife biology, animal medicine, conservation and wildlife rehabilitation programs. Students will gain exposure to patient care and education in the May Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. The second session, which runs from July 2 until July 8, is designed for students interested in pursuing a college education in the wildlife field. Students can work in a clinical setting alongside nurses and staff, engage in advanced wildlife studies, and tours of western North Carolina to study wildlife.

Both sessions require registrants to be rising sophomores or above and have enrolled in, or completed, a high school level biology course. Registration deadline for both sessions is Sunday, June 11. Cost is $750 and includes lodging, meals, instruction, materials, supplies, field trips, transportation and a camp t-shirt. For participants who would like to attend both sessions, the cost is $1,400. Payment can be made by method of cash/check, or online.

Burke County
Catawba River Baptist Association - We are putting together a mission team to serve in Chicago July 29-August 4. The cost is $200 per person which includes transportation, lodging, meals, trip shirt and all needed supplies. For more information and registration forms please contact our CREA office. All forms and a non-refundable deposit of $50 must be in by June 8. This trip will entail construction, VBS, testimonies and prayerwalking.

June 1 - Minister’s Wife Fellowship @ Aobele’s in Morganton @ 5:30 (Dutch Treat) 13-14-15 SBC Annual Meeting in Phoenix.

West Virginia Mission Trip - Sunday to Thursday, July 16-22, taking a group to Fayetteville, West Virginia July 23-28 where we will do VBS, Nursing Home ministry, Block Party as well as some light construction. This is a great trip for adults and youth as well as families with children. The cost of $750 per person includes: food, lodging (sleeping on air mattresses at New River Baptist Church), and supplies. For more information, registration and meal release forms please call our CREA office or email us at creaky@crab.com. Catawba River Baptist Association will be leading a mission trip to Cuba September 16-22. This will be an exciting trip where we will do construction, prayer walking, personal evangelism and preaching. The cost for the trip which includes transportation, food, lodging and supplies is $2,000 per person. This trip is open to both men and women.

Christian Business Men’s Connection (Morganton) - We are a movement of men to Experience the Power of One God, the Value of One Man and the Leverage of One Team, resting in the Spiritual Resources of Our Businesses. Please join us for lunch at one of our weekly Bible study meetings: Tuesday, 12 noon at the Community House, Morganton. Contact: Wayne Giese, 828-413-3819.

First Baptist Church of Marion - EVERYONE IS INVITED TO MOVIE NIGHT ON FRIDAY, JUNE 16th at 6:00 pm. We will have a pizza and dessert dinner at 6:00 pm. The movie and popcorn will begin at 6:30 pm in the Blanton Center. Please sign up with Ms. Christi, if you plan to attend.

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist-Buskey Church - VBS - Fruits of the Spirit Big Farms - Where God's Fruit Grows! Please join us for Vacation Bible School! Sunday June 26th - 30th, from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm, at the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2871 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C. 28655. $18.00 per person, which includes cooking dinner and family-style fun! For more information, please contact Cindy at 828-710-8048.

Cooling Class with Sharon - Tuesday, June 20th, from 5:00 - 8:00 pm, at the Silver Lode Adventist School, 2195 Jennetown Road, Morganton, N.C. 28655. Enjoy a wonderful evening, great food and fun fellowship! For more information please contact Cindy at 870-710-8048 or e-mail cjacker@cbliz.net or register for more information.

Sharon shares a unique presentation that will provide a personal testimony to health and wellness. She began while caring for her husband's health challenges, which included diabetes. Sharon's journey is a miracle of health and recovery from cancer. Her message will be a testimony to her health through diet and exercise without medication!

Historic Valdese
June 2 - The Tony Bailey Band - County June 5: N布尔s - Bluegrass & Progressive Grass June 16: Emily Minor - County & Variety June 23: Jason Lee Kinsey - Americana & Variety

The outstanding donors “From This Day Forward” written by Fred Cranford is the flagship show of Old Coloney Players. The summer of 2017 will mark the 50th consecutive season of production. This drama tells the story of the Waldenses, a people from the area known as the Cottan Alps in Northern Italy near the French border, and the founders of the Town of Valdese.

The 50th season is proudly directed by Kenneth Kay & Kim Cortez Kay and presented by the Valdese Community Players. For more information call 828-782-2129, order online, or get them the night of the show with cash or check.

Show runs Fridays & Saturdays starting July 14 and ending August 12 at 7:45pm.

Aglow International History Lightshows - History Lightshows meetings are the second Saturday of each month.

McDowell County
Clingmans Baptist Church (Marion) - We are accepting resumes for Minister of Music. Please submit your resume to clingmansbaptistchurch@comcast.net or to address 1150 East Court Street, Marion, NC 28752 Attn: Personnel Committee.

Cross Moravian Baptist Church - 15 Cross Moravian Baptist Church Loop (across from Wal-mart Center) Marion NC 28752

We will be having Vacation Bible School from June 18th-June 23rd from 6:00-8:30 nightly. All children from age 3 to Grade 5 are invited to attend. We will have a run running nightly. If you wish to attend and need a ride please call the church at 652-6115 to make arrangements. Our theme for this year is “Hero Central”.

First Baptist Church of Marion - Belize Medical Mission Registration is now complete for the 2017 Belize Medical Mission Trip. 14 are outbound and preparing to provide free clinics in 5 underdeveloped villages in the northern Corozal District of the country. The team is currently raising funds for medical supplies and medicines. Contributions are greatly appreciated. Please make your donations to FBC for the Belize Medical Fund. For more info, please contact Scott Hagaman.

Historic Marion Tailgate Market is open on Tuesday from 2pm to 6pm and Saturday from 9 am to 12 pm downtown Marion under the Tailgate Market shelter.

New Hope of McDowell (Marion) - New Hope of McDowell is seeking a full-time Associate Director - Shelter Manager. New Hope of McDowell is a non-profit domestic violence and sexual assault agency located in McDowell County, NC. This position requires someone to take over the new mission, will be fulfilling. All Wins of America Outreach Ministries. The selected candidate will have all skills and abilities in the English language. Additionally, all will be invited to an picnic at 1046 Darla Lake Rd, Spruce Pine, NC.

Bear Creek Baptist Church-Ledge - Vacation Bible School LifeWay’s” Galaxies Starviewers” will be Sunday, June 11th - Thursday, June 16th, 6:00 - 8:30 each night with an Adult Class at 7 pm. VBS Kick-off is Saturday, June 10th, 10 am - 12 noon. “Decoration Day” at Bear Creek is Sunday, June 25th.

Catawba College - This is a Christ and Biblical Based Program, giving light and help for men, women, and families suffering from addiction. Any question contact: Josh Wise @ 315-0601

There will be a meeting every Thursday night with someone there to talk to men, women, and their families.

Calvary Chapel Asheville - Spruce Pine - Calvary Chapel Church in Asheville is sponsoring a home fellowship and Bible Study in Spruce Pine. The fellowship is held on Thursday evenings at 700pm at 89 Seam Dr. (Estate area) - off Bryson Creek Rd. We are studying the Gospel of Luke currently. Call Jon Jackson 760-739-3799 for information and directions. And bring your Bible.

Rhoodonden Festival -On June 16 and 17, the Town of Bakersville, Gateway to the Rough and Home to the Arts, will host its 71st North Carolina Rhododenron Festival which is among the oldest and most respected festivals in the Southeast. The two-day Festival will feature the Rhododenron Festival Pageant on Friday and Saturday evening. The Rhododenron Festival Arts and Crafts Fair on both Friday and Saturday will have live music all day, food vendors, featuring local and organic selections and crafts. Check out our Natural arts and crafts, people; commercial vendors; invalids; and train rides for the kids; nonprofit exhibitors, and the famous Ducky Derby. We will have a classic car show on Saturday as well as a 10K run and street dancing both Friday and Saturday night. Come to Bakersville! There are vendor spaces still available! Contact Dr. Dan Barone dedonborn@gmail.com or 828-284-1914 http://www.northrohdodenronfestival.org/
Support Group For Caregivers Of Those With Memory Loss: To Hold Meetings The First Friday Of Each Month From 1-3PM

Care & Share, a newly formed support group for caregivers of loved ones who have memory loss, will hold monthly meetings at the offices of Hospice & Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge, 235 Hospital Dr. in Spruce Pine, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. High Country Caregiver Foundation welcomes and encourages all caregivers to attend.

Facilities dealing with a loved one with memory loss can quickly become exhausted, traumatized, and isolated, and this new group intends to provide support, friendship, education, information and referrals for caregivers. Monthly meetings will be held on the first Friday of each month, offering refreshments and fellowship. There will be opportunities for caregivers to tell their stories, learn useful tips, trade information, and give and gain support to others in the same situation.

For more information about the group and the meeting please contact Suzanne Russell at (714) 614-5867 or Juan Ortiz at justouritz@yahoo.com.

First Baptist Church Spruce Pine - First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine is seeking a part-time childcare provider for their toddler nursery. The position will require approximately 20 hours per week ranging from 8:00 am to 12:30 pm or 12:45 pm on Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from 12:30 pm to 4:30 pm. Applicants should contact First Baptist Church, 125 Tappan Street, Spruce Pine, NC 28777. Phone: 828-765-9411 Ext. 301.

Grassy Creek Baptist Church - Grassy Creek Baptist Church will have Vacation Bible School June 19-23 from 6:00-8:30 each evening. The theme is "Victory!," the Ultimate Pep Rally! For more information or if you need the bus to pick you up, please call the church office at 765-4650.

Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge Annual Golf Tournament on June 3, 2013 at the Grassy Creek Golf & Country Club in Spruce Pine, NC.

Mitchell County Baptist Association - Bible Schools-Beaver Creek Baptist Church-June 11-15 6:00-3:30 pm, Barry Chapel Baptist Church-June 10-14 6:00-8:00 pm, Beaver Creek Baptist Church-June 15-19 6:00-8:00 pm, Stowe Hill Baptist Church-June 11-16 6:00-3:30 pm, Spruce Pine First Baptist-June 6-8 5:30-8:30 pm, White Oak Baptist Church-July 15-19 5:30-7:30 pm

Mitchell County Historical Society - The story of Frankie and Charlie Silver will be presented by John Silver. It is the story of his ancestors. A louder story that continues to captivate our interest. Monday, June 10-8:30 pm Old Kennon Baptist Church.

Mitchell-Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force - A conference sponsored by Youth to Youth will be held at Queens University, Charlotte, NC on July 17-20. An awesome leadership opportunity to our youth to learn and make a difference with their peers in the fight against drugs in our schools and communities. Some scholarships are available. Contact the Task Force office for more information. Call 828-622-7899.

Red Cross Blood Donation - The American Red Cross serving Mitchell and Yancey County has volunteer positions open as Blood Donor Ambassadors assisting in the areas of Reception and Hospitality at local blood drives in Spruce Pine and Burnsville. With the need for blood donations increased during the holidays, this is a critical role in our community. If you can spare some of your time, please contact Emily Trinity, Donor Services Specialist supporting the Mitchell and Yancey area blood drives at knmbrewer@redcross.org or 828-333-9009.

Parkway Playhouse is excited to present The 39 Steps, which runs June 10-24. Also, announcing a new outreach program that is free and fun for the entire family.

Penland School of Craft - Summer 2017 Workshops at Penland Say hello to Penland’s Summer 2017 workshop catalog, now online in pdf at a PDF! We’ve beyond traditional classes... Penland is about the journey and what happens alongside your classes... and come join us in the studios to build bikes or books or bowls or brooches or...?

Tipton Hill Community Foundation (Tipton Hill) - Country Breakfast, the first Saturday in May, from 8:00 am to noon. All proceeds go to Tipton Hill Community Foundation. For more information call 828-592-9977.

Women’s Prayer Breakfast - If you would like to join a group of women who are dedicated to praying, learning about God, and God’s Word, fall in line and come join us at the studios to build bikes or books or bowls or brooches or...

Yancey County

Calvary Chapel Asheville - Spruce Pine - Calvary Chapel Church in Asheville is sponsoring a home fellowship and Bible Study in Spruce Pine. The fellowship is held on Thursday evenings at 7:00 pm at 79 Seem Dr. (Esso area) of Burnsville Creek Rd. We are studying the Gospel of John currently. Call John Jackson 760-793-3799 for information and directions. And bring your Bible.

Laural Brand Baptist Church (Burnsville) - Seeking bi-vocational pastor please email resume to foreceaprics@frontier.com.

South Estato Baptist Church - This year’s invitation to attend our royal 2017 Vacation Bible School at South Estato Baptist Church, 32 South Estato Baptist Church Rd, Burnsville NC 28714. Come and join us as we go Over The Moon, Across the Drawbridge, to the King. June 12-16 from 9:00 PM each night. There will be classes for kids ages pre K - 12th grade, food, activities and tons of fun. See Vanity Ledford (VBS Director) with any questions. 228-284-5463

Tooe River Arts - JULY 8, 2017 LIVE EVENT - 6 PM Dinner/Entertainment $40 PER PERSON

Tote My Lunch Bag - SUNDAY-MAY 21ST - DONATE $6 IS THE PRICE TO REGISTER.

Yancey County Meals on Wheels (Burnsville) - Volunteers needed to deliver meals to Yancey County shut-ins, any weekday, 10:30 am - noon. If you would like to volunteer, please call the Yancey County Senior Center at 828-482-6011.

Maryland Community College SMALL BUSINESS CENTER

The Maryland Small Business Center (SBDC) offers high quality training and confidential counseling for entrepreneurs and small businesses. Whether you are considering launching a new business or managing an existing one, The Small Business Center provides resources tailored to fit your needs. If you would like to schedule a free confidential business counseling session or sign up for free small business seminars, contact Maryland SBDC Director Allen Cook at 828.766.1285 or email him at acsbdc@mayland.edu. Check out our June classes:

Funding Your Small Business in the 21st Century
In this class, Maryland Small Business Center Director, Allen Cook, will discuss sources of small business financing and strategies to obtain funds for your business or startup. Explore the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of funding sources. Discover the keys to financial success.

06/1, 10:00-3:00 pm Banner Elk Maryland Satellite Campus Learn QuickBooks: FREE Series.

In this class, you'll discover everything from setting up QuickBooks to handling money in, money out, banking, payroll, and much more. If you would like to use QuickBooks for your business, this seminar series is a great starting point. Computers with QuickBooks will be provided.

06/5 Mon./Wed./Fri., 12:00 pm 6/14 Wed. MW, 5:30-8:30 pm Maryland Cayce Best Startup Ideas for Yancey, Mitchell and Avery Counties (3 HOURS)!

What kinds of new businesses have the greatest potential in this area? We will look at data on existing businesses with a further objective of identifying opportunities for new businesses and growth opportunities for existing businesses.

06/5, 5:30-8:30 pm Yancey Campus

How to Find Your Customers

Explore a variety of market research tools that will give you critical information about your industry and customers. Find the data you need to test the feasibility of a new business. Learn how to perform a competitive analysis and determine your target market.

06/6, 1:00-3:00 pm Banner Elk Maryland Satellite Campus JUNE Women in Business: Pita's Tips for Growth in a Seasonal Economy Everyone Welcome! Enjoy free lunch while learning business building tactics. Sponsored by the Western Women's Business Center, Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce, and Maryland Small Business Center.

06/14, 12:00-1:00 pm Maryland Cayce

TripAdvisor for Your Studio:

Our mountain region is a vacation destination. TripAdvisor provides reviews and rankings of unrivaled topics such as restaurants, lodging, entertainment, arts related, and local attractions. This seminar will help you look at the advantages of being on TripAdvisor and how it can grow your studio business when managed correctly. Sponsored by the Toe River Arts Council and the Maryland Small Business Center.

06/14, 3:30-5:30 pm TRAC Art Resource Center Spruce Pine Using Facebook and Instagram for Small Businesses: Put One Facebook business page is a great tool to connect and interact with new and potential customers. Learn how it works and what is needed to build the perfect Facebook business page. Return for part two to build or optimize your Facebook business page.

06/20, 3:30-5:00 pm Maryland Cayce Instagram and Facebook for Small Businesses Learn how Instagram and Snapchat will benefit your small business. Find out the customer profiles of typical Instagram/Snapchat users and how they may relate to your business. Get the basics in this one hour class.

June 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News Page 9
The Spiritual Duty of the Wife

By Dr. Tom Walker
McDowell County

Ephesians 5:22-24 says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."

God assigns duties in the home to both the husband and the wife. In this study, we are going to consider the place of the wife in the home in regard to her husband. She has many duties but it all revolves around the basic one, that being submissive to her own husband.

If we will look to God’s Word, we can find out what God expects from the wife. If husband and wife both do what God tells them to do, they can have a successful relationship.

"This verse, taken out of context, has caused many husbands to repress: their wives and many wives to be rebellious and rebellious. Standing alone, this verse seems arbitrary and unfair. But it does not stand alone. No verse of Scripture stands alone. This verse is preceded by the command that we submit ourselves one to another in the fear of God. What a pity that preachers so often ignore this context when beginning a series of messages on husband-wife relationships. The context includes not only the Holy Spirit’s instruction for mutual submission, but also His teaching about the Holy Spirit’s filling—the blessed oil that makes the machinery of marriage run smoothly." (Dr. John Phillips)

The idea of the wife’s submission is not very popular and not very widely accepted today. One who resists the direct Word of God is in a state of rebellion against God.

Before I reveal to you what submitting to one’s husband means, I want to express to you what it doesn’t mean:

First, submission is not just something women are supposed to do. 1 Peter 5:5 says: “Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto your elder. As all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility, for God revieth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.” Submission is a matter for both husband and wife. It is a mutual submission, not a one sided one.

Secondly, submission for the wife does not mean she is regarded like a slave. When the wife does and becomes what God wants her to be, it is then that she is really free. Some men take this idea of submission, and twist it in meaning to try to saying the wife is to do whatever he tells her to do. That is not so...

Thirdly, a wife submitting does not mean she is never to speak or that her opinion or advice does not matter. She is weaker physically than the man, but not necessarily mentally.

Fourthly, it does not mean that she is to keep her abilities dormant or inactive. Look at Proverbs 31 where the godly woman is portrayed. She is seen as being active and busy.

Fifthly, it does not mean the wife is inferior to the husband. God has a division of labor and responsibility. There should be order, understanding and structure for the various responsibilities in home life.

Now let’s look at the Biblical responsibility of a wife and see what submission actually involves. Submission is the act or face of accepting or yielding to a superior force or to the will and authority of another person.

Submission Is: Commanded

When God gives us a command to do something, the only thing to do to make things come out right is to obey Him. There is not one place in the Bible where God commands a husband to force his wife into submission. If he will be the kind of man he ought to be, it will be easier for the wife to submit to him.

Submission Is to Be Continuous:

If it is a way of life, it will promote harmony and unity in the marriage relationship. A consistency should exist in this matter. Most of the time the Greek verb to "submit" is used in a passage, it is present tense, or continual action.

Submission Is Absolutely Necessary

The Greek word for "submit" is in the imperative mode. That simply means it is something that is necessary and not optional.

Submission Is Spiritual

Ephesians 5:22 says it is to be "as to the Lord.
Since the Lord commands the wife to be submissive in regard to her husband, if she does not submit, she is living in rebellion against God. If she puts herself under the authority of her husband, it is a good test for her love for God. She should see her submission to her husband as an act of obedience unto the Lord.
It takes the power of the Spirit of God for the woman to do as she ought to do. That presupposes a woman who has been cleansed by Jesus’ blood and has been inwardly strengthened by the Holy Ghost.

Submission Is Positive and Negative

It stresses what a woman should do instead of what she should not do. It means continued on page 11
What If Our Bible Was Taken?
By Billy Graham

Which way would we turn if the country in which we live were suddenly wrecked and all the props gone? As a whole, our nation does not know what it is. We do not know what sacrifice is. We do not know what suffering is. Suppose persecution were to come to the church in America, as it has come in other countries.

The immunity to persecution that Christians in our country have experienced in the past two or three centuries is unusual. Christ strongly warned Christians that to follow Him would not be popular, and that in most circumstances it would mean cross-bearing and persecution.

The Bible says all who “desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). Jesus said that as the time of His return draws near, “They will lay their hands on you and persecute you” (Luke 21:12). We have no scriptural foundation for believing that we can forever escape being persecuted for Christ’s sake. The normal condition for Christians is that we will suffer persecution. Are you willing to face persecution and death for Christ’s sake?

What Would You Do?
Since we have experienced little religious persecution in this country, it is likely that under pressure many would deny Christ. Someone who shouts the loudest about their faith would surrender sooner. Many who boast of being courageous would be the most cowardly. Many who say, “Though all others deny Christ, yet I will never deny Him,” would be the first to warm their hands at the cauldrons of the enemy.

Jesus, in speaking of the last times, warned, “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake... (Matthew 24:9). The Scripture says, “because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold” (Matthew 24:12).

The Apostle Paul, referring to the coming evil day, said, “Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and have done all, to stand” (Ephesians 6:13).

Here are five ways to fortify yourself so that you will be able to stand in that day.

1. Make Sure
First, make sure of your relationship with God. Amos the prophet saw the Day of Judgment fast approaching for Israel. He warned the people to prepare to meet God. God’s preparedness should be a key word for everyone. It is strange that we prepare for everything except meeting God. We prepare for marriage. We prepare for a career. We prepare for education. But we do not prepare to meet God. Even though most Americans see the storm clouds gathering on the horizon, by and large we are making few preparations to meet God. This is a time for repentance and faith. It is a time for soul-searching, to see if our anchor holds.

Have you been to the cross where Christ shed His blood for your sins? Have you had the cross forgiven? Have you come by faith, confessing that you are a sinner and receiving Christ as your Savior? I tell you that this cross is the only place of refuge in the midst of the storm of judgment that is fast approaching. Make sure of your relationship with God.

2. Walk with God
Second, learn now to walk with God in your daily life. Abraham walked with God and was called a friend of God. Walk with God as Moses did on the back side of the desert; when the hour of judgment fell upon Egypt, Moses was the one who led his people to freedom. Walk with God as David did as a shepherd boy; when the time of crisis came, David was prepared to meet it. David and his three young friends walked with God in Babylonia, and when trouble came, God was beside them—whether it was in the lions’ den or in the fiery furnace.

“The normal condition for Christians is that they should suffer persecution. Are you willing to face persecution and death for Christ’s sake?”

However, God does not always deliver His saints from adversity. God says in Hebrews 11 that others were just as faithful as Abraham, Moses, Daniel, or David. They, too, walked with God—but they perished. God has not promised to deliver us from trouble.

But He has promised to go with us through the trouble. Stephen was a young man “full of faith and the Holy Spirit” (Acts 6:5). They stoned him to death, but his was a triumphal entry into Heaven. If you are not strengthening the inner man or woman by daily walking with God now, when a crisis comes you will quake with fear and give in, having no strength to stand up for Christ.

3. Memorize Scripture
Third, we should fortify ourselves with the Word of God. Begin reading, studying, and memorizing Scripture as never before. The Bible says, “Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth” (Ephesians 6:14). The truth is the Word of God. We are to be girded and undergirded with the Word. Read it, assimilate it, feed on it; let it be your staff and strength. It is quick and powerful. It is the bulwark of the soul. Too many Christians today are entangled with the affairs of this world, caught in a net of material interest and diversion. Scripture, to many, is little more than a reference book for Biblical facts. It is seldom opened and rarely relished as the spiritual staff of life that it is.

Many souls are anemic and starved for the things of God. They are totally
The Senate introduced Senate Bill 217 – Appropriations Act 2017 in mid-March and passed it out of our chamber and on to the House in mid-May. The House will make changes to the bill and send it back to the Senate. Differences between the Senate and House bill will be worked out in conference committees. I am hopeful that we will have a state budget in place by July 1.

The Senate's proposed budget of $22.9 billion increases spending by 2.5 percent over last year's budget and 3.75 percent over actual spending. Our continued focus is improving outcomes in public education, providing generous tax cuts for the middle class and job creators, and saving for the future. This year's budget provides a $580 million surplus.

On the education front, the budget continues implementing a plan announced last year by investing $131 million in the first year alone to dramatically increase teacher pay from last year's budget, providing teachers an average 3.7 percent raise this year and 9.5 percent raise over two years, while also ensuring teachers earn far more over the course of their careers. This is in addition to the substantial teacher pay raises legislatures passed in 2014, 2015, and 2016. Along with providing $28.5 million to substantially increase school principal and assistant principal pay, it also directs roughly $700 million in the first year alone toward compensation increases to state employees.

In health and human services, the budget provides more than $18 million over two years to add 2,350 new pre-K slots – cutting the waitlist in half for at-risk children, earmarks close to $3 million to provide support for additional foster children in the system, allocates $15 million over two years to community health centers, rural health centers, free clinics, and other health services providers in rural and underserved areas that assist the uninsured.

In justice and public safety, the budget funds an opioid prevention pilot, putting in place a quick response team to address the needs of opioid and heroin overdose victims. Also included is more than $4 million for law enforcement training for North Carolina's officers.

Transportation funding includes $246 million to improve structurally deficient bridges statewide, adds $130 million to improve safety and conditions of existing roads, and increases the outlay for pavement preservation by $70 million, extending the life of thousands of miles of roads.

For economic development, the tax burden is reduced for our state's families and small businesses by cutting the personal income tax rate from 5.49% to 5.33% in 2018, and by increasing the amount of income that is exempt from state income tax.

These are just a few highlights of the Senate budget. I look forward to reviewing the House budget and working with House members and my Senate colleagues to pass a final budget for the governor's signature.

As always, please share your thoughts with me on issues related to state government by emailing me at ralph.hise@ncleg.net or calling me at 919-733-3460.
**US House of Representatives NC District 11**

**US House District 118**

**Budget work continues:**
As a co-chair of the House Transportation Appropriations Committee, I have continued to work on the budget and support our fellow chairs and counterparts on other appropriations committees.

The budget process is moving along at a pretty good clip this session. The current plan is to have the budget on the floor of the House next week for votes. If you have any concerns relating to the budget, please get in touch with me or my office.

**Yassey biscuit maker reaches milestone**
Emma Peterson of Burnsville in Yancey County is a professional biscuit maker if there ever was one. On May 11, Emma celebrated her 25th year of making biscuits. Dedication to the perfection of one’s craft is a most admirable trait. Emma Peterson’s contributions to her community are appreciated, and I dropped by to give her a certificate of recognition last week if you get a chance, Emma’s biscuits are worth a stop into Burnsville.

**Miss NC makes rounds**
It was great to catch up with Miss North Carolina and Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Troxler at an agriculture event. McKenzie Jade Faggart was crowned Miss North Carolina in June 2016. She has represented the state well in her role. Commissioner Troxler was first elected in 2004, and has been re-elected three times since. If you have any questions or concerns about interacting with the state Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, please let me know. I will work with Commissioner Troxler to solve any issues you may have.

**2nd Amendment stays strong in Burnsville**
I dropped by Cooper’s Trading in Burnsville on Friday to pick up my new Kimber 45 Super Carry. I got my concealed carry permit many years ago. Since then, I’ve taken advantage of the opportunity to protect myself and those around me by carrying concealed.

**NC House District 85**

One bill that I was proud to sponsor, House Bill 295, titled Health Care Sharing Expenses Deduction, passed the House unanimously and has been sent to the Senate for consideration. This bill would allow a state income tax deduction for payments to health care sharing organizations. Health care sharing organizations are non-profit organizations that facilitate sharing the medical needs of their participants. Health care sharing organizations provide a fee-market alternative to consumers who do not wish to be forced to purchase insurance and do not wish to receive government assistance in the form of state Medicaid benefits. Health Care Sharing Organizations have had participants in North Carolina since the mid-1980s and participating households are projected to number approximately 12,000 by 2018. Participants in health care sharing organizations pay monthly share amounts towards the medical expenses of other participants. They currently do not receive a tax deduction for these share amounts under the current federal deduction provisions in the IRC tax code. House Bill 295 will allow health care sharing participants to receive an itemized state tax deduction for qualified health care sharing expenses in addition to out-of-pocket medical and dental expenses. Deductions would only be allowed to the extent the total expenses exceed 10% of the taxpayers’ adjusted gross income. HB 295 will give taxpayers the ability to participate in health care sharing organizations, so their tax treatment is identical to other medical and dental expenses. There are several Christian health organizations that this legislation will benefit tremendously. Three examples of these are Medi-Share, Samaritan Christian Health Sharing Ministries, and Christian Health Sharing Ministries. I continue to be grateful for the opportunity to serve the people of the 85th district.
**Berry Chapel Baptist Church**

**Dad’s, Do You Want Your Kids to Be Just Like You?**

By Pastor Steve Williams
Mitchell County

A few days ago, a good friend of mine named Rocky Buchanan, in my church introduced me to a song and a video by Country singer Rodney Atkins which is several years old. Now before you turn off what I’m saying to chew because you say I only listen to Christian Music. I challenge you to read the rest of the article, because I believe you will be blessed as I was blessed by listening to the song.

I want all dads to think on this question, because this month is Father’s Day. So, “Do You Want Your Kids to Be Just Like You?” That is a tough question to answer. Reason being, I had a tough time answering it myself. Many times, as dad’s we fail to remember that little eyes and ears are watching and listening to our every word and watching our every move. Thank about it, have you ever been somewhere and your child said or did something that they saw you do or heard you say? Now I know they pick up things at school and in the world, but dad’s I’m talking about you. See dads, we should be the Greatest Example to our kids, we can be. Reason being, we only have one chance to do the job, and God has given us all-soleme responsibility. I want you to read the words of this song and see if it doesn’t make you think. You can also see it on You Tube video “Watching You Rodney Atkins”

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**“WATCHING YOU”**

By Rodney Atkins

Driving through town, just my boy and myself
With a happy meal in his booster seat
Knowing that he couldn’t have the toy
Till his nuggets were gone.

A green traffic light turned straight to red
I had broken and mumbled under my breath
As fries went flying and his orange drink covered his lap
Well, then my four-year-old said a four-letter word
That started with “s,” and I was concerned.

So, I said, “Son, where did you learn to talk like that?”
He said, “I’ve been watching you, dad, ain’t that cool?”

“I’m your buchanan, I wanna be like you
And eat all my food, and grow tall as you are.
We get cowboy boots and cema pants
Yeah, we’re just alike, hey, ain’t we dad?
I wanna do everything you do
So I’ve been watching you.”

We got back home, and I went to the barn
I bowed my head, and I prayed real hard
Said, “Lora, please help me help my stupid self”
Then this side of bedtime later that night.

Turning on my son’s Scooby Doo night light
He crawled out of bed, and he got down on his knees
He closed his little eyes, folded his little hands
And spoke to God like he was talking to a friend.

And I said, “Son, now where’d you learn to pray like that?”
He said, “I’ve been watching you, dad, ain’t that cool?
I’m your buchanan, I wanna be like you.
And eat all my food, and grow tall as you are.
We like fixing things and holding mama’s hand
Yeah, we’re just alike, hey, ain’t we dad?
I wanna do everything you do
So I’ve been watching you.”

With tears in my eyes, I wrapped him in a hug
Said, “My little bear is growing up.”
He said, “But when I’m big, I’ll still know what to do.”

“Cause I’ve been watching you, dad, ain’t that cool?
I’m your buchanan, I wanna be like you.
And eat all my food, and grow tall as you are.
Then I’ll be as strong as Superman
We’ll just alike, hey, won’t we, dad?
When I can do everything you do
Cause I’ve been watching you.”

---

I know little to nothing about this song writer, I’m not lifting him up, but the Words of this song. See the words to the song touched me and brought me back to a passage in God’s Word. See, these words also touch me. Proverbs 22:6 “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. If you were to look up train in the dictionary you would find it to be described as something like this: Training is to prepare for a contest, to instruct by exercise, to drill, to form in a proper shape, to discipline for use. Now, dads that’s what God wants us to do with our children. We are to train them by example. You don’t teach great athletes to be great, you train them to be great... The Bible does not say Teach your children, though you ought to, it says to Train them. Do you have them in church? Do you have them in Sunday School? Do you have them in Youth Group? How are you training them dad? Do you want your kid to be just like you?

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

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The Love from Which Nothing Can Separate Us
By Rev John McCoury
Roan Mountain, Tennessee

I will trust in your unflagging love. My heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing unto the Lord, For He has been so good to me. Your goodness like the rainfall Methuselah over me. I am joyful above the stars. As you are dancing over me. Joy is now my heartbeat. Freedom is my song. So I soar on the wings of your love. I will trust in your unflagging love. My heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing unto the Lord, For He has been so good to me. The Love from Which Nothing Can Separate Us. Romans 8:31-39 This is one of the most lyrical passages Paul ever wrote. God has acquitted us. Who then can condemn us? The answer is that the judge of all is Jesus Christ. He is the one who has the right to condemn—but, far from condemning, he is at God's right hand interceding for us, and therefore we are safe. It may be that, in verse 34, Paul is doing a very wonderful thing. He is saying four things about Jesus. (a) He died. (b) He rose again. (c) He is at the right hand of God. (d) He makes intercession for us there. Now, the earliest creed of the Church, which is still the essence of all Christian creeds, ran like this: 'He was crucified death and buried, the third day he rose again from the dead, and sat at the right hand of God; from thence he shall come to judge the quick (living) and the dead.' Three items in Paul's statement and in the early creed are the same: that Jesus died, rose again, and is at the right hand of God. But the fourth is different. In the creed, the fourth is that Jesus will come to be the judge of the quick and the dead. In Paul, the fourth is that Jesus is at God's right hand to plead our case. It is as if Paul said: 'You think of Jesus as the judge who is there to condemn; and well he might, for he has won the right. But you are wrong: he is not there to be our prosecuting counsel but to be the advocate to plead our cause with one tremendous leap of thought, Paul has seen Christ not as the judge but as the lover of human souls. Paul goes on with a poet's fervor and a lover's rapture to sing of how nothing can separate us from the love of God in our risen Lord. Here is a vision to take away all loneliness and all fear. Paul is saying you can think of every terrifying thing that this or any other world can produce. Not one of them is able to separate the Christian from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ, Lord of every terror and Master of every world.' Of what then shall we be afraid?

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

Children's children are the crown of old men, and the glory of children are their fathers. Proverbs 17:6

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For more information call 828-652-2215 or check out Liver Mush Festival on Facebook.


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March 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 36

Mitchell County SafePlace

Why I Support SafePlace
By Beth Davis
Mitchell County

Every month, you hear from someone on the SafePlace Staff... usually it’s Associate Director Tracy Black or I, who write the article for the Blue Ridge Christian News. This month, you’re hearing from a dear friend and long time supporter of Mitchell County SafePlace. Yes, of course, these are her own words.

And, no, of course, we are not revealing her identity... because only a handful of folks know her story and she’d prefer to keep it that way.

“My goal is to bring a sense of reality about domestic abuse. Probably most of you are unaware of anyone who is suffering this fate at the hands of an abuser.

Think about it. Does anyone come to mind? How do you recognize such a person? Can I assure you that most of you do know someone who is being abused either physically, emotionally, or verbally, or has been in the past.

Much of the time, victims and their abusers present themselves to their friends, family, and the community as the perfect couple whose lives are to be envied... a perfect marriage, a perfect home, a perfect family; but outward appearances can be deceiving. You may be asking yourself how I know this. I know because I was in an abusive relationship for quite a number of years. It never escalated to physical abuse, but rather was verbal and emotional. The pain wasn’t physical, but it was real. The scars aren’t visible, but they remain - to this day, they remain - after more than 30 years. His words, his belittling, his criticism, and my doubts about myself and my worth as a person and as a woman often come tearing back into my head for no apparent reason and I begin to doubt myself again. The scars of verbal and emotional abuse remain for many years and sometimes for a Lifetime... even after the abuse has ended.

Remember my saying that people in an abusive relationship present very differently to their friends, family, and their community? That was us. We had a nice home, drove a nice car, owned our own business, went to church every Sunday, and participated in the community. Because of our business, we even did seminars all over the United States, and mess what one of the main topics was in those seminars? Husband and wife relationships? I guess there’s nothing stereotypical about abusive relationships!

A few years of constant criticism, demeaning, and belittling. I began to believe his words. I was totally convinced that I was stupid, ignorant, and incompetent. According to him, I could do nothing right. After a while, I truly thought I was going to lose my mind. I was suffering from anxiety and depression. Even my physical appearance changed - I lost forty-three pounds! When I finally left the relationship, I weighed 122 pounds.

Then, one evening I was sitting at the kitchen table when he came into the room - evidently upset about something I had done or hadn’t done. When he walked past me, he kicked my chair as hard as he could, almost jolting me out of the chair. It was at that very moment that I realized that next time he could be kicking me. I decided that I had to begin to make plans to get out. I was so tired of living like this. I felt so alone. I wished I had had somewhere like SafePlace to turn to - someone to guide me and give me advice, someone I could confide in and trust. So, I immediately understand the need for and the value of the services that SafePlace provides.

I became involved with SafePlace several years ago through a friend. I became aware of the need for their services in our community. I also learned that the entire Mitchell County SafePlace staff is knowledgeable, dedicated, and passionate about their mission to aid victims of domestic abuse, whether it be women, men, or the elderly. They do whatever is necessary to ensure that their clients are safe 24/7, and have every positive opportunity to remove lives apart from their abusive relationships. SafePlace deserves our support!

If you or someone you know is in an abuse relationship, call our 24-hour hotline at 828-765-4044. If you’d like to volunteer at SafePlace, please call 828-765-4044. Our mailing address is PO Box 544, Spruce Pine, NC, 28777, if you’d like to make a financial donation.

I was told by one of the staff there that they’re always looking for volunteers. They do what they do because they love it and want to help.

I think that’s admirable. I think that’s something I should be doing and I think it’s something you should be doing. So, if you’re interested in volunteering, I would suggest you give their hotline a call.

Beth Davis is the Resource Development Coordinator at Mitchell County SafePlace. She can be reached at 828-765-4044 or bethdavis09@gmail.com.

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June 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News
unprepared for a time of crisis. Store these Scriptures away so that if your Bible is ever taken from you, you will have the Word of God written on the tablet of your heart. Many stories have come out of prison camps, of Christians who had no Bibles but had committed to memory great portions of Scripture. What a comfort, blessing and strength these Scriptures were as they repeated them over and over again to themselves. One missionary who was in a concentration camp for three years in China told me that during that time his greatest regret was that he had not memorized more of the Bible.

4. Pray Always

Fourth, fortify yourself with prayer. The Bible, referring to “the evil day,” says, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:18). If we are to stand uncompromisingly for Christ when a national crisis comes, we must invoke the power of prayer.

The early church knew the value and necessity of prayer. Earnest, fervent prayer preceded every major triumph. Prayer preceded Pentecost. Peter and John were en route to the Temple to pray when they witnessed for Christ, and thousands were converted. Paul and Silas prayed in prison, the Philippian jailer found Christ, and Paul and Silas were delivered.

“God needs men and women who will ‘stand in the evil day.’ Will you be one of them?”

If Christianity is to survive in a world filled with materialism, the Church must have a revival of prayer. As individuals, we must repent of prayerlessness. The prayer meeting must become the vital institution it was when evangelical Christianity was the mightiest force in the world.

5. Meditate on Christ

Finally, we must fortify ourselves by meditating upon the person of Christ. Charles Hadden Spurgeon once said, “There have never been 15 minutes in my life when I did not sense the presence of Christ.” We must learn again to practice the presence of God. We must pray with David, “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer” (Psalm 19:14). Christ must be vitally real to us if we are to prove loyal to Him in the hour of crisis.

Will You Stand?

Today our nation stands at the greatest point of pressure on the face of the earth. But if we put our trust in an armed might instead of Almighty God, the coming conflict could conceivably go against us. History and the Bible indicate that mechanical and material might be insufficient in times of great crisis. We need the inner strength that comes from a personal, vital relationship with God’s Son, Jesus Christ.

The wheels of God’s judgment can be heard by discerning souls across the length and breadth of nations. Things are happening fast! The need for a return to God has never been more urgent.

The words of Isaiah are appropriate for us today. “Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:6-7).

God needs men and women who will “stand in the evil day.”

Will you be one of them? Will you come to the cross and in humility confess your sins to God and receive Jesus Christ as Savior? Will you become one of God’s warriors in this crisis hour? You can enlist today in the army of God by giving your life to His Son Jesus Christ and letting Him become the Captain of your soul. “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12).

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Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, New King James Version

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ACROSS
1 If anyone__anything to him, God will add to him (Rev 22:18)
5 like a day that has just gone by, or like__in the night (1,5) (Ps 90:4)
10 deceive (Job 30:13) (KJV)
13 they made fifty__along the edge of the end curtain (Exod 36:17)
15 another seed instead of that, whom Cain slew (Gen 4:25)
16 Bel hovest down__, slopes low; their idols (Isa 46:1)
17 My first stand on__ground (Ref 36:12)
18 he shall__them with a rod of iron (Rev 19:15)
19 And__gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air (Gen 2:20)
20 The LORD__his servants; no one will be condemned (Ps 34:22)
22 A severe shortage of food (Gen 12:10)
25 Above all__guard your heart (Prov 4:23)
26 the eaters shall__out no wine in their presses (Isaiah 16:10)
27 not the least__of a pen, will be by any means disappear (Matt 5:18)
31 Awake, and__to my defense! (Ps 35:23)
32 I will make Jerusalem a__of ruins (Jer 9:11)
35 have made themselves an idol__the shape of a calf (Exod 33:8)
37__said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It will be good (Ruth 2:22)
41 speak unto us smooth things, propesy__ (Isa 30:10) KJV
43 a make bites before it is__ (Ecc 10:11)
49 Jacob’s first wife (Gen 29:15-18)
51 Simon answered, “__we’ve worked hard all night” (Luke 5:5)
53 with every kind of plague as they want (Rev 11:6)
56 he has appeared once for all at the end of the__ (Heb 9:28)
58 the LORD made an east wind blow__the land (Exodus 16:13)
59 he lay on his bed__and desired to eat (1 Kings 21:7)
61 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and__not on your
own (Prov 3:5)
64 lose the claims of injustice and__the cords (Isa 58:6)
65 See if you recognize whose seal and__and staff these are (Gen 38:25)
67 to another faith by the__Spirit (1 Cor 12:9)
69 She saw the basket among the__and sent her slave girl (Ex 2:2)
70 the boys grew and__was a cunning hunter (Gen 25:27)
71 power of God unto salvation to every__that believeth (Romans 1:16)
72 according to the__of years thou shalt diminish the price (Lev 25:16) KJV
73 Eye for__tooth for tooth (Exod 21:24)

DOWN
1 Jesus went through__towns and villages, teaching (Matt 9:35)
2 being not a forgetful hearer, but a__of the work (James 1:25) KJV
3 The last bird Noah sent out to search for dry land (Gen 8:10)
4 The creatures__back and forth like flashes of lightning (Ezek 1:14)
6 man’s fuel for burning, some of it he takes and__himself (Isa 15:11)
11 or effeminate, nor__of themselves with mankind (1 Cor 6:9) KJV
7 The exiles who lived at__Abib near the Kehor River (Ezek 3:15)
9 you who live in the__of the rocks (Jer 49:16)
10 The ram that you saw represents the__and Persia (Dan 8:20)
11 while__of Philistines was encamped in the Valley (1,4) (2 Sam 23:13)
12 testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in__ (Acts 23:11)
13 filed with food, he became heavy and__ (Deut 32:15)
14 holy and reverend is his__ (Ps 111:9)
21 In the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the__angels (1 Tim 5:21)
23 Like men condemned to die in the__ (1 Cor 4:9)
24 the five Philistine rulers in Gaza,___, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron (Jos 13:19)
28 God said, “Let the water with living creatures (Gen 1:20)
29 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the__ (2 Tim 4:7)
30 His ears are__unto their prayers (1 Pet 3:3)
31 28 boil of Egypt and with tumors, festering sores and the__ (Deut 28:27)
33 chariots and their drivers; horses and their__will fall (Hag 2:22)
36 looked like__of glass, clear as crystal (1,3) (Rev 4:6)
38 It is God who__me with strength (2 Sam 23:33)
39 leave out (Jer 26:2)
40 and your hands__violence on the earth (Ps 58:2)
41 42 Now shall the__trouble in the day of thy fall (Ezek 26:18) KJV
53 large body of water (Ps 18:4)
54 The body of a human being (Isa 38:11)
55 I wish I could be with you now and change my__ (Gal 4:20)
57 When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will__you into all truth (John 16:13)
58 Know that wisdom is sweet to your soul (Prov 24:14)
60 an expanse, sparkling like__, and awesome (Ezek 1:22)
61 the wrangling of the__brethren forth blood (Prov 30:33) KJV
62 you will bring my__head down to the grave in sorrow (Gen 42:38)
65 If anyone is in Christ, he is a creation (2 Cor 5:17)
67 Ascribe to the LORD the glory__has name (Ps 29:2)

Solution on page 14

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Marlene’s Meditations

Filling in the Blanks of Life

By Marlene Houk
Burke County

Hebrews 11:11 Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to concieve seed

Can you fill in these blanks?

Up and __________ Off and ___________

Sometimes, filling in the blanks is easy. Sometimes, we don’t pay attention while we’re filling in the blanks, and the result creates confusion or bouts of laughter. For example, I complimented the new-born baby on social media and meant to say, “How precious!” instead, my app decided to fill in the blank with the word, previous! I called a new-born previous! How random is that? Sometimes, genes show and group genes cause anxiety filling in the blanks. On one particular gene show, the host always says, “Surveys said…” I can hear his voice new even though I rarely watched it. Mad 3b stories fill in the blanks with random words, and people chuckle at the unexpected.

Filling in life’s blanks can result in astonishing adventures when you use the tool of faith. God has created mankind with voids that are filled best with His ways. We all encounter the blanks of missing love, a flattering purpose, or perhaps health or financial crisis. How do we fill these blanks?

Rather than using fleshly thinking, we need to use the tool of faith to fill in the blanks of our lives. We need to look beyond the brick wall of our circumstances by using the tool of faith to fill in the blanks that will restitute spiritual balance, realign us with His plan and fill in the blank with peace.

It is interesting to note that Sarah used her fleshly thinking and cultural background to fill in the blank of her missing baby as told in Genesis. But somewhere on her journey between Genesis and Hebrews 11:11, she learned to use her faith to receive physical strength to have baby Isaac, the hope of future redemption through Jesus Christ. How do I know that she used her tool of faith to look beyond her 90-year-old body and believe, just because God said so? Here’s how I know, because she kept moving toward the possibility of having a baby! She kept following Abraham as he sauced forward to place. She kept being his wife. She kept her spiritual eyes on the promise and not her pitiful circumstances. She kept pointing her tool of faith toward God, and He filled in the blanks of her life according to His plan. And she became part of the lineage of Christ because her faith was used to believe God’s promises.

She changed history, charged her descendants to have the same faith, and chockled in delight at the result of chubby Isaac dancing in her arms!

When we use our tool of faith to fill in the blanks of our lives, we too can cope with our circumstances, conquer our fears and change the world!

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 Backs-ups for Bible Women. She and her husband discover joy, nurture, and challenge in their church. Her contact is marlenehouk@bellsouth.net

Altapass Baptist Church

The Seriousness of Sin

By Pastor Marcus Benfield
Mitchell County

Well it’s hard to believe it is already June, and here we are. I am going to address a subject at the request of a reader as well as a radio listener from the Lincolns area. She wrote me and asked if I could do a message on an article? That being said, I am going to attempt it.

Let me begin by saying some of the material I will be using I gleaned from my brother Chris who pastors in Mt. Aley NC.

I am going to deal with “The Seriousness of Sin.” I will be looking at Romans 3:21-28 as a text for this subject. Here in this verse the Apostle Paul deals with the sin problem very candidly. He also sets forth the doctrine of grace very clearly. We will look at four simple yet profound truths in this text dealing with the seriousness of sin. Many people in our society today turn their heads at sin, many no longer view sins as sins today that were recognized as such by most everyone just Twenty years ago. The important thing to remember is that Sin is Sin and You and I cannot rationalize it, deny it, work around it or by not calling God a liar!

1. Let’s consider The Magnitude of Our Sin. Verse 23

Sin is universal—All have sinned. Sin is inherited. (Psalm 51:5 & 58:3) Sin is Deadly. (Romans 3:23 & James 1:14)

2. Let’s consider The Measure of Our Sin. Verse 23

All of us have come short, no matter how good we think we are. God has news for all of us.

You may ask how many have come short? As many as ever have sinned. This verse teaches us that ALL have sinned! Many think works are sufficient, many think just being good is sufficient. Many believe Church attendance, being Baptized or giving money is sufficient. However, the fact remains that ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

3. Let’s consider The Mediator for Our Sin. Verses 24 & 25

Today many are turning in every direction looking for inward peace. They are looking to self-help literature, psychology, sacraments, Allah, the Pope, even TV talk shows. The Bible teaches there is ONE mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. (I Timothy 2:5) My friends if you and I want total immunity from the punishment and the penalty of our sins, we must place our faith and trust in Jesus Christ who can be Saved by His grace! Once you as a Christian into your heart you can’t turn yourself, you can’t be tried twice, when we are saved we receive total immunity! Not only is He our Mediator, but He is our advocate (our defense attorney if you will). 1 John 2:1 & 2

Finally let’s consider The Satisfy of Forgiveness for Our Sin. Verses 27 & 28

Paul spoke easier of works. Let me be clear here, we are saved thru good works! We are not saved by good works! (Ephesians 2:10) Please note Paul addressed Works elsewhere; he’s talking about salvation, not salvation by works. However, I believe that we are saved (justified) thru faith only without any works of the law. Here we see how justification works. Even though we are all guilty (sinners) we are pronounced Not Guilty because we have trusted in Jesus Christ for Eternal Life.

My friends, I ask you as I conclude this article, Do you realize the magnitude of your sins today? Christian reader, do you have sins that have spread like a cancer and are polluting you down and away from God? Lost person, do you realize that no matter what you do, no matter how good you try to be, you can’t do enough to earn or merit a home in Heaven? All of us have only one hope, Our Mediator, the man Christ Jesus! He alone can grant the pardon for our sins. (II Corinthians 5:17) By His Grace we can be a new creation because of Him!

I hope that as you have read these thoughts you have been reminded of the seriousness of our sin and that we have only one escape and that is through Christ alone. May God Richly bless you and yours and may we never fail to share His love with all we come in contact with.

Dr. Benfield is the Senior Pastor of Altapass Baptist Church in Spruce Pine. He formerly pastored in Alexander County, NC for 20 years before coming to Altapass in October 2011.

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June 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 39
A Listening Ear
By Ken and Jan Merop
Avery County

A new friend and I sat together over refreshments at a local restaurant. When we first met, I sensed a kinship in her open and smiling face. We connected again while visiting and laughing...getting to know one another.

By the time our visit came to an end, we knew we were kindred spirits.

Sometimes that is not easy to define. But, in this case, I believe each of us sensed the ability of the other to really hear what was being said, not just the words, but the heart behind the words. And we shared the love of the Lord and our desire to please Him in everything.

As we visited, understanding of each other caused us to laugh and realize our shared thoughts and feelings were safe in our newfound friendship. But listening isn’t always easy.

Often we try to come up with an answer while the other person is still talking, longing to spill our thoughts without relying on God’s Spirit to help us discern.

First, we need to set aside the thoughts coming into our own heads.

Then, when we open our mouths it will not be rashly, but with that gentle wisdom God speaks about in James 3:17. NKJV where it says, “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”

It also takes time...a real challenge in today’s drives, fast-paced society...to really discover the heart in a person’s words. Time is a gift from God. When we set aside time to visit and care about another person, we give a gift and receive one in return. But, today a quick text or e-mail is seen as communicating. We may be in touch...but are we touching one another in a deeper sense?

Recently we attended a conference. There were many speakers that inspired and motivated us. But, one who really inspired me was a 25-year-old young man. Though from that ‘new’ generation, he spoke with the wisdom of one who has allowed God’s Spirit to mold him well.

He uses his life as a vehicle through which he can be an agent of change and relegate his peers and people of this age. He said that it is important to become very good listeners. Don’t just ask questions, ask inspired questions. Have the other person consider how their decisions can bless their family and others.

So lead a listening ear that leads to inspired discovery. Salute.

Blessful Splendor

This flower reflects God’s artistic boldness.
With a bright smile, warm touch, or expressive glance, we reflect God’s brilliant splendor to others.

“Be imitators of God...And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and has given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.”

Ephesians 5:1 & 2

Ken and Jan reside in Land Harbour in Avery County, where they have moved in retirement because they love our mountains. They have written for us in years past.

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June 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 40
God’s Gift to the Animals
By Pastor Kurt Bomar
Every County

When I do devotions with a new group of children I love to talk about animals and the gifts that God gave them. If you stop and think about it—God gives each and every animal a special gift for survival. I like to ask the children to name an animal and I would then ask them what the special gifts God gave them. It would usually go something like this:

Tigers (they always seem to start with Tigers): That’s easy. They have big claws and sharp teeth and can see well at night.
Horses: They can run fast.
Grasshoppers: They can hop long distances very quickly.
Moles: They can hide underground (unfortunately)
Rabbits: They don’t have much of a defense mechanism but they are fast and they can breed prolifically ensuring survival of the species.
Butterflies: Many are disguised to look like other things that don’t taste well to birds.
Geckos: They have the ability to travel much rockier terrain than their pursuers.
Even a mosquito that can be easily swatted, can multiply so rapidly we can’t keep up with them.

On and on the suggestions would come and I haven’t been stumped yet. It’s a fun game to play with your kids.

But then I would tell them that there is one animal that God didn’t give any gift of survival to and it doesn’t reproduce particularly fast. In fact, this animal should have gone extinct many years ago.

It’s not big enough to intimidate its predators, it doesn’t have sharp teeth, it can’t run fast, it doesn’t have a good warning system to its friends, it doesn’t have good sight and it’s not even smart enough to know when it’s in danger. It’s not even brave enough to protect itself. Do you know what it is?

It’s a sheep. This poor animal is constantly ready to be served up on a platter to any number of predators.

So how did God compensate this poor creature destined for extinction? He gave it a Shepherd.

Without shepherds, every Sheep in the World would be gone in one generation. And here’s the spiritual application.

It’s interesting that of all the animals in the world, Jesus likens his children to sheep. That’s what He wants us to be. Sheep. We are not in an all situations and that the secret to our survival is to just stay close to Jesus.

Selah (think about it)

Kurt Bomar is pastor of Walnut Grove Church.

Lana’s Lines

My Sons and Their Dad
(A Father’s Day Portrait)
By Lana Ellis

Chuck may not be present but he still lives on in our two sons. They’re in their 40’s and 50’s now and all time goes by more of Chuck’s traits are seen in them. The oldest one’s personality is a lot like his dad. He, much like Chuck, is even keeled, taking things pretty well in stride, often seen sitting quietly observing with a little grin on his face. The younger son reminds me so much of Chuck! I do a double take when he appears wearing one of his dad’s hand me down shirts. Not only his looks but a lot of his actions are those of Chuck.

Growing up in a rural area during the 40’s and 50’s certain responsibilities were bestowed upon the oldest child, ergo Chuck, the oldest of six children. Not only at home but during the summer months local farmers often called upon him to work in the hay and corn fields. This work ethic continued throughout his adult years, never slacking when it came to his responsibilities and this same ethic can be said about our sons. A trait they also mirrored from their dad is their gift of gab which comes easily for both of them whether on their jobs or standing in line with complete strangers. Christian ministry and church music was a very important part of Chuck’s life even as a youth. Our sons began at an early age and remain active in their respective churches, ministering and leading worship. Another similarity is their relationship with others and their families, exhibiting trustworthiness, dependability, honesty and faithfulness.

God truly blessed me the day he brought Chuck and me together back in 1962. He continues to bless me this Father’s Day as I am given the privilege of seeing Chuck live on in the most precious gifts he could have given me, two terrific sons from whom I gained two “daughters” and four grandchildren.

Psalm 127:3 Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward.

Chuck and boys

Lana with sons Brandon and Tony

Lana Ellis resides in Kingsport TN, next door to grandchildren. Church is West Colonial Hills Baptist Church.

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www.brownews.com June 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 41
Summer Fun and More
By Kaley Brown
Mitchell County

4-H Summer Fun is a special 5-week program sponsored by Mitchell County 4-H through the NC Cooperative Extension. Activities are open to all youth ages 5-15. Workshops are designed for specific age groups and include cooking, farm tours, crafts, robotics, and many more. Early Registration for current 4-H members will be on Thursday, June 1st from 8am-9am. Early Registration for the public will be open on Friday, June 2nd from 8am-9am. Workshops are limited to the first 15 registrants. Registration will be accepted at the Mitchell County Cooperative Extension Center located at 10 South Mitchell Ave., Bakersville. (828-390-9810). Payment is expected at the time of registration. No registration for Summer Fun will be accepted over the telephone. Call for more information.

Congratulations to the 4-H Project Record award recipients. 4-H Project Records recognize excellence in 4-H’ers through their detailed account of what that 4-H’er has accomplished throughout the year in a specific project area. 4-H’ers are eligible to compete in four age groups: 9-10, 11-12, 13-14, and 15-18. These project records consist of several sections that allow the young person to put into words the activities and accomplishments that happen within their 4-H year.

It is truly a great achievement to complete a Project Record book, and it is an even greater honor to receive an award at the District level for this work. Mitchell County excelled at the district level this year with nine Project Record entries. Every entry sent in by this year’s participants placed in the top ten within the West District.


Thank you to all the participants for their hard work and dedication, and a special thank you to all the families and volunteers who helped these young people accomplish this level of excellence. If you would like more information on how your child can participate in Project Records, and many other 4-H activities, please contact Kaley Brown, Mitchell County 4-H Agent, at (828) 888-4811 or by email at kaley_brown@ncsu.edu.

Mitchell County 4-H is pleased to announce that the first annual County Activity Day was a great success. There were 13 presenters total in the following age and subject categories. In the Cloverbud (6-8 age division) Emma Cook, Career and Entrepreneurship, Perry Kim, Arts and Communications, Evan Payne, Arts and Communications, and Kay Pittman, Park Chef-Grill. In the (9-10 age division) Jace Islandon, Science and Technology, in the (11-12 age division) Clinton Chandler, Career and Entrepreneurship, Chlaute Hubbard, Poultry, and Jessie and Josh Silver, Livestock. Finally, in the (14-18 age division) Marina Bellingham, Forestry and Wildlife, Corbin Bachman, Small and Companion Animals, Jassy-Kate Glenn, Horse, and Luke Silver, Beef Chef-Grill. These 4-H youth did an amazing job at County Activity Day and those in attendance praised their hard work and dedication to their category as it is shown through their presentations. A huge thank you goes to all the presenters, families, and volunteers who helped youth get ready for their presentations. We would also like to give a special thank you to our wonderful judges that helped make this event possible. Thank you to Fred Haskin, Lila Haskin, Grant Haskin, Kaitlyn Stomick, Kira Stomick, and Adam Lawing. With over 40 attendees to help support these youth it is easy to see what a supportive community we have here in Mitchell County. Thank you to all who attended this year’s event! Those who participated in County Activity Day will have the opportunity to go to West District Activity Day on June 17th in Macon County NC. We wish these 4-H’ers the best of luck and a big congratulations on all they have accomplished thus far.

Quoted Gloria Fuskus (County Activity Day Judge):

“I was amazed at the talent and organizational skills those children used to put their outstanding projects together. Each one with its own style and charm. I was so happy to have been able to be a part of the event.”
The National Day of Prayer

Power of Collective Prayers
By Monica Henley-Kritz
Mitchell County

The National Day of Prayer was established in 1775 by the first Continental Congress. Since then, prayer gatherings are scheduled all over America in order to meet and pray for our nation, states, and towns/counties. This year, Mitchell County gathered at Riverside Park on Thursday, May 4 at 12:00 noon and also at 6:30 p.m.

Prior to this date, we scheduled Days of Repentance, beginning on Saturday, April 29 and continuing Monday through Wednesday, May 1 – 3, each day at 12:00 noon at Riverside Park at the amphitheater. The reason for the Days of Repentance is that before GOD will even hear our prayers, we must come to HIM and confess our sins, both individually and as a nation. Then, we repent and turn away from those sins, as we turn back to HIM, calling on HIM for our help. During the Days of Repentance, we used the prayer guide from the National Day of Prayer called “727” prayer. This is praying for 7 major areas of power and influence for 7 days of the week, 1 for each day. Although we only met for 4 days of Repentance, we used these different areas for our focus on the 4 days that we met. The 7 areas are: families, government, churches, education, military, media, and business. Each day was very special, and I felt GOD’s presence each time that we met. One special day in particular was a day that it was raining, cold, and windy; so we moved to a small, enclosed shelter, where there was only 1 table. As we gathered around the table, we prayed, read Scripture, and different speakers shared what was on their hearts. It was a very powerful time, as we called upon GOD for HIS help, leadership, and intervention.

On Thursday, the National Day of Prayer, we had 70 – 75 people in attendance at 12:00 noon. We began with the blowing of the shofar, and our Director of Missions, Pastor Daniel Whetstone opening as prayer. As the County Coordinator, I shared the theme for this year, which was: “For Your Great Name’s Sake! ReFuel! ReServe! Forgive us… ReCreate!” The Scripture for this year’s theme was Daniel 9:19, “O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for Your own sake. O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.” We must not stop praying now! I do believe that GOD has given us a window of opportunity to return to HIM. We desperately need HIS help! In a letter from Anne Graham Lotz, who is the daughter of Billy Graham, and who is the Chairman of the National Day of Prayer this year, she said, “Now is the time to get serious about repentance and prayer.” God promises: “And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. (Jeremiah 29:13) There can be no casual, half-hearted musing to GOD—not if we want Him to return to us… I am led to ask myself… how truly serious am I about seeking GOD on behalf of our nation? When was the last time I fasted and wept and mourned and confessed the sin of our nation as though it were my own? Have we ever actually asked America how to pray? Have we ever actually asked the question that His people give to that question.” We were privileged to have the students from Tri-County Christian School to come and sing, lifting their voices in praise to GOD, and to recite Scripture, as well. The song, “Ring Of The World” was led by Alexis Buchanan, a 7th grade student. Also, a 5th grade student, Josh Hamlett, led in prayer. Josh is a 5th grade student, and his principal describes him as a “prayer warrior.” This was so special, and reminded us how important it is to begin as a child and read and learn the Bible, which equips us for life.

At the 6:30 p.m. gathering, there was a downpour of rain with much wind, and it was cold. Because of the weather, we again gathered under a nearby picnic shelter, where there was 1 table. A friend reminded me that in The Bible, rain was a sign of blessing. When there was drought, it was a result of GOD’s judgment or withdrawing of HIS favor. So, I said, “Bring on the rain!” We circled around the picnic table, mixed arms, and prayed. We also sang together, led by Joy Young, and several shared personal testimonies. I had also felt led to ask one of my students, Kaitie Rain, to come and join in prayer. Katie is a 4th grade student at Bethel Christian Academy, who prays so sincerely from her heart. GOD reminded me of how special children are to HIM. In Matthew 18:3, JESUS said, “Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” Ruth Graham said this: “When Jesus put the little child in the midst of HIS disciples, He did not tell the little child to become like HIS disciples; He told the disciples to become like the little child.” It was all very touching! The best way I know to describe this experience was that it was so sweet. Sweet, in a way that we felt GOD’s sweet presence in an amazing way! One thing that was extra special was that before we began, we noticed a fisherman in the river. After we started the service, he stopped fishing and came over to the picnic shelter, took off his cap, and joined with us! How precious of our LORD to bring hearts together in such a way. He later told us that he was planning to go back to the county in which he lived and go to a prayer gathering at their county courthouse, but he had fished too long and knew he would be too late. So, he joined with us. We should always take notice of things like this, because if we don’t, we may miss special blessings that GOD gives to us!

Our pastor, who was out of town on vacation, told me before he left: “I hope it’s a huge success!” That meant so much and was a great encouragement. As I pondered, I realized that “my” idea of success had been about who was there, how many were there, and that the weather conditions were. But GOD reminded me, that was not true success. Real success is if GOD was pleased with our gathering… with our hearts… if we were sincere. Real success was that wonderful peace of HIS presence is that tiny picnic shelter, where hearts were knit together in a special, yet unusual way. In other words, I believe this day was a success! So, ask yourself, am I pleased to GOD? Am I truly seeking HIM or my own agenda? Do I love HIM first and most, out of everyone and everything is my life? Take a few moments and be still before THE LORD, and be honest. Praise GOD!!

I do apologize for any confusion on the location of our prayer gatherings. A lady told me that she went to the large picnic shelter, and she saw other people there in their car, as if they were waiting for something. So, I apologize for any inconvenience.

Monica Henley-Kritz is a member of Berry Chapel in Spruce Pine NC.

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Sudoku

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

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

Solution on page 14

www.brcnews.com
June 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 43
Quilt Presentation to Veterans on Hero Day May 27
By Carolyn Dott
Mitchell and Yancey County

On Saturday, May 27th, approximately 55 veterans were presented with handmade quilts at Hero Day in Burnsville on the Town Square. The impressive ceremony began about 10:30 AM and honored veterans from World War II, Korean War and Vietnam from all branches of service. Letters were mailed to the veterans who received quilts this year inviting them to the presentation. Guild members from Mountain Piecemakers Quilt Guild make these quilts annually to thank our veterans from Yancey, Mitchell and Madison Counties for their service. This year the veterans were seated in front of the stage in the shaded area.

Guild members made all the Hero Quilts as a special service project. Each veteran received a quilt made especially for him. This was the fifth year that the guild donated quilts to the veterans. Sixty-five quilts were presented in 2016. The guild keeps an ongoing list and our policy is to give priority to the World War II and Korean veterans.

Mountain Piecemakers Quilt Guild also constructs an opportunity raffle quilt each year, which was displayed in the Hero Day booth. Sales of these tickets help defray expenses for fabric and quilting of the patriotic quilts. Tickets for the raffle opportunity quilt are sold by members and at many festivals. Patti Booth from Mars Hill won the 2016 raffle quilt. The new quilt for 2017 is already on display, and tickets are available from guild members. Donations are always welcome and can be made at the Mountain Piecemakers booth.

At Hero Day in Burnsville, nomination forms were available at the Mountain Piecemakers booth to request a quilt for a veteran in future years. If you would like to make a nomination of a veteran who lives in Madison, Mitchell or Yancey counties, visit the booth at any festival to pick up a form. Information needed includes veteran’s name, address, phone, branch and period of service. You can take a form and mail it back to the address on the form. We want to thank the Yancey County DAV and DAV Auxiliary, Blue Ridge Test and Event Rental and Yancey Graphics for their help in making this Hero Quilt presentation possible. Our veterans deserve the best, and we were proud to be part of this day. It was a privilege to honor them in this way.

Carolyn Dott makes her home in Ledgemont and is a teacher of Exceptional Children at Greenlee Primary School. She is a widow with two sons and five grandchildren. She is a member of Western Carolina Church in Spruce Pine.

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June 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 44
Habitat for Humanity

By Robin Warden
Mitchell-Yancey County

On April 2-3 the North Carolina Housing Coalition invited Habitat for Humanity affiliates around the state to attend a Legislative Day in Raleigh, NC. Pictured here with Representative Michele Presnell are (l-r) Paul Reeves - Director of Construction Services for Buncombe County Habitat in Asheville, Clark Pendell - Executive Director of Madison County Habitat in Mars Hill and Brian Yaffe - Mitchell-Yancey County Habitat Board member.

Affiliates were invited to discuss support needed to maintain funding for their mission to provide low-income housing for families in need in North Carolina. Under the budget currently proposed by President Trump, Habitat affiliates in NC alone would be faced, in 2018, with the loss of as much as $10M in federal funding.

Yaffe, who has been affiliated with Mitchell – Yancey and Avery County Habitats over the years shared, “Building Habitat homes is most important about improving the lives of children. Families report significant changes in their children’s health, especially respiratory illnesses such as allergies and asthma. They spend more time with friends and are proud to bring friends home. They feel safer and more confident about their chances for a better future. Their study habits and grades improve and significant numbers of children complete high school and enroll in higher education programs.”

Mitchell-Yancey Habitat for Humanity is a locally run affiliate of Habitat for Humanity International, a nonprofit, ecumenical housing organization that builds quality, energy-efficient housing.

Habitat Legislative Day

Like a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

Psalm 103:13

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Robin Warden is the Public Relations for Mitchell, Yancey Habitat for Humanity.
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