What Happened to Our Society

By Doug Harrell

In 1962 the Supreme Court ruled that prayer needed to be taken out of our school system and guess what has happened since that time. When we remove God from our society we are asking for trouble. Following are some results from an article entitled “America: To Pray or Not to Pray” that really make us stop and think!

A. Young People
1. For 15 years before 1953 pregnancies in girls ages 15 through 19 years had been no more than 15 per thousand. After 1953 pregnancies increased 187% in the next 15 years.
2. For younger girls, ages 10 to 14 years, pregnancies since 1953 are up 53%.
3. Before 1961 sexually transmitted diseases among students were 400 per 100,000. Since 1963, they were up 90% in the next 12 years.

B. The Family
1. Before 1961 divorce rates had been declining for 15 years. After 1963 divorces increased 300% each year for the next 15 years.
2. Since 1963 unmarried people living together is up 353%.
3. Since 1963 single parent families are up 140%.
4. Since 1963 single parent families with children are up 160%.

C. Education
1. The educational standard of measure has been the SAT scores. SAT scores had been steady for many years before 1965. From 1963 they rapidly declined for 18 consecutive years, even though the same test has been used since 1941.
2. In last 75 the rate of decline of the SAT scores decreased, even though they continued to decline. That was when there was an explosion of private religious schools. These were only 1000 Christian schools in 1965. Between 1974 to 1984 they increased to 32,000.
   a. That could have an effect if the private schools had higher SAT scores. In checking with the SAT Board, it was found that indeed the SAT scores for private schools were nearly 100 points higher than public schools.
   b. In actual scores were at the point where the public schools had been before their decline started in 1963 when prayer and Bible reading/instruction was removed from the schools.
   c. The scores in the public schools were still declining.
   d. Of the nation’s top academic scholars, three times as many come from private religious schools, which operate on one-third the funds as do the public schools.

D. The Nation
1. Since 1953 violent crime has increased 344%.
2. Illegal drugs have become an enormous, uncontrollable problem.
3. The nation has been deprived of an estimated 30 million citizens through legal abortions just since 1973.
4. I wonder if it is time for REVIVAL? What do you think?

Doug Harrell is a life-long resident of Mitchell County, Owner of Harrell Hill Farms, Inc, a member of Bear Creek Baptist Church and Publisher of the Blue Ridge Christian News.

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Associate Pastor Javier Guzman
Pastorbradshawmorganton@gmail.com
Sunday School 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship 11:00 AM
Wed: Youth Group 6:30PM - Meeting 7:30PM
Adult Bible Study 6:30PM - Meeting 7:30PM
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Burnsville, NC 28714
(828)-862-3990
West Burnsville Baptist Church
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4:45 pm - Sunday School
11:00 am - Worship
6:00 pm - Evening Worship

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www.bearcreekbaptist.org
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Tim's Treasures

An Unforgettable Sunrise
By Timothy W. Trow
Burke County

...whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow.
For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. - James 4:14

We can no more know what will be in 20 years than we can know what tomorrow will bring. It is like being able to see what is not visible. We are ourselves like the mist, as scriptures tell us. "Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

One may project themselves mentally into that point beyond their horizon, that point, that deadline, that ticking of a side time and place which must be known. From that place, they may reflect back upon all that might have transpired. From such an appointed place we may see with more clarity what we should find of value, of meaning, of purpose.

We can take away from our reflection in that distant horizon such that, over the years, life has presented its fruits, we all would like to say with assurance, “We have run the race well.”

To run that race well, there are a few moments which I hope to find, which many may find as their own, to see my children grow into adulthood, to see them become parents with successful careers; to hold that first grandchild in my arms; to see the flowers bloom in the garden, the grass grow and turn; to sit in that seat of satisfaction, the seat of contentment, the seat of comfort; to have a seat of reflection, the seat of meditation, the seat of thought.

But we must be careful not to dwell too long in such reflections. We must not allow ourselves to become too absorbed in the past, to the point of forgetting the present, the present that is unfolding before our eyes.

When we stand on that mountain top and look back, we should hope to see how we have lifted up others in their wake, as Christ-like as possible.

To become the light is all we should seek.

To get there from here, we must take one step at a time. Each new footprint, insignificant as each one may seem, leads us to the eventual destination if we can remain focused. In our hearts, we know the words, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff comfort me..." All around us, the dark peaks are of strength are pitched against the sky, yet the path is clear and the way is bright.

The fear of doubt and uncertainty shroud our way. Yet, we push onward, one step at a time. We must not look back when the storms pull us down. We cannot revive what has gone on before us. We cannot return to the dead, the dead we must push outward.

Closing my eyes, I drift off to that future time and place.

From that distant vantage point, any breath is labored. The height at which we have achieved to point this is substantial in altitude. The air is thin up here.

In my mind, I am standing upon the highland overlooking the Chisone Valley, the year is 1669. Darkness is before me, it is night. Behind me, I can hear men rushing about, preparing for the meeting that evening. The meeting that evening.

We are nearest to Him on this imagined peak. What we left behind to obtain our position is a journey around the world. How we have shaped by perseverance. Like Aramda, his men having fought past the bridge at Sabrann, to witness the miracle of 600 men routing the army of 1,500. They are now the survivors of the 70 days of forced march. They have avoided the main road, taking the good path and cliff faces in their march.

They have fought through one village after another. After this late day battle, they are now marching through the night to reach the summit. Exhausted, they will still sleep before their bodies let the ground. Aramda stands awake well past his bed time, he will allow nothing to keep him. The moon is full, the stars are bright, the clouds are clearing. He doesn’t know I’m here, but together we watch as the dawn begins to lighten the eastern sky.

With inspiration, we swear, as the sound of men scattered about us sleep in fruitful slumber. The wounded wend their way to find comfort upon the hard ground, there is little to relieve their pain. The campfire is nearly gone, its embers glowing red, like the horizon that begins to hint of the coming day.

As the dawn broke before them on that glorious morning, the sunlight filtered through their land, those ancient valleys of garrigue and rugged terrains. Their horses were at a standstill, they knew this was not the end, before them lay the unknown. God had surely delivered them to this point for a reason. Yes, they had made it. Yet, the battle to reclaim their lands had only begun. The dead that they had left behind, now almost half of their number, cannot be forgotten, yet they must fight on, clearing the darkness to consume their fate. Before them, the mountain falls away, revealing the Chimone. Some are eager to get down below, family home;

and this descent is dominated by the enemy burn in their minds. Liberation of their own farms and homes begins to overwhelm them, but their leader, Pastor Aramda, recognizes this inner strife and calls them to the altar, warns with prayer.

"Men, let us hear your hearts, God, your hand has been upon us each and every step of the way. We thank you for all that you have given us to this day, but Lord, we know that you are the one who is in charge, and we trust in your will, this place which you have pre-

pered for us in the beginning, will once more be returned to us again. We ask for the forgiveness of our sins, for taking another man’s life is something we do not do lightly. In our hearts, at the same time, we ask that you forgive those that seek to destroy us. For all we do, we do in your name, for you are our Holy God, and we have life eternal. In all these things, we thank you, God..."

We must do all that we can to bring them back to the faith of our ancestors, to bring them the salvation for which they were once freely given.

Each faces an uncertain future.

Each knows from whence they came.

Each knows that the going forward will not be easy. Time is against us, all matter. We face the unendurable, we find our way. We are alone. "We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us." And that is in fact, we face tomorrow.

We know that not everything may bring, but with faith, we can face tomorrow.

In all that we do, let us serve Him, and to serve forever.

Thank you to God.

Timothy W. Trow is the Executive Director of the Waldensian Trail of Faith. He lives in Valdevia with his family. He is the author of "Brucke to Heaven," and an active blogger, artist, and musician. Timothy also has a BSEE from UAC, is an Eagle Scout and is Vice President of the Valdevia Merchants Association. He has been Ordained to perform weddings at the Trail and attends several area churches seeking to serve the Lord every day.

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

2 Chronicles 7:14

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He Will Convict
By Shawa Thomas
Burke County

“And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment” (John 16:8)

The word “He” in this verse is important for a couple of reasons:
First, it emphasizes the Personhood of the Holy Spirit. He is not an “it”, some impersonal “force” as Gandhi taught. Rather “He” is a Person, the 3rd Person of the Triune Godhead. Thus, He relates personally to God the Father and God the Son as we see evidenced in this chapter; He can be “grieved”, as Paul asserts in Ephesians 4, etc. “He” is a Person.
And the “He” here is also significant because it reminds us that the conviction of sin in a person’s life is HIS job, not ours. “HE...will convict the world of sin...” We can preach, we can teach; we can admonish—but our role is limited. Only “HE” can actually “convict...concerning sin.” And that conviction makes all the difference.

When Hudson Taylor was on mission in China in the late 1800’s, he wrote of the following experience:

“An old man found us, I know not how, and followed me to our boat. I asked him in and inquired his name.

“My name is Dzim,” he replied. “But the question which distresses me, and to which I can find no answer, is—What am I to do with my sins?” Our scholars tell us that there is no future sure, but I find it hard to believe them... Oh, sir, I lie on my bed and think. I sit alone in the daytime and think. I think and think and think again, but I cannot tell what is to be done about my sins. I am seventy-two years of age. I cannot expect to finish another decade. Today knows not tomorrow’s lot,” as the saying is. Can you tell me what to do with my sins?” (Hudson Taylor’s Spiritual Secret, p. 196)

This kind of conviction of sin can only be the work of the Holy Spirit; and there is no substitute for it. John 16:8 is a good reminder to us: we can’t convict people of sin. Only “He” can. So, do your part—and pray—and leave the conviction to Him. “He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin...”

Shawa Thomas: Senior Pastor at Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church in Morganton. His messages and devotionals are available at www.shawathomas.com

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Enjoy Each Season Of Your Life!

By Rev John McCoury
Roan Mountain, Tennessee

We read in Psalm 1:3: “And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season, his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” Your life is lived in seasons, and to be fruitful you must recognize the season you’re in and appreciate it. “How can I tell when a season is ending?” you ask. Because the grace that accompanied that season will leave, and what was once rewarding will start to feel unrewarding. The Bible says a successful man or woman is like a tree “planted by streams of water” which brings its fruit in its season. You can only be fruitful in your season! That’s where blessing and success occur. You can’t just do it whenever you want to, it has to be in your appointed time. When the right season comes, it’s effortless for a tree to produce what’s stored within. And there’s fruit within you that will be produced when you understand what season you’re in. But there are rules for each season; let’s look at them. I am glad God changes the times and the seasons, aren’t you? Just think how dull things would become if He didn’t paint nature’s scenes in different colors several times a year.

With infinite creativity and remarkable regularity, He splashes white over brown in the expression, giving such attention to detail that we are often stunned with amazement. Each of the four seasons offers fresh and vital insights for those who take the time to look and to think. Hidden beneath the surface are colorful yet silent truths that touch most every area across the landscape of our lives. As each three-month segment of every year holds its own mysteries and plays in our melodies, offering sight and smell, feelings and fantasies altogether distinct, so it is in the seasons of life. The Master is neither mute nor careless as He alters our times and changes our seasons. How wrong to trust blindly and routinely through a lifetime of changing seasons without discovering answers to the new mysteries and learning to sing the new melodies! Seasons are designed to deepen us, to instruct us in the wisdom and ways of our God. To help us grow strongly...like a tree planted by the rivers of water. We need to walk through each scene pondering the subtle shading as well as the obvious broad-brush strokes from the Artist’s hand.

Let’s take our time and leave room for our feelings to emerge. Let’s sing in harmony with the Composer’s music. Let’s drink in the beauty of His handwork. It will take time, so let’s not hurry. Our journey begins in the winter, a season of quiet reverence. When we realize we are nothing without Christ and accept Him as our Savior. This is followed by spring, a season of refreshing and encouraging renewal. Summer is for nurturing what spring started. The seeds you sowed and nurtured then will grow and multiply now. Then comes summer, a season of enjoyable and much needed rest is for training and discipline. That’s when you begin to see God’s purpose for you. As autumn approaches, prepare for it. The seeds you sowed and nurtured will grow and multiply now. Finally, we’ll stroll through autumn, a season of nostalgic reflection. When you assess your accomplishments, enjoy your rewards, pass on your counsel, and take your bows. You have fought the good fight, kept the faith, and finished the course. Then Autumn is when you no longer have the passion of youth but the steady calm of the seasoned veteran. If you do it right, each season can be the best season of your life! Our hope is to grow stronger and taller as our roots dig deeper and the soft soil allows the branches of the river of life. And let’s not forget the winds of adversity! The beast old twisted trees, beaten and battered by winds and seasons along the canop of life and the storms of consistent courage. May God make us strong as the winds whisper against, as my friend? Let our roots grow deep.

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

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My Neighbors

By Lana Ellis
Tennessee

I really like the neighborhood in which I live. There are neighbors all around and their homes and yards are well cared for. They’re all very nice and throughout the day are often seen playing outside with children, pushing strollers, and walking their dogs.

At the end of summer, a few new “neighbors” — one family in the back yard and the other in the front yard. I spent a lot of time keeping a close eye on both of them. Needy neighbor? Well maybe but you could call it “neighbor watch.” You’ve heard of neighborhoods going to the “dogs.” Well mine wanted the “Birds!”

The family in the back yard lived in a house safely enclosed and protected from the elements. They carefully furnished their home making it very comfortable for the expectant mother and her soon to be born children. As mother awaited the arrival of her children the father worked to find food for her and delivered it directly to her mouth. Ahh! How sweet. The babies arrived weeks later and both father and mother began the daily chore of providing food to the insatiable little darlings. This seemed to go on far longer than maybe it should have but finally the once hot, “hot” fed siblars had to be coached out of the house and sent into the real world. The back yard bird family are Tree Swallows who boldly took over the blue bird box. They are rather pesky, often swooping down as if to attack while making quite a fuss over head. Much the opposite were the neighbors in my front yard. No plush feather beds for those young'uns. Their mother came up tough so will they. Her nesting spot was not enclosed nor covered. It was out on a bed of pea gravel beneath a very small tree exposed to rain and wind. On occasion the wind would leave the nest and search for her own food before returning for duty both day and night. It was early one morning when the “noisy neighbor” chirp by which the mother bird was darting at the bird diner and there they were — four tiny seemingly balls of feathers. Within a just a few hours they were on foot and mother was carefully keeping them covered if at all possible. The next day they took on the appearance of their mother. Though much smaller it was evidenced that their long skinny legs were made for walking and walking. They are from the Plever family and go by the name of Killdeer. They are much quieter and lessassuming than the Swallow family. However they too have a form of self-defense by leaving the nest area and flapping around to draw attention away from the little ones.

As I observed these two families it wasn’t hard to come up with an analogy — Birds and People. Hopefully all of us were born and raised in a suitable dwelling with parents who cared for us. However, like the Swallow family some can easily become spoiled and require more than enough care and attention. The Killdeer family doesn’t require a lot and quickly learns to find for themselves. I know some people in the Plever family who were born to low income parents in underdeveloped areas who have become very productive and useful adults. The same cannot be said about others who feel the system owes them and continue on the lookout for free handouts.

This isn’t to say there is nothing to the story. I’ll leave that up to you. Meanwhile whatever your living conditions try your best to make it “Home Tweet Home.”

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

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www.brcnews.com September 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 7
Tour of Heaven
By Judy Griffin
Mitchell-Avery County

And after this, I looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice that I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me, which said, Come up hither, and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. (Revelation 4:1)

John’s “visionary experience” included many things that are proclaimed from pulpits within and without the church walls. But one of the most amazing things about his vision is John’s guided tour through Heaven’s gates. The theme of this particular portion of John’s description of his vision is that of the throne of God. (Much more is said about thrones in the Biblical saga, but trust me this is NO Game!)

It seems that this “tour” of Heaven that John experienced has some interesting parallels to where I spend many hours each week. This is compelled to offer for your consideration a few insights gained in this opportunity and privilege.

First, the gates of Heaven that contain the eternal, glorified Presence of the Mighty God and the Savior Lord are dedicated for the everlasting security of those who dwell within them. There are not many weeks that pass without me offering an alternative outlook to the men who are confined within the walls and gates of this institution. I suggest to them that perhaps they find themselves contained within the corrective facility for their own protection.

There is a God Who has intervened in their circumstances to place them in a setting such as this to secure their future! Interestingly enough, a good number of these I have shared this thought with have wholeheartedly agreed.

Second, once one has come to the realization that a Divine God has redeemed their life from destruction and offered them security like they have never known before, some are NOW ready to see what lies ahead with fresh eyes and an enlightened perspective. It is as if the “door” to understanding has been opened and they now see how things can and will be different for them in the days and years to come.

The suggestion that they seize the opportunity given them by this temporary “time out” from the outside world to think about how...

Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge, Inc. is pleased to announce that Kimberly Grindstaff, RN, WCC has successfully passed the national certification exam to become Wound Care Certified by the National Alliance of Wound Care and Ostomy.

The WCC credential is a multidisciplinary wound care certification available to licensed wound care professionals across the healthcare continuum. This professional certification provides the recognition that Kimberly Grindstaff RN, WCC possess the qualifications to deliver the highest standard of care to all of our wound care patients.

We are very proud of Kimberly. She is a wonderful nurse. Her level of compassion and professional expertise make her an invaluable asset to our Hospice team.
Seasons of Our Lives
By Doug Harrell

Exclusions 1:1 To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

As I am writing this morning I have really been thinking about the different seasons of our lives and the changes that take place in each one and how one leads into the next. We see these changes in our children as they grow and learn. We see them in the growth of the crops and the plants that we raise in our gardens. We see these changes in the way that we live our lives and the way that we work.

We are all familiar with the idea of the seasons of the year, but what about the seasons of our lives? What are the stages of life and how do they affect us? How do we move from one stage to another?

There are several stages of life that we all go through. These stages can be physical, emotional, or spiritual. Some of the stages are more obvious than others, but they all play a role in our lives. Here are some of the stages of life that we all go through:

1. Infancy
2. Childhood
3. Adolescence
4. Young adulthood
5. Middle age
6. Old age

As we move through these stages of life, we experience different emotions and challenges. Some of the challenges are physical, such as the changes that occur in the body as we age. Other challenges are emotional, such as the challenges that come with parenthood or the challenges that come with losing a loved one.

As we move through these stages of life, we also experience spiritual growth. We may become more aware of our relationship with God and how we can grow in our faith. We may also become more aware of our own mortality and how we can live a life that is full of purpose and meaning.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to make choices that will affect our future. Some of these choices may be difficult, but they can also be rewarding. For example, choosing to go to college or to get married can have a huge impact on our future.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to learn from our experiences. We may learn from the mistakes that we make or from the successes that we achieve. This learning can help us to grow and become better people.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to help others. We can help others by sharing our experiences or by serving others in our community. This can be a very rewarding experience and can help us to feel more connected to others.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of life and the beauty of creation. We can find beauty in the changing of the seasons or in the beauty of a sunrise or sunset.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to reflect on our lives and our experiences. We can reflect on the good times and the bad times, and we can learn from both.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to develop a sense of purpose and meaning. We can find purpose and meaning in our work, in our relationships, or in our faith.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to experience joy and happiness. We can experience joy and happiness in the simple things of life, such as the beauty of a sunrise or the love of a family.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to experience pain and sorrow. We can experience pain and sorrow in the loss of a loved one or in the difficulties of life.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to experience growth and change. We can experience growth and change in our physical, emotional, or spiritual lives.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to experience love and compassion. We can experience love and compassion in the love of a family or in the love of a friend.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to experience forgiveness and reconciliation. We can experience forgiveness and reconciliation in the forgiveness of a loved one or in the reconciliation of a relationship.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to experience hope and protection. We can experience hope and protection in the hope of a better future or in the protection of a loved one.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to experience comfort and restoration. We can experience comfort and restoration in the comfort of a loved one or in the restoration of a broken relationship.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to experience peace and purity. We can experience peace and purity in the peace of a quiet moment or in the purity of a simple life.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to experience community and dependency. We can experience community and dependency in the community of a family or in the dependency of a loved one.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to experience prayer and praise. We can experience prayer and praise in the prayer of a loved one or in the praise of a loved one.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to experience thanksgiving and testimony. We can experience thanksgiving and testimony in the thanksgiving of a loved one or in the testimony of a loved one.

As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to experience joy and thankfulness. We can experience joy and thankfulness in the joy of a loved one or in the thankfulness of a loved one.

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As we move through these stages of life, we also have the opportunity to experience thanksgiving and testimony. We can experience thanksgiving and testimony in the thanksgiving of a loved one or in the testimony of a loved one.
First, there must be earnest prayer. The Bible says, “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14). There must be a deep-seated heart-yearning for revival—not just a mere muttering of words, pious platitudes and religious mumblings, but earnest, fervent prayer. The Bible says, “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16).

Let your soul be anxiously, let the tears flow, let your heart be burdened for the lost. Tears are appropriate, for God’s Word says, “He who continues goes forth weeping, bearing seed for sowing, and shall come again rejoicing, bringing His班车 with Him” (Psalm 126:6).

But let us forsake our sins. The Bible says, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord” (Isaiah 55:7). Again, the Bible says, “If My people ... turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

The bickering, the prejudices, the ill will, the envy, the jealousy, the bitterness is the criticism among Christian people today must end before revival can begin. The revival must begin in the hearts of Christians before evangelism can be bought effectively to the world.

When Christ’s disciples settled their differences, gave up their selfishness, confessed their sins and allowed God’s Spirit to fill them, the church came. We must forsake our evil ways. God’s Spirit cannot operate in a climate of dissension and quarrels. We must forsake our perversity, our peevishness, our littleness and our whins.

The enemy of souls has weakened the effectiveness of the Church because we have centered on controversy and dissension rather than on going forth weeping and bearing precious seed. May God forgive us and help us to forsake our wicked, contemptuous ways!

Third, God must be real to us. The Bible says, “If My people ... seek My face” (2 Chronicles 7:14). In a world filled with carnal materialism, we have tried to muzzle God down to our size. We have created a god in our minds which is not the revealed God of the Bible.

Many say, “It’s all right to go to church, and a person ought to be decent, but I don’t believe in going overboard on religion.” They think the Christian faith is a fad, a hobby, a pastime. 

If Christianity is important at all, it is all-important. If it is anything at all, it is everything. It is either the most vital thing in your life, or it is not worth bothering with.

You can know God. Millions of Christians are saying with assurance, “I know I have passed from death to life” (1 Corinthians 3:14). “I know whom I have believed” (2 Timothy 1:12).

We need a revival of Christian faith, of Christian experience, of God-consciousness. God has said, “If My people ... seek My face” (2 Chronicles 7:14). If we will recorrect that He is holy, righteous, real, above personal, and that He is a God of love and mercy, then this reality will be transferred to the world and revival can come.

Don’t give lie to the Christian faith by professing Christ without possessing Him. Don’t lock the church door with the key of inconsistency and keep the lost from coming to Christ. Don’t hedge revival by your unbelief and prayerlessness. Don’t cheat yourself out of spiritual victory by allowing on to imprison you. Seek God’s face and turn from your wicked ways. Then He will hear from Heaven.

The church holds the key to revival. It is within our grasp. Will we rise to the challenge? Will we dare pay the price? The supply of Heaven is adequate for the demands of our spiritually starved world. Will we fail to offer that supply? Have you accepted Christ as your Savior? If not, you will admit that deep down inside you is an emptiness that needs to be filled. Your heart yearns for peace and joy and help and hope and guidance. When the church is transformed, the world is transformed. Then Jesus is glorified.

In the center of history, on a low hill in Palestine, a cross was erected—the cross of Christ, the Son of God. By some wonderful miracle known only to God, all who look to the Lamb on the cross have life—not just the good, the reputable, those who can make the dedication. Jesus died. He died with Jesus looking belovably upon Him and was assured of life everlasting.

The Bible says that Jesus “made peace through the blood of His cross, and by that cross, God reconciled all things to Himself” (Colossians 1:20).

Give your life to Christ today. And may the revival that the world needs begin in you. ©1944 BGEA
“Choices” 
By Jacob Willis
Yancey Hospice County Hospice

Have you ever attempted to make a difficult
decision and people say well just pray about it? Sometimes
we at Yancey Hospice and Palliative Care, see people
struggle with the most difficult of decisions such as:
whether or not to continue aggressive treatment for
illness, what physician to use, what to put in their will, or
whether or not to sign a DNR.

When you get right down to it, life is one big se-
quence of choices. We can, however, become very enthralled with our choices
ending us up at a perfect destination. Talk with bereavement clients who worry
about end of life decisions that were made and question, “If only I would have
closed this treatment or that Doctor for my loved one they might not have died.”
Some struggle with decisions they make for a lifetime wondering what life might
have been. Sometimes we are told, just listen to the Spirit and you will be in the
perfect will of God, but I personally have found that to be a slippery slope that
isn’t sustainable for long periods of time. I think we need to focus more on God’s
will as a way of living—That God’s will means I am doing what God has called
me to do. People say, “If only I knew what God’s will was, then I could make the
right decision.” Romans 12:1-2 describes God’s will for everyone as Paul
writes, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye pre-
voy your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reason-
able service. 2. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the
renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and
perfect, will of God.”

God’s will doesn’t have to do so much with a place, person, job, or circumstance
as it does with being a Godly Person. God wants us to surrender our will
unto His. He wants our whole heart and all of our true, talent, and treasure. God
wants to conquer us in a sense. Paul expresses this in 2 Corinthians 12:1-2
“Now I will come into the Texas to spread there the Good News about the Christ,
even though in the Lord’s providence a door open before me. I see, obtain-
ing no relief for my spirit because I did not find our brother Titus, I bade them
not to go on into Macedonia. 14 But to God be the thanks: who in Christ ever
heard our triumphal procession, and by your hands wave in every place that
sweet incense, the knowledge of Him. 15 For we are a fragrance of Christ grate-
ful to God in those whom He is saving and in those who are perishing; 16 to the
last-named an odor of death predictive of death, and to the others an odor of life
predictive of life.”

The church at Corinth was composed of some of Paul’s biggest critics. They
condemned him, accused him of stealing money, accused him of being weak, and
in the context of this scripture, were accusing him of not going where God wanted
him to go. Paul describes a great door of opportunity that opened to him. Why
didn’t he go? Was he not a man of his word? Did he not care about the people in
that community? Paul says, “It didn’t work out because I had no peace in my
Spirit and I couldn’t find Titus.” He had some anxiety about being in this place
and about his decision. He was worried about his friend so he went on to Macedonia. We might look
at this and say, “Paul was totally out of the will of God for leaving!”

Paul then explains God’s will by using an analogy.
In verses 14-16 he describes the procession held in
Rome for a conquering hero. Someone who had gone
into battle and won a great victory, coming back into
the city to a parade. In this parade would come the
army from, and in the back the conquering hero with
a whole procession of conquered slaves chained to
the chariot. They were led through the city to the center.
There many of them died and some lived on to serve
their masters for us.

In other words: Jesus is the Conquering Hero. He defeated death, hell, the
great, sin, and Satan by the blood of His cross and the resurrection. We follow-
eners of Jesus are the ones who are chained to the chariot. He conquered us and
now leads us to the place of death and service. During the procession the incense
would be symbolic of both death and life. Buried for those who would die and
those who would live. We die to ourselves and live to Christ. Paul is saying
wherever I go, wherever I say, wherever I am, I am led by the one who conquered
me. I am dead to myself, and alive to Christ Jesus. I can’t go anywhere that he
doesn’t lead us to die to myself and live for Christ. Wherever I go from that point on, I am in the purpose-
ful will of God.

Refuse to let past choices define you, refuse to be dominated by your circum-
sances, and refuse to allow others to be critical of your choices and make you
view yourself. Does this mean choices do not matter? Certainly not. It does
mean that when we make our choices as a sold out child of the living God, we can
trust Him to go before us. No choice we make surprises God. “He leads His
dear children along, some through the fire, some through the flood, but all through the
hair, some through great sorrow, but God gives a song, as the night season and all
the day long”

Sell out to Jesus, pray and ask for His wisdom, go where you feel there is
peace, and make your choices. Make them with the confidence that God is lead-
ing you no matter what, and there is nowhere that He hasn’t gone before you,
already making the way.

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

And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him
that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for
thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. Revelation 1:15

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Truth
By Preacher Chris Rathbone
Mitchell County

The society in which we live has become a society that is for the most part offended by truth. One group speaks one “truth” and immediately another group will begin shouting their “truth”. Both claim to be right about whatever their truth may be, even though the “truth” each group proclaims completely conflicts what the other group is proclaiming.

Then, there is the group that proclaims that there are no absolute truths in this world. They believe that truth is relative. That just means that everybody’s truth is right, no one is wrong, and nobody can claim that their truth is above someone else’s truth. Each person can believe whatever truth they want, even if it conflicts someone else’s truth and all are equally valid. Even though 2 plus 2 equals 4, we cannot make that the final and absolute answer, because someone else may believe it to be something else. And we don’t want to offend someone. Again, even if the “truth” each one believes is completely opposite to each other, no one is wrong and everybody’s truth is right. Yet, that feeling of “What?”, you’re having right now is how I feel when I hear people say stuff like that. According to these folks there are no moral absolutes. What one person believes is wrong, another person may believe is right. Mankind apparently just drifts along and comes up with whatever truth he or she likes and everybody is supposed to hold hands and agree that everybody’s truth is right. Everyone does that which is right in their own eyes. We are commanded by society to get in line and cooperate with whatever truth comes up with, even if that truth is conflicting with ours. You “absolutely” have to believe in this and go along with people’s beliefs or unbelief, whichever may be. Wait....are they saying that there is absolutely no absolute truth? Aren’t they proclaiming an absolute truth? Uhhhh... confused yet? That’s the whole purpose of it all: “confusion”. Satan has done a pretty good job of confusing people.

What are we as Bible believing Christians to do in such a society? What about those who say they are Christians and yet proclaim and support as “truths” that conflict with what the Bible teaches? Do we just keep silent? Do we hide behind the walls of our church buildings because we are afraid someone will accuse us of being “judgmental” if we state what the Bible teaches? Paul gives a young preacher named Timothy some advice when it comes to teaching and preaching the truth.

First, begin with the correct source of truth, the scriptures. II Timothy 3:16-17
All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. Timothy lived in a time not so different from our own when it came to all the different opinions of truth. Faisee reagan, the worship, ungodly religious worship, and all the rest of the stuff that was going on, believe me, was nothing. What did we have? The Bible! Timothy had the Bible. Timothy was told to teach only what was taught in the Bible. Timothy had the scriptures that were the source of truth in a world that was proclaiming so many different opinions of truth. The Bible, given by inspiration of God, is the only inspired source of truth. So if you’re teaching Bible truths then you’re following the correct source of truth and you will always measure the “truth” to many claims in this world is God’s word. If it doesn’t meet the standard declared in God’s Holy Bible, then it isn’t truth.

Secondly: Tell the truth, even when the word doesn’t want it! Paul charges Timothy in II Timothy 4:2 to preach the word: be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. Paul was telling Timothy to preach the truth of God’s word whether it is popular to the masses or not. Just proclaim the truth because it was what God had called Timothy to do. Paul warns in verses 3-4: For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. Paul warned Timothy that there would be those who would reject God’s truth to make up their own. Those would rise up their own teachers to proclaim what they wanted to hear but not what they wanted to hear. They turned away from God’s eternal, unchanging truth and embraced the fables and lies of the world.

As Christians, it is our responsibility to proclaim the truth of God’s word. Even though the world around us keeps screaming for us to keep silent, we must not. In John 3:31-32, Jesus spoke these words: If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. The Word of God has always been and will always be the truth that sets sinful man free. The Gospel of Jesus is the only message by which man can be saved. No one can enter the Kingdom of Heaven without being born again. Receiving Jesus Christ as their Savior by faith, and repenting of sin. That’s not my truth, but God’s truth. Jesus Himself stated in John 14:6 I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. That’s not my truth, but Jesus truth. Even though it’s not popular in the world you and I live in, it is the truth of God that we must proclaim. It is the truth that sets man free!


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

Mitchell County Family Will Be New Homeowners of a Habitat House

By Robin Warden

Mitchell County

Congratulations to Tanya Hudgens and her four children who are the newest Mitchell-Yancey Habitat for Humanity partner family. Their new 4-bedroom, 1200 square foot home will be located in Mitchell County.

I am excited and honored to be a part of the process, and did the research on what it would take to be a Habitat Partner family. I have always been a single mom. I feel so much better about myself because I can provide a house for my children. I want them to know now and as they finish high school and college and marry on with their lives that ‘s place called home’ will always be here for them,” expressed Tanya.

On a sunny Saturday afternoon at Riverside Park in Spruce Pine, I sat with this wonderful faculty to talk about what lies ahead. Tanya was happy to see her children, Seth (16), Dwayne (13), Ayden (12), and Kinsa (8) so enthusiastic as they talked about their thoughts about moving in. They were excited about themselves, their interests and accomplishments, as well as those of their siblings. Tanya is an avid reader and has definitely passed her passion along to her family, who can’t wait to have bookshelves in every room of their new house.

Everyone understands the shared responsibilities ahead to help build their first new home.

All Habitat families are required to provide 300 hours of “sweat equity” on their own home and work alongside staff and volunteer crews. The boys are anxious to get to it. They already have considerable experience with constructing walls and putting up insulation from helping build their aunt’s house. Dwayne was excited about helping his aunt and has always been so enthusiastic for painting; however, assured us that Habitat crew are not usually tees on the kids that do that job.

The family currently lives in Burnsville in an old and very small two-bedroom, one-bath trailer that their mother belonged to Tanya’s parents, Gary and Marleene Hudgens, who live only a few houses away. Each family member shares their bedroom or room and will have a bathroom in their new house and eventually leaving grandparents in the old neighborhood in Burnsville.

Kydal, the youngest and often the spokeperson for the family, declared, “The bungalow is a whole lot of room for me.” Mom shares a room with her while the three boys bunk together in the other bedroom. Tanya has done her best to keep up their home; however, it has been difficult to manage with both limited space and with no closets. They all envision a new life with a big yard, their own bedrooms, of course, in time, a big dog. All are looking forward to the privacy and independence that comes with one’s own room.

“My kids have a more positive outlook because of this opportunity. They can see that everything is possible if you keep trying and work for what you want. God will help you find it,” says Tanya.

Tanya was raised in Tipton Hill near Bakersville and is living now in Burnsville. For the past ten years she worked as a Head Start teacher at Roan View Child Development Center in Bakersville. As a single mom, working full time and raising four children, she went back to school when her child was an infant and enrolled in classes from school during the day and later was employed at Roan View Neonatal Science.

She received her diploma from the Maryland Community College in Spruce Pine in 2006 with an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education. Two years ago, Tanya became the Director of Roan View Development Center.

When the family moves to Mitchell County, no one will have to get up at 5:00 AM on school days any longer. They all attend schools in Mitchell County where Mom is employed. Currently, to make it all work, Tanya drives from Burnsville to Mitchell County every morning at 5:30. The family helps her open up the Child Care Center and they are off to school from there.

“Tanya and Marleene Riddle are wonderful people. Tanya has always been very independent, persistent, and hard-working. We made sure all of our children went to school and graduated. She has followed this example and always helped her children through school and encouraged their interests. She has made sure every one of her children know they are loved,” said Marleene.

Marleene and Marlene always look forward to taking the children on the road with them whenever possible. The family is close to their papaw and mamaw, who have helped Tanya tremendously over the years with the children. Living farther apart from their grandparents in Mitchell County was difficult for Marleene, she says, “We will always stay closely involved in each other’s lives.”

Seth Easie (16) is the oldest son and a sophomore at Mitchell High School. He is on the wrestling team and now competes in the 132-pound category. He works part-time for his coaches doing landscaping and yard work. Seth accompanies his sisters, Gary, on the road whenever he can. He has traveled to half dozen states or more states in the South to date. He loves working on old tractors and 4-wheelers with his papaw and sees himself working as a mechanic after finishing school.

He will have his own room in the new house and plans to fill his space with his music collection of football and basketball paraphernalia of his Carolina Panthers and the Carolina Panthers.

Dwayne Heidel (13) is in 8th grade at Bowers Middle School and claims to be the biggest bookworm in the family. He loves to read fantasy and gets a real debate going among his brothers and sister about who is the biggest Harry Potter fan. He also shares his love for music, specifically playing the drums, and has an interest in karate with his brother Ayden. They will be roommates in the new home and have some exciting ideas about creating Do-It-Yourself platform beds with storage and cubbyhole areas. However, they still are at odds about one’s choice for a black, red, and bright yellow color scheme. Having recently turned thirteen, he was allowed to make his first long-distance truck drive with papaw to Florida this summer. Dwayne thinks truck driving may be a career he would enjoy.

Ayden Farris (12) is enrolled in advanced math classes, his favorite subject, in 7th grade at Bowers Middle School. He is seen as a mathematician in the future, or possibly, a video game designer. He boasts of being one of the most dance dancers in the family for tap, rap, and clogging, as well as in karate. Ayden is in the school band and plays the flute. Next school year, he looks forward to starting track. And of course, his 13th birthday is approaching and that means his first road trip with grandparents Gary and Marleene will be soon.

Kydal Farris (8) is in the 3rd grade at Goose Elementary School and the youngest and only girl is the family. She patiently waits her turn to talk about her love of dance that she shares with her brother Ayden. “I love to dance ballet in addition to jazz, tap, rap, and clogging. But, I am most looking forward in 3rd grade to cheerleading. I have been wanting to be a cheerleader for almost half of my life.” Kydal dramatically states. However, having her own room is high on her list of dreams as well. She and Marleene are working on a princess bed that she plans to surround with her posters of the Disney Princesses. She excitedly raved through the list of a few of those princesses before I got lost: Snow White, Cinderella, Aurora, Ariel, Belle, Jasmine... I was so surprised to hear that, so far, she has her sights set on moving to New York City and becoming a fashion designer.

The board and staff of Mitchell-Yancey Habitat for Humanity welcome this new partner family. The location of their home is still pending as the affiliate seeks a suitable lot in Mitchell County preferably in Lodger or Bakersville. They will work alongside Habitat volunteer crews and local contractors to build their house and receive a no-interest 25-year mortgage. Tanya will be required to pay a monthly mortgage, land taxes, and insurance. Their home will be the 23rd home built by Mitchell-Yancey Habitat for Humanity since 1993 providing safe and affordable housing for 27 serving families since that time.

Soon Mitchell-Yancey Habitat for Humanity will be seeking volunteers to help build Tanya’s family home. Are you interested in sharing your time and talents to help Tanya and her children make the dream of owning their home a reality? Contact: Steve Brune, M-Y Habitat for Humanity Volunteer Coordinator 627-904-0599 email: stevebrunetv1@yahoo.com

Robin Warden is the Board Vice-President and Development Chairperson of Mitchell-Yancey Habitat for Humanity.

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Have You Become Accustomed to the Dark?

By Pastor Stevens Williams
Mitchell County

Many Years Ago Beverly and I went to a restaurant where they must have loved darkness, rather than light. I stumbled into the dimly-lit dining area and finally found my chair to sit down. I told her that I was going to need a flashlight if I was going to be able to read the menu and order. We finally ordered and after a while the food came. I admit I ate it by faith and not by sight. But gradually, I began to notice our objects in the restaurant a little more clearly. As we eat, I thought to myself, it’s funny how you can use the dark after sitting in it for a while.

We are living in the Dark Age’s whether we want to admit it or not. We’re living in a time where the power of darkness seems to have hold upon people like never before. We have more Artificial Light in this world than we do True Light today. Meaning more people claiming to be a Christian than really being a True Christian. We Christians have the technology (TV, Radio, Internet) to reach more people today than in the past. I believe that there are more people in darkness today, than ever before.

We are living in a day of Moral Decay where nothing seems to really bother many people. It’s sad to say people today have lived in darkness so long that they have become use to it. There is a slow brainwashing process going on, and slowly but surely we are being desensitized to evil or darkness in our society. Little by little sin is made to appear less sinful, until the light that was in many Christians has become dim. Just look at the magazines and shows on TV that we now watch. People by the millions are hooked on Reality TV. We watch them fess, cess, fight, belligerent another and we now call that entertainment instead of disgusting. In The Day you are living you can have every type of ungodly trash pumped right into our home without others knowing what we watch from our TV’s, phones or computers. We get used to it, we accept it, as a matter of fact we call it literature, music, freedom of speech, and people have learned to live with it, without feeling any guilt at all. Think about Lot in the Bible. The Bible says, Lot was a righteous man, but he moved into Sodom. Lot lived among sexual perversion and Lot became accustomed to the sinful deeds of the people he passed day by day. (Read Genesis chapters 13-19) Lot become accustomed to the dark and this is a return allowed his family to become accustomed to the dark, as return they failed to see anything wrong with the society they were living in, and this is still happening in our homes today. I hate to say it, but I have met many Lots in the past several years who just like Lot, they have lost the respect of their families, and friends because they have grown accustomed to the darkness of the world and the sins of the world. The Bible tells us... as it was in the days of Lot... So shall it be in the day when the Son of Man shall return. We’re there. Do which Adrima Peters would say “IT IS GETTING DARKLY DARK.” Folks, God’s return is very close, I believe. We are living in a day of Liberal Lot, who tell us that we should accept Sodom, get right with God and live together and learn to tolerate and accept one another as they are. To which I say “NO WAY!” Again it is sad but true, people have gotten so use to sin and darkness, that they are accepting the darkness rather than accepting the Truth from the Light of The World (Jesus Christ). Dear friend please understand if you sit in a dark room long enough you will think that there is more light shining through the longer you sit there. Christians must stand strong today and look to the light instead of accepting the darkness of the world. I know many people will say I’m old fashioned and narrow minded, but that’s OK. There are two reasons I say that: 1st is because Christian people today have become accustomed to the dark, 2nd is because lost people have never seen the light of Jesus Christ in their life. Understand, lost or saved, Jesus Christ never changes, no matter what we think.

The Early Christians did not dim their light to match the time. They stood strong on the Word of God. If you read your Bible and early church history you will see that the Romans would kill Christians and impale them (pierce them with a stake or pole) and line the streets of Rome with their dead bodies, using them as human torches to light the way. Even by their death for their belief in Christ, they give off light to the dark world. Christians, are a city that is set on a hill, we are not to be hidden in a dungeon. It is not time for Christians to get use to the darkness but it’s time to live our lives in Christ, to shine our light with darkness but to conquer it. Christians, we are not to compromise our faith but stand up for our belief and shine for Jesus Christ. Christians, let’s get our candles out from under our bushes that hid them and take off our shades of compromise and shine. Shine, Shone, for Jesus Christ while we can. Vince Hawes said, We are creeping down in the dark when we are supposed to be flooding the world with light.

Words of Wisdom:
- Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. N/A
- Always being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness. N/A
- “In order for the light to shine so brightly, the darkness must be present.” N/A

Good Advice:
- When we start dwelling down things start looking up.
- Your friends are like buttons on an elevator. They can take you either up or down.

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

And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year’s end. Exodus 34:22
Clint’s Chronicles on the Funny Farm
The Rest of The Story
Doug Harell

I have to laugh as I remember the evening Clint is talking about. One of the pleasures of working with Clint was his innocence and gullibility. I was as tired in the evenings as he was, and I’d sooner joke around with him. I enjoyed the Gaither hour as much as he did, but I was always good for a joke or two when I would egg him on about getting more work done. Oh, to be able to sit back down with Clint in the living room and enjoy another hour of good gospel music and conversation!

Suset at Harrell Hill

Dear Friends,

I receive letters, emails, phone calls and personal visits from many, thanking me for recounting my close encounters and near-death experiences at Harrell Hill Farms. I continue to often wonder how it is that Christian brother’s and sisters can derive such perverse pleasure from Farmer Clint’s antics. I’m sure he’s aware of it. You may be surprised to learn that such occurrences are commonplace throughout my lifetime, even pre-farming days. For example, one day I will recount for you how I was run over by a truck while falling into one of the manure-filled, smelly and dangerous rivers. Or perhaps you’d like to hear about the night I was attacked by a raccoon? But not now, let’s stay closer to home for the time being.

One summer’s eve, Doug, Barbara and I were resting in the kitchen at their farmhouse at Harrell Hill. I was celebrating the fact that we actually had a short work day, by Doug standards anyway, a mere 12 hours. As we visited around the dinner table Doug surmised that he had “been thinking...” always a scary scenario. Usually this meant we would soon embark on a wild and crazy venture of farmers do. I would go along kicking and screaming, my body hanging in the balance.

As Barbara and I digested her fine home cooking, Doug offered me a second piece of Hawaiian Sunrise cake... a sure sign of impending doom for me! This dessert, a Barbara specialty, had become my overwhelming favorite. And I knew that if Doug offered me a second slice something terrible was about to happen to me. He began, “You know, there is so much to do around here and it seems there are too few hours in the day” (I was feeling more confident than usual as I knew Doug could do a lot of things but even he couldn’t make time happen!) “So,” I quizzed, “how do you propose that we get more done? Perhaps I could wear a miner’s hat, with the lights on top, and work all night long. Just think, Doug, I can dig, plant, weed, eat, spread fertilizer, during the day, then crawl around on my hands and knees and dig potatoes, pull corn and other vegetables at night. I could take a 5 minute nap at the end of each corn row... or maybe rest beside the green lake beans... or perhaps snooze, ever so briefly, in the sorghum patch. By sunrise I would already have chosen the over-ripened cabbage and tomatoes for the pigs’ breakfast. That way you can work me around the clock. Wouldn’t that make you happy?”

Shaking his head and closing his eyes, the way Doug does when he really would like to shoot me, my friend replied, “You know, Pollard, you just don’t have vision. You’re a great worker and willing to do just about anything, but you ignore the facts.” Oh, here it comes! “We’re usually finished dinner by 7:30 or so, and then we watch The Gaither Homecoming shows on TV, or sometimes we eat watermelon on dad’s front porch. I’m thinking we should make good use of that hour, after dinner, to do more chores. Just think, an hour a day six days a week, it would be like having another day!”

Believe me, friends, I enjoy hard work. Although inexperienced, I had grown to love farm chores as each day is filled with exciting, break-taking, dangerous projects. I even became accustomed to getting out of bed at 4:30 AM to Doug’s belching from the foot of the stairs, “Pollard, pancakes are ready.” We’re burning the manure on the field, and it’s hot! So I would get up from my bed, don my Farmer Club attire, and descend the stairs for a breakfast of buntwheat cakes and another harrowing adventure on the farm. And, always, I would note my friend’s Bible, open to his daily devotions, resting on the end table. I accepted the notion of being mired in dirt by 3:30 AM because that’s what it takes to run a farm. I was prayful, paunchous and projects... can it get any better than this? But now, NOW this obsessed Farmer Doug, the Paul Bunyan of Harrell Hill, wants to take away the ONE HOUR! I have one more thing to think about.

When you are a guest in one’s home, as I was at Harrell Hill farmhouse, it is incumbent upon you to observe the power structure, i.e., who is in charge. Well, having been Doug’s indentured servant for several months I’ve discovered that Barbara is the boss of him when we’re inside that house. It made sense, therefore, that whenever Doug proferred one of his cockamamie schemes I would take a step back, hide behind Barbara, and see how the early skirmish would end. (Notice that I did not say: “...as who would win the early skirmish?”)

Now Barbara is a very loving, dutiful, hard-working partner to Doug. But there are some things she will not compromise. I’ve witnessed her drop everything she’s doing to help her husband at a mere call. But hear me now, YOU DO NOT MESS AROUND WITH GAITHER HOMECOMING! As I covered in the background, speechless and flabbergasted by Doug’s ‘suggestion’, I watched the lady of the house raise her head...look up at her husband...“(WAY up ‘cause he’s about 6’1”)...and those tiny little eyes were terrifying laser beams right into his skull. And the BIG man quivered, and his knees knocked and buckled...and he collapsed like an umbrella in a hurricane! And I knew, GAMES OVER!

The three of us chuckled at this silly exchange, and I wondered if Doug knew just how close he came to being annihilated (he of course did). I reminded Doug that God stopped the sun once, Joshua 10:12-14.

1. On the day the LORD gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the LORD in the presence of Israel: “Sun, stand still over Gilgal, and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.”
2. So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Joshua.

The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. 14 There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the LORD listened to a human being.

Happy to be clandestine, I said, “Note verse 14...I’m pretty sure the Lord won’t stop the sun for you!”

Barbara departed to her bedroom to watch Gaither Homecoming. I looked at my friend, with that “gosh...” grin and said, “Think I’ll go down to Daddy D’s and have a little watermelon, wanna go? I love eating watermelon in the daylight.” Doug shook his head, closed his eyes, “Pollard, one of these days...” Yeah, I know... but I’d won this battle on the Funny Farm (or at least got to enjoy the spoils)... no extra work day for me. And that doggone watermelon was so good. Praise the Lord!

Humbled in the Hills, Clint

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Moses
By Edward Couser
Tennessee

Greetings Friends,

Recently, I read an article about a mom’s experience backing out of her driveway. Her three kids were sitting in the back seat, when suddenly her four-year-old cried out, “stop!” Mom stopped suddenly and inquired, “What’s wrong honey?” Her four-year-old said, “You almost ran over Boopie!” Boopie was her four-year-old’s invincible friend.

Several weeks ago, on my weekly radio program in Burnsville, I started a new teaching series on Hebrews. The other day, I was reading Hebrews 11: 23 – 27. In verse 27, it mentions that he (Moses) endured as seeing him who is invisible. How did Moses see the invisible? To see, Moses had his first lesson seeing the invisible at a very early age. Remember Pharaoh had issued a decree that all the male babies born to the Hebrews should be killed. His parents made the decision to hide him. Moses mom modeled faith. (Read Hebrews 11: 23). She prayed and trusted God to take care of her son. What happened next? Pharaoh’s daughter found baby Moses. His sister Miriam stayed close to her baby brother. Miriam said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “I will go and call to thee a nurse for the child for you.”

Jehovah’s faith had been rewarded. As she cared for her son, she faithfully used this opportunity to educate Moses about God. She taught him to bow down and pray to the living God, who would hear and help him. She must have told, and retold the story about how God had preserved his life during Pharaoh’s decree. When Moses left to become Pharaoh’s daughter’s son, he did not lose the impressions received during childhood.

Moses’ life as Pharaoh’s daughter’s son had been crammed with the visible. He grew up with pomp and circumstance. All this changed when he had to flee to Midian. Suddenly his life changed, from the palace in Egypt to the wilderness of Midian. Yet, in the wilderness, through the school of self-denial and hardship, he learned patience, and learned to be trained to obey God. In some way, we may be walking through the wilderness today. It may seem that everything we value is falling apart. Yet in spite of our circumstances, the Rock of Ages stands. It may take the visible clutter in our lives to fall away before it becomes easier for us to see the invisible. Seeing the invisible can be a challenge. But through our eyes of faith, (read Hebrews 11: 1), we can see Him confident as we learn to trust in Him. As believers, we have been called to walk by faith not by sight. The Bible says, “we walk by faith and not by sight.” (Read Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17; 2 Corinthians 4:18). We are to call upon Jesus by faith. (See Jeremiah 31:3). Jesus hears our prayers, and invites us to look to Him by faith, to answer our prayers according to His will. Our God is mighty and powerful. Who can ever forget Moses’ ultimate experience seeing the invisible? In the wilderness, he saw a burning bush, but it was not consumed. When Moses came into the presence of God, God said to him, “Take off your shoes, for the place you are standing is holy ground!”

Verse one said, that we were created with a hole in our heart. Unfortunately, we often try to fill this hole with other things. We may choose to turn to substitutes, when it is really God we hunger to see and experience. Jesus is mighty, powerful, and holy. He is big enough for every moment in our lives, the good and not so good. What was the result for Moses? He endured! In the solemn mountains of Midian, he was reminded of the power and presence of God. In nature, Moses just seemed to be standing in His presence.

What is the result of seeing the invisible? Like Moses, God will give us the strength and grace to endure. I believe what I learn to possess is unwavering love and obedience, unwavering love and dedication, and unwavering love commitment.

What about you?

Where do we find true hope, peace, encouragement, strength, purpose, and promise? How can we endure as we live now and wait for the second coming of Jesus? To me there is only one way – we can endure, “as seeing Him who is invisible.”

God Bless You.

Ed Couser is pastor for the Burnsville and Ennis Hills Seventh-day Adventist Churches. Previously he served churches in Ontario (Canada), New York, Kentucky, and North Carolina. He also married Chaplain, Lieutenant Colonel, having spent 24 years in the US Air Force. Pastor Couser and his wife of 35 years, Carol, have three daughters, Melissa (23), Kaylee (21), Megan (20), and a son, Drew (19). He enjoys sharing the love of Jesus and encouraging others to prepare for His soon return.

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It Looks like a Weed to Me
By Brent Price, Outreach Programs Coordinator

My wife and I were working in our flower garden getting ready to mulch and set our new plants. I stepped into a portion of one bed to thin some tiny flowers that had reseeded from the previous year. Carefully I began to pull the tiniest plants from the ground leaving behind the largest and healthiest plants. From another portion of the garden, Tammy asked what I was doing. I explained that I was thinning flowers that had “volunteered” from last year. When I watched as I painstakingly pulled one small plant after another leaving space between the largest ones. Finally, she exclaimed, “Well they all look like weeds to me!”Torched at her standing with her hands on her hips and we both laughed. I said, “Trust me. They’re flowers, wait and see.”

If my wife had started her work in that particular section of the garden, I don’t think there would be a single flower left to bloom later this summer. All these “weeds” would have ended up on the compost pile.

Pulling weeds in general is not rocket science. Weeds are easily identified. If a plant of some sort or another doesn’t belong in a particular place or you simply don’t want it growing in a certain area, then you pull it. It’s easy to see how one person’s weed could easily be another person’s flower.

But it occurs to me that our lives are not so different from working in the flowers. Moment to moment we’re faced with decisions. Accept this reject that. Go or to stay, embrace or pull away.

While we generally take time to think over the important decisions, most of our day-to-day choices are made with a minimal amount of reflection. The pace of life demands that we make decisions quickly and move on. We don’t always have adequate information. It’s easy to be careless. Have you ever gotten in a hurry or not been paying enough attention to realize that you’ve pulled up a flower instead of a weed?

Even what appears to be an insignificant choice can possess the power to change our lives in profound ways. Sometimes it is the simplest choice that can make all the difference. Stop and listen to the stranger who needs someone to hear their story. Offer appreciation to someone who’s working in a thankless job, but obviously cares about the quality of their work. Invite someone to dinner who is lonely. Push aside your fear and judgment and reach to someone who needs a second chance. Or—-you can simply pull a weed.

More times than not, I happen to see more flowers than weeds. God provides the seasons each of us requires to grow and become so I try to be careful. Flower or weed?

Reverend Brent Price is a chaplain at Hospice & Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge.

God Makes No Junk
By Jerry Lewis

McDowell County


We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

So does God:

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for i am fearfully and wonderfully made. You are wonderful: my soul knows it very well. (Psalm 139:13-14, ESV)

One only has to travel back a few decades is world history to discover a regime that idolized blonde hair and blue eyes and killed six million Jews. Jews weren’t the only ones who lost their lives:

• 7 million Soviet Jews died
• 3 million Soviet prisoners of war died
• 1.8 million Polish Civilians died
• 220,000 Gypsies, 1,900 Jehovah’s Witnesses, and 70,000 Jews died
• 250,000 disabled people were killed... for being disabled

Black people matter, White people matter. All people matter. I’m afraid we’ve lost sight of this. This week CBS ran the story about Ireland’s eradication of babies with Down Syndrome.

Since prenatal screening tests were introduced in Iceland in the early 2000s, the vast majority of women — close to 100 percent — who received a positive test for Down syndrome terminated their pregnancy.

Other countries aren’t faring any better in Down syndrome termination rates. According to the most recent data available, the United States has an estimated termination rate for Down syndrome of 87 percent (1995-1999); in France it’s 77 percent (2015); and Denmark, 95 percent (2015). The law in Iceland permits abortion after 18 weeks if the test has a deformity — and Down syndrome is included in this category.

The common ground between white supremacists and Iceland’s law is easy-life only matters if “T” think it matters.

In 2011, 968,000 babies were aborted.

Abortion advocates, white supremacists and Iceland’s “deformity” law advocates find themselves on the same shaky ground: “we” should determine when life matters.

Yet Scripture is clear: life matters for blacks, whites, Latinos, unborn babies, down syndrome sufferers, people with Alzheimer’s and dementia, because God created them, and therefore loves them.

Though marred by sin, we are all created in his image.

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” (Genesis 1:26, ESV)

God makes no junk.

And after he created them, when they had blown it, he sent his Son Jesus to die for them.

And Jesus didn’t die for junk.

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

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Where Are the Monuments?
By Pastor Dan Quarillo
Burke County

Recently, I heard a well-known speaker address the matter of journaling. Admittedly, I struggled with taking the time to hear what he had to say, yet I must say I was truly challenged after reflecting on what he had to say. As I listened, I began to ponder this question: where are our monuments?

Across this great nation of ours, various monuments and memorials have been established. In the Black Hills of South Dakota lies Mt. Rushmore, a sixty-foot high granite sculpture depicting the Presidential faces of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln. All throughout Washington, D.C., a person can find numerous monuments and memorials. Many of the national buildings have Scripture permanently engraved on them, reminding us of the Biblical heritage that our country has. Various national leaders have recognized that our heritage could quickly be forgotten if we do not intentionally establish memorials as visible reminders.

A quick trip to the grocery store for just a few items will remind us all how quickly we are prone to forget! Tragically, we are equally prone to forgetting the things which God has done for us. Moses cautioned the Israelites when they were about to enter the prosperous land which God promised, “Then beware lest thou forget the LORD” (Deut. 6:9). Prosperity often results in our forgetting God. The Israelites were to annually observe the Passover as a memorial of God’s deliverance (Ex. 12:14). They set up a memorial of twelve stones to commemorate the crossing of the Jordan (Josh. 4:7). The Lord’s Supper is done in remembrance of Christ’s work on the cross (1 Cor. 11:25).

How will you remember the answers to prayer you have experienced? What are the things we will point our family to that commemorate God’s work? How are others directed to remember what God has done? We dare not rely upon our memory. Where are the visible monuments in your life?

Pastor Dan Quarillo is pastor Morganton Baptist Church. Check us out on our website www.morgantonbaptist.net or find us on Facebook and YouTube.
The Bridge Church

The Apostle Paul of Vietnam
By Pastor Tom Anglin
Mitchell County

I am so thrilled to welcome you to special services Sunday September 3rd at 10:30a and 6pm!
Paul AI is often referred to as "The Apostle Paul of Vietnam. " Former Buddhist monk and witch-doctor con-verted to a firebrand for Christ! He wishes to especially invite Vietnamese Veterans to attend. He will honor them and give them gifts during the morning service! He will give explanation why he honors Veterans everywhere he goes! You don't want to miss a minute of these two life changing services! Please help us spread the invitation to everyone!

ABOUT DR. PAUL AI
-- From Buddha to the Bible --

Rev. Dr. Paul AI was born into a strong Buddhist family in central Vietnam. At every young age, he was sent to pagoda (Buddhist school) to be a Buddhist monk. As he grew up, he realized there was no hope and no power in the doctrines of Buddhism, so he decided to study black magic and become a witch doctor. He served 3,366 gods, but became disappointed in the devil's power when a Christian festival came to his town in 1990. Paul was determined to stop the Christrians meetings with the power of his gods, but they were no match for the God of the missionaries, and Paul gave his life to the Lord. When he made his decision to follow Jesus, he was disowned by his family, relatives, and friends. He persevered, however, and went to Bible college to learn the Word of God. Just before the fall of Saigon in 1975, Paul became the first General Superintendent of the Assemblies of God in Vietnam.

Only a week after the Communists took over Saigon, Paul was put in prison for being a pastor. Over the next 25 years, he served a total of 10 years in prison, forced labor camps and re-education camps for preaching the Gospel and starting churches. Even in prison, Paul continued to share the Gospel and his testimony, and many people accepted Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. When they were released from the prison camps to return to their villages, these Christians shared their testimonies, people accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and new churches were started. The prison camps were the start of many churches in North Vietnam, which of course was not the outcome that the Communists had hoped for or had expected.

During the 25 years that Paul was in and out of prison, he met his wife, Ruth, and they had four beautiful daughters. A curse had been put on Paul after he became a Christian that he would never have a son. His fifth child, a son, showed Paul's family that God's power is stronger than the curse of the devil. As a result, over 300 of Paul's relatives came to know the Lord.

Woman Walks After Four Years Confined to Wheelchair

Christina Magazine article

For four years, Marie Cribbs' life was filled with pain. Wheelchair bound as a result of complications from diabetes, two bouts of breast cancer and osteoarthritis, she couldn't lift her arms or legs and deal with extreme pain every day. "She had chemotherapy and whenever the chemo left her system, her arthritis came back in a fury and left every joint inflamed," explained her husband, Bob, who served as her caregiver during this time. "It made it very hard for her to move, and because of that, her whole body degenerated, and it was impossible for her to walk."

That all changed in May when Marie, who had been unable to attend church regularly due to her condition, made a decision to go to a service at Magnolia Church in Port Neches, Texas, where Paul AI was speaking.

"I'm going to go," she told Bill. "I feel like something is going to happen." AI, founder of Vision Outreach International, is known as "the Apostle Paul of Vietnam." A former witch doctor, he came to Christ during the Vietnam War and spent 10 years in communist prisons for his faith. He now plants churches in South Asia from a base in Cambodia.

After a two-hour message on prayer, AI called up anyone who needed prayer and healing. When Bill rolled Marie past AI and his wife, Ruth, Marie felt "an immense burning" in her back. The couple then began to pray over her.

"Pastor Paul commanded all my pain and my legs to align with the Holy Spirit," Marie recalls. "Then Ruth extended her hand to me, beckoning her to stand up."

"I immediately, I stood up and started walking, " she says.

The Cribbs' daughter, Lolly, says her mother is "back to walking and jumping and running as if she was a teenager."

"Now, by the grace of God, I am healed. I will be a walking witness the rest of my life, " Marie says.

Bill says he's noticed other changes in his wife as well. "She used to wake up in the morning with pain in her face and her brow furrowed. Every night she's had a visitation by the Holy Spirit in her sleep. She wakes up, and her face is glowing."

—Gina Neelks

If we will work as a walk, our walk will work wonders in our world. See 1 John 2:6. http://bwcnc.org

Theo hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. Isaiah 9:3

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Why Don’t We Do Family Discipleship Anymore (part 2)

By Jason Koon
Burke County

This is part two of a series examining the importance of family discipleship, exploring some of the reasons that many seem to avoid this, and overcoming some of the obstacles to training our kids to live well as Disciples of Jesus.

Objection #1: We Don’t Have Time
Again, short answer: Yes, You Do!!! The key here is intentionality rather than addition. When I say we need to train our children up in the faith most of us have the idea that I’m saying we need to add more activity into an already busy day, but that may not be the case. Do you eat dinner? Do you do homework? Get up in the morning? Do bath time? Attach it to one of those things.

I remember several nights when my children were young, reading a bible story to them while they were in the bathrub. Maybe before dinner time, you sit down, say the blessing and take five minutes to read a few verses of Scripture together. Maybe you plug it into homework time; after math and reading are done, we have a few verses of Scripture we need to go over and a couple of questions we need to answer together. There are tons of ways to make discipleship apart of your daily life without adding more activity into an already packed day. Maybe you need to go to bed 10 minutes later or get up ten minutes earlier. We don’t have a problem doing this if we have sports practice, or if homework didn’t get finished the night before.

I’m going to resort to guilt tripping here – which I rarely do – but I’ll make an exception on this one. Is Jesus as important to you as sports or good grades? If you’re not willing to carve out five minutes in your day for Jesus and you are willing to do that for these other things. He’s not, plain and simple.

Objection #3: I Don’t Know Enough About the Bible
For some of us, this is probably the most legitimate objection. It can be intimidating to be responsible for the Biblical education of another person, when many of us feel weak in our own knowledge of the Scriptures. Fortunately, we live in the information age, and there is no reason that says that you and your children can’t learn together. It just might take spending a few dollars on some good Gospel-centered resources.

Get a good study bible to help with understanding more difficult passages of Scripture as well as the overarching message of God to humanity. My favorite is the ESV Study Bible, but the Christian Standard Bible and the Life Application Study bibles are good choices as well. There are bible dictionaries that contain a wealth of resource on just about every biblical topic you can imagine, and probably a few you’ve never dreamed of. And there are tons of good books out there for kids and adults that can help you as you grow together in your knowledge of the Scriptures. Whatever the reason, whatever the obstacle, the most important thing is that we are committed to the importance of raising our children to know and follow Jesus.

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

As we go back to school please let us focus on keeping the Lord in our hearts!

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God Still Heals!
By Pastor Ryan Bridge, Every Day

"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, [and] cast out devils." (Matt. 10:8)

This summer, Global Awakening’s ministry located in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, organized 150 young people from all over the world for a thirteen-day healing and prayer outreach in Campinas, Brazil. I was blessed, as the pastor at Plumtree Presbyterian Church, to go on the trip with my wife, Holly, our three sons, Jordan, Taylor and Mica, as well as five other young people, Jesse Jones, Jillian Young, Mackenzie Courey, Anna Grace and Aaron Tomlin.

In the first phase of the trip, we began each morning with worship, as well as teaching sessions on outreach, healing, and prayer. In the evenings, we would put our training into action. Global Awakening’s leaders, Randy Clark, Tom Jones, Elaine Cook and Kim Moss would speak in the evening services, and we were the interaction and ministry team. Could you picture it? ROUGE Church services, filled with hungry people ready to receive all the Lord had for them, salvation, physical and emotional healing? Plus, 150 young people activated to do the ministry time? It was amazing!

Each service was powerful and had huge responses to our invitation for salvation. After the salvation call, there was time for healing prayer. It was our time to step into activation. We made a line across the front of the church and stood with our Brazilian translators (Brazilian youth who went through the same training with us) and waited to see who God brought our way. The prayer lines stayed full as people, often not able to pay for doctor’s care, came for a desperate touch from the Lord. Holly prayed for a lady who came forward in response to a word of knowledge given for a ‘crushed right ankle’. She had broken her right ankle five years prior and had a plastic plate and multiple screws placed in her ankle. She was in constant pain even after the surgery. God touched her that night, and restored full mobility to her ankle and took away ALL pain (Praise Jesus!)

Aaron prayed for a lady who had been burned in a food industry accident. She had bad scarring on her face and fingers, as well as a scar on her beautiful brown skin. Aaron used his ear to listen, and prayed what the Lord put in his heart. As he was praying, the lady began rubbing her face where she had scaring. Aaron asked her through a translator, what was happening and why she was rubbing her face. She told him that she was having a tingling sensation and felt new skin growing. We rejoiced in what the Lord was doing. The next afternoon, she returned to the church to report the miraculous work of the Lord. She looked completely different! Her scar was almost completely gone! Where the skin had been stuck white, it was brown, almost a perfect match. It felt soft and taut, like new skin. We could hardly believe our eyes!

During the second phase of the trip, the 150 were divided into 15 ministry teams. We were sent out into the smaller churches in the community, fully activated to do every aspect of the ministry, even the preaching and teaching. It was wonderful to see young people stepping into these roles. During the day we walked the neighborhoods and visited homes to pray for the sick. In the afternoon there was teaching and in the evenings, preaching and ministry time, all conducted by the young people! It was beautiful. God continued to show Himself mightily on the behalf of those giving and receiving ministry. Many hearts were touched and many bodies restored. Praise His Name!

On one of our evangelistic outreaches, our small group was invited into a local home in response to our invitation for prayer. The very small house was home to 11 people, with four generations of family represented. We began by praying for the great grandma, who had three broken ribs, the end of a chronic neck pain, shortness of breath from years of smoking and dizziness when she walked. God healed all these health issues! This opened up their hearts to receive the Gospel of the true, living God. They ALL prayed to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior! Hallelujah!

The Great Commission was coming to life right in our midst! There were many other healing testimonies from our ‘Plumtree Group’, almost too many to remember by the end of each night. Total, with the entire Global Awakening group, there were 119 healings, 38 rededications, and 3,551 accounts of God’s healing touch during our time in Brazil!

Since being home in NC, we have stayed in activation mode, not wanting this fire to die out. We continue to pray for the sick. We have seen God do miracles right here in our own home church and even at places like Walmart. God is amazing and we give Him all the glory! We are excited to see what God wants to do here in Avery, Mitchell and surrounding counties.

I want to personally invite anyone who needs a physical or emotional touch from the Lord to come out to our monthly healing meetings at Plumtree Presbyterian Church. The healing services are on the 2nd Sunday of each month at 6:30 pm. Our next meeting is Sunday, September 10th. Come join us in expectation that God is the same today, yesterday, and forever, and in Brazil and in the USA. He wants to heal His people.

Plumtree Presbyterian Church is located in Avery County at 4527 Highway 19E in Plumtree, NC. Ryan and Holly Bridge can be reached at 828-765-6919. For more information, you can visit the church website at www.plumtreepres.com or email pastor@plumtreepres.com.

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Burke United Christian Ministries

New Location for Thrift Store
By David Burleson
Burke County

Many exciting opportunities are occurring at Burke United Christian Ministries (BUCM). Daily, we have the opportunity to provide food, clothes, and assistance to many in our community who need just a little extra help. It is a blessing to show Christ’s love to others as we help meet their needs.

One of the most exciting opportunities is the opening of our new clothing store. Our clothing store has been relocated to the opposite end of the Burke Mission Station where the Thrift Store was located. We are now able to expand not only our space but also our offerings for our shoppers. The previous clothing store has become the BUCM Clothing Closet specifically for our clients and the homeless.

The grand opening for the new clothing store was on Saturday, August 12 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The dedication ceremony was a huge success. A big thank you to my Pleasant Ridge Church family and others for singing songs, comments, and prayers throughout the dedication ceremony. The following made the day very special: Dr. Kevin Fredericks - Board Chair; Mrs. Rhonda Lee - Board Vice-Chair; Dr. Jim Smith; Keith Burkardt; Mr. Greg Riddle; Mr. Ladd Womans; Mrs. Julie Phillips; Ms. Brittany Davis, Ms. Willette Mcintosh, Mr. Tony Jaynes, and Mrs. Lavela Smith.

The move to the new store will not be possible without the help of our dedicated staff and volunteers. A very special thanks must go out to our Clothing Store Manager, Diane Bradshaw, and her husband, Billy without whose determination, hard work, vision, and loyal support we could not have been ready to open at this time. BUCM is also eternally grateful to David, Tony, and Cali Jaynes for their countless hours of dedicated service and financial support. Our new clothing store assistant, Dot Beams and her husband, DA also gave countless hours of time to our move with our volunteers Libby Cook, Linda and Terry Darcy, Carolyn Coffee, Brittany Davis, Deloras McNealy, and the Gibbs Chapel Youth. Appreciation goes to our good friends, Thomas and Steve, Ambrose Mountain Peeling has also assisted with our cleaning project. A big thank you must also go to the BUCM Board of Directors, Burke Charitable Properties, and Mr. Dale Barrier for supporting the expansion of the ministry of BUCM. We are most thankful for God’s guidance and provision. As God always does, He came through right on time with many extra volunteers throughout the World Changers have over 350 hours of service to BUCM. Thanks Pastor Mike Chandler and Dwight Winters for letting God use you to make this extra volunteer effort happen.

We are very proud of the progress we have made at BUCM and appreciative of the support we receive from our surrounding churches, donors, and volunteers. Our ministry could not occur without these wonderful groups.

With these new opportunities at BUCM, we need each of you even more. Please consider being part of our BUCM ministry in one or more of the following ways:
- Make BUCM Part of Your Annual Budget
- Be a Food Harvester
- Work in the Soup Kitchen
- Assist in the Food Pantry
- Donate Heavy Used Items for the Saved for You Clothing Store
- Volunteer in the Clothing Store or our Clothing Closet
- Donate Children’s Shoes or New Underwear
- Donate Food for the Food Pantry or Soup Kitchen
- Volunteer in the Office Area (Typing, Folding Newsletters, Answering Phones)
- Read with or tutor a Child After School
- Eat Lunch with a Client
- Work in the Firewood Ministry
- Transport Clients or Potential Clients to BUCM
- Place a Collection Barrel at your Church or Business
- Be Part of our Ministry of Presence (Just come have lunch with a client who needs someone to talk with, pour a glass of water or just make someone feel)

As summer progresses and children are home, the need for the BUCM Food Pantry increases. Our pantry is in continual need of non-perishable items. Some of our high need items are:
- Canned Meat, Macaroni and Cheese, Peanut Butter, Chicken Noodle Soup, Pasta, Pinto Beans, Canned Fruit, Jelly

In the world in which we live, it takes our entire community to meet the needs of our neighbors. Each of you are a vital part of our community and it is essential we work together to meet the needs of all our citizens who are in need. Please know that there are many ways we can partner together to assist others. Please know that we are very willing to come and tell the BUCM story at any church or organization. Just let us know a good time to do this.

Please remember to keep BUCM and me in your thoughts and prayers. There are many difficult decisions we are called on to make and through prayer we can continue to make the appropriate decisions for our ministry. Thank you again for making BUCM a wonderful, caring place for others.

David Burleson Director of Burke United Christian Ministries

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9th Annual MOUNTAIN GLORY FESTIVAL

Oct 14, 2017 - 9:30am - 6:00pm
Where Main Street Meets The Mountains
Marion, North Carolina

Marion, North Carolina celebrates the arrival of autumn in the Blue Ridge during their annual Mountain Glory Festival. For 34 years, beautiful downtown Marion has hosted this popular celebration on the 1st Saturday in October. This year, make plans to visit on October 14th between 9:30 AM and 6:00 PM.

Celebrate small-town living in the mountains. Visitors seeking original handcrafts will find plenty of choices shopping at local crafters, featuring locally made arts and crafts. Enjoy local food booths and the wide variety of live entertainment focusing on traditional Bluegrass and old-time mountain music.

Don’t miss the annual Mountain Glory Art Show inside the McDowell Arts Council. The quilt show is the gallery featured, October exhibit. The kids all have fun in the “Children’s Area” with hands-on activities and a well-stocked petting zoo.

To find additional area events, attractions, and lodging information, visit www.bluegreentrail.com or call toll-free (888-230-6111) to receive a free visitor guide and map. The festival is sponsored by the City of Marion. For festival information visit www.mountainfestival.com or call 828-652-2016.

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Walnut Grove Church

We’ve all done it. We’ve waded into a chilly pool or stream on a hot day in anticipation of refreshment. But then our toes hit the cold water and we think, “do I really want to do this?” Little by little we continue to question our total commitment as we slowly wade in (all the while looking over our shoulder to make sure someone doesn’t splash us or push us in.). Finally, we realize the tortures of the slow approach is too much to bear and we make the full plunge. Then we think, “why didn’t I do that from the beginning, this feels great!”

There’s a story in the Bible that reminds me of this summertime ritual in Ezekiel 4. There Ezekiel is led to the waters flowing from the Temple. First, he steps in up to his ankles, then downstream a bit he steps in up to his knees, further down he goes in up to his waist and finally the water is over his head. Don’t miss the picture here. The Spirit of the Lord is always inviting us to step into the waters (water in Scripture almost always is a picture of the Holy Spirit). Some of us will wade in up to our ankles and be content to stay there. That is, we are standing in Christ and believing in him. Others choose to go deeper, up to our knees. Our knees being a picture of prayer, we fall on them and pray for others.

Dive in! By Pastor Kurt Bonar
Avery County

Others go deeper yet, up to their waist. Our waist being a picture of the reproductive part of our body, these people share their faith and reproduce other Christians by actively witnessing to a lost world.

And finally, others just take the plunge allowing the Lord to have His will over their lives, totally surrendering to Him day by day and hour by hour.

Each level of commitment brings with it a level of refreshment, but as we have all learned at the pool, the greatest refreshment comes when we make a total commitment.

Where are you in your level of commitment? Are you a solid believer, not being tossed to and fro in your faith? Do you have a daily pattern of prayer for others? Is it a priority for you to share your faith? Have you placed the Lord in the throne of your life giving Him free reign to rule over every decision?

Here’s the special part. Jesus invites us to go all out for Him and He promises a level of refreshment that can only be maximized by taking the full plunge. But at the same time, He is the perfect gentleman, He will invite, but He will not force. It’s up to us.

My suggestion? Dive in, take the plunge! Selah (think about it)

Kurt Bonar is pastor of Walnut Grove Church

Lees-McRae President to Retire in May 2018
By Nina Mstandrea
Avery County

Banner Elk, N.C. — Lees-McRae President Barry M. Buxton announced that he will retire in May 2018 and that a search for his replacement has begun. Buxton has served as the president of Lees-McRae since June 1, 2010 and is the 15th president in the 116-year-history of the institution.

In announcing his retirement, Buxton expressed gratitude to Lees-McRae students, faculty, staff and the Board of Trustees. “I am humbled by your years at this sacred place, but the people of Lees-McRae have left me truly grateful and blessed,” he said.

Throughout his tenure, the college experienced enrollment growth, balanced operating budgets, expansion of curricular offerings, and saw its regional accreditation reaffirmed by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. Under Buxton’s leadership, the college broadened its educational reach with the addition of online programs that grew from 49 students to almost 300 students in four years.

The historic campus witnessed a physical transformation with construction of 30,000 square feet of additional student space, including the May School of Nursing and Health Sciences, the May Wildlife Rehabilitation Center and the Laurentian Technical Theatre and Design Studio. Buxton also oversaw the renovation and modernization of the intellectual center of campus — the college library — in the Dotti M. Shelton Learning Commons.

During Buxton’s eight and half years as president, Lees-McRae completed $7.5 million in additional physical improvements. Over the same period, the college net assets grew by 38 percent and institutional debt was reduced by 78 percent. Buxton returned the campus to its residential roots with more than 90 percent of Banner Elk students living in college facilities. He also established Lees-McRae as one of the nation’s only pet-friendly campuses and led the effort to be designated a Bicycle-Friendly University.

Buxton currently serves as president of the NCAA Division II athletics conference, Conference Carolinas, as well as on the executive committee of the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities.

A. Hope Williams, president of NCICU, summed up his service to Lees-McRae and the state saying, “Dr. Buxton cares deeply about students and their success, about the college and about all of higher education. His warmth, sincerity, energy, and creativity will be missed by the college community and by all his colleagues in higher education in North Carolina.”

In a diverse career spanning 35 years, he has been a teacher, researcher, publisher, editor and community leader. In 2016, Buxton received the prestigious Order of the Long Leaf Pine from former North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory. The award is one of the highest civilian-focused honors the governor of North Carolina can bestow.

Prior to Lees-McRae, Buxton served as Vice President for Special Projects at the Savannah College of Art and Design, where he was responsible for major gift solicitation, leadership development and foundation relations.

A native of Blowing Rock, North Carolina, Buxton has a long history of involvement with non-profit organizations in Appalachia. During the 1960s, he served as Executive Director of the 15-member Appalachian Consortium. Buxton holds two degrees from Appalachian State University, where he received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees.

“I am so proud of all we have accomplished, and I am inspired that there is more to achieve,” Buxton said. “I look forward to my time remaining at Lees-McRae, and will continue to work with faculty and staff to elevate everything that we do.”

Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina, Lees-McRae College is a private, four-year college offering diverse baccalaureate degrees, strong athletic programs and outstanding faculty. Field-specific career preparation and hands-on learning enhance the broad core curriculum. For more information, please visit www.lmc.edu or call 828.986.5241.

Nina Mstandrea is the content manager of Lees-McRae College

www.brecnews.com September 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 24
Delegation Attends Annual Electric Congress:

Mitchell County

A delegation from Mitchell County attended the 70th Annual 4-H Electric Congress July 11-13 at the University of North Carolina Charlotte. 135 4-H’ers, adult leaders and North Carolina Cooperative Extension agents from 47 counties attended the three-day event. Since 1947, Duke Energy and Dominion Energy have sponsored the annual congress to emphasize electrical energy concepts, conservation, and safe efficient use. Daniel and Luke Silver represented Mitchell County well at Electric Congress. They have worked hard to help others learn more about electricity in the past year.

Mitchell County 4-H’er’s Attend NC 4-H Congress:

This year’s 4-H Congress, held in Raleigh July 29-Aug. 1, attracted more than 500 young people and their adult leaders for activities including presentations on a variety of subjects, leadership and citizenship training, service opportunities, officer elections and more. Mitchell County 4-H’ers received honors during the recent State 4-H Congress.

Corbin Buchanan, 14, son of Travis and Misty Buchanan of Spruce Pine was an honored state presentation participant in the Small and Companion Animals category. Jesse-Kate Glenn, daughter of Darrin and Susan Glenn of Spruce Pine honorably placed 9th in the State Horse presentation category. Charlotte Hubbard, 11, daughter of Ray and Sharrri Hubbard of Burnsville won Bronze in the Poultry presentation category. Jesse and Josh Silver, 12, son of Jonathan and Amanda Silver of Spruce Pine won Silver with their team presentation in the Livestock and Dairy Production category. Also Luke Silver, 14, son of Jonathan and Amanda Silver of Spruce Pine won Gold in Beef Charrngill and received a $75.00 scholarship for his category win. Mitchell county 4-H is proud to have such talented youth participate in state presentations this year.

4-H Honor Club

Daniel Silver was inducted into the 4-H Honor Club, one of the highest honors a 4-H’er can achieve. Membership in the Honor Club is based on service to the 4-H program, leadership, moral standards, 4-H activities and project achievements. Less than one-half of one percent of North Carolina 4-H’ers are selected for membership each year.

4-H Congress, Day 2

This was a special day for Mitchell County as our own Daniel Silver gave his spotlight speech. Every outstanding 4-H State Officer gives a spotlight speech at 4-H Congress, and Daniel’s speech brought many to tears. He helped us realize what is truly important. That we should always be ourselves, and strive to be the best we can be in 4-H. He thanked his family for always supporting him and honored them with a plaque for helping him through his 4-H career.

Daniel has done so much for the NC State 4-H Council in the past year. Mitchell County 4-H would like to congratulate him on a wonderful job as our State 4-H Council Representative.

4-H Congress, Day 3 and Scholarship Winners:

On Monday Mitchell County 4-H’ers were honored at the Donor Luncheon. Congratulations to the following 4-H Scholarship recipients. Their accomplishments in 4-H combined with great academic success will surely serve them well as they further their education. Jounnea Glenn, 18, daughter of Darrin and Susan Glenn of Spruce Pine received the Robert and Helen Runion 4-H Scholarship in the amount of $1,000. Daniel Silver, 10, son of Jonathan and Amanda Silver of Spruce Pine received the John C. and Cathy H. McLan 4-H Scholarship Endowment for the Western District in the amount of $1,000, the Mitchell County 4-H Discovery Scholarship in the amount of $500, and the Robert and Helen Runion 4-H Scholarship in the amount of $1,000.

continued on page 27
TREASURES
By Joyce (Joy) Harwood Baldwin

When you leave this world below
Will you leave anything at all.
Have you taught your Children
On the master's sweet name to call.

Worldly treasures to my dad
They never meant a thing.
T'was worth more than any diamonds
In church to hear him sing.

We work our lives away at best
Providing food and clothes.
And every other thing they need
So much more only Heaven knows.

Then when it comes down to the end
Do they know about The Lord?
Gold and silver won't pay their way
At last to enter our Father's Abode.

Don't waste away the time you have
On earthly things that all decay.
Leave everlasting treasures
That cannot fade away.

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

When our family felt the call to minister through foster care, it was very much about accepting a child out of a broken world into ours. But we have learned that as we lived to make a difference in their lives, it has been their lives that have changed us. You see, you cannot bring brokenness into your home and not be broken by it.

In the midst of this has been the heart of the Gospel. We also were broken, helpless, and hurting. But Jesus went to extravagant lengths to enter our brokenness and be broken for us. Fostering is a practical reminder of this Gospel truth. It is a call to step out of your own story and wrap yourself in the brokenness of another and willingly be broken by it.

In the end everything changes - you change them, but perhaps more importantly, they change you. Make a difference foster/adopt a child. Contact McDowell County DSS 828-652-3353.
4-H AIRE Competition

Our own Jessy-Kate Glenn was an AIRE participant and had her interview on day 3 of the 4-H Congress. Jessy-Kate did a wonderful job as it was her first time participating. Jessy-Kate Glenn was a state alternate winner in the AIRE competition. AIRE – Application, Interview, Resume and Essay competition – is a four-step process by which youth are chosen to attend national 4-H events. As an alternate Jessy-Kate may have the opportunity to attend National Congress. Congratulations to Jessy-Kate on her success at this level of competition.

Please like us on Facebook to view pictures from all the 4-H Congress events https://www.facebook.com/Mitchell-County-4H.

Mitchell County 4-H's participated in the McDowell County Junior Livestock Show on August 5th. On Saturday, August 5th, Mitchell County 4-H’s participated in the 71st Annual McDowell County Junior Livestock Show Of the participants Colton Cox, 14, son of Eddie and Niki Cox of Spruce Pine and Jacob Honeycutt, 15, son of Dean and Pam Honeycutt of Spruce Pine showed beef cattle. Colten Cox received Grand and Reserve Champion Angus Heifer, Grand Champion Senior Showmanship, ornamental Exhibitor, and Grand Champion Black Hereford in the All Other Breeds Class. Jacob Honeycutt received Grand Champion Lambs in the All Other Breeds Class. Jacob was also a first time livestock showman, and did a wonderful job showing his heifer. Several of the Mitchell County Livestock club members came to support their showmen. Mitchell County 4-H is very proud of the hard work and dedication these two young men have shown in working with their livestock.

Good luck to both Colton and Jacob as well as the entire livestock club as we continue with the 2017 livestock show season. For those interested in learning more about becoming a Mitchell County 4-H livestock Club member please contact Kaley Brown at the (828) 685-4811 or email her at kaley_brown@mcc.edu.

4-H is North Carolina’s largest youth development organization, equipping more than 247,900 young people each year with the skills to succeed and improve the world around them. For more information about 4-H in Mitchell County please contact Kaley Brown, 4-H Extension Agent at kaley_brown@mcc.edu or Kim Slanick, 4-H Program Assistant, at kim_slanick@mcc.edu. Also by phone at (828) 685-4811.

And he that reapeth receiveth wages, andgathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. John 4:36

BEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH
Welcomes You to
Celebrate Recovery
Thursday’s at 7:00pm
Hope & Help from Addiction Through Christ

Drug Take-Back Event
Saturday, September 23
10am-2pm
The Prescription Pad of Burnsville
730 E Main Street

We will accept:
Prescriptions
Over the counter pills
Liquid medications
Vitamins
Pet medicine

We cannot accept:
Needles and sharps
汞 (thermometers)
Chemotherapy/radiation substances
Oxygen containers
Pressure-filled containers/inhalers

Drug Drop Box Locations:
Mitchell County Sheriff’s Office - 828-686-3982 (Mon.-Fri. 8am-7pm)
Spruce Pine Police Department - 828-686-9974 (Mon.-Fri. 8am-5pm)
Yancey County Sheriff’s Office - 828-682-2124 (24 hours/7 days a week)
Burnsville Town Hall (Mon.-Fri. 8:30am-4:30pm)

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Avery County Chamber - Sept 1-2 12th Annual Milk High Kite & Crafts Festival Beach Mountain, Sept 2 Beer & Wine Celebration, Old Hampton Store & Tavern, Linville, Sept 2-3 Gilmer County Historical Society, Historic BE School, Banner Elk, Sept 5-9 Avery County Fair, Fairgrounds, Newland, Sept 8-10 Autumn at Oz, Beech Mountain.

Greater Banner Elk Heritage Foundation — Sat. Sept. 2 — Downtown Banner Elk Walking Tour Sat Sept. 2 — Historic and Contemporary Crop Show for more info call 828-899-3634 or check BannerHouseMuseum.org or email BannerHouseMuseum@yahoo.com

Burke County

Burlie County Chamber - Changing Gears Changing Lives Charity Ride September 15, 2017
Join us for a law enforcement led ride through Catawba County to raise money for local children in foster care.
Save the Date! November 16, 2017
Foothills Higher Education Center
What is your haitian Olympic Sport or Team? This year's theme is World Games and can be any team or sport. Past, Present or Future! The Chamber will be Sport Sailing, so jump on board with your best theme and see if you can win the Gold, Silver or Bronze Medal.

Catawba River Baptist Association - Catawba River Baptist Association will be leading a mission trip to Cuba September 15-22. 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.
Are you ready to LoveLOUGH October 9-14.
LoveLOUGH is a week of missional service opportunities designed to engage CRBA churches in sharing Christ’s love in Burke County in a variety of practical ways. Churches can be involved in one of three kinds of projects:
1. Construction
2. Community Service
3. Evangelistic Outreach
For more information on how you and your church can be involved give us a call at 828-497-6137.

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist - Burke County - Everyone is welcome to the Friendly Town of Tumbling's Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church Social happening September 24th, at 12:30 p.m. For directions and more information, please contact Cindy at 870-510-8984.
Health Social - Sunday, September 10th, at 5:30 p.m. Please bring a plated-based (non-dairy / non-meat) dish along with copies of your recipe to share, if you would like! Come prepared to enjoy some great food and fun fellowship! For directions, please contact Cindy at 870-510-8984. The church may be dropped off anytime under our covered drive-through at the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C. Please label box/ bag with “God’s Closet.” Donations are greatly appreciated! For more information, please contact Janet at 828-244-3876. Like us on Facebook @ God’s Closet Morganton

Agoric International Hickory Lighthouse - Hickory Lighthouse meetings are the second Wednesday of each month.

McDowell County

Grace Community Church - New Prayer Line Launches in Marion, North Carolina - James 5:16 says “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” A. J. Gordon, “You can do more than pray after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.” Churches in McDowell County are praying and agree with A. J. Gordon. That’s why they have launched 650-PRAY, a prayer line where people can call anytime, leave a message and know that churches in McDowell County will be praying for them. Here’s how it works. The prayer line (650-PRAY) is hosted by Freedom Life Ministries (freedomlifeministries.org). Each day prayer requests will be sent to 25 pertinent churches that will continually pray for these requests to prayer warriors in their churches who will pray for the effect. It’s knowing that your prayer request is covered daily by hundreds of people across McDowell County. 650-PRAY will begin on September 1. Between now and then, please ask your pastor if your church is involved. If not, encourage your leaders to reach out and get on board. For more information, please call Robin at (838) 724-9599. — Contact: Chris Allison Cell Phone: 828-559-7312 E-mail: chris@rockesleighdesign.com

Chieflinch Baptist Church - We will be having our “Homecoming Day” at Chieflinch Baptist Church on Sunday, September 10th at 11:00. We look forward each year to this time when we welcome former members and good friends back to visit. We hope you will join us for the time of worship and fellowship as we celebrate our 102nd year.

First Baptist Church of Marion - Mark Your Calendar! 2nd Annual McDowell County Community Unity Service Sunday, September 24, 1:00 p.m. East McDowell Middle School Auditorium Led by community leaders and pastors from across McDowell County. Special music by Old Fort Community Choir and others. Various speakers, including Rev. Danny Hampon, director of Freedom Life Ministry. Information here with various community ministries and agencies to follow the service. Central focus of the event will be the opioid epidemic facing our county and country. “Ways to turn an audience into an army to help our neighbors in need.”

Glenwood Baptist Church - McDowell County 2nd Annual Sportsman Banquet Sept 10 Steve Rockey will speak. He is a Master Sportman and Pro-Staffer. Music will be Heart Cry. Tickets: $10.00 and includes entry in grand prize give away (must be there to win), a meal, door prizes, access to Vendor booths and a Silent Auction. Grand prizes giveaways are Fully Equipped Muzzle Loader, Fully Equipped Crossbow, 2 Youth Guns. Adult Shriners and an Adult Shriners fleece. September 30, 5:30 pm Glenwood Baptist Church at 155 Glenwood Baptist Church Rd, Marion, NC for tickets or more info call 828-738-4995 or visit www.gwbaptist-church.org

Historic Marion Tailgate Market is open on Tuesday from 3 to 6 pm and Saturday from 9 am to 12 pm in downtown Marion under the Tailgate Market shelter.

Old Time Presbyterian at 144 Mini Street has a free community dinner and musical entertainment every fourth Saturday from January through October. Meal is from 5:30-6:30 And Music is 6:30-7:30.

Zion Hill Baptist Church - 1036 Zion Hill Rd, Marion Pre-Labor Day Jubilee Thursday, August 31st — Sunday, September 3rd. 7:00 pm except Sat 4:00pm. Spiritual Filled Preaching and Inspiring Music Dr. Joe Arthur and Pastor Neil Walker. Music by the McKinseys, the Primitive Quartet, the Roxie's, the Edwards Family and New Vision. For more info call 828-738-0602.

Mitchell County

All Saints of America Orthodox — On Saturdays beginning in June, All Saints of America Orthodox Mission will be having Divine Liturgy at the meeting hall located at Trinity Episcopal Church, 15 Hemlock Ave, Spuce Pine, NC 28777. The Liturgy will be served weekly on Saturdays at 11:00 AM. Fr. Steve Web, the priest appointed to serve the new mission, will be officiating. While All Saints of America Orthodox Mission is a part of the Russian Orthodox Church, all services are performed in the English language. Afterwards, all are invited to a picnic at 1008 Deer Park Lake Rd, Spuce Pine, NC.

Bear Creek Baptist Church - Ledger - The Hisston Girls will be performing at Bear Creek for the 5th Sunday night singing on Oct 28th at 6:00pm
This is a Christ and Biblical Based Program giving hope and help for men, women and families suffering from addiction. Any question contact Josh Wise @ 315-0061.
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 in Asheville is sponsoring a home fellowship and Bible Study in Spruce Pine. The fellowship is held the first Thursday evenings at 7:00pm at 70 Sen Dr. (Street name off Brush Creek Rd). Call John Jackson 760-793-3799 for information and directions. And bring your Bible.

Barry Chapel Baptist Church - “Cry Out America” Prayer Day — 9/11 Monday, September 11, 2017, 6:30 pm. This is not just another meeting...another “to do” on your agenda. Please come. Let’s come together and pray...brothers and sisters in CHRIST...for our town and county, for North Carolina, and for the United States of America. Joel 1:14...this is the word of THE LORD.

This is a call to prayer from the National Day of Prayer Task Force which is a nationwide call for prayer!

Support Group For Caregivers Of Those With Memory Loss To Hold Meetings: The First Friday Of Each Month From 1-3PM - Canton - Canton United Methodist Church is pleased to announce the creation of a new 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, 225 Hospital Dr. in Spruce Pine from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. High Country Caregiver Foundations welcomes and encourages all caregivers to attend.

Families 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 held on the first Friday of each month will offer refreshments and fellowship.
There will be opportunities for grief counseling, safety tips, trade information, and grief and guilt support to others in the same situation.

For further information about the group and the meeting please contact Suzanne Russell (at) 714-614-5867 or Janet Ouszt at johnjoustz@yahoo.com

Hospice of the Blue Ridge - Cruz-In for Hospice — Car Show & Swap Meet — September 9th at 9:00 to 4:00 Donation Entry Fee — Downtown Bakersville, NC Next to Fire Dept. Classic, Muscle, Sports & Custom Cars, Trucks and Motorcycles — Prizes-Jams-Basket-Food & Drinks — Local Crafts.

Mitchell County Chamber - 25th Annual Overmountain Victory Celebration.
September 14, 2017 At the Museum of North Carolina Minerals Migrating 331 on the Blue Ridge Parkway

Scheduled of Events
School Days From 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 14 and Friday, Sept. 15. (Located in the main Lobby, Free admission to the Museum. Reservations are required. Contact Ranger Faison at 828-348-5319)
Encampment Open to the Public From 5:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 16. Re-enactors will demonstrate crafts and skills of the Revolutionary War period throughout the day.

Women Seeking God Freedom Retreat “Inviting ladies of all ages, to join us for our 5th annual Freedom Retreat at High Pastures Retreat Center in Burnsville, NC on October 6th-7th. Our theme this year is becoming women who “Let Go and Trust God”. If you often find yourself trying to take control of people and situations instead of trusting God has them on course with fear and worry, this year is for you! We want to become women with deep roots planted by the living water, that don’t fear or worry but remain calm and trust in God even in the seasons of doubt as Jeremiah 17:7-8 states.”

You will hear testimonies from local women Lacey Cannon, Kim Hobar, Jordan Daily and Shelley Grindstaff who are going to let God do great work in our lives. Shelley Grindstaff. She has a heart to see the body of Christ joined together in worship and broken women find freedom in the healing love of Christ and God’s word.
It begins at 5:30 on Friday October 6th with dinner at High Pastures followed by worship and speaker from 6:45-9. Saturday, it begins at 8am with breakfast followed by worship and speakers from 9am – pm with lunch being served at 12. Cost is $55 for room and 3 meals. Staying encouraged is you have experienced any circles from distractions but there is option of conference only for $5 if you cannot stay for the whole conference. Meals can be purchased separately at will. Registration and deposit for room and meals is needed by Sept 25th. Space is limited. Registration can be picked up and dropped off at Figius UMC in Burnsville or contact Shelley Grindstaff at grindstaff@email.com or to receive by email or mail with questions call 268-8564. Also look up Yancey Women Seeking God on Facebook.

Shelley and her husband have been serving together in ministry for 24 years. She has led women’s ministry called Mary Ministries for 16 years at the various churches she has served at in the area. Shelley has a passion to see women find freedom in the healing love of Christ and God’s word.

Weaverville Wellness Fair September 23, 2017, 8:30am to 12pm Weaverville United Methodist Church 45 N. Main Street FREE HEALTH SCREENINGS Mission Hospital Weaverville Fire Department Woodfin YMCA Foot Rx Asheville Project Lungs Project C.A.R.E. Physik Legal Services YMACA of Western NC Senior Center Weaverville Police Department Weaverville Yoga Therapy Wellness Exercise Hopscotch Project Meals on Wheels Mobile Municipality Weaverville Police Department Buncombe County Sheriff’s Office The Vineyard NC Cooperative Extension Jenny To The Roof The Office of Weaverville Fire The Eye Doctor Certified Optic Eye Care Radiation Therapy Associates of WCU Publix Pharmacy Maureen McDonnell, RN/Nutritionist Cheswic Weaverville United Methodist Church Ashville Heart CPR, LLC Brian Center of Weaverville EXHIBITORS INCLUDE: WELLNESS PRESENTATIONS: 9:30am ‘Gentle Yoga’ (with chairs) with Rhonda Grindstaff 10:30am ‘Chair aerobics’ with Joyce Sullivan 9:30am ‘Meet The Health House Practitioner’ Ann Peterson, L.Ac. (Neuroacupuncture/Herblist/Linda Letourneau, OTR/L (Occupational Therapy and Eldercare) Deborah Schultz, (Felis Master) 11:00am Only CPR — John Rowe, Asheville Heart CPR, LLC 11:40am ‘Strong Yoga’ (a sample of Ashtanga & Yoga Iyabou) Jonathan Harrah & Raundi Jazelle-Weaverville Yoga

Parkway Playhouse—Jeff Messer and Graham Livingston play rival County Cub Directors fighting for the summer tournament cup in Parkway Playhouse’s production of Little Shop of Horrors. The show runs Thursday, Sept. 21 – Saturday, Sept 23 – Tuesday, Sept 26 at 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Sept. 21 – Saturday, Sept 23 – Tuesday, Sept 26 2nd-16th. Tickets are available at www.parkwayplayhouse.com or by calling 828-682-4285.

Over the next several months, the group of “over 50” reading blues will be starting in sowing with audiences of all ages in our community. For more information about the Parkway Playhouse or how to bring them to your organization, please visit www.parkwayplayhouse.com or call 828-682-4235.

September 2017 FREE Classes at the Mayland Small Center: Business: Introduction to Social Media Marketing (2.5 Hours) 9/5, 6:30-8:00 p.m. Mitchell Which Social Media Site is Best for my Business? (2.5 Hours) 9/7, TH, 5:30-8:00 p.m. Mitchell Wine One: How to Start & Finance a Small Business (3 Hours) 9/11, M, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Mitchell Contact Your Customers by Telling Your Story (2 Hours) 9/13, W, 5:30-7:30 p.m. TRAC Art Resource Center, Spruce Pine How to Write: How to Write a Business Plan (3 Hours) 9/18, M, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Mitchell Small Business Wrap Up (2 Hours) 9/19, T, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Yancey Class Three: Posting, Tweeting, and Blogging to Build Sales (2.5 Hours) 9/19, T, 5:30-8:00 p.m. Mitchell Essentials: Advertising, Fliers and Ads (3 Hours) 9/21, TH, 5:30-8:00 p.m. Newland Class Four: Social Media Management Strategies for Business (2.5 Hours) 9/21, W, 5:30-8:00 p.m. Mitchell CAMAC: Marketing your Business (3 Hours) 9/25, 5:30-8:00 p.m. Mitchell Eby, eBay, Amazon: Best Online Sales Platforms for Artists (2 Hours) 9/27, W, 5:30-7:30 p.m. TRAC Art Resource Center, Spruce Pine

To learn more or register for a class, contact Allen Cook at the Mayland Small Business Center today. Call (828) 666-1291 or email acook@mayland.edu. Get your business going and growing!

Yancey County
Cavalry Chapel Of Asheville – Spic Pine – Calvary Church Chapel in Asheville is sponsored a home fellow and Bible Study in Spruce Pine. The fellowship is held on Thursday evenings at 7:00pm at 79 Seaside Dr. (Exit area— of Brush Creek Rd.) As we study the Gospel of John currently. Call John Jackson 706-703-7700 for information and directions. And bring your Bible.

Carolina Mountain Literary Festival September 7-9, 2017, Burnsville, NC. Twenty-five free author readings, free concert. Registration is required for Saturday keynote with James Reasoner, Jr. Banquet, three writing workshops, situated book making, workshop. cmlif.org

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 Yance County Senior Center at 228-682-6011.

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

Regional Artist Project Grant Workshops This Month: The Regional Artist Project Grant (RAPG) deadline is October 13, 2017. Artists seeking to apply are encouraged to attend one of the FREE grant-writing workshops. The first workshop will be held on August 24 at 2pm in the Gunnjle Building (102 W. Main Street). The second is scheduled for August 30 at the Arts Resource Center in Spruce Pine (2nd floor, 269 Oak Avenue). The workshops will last approximately one hour. Grant requirements will be discussed and any individual grant ideas evaluated. Toe River Arts, in collaboration with Avery, Buncombe and Mitchell counties, and the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Cultural and Natural Resources Department, provides funding through RAPG for projects (in all art genres) that enhance an artist’s career; the workshops are highly recommended. Registration is required. Please call 828-682-7215

Women’s Prayer Breakfast: If you would like to join a group of women who are dedicated to praying, learning about God’s will, and fellowship, please come in for breakfast at DT’s in Spruce Pine. We will be ending by 10:00am. Open for all. For more information call Barbara Farrell at 828-487-3641 or email barbara@bcnews.com

www.bcnews.com September 2017 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 29
The Power of Fragrance
By Marlene Toulk
Burke County

Slowly my daughter opened the file folder, swerving at the dusty dust drifting upward into the morning sunlight. Papers littered with long ago importance slipped off her lap. Tattered bits of memories teased the edges of her thoughts as sounds of long ago laughter bubbled somewhere near her heart. The years stretched behind her with its faint traces of friendships, shared joys and hidden frustrations. Grade and grins traced the pathways of her mind as she traveled long forgotten paths. With a simple whiff, we often are transported instantly to the exact same emotions and reactions that may have surged within us a decade ago.

The next time you pop a couple of almonds in your mouth, think of a twin set of brain structures that are named after the almond. They are tiny components whose name comes from the Greek word meaning simun. They are called the amygdala. They help us to recall the emotions associated with events. These small segments of the brain’s memory system empowered our daughter to recall with lightning clarity the memories of recent past and to relive the emotions associated with those memories.

In an online article from NBC News, an expert confirms that smell is connected to our memories. “Smells do bring back memories,” says Dr. Ken Heilman, James E. Rooks Jr. Distinguished Professor Neurology and Health Psychology at the University of Florida and a member of AAH. “Smell goes into the emotional parts of the brain and the memory parts, whereas words go into thinking parts of the brain.”

The article goes on to quote him as saying, “When you smell things you remember your emotions ... it’s very, very true.”

http://articles.mercola.com/sites/articles/archive/2015/08/06/smells-trigger-memories.aspx

How infinitely wise our Creator is to design us with the sense of smell, connect it to our emotional memories and thus bask the experience of smell with the weight of spiritual significance! We understand the power of a memory of fragrance to bring pleasure, recall joyous times and attach as emotion for a lifetime. The following verse uses the word picture of fragrance to explain its spiritual significance.

Just as a new baby exudes sweetness and love with his or her newborn smell, so God considers us as newborn babies in Christ, a sweet reminder of His Son and the mystery and majesty of the spiritual new birth. Upon accepting Him as Savior, we immediately desire the “sweet smell of the word.” [2 Peter 2:2] And all around are sisters and brothers who catch a whiff as they make the new life.

2 Corinthians 2:15 says, “For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish.”

When we belong to God, we become a sweet savour of Christ, waking the fragrance of His love and longing for all to come to Him and find rest for their souls. Just as warm cinnamon buns fresh from the oven create a longing to taste one, so we, as Christians, can create that same longing as we allow the sweet fragrance of His love to work in us and into the direct path of those around us. Practically speaking, Philippians 4:18 and Proverbs 27:9 advise us to send the sweet-smelling gifts of the fragrance of Christ into the hearts of those around us. It is through the:

- 1. gentle everyday gifts of meeting needs and the
- 2. sweet counsel of a friend that is willing to listen and to enter into a conversation designed to heal and to help.

My daughter found what she was looking for in that tattered file folder. However, the memories lingered, following her gently throughout the day, and they beckoned her calls of conversation as she remembered her times of shared conversation in the good times of youth. Much like these memories, the fragrance of our Christianity lingers after we leave the presence of others, perhaps prompting them to further talk about the sweet fragrance of Jesus and His love. The next time you immerse yourself in the fragrance of someone’s memories that bring a smile, remember that a life of pure devotion to Christ can bring a sweet fragrance that else of these whose lives are desperate for a gentle reminder of God’s all-encompassing love for them.

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

Unity in God’s Work
By Marcus Benfield
Mitchell County

Hello everyone, I trust you are happy in the Lord as we begin to anticipate the beautiful Fall colors here in Western North Carolina. Our area will see a lot of travel yet for the next several weeks as many come to look at the changing leaves. People will come from all around from all walks of life, however they will be unified in one fact, they all want to see the beautiful colors.

That is the subject I want to deal with this month (Unity). God gets glory when His people unite as we experienced on August 17, 2017 at our Back to School Bash where 10 Churches and 13 business came together from all across our community of faith and saw God get the glory as we fed, witnessed to, offered fun & games, Christian music, as well as school supplies to over 350 people. How? Because of Unity.

By way of introduction let me say, when we and/or our friends are facing trials we appreciate those who pray for us.

Before Jesus went to the cross, He prayed for every person who would be saved by Him.

John 17:20-21 - “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

Please notice that Jesus prayed for the unity of those who would trust Him! This is a unity of every truly born again Christian. This unity is to be a testimony to those who do not know Christ as Savior.

Psalm 133:1 enters the importance and beauty of this kind of Godly unity.

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”

Looking at other portions of Scripture, we can find some of the ways there should be unity among true believers.

I. UNITY OF PERSONALITY - CHILDREN OF GOD - John 1:12

Very often we say, “He’s just like his father,” or “She’s just like her mother.” We tend to have personality traits similar to the personality traits found in our parents.

According to John 1:12, a person who is saved is a child of God.

The moment a person is saved the Holy Spirit does a work in his life and he is changed. John 3:1-8. II Corinthians 5:17

As children of God, we should now all demonstrate some of the personality characteristics of our Heavenly Father.

God is forgiving. We are to forgive.

God cares about the physical well-being of others. We should care about the physical well-being of others.

God is holy. We should strive for holiness in our own lives. I Peter 1:15-16

II. UNITY OF PURPOSE - AMOS 5:6 & Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

We cannot walk together in unity unless we are in agreement. We must agree on the purpose of our lives. I believe every one of us should have a three-fold purpose for living. If all Christians have these purposes, we will be unified!

1. To Love and Obey God - Matthew 22:37
3. To Win Souls to Faith in Christ - Matthew 28:19-20, I. Peter 3:15, Mark 16:15


Paul prayed that the Ephesians would understand the power that is at work inside of them (Ephesians 1:19-23). He also prayed that the Holy Spirit would strengthen them within.

Later, he commanded us to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). There will be unity as the Holy Spirit controls all who are saved!


When the church unites in prayer, God does wonderful things!

In conclusion let me say: I truly believe God desires unity in the Church and in the lives of His people. All Churches who preach the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ are a part of the Church and we should strive to work together to evangelize our county for the Glory of God!

I also want to say a Heartfelt Thank you to the Following Churches and Businesses who came together in unity to make this day a Great Success!!!

The following churches from across 3 counties were directly involved with our event:

Crab Orchard FWB, Spruce Pine First Baptist, Spruce Pine Methodist, Alta
pass Baptist, Liberty Hill Baptist, Bear Creek Baptist, The Bridge Church, Berry Chapel Baptist, Lilly Branch Baptist, and S便利 Creek Baptist.

The following Businesses also gave as much needed help and support:

Blue Ridge Christian News, Fun Time Inflatables, Pitrun Signs, Stamney’s, Lay potato chip, Little Debbie snack cakes, Valley, WTKY-WTOE, Mayland Community College, Celebrate Recovery, Mountain Community Health, Mitchell County Health Department, and Shoes for Sharing.

So, you see precious readers, if we come together in unity God can do great things! Let us continue to work together and take our communities back from the destruction that Satan has brought about through drugs, alcohol, sexual perversion as well as a host of other things. If we stand as The Church, the church Jesus referred to as “My Church”, Then the gates of Hell cannot prevail against it!

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.
North Carolinians cannot conceive of a scenario where they could be fired for misconduct or lying on their application forms and then get their jobs back. However, the Internal Revenue Service has made a practice of just this and, for the second time, has been caught by the IRS watchdog.

A recent report from the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA) found that 200 of the 3,000 employees that were hired to work at the IRS from January 2015 to March 2016 were originally hired for substantiated performance or conduct issues, including willfully failing to file taxes. While working for the government agency responsible for collecting taxes.

In response, I have reintroduced the Strengthening Integrity in the IRS Workforce Act of 2017. This bill, S. 1542, would bar the IRS Commissioner from removing employees separated from the agency due to such issues. The rampant abuse at the IRS has continued and thrived for far too long, and the time to put a stop to these abhorrent practices is now.

The American people are sick and tired of Washington at its worst. We have Americans paying the salaries of IRS workers who have repeatedly cheated the very government they took an oath to serve, and a Commissioner who won’t hold them accountable. I’ve had enough, and I know you have too.

This month, the Senate Democrats ceased their blockade of the President’s key staff, allowing more than seventy nominees to move through the Senate. More individuals were confirmed to important posts across the federal government in one afternoon than in the previous six months combined. Hopefully this is a sign of things to come so that we can let experienced individuals get to work in critical positions to serve the American people.

I was proud to have led hearings for a few of these individuals: David O’Brien of Iowa, the new Under Secretary of Intelligence and Analysis for the Department of Homeland Security, and Susan Gordon of Virginia, the new Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence. These dedicated public servants have spent their lives working to protect our country, and I’m thankful for their willingness to serve our country yet again.

I am also humbled to see several former staff members go on to important positions throughout the administration. I am grateful for their work on behalf of North Carolinians, and I know they’ll bring the same dedication to all of the Americans they now serve.

The astounding level of obstruction in the Senate has come to a bitter end, and I am encouraged to see Senators working together for the benefit of the American people. There are still many nominees that have been considered by their respective committees but have yet to be confirmed. When Congress returns, we should pick up where we left off.

Since 2007, the National Human Trafficking Hotline has received 1,700 phone calls and logged nearly 900 cases regarding human trafficking in our state. This ranks North Carolina in the top ten most trafficked states in the nation. Even more cases go unreported, making this lucrative criminal activity a difficult one to control and prosecute. Our state can do better. In this spirit and with a commitment to curbing a damaging cycle of servitude, danger, and violence endured by the victims, the General Assembly passed Senate Bill 546 which deals a blow to the criminal and abhorrent activity of human trafficking. Behind escort services, the second highest prevalence of human trafficking is found in the massage and bodywork industry. While many massages and bodywork establishments are reputable, some operate as a front for human trafficking.

Senate Bill 546 — Strengthen Human Trafficking Laws/Sudies, sponsored by Senators Riddleman, Daniel, and Brock, combats this illicit trade, through the following:

- Establishes standards for and requires licensure of establishments providing massage and bodywork therapy services through regulation by the N.C. Board of Massage and Bodywork Therapy.
- Requires massage and bodywork therapists to obtain a statewide privilege license.
- Makes it a Class I misdemeanor to employ anyone to provide massage and bodywork therapy services to the public who is not licensed to provide such services and is not exempt from licensure requirements.
- Increases the felony level for human trafficking. Now, adult trafficking is a Class C felony and child trafficking is a Class B1 felony.
- Directs the Department of Health and Human Services to study the feasibility of providing human trafficking training to health care providers, emergency medical providers, and relevant first responders. Not subject to regulations are on-site massage performed at the customer’s location; establishments within a hospital, nursing home, or similar facility licensed by DHHS; massage and bodywork therapy provided by a sole practitioner; student clinics operated by a Board-approved school, or massage and bodywork therapy programs offered by accredited community colleges, colleges, or universities, and chiropractic or physician’s offices in which massage and bodywork therapy is provided only by a massage and bodywork therapist licensed in North Carolina.

This bill provides law enforcement, as well as the massage and bodywork therapy’s regulatory and licensing board with the necessary tools to stop the crime of trafficking at its source, before it can even begin.

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.
The destruction of monuments and other objects of remembrance throughout history did not erase the history they represented.

- In 1944, Nazi Germany destroyed numerous buildings, castles and parks in Poland.
- From 1959 to 1964, Nikita Khrushchev closed and/or destroyed more than 10,000 mostly-rural churches as part of his anti-religious campaign in the Soviet Union.
- In 2001, the Taliban destroyed 6th century Buddhist statues they declared to be "heretical idols."
- ISIS has destroyed countless historical monuments and artifacts. Their acts have been referred to as a "cultural cleansing."

We are Americans. We preserve our past and our heritage so we may learn from our successes and our failures. Destruction of monuments dedicated to historical figures and heroes of our past will not erase the history they represent. In fact, their destruction will only divide us further.

Today, the target of cultural cleansing is Civil War and Confederate monuments. If you support destruction of monuments to that part of our shared history, who is to say monuments to a part of history you want to protect won’t be a target tomorrow?

Destruction of monuments is a slippery slope, indeed.

Hundreds of thousands of Americans died during the U.S. Civil War. Monuments and statues across our state commemorate the sacrifice of tens of thousands of North Carolinians who died during the war — and the families who sacrificed with them.

In 2015, I voted in favor of a bill that protects all monuments across our state equally from destruction and removal. I stand by that vote, and I will not vote to lessen the protection of monuments should the occasion arise.

If you were to dedicate your time and energy to erecting a monument today, would you want future generations to tear it down in a fit of short-sighted rage? No, you dedicated your time and energy to that purpose because you wanted future generations to remember something significant.

Monuments that our forbearers built should remain so we and future generations may learn from our past.

Without destruction of property against monuments dedicated to our past and the general awareness and violence that surrounded acts of the past week cannot be tolerated. I support the Durham County sheriff’s decision to charge those involved in the destruction of a monument in Durham on Monday.

Gov. Roy Cooper said this week that monuments should come down, and the history they represent belongs in museums and textbooks. If he got his way, removal of that history from textbooks and museums would be next.

You cannot rewrite our history, Gov. Cooper. I will not be party to any attempt to do so.

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Allen’s Offerings

Yesterday and Today

By Allen Buchanan
Mitchell County

The other day I drove my dad to The Produce Stand at Grassy Creek. I sat in the van while dad and others shopped in the pouring rain. In front of me was a large bin overflowing with fresh peaches. They were simply beautiful and inviting. I thought surely Dad wouldn’t overlook them. He didn’t and on the way home I asked him for one. I couldn’t remember the last time I sunk my teeth into a fresh peach.

As I was eating the peach, I didn’t take the time to peel it. Once I split it open and removed the seed, it was all mine. Biting into it, sweet juices ran out of the corners of my mouth and off my chin. I had a thought flood my mind from my youth. One summer, my Uncle Dewitt Buchanan had gone to SC and gotten a pickup load of peaches. I happened to be at his house on the day he was going to sell them. In the 80’s, salesmen would go door-to-door. My cousins, Brooks and Keith, helped their father and I got to ride along.

Selling peaches door-to-door may have been a job for some families, or it could have been considered a ministry even though money was involved. It gave many people the opportunity to have fresh fruit they may not be able to have otherwise.

And produce wasn’t the only product that a salesman might deliver to your door. Encyclopedia, Bible, cookware, vacuum cleaners and religion were all sold in that fashion. Yes, religion came into our communities by way of door-to-door salesmen who shared false doctrines. In some states, this still occurs. I’ve often heard discussions as to why those determined people were eager to go door-to-door. Yet most Christians do not visit their neighbors to share Jesus.

Now stop for a moment and consider how times have changed. Technology has brought much more into our homes. Nearly every item you once had to go to a store to purchase can be bought online. We are no longer visited by door-to-door salesmen who may also bring one false doctrine. Our minds are challenged constantly by every religion known to man. Whether it reaches us by way of radio, television, computer, smartphone or video game, as Christians we’ve got to know what’s right and wrong. As Ephesians 4:13 (KJV) reminds us:

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and for speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. Romans 16:17-18 KJV

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

Shoes for Sharing

Selfless Ministry

By Lois Duncan
Tunsey County

I had convinced myself that I was too old to do anything for the Lord, and was praying that somehow I could tell young people to “go and do” while they could. And, that there is so much work to be done for the Lord, souls that need to be saved.

It was with these prayers that “Shoes for Sharing” was born.

One day at work I was out on the playground with the kids. It was a beautiful fall day and the children were running and playing. Right in front of me were two little boys. I noticed that the sole of one of the shoes of the first little boy was all torn off and his shoes were way too long. The side was out of the other little boy’s shoe and he could not keep them on his feet. It was at this point that God spoke to me and said, “See, you aren’t too old to do something. These kids need shoes and so do many more just like them. This is to be your ministry.”

Decades 3-5-6 says, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” I had never done anything like this before and had no idea how to start. I stood up on Sunday morning and told my church what God had called me to do. Before the day was over, God had given me the name for the ministry, shoes, money for shoes, and a shoe closet. At this point I could say, He was directing my path.

Over the past two and a half years I have been able to give away countless pairs of shoes to children ranging from infants to teenagers. One of the greatest blessings I receive is seeing the reaction of joy and excitement when a child receives a pair of shoes. They are so happy. It is such a joy to see a young child who has received a pair of shoes stomp around, especially those that have received shoes that light up.

I have shared this ministry and have been able to distribute shoes through different organizations such as social services, school systems, and churches. No matter the size or type of shoes needed, God has always made a way for me to provide them. I was overjoyed to be able to give away 103 pairs of shoes at the event sponsored by the Blue Ridge Christian News and local churches. Philippians 4:19 says, “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” He has been faithful in providing for every need for this ministry.

If you know of a need for shoes, please contact me. Please pray for this ministry that it can be used for the furtherance of His Kingdom.

Lois Duncan is a member of Balens Creek Baptist Church. You can contact her at (828) 284-2213 or lduncan1104@gmail.com.

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The Name Of Jesus Is One Of The Greatest Names In The World!

By Timothy Eller
Adair County

His name was actually not given to him by his mother and father. His name was given to him by an angel.

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.
31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

The angel stated that his name would be called Jesus.

Luke 2:21
21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Isaiah 9:6: 6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

His name is said to mean Jehovah has become our salvation or deliverer. He was also known as Emmanuel being translated "God with us" (Matthew 1:23).

Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

So my question, I leave with You, who was this Jesus?

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.
The Inspiring Word

Signs
Pst Terry Cheek Th.D.
McDowell County

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

Since our last BRCN was published there been many things take place internationally, nationally, regionally and even locally. These continue to affect our lives and bring concern into our homes. The crisis and concern brought into our lives is the subject of our article this month. With a topic, this broad theme is no way to cover it all in one article. We will begin to look at a crisis and concern this month and continue as necessary to provide hope, encouragement and strength from God’s word to your life and mine.

Probable the most intense moment at the beginning of August would arguably be America’s standoff with North Korea. Anyone having real knowledge of world events knows that even though North Korea is very small and very poor they are also controlled by a very unstable dictator Kim Jong Un. Our current focus has been turned to NK’s ability to deliver a Nuclear weapon to the U.S., but let’s not forget they also possess Chemicals and the ability to deliver biological weapons as well.

America’s leadership found themselves in a very delicate situation. Making the wrong move at the wrong time would have escalated a dangerous threat into a situation being lived out for America and North Korea. While we don’t agree with NK’s actions we do not want to bring the misery of Nuclear war to any nation. However, our leaders were not going to allow that threat to be carried out against our people either. So say we were in a tense situation would be an understatement.

As I reflect on this event and the tension it brought to our lives, I am reminded of a passage from God’s word. Luke 21:25-28 “And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves rearing up; (26) Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. (27) And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. (28) And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh.”

As the Lord taught His disciples about things that would take place shortly in Jerusalem He also spoke to them on a broader level. Part of that teaching was given in the previous paragraph. While the events may not be in numerical order they are given as a general warning and indication of Christ’s return. Distress of nations is obvious today. The distress of nations like N. Korea is obvious, but looking beyond North Korea we find distress which is just as dangerous, but very close to home. Recently in Charlotte, N.C. we saw an ugly situation escalate to a national level with violence and deception creaping into the hearts and lives of people everywhere. Racism, once thought to be largely a part of our history and something we had grown through and put behind us nationally, has suddenly been resurrected. At least the fear of racism has been resurrected. I will not use this article as an opinion piece for Charlottesville, racism, the alt-right or alt-left. I will say this, racism is unjustified anger toward another person because of their color or race. There is no place for it in the heart of a born again Christian. To blame racism on anything other than unconfessed sin is a sin itself. Tearing down history and even rewriting it will not erase it. Pretending sin doesn’t exist doesn’t erase it either. When Jesus said, “looking after those things which are coming on the earth”, He spoke about being distracted by events caused by sin and eventually result in greater sin. I fear what we witnessed in Charlottesville was a testimony of this statement. A horrible act of violence perpetuated by Satans to destroy people for his pleasure. Let’s be careful and not get so wrapped up in the drama and the trumps that emotion takes us to a greater sin thus we have already witnessed. I fear if we are silenced over the tearing down of monuments we will soon find ourselves facing the removal of God’s word because it is considered offensive. The precedent for that argument is being set today. Let’s prayerfully, and with love seek the Holy Spirit’s direction through God’s word and seek the right remedy for the crisis and concern we face.

Our time has come and gone, until next time may God keep you firmly in His grip!

Terry Cheek = Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church is Marion.

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Mitchell County SafePlace

SafePlace Tips for Back

to School Safety

By Tracy Black, Associate Director

Mitchell County

SafePlace is all about keeping ourselves and our children safe. This concern is not just
curled around Destructive Violence but in every aspect of
life including Back to School. This month I'd like to use
our space to give everyone some tips on how to keep your
children safe.

For Parents:

• Be very clear with the school as to who may, not only check your children out
school, but who can pick them up as school lets out or at bus stops. We suggest
you keep this list short; possibly yourself and one trusted friend or relative.
• Children know that we expect them to listen to their teachers in school but do
they also know that you expect them to listen and follow the instructions of the
bus driver? If not, make sure the children understand that the bus
driver is looking for them and is trying his or her best to make
sure they remain safe.
• If your child’s bus driver informs you of behavior issues,
PLEASE, take it seriously! It doesn’t mean your child is bad, just
that it could distract the driver and jeopardize the safety of 20-30
other children.
• If you have a Domestic Violence Protective Order in place, make
sure the school not only has a copy on file but also discuss with
them how the school will respond if the order is violated on school
grounds or at school sponsored events.
• Make sure you and your child have a “safe” word that only you
and they know. Your child will know that anyone who tells them
you sent them to get them isn’t telling the truth if that person
doesn’t know the “safe” word.

For Kids:

• If you have to cross the road getting on the bus, wait for the bus
to stop, the door is open and the bus driver motions for you to
cross.
• ALWAYS cross the road in front of the bus, NEVER behind it.
• Don’t wear headphones on the bus, especially during loading and
unloading.
• Never bend down to tie your shoe or pick something up when
you’re crossing in front of the bus. The driver can’t see you and
you will be in danger.
• Follow all of the rules of the bus. They are there for your
protection.
• Have a “safe” word with your parent(s). NEVER go with anyone
who doesn’t know this word.
• Be a good role model. Your younger brothers and sisters are
watching you and it is your duty to show them the right way to act.

For Drivers:

• Slow way down in school zones!
• Don’t change lanes in a school zone, there may be a child
crossing.
• Be extra cautious near high schools. There will be a dispro-
portionate number of new, inexperienced drivers. We were all young
once so let’s look out for them!
• Stop at least 10 feet behind a school bus. The driver needs to be
able to see you in his mirror. They are responsible for these young
lives so they need to be able to see every potential hazard.
• NEVER, EVER, EVER pass a stopped school bus. Remember,
where there are buses there are children!

Keeping these few tips in mind, we can have a safe, happy, fun
school year. Together we can make the 2017/18 school year the
best ever!!

Tracy Black is the Associate Director for Mitchell County Safe
Place. She can be reached at 828-703-4913 or tracyblack@
bellsouth.net.

Put ye in the sack, for the harvest is ripe: com, get you
down; for the press is full, the fatn is great. Joel 3:13.
ACROSS
1  and Eshem, and (Joshua 15:52) (KJV)
5 which devoured ___ in pieces, and stamped the residue (Deut 7:19) (KJV)
9 abbr. for the 16th book of the O.T. (Rom 11:33) (KJV)
12 They ___ at me and say, "Aha! Aha!" (Ps 35:21)
13 Awake, and to my defense! Contend for me, my God (Ps 35:23)
14 the lizard, and the snail, and the (Lev 11:30) (KJV)
15 Can you loose the cords of (Job 38:31)
16 God will judge the ___ and all the sexually immoral (Heb 13:4)
18 Your ___ will be the coast of the Great Sea (Num 34:6)
20 Rescue me from the ___, do not let me sink (Ps 69:1) (KJV)
21 opposite to windward side (naut.) (Acts 27:4)
22 You have ___ them with the bread of tears (Ps 80:19)
23 They fasten it with hammer and nails so it will not ___ (Jer 7:28) (KJV)
26 You will drink it and ___ it dry (Ezek 23:34)
28 I will send ___ , saying, Go, and cut out the arrows (1 Sam 20:21) (KJV)
30 Eber, Mispah, Shemed, who built and Lod (1 Chr 8:12)
32 his hands were ___ until the going down of the sun (Exodus 17:12)
34 there appeared ___ him an angel of the Lord (Luke 1:11)
35 Surely the nations are like a ___, a bucket (Isa 40:15)
38 the judgment of the great ___ that sitteth upon many waters (Rev 17:1) (KJV)
39 If a bird's chance to be before thee (Deut 22:6)
41 and eny stones and other ___ to be accounted (Ex 25:7)
42 I beheld when he had ___ the earth seal (Rev 6:12)
44 the poor man had nothing except one little ___ (2 Sam 12:3)
45 abbr. for the first book of the N.T. (Mark 2:28)
47 When it ___ it has no fear for its household (Prov 31:2)
49 the supreme commander, sent by (2 Kings 22:11)
52 Israel will ___ and blossom and fill all the world with fruit (Isa 27:4)
53 Seventh letter of Greek alphabet (Isa 27:4)
55 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the ___ (Gen 48:16) (KJV)
57 the ___ will lie down with the goat (Isa 11:6)
59 Do not take ___ of a hired man who is poor and needy (Deut 24:14)
62 turn to God, so that your sins may be ___ out (Acts 3:19)
63 Indeed, the very hairs of your ___ are all numbered (Luke 12:7)
64 ___ miracles to deceive the elect if that were possible. (Matt 24:24)
65 son of Seth (Gen 4:26) (KJV)
66 What is man, that thou ___ of him? (Ps 8:4) (KJV)
67 I will put ___ to the pride of the mighty (2:33) (Ezek 7:24)
68 The animals take cover; they remain in their ___ (Job 37:8)

DOWN
1 Do two walk together unless they have ___ to do so? (Amos 3:3)
2 Then shall stand up in his estate a ___ (Dan 12:10) (KJV)
3 They cooked it in ___ or made it into cakes (Num 11:8) (KJV)
4 Jesus said, "This voice was for ___ your ___: mine (John 12:36)
5 is not this a ___ shaken out of the fire? (Zech 7:3) (KJV)
6 Therefore, yourselves of all matrice (1 Pet 5:1)
7 you should set aside ___ of money in keeping with (1 Cor 16:2)
8 their associates: Shebaniah, Ho-___, ___ Pelelah (Neh 10:10)
9 there will be neither dew ___ rain in the next few years (1 Kings 17:1)
10 heavens by fire, and the ___ will meet in the heat (2 Pet 3:12)
11 He said to ___: "Daughter, your faith has healed you (Mark 5:34)
12 together with them in the clouds to ___ the Lord in the air (1 Thess 4:17)
13 the great ___ and the raven will nest there (Isa 34:11)
14 Will you keep to the old path that ___ men have (Job 22:13)
15 they will ___ the ruined cities that have been devastated (Isa 61:4)
16 I wish I could be with you now and change my ___ (Gal 4:20)
17 saw the fig tree withered from the ___ (Mark 11:20)
18 the poison of ___ is under their lips (Rom 3:13)
19 ___ the tongue of the crafty (Job 19:5)
20 horn, the root, the ___ and harp (Dan 3:7)
21 must not shave their heads or ___ off the ___ of their beards (Lev 7:5)
23 whose consciences have been seared as ___ iron (1 Tim 4:2)
25 loose the bands of wickedness, to ___ the heavy burdens (Isa 38:6) (KJV)
26 ___ these things (Titus 3:8)
27 ___ in thy mercy (Ps 31:7)
28 These make into a sacred anointing oil, a fragrant ___ (Ex 30:25)
29 Do not ___ to what I command you and do not subtract (Deut 4:2)
30 You are my God; ___ your servant who trusts in you (Ps 86:2)
31 ___ olive branches, and branches, and myrtle (Neh 8:15)
32 ___ as a man, and I am warm (Isaiah 44:16)
33 ___ to draw fifty measures (Haggai 2:16)
34 abbr. for the first book of the pentateuch

Solution on page 14
Heaven
By Pastor Bruce Cannon
Mitchell County

And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and looking for those things which are coming on the earth: (Luke 21:25,26)

Isn't it amazing that not one thing catches the Lord off guard. He has known for all of time an eternity what would be happening on planet Earth presently. He knows the good, the bad and the so forth.

As I write this article, I just finished watching the solar eclipse. It has been spoken about in the news media for weeks. People, a hundred million or so, made vacation plans around this event so they could be in the path of it and experience this rare phenomenon.

Currently I am doing a study on the book of the Revelation and note another event, even more rare, which is being anticipated by a billion persons or so. Instead of a solar eclipse there will come a day when the Son of Man will come back to planet earth riding on a white horse. Every eye will see Him and He will set up His Kingdom on earth and rule it for one thousand years. (Revelation 1:7; 19:11-16, 26:4). He will put all enemies under His feet and will cast Satan into the bottomless pit for the thousand years. There will be peace on earth. There will be no fighting among the nations during that time.

Those who know Christ as personal Savior and Lord will have been given new bodies, glorified ones. There will be no sickness, no more dying, no more evil as eternity bagpipe. Every believer will have made it home safely where the streets are gold and so forth.

Sounds almost too good to be true. But it is true! How do I know? So many passages in the Bible tell me so. And, like those of you reading this article, I believe the Bible to be true and without any error whatsoever.

When I think about Heaven and all it holds I have to bow my head and pray the same prayer John prayed, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Revelation 22:20)

Do you know Him? Have you made Him Lord and Savior of your life? If not, why not do so today? It's such a simple process! All we have to do is as simple as saying our ABC's. We acknowledge He is the Savior...the only one. He died on a Cross to save us from sin. We believe that He will save us if we call on Him. (Romans 10:9,10). And we must confess. We confess that we have sinned (Romans 3:23). We confess that we believe He is the only means of forgiveness of sin and that He will forgive us if we ask Him to...no matter what we have done in our past. (Romans 5:1, 8,1)

Why not do that today? It will be, without the shadow of any doubt, the greatest decision you will ever make in your life!

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

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Penland School of Crafts

Mia Hall Selected as the Next Director of Penland School of Crafts
By Robin Denyer
Mitchell County

Penland School of Crafts is pleased to announce that artist, educator, and administrator Maria “Mia” Hall will be its next director, succeeding Jean McLaughlin, who has led the school since 1989. Hall is currently interim chair of the Department of Art and Design at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR), where she has been a faculty member for ten years.

A native of Sweden, Hall holds an MFA in furniture design and woodworking from San Diego State University in California, where she worked closely with renowned woodworker and teacher Wendy Maruyama. In 2007, she was hired by UALR to develop a furniture design program and to teach furniture design and contemporary craft courses. During her time in Arkansas, she worked on the development of the department’s curriculum, served on steering committees, helped design and establish a visiting artist workshop series, and organized public events that increased awareness of the university’s craft program. In 2016, she was asked to take the position of department chair, leading fifteen full-time faculty, four staff, and twelve part-time instructors.

She has also been involved with the teaching, design, and construction of the new, 65,000-square-foot Wadsworth Center of Art + Design at the university. She worked on the feasibility study and the design development phase, and she served on the committee that chose the architect and the contractor. As chair, she is the department’s project manager and will oversee the construction of the new facility. When it opens in January 2018, in addition to her many activities at the university, she has served on several foundation boards.

Hall’s personal work, primarily furniture and mixed-media sculpture, has been shown in numerous exhibitions at venues such as the Arkansas Art Center, the Contemporary (OK), University of the Arts (Philadelphia), and Blue Spiral 1 (NC), and is held in many private and public collections.

Hall describes Penland School of Crafts as “one of the leading institutions for the study of craft-based art making,” adding that “in a society that puts increasing value and importance on science, technology, engineering, and math, promoting the hand skills, decision making, ingenuity, inventiveness, and analysis that are required to practice skilled making is not only necessary, but essential.”

Alisa Fish, chair of the Penland board of trustees and a member of the search committee, says that the committee saw in Hall the kind of skills and experience it was looking for in a new director. “We were particularly struck,” she says, “by her genuine interest in people and her commitment to Penland. This, combined with her forward-looking and innovative thinking, is sure to result in a winning outcome for the school.”

In accepting the position, Hall said, “I am honored and humbled to be chosen as the next director of Penland School of Crafts. Jean McLaughlin has for years been a formidable role model for me, and I find the Penland staff truly inspiring. My family and I look forward with great enthusiasm and excitement to being part of this phenomenal institution’s future.”

Hall is married to mathematician and educator David Clemens, a long-time arts-in-residence at UALR, and a regular instructor at Penland. They have a ten-year-old daughter, Fiona. Mia Hall will become Penland director on January 1.

Penland School of Crafts is an international center for craft education dedicated to helping people live creative lives. Located in Watauga North Carolina, Penland offers workshops in books and paper, clay, drawing and painting, glass, iron, metals, printmaking and letterpress, photography, textiles, and wood. The school also sponsors art residencies, an outreach program, and a gallery and visitors center. Penland is a nonprofit, tax-exempt institution which receives support from the North Carolina Arts Council, an agency funded by the State of North Carolina and the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art. More information at www.penland.org.
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“Aha” Moments
By Ken and Jan Memer
Avery County

I was frustrated! No doubt about it, hunting for an apartment as a single mom with a very low income left me wandering with indecision, fearful of where we would go. Time was of the essence as my landlord needed my apartment and I had to vacate. However, every rental ad was beyond my means.

As I prayed, an idea came to mind. I would drive around town looking for “For Rent” signs. Perhaps this method would lead me to the right place.

A very long story short… I met a lady who invited me to a piano recital (right in the middle of all this drama in my life). But, her invitation had a purpose. As a Christian, she believed God sometimes works things out in ways we might not expect. Why not introduce me and my need to neighbors who would be attending?

With some hope in my heart, I attended. After the announcement a lady (who would soon become my neighbor) came up to me to tell me about an apartment for rent next door to where she lived.

When I met with the landlord, the price was too high for me. But I’d been directed to seek aid from a rent subsidy program. Because of it, this larger apartment became our home for less than we had paid in the little apartment.

An “Aha” moment to be sure as God caused things as only He can.

Recently, in the quietness of my heart, I asked the Lord to especially help me with trusting him with our finances. I hoped in my quiet time, God would point me to verses on trust that would give me hope.

And he did. But differently than I expected.

In this “Aha” moment, he opened my spiritual eyes to see other verses and concepts in the light of trust. Through my morning readings, I was led to verse after verse that didn’t necessarily say, “Trust is the Lord with all your heart.” But, rather enlightened my soul to who God is in all of his fullness that I might realize, once again, that he is my portion forever.

Eventually, I walked right into Ephesians 3: 20-21, where it says, “How to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”

“Aha!” Exceedingly abundantly above all we ask or think! Imagine…that’s beyond mustworthiness. Selah

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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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Honor Saluting Honor
By Dr. Mark Creech

I would like to share something that I saw directly from the American Civil War Almanac by William J. Sennett and John T.E. Cribb.

“The Civil War came to an end, for all practical purposes, in April 1865 when Robert E. Lee’s starving, exhausted Confederate army found itself surrounded by Union forces in Virginia. On April 9, Lee met with General Ulysses S. Grant in a farmhouse at Appomattox Court House to offer his surrender. Grant’s terms were generous. The Southern soldiers were to be paroled and could go home with their private property, including their horses, which could be used for a late spring plowing. Officers could keep their side arms, and Lee’s hungry troops could receive Union rations. ‘This will have the best possible effect upon the men,’ Lee observed quietly.

‘Three days later the formal surrender took place as Confederate troops marched to catch their weapons and lay down their flags. The Union officer in charge of the ceremony was Joshua Chamberlain, hero of Gettysburg. Leading the Southerners was General John B. Gordon, who had been wounded many times in combat.’

‘Chamberlain watched Gordon approaching. As he later described it, ‘The General was riding in advance of his troops, his thin drooping to his breast, down-hearted and dejected in appearance, almost beyond description.’ Something stirred in Chamberlain’s breast. He gave an order, a bale of candy, and his horse came to attention with their rifles on their shoulders. It was a salute of honor. ‘General Gordon looked up in surprise. Recognizing the gesture, he wheeled his horse, dipped his sword, and ordered his own men to return the salute. Lee’s defeated veterans stepped forward with heads high and eyes level — honor saluting honor. The then it was over. The Union had been tested and had survived. With a salute of solidarity respect, the soldier’s wounds began to heal. Both sides faced a new beginning as Americans all.’

‘If these men, participants in that terrible War Between the States, having watched their comrades fall in battle, and at the end of that great conflict turn to honor and salute each other, how can we dishonor their memory with lesser behavior?’

‘People gathered around a name of Robert E. Lee holding it up as a symbol of white supremacy is exceedingly vile and ungodly. But there is no sin, no threat to our Union, in visiting such monuments recognizing as Dr. Jerry Newcombe has eloquently stated it, that historical figures are not always “two-dimensional curiosities in a simplistic morality play of obvious good versus obvious evil.” We can honor our past without being in bondage to it.’

Reverend Dr. Mark Creech is Executive Director of the NC Christian Action League. You may contact him at revmarkcreech@christianactionleague.org or 919-787-9665

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Why Children Should Obey Their Parents

By Dr. Tom Walker
McDewell County

We are living in an age of rebellion and defiance. It is evident both in our homes and in society as well. Years ago, defiance from children was not tolerated, but it seems today we have become too lenient in regard to it in our families.

Discipline is taught in the Word of God. Proverbs 22:15 says, “Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.” Children should be reared to obey their mother and father. It should not be an option in the home but a requirement.

There are blessings that come through obedience. Of course, the word “obey” means to do what a law or a person says to do.” In the Word of God, obedience is spoken of highly. 1 Samuel 12:22 reminds us, “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” Obedience reveals wisdom, respect and love. These elements are missing in so many homes in our generation.

Why should children obey their parents? There are several good reasons that I am going to share with you today.

The Bible Commands It

In Ephesians 6:1, the Bible says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” Look closely at what that verse says to us. If it is right to obey your parents, then it is not right when children refuse to obey the wishes of their mother and dad. If something is right, it is correct, it is the thing to do. The word “obey” is in the Greek present tense, which suggests an ongoing continued action. As far as the mode goes it is imperative mode, which means it is not an option but a command from the Lord. It is absolutely necessary to have an orderly society that children obey their parents in the Lord.

The phrase “in the Lord” suggests there is a limit to the child’s obedience. When a parent is not acting in the Lord, he is not to be obeyed. The Lord has neither permission to do with the child’s upbringing and abuse of precious children. If a child can break away and free himself from such parental corruption, he has every right to be freed from his parent. The Lord came to set men free from the abuse and the filth of sin, not to enslave men to it, and especially not to enslave children to it. One of the most severe warnings ever issued in all of history was issued by the Lord Jesus to adults who abuse children (Mark 9:33-48). The abusing parent had better heed, for one of the things that God will not tolerate—obviously not tolerate—is the abuse of a child. We must proclaim the Word of God: children are to obey their parents, but they are to obey only if the parents’ desire and instructions are in the Lord. If a parent is beating a child black and blue or sexually abusing a child, the child should go to some other adult he feels close to and ask for his help. And we as ministers of the Lord—ministers who are called to proclaim Christ and to do what we can to bring His righteousness to earth—must teach the truth from the pulpits of the world” (Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible).

Longevity Encourages It

God told Israel in Exodus 20:12, “Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” Although that was spoken to Israel it certainly can be applied to us today.

I believe God many times will bless the child who is obedient and shows the proper respect to his or her parents, with longevity of life. Some young people’s lives have probably come to an end because they were not wise enough to listen to their mother and dad and had to say to them.

In the Old Testament, some children were taken by the elders to the gates of the city and stoned because they would not co-operate with their parents. Deuteronomy 21:20-21 tells us, “And they shall say unto the elders of his city, this our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die.” As the child put away from among you, and all Israel shall hear, and fear.”

The people of the past and the Word of God takes disobedience to parents as a very grave and serious matter.

Order Demand: It

If we are to have an orderly and decent society, children must be taught to obey when they are young. Rebell and anarchists in society often come out of homes where they were not taught to be under authority.

There is a chain of command in the home, and even so in our society. The Bible teaches us to be in submission to the authorities that be so that things can be done decently and in order. Kids must learn to put themselves under the authority of the mom and dad, to prepare them to be responsible citizens, when they become late teens and early adulthood.

Love and Respect Produces It

If a young person respects his parents and has the love for them he ought to have, then obedience will flow out of that love and respect. Where love and respect are missing, there is chaos, confusion and turmoil in the home. Why not the love of God flood your soul and love and respect for the parents will come spontaneously.

God Smiles Upon It

Since God commands us to love our parents, He smiles upon us when we are doing what He wants us to do. If a child is to have the smile of God upon his life, then he would be wise to listen to what his parents have to say to him. Then, he should co-operate fully with them as they seek to guide his life until he is in the place to make his own decisions. I had rather have God’s smile than God’s frown.

Peace of Mind Accompanies It

Paul the Apostle said to the church at Philadelphia: “These things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the peace of God shall be with you” (Phil. 4:9). When we do not do, what we know we ought to do, there is a lack of true peace in our hearts. It is best to just do the will of God and we will have peace and serenity of heart in a troubled and confused world.

Tom Walker is President of Foothills Baptist Bible College and Pastor of Zion Hill Baptist Church in Marion, NC.
Answering the Call, Paying the Price, Reaping the Rewards
By Rebecca Gwyn
Buncombe County

As I sat in the beautiful chapel at The Cove in Asheville, NC, trying to focus on what it was that God had brought me there for, in my spirit I heard God clearly ask me, “Are you willing to forsake it all?” Absolute fear struck my heart as I began to think about what my answer could cost me. If I answered, “Yes”, I knew I must be sincere in my answer because the price could be great. If I answered, “No”, the cost would be even greater. So, I had to choose. Was it to be God or home and family?

As I sat there with tears streaming down my face, I battled with my response. The first thing that came to mind was my children. I could easily give up the material things, but my children had always been my life. Would I be able to leave them behind, if need be, to follow God? I must admit, I struggled. I still struggle sometimes. But, as I sat there contemplating how I would answer God, my mind went to the cross and the great price that was paid for me. The sacrifice that was made so that I could have eternal life and a relationship with God. How could I possibly say, “No”, when I owed Him my very life?

With tears still flowing, I gave Him my answer. “Yes, I am willing to forsake it all.” I knew from that moment forward it would be a journey into the unknown. Simply trying to follow as He leads. I was scared, but determined to hold up my end of the bargain. He said He would never leave me nor forsake me. My job was simply to follow. I now have a much deeper respect for the story of Abraham. When Abraham was called out from among His people, from the land of Ur, He had a decision to make. To be obedient and follow or refuse.

Abraham was called to follow God into the unknown. He did not know where he was going, how long he would have to stay, what he would have to leave behind, what enemies he would face. Nothing. He simply packed up his bag, set forth, got sidetracked at times, but he always got back on course. He didn’t always do things the right way. He made mistakes. Even though He failed at times, God did not. He kept His promise.

Because of Abraham’s obedience to forsake all and follow God, his descendants became heirs to a land flowing with milk and honey. Because of His obedience, a great nation was born of which would be the avenue for the Messiah to come. Because of His obedience and willingness to forsake this world, we are now heirs to the Kingdom.

When we answer the call, “Follow me”, are we ready to pay the cost? Do we take it seriously? Are we willing to forsake it all in order to follow Him into the vast kingdom of obedience? Are we willing to say as Jeremiah, “Here am I Lord, send me”? We are often, as Christians want the blessings of God without any real sacrifice or service. We are satisfied sitting in our comfortable church pew singing, “Oh, How I love Jesus”, as long as He doesn’t require anything of us. We do not want to get out of our comfort zone. Therefore, we forfeit the promises and blessings of God. We fail to reap the rewards God has for us down here. We will ultimately reap the reward of Heaven because God keeps His promises. But, we are in no hurry to claim that either because we are happy where we are. This sad part of that is, when we do get to Heaven we will stand before God empty handed. Nothing to offer Him for the great and many blessings He bestowed upon us simply because He loves us.

God has called us to be followers of Jesus. He has asked us to count the cost. He has promised us a reward. Are you ready to say, “Yes, Lord, I’ll go”?

Rebecca Gwyn is the Director of REACH for Women Ministries.
The Rotary of Spruce Pine

Chief Summerlin
By Doug Sudduth
Mitchell County

The Chief of the Spruce Pine Police Department, Bill Summerlin, presented an informative program on Thursday, August 10, to members and guests of the Rotary Club of Spruce Pine. He was introduced by Rotarian Ruby Creece. He thanked the Club for their generosity and service to the community. As a former detective, Chief Summerlin provided insights into the overwhelming world-wide drug problem and how even in small towns like ours, families can be profoundly affected.

In a lively anecdotal style, Chief Summerlin shared stories about “Shop with a Cop,” a project of the Spruce Pine Police Department that helps local disadvantaged children. He invited Rotarians to become involved in this program as volunteers are always needed. He closed his remarks with a challenge to “do something good, make a difference in someone’s life.”

Doug Sudduth is the Public Relations Officer for the Spruce Pine Rotary Club.

Christy’s Corner

Beavers
By Christy Lowman
Burke County

This month we are going to talk about beavers. Now I bet you are thinking, What in the world could I possibly learn about beavers when it comes to God? Keep reading, and find out!

There are two types of beavers: the American beaver and the European beaver. Beavers are mammals, they don’t eat meat, and are nocturnal. They live in colonies, live up to 24 years and can weigh as much as 50-70 lbs. God gave beavers huge teeth, (almost as long as they are tall) and very strong paws. Their teeth continue to grow throughout their entire life. This is so they can bite through trees, rocks and build their dams and domelike homes called lodges. Beavers have a scaly tail, waterproof fur, webbed feet, and see-through eyelids which are like goggles. These help them navigate under water. Beavers can also swim up to 5 miles an hour and stay under water for fifteen minutes at a time.

Have you ever heard of the term “busy as a beaver” or “eager beaver?” These sayings were created because beavers are very hard-working animals. They build their first dam at a year old. They babysit their new baby brothers and sisters. Can you imagine taking care of a baby when you were just one year old? Beavers are also intelligent. They build underwater doors so they can get out of their homes and access their underwater food supply during winter when there is ice on the top of the water.

Did you know that God gives each person his very own talent to do things for Him? God also gives animals talents too. One of a beaver’s talents is that they are awesome engineers and architects. They can build dams and structures that can span across ponds and wetlands, raise the water table, and much more. Beavers may not know it but by using their talents, they create fresh water and thriving habitats for other mammals, fish, reptiles, and birds. Lots of endangered and threatened species are able to live in the wetlands beavers create. Their structures also provide people with vital natural resources. Because of the environment beavers create, the Native Americans call them the “sacred center.”

Beavers in Alberta Canada have created a gigantic dam. It is so big that astronauts can see it from space. This dam is 200 ft. long and 15 ft. tall. Scientists believe that these beavers have lived there since the 1700’s. These beavers joined together to create these large wetlands for protection and food. How cool is that? This huge beaver dam reminds me that if we have asked Jesus into our heart then we will get to live in heaven with Him and our family.

I know that you will find that Jesus is in heaven right now building a mansion for you and me. We will get to live with Him for all of eternity! Isn’t that great news?

In my Father’s house are many mansions; if there were not so many, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. John 14:2

King James Bible

Things to think about:

1. Do you know what your talent is? God has given you one! If not, it is okay. Start praying for Him to show you what it is. He will! I promise.
2. How can you be a “busy beaver” for Christ?
3. Have you asked Jesus into your heart so He can prepare a mansion in heaven for you? If not, please think about doing so. If you do want to, talk to an adult about it and they will help you! All you have to do is invite Jesus in.

Dear Lord, I pray that you will forgive each one of us of our mistakes and that you will help us live for Christ by using our talents for your glory. Please show children what their special talents are so they can use them to glorify You. I pray that each one reading this article will surrender their heart to you so you can build a mansion in heaven. In Jesus’ name, I pray. AMEN.

See you next time!

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Christy Lowman is a Christian author and illustrator that lives in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains with her husband and two children. She enjoys writing and illustrating books for all ages. Some of her other recreations are hiking with Guidedtours and HCl. Christy gives all the glory to God in everything she does. A portion of every book sold from the Small Bible Character Series will be donated to battle human trafficking. If you enjoy her books, ‘like’ her author page on Facebook and her know. You can buy her books at: https://www.amazon.com/End-Child-Slavery-Book/dp/1944516017. You can reach her at: christylowman@gmail.com.
As the son of Billy Graham, Franklin Graham learned many lessons from his father. Read more about his journey from rebellion to reverence.

For all his youthful rebellion, Franklin Graham learned where he started—with family and the church—where he always belonged.

Fast cars, fast motorcycles, fast planes. "Anything that blows smoke and goes fast, I like it," says Franklin Graham, son of world-renowned evangelist Billy Graham. His banking for adrenaline-pumping experiences hasn't changed even though he parted ways with the rebellions days of his youth and followed his father to the pulpit.

When he crosses the globe on international relief missions, Franklin buckles himself into the cockpit and pilots the plane to whatever destination he's headed. "I've been flying for around 35 years," he says. "Aviation is the one thing I learned in school that I use every day. We have 14 aircraft in the organization, and I fly all of them except the helicopter."

Franklin, as well as a hectic schedule of world travel for two organizations. In 1979, he became president and chairman of the board of Samaritan's Purse, an international relief agency with corporate offices in Boone. There, he helps provide assistance to victims of natural disasters, war, disease, and famine in more than 100 countries. He's also the CEO and president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association—roles he took on in 2000 and 2001, respectively.

After serving God throughout the world, Franklin anticipates returning to his home, located on more than 100 acres in Boone, and his wife, Jane Austen Crumblin Graham, a hometown girl he met when he was eight years old. It's also the place where they raised their three sons, William, Roy, and Edward, and daughter, Jane Austin.

"It's the only home my wife and I have ever owned. We were just kids when we first came here to Boone," he says. "I've lived my life in Western North Carolina, and I can go anywhere in the world. But there's something special when you land in Charlotte, and you see the mountains in the west."

That notion, that he can be anywhere in the world but chooses to come back to the familiar, is a theme that runs through Franklin's life—personally, professionally, and spiritually.

Battle for Control

Franklin's features are strikingly similar to his father's, especially his magnetic eyes. On the day of this interview, he's dressed in black jeans, purple shirt, and a black Harley Davidson ball cap. He looks more ready to jump onto a motorcycle than lead the faithful and help the needy.

His oversized office provides more insight into his personality and interests. It's a spacious room with a desk and conference table, and it's brimming with lots of papers arranged on the bookshelves. There were times in his youth when his choices and behavior gave his parents pause as they wondered about the direction their fourth child would take in life. His teenage years were filled with fights, cigarettes, and alcohol. In his 20s, he was an aggressive, rebellious young man.

He has a red hair, blue eyes, and a fair complexion. His features are similar to his father's, but he is shorter and more slender. His hands are large and his feet are average. He stands 5'10" and weighs 180 pounds. Like his father, he has a noticeable nose and a pronounced forehead. He also has a mustache that is much like his father's.

Franklin is the son of Billy Graham, one of the most famous evangelists in the world. His father's influence and guidance have played a significant role in his life. Franklin has followed in his father's footsteps and has become a notable figure in the world of Christianity.

Franklin has been involved in missions work since he was a young child. He assisted his father in his work and became more involved as he grew older. He has traveled extensively throughout the world and has helped to establish several missionary organizations.

Franklin has a degree in business administration from Furman University and a master's degree in international relations from Harvard University. He is married to Jane Austen Crumblin and they have three children: William, Roy, and Edward.

Franklin has been a prominent figure in the world of Christianity for many years. He is known for his dedication to helping those in need and his commitment to spreading the message of Jesus Christ.

Preaching a Familiar Message

Franklin has witnessed much suffering during his missions for Samaritan's Purse. He says he would love to work in Thailand but that he doesn't have the ability to do so. His work is focused on helping those in need and providing them with hope and support.

Franklin has a deep commitment to his faith and to spreading the message of Jesus Christ. He is a strong advocate for those in need and works tirelessly to help them.

Today, Franklin Graham is a well-known evangelist and a prominent figure in the world of Christianity. He continues to spread the message of Jesus Christ and to help others in need.

This article first appeared in WNC Magazine in 2007.
Accentuate the Positive
By Cheryl Shiffer
Burke County

Principal meeting focuses on workforce development

Burke County Public Schools hosted its annual administrator strategic planning session July 17 and 18 in downtown Morganton. The two-day retreat focused on economic development and helped directors, principals and assistant principals connect the dots between education and the workforce.

Guest speakers included Ed Phillips, Burke County director of tourism; Sharon Jablonski, Morganton Main Street director; Bryan Steen, county manager for Burke; and Aam Wood, president/CEO Burke Development Inc.; Kasey Cotter with the Historic Burke Foundation; and Rasty Bums, Burke County Board of Education chair.

The principals toured the Old Burke County Courthouse, Catawba Brewery Company and downtown Morganton as well as several industries, including Levi-ton, Continental and SeiEen. They also visited the site of the future N.C. School of Science and Math West on the campus of the North Carolina School for the Deaf, Broughton Hospital to learn about the proposed re-use project, and the new Mountain View Elementary School construction site.

“This retreat was laser-focused on economic development,” said Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam. “We held an intense two-day event and talked about everything from teaching soft skills to enticing our students to stay here and return to Burke County to live and work after they graduate from Burke County Public Schools. We have been getting out and talking industry tours for three years now and have worked hard on relationships with Western Piedmont Community College and our County Commissioners and just wanted to continue the hard work we have done.”

The goal for Burke County has been to outfit students for the workforce. “The keys to attracting industries are having a well-educated education system and the workforce, and bringing our school system all the time,” Wood said.

Steen said, “You have a very important job in economic development. I am grateful you have had this opportunity to see what our county offers as we continue to work together.”

At the end of the two-day retreat, the principals reflected on what they had learned and observed.

Several of the principals who have children of their own said they are excited about what jobs are available for the Burke County workforce and see that the workforce and education communities are taking steps now that will hopefully lead their kids to become back home after college.

“As a parent, it is exciting to see what’s coming for our own kids,” said Hsidi Bristol, principal at Ray Childers Elementary School.

Kristina Edwards, assistant principal at East Burke Middle School, said, “This has helped me to see our purpose and the big picture of what we are preparing our students for and that is to come back to our community and to contribute to our community. My family is a close family, and I think there are a lot to come back for our kids.”

The industry tours allowed principals to interact with some of their students’ parents.

Chastefield Elementary School Principal Charles Williams said, “It was interesting to see where our parents work and where they spend the majority of their day.”

Table Rock Middle School Principal Jennifer Hawkins said she saw real-world applications for classroom lessons. She said, “As a teacher, I always like to have applications for a concept and on these tours, I saw some examples of that. Continental had an electron microscope. That will make it real for the students to know that.”

Anna Moore, assistant principal at Freedom High School, said, “This retreat has helped me think about what we are doing to help cultivate skills in students that are needed for the workforce.”

Lannie Simpson, director of ELL, said, the two days helped show her the importance of motivating lifelong learning. “The rate of innovation is so fast and changing so much that we can’t teach specific skills because they will be obsolete.”

She reiterated the importance of teaching students to be adaptive and willing to learn new skills.

Burns said, “I see traditional education moving away from the model of giving the students a problem to solve to having students identify the problems that need to be solved and then solving them.”

He also thanked the principals for all they do and reinforced his commitment to helping our students by continuing to build strong partnerships with Western Piedmont Community College, local governmental agencies and businesses and industry. He said, “Everything is about relationships.”

The principals also took part in several fun activities, including painting and then riding rocks for the Color Burke! Facebook project.

BCPS elementary schools to start GEMS clubs

Activities focus on STEM for girls

Seven teachers and media coordinators from Burke County Public Schools are now GEMS Excelling in Math and Science (GEMS) club coaches. Elise Hembree, from WA Young; Karen Broadlove from Forest Hill; Emma Watson from Salen; Karen Grinis from Drexel; Ananda Garrison from Drexel, April Robinson from Oak Hill and Lisa Nichols from Valdese were among the 27 educators from across the region who spent the week of Aug 7 at the NC Center of Engineering Technologies (NCCET) training to start GEMS clubs at their schools.

The goal of GEMS clubs is to enhance self-efficacy and skills in female students in elementary and middle schools. These school clubs focus on females in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) careers through inquiry-based activities.

This project was developed and implemented by STEM West, the educational arm of Workforce Development of the Western Piedmont Council of Governments and funded by the Duke Energy Foundation and the Appalachian Rural Community STEM West partnered with the NCCET and The Science House of NCSU to provide training.

Dr. Laura Bonomi of Women in Engineering from NCSU kicked off the training. She shared research about females in STEM careers and why these clubs are important to the community. On the second day, GEMS coaches Dee Chaudhuri and Corry Brontom from Charlotte Meckleburg shared practical experience they learned from their club of three years. On the third day, Gina Barrier of The Science House/NCSU, trained the coaches in data collection devices and Makeys, Makeys. The GEMS coaches have access to the free equipment loan program to use in their GEMS clubs.

WA Young, Forest Hill, Drexel, Salen, Oak Hill and Valdese will start their new GEMS clubs in the fall. Using grant funds to purchase materials or fund club field trips, they will provide experiences for approximately 30 girls in each club to build their confidence and provide opportunities in the STEM fields.
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