A New School Year Begins

By Doug Harrell

Before another edition of Blue Ridge Christian News hits the streets, our children and grandchildren will be back in the walls of classrooms across our state and nation. That first day will be an exciting one for many and a traumatic day for others. The most traumatic ones involved will probably be the mothers of the new kindergarten children that will be leaving home and the nest for the first time! I still remember my first grade teacher, Mrs. Byrd, at Tipton Hill School where I attended many, many years ago and how exciting it was.

Today, many things are the same as they were then, and many things have changed. The school environment is very different in so many ways, some changes may be good, but many are not beneficial to the children enrolled today. The major difference today is not really in the schools though, it is in the change of the family structure itself and the teachings that were being taught in the home. Today we Christians need to fault the school systems because we cannot have prayer like we used to, in fact, our days started with a morning devotion read over the PA system to the entire school and having prayer in our classroom was not uncommon at all. We all know this is not allowed any more and while I wish it were so, I do think it has not only positive influence on the children, the courts will no longer allow this. In the mid 1950’s and sixty’s the vast majority of our population, especially here in the Bible Belt of Western North Carolina, were professing Christians and prayer and Bible reading was a totally acceptable thing to do on all public places. Today these things are not necessarily true. While I personally wish these things still took place, I do realize that it is a different world today. When I was in school it was not common for there to be a single parent household, today that story is also very different. Today the number of children living in a single parent family has tripled what it was then and if you add the number that live in a family that the parents have divorced and remarried the numbers are even more stunning.

While I truly wish we could go back to having the Ten Commandments and other spiritual references in our schools, this will probably never really go back to where it was. What we really need to work on is the family unit starting with the marriages. The world of social media and instant access to all kinds of things has had a dramatic impact upon each of our personal lives, and can be good or bad, depending on how we use it. Scenting never used to exist and Snapchat was not even thought of. The promotion of sexual images has become totally overwhelming. These things can certainly destroy marriages in a moment. We need to pray that our marriage may be strong and Chrisie cantaced, that we get couples to take time to be sure that they are actually yoked in their beliefs and are willing to truly commit to each other that marriage will be until death do us part. Fathers need to step up and be the spiritual leaders in the family, reading the devotions and taking the family to church, not sending them. When we lose the family values and Christian values we see the drug addition skyrocket as it has in the past few years, the going to church and praying together is not a guarantee that bad things will not happen, but it does lessen the chance. It at least gives the children a base to fall back on if things go wrong, and they sometimes will.

Looking for the “good old days” will nor change the things that need to be changed unless we change at home. The school are not tasked with that, you and I are. Certainly, pray for our schools, our principals, our school boards and staff and especially our teachers, understand though that you and I are the home front, we are the frontline of offense and defense against the devil’s workshop. If the children are to be taught right from wrong, respect for authority and good work ethics, it is up to us. Make sure your children are clothed in the total Armour of God because, like it or not, they will be facing a battle for salvation in this old world, school included.
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"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace: that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation: that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"

Isaiah 52:7 KJV

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207 Founders Avenue
Spartanburg, NC 29777
www.bridgeofwnc.org
Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin
Sunday Service 10:30AM
Wednesday Service 7:00PM
Church Office M-F
9:00AM-3:00PM
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Our passion is to help connect the Body of Christ in this area in order to see the fire of God transform our community, state, nation and world! (See John 17:23)

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2167 Jamestown Road
Morganton, NC 28655
828-534-8212
Pastor Rick Mercer
Sabbath (Saturday) Bible Study - 9:30 am
Sabbath Worship - 11:00 am
Vegitarian Buffet after church
Wednesday
Praise, Prayer, Proclaim
7:00 pm
www.morganton7d.org

Berry Chapel Baptist Church
250 Chapel St.
Spartanburg, NC 29777
828-765-6996
www.berrychapelbc.com
Pastor - Steve Williams
Sunday School 9:45 AM
Worship Service 11:00 AM
Sunday Evening Bible Study/Ministry - 5:30 PM
Wednesday Evenings
7:00 PM
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Faith Fellowship Church
Champage Rd.
Inkster, NC 28757
(803) 765-8246
www.fbc.com
Pastor: David Gillespie
Sunday School: 10:00 am
Worship Service: 11:00 am
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:00 pm
"The Ephesians 6:18 prayer warrior is not afraid of the Lord. And he delighteth in his way."
Psalm 37:37

West Burnsville Baptist Church
229 West Burnsville Church Rd.
Burnsville, NC 28714
(828) 682-9939
Pastor: Terry Long
Sunday School: 9:45 am
Worship Service: 11:00 am
Evening Service: 6:00 pm
Wednesday Service: 6:30 pm
Youth and Teen Night: 6:00 pm
Church view: To become passionate followers and servants of Jesus Christ while reestablishing the radical and physical needs of our church and community.

Burkemont Baptist Church
4868 Burkemont Rd.
Morganton, NC 28655
828-437-2357
For more information, please visit
www.burkemontbaptist.org
Dr. David Mills, Sr. Pastor
8:30 am - Early Worship
9:45 am - Sunday School
11:00 am - Worship
6:00 pm - Evening Worship

Bear Creek Baptist Church
327 Bear Creek Road
Bakersville, NC 28705
www.bearcreekbaptist.org
Reverend Bruce Cannon
Sunday School: 9:45 AM
Worship Service: 10:45 AM
Discipleship: 5:00 PM
Evening Worship: 6:45 PM
Wednesday Worship: 7:30 PM
"For God so loved the world, he gave his only Son..."

Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church
2074 US Highway 70 E
Morganton, NC 28655
828-475-2040
Pastor Barry Maloney
Sabbath (Saturday)
Bible Study: 10:00 AM
Sabbath Worship: 11:30 AM
Vegetarian Buffet after church
Wednesday
Praise, Prayer, Proclaim
7:00 PM
www.greathopedsa.org

Pine Branch Baptist Church
48 Church Road
Spartanburg, NC 29777
(828) 766-9911
www.pinebranchbaptist.net
Reverend Bobby Joe Greene
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Worship Service: 10:45 am
Sunday Evening: 6:30 pm
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125 Tappan Street
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828-765-8441
www.firstbaptistsp.com
www.nyffye.com
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Senior Pastor
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11080 Hwy 215 South
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www.sprucepineumc.org
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Pastor: Rev. Jerey Walker
Sunday School: 10:00 am
Sunday Worship: 11:00 am
Choir Wednesday - 7:00 pm
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Chelsea's Blog

Jesus And A Cozy Corner Booth
By Chelsea Blewis

If told you I hadn’t been on the struggle bus lately, I’d be telling a big one. Truth is, I’ve been riding the struggle bus twenty-four hours a day in attempts to recollect myself. Drowning in doubts, comparing myself to others, worrying myself sick over past occurrences, worrying about things that haven’t even happened yet, trying to fix everything… the list could go on and on. Surely, I’m not the only one who does this.

It sounds silly, but this has been me on level 30 lately. My mind is truly my worst enemy. Often, I feel like God has put many small tests in my path to try to pull me out, fix, and repurpose my life. Nobody else feels like they really try, but really just floundered for a bit. Yeah, me too.

Welcome to the life of me, Chelsea. Who has already given 100 percent in attempts of trying to make her life the way she feels it should go. Ya know, perfect.

Babah... what week attempts I have at being in control of my life and thinking my way is the best for me. Funny right?

I sit back and think what causes us to run and be filled with doubt and disbelief or feeling unqualified for God’s plan and only one excuse that covers it all comes to mind...FEAR. Fear holds us back from SO many things, doesn’t it?

I AM SO GUILTY to question God and his plan for my life.

I have a simple little notebook where I collect my favorite quotes, scriptures, etc. that stand out to me and that I never want to forget. It had been a rough couple of days covered in fear, doubt, regret, and feeling unqualified so I picked up my notebook. Inside were the words written in scribble scrawled on its pages.

BE WHERE YOUR FEET ARE

I immediately began to ponder on these few simple words. I began to glance down and up at the literal place my feet had landed. Tired filled my eyes as I thought about all the places my feet had landed. The places Jesus has carried me. In times of fear, failure, and heartbreak he has followed and guided my footsteps leading me to the current place my feet reside. And to think I am fearful of the great things he has in store for me.

Often when feelings of inadequacy and fear settle in I think about the story of Moses. I read about Moses and I often am quick to think of myself. Doubtful and fearful of the plan God had laid out for me.

We read that God showed up to Moses through a burning bush. God began to call out to Moses to receive his attention. I just love what God says next as he grasps the attention of Moses, as he tells him to take his shoes off for the place he stood was Holy ground. Up until recently I never really understood the power or meaning in this statement. But now I see that where my feet are and where Jesus Moses, is certainly a Holy ground. God calls Moses to deliver his people and Moses is fearful. He begins doubting the plan God has for him and he questions his ability. Moses had a speech problem and he was sure God couldn’t have just asked him to do the very thing he felt poorly at completing.

Moses couldn’t run away from the plan God had called him to do. GUILTY, again.

“...But God, I can’t speak well, what if they don’t understand me?” “But God, why me?”

These words hit me so hard as I begin to think about all the times I have questioned and doubted the duty God had for me.

Although Moses doubted, God reassured him time and time again. Don’t you feel like God does that to you as well?

But the words spoken to Moses in reply to his fears speak utter volumes suddenly crushing every fear or excuse Moses could have as God speaks:

“AM THAT I AM.”

If they ask who sent you, tell them THE I AM sent you.”

I think that God is calling us to Moses and snuggling him up close as he spoke these words, I AM THAT I AM. His assurance provided Moses with strength in his weakness as he whispered these words. There is something comforting in knowing that in a time of fear there is one who is in fact all we need. No explanations, no if’s or but’s but a simple answer that covers it all.

“RAT GOD I fear...”

“...But God, I need you to tell me what next”

“...But God, I need you to promise me it is gonna be okay.”

“...But God I need you to show me your heart won't be broken again before I will trust.”

He replies with the same fear soothing answer, I AM THAT I AM.

Man, isn’t it so comforting to know that no matter what you may face HE IS in the fact the answer to it all.

I soon felt his invitation as I heard these words.

The invitation to be where my feet are, a Holy ground, where I have the most personal one on one connection with Jesus. The one where nothing else matters and every fear runs at the sound of His name.

“Welcome to the party, you are invited. No dress code, makeup, or directions needed.”

Just Jesus and me.

So many times, I want a party with friends and dancing and laughter and beauty. But I often forget about the one on one time Jesus wants with me. The time I need with Him. The party where it’s just me and Jesus spending time on Holy ground.

The party where my feet are tied, my hands down, and my heart feeling and I feel a little more unqualified. Yet, he holds me. He invites me to spend a little time with him in a cozy corner booth. My messy, ugly, broken self. And it’s just beautiful and comforting that he wants me there. Just as I am.

He invites you too.

The Western Sizzling Steak of the Week

The Western Sizzling Steak of the Week

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THE FINAL TEST
By: Joyce Harwood

A little girl was sad each day; she sat there all alone. The children all made fun of her; she wanted to go home. They made her cry and hate the day, so speak she was not free. At home they loved her as she was; that was where she belonged to be.

Then one day she met the Lord; He told her of His gift. He loved her so He gave her life, it gave her heart a lift. They then saw she realized her worth more than gold. Creator of the universe had chosen her, she was told.

You'll be the one that I will trust with many precious things. And when you come to life's hard road, you'll walk beside The King. Jesus whispered to her soul that what YOU think of you, Is what you really do become, I've made your life anew.

Competing now in high school, she's run among the best. Remembering what was in her heart has stood the final test. The Lord with authority, steady went to head held high. Her students saw by wisdom as she looked them in the eye.

Lessons learned from childhood and the book above the rest. With the Bible as your roadmap, you'll pass the final test. She read a note from parents who responded to her call.

"You're a blessing to our children, signed, your old classmates, one and all."

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 "Jonathan's Voice" out of Mars Hill, NC. Her latest song "Homecoming" will soon be heard by many.

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A Historical Common Thread of Cultures in Decline
By Dr. Mark Creech

The prophet Isaiah was a towering figure in his day. He was not only a prophet of God but a tremendous statesman. A consultant to Kings Ahaz and Hezekiah of Judah, Isaiah displayed a remarkable understanding of the international affairs of his day. Sometimes his wise counsel was heeded and other times not.

Chapter 25 of the Book of Isaiah is a fascinating passage about a nation on the brink of collapse. It reads:

"And thou shalt plant vineyards before thee, and shalt drink of the fruit of thine orchard. Thou shalt eat the produce of the land six years, and thou shalt sow in vain; thou shalt reap in vain, for the earth is a desolate wilderness. But in the seventh year shalt thou let it rest, and let it give thee food; for the earth is of the Lord, and the Lord giveth it to whom he will. Shalt thou not know that the Lord is God, and that there is none else? For I am the Lord, and there is none else. I have wrought salvation for thee as often as thou wentest into battle. He shall be fruitful as the grass; and his strength shall be as the reed; and his mouth shall bite as a lion, and the heart of the young lions shall fail; and the Lord shall set forth before his feet the sea, and the rivers shall flow before his feet."

This concerns the people of Judah as distinguished from the people of Israel who had separated from Judah. Incidentally, the ten tribes are referenced as Ephraim in verses 1 and 3 of the same chapter and a similar charge is made against them.) The period cited is likely to be the dark time which followed the ephemeral splendors of Hezekiah's reign.

The drunkenness mentioned in the passage should be interpreted both literally and spiritually. The physical effects of inebriation are made to portray Judah's moral unsoundness. The irregularity of the movements of an individual who is consumed by alcohol — unable to walk straight — unable to see matters clearly — unable to navigate directly to a precise point — is demonstrative of the nation's erratic spiritual and moral behaviors. Add to this the filthy waste of drunken diversions, the filthy language, and the filthy displays of impropriety so that everything is made unclean. The country's character, says the prophet, is like its drinking.

Sir Augustus Watson once wrote, "The three rocks on which frail humanity most often makes shipwreck are drink, gambling, and immorality, which are intimately related, and of these three drink by far is the most common."

As it was with Judah, the widespread use and overdosage of alcohol is historically a common thread among cultures in decline. Freedom had its birth among the hills of Greece. Her writings are still studied by intellectuals today; military leaders admire the exploits of her Greek officers; students of structural engineering and architecture dig among her ruins. But little is known about the rigid abstinence from alcohol which helped produce the mental and political giants who made ancient Greece.

The time of the Apostle Paul, when he gave his sermon on Mars Hill, the pluvial of the many gods of the land were being worshippers into the lowest forms of debauchery. After the Panhellenic Empire came into power, the idiosyncracies of drink, the rags and the public houses increased to an extent where the consumption of wine increased by colossal proportions. Consequently, the circumstances which produced the mighty heroes of Greece disappeared, and the was perfectly conditioned to fall to Rome. This would also get caught in the mesh of wine before its fall. After the conquest of the Mediterranean basin, heavy drinking and legemancy would replace the traditional virtues of temperance.

The Romans had methods that gave aid and assistance to excessive drinking. They would drink on an empty stomach to get drunk faster, vomit, then eat food, drink more wine, and play drinking games. Mark Antony, the Roman politician, and General, was well-known for taking pride in destractive drinking behavior.

The once great and mighty Rome would eventually turn aside from the kind of character suitable to defend itself against invaders from the North.

The purer grade here is that alcohol was the sole reason for the destruction of these civilizations, but instead to argue that a culture's easy acceptance, widespread and excessive use of alcohol, is unquestionably an accelerator for every form of decadence, dissipation, and dissolution. Such is symptomatic of a people thoroughly sliding downward.

Someone once said this: If a man riding a spirited horse looses the reins, the horse may go faster, not because the horse has been excited, but because the restraint has been taken off. The man who imbibes alcoholic beverage is like a rider who looses his lines or throws them away. This principle is not only true for the individual who drinks, but also for a nation that celebrates alcohol and other recreational drugs.

Today in America, even the prophet and priest have wandered on this issue. In rare to hear a sermon about alcohol use from the pulpit anymore, much less a statement from the Bible's teaching on the subject. Unfortunately, they do not engage in the policy debates about the need for alcohol's regulation and control.

All the while, this nation reeks in a morally drunken stupor, seemingly unable to walk a straight line in its political endeavors, suffering blurred vision, and unable to set the course for a bright future. Corruption, obsequity, and licentiousness have consumed our society. Our national character is very much like our drinking with all of its associated problems.

Our nation must literally and spiritually sober up, lest it fade into obscurity or other great civilizations before it.

Reverend Dr. Mark Creech is Executive Director of the NC Christian Action League. You may contact him at revmarkcreech@christianactionleague.org or 919-787-5665.
Miracles
By Jody Griffin
Mitchell County

Heaven unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God. (Job 37:14, KJV)

On July 28, 2018, my eyes beheld a most magnificent sight. Incarcerated fathers spent an entire day inside the gates of the prison with their children. There was much laughter, singing, sharing and the spirit of Hope was alive within these walls! It could ONLY be the miraculous gift of a Gracious God Who could orchestrate such things.

Months ago, I presented the need for volunteers and financial contributions to this community that would be required for the events of this day to take place. Ever so slowly, the required monies/people began showing up. Prayer and repeated pleas from my heart as I thought of the children whose lives would be touched by this opportunity in a very special God-given One Day with God Camp and their fathers overtake me. I knew I needed to trust God, and that I simply needed to watch and see what God would do.

Through miracles provision, as the Lord touched the hearts of people like yourself, the resources of Heaven arrived just in time! Thanks to the willingness of compassionate people, our Camp was fully funded once again this year and sounds of joy echoed all around!

Over the next couple of months, I hope to share some of the incredible things I saw this day. But for now, I must begin by giving all praise and honor to God for what has been done! There are a number of “miracles” that need to be known by all.

First, the divine appointment I experienced through no knowledge or connection of my own. A few months before our Camp day the funding shortfall was significant. From my perspective, I doubted that it was possible for this day to happen. My heart was heavy for the children who would miss this opportunity and for their fathers whose hearts were being turned to their children in a new way as a result of this opportunity being presented to them. It was an incredible burden to me as I sensed that it was somehow my responsibility to make this happen.

(Silence ...)

Our Faithful Heavenly Father was at work in spite of my doubts! A miracle was about to take place! A member of our institutional staff and myself had sent a request to an organization looking for ways to be used as Blessings in the Name of the Lord, expecting that they would do something but with NO idea they would challenge me the way that they did.

"Raise one half of your needed funds before we send you a check." they said.

"And we will match what you have raised." That ‘half’ equated to $4500 and we had a current balance around $3000! My heart raced, I tossed and turned each night. Our donation stream had slowed to a drop-by-drop pace. I called Forgiveness Ministry who contacted the News and by word of mouth our cause was spread around our state and our country, even around the world.

My friend Karen, who manages the office of this incredible ministry said to me in the cafeteria, most faith filled tone, “Chaplain, we just need to stand still and watch our God do what our God does.” That wasn’t all she said...but it was all I needed.

That’s it! Just needed to stand still! This could only be done in complete confidence in the power of the God Who Provides All Things.

Within days, we had met (and exceeded) our goal of $4500. Our ‘miracle’ match was on the way, and I just stood there and took it all in with utter amazement!

To all of you who prayed, who gave, and who believed that this day would come and to all of you who served the children and their fathers in any way I testified to you this day, that OUR GOD IS FAITHFUL! GOD be the Glory! Great things He has done!

There is so much more to be said...but for now, let me encourage you to “…stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.”

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

The Tremendous Need for Earnest Prayer
By Bruce Cannon
Mitchell County

There are so many reasons the Church needs to earnestly pray. First, a careful study of people living around our community has revealed that an overwhelming percentage do not attend Church. In fact, it is estimated in some western North Carolinas areas the percentage of people that do not attend can range as high as 75%. When one looks at the attendance trends of all denominations it is noted that most congregations have gotten significantly smaller in size over the past decades.

A second reason for prayer concerns the rise of activities the Bible refers to as “iniquity”. In Matthew 24:12 the Scriptures state that in the latter days “iniquity shall abound.” This is simply a “catch all” category for the actions we are seeing so prevalent today such as drug use, the breakdown of the home, the lack of a work ethic, criminal activities and so forth.

A third similarity is easily seen in that the smaller and weaker the Church gets, the greater influence iniquity will have over a society. It is the voice of the Church, forcefully used by the Spirit of God that holds evil in check. And if the Church is frail, evil will abound.

And while all of these things are true and seemingly leave us without hope, the truth could not be further from that. God has always used the dark times to draw a remnant of believers to prayer, faithfulness, concern and so forth. Someone has said that the darker the night, the brighter the light.

It is the time for the Church to be filled with passion for her Lord and perform extravagant displays of lavish love. But what better place to exhibit boundless zeal and holy passion than in the place of prayer!

Read these great Scriptures concerning prayer and take to heart the promises made.

John 15:7 - “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

Luke 11:9 - And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Psalm 31:17 - The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

The psalmist asks in Psalm 43:5, "Why art thou cast down, O soul? why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.”

It’s not time to be discouraged, defeated or depressed! It’s time to be filled with hope because God the Creator of the universe will hear our prayers and will answer. Pray with me that this present darkness will give way to a glorious time of revival and movement of the Lord as our King hears our prayers and will send a great revival in our land.

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

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August 2018 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 8
By Doug Harrell

Many of us are or have been blessed with wonderful parents that have taught and trained us correctly and hopefully shared the importance of developing a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I am fortunate to be one of those that has been blessed in all regards.

Thirty years ago, my wife Barbara and I were home working together on the farm, hunting together and just spending time together as a couple. We made that move to the mountains and are still living here and if the Lord is willing that will be my home until it is time for us to go to our eternal home.

The twenty-eight years here has been a blessing beyond description. Now I know that many of you cannot make a move to come here to look at parents, but if you can, it is well worth the sacrifice to do so. The Commandment, “Honor Thy Father and Mother that your days may be many” is the only one with a promise attached to it. Dad and I were always close but able to spend twenty-two years working together on the farm, hunting together and just spending time together as a couple. We made that move to the mountains and are still living here and if the Lord is willing that will be my home until it is time for us to go to our eternal home.

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For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16

Fundraising

By Lisa Ellis

Kingsport, Tennessee

According to the Oxford Dictionary the meaning of the word “Fundraising” is the seeking of financial support for a charity, cause or other enterprise. One source said that the term “fundraising” was first used in 1560 but basically the act of gathering funds for some purpose had existed long before then. We know for sure it was practiced in the Old Testament. A noted example is found in Exodus 35: The Lord instructed Moses to have the people bring their willing gifts. It was not until the latter part of the 20th century that the construction of the Tabernacle. More than enough gold, silver, bronze, fine fabrics, animal skins, oil and precious stones were given. The “Tabernacle Building Fund” was a huge success!

Today with most fundraisers those contributing to the cross receive something in return. Perhaps a bowl of cookies sold at the store entrance or magazines, popcorn and candy being offered at your door by neighbor kids. Pancake breakfasts, spaghetti suppers or fish fries are often used as fundraisers for service clubs. Church youth groups raising money for a mission trip are well known for their car washes and car washes are willing to take a week out of their summer break to repair a house or conduct a backyard Bible Club I’ll gladly contribute to in spite of the mudslides!

What it contributing to a fundraiser would assure you that at your deeds would you go to heaven? Would you “buy in into” it? The Catholic Church teaches that the souls of those who are deceased are kept in “purgatory.” Purgatory is defined by the Catholic Church as “a place of prayer and penance.” The souls of those who die in the State of Grace are sent to heaven. Those who die in a state of Sin are sent to Purgatory. Only those who are in a state of Grace may enter heaven. Purgatory is a temporary state. Souls are cleansed of venial sins and can get there the grace necessary to enter the joy of heaven. Members of the Church are given the opportunity to reduce the amount of punishment for sins and lessen the time spent in purgatory by way of indulgences. Indulgences are earned by performing certain acts which are approved by the Church. There are 5 classes of indulgences: the first class includes the 5 plagues of Egypt; second class includes the seven last words of Christ on the cross; the third class includes the seven sacraments of the Church; the fourth class includes the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit; the fifth class includes the seven virtues.

The Church has always recognized the spiritual and emotional value of indulgences. For this reason, the Church has encouraged the faithful to participate in activities that promote the advancement of the Church. For example, the faithful are invited to participate in the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The goal is to promote a deeper understanding of the Church’s heritage and to encourage greater participation in the Church’s mission. The Catholic Church is dedicated to promoting the advancement of the Church and to encourage greater participation in the Church’s mission. The Catholic Church is dedicated to promoting the advancement of the Church and to encourage greater participation in the Church’s mission.
Man and woman today are seeking various kinds of freedom. In many places of the world, people are gathering in crowds and shouting, "Freedom!"

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

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

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

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

Mr. Graham did not feel that way. He wished that we should have freedom of religion, but not freedom from religion. "Blinded is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 145:12). If we push God aside, may God have mercy upon our nation!

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

What, then, is truth? People seek for that, too, as they seek for freedom. The scientist seeks truth about the physical universe. The philosopher tries to discover truth about human existence. The psychologist looks for truth about the action and reaction of the human mind. At the end of his life, Gautama Buddha said, "I am still searching for truth." But here is a man, a giant among men, who appears on the horizon. He stands before His neighbors and friends and declares, "I am the truth!" (John 14:6).

What an astounding claim. He is the secret of all truth—all psychological truth, all sociological truth, all scientific truth, all philosophical truth, all religious truth.

The Secret of the Universe

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

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

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

God Demands a Commitment

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

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

When you come to Christ, you are in a situation that is real. If you do not choose what Christ said was true, then "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed" (John 8:36).

What is this freedom? First, He frees you from the penalty of sin. I could preach from morning until night, describing what sin is. But I do not need to. You know that you have sinned against God.

We break the laws of God. We fail God. We fall short of His requirements. We are sinners. And this sin has done something—it has alienated us from God. Our sin comes between us and God, and He has to hide His face from us and will not hear us. You may laugh at this. But remember: The Bible says that "for who knows any man at all sin" (Proverbs 14:9) You can say that you offenses are small and don’t amount to anything. But God is a pure and righteous and holy God, and He is your sight, you have caused offense; you have caused a cloud to come between you and God. You are separated from God so that your prayers cannot be answered, and all of our religious actions mean nothing in his sign. You can try to cover up your sins, but God says that you cannot get away with it.

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

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

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

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

Forgiven: is the Power

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

It may be that sin is standing ever you with a whip and lashes you across the back. You protest, “But I don’t want to commit this sin. I don’t want to tell this lie, I don’t want to get drunk. I don’t want to get involved with that person.” But you yield to the domination of sin—you are a slave to the sin. The very thing you say you will not do again you do. It becomes worse and worse as you grow older. Your heart gets harder and harder, until finally there is death and judgment and hell.

But when you know the truth, the truth shall make you free. How wonderful! Sin is no longer in the throne room of my life. Christ sits there, and as I daily, moment by moment, yield my memberships to Him, He puts my title in order. Satan no longer has the power over my life that he once had. Sin is no longer in command. Oh, to be sure, I slip and fall, but Christ is there to pick me up and put His arm around me and to love me.

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

From The Holy Bible, New King James Version.

Find freedom in Christ today.
Home
By Preacher Chris Kathbone
Mitchell County

Summer is in full swing! Hot weather, mowing, vacation, thunderstorms, gardening, etc... Where? Sometimes summer vacation is so busy it sure doesn’t seem like much of a vacation. Well, kids are off from school, but most parents only get a week or two, if that, for vacation. We were fortunate and blessed enough to travel to the coast for a week as a family. I’m not necessarily all that fond of the beach because of the heat. The rest of the family seems to enjoy it for the most part so I’m ok to visit for a few days.

The way our schedule worked out we were gone for 2 weeks in a row. One week for family vacation and another to Caswell for youth camp. So, I’ve had to endure two weeks of hot weather! Heat isn’t necessarily my favorite weather. I’m more of a spring and fall kind of fellow myself. When I hear someone talk of how they love hot weather, I just have to shake my head.

When I’m away from the mountains it sometimes feels as if I’m just lost and wandering around. The mountains, hills, and hollows are all landmarks to a mountain boy. Seems as though the land all looks the same when it’s flat. No mountain range to guide you, no valley to travel through that you know leads to a certain place. Mountains to me are my home. Though I pray my heart would follow the Lord where He may lead, I sure hope He keeps me in the mountains. The mountains have been my home my entire life. Apart from visiting a couple other places short term, these mountains have been it for me, and you know what, I’m completely fine with that! Years ago, when in between jobs, I spent about a month in Florida. On that trip my favorite thing was that the weather was nice!

Home is where memories are made. Many people say that though they like to visit other places, it’s always good to get back home. Home is familiar. Home is comforting. Home is where our family lives. Home is where we raise our children. Home is where we live our lives. Home is where we die. Home is where we eventually all go to. Home is something that is a part of us.

Evangelist Abram realized that this world wasn’t his eternal home. Hebrews 11:16 teaches us that Abraham by faith obeyed God when God called him to journey to the land of promise. By faith, he journeyed in the land God had promised him as a strange country. He dwelt with Isaac and Jacob in tents, not building a permanent dwelling. Even with the blessing of giving them a land to dwell in, Abraham understood that it was all temporary and that one day he would be moving to his real house!!!! Verse 16 states, “For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

Verse 13-16 teaches us that all those great examples of faith were convinced of the promises of God, embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. They were seeking and desiring a better country, a heavenly home, a place, a city God has prepared for His people!

God’s people have always realized that his world is not our real home. Even though there are great blessings in what God has given us here in this world, it pales in comparison to what lies ahead for God’s people. We must be careful to not forget that we will be going to our heavenly home one day. Those who have been born again by their faith in Christ have something even better to look forward to. The longer I live in this wicked world, the more I have a desire to go home. Don’t get me wrong, I love the life God has blessed me to have here. So many blessings He has bestowed. But there is a longing in my heart to see my Savior, to dwell in the land where sin, sickness, death, disease, and heartache are not present. I well remember the verse I said in John 14:1-3: “Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions; if ye were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may also be.”

My friends, as much as we may love our home down here, it is only temporary. Are you ready for home? Have you trusted Jesus as your personal Savior? Are you ready for the return of Jesus when He comes to take His children to the eternal home He has prepared for them? Carislian have you become so caught up in your home here that you often forget this is not really home? Do you long for that home Jesus has prepared? Are you making preparations for His return? Oh, how I pray you’re ready! Oh, how much Jesus loves us! Regardless of what this world may think, keep looking up, for Jesus is coming on one day to take us home!

Preacher Chris Kathbone serves as Pastor at Mine Creek Baptist Church.
North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry

To Hold Senior Adult Leadership Event in Boone

By Carol Layton
Western North Carolina

North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) will hold three Senior Adult Ministry Regional Leadership Gatherings this fall. The western gathering will be held at Greenway Baptist Church in Boone on September 20.

Mark your calendar for the gathering nearest you!

- **Western NC**: Greenway Baptist Church, Boone
  **Saturday, September 20, 2018**
- **Eastern NC**: Hayes Barton Baptist Church, Raleigh
  **Saturday, October 6, 2018**
- **Central NC**: NCBAM Thomasonville
  **Saturday, October 13, 2018**

All events are held 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

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

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Evergreen Church

Marriage and Grace

By Rev John H McCoy
Room Mountain, Tennessee

Paul provides a good deal of information in 1 Corinthians 7 about three realities having to do with marriage and grace it takes to sustain it. Reality is a hard thing to live with. We all tend to be idealistic, especially when it comes to our closest relationships. We’ve all had dreams of our marriage, or for our spouses, or for ourselves. But we must take off the mask of perfection and live with the reality of our humanity. The first principle we see in this chapter relates to sexual intimacy in marriage (1 Cor. 7:3–5), and it applies to the intimacy of life and conversation. Paul speaks of rights and duties, and you will notice that everything is reciprocal. This is the first reality of marriage. Marriage requires mutual usefulness. The application of this is broader than only to sexual intimacy. To operate completely unselfishly in this or any other realm takes grace—grace to accept, to forgive, to respect, to affirm, and to maintain grace to give, and grace to receive gracefully. If you are not yet married and if you tend to regard being more selfish than not if you’re the type who clings to your own rights stubbornly, then please do the world a favor and don’t get married. Marriage will constantly challenge you to release your rights and give without getting back. The second reality of marriage is highlighted in 1 Corinthians 7:10–13. Marriage is a lifelong commitment. Unless you’re ready to make one of these, do not get married. Maybe you got married before you knew the Lord, and have now come to know Him, but your spouse has not. That doesn’t change your commitment. Yes, there are exceptional circumstances, though they are rare. But the basic rule that I would underscore here is this: When you marry, you marry for life. Your spouse expects you to stay for life. It does something to a marriage when you can cast off your partner to work through your differences. What does it take to stay? It takes grace! There’s a third reality: Marriage involves moulting times. Again, it takes grace to get through them. These are from a lifetime of trial and difficulty. Moulting is from the old, sinful nature. Trouble from children, neighbors, extended family, and even church squabbles. Trouble from the times in which we live. On the front end of marriage, you need to realize that you are automatically going to have troubles. I don’t care how often you go to Bible classes or how much time you spend in church you will be tried, and you will need a lot of grace in your home. Truly great people in the Kingdoms of God are not usually the ones who make the headlines. In fact, they seldom are. I have found that the folks who really make a difference in homes and lives are not even known very well in their communities. Great people are people who show love and grace to others without any expectation of external reward. My point is that you not limit the principles revealed in this chapter to the home, though this passage seems to suggest that directly. You should understand, whether single or married, that these same qualities are needed in every area of your life for you to become truly great. Let us remember that Marriage is a gift (vv. 1–9), and not everybody has the same gift. Some people have more self-control than others. People remain unmarrried for different reasons (v. 16–12), and each one must know the will of God. Marriage is a ministry (vv. 10–16). He addressed people who had been converted after marriage and who wondered if they should remain with their unsaved spouses, “Yes,” said Paul, “because you might win them to Christ.” But even Christian spouses can have a wonderful ministry to each other as they pray in the Lord and live each other (Eph. 5:22). Marriage is a calling (v. 17–24). When you become a Christian, that does not annul what you were before you trusted Christ. Jews are still Jews, slaves are still slaves, and married people are still married. But now, with the Lord’s help, you can fulfill that calling in a greater way. Marriage is a challenge (v. 25–40). Paul uses the blessings of marriage, but he does remind us of the burdens that marriage brings, especially when the times are tough. Building a Christian home is a great ministry, but nobody should enter into it lightly or carelessly. “Success in marriage involves much more than finding the right mate. It also requires being the right mate.”

John McCoy is pastor of Evergreen church in Room Mountain, Tennessee and also chaplain at Blue Ridge Christian Nursing Center.

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August 2018 - Blue Ridge Christian News: page 12
Salt and Light on the West Coast
By: Franklin Graham

Franklin Graham's Decision America California Tour covered 900 miles of the Golden State, from Escondido to Redding. At each stop, Franklin preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ and called on Californians to pray, vote and engage in the political process.

I recently returned from preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in 10 strategic California cities, calling on God’s people to fervently pray for their state and our troubled nation during our Decision America California Tour.

It was an incredible time! In 17 days, we covered nearly 900 miles from Escondido in the south to Redding in the north, with stops also in Pasadena, Oxnard, Bakersfield, Fresno, Modesto, Santa Clara, Berkeley and Chico.

In every city, thousands of people filled parks and outdoor venues in the average attendance of the children’s events proceeding for the Golden State, where progressive state and city governments have openly targeted churches and Christians through restrictive legislation hostile to Biblical values.

In Berkeley, a radical leftist, I preached at beautiful Cesar Chavez Park, aimed at one of California’s best known political activists. I preached at Rev. Jesse Jackson’s Watts United to save and rededicate. There, by the San Francisco Bay, we prayed for Gov. Jerry Brown, state lawmakers, law enforcement and others who make the state run every day.

Members of the Bikers for Christ joined us several nights to pray for our meetings and to ask God to bring revival to California.

At the Stanislaus County Fairgrounds in Turlock, just outside of Modesto, we celebrated the God-given principles called the Modesto Manifesto that were outlined by my father and his evangelistic team way back in 1944. If Americans still held to that kind of integrity, we would be a far better place.

I called our Tour “Piercing the Blue Wall,” referring to California’s intransigent, godless liberalism that hasaken over so many universities, school boards, local and state governments.

The results have been a state that leads the way for the secular-progressive movement. At its core, this is a radical, biased agenda against the Christian foundations that have long undergirded our nation.

On June 5, the day we concluded our Tour in Redding, voters were headed to the polls to cast votes in crucial statewide primary elections. I encouraged the more than 57,000 people who attended our rallies to study the issues and vote for those candidates who were more closely aligned with Biblical values.

Can you imagine the difference it would make if Christians were elected to city halls, legislature and school boards, like Dallas Museum of Las Vegas? What if California were to lead the way? Would that be something?

That’s why I asked everyone to make prayer their first priority. It’s Almighty God alone who can change a person’s heart, and in whose hand lies all power and sovereignty over men, rulers and nations (Proverbs 21:1). Repentance has always been the key to personal renewal and national revival.

I thank God that as we moved across the state, scores of men, women and children stood to confess Christ as their Lord and Savior. My hope is that they, in turn, will share their newfound faith in Jesus with families and neighbors. That’s the power of the Gospel.

In August, I am headed into another season of progression and liberalization—the beautiful but spiritually starved Pacific Northwest. Starting Aug. 1, I will begin a seven-city tour of Oregon and Washington—states that have directly targeted and fined Christian business owners like Forrill Burnette Sturman in Richland, Wash.; bakers Azcon and Melissa Klein in Portland, Ore.; and drugstore owner Kevin Steenstra in Olympia, Wash. simply because of their Biblical convictions on same-sex marriage and abortion.

The Pacific Northwest is one of the least Church and least evangelized regions of the United States. Evangelicals are far outnumbered by people who say they are without faith in any church. I can’t think of a better place to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and to see souls won for Him.

For Christians who attend, I will encourage them to participate in civic affairs, to cast their votes in important midterm elections and to even consider running for local and state offices. Believers are salt and light, not to be stored or hidden in a cellar, but to be a visibly active in the midst of a corrupt culture.

The prophet Jeremiah preached to the people of Babylon who were enslaved 70 years in the alien, idol-filled land of Babylon. It was a terrible time in Israel’s history, but tucked into the biblical narrative is a surprising verse: “Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare” (Jeremiah 29:7).

Rather than let the people of Israel wallow in bitterness and anger against their captors, Jeremiah told them to pray for their rulers and be constructive.

I don’t know what the next few years or decades will bring. Only God does. But I know He has given us a brief window of time to do all we can for the sake of righteousness. We can still call people to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We can still pray for revival.

This is no time for Christians to hole up and hide from engagements with our culture. We are not of the world, as Jesus said (John 17:14), but we must certainly are in the world. We have the responsibility for our state, and especially for the sake of our children and grandchildren, to do all we possibly can to influence our communities with godly conduct.

John Wesley, the great English evangelist, preached that you should do all the good you can in all the places you can to all the people you can. That’s good advice for the believer today. Abraham Kuyper, a fervent Christian and former prime minister of the Netherlands, said, “This is not one square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ who is sovereign over all, does not cry, ‘Mine!’” God owns it all, and Christians should work hard in every sector of life for His glory and the welfare of all people.

I don’t know what the next few years or decades will bring. Only God does. But I know He has given us a brief window of time to do all we can for the sake of righteousness. We can still call people to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We can still pray for revival.

There is still a chance for our nation to call on the Name of the Lord and turn back to Him.

That’s certainly my prayer, and the reason we at the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association are always going to obey 2 Timothy 4:2, which says, “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season.”

Seek the well-being of your city, wherever you are. Pray for it. Get involved in every corner of public life you can for the sake of the Gospel. Live boldly for Christ, and trust Him completely. Work while it is still day (John 9:4), and let’s see what God will do. ©2018 BGEA

Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, English standard version. God loves you and has a plan for your life. Get to know Him right now.

Reverend Franklin Graham is President and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Samaritan’s Purse, an international Christian relief organization.

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

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Equals a Deficit in Peace
By Rev. Mark Creech

Proverbs 11:3 tells us how critical integrity is. It says, “The integrity of the upright shall guide them, but the perverseness of transgressors shall destroy them.” Simply put, honesty develops and sustains life, but dishonesty tears it down.

In December of 1994 syndicated columnist Bob Greene told an inspiring story about a teen named Rob Mow.

Rob played on the soccer team in his senior year at Wheaton Christian High School. In the final seconds of the big game against the favored team, Wabonsie Valley, with his team behind by only one goal, Rob was kicking the ball down the field, running at full speed toward the opposing team’s goal. Just before he made his play for the goal, he caught sight of the scoreboard and saw the clock displayed zeros all the way across. But like any good athlete, Rob went for the goal anyway and made it. The referee signaled that the goal was good, and the game finished in a tie.

The Wheaton fans cheered emanitively, while the Wabonsie Valley fans cried foul saying that the time had run out.

In that moment, Rob had a choice to make. He could be silent and avoid a loss. After all, it was the referee’s job to decide the call. Or he could do what was right.

Rob then asked the referee whether the official time was kept on the scoreboard or the referee’s stopwatch. The referee said the scoreboard time was official and then ran off the field. Rob went to his coaches and explained that just before his kick, he had seen zeros on the scoreboard clock. Since he hadn’t heard a whistle, he kept playing. Still, his goal was good, and he didn’t think it should count.

His coaches agreed, and so they went over to the opposing coaches, explained what happened, and conceded victory to Wabonsie Valley.

Bob Greene ended his article with this quote from Rob Mow: “Every time in your life you have an opportunity to do right, you should be thankful. For a person to know what right is, and then not to do it—that would be a sin. To have won the game—I mean, really, who cares? Doing the right thing is more important. It sets you apart.”

I suggest that we have a tremendous deficit of peace today, largely in part, because we have a tremendous deficit in honesty. A deficit in honesty equals a deficit in peace.

Lying seems to be the modus operandi of our politics. Some would argue it’s always been that way, but it seems worse than ever nowadays.

As a registered lobbyist for the Christian Action League of North Carolina, I was stung by a state lawmaker’s lie this week. In fact, it may not have simply been one lawmaker’s lie but a party of liars that smothered this preacher.

I’ll leave off mentioning names and circumstances. It’s enough to say that lying always conjures up a host of emotions from the deceived: anger, frustration, betrayal, just to mention a few, especially when you’ve been operating with others in good faith.

Several years ago, Paul Burk wrote an article titled, Honesty is the Best Politics. He said:

“Lying is one of the two constant temptations of politics. (The other is money.)

We even have a lexicon of political lying: spin, disinformation, mislead. Politicians have an unwritten code that sanctions deceit under certain circumstances. If you are asked a potentially embarrassing question against you, you don’t have to tell everything you know. A few years back, a state legislator was asked by a reporter if he had received a gold watch as a gift. The answer was no. Later the reporter called back—what about a gold-coated watch? ‘Yes,’ was the reply. ‘I got that one.’

Burk says that politics is like a poker game “in which players agree that sending misleading signals is acceptable.” Burk adds, ‘Most politicians see their professions in this light. The best politicians know instinctively what the limits are, and the worst ones never learn.’

Burk’s assessment was spot-on.

Someone protests, ‘This is terrible! What can be done about it?’ The cry of many is to ‘thrive the bans on our office.’ But the problem is really more complicated than the politicians who lie; it’s the culture of lying we have come to accept as normal. This culture of deceit is the enemy of our faith in each other, without which there can be no peace.

There’s an old story about a little boy who was once asked by his mother to define a lie. He replied, ‘Mother, she is an abomination to the Lord, but a very present help in time of trouble.’ This is the problem with duplicity, double-dealing, trickery and guile. It seemingly produces a blessing for the moment, but it’s one that ultimately morphs into a curse.

It’s hard to believe that politicians will ever be freed of the pervasiveness of lying. Nevertheless, a few in the profession with the integrity and courage of a young Rob Mow could significantly change everything.

It could happen. Let’s pray for it. Let’s work for it. We should start to expect it. It’s the way of peace.

Reverend Dr. Mark Creech is Executive Director of the NC Christian Action League. You may contact him at marckcreech@christianactionleague.org or 919-787-5600

Sudoku Solution

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Clint’s Chronicles on the Funny Farm

The Rest of the Story
Doug Harrell
Well Clint and Daddy D did catch the groundhog that had taken up residence under the porch and the hog, Racing and Sowes, were the daddy and mama hogs, all lived until harvest (slaughter). Clint was always taking it all to the limits and creating havoc along with the laughter filled way. His antics were always something to behold.

Funny Farm
Dear Friends,
When you see me it’s hard to decide what story to share next with 50,000 of my closest friends. Often times people are perplexed as to why I am willing to relay tales of my incompetence month after month. I tell them that I am a provespective that there is a merciful God Who looks after the fools of this world... and I am chief among them.

The Farmer’s Appointment
It was early October, 2010, and time for the Family Fun Festival at Harrell Hill Farms. This annual harvest celebration is truly a wonderful event highlighted by Gospel music, face-painting for children, hay rides, excellent BBQ pork and other goodies, and the making of old time syrup molasses. If you haven’t attended this country festival you should make plans to come this year on Saturday, October 4th! Anyway, back to the story.

Clint caught the groundhog in the Spring of 2010, and Farmer Doug was the caretaker. He, with his very heavy duty, size of the piglet was more than a couple of inches shorter than his Tanner’s. Clint was doing quite a bit of work in the barn and handled the hog with his powerful arm. He was always looking at what was on the minds of his people.

“Get in, I wanna show you something,” he said with a waggy smile. He was usually tentative when summoned this way but I knew it was not about the request he had. I climbed into the passenger seat having no idea what would come next.

We made our way to the barn, weaving slightly from left to right (Daddy D’s eyesight wasn’t what it once was!) until we arrived at Farmer Doug and Barbara’s farm house and parked in the driveway. “C’mon on,” was my only instruction, and I went.

Daddy D carried an old, oil-stained brown bag which appeared heavy in hand. As we approached the front porch he began digging in the bag, first tossing me a couple worn red “sheep’s nose” apples (I think that’s what they called them), then he handed me some sticks and dried leaves, and finally unveiled a rusted contraption of some sort. I confess, I quickly identified the first three centers but couldn’t imagine what would do with the ninth, rusty, medieval torture device. Soon I would know.

Setting the Sted Trap
Please understand, Daddy D’s hands were pretty grubby... I didn’t mind telling the man didn’t have a single digit. I can only imagine how his hands would become so... ummm, weathered would be a nice term but they were a mess.

I wasn’t quite sure how to hold a pair of hoes because his fingers couldn’t do it! At any rate, he said “I’m going to tell you what to do, but you have to follow my instructions. I would do this myself but my fingers can’t manipulate the trip like they used to. Now, don’t do anything until I tell you.” Always the eager learner, I agreed to the challenge.

Now what he began, “we’ve got a groundhog under the porch here and it’s digging tunnels all the way under the house. We’re going to cut this trap to my and get rid of.” By this time I am getting pretty excited, just think – “Farmer Clint the Trapper”! It just had a certain ring to it, don’t you think?

Another thing you have to know about Daddy D, he was fun and mischievous much of the time I spent with him, but... he was VERY serious when teaching me things which might be considered dangerous... “Clint, don’t ever go into the woods with a chainsaw by yourself, be sure you have a partner!”... or, “Son, you’ve gotta watch where you’re going with that tractor and hay rake, you’re running the risk of getting your foot stuck!”

“Always check to make sure the power is off on the fence before you climb over!” The warnings were endless.

Daddy D was a long time educator and was about crumpling his teaching voice. I’m not sure exactly what he planned to say but I have innate recall of next comment... “Hang it, boy, you’re going to kill yourself!” (Oops, I think I made him mad!) You see, in my mind I already had graduated to “Farmer Clint the Trapper” and had the jaws of that steel monster wide open. As I went to put it on the ground it snapped with the force of a 500 lb. gator, narrowly missing my right hand. And I thought to myself, “Yeah, Daddy D said you have to follow my instructions. Guess I failed that test.”

I wiped my brow and looked him in the eye as Daddy D “dressed me down” for a little while longer – “a terrible whuppin’ I deserve”, then we went about the business of setting the trap. With his very best fingers actually did the “setting”... I was allowed only to sprinkle a few leaves and twigs in the vicinity. Daddy D put those sheep’s heads nearly as bad: “That’ll get the job done,” he said, and he winked at me – you know, that ‘wink’ we get from a parent which actually means, “its okay now, I still love you, let’s move on.”

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Busy boiling the juice fromorghum cane. This is a very tedious process which requires continuous skimming to remove the various impurities and proteins which rise to the surface. It forms premix form – similar to the slime used in Ghost Busters – and it must be scooped into buckets for disposal. Anyway, there were a couple 5 gallon buckets of what I call “molasses scum” beside the pan.

“Hey, Farmer Clint, why don’t you take some of that up to the pigs? They will be your friends for life,” Farmer Doug laughed. Now that was rather funny since you may remember that I had some rather unpleasant encounters with these aggressive piggies earlier in my stay on the farm.

Obediently, dutifully, I grabbed a bucket of scum and walked to my truck. After having nearly choked off my hand with a grounding trap-thingsamabob, I was sent following directions to the left. So I left a 5 gallon bucket full of molasses dripping just inside the piggy fence. I looked forward to a new, improved relationship with the hogs after this little gift.

Too Much Of a Good Thing?

It has been said that too much of a good thing can be a bad thing. Apparently this is true of molasses and piggies. The next morning, as we enjoyed Doug’s petted buckwheat pancakes with molasses mixed with butter, it started:

Doug: “Hey, Clint... ummmm, don’t you give molasses to the pigs?”

Me: “Yeah, and they REALLY like them.”

Doug: “Well thanks for that. I wonder how much did you give?”

Me: “Just one of the gallon buckets full.”

Doug: “Oh, a WHOLE 5 gallon bucket full?”

Me: “Yeah, but it was a couple inches from the top cause the rest spilled out into the truck bed.”

Doug: “Hummm...” – now that crooked, wily, half-cooked smile overtaking his face.

Me: “Now what? You tell me to give the pigs some molasses, I give the pigs molasses. Didn’t you want me to give them molasses?”

Doug: “Yes, I did. I was thinking more like a cupful in their evening feed. But you gave them 5 gallons? Right?”

Me: “Yes I did. Are they okay?”

Doug: “Hummm, not really. When I drove by all 5 of them were lying on their backs with their feet straight up in the air.”

Me: “To paraphrase, “DANG IT, BOY, YOU ARE GOING TO KILL YOURSELF!” (Oops, I think I made him mad!)

Me: “Darn it, Doug, I’m so sorry. I thought you meant... oh never mind.”

Doug: “Once again, it’s your fault, Clint. I forgot that you’re still new to the farm. I need to communicate better, to let you know exactly what I’m saying.

You must know that now I’m feeling pretty much like the village idiot. I’ve disappointed Daddy D by nearly severing my arm; now I may have killed Doug’s pigs, What next?”

Doug: “There’s one thing about it, Pollard.”

Me: “Yeah, what’s that?”

Doug: “If they don’t die beforehand, that will be okay. They will be sweet-usering BBQ next fall!”

I received that message... my second “wink” of the day. (And those pigs lived until the next October.)

Still humbled in the hills,
Farmer Clint

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All the answers in this game contain the word “air”. Fill in the word or words by putting one letter in each blank.

1. ____________  
   Lam barge (Jeremiah 4:7 - NIV)

2. ______________  
   Deent snoop (1 Corinthians 6:11 - NIV)

3. _______________  
   Noah’s ark requirement (Genesis 6:19)

4. _______________  
   A crown of splendor (Proverbs 16:31 - NIV)

5. _______________  
   Cefia locale (Acts 10:2 - NIV)

6. _______________  
   Essa wali (Genesis 27:3)

7. _______________  
   Bible twixr (1 Samuel 13:7 - NIV)

8. _______________  
   Join th Baptist’s clothes which (Matthew 21:4)

9. _______________  
   Eli’s final resting place (1 Samuel 4:8)

10. ___________  
    Shadow wal (2 King 20:11 - NIV)


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Morganton Baptist Church

A Plea for Godly Leadership
By Pastor Dan Quarilo
Burke County

Shortly before Moses passed from the scene, he cautioned the children of Israel against an attitude of complacency in the midst of blessing. After describing all the blessings, they would simply receive, he cautioned: “Then (at that point in time) beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage” (Deuteronomy 6:12). Moses recognized that man’s natural tendency would be to grow complacent in the midst of blessing. Tragically, Israel failed to heed Moses’ warning and became complacent. They did not drive out the inhabitants of the land and soon became just like the surrounding nations. They lost their distinction.

To try to bring them back to Himself, God sent various prophets whose messages were largely unheeded and even mocked at times. Eventually, God had enough and allowed the Assyrians to conquer northern Israel in 722 BC and the Babylonians to conquer the southern tribes ultimately in 586 BC. For seventy years, God’s people dwelt over one hundred miles away in a pagan land.

At the end of the seventy-year captivity of Judah by Babylon, God moved in the heart of a godly king named Cyrus to issue a decree in 539 BC that enabled the Jews to return to their homeland to rebuild the temple. Zebedee had the first wave of Jews over the nine-hundred-mile journey from Babylon to Jerusalem. When they arrived, they eagerly began work on the temple. The first order of business was the altar, followed by the foundation of the temple. By 536, the altar had been erected, and the foundation laid. Then came the problems. Opposition set in, and the work of God ceased. For the next six years, the work of God sat idle. Meanwhile, God used two prophets named Haggai and Zechariah to minister and stir the people to complete what they had begun.

In 648, Ezra led a second group to Jerusalem. His primary focus was on the spiritual restoration of the people, for the spiritual conditions were deplorable. In 444 BC, over ninety years since the original decree was issued by Cyrus, God moved Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls. Why the delay? Was it merely a matter of timing with God? Were the people content with the status quo? Were they overwhelmed by the nature of the project? We do not have answers to these questions, but God led Nehemiah to direct this badly needed project. The time in which he accomplished it was truly amazing.

For nearly a century, thousands of Israelites dwelt in the ruins of Jerusalem. For sixteen years, they were content to build their own homes while God’s house lay waste. Two leaders redirected a large group of people to reconsider their priorities. For over ninety years, they were content to dwell in a city that was anything but secure. God led one man to lead a project that would alter the nation for years to come.

Without a doubt, we live in perils times as a nation. God is increasingly less welcome in our society; tragically, He is not even welcome in many of our churches. Many Christians are not passionate for God and do not want a life of usefulness; they prefer instead a life of convenience and entertainment. Without a doubt, there is a great need for God’s people to stand up and lead in a direction that is pleasing to the Lord. Are you one who will be with the status quo society? Or are you willing to be that individual whom God uses to be different and lead accordingly? Will you be a Zebedee, Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra, or Nehemiah and rise up against the current and popular trend for God?

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

Thus hath the Lord GOD showed unto me, and beheld a basket of summer fruit. Amos 8:1

Bridge42 Church

Forgotten Gospel: The Nations
By Jason Koon
Burke County

This is the fifth article in a series on central truths of the gospel that are slowly becoming endangered in today’s Church culture.

The Nation:

One of my favorite shows is Dr. Who, and one of my favorite moments is always the first time a new character sees the inside of the Doctor’s spaceship/time machine. Somehow, his ship bends the fabric of spacetime, so while it’s tiny on the outside – it’s massive on the inside; room after room, including a swimming pool and a tennis court. A new character’s disbelief in these moments reminds me of the attitude with which I should be approaching the message of the Gospel – room after room of new discoveries, truths that seem too good to be true. However, in our individualistic, Americanized understanding of the gospel, we are often in danger of losing the sense of the bigness of it all. Instead, seeing it merely as a personalized invitation to repent, believe, live, and nothing more. Now while, this is obviously a very important piece of the message, if that’s where we stop we miss out on the Gospel as this glorious announcement that the King has come. His Kingdom is coming, and He is conforming all of us who believe into His image, so we will be fit for life in His Kingdom.

In Revelation 7:9-10, we see a clear picture of this grand overarching Kingdom theme. And I looked, and there was, surrounding the throne, bowing down in worship before God, a great, uncountable number of people. People from every nation, from every people group, from every race, language, socio-economic status, anyone and everyone who has trusted Jesus was standing around the throne, united in one singular purpose. The Worship of its creator and Savior. Of course, I am paraphrasing, but this is the heart of what this passage is trying to communicate. God is creating – in the words of Dr. Tim Mackie – “one large multi-ethnic family.”

Mackie’s use of the word “multi-ethnic” brings our Scripture’s emphasis on all kinds of people from all nations. God is not just building a Kingdom, and if other kinds of people end up coming in, that’s okay. God intentionally sends us out to every nation, every language, and every people group, because He is intentionally including every imaginable kind of person. This is not extra credit; it’s foundational. For this reason, it’s not enough for a Church to say, “we accept people from different races if they came.” Instead, we must be actively breaking down those walls, seeking out the kind of Kingdom diversity Revelation describes. And if we’re not, if we’re limiting God, and possibly even finding ourselves in direct opposition to His plan for us to make humanity into one large multi-ethnic family.

So, we must ask ourselves, are our Churches reflecting this Kingdom ideal? And if not, why are we falling short? Because we should ask ourselves the question, “the Church is a preview of the coming attraction of the Kingdom,” and if Revelation 7:9-10 is how the coming kingdom will look, then how can our Church lack right here and now? My Church is not the most diverse Church out there, but we’re doing better than we were. We are not becoming a Church that accepts people from other races, we are becoming a Church who desires them, who is learning to seek this kind of Kingdom diversity out. We pray that God would send people from other nations and tribes to us because we want our Church to accurately represent what God’s Kingdom is going to look like.

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

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Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge

An Ordinary Shave
By Brent Price, Outreach Coordinator
Mitchell County

A while back my wife bought me a new razor. Unlike the multi-blade razors that promise the closest shave you’ve ever experienced, this razor is equipped with a single, double-sided blade. To change the blade you twist the handle and two little “doors” open. Replace the blade, twist the handle in the opposite direction to lock it in place and you’re ready to go.

Some of you older folks might remember. It’s not a razor that easily plows through two days of beard. You have to take your time and concentrate in order to get a close shave.

Since I tend to shave quickly, I usually forego hot towels and shaving cream. My revolutionary multi-blade razor enables me to fly through the task. However, the other day I decided to do it right.

I soaked my beard with a hot towel and broke out the shaving mug. Staring at the edge of one sideburn, I slowly drew the razor toward my chin. Every stroke that followed was deliberate and methodical resulting in a perfectly close shave.

Looking into the mirror I smiled and remembered. This is the way my daddy taught me to shave. Too many times to count, I watched him prepare to go. He never altered his routine.

Hot water in a mug was transformed into a thick lather that was applied with a badger-hair brush. Loop strokes were punctuated by lifted facial expressions that stretched the sooks and crannies of his face.

I always knew when he was finished. He ran his hand over his face, cocked his head back and forth and swished the razor one last time before tapping it at the rim of the sink. A couple of twists of the brush cleaned the sink of whiskers and it was over.

Shaving was merely a task Daddy chose to perform daily. Yet, I think he would agree that those times when we “shaved together” were moments made holy through the ritual of an ordinary act.

Help someone across an icy parking lot. Feed bread together Sit with someone and cry together. Teach a child to whistle. Deliver a casseroles. Anoint someone with the precious ointment of grace or hope or peace. Do whatever needs to be done and do nothing when nothing is to be done but simply be present.

You might be surprised by something you weren’t counting on, something you needed before you knew you needed it. Something that reminds you that nothing is really ordinary at all.

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

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Altapass Baptist Church

Working Together
By Brother Marcus Benfield
Mitchell County

Hello dear friends. I trust you are enjoying your summer. As we enter the final weeks of Summer vacation for our children and churches are trying to get their Vacation Bible Schools finished up things are still very busy. I’m sure many are ready for a vacation from summer vacation. However, as Christians there is nowhere to let up. Our work and witness must continue as long as we have breath and strength. Soon they in Matthew 28:14 that “Whoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.”

With that scripture in mind may we be looking for opportunities to be the hands and feet of Jesus as often as possible. One such opportunity is coming up in August. The community of faith is coming together to host our Annual Back to School Bash. It is scheduled for August 11th with a rain date of August 18th. It will be held on Sky view Circle behind the Cherry Dealer. We will have free food, school supplies, shoes, and other items as well as many inflatables from Funtime Inflatables available for the enjoyment of the children of our communities. We will also have music throughout the day.

You may ask how can I help? it’s easy, you can get involved. Ask your pastor if you and your church can participate? This is not about any one church or denomination. It’s about the Christian community of faith reaching our neighbors in Jesus name. Jesus also said, “A house divided against itself cannot stand” Mark 3:25.

Our communities need to see us “The Body of Christ” come together as one and work together.

Many Pastors agree we need to work together and this is a tremendous opportunity to do so. I believe we need to seek out opportunities to work together more often as opposed to looking for excuses to be divided and separated.

May God help us to lay our personal preferences aside and allow our communities to be transformed by the power of the Gospel. Anyone who looks around can see we desperately need God’s power as we watch the effects of Drugs and Alcohol destroy our very own families and communities!

This is only one of many opportunities we are planning to bring our communities together. We are praying about having a community Revival service featuring a different local pastor and his choir each night as we come together to worship and pray and seek God’s face for Revival.

If you need further information, please call me at 828-590-3146 and I’ll do my best to answer any question you may have.

In closing, I ask all believers to fervently pray that Christ will remove the spirit of division from our area that we take back our communities and families from the clutches of Satan and Sin! We need Revival, but revival will never truly come until God’s people are truly one in Christ! An old Moravian preacher from yesteryear has well said “In Essentials Unity in Nonessentials Liberty, but in All things Charity.” It is my prayer we can see this happen for the Glory of God and for the sake of our families.

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

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Bits 'n Pieces

continued from page 29

We hope that this is a useful resource for our partners, friends and family in our community. Know that there are many people who do not have email addresses for these chores with your colleagues, networks, churches, and anyone who might find it useful.

Shoal Creek Baptist Church. We are planning an event called "Messy: Call" at Shoal Creek Baptist Church August 26, 2018 @ 5:00 PM. "Life is Messy; God is Good!" What is a mess? Is a fun for you? Anything, sticky, slimy, goopy, or gross— we've got it. Messy games all evening long for kids, youth, and young at heart. Join us for a fun-filled evening. Bring a change of clothes, for you will get messy!!!

Shoal Creek Baptist Church, 1867 US Hwy 19E, Burnsville, NC Contact Michelle: (255) 217-6310

August 19, 2018 Homecoming celebration at Shoal Creek Special Music program at 9:45 AM featuring Calvary's Touch (love offering to be received)

Homecoming worship service with guest speaker—Rev. Grey Fishman. Potluck lunch at the church following worship service

ASAP (Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project), in partnership with Duke University World Food Policy Center, University of North Carolina Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, and METHEC, will present the Healthy Eating in Practice Conference August 26-28, 2018, at the Cumn Grove Park Inn. Daphne Miller, M.D., author of Pharmacology, will give a keynote address on the intersection of farming, food, and health.

New Community Outreach Benefits Haywood County Families with Children B.E.A.R. Closet Baby Equipment and Resource Closet

Beginning Wednesday, March 21, 2018 the Haywood Parish Baby Equipment and Resource Closet (B.E.A.R.) located at Francis Cove United Methodist Church, 2301 Cynoes Cove Road, Waynesville, will begin a new outreach ministry in the local community. This is a shared ministry between five local United Methodist churches: Beeverdam, Elizabeth Chapel, Faith, Maple Grove, and Francis Cove that are reaching out to serve low income families and expectant parents struggling to care for their babies and children. The B.E.A.R. Closet will provide free gently used clothing (sizes preemies to 4 toddlers), shoes, baby equipment such as strollers, high chairs, swing, pack n' plays, bouncy seats, bathing and hygiene products, bedding items, as well as loving encouragement to expectant moms and parents. The outreach will be open the first and third Thursdays of every month 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. Please call (828) 476-8502 and leave a detailed message, and a B.E.A.R. Closet representative will return your call within 24 hours.

Maryland Community College—Allen Cook, Director, Maryland Small Business Center (828) 766-1255 acouch@maryland.edu

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By Mel Wood

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August 2018 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 19
right now, I’ve got you. I have made you altogether beautiful. I sang for this version of you, the one you feel is a mess. The one I’ve made you to be. Connect with me. Trust me. Love me. Be present with me. I’m here, inviting you to come reside with me. The I AM.”

Man, just picture it. Can you just imagine? I get called thinking about the party where Jesus invites me to come and sit in a cozy Holy Communion booth with him. It’s certainly a party to celebrate.

I’m slowly learning that as my yearning to be invited by Jesus is more and more, I yearn for my feet to be where Jesus is, and then to be most present there. To snuggle up in a cozy communion booth just as I am where I am invited to simple be me with the one who covers all. I think about the times that I’ve been broken and alone and I felt his invitation as he called me to just come and spend a little time with him. The times I was a little unsure where life was going to go, wait my next step was, where my feet were going to reside.

But here’s the thing.
When you spend time with Jesus… there is no place for fear.
Because in the name of Jesus, there is no room for fear. In Jesus, there is no need to fear.
He simply is, was, and will always be and his plans for your life is so so so much better than what you can imagine. So, hold tight and just run to Jesus. In the midst, in the heartbreak and the fear, just seek Jesus. I agree, it’s hard to trust. It’s hard to have unwavering faith. But, it’s always worth it to spend a little time with Jesus in a cozy communion booth as he whispers strength into you and calms your fears. HE IS, in fact, all you need.

Run to him and give your heart to him.
The I AM is inviting you.
Don’t be afraid anymore.
I promise, he is going to open doors in your life, beautiful and perfect in his time.
So, dance a little on the Holy ground God has given you as he invites you to come spend a little time with him, would you?
Fears are shut down at the mere mention of his name as he wraps you up and blows a cool calmness over your fears, imperfections, and doubts. So, let yourself be covered in the overwhelming love and grace of God and through every worry or fear, he will give you rest.
Jesus, help me to always be where you are and to always have my feet planted in you. Thank you for your eternal invitation to come be in your presence.

To be held, loved, and directed by you Jesus, is a Holy invitation that I will always accept.

Chelsea Blevins lives in Burnsville, attended Mountain Heritage High School and South College.

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Contemporary Glass at Penland Gallery

By Robin Dryer
Mitchell County

Alchemy was an early science famous for its attempts to turn lead into gold. Today, it’s used to describe murricular transformations. This makes Alchemy a fitting title for the current Penland Gallery exhibition of work by artists using glass in remarkable ways. The exhibition runs through September 16 with an opening reception on Saturday, August 4 from 4:30-6:30 PM.

Glass is a material with almost limitless artistic possibilities. The twelve artists in this exhibition create objects of mystery and complexity by working with the material’s chemical makeup, its optical properties, its ability to hold incredible detail, and the possibilities of layering and combining multiple processes.

Mark Reiser, who lives near Penland School, is represented in the show by two cast forms. They are made from glass that separates light into different colors, so the apparent color of the pieces can change depending on how they are lit. Nicholas Proulx’s vessels, by contrast, are completely clear but have visible patterns created by combining different formulations of clear glass that each refract light a bit differently.

Penland resident artist Dean Allison has several three-dimensional portraits included in the show. His complex process begins with a rubber impression of his model’s head. After many intermediate steps, the final result is a detailed bust cast from colored glass.

Nearby is Amber Conwell’s piece: an intricate assembly of glass leaves and flowers culled from recycled commercial glass waste and incorporating several vintage glass objects. Also, on display are several pieces by Kit Paulson, one of which is a flexible snake made from hundreds of linked glass rings. These are just some of the wonders that are waiting for visitors to Alchemy, which is part of the regional Summer of Glass. For information about all of the glass activities in the area, visit exploreasheville.com/summer-of-glass.

Running concurrently with this exhibition is a smaller show of contemporary jewelry titled Wear that includes work by artists who use materials in new ways to create exceptional wearable pieces. The Visitors Center Gallery has an ongoing display of objects that illuminate the history of Penland School, and the Lucy and the National Endowment for the Arts presents a selection of works by dozens of Penland-affiliated artists. On view outside the Penland Gallery are large sculptures in stone and steel by Daniel T. Back, Ross Haley, and Carl Newall, plus a structure designed by artist Meredith Briggel that invites visitors to stop for a few minutes and observe the clouds.

The Penland Gallery and Visitors Center is located at Penland School of Crafts on Colder Ridge Road, just off Penland Road in Mitchell County (near the town of Spruce Pine). It is the first building on the right as you enter the Penland campus. The gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 AM-5:00 PM and Sunday, Noon-5:00 PM; it is closed on Mondays. For more information call 828-765-4211 or visit penland.org/gallery.

Penland School of Crafts is an international center for craft education dedicated to helping people live creative lives. Located in Western 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 artists’ 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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1. _______  Put confidence in (Proverbs 3:5)
2. _______  Paul addressed them often (Ephesians 3:13)
3. _______  Permanent resident of Jerusalem
4. _______  Disciple or Benedict’s brother (Matthew 10:3, 46)
5. _______  Flaskburn among many sisters?
6. _______  He’s impressed Jesus (Mark 12:42)
7. _______  Aaron’s prophetic sibling (Ezokins 1:20)
8. _______  Dead church (Isaiah 1:13)
9. _______  Joel knew his fixed (Job 15:25)
10. _______  Hostile nation (Deut 3:16)


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Example: Coved on high (TTC)
1. FOM – The Jesus way of anging? (Mark 1:11)
2. COM – He’s saved (Genesis 1:12)
3. PITS – Believe, for our (Galatians 5:2-23)
4. GSW – Isaiah 41:31 (inspired song)
5. ATTP – Hot time to up (Christmastime)
6. FONR – God’s six-weeks’ promise (Acts 11)
8. WITF – Stony question (Luke 8:5)
9. YMPN – Bothies to Naomi (1&2 Thessalonians 8:15)
10. LMG – Divine Egyptian Command (Exodus 8:1)

The Ten Commandments

Solution: 1. Fishers of Men 2. Cost of Many Colors 3. Fruit of the Spirit

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What You Will Never See
By Jerry Lewis
McDowell County

Psalm 106 is a retelling of the history of Israel. In summary, the Psalmist confesses both his sin and the sin of his fathers (vs. 6). They rebelled at the Red Sea, “yet He saved them for his name’s sake.” Once they crossed the Red Sea they “believed his works; they sang his praise.” They had to see God work and then trust Him.

However, verse 13 gives the sad reality: “They soon forgot his works; they did not wait for his counsel.” Sin was followed by sin, disobedience multiplied by disobedience. Things got so bad that God was ready to kill them. “Therefore he said he would destroy them—had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him, to turn away his wrath from destroying them.” (vs. 23)

It didn’t get any better.
“Then they despised, murmured, did not obey, yoked themselves to Baal, ate sacrifices offered to the dead.” A plague broke out among them. “Then Pnuelus stood up and intervened, and the plague was stayed.” (vs. 30)

Two times they were near extinction—two times someone stood in the gap for them. Someone interceded. But it wasn’t enough. Moses and Phinehas died. Israel sinned even more.

Until Jesus. He came as the ultimate intercessor. On the cross, he stayed the wrath of God, interceding not only for Israel but for anyone who will trust Him. “For our sake, God made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

And Jesus’ work didn’t stop there. Three days later he was resurrected. Then he ascended. Now he intercedes.

Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. (Romans 8:34, ESV)

Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. (Hebrews 7:25, ESV)

My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. (1 John 2:1-2, ESV)

Moses’ intercession was limited to a certain event and time. Phinehas interceded and died. Jesus died to intercede! Now he lives to intercede! What you will never know is what he has interceded for in your life today. You will never know the pending danger, the looming temptation, the almost catastrophe that he stayed away by interceding. He saved you then and he’s saving you now—to the uttermost!

Thank God today for what you don’t know.

Jerry Lewis is Senior Pastor at Grace Community Church in Marion.
To Receive Grant Funds
By Amber Dilinger
Mitchell and Yancey Counties

Mountain Community Health Partnership (MCHP) is pleased to announce they are one of twelve organizations to receive one-time grant funding to combat the opioid crisis. Governor Cooper has announced that a total of $1.5 million in grant awards will be given to the twelve organizations. The purpose of these funds is to advance the goals of the NC Opioid Action Plan. It will enable MCHP to implement activities in our community that improve access to harm reduction, treatment, and recovery supports. "Community efforts to turn the tide on the opioid crisis deserve our support," Governor Cooper said. "These grants are another example of the collaborative effort we need to fight overdoses, save lives, and connect people to treatment statewide."

Mountain Community Health Partnership is a Federally Qualified Health Center serving Mitchell, Yancey, and surrounding counties. MCHP will use this funding to establish a network of peer support specialists and post-overdose response teams who can meet with people who are struggling with addiction where they are. Our residents are in desperate need of assistance in fighting the opioid epidemic. It has become increasingly clear that if we are to make an impact on this problem, we must move beyond the walls of our clinics and into the community to engage our neighbors. "I am thrilled to begin collaborating with community agencies in order to develop a post-overdose team. This effort is fueled by the needs of our communities, which like many others have been hard hit by chronic stress and overwhelm. MCHP is dedicated to helping our communities address the opioid crisis and this is the next step in a natural progression as we build and create programs to support families and treat individuals who are struggling with this medical, chronic, relapsing disease. People who are using drugs are surrounded by other people who are using drugs. Even when the person has a desire to quit using, treatment can be difficult to access and recovery processes can seem unsustainable. The team at MCHP already includes medical and behavioral health providers who work collaboratively to treat patients with substance use disorders. This grant will enable MCHP to add Peer Support Specialists to our team. While working together with community agencies, we will strive to support and link folks with treatment and community resources, create opportunities for change, transform life threatening events and enhance community resilience."—Amy Earnheart, LCSW LCAS

Amber Dilinger is the Outreach and Enrollment/Certified Application Counselor at Bakersville Community Health Center

"Faces you know:"
"Faces you trust:"

We cannot change the outcome, but we can affect the journey.

~ Anne Richardson
The Truth
By Tim Iron
Burlington

“I’ve always thought that the most powerful weapon in the world was the truth and that I’d given it to my people, but I’ve come to the conclusion that the most powerful weapon in the world is not the bomb but the truth.”

—Andrei Sakharov

Every day, we are confronted with a multitude of information that puts us at odds with our ability to focus on the word of God, the truth. This comes in one of two variations: First and probably the obvious, are those lies that are the result of our disobedience to God’s word. Second, and sometimes not as obvious, are the lies of this world, the very objects we use to serve man because we have become so immersive in nature that we overpower our spirit-led intentions. We become consumed by the weights of our responsibilities. Under the load of these burdens we find ourselves struggling to keep God in our minds, let alone keep Him as the focus of our hearts where we have placed Him; our last bastion of safety, sheltered from all else.

In an effort to maintain our sanity, we must filter the cloud of noise, purging the false, or more popularly referred to as, “fake news,” from the truth. In my grandfather’s milk bar, there was the room where he kept the Separator, as it was known. In my mind, I can still picture the stainless-steel piece of equipment that stood about chest high. Grandpa Tom poured it into the milk stream that was directly from the cow and it would spin the cream away from the milk, where it could then be collected and used to make the other by-products of dairy, cheese, butter, and so on. It was obvious when the Separator was done. Unfortunately, cleaning the input to our mental palatal is not as easy.

In a documentary in the early 1990’s Bill Moyers, an ordained minister in 1954, and a reporter for CBS and NBC News, presented a vision of the future as part of a special documentary, “A World of Ideas,” where he predicted we would soon begin living in the “Age of Information.” However, prophetic words were at that time, albeit too soon for what was really to come in 2000; we live in that time now. From the traditional nightly news to the outer edge of the spectrum where someone with a keyboard and access to social media can output information, be it true or false, we face a world of a constant barrage of data. More and more, unlike in what now seems ancient times, there is little to no references given, no facts back up said purported info. There are sound bites thrown like frisbees, tossed into the mix sometimes simply to cause a sensation; their aim is to go viral, another operative of many that dwell in this spectrum.

What say you then of what Christ would say to those Jews who were on the fence of becoming believers, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”—John 8:32

To know the truth is to be the truth. “If it were only that simple,” you might respond.

Churchill said, “Truth is the most valuable thing in the world, often it is protected by a bodyguard of lies.”

Today, we struggle to resolve fact from fiction, not only in the obvious manner in which we often think, but also what is relevant to our purposes in Christ. Church and denominations across the globe face an attack from a force not of this world, their leaders. They are using the duplicity of their positions to confuse congregations into worldview thunderbolts unseated by logical thought and necessities of faith on the truth. Giving into the world was not an option in the Apostle Paul’s time. As he spoke to the church in Corinth, he was brutally honest when he told them, “For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed for death, for we sows into the world’s, in every place, and in every church. We are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; we are dishonourable, but ye are honourable; and we are despised, even to this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place, and laboring with our own hands: we seem as the apostles of Christ; but you are of circumcision, because you are the circumcision. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Of the things which were written aforetime are written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”—2 Corinthians 11:23-28

Paul was making an inaudible statement about the apostle’s task. These words are something which could be taken totally out of context is today’s world and often is literally used against unforgiving Christians, being misused to advance other ideologies. The lies come more surrounding the truth. Paul and the apostles were anything but tools in Christ’s army, they were despised and hated by the Jews of their time. They were always under attack of defamation of character and literal persecution. Yet, as they would have to leave, either after a miraculous healing or shortly before their deaths, they would, in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again, I say, Rejoice. For your fellowship for the sake of the Gospel from Philippi, and your labor in the Lord, are well known unto all the saints: For the Lord is not unjust to forget any work, and labor of your love, which is of service toward the saints.”

As we strive to walk down the pathway which we feel God hath set before us, we must feel like the psalmist when he wrote the words to the 33rd Psalm. “I will praise the Lord, with my mouth; I will glory in the Lord all the day; and I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.”—Psalm 33:1

Although your journey may be obvious, there will be times that you will face challenges of problems and trials, sometimes even easy ones. Do not view your trials as an enemy. In 1 Corinthians 10:13, “There hath not been nor ear heard neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

Know that through all we face, the trials, persecutions and adversarial realms, there is one thing we can count on; the Word of God, for it is the ultimate realm of all and in this, we shall ever be thankful.

Thanks be to God.

Timothy W. Iron lives in coolellv, NC, with his family. He is the former Director of the Thrust of Faith in Wake, where he still volunteers and helps with tours. He now teaches Math full time at Western High School in Marion, NC. He is the author of a new Christian series, “Children of the Light,” with the first book being, “Eureka to Heaven,” and his recent book being, the second, “The Light in the Darkness.” He is an active blogger, artist, and musician. Timothy also has a BSEE from UF, and is a Lay Speaker. He can be reached at tironwlive@yahoo.com.
Enjoying Everyday Life

Get Radical Results by Changing Your Mind
By Joyce Meyer

For many years I went to church faithfully, week after week, but I wasn’t living a victorious Christian life. I read my Bible every day, served on the evangelism board and went door-to-door telling people about Jesus because I really wanted to serve God. But even though I was doing those things, I was still miserable most of the time.

While I learned a good foundation about salvation through God’s grace at my church, I wasn’t learning how to change and be transformed into the image of Christ by renewing my mind, according to God’s Word.

I began to live in a frustrating cycle that went like this: Go to church on Sunday, fight with my husband during the week, get frustrated with my kids a lot and feel miserable, depressed, angry—like a mess—and then go back to church on Sunday to get “right” with God again. I felt like I didn’t know how God act like a sane human being.

Ephesians 4:21-24 (AMPC) says “to be constantly renewed in the spirit of your mind (having a fresh mental and spiritual attitude), and put on the new nature (the regenerate self) created in God’s image.”

This is so important, because it’s impossible to have a positive, peaceful life and at the same time have a negative mind.

But when we take time to renew our minds with God’s Word, we learn how to think like God thinks, say what God says, and act like He wants us to act. Then we can have what He wants us to have—abundant life in Christ, filled with His righteousness, peace and joy. (See John 10:10 and Romans 1:17.)

How Are You Supposed to Think?

The first thing we need to understand is that when we become new creations in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), what is normal for the world is no longer normal for us. There’s a way we’re supposed to live that reflects the image of Christ in the world.

For example, many people think it’s normal to worry, but as a Christian, worrying is not a normal way of thinking.

Philippians 4:6 says “Be anxious about nothing” (NIV). This doesn’t mean we won’t ever feel worried, but when we do, we can pray and give it to God so we can have His peace while we go through the challenges of life.

First Corinthians 2:16 (AMPC) says “we have the mind of Christ.” This means no matter what our circumstances may be, we can have God’s wisdom, discernment and peace to guide our decisions in the midst of them.

We can live with these mind-sets:

* The Made-Up Mind: Colossians 3:2 says “set your minds and keep them set on what is above, not on what is on the earth” (AMPC). The only way we can accomplish what we really want to do in life is by determining what God has put in our hearts to do and then setting our minds to do it. With the help of the Holy Spirit, you can make up your mind and stop ever-thinking your decisions.

* The Accidental Mind: Philippians 2:5 says “Let this same attitude and purpose and humble mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus…” (AMPC). A person with a humble mind is peaceful because they can wait on God’s timing and follow His direction, they don’t constantly struggle with wondering why or when. And they aren’t judgmental or critical of others.

* The Focused Mind: We live in an age of distraction! It’s amazing how much information is coming at us most of the time through technology, the media and the busyness of the world around us. I’ve decided that the world probably isn’t going to change, so I have to change. I’m learning how to keep my mind on what I’m doing, rather than thinking about several things at once or what I want to do next.

You Can Choose

There is a way to have righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit—to have victory in our circumstances and not live based on what the world views as “normal.” And it all begins with renewing our minds. The choice is up to us.

Make the decision to spend time each day reading and meditating on the Word. Pray and ask God to help you understand how to apply the wisdom you discover to your everyday life. As you do your part to renew your mind, God will do His. And you’ll love the transformation that comes with having a “normal” mind—the mind of Christ!

For more on this topic, order Joyce’s Battlefield of the Mind Action Plan. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting www.joycemeyer.org.

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

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8
Avery County Events:
August 10-12 Fine Art and Master Crafts Festival, Downtown Banner Elk, Linville Falls Community Church August 16-17, 2018, the Linville Falls Community Church is holding "Linville Falls Vintage Market Days," a 2-day tag sale type sale with proceeds to benefit the building fund for the Bond Fellowship Hall. How do I post the event on the calendar?
Burke County
The Footsteps Text Crusade will be held at Caldwell County Fair Grounds located at 2461 Fairground Road, Lenoir, NC 28645 August 6th - 17th (Monday - Friday), Services start at 7:00 PM, Choir Practice starts at 6:30 PM. "Reversing Our America" The crusade will be led by Dr. Ralph Seston, Jr. and there will be preaching nights! Youth Night will be held on Friday, August 17th at 7:00 PM
Burke County Chamber - Dementia Resources Summit - September 21, 2018 from 10am-10pm at Rock School, 10am-3pm Presentations Grace Ridge Retirement Community is Ervin Community Room. For more info call Carol Tucker at 828-466-1400 or Charity Elliott at 828-380-3432
Catwba River Baptist Association - We have an exciting mission opportunity for folks in our Association. There are many people in the eastern part of our state who are still recovering from the devastation of Hurricane Matthew. We are taking a group of workers August 6-18, 2018 to do clean-up and some construction in Lumberton, NC. This trip will not cost you anything as all supplies, lodging, and food in the Rock School, Waldensian will be provided. If interested please call our CRBA office for more information and to register. If your church is doing VBS this year and you are looking for a great place to send the offerings collected, we may have the place for you. We are happy to be partnering with Pastor Fuchs Maddox of Victory Baptist Association is going to provide pastors in India to reach communities for Jesus. Most pastors in India pastor more than one church and they travel wherever they go. They are in need of 100 bicycles to help 100 pastors take the Word of God from village to village. The Catwaba River Association is working to meet this need through the gift of bicycles from the USA. If your church or class would like to donate a take (pedals for pastors) please send a check for $30 to CRBA and put on the name line "Pedals for Pastors". Every dollar collected will be sent to India and will be used to purchase bicycles. Please send all donations to 1812 US 70 E. Morganton, NC.
East Valdese Baptist Church - July 29-August 1, 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Family night with free dinner August 1
Gilead Baptist Church - August 12-15, 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Family cookout on Wednesday night.
Pleasant Hill Baptist Church - August 5-10, 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Classes for Pre K through 6th grade.
Walker Road Baptist Church - August 12-16, 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Dinner to be served nightly. Classes for all ages through adult.
Zion Baptist Church - August 4, 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. @ Burke United Christian Ministries This will be a joint Bible School and volunteers are needed please contact Lori Matthews @ zonic.secretary@gmail.com or call 828-477-3080 for more information. School supplies will be collected to hand out to the children in attendance.
Please bring donations to the CRBA office.
Great Hope Seventh Day Adventist Church “Eating You Alive—one bite at a time” is a worthy with a comprehensive look into why we are so sick, who is profiting and who is taking the “fat”. In bringing together evidence—based science, expert testimony and inspirational stories of people who have reversed disease and discovered the truth about how a whole food plant based lifestyle can address and solve some of our world’s most current crisis. Showing, Tuesday, August 9, 7:00 p.m. at the Old Rock School, Waldensian Room. This movie has been shown in theaters across America this year. Info will be taken.
Open House will be Sunday, August 5, 2:00-4:00 pm at the Great Hope Seventh Day Adventist Church, 3070 US Hwy 70 in Drexel (across from the Food Thrift Store), inviting our friends and community to come for a brief tour of our expanded and remodeled new church, God has poured out His blessings, refreshments, gifts, and balloons for the kids.
Is diabetes destroying your life? Is there scientific research for reversing it. Are you ready to learn how and also to prevent such? REVERSING DIABETES WORKSHOP will be held August 15- 26, 2000. You will love feeling healthier! Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church, 3070 US Hwy 70 in Drexel (across from the Thrift Store). Invite your family and friends to come for a brief tour of our expanded and remodeled new church. God has poured out His blessing, refreshments, gifts, and balloons for the kids.
Morganton Seventh-day Adventist - Burke County - Looking for a place to volunteer and make a difference in your community? God’s Closed Morganton needs volunteers to help set up for our next FREE shopping event. If you can help with set up and clothing sorting on Sunday, July 29th, for at least 2 hours between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m., please call Janet Hardin at 828-444-3876 or you can sign up to volunteer that day at 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C. The next God’s Closet-Morganton FREE children’s clothes shopping event will be held at the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church located at 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C. Sunday, July 30th from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. entry is only $1, and we provide the shopping bags for you! FREE childcare while you shop. Each family will receive a pair of free brand new pajamas and brand new uniform polo shirt while supplies last. Please visit, like and share our Facebook page: God’s Closet-Morganton.
Town of Valdese Community Affairs & Tourism - August 3 - Carson Hill - Community Rock School - The Rock School.
The Valdese Farmers Market has opened at its new location at the Old Rock School. Vendors will set up and be ready to sell at 11am and will stay open until 4pm on Fridays.
"We are excited to bring the Farmers Market to the Old Rock School for the first time, shared Morris Ang Community Affairs Director for the Town of Valdese. "We hope to increase the visibility of this market and create a stronger number of regular shoppers with the new location." Farmers are invited to set up their produce underneath the large tree on the front lawn between 10:30am on Market Fridays. Farmers that are interested in participating can download the vendor application at valdese.net.com.
The Town of Valdese — The Waldensian Festival August 10th and 11th.
McDowell County
CarePartners: Want to make a difference, touch lives, and impact your community? If so, several Volunteer opportunities are available in the following positions: Administrative Office Volunteer, Patient/Family Support Volunteer, Barasumant Support Volunteer, We Honor Veterans Volunteer, Special Events Volunteer, and a newly added position, Pastoral Care Volunteer! For more information about these positions, please contact CarePartners Hospice and Palliative Care McDowell Volunteer Services Department at 828-652-1318 ext.2G. You can make an everlasting impact with just a few hours of your time a week! Call today to learn more!
Cross United Methodist Church - New Community Outreach Benefits McDowell County Families with Children Teens for Christ B.E.A.R Closet (Baby Equipment and Resource Closet) Teens for Christ B.E.A.R Closet will be hosting the outreach day on August 1st, 2018 at Cross United Methodist Church located at 65 West Cross Street in Marion will launch a new outreach ministry benefiting families with children. This is the first youth led outreach program of its kind serving the Marion community. With oversight and direction from the McDowell District Women’s Ministries and the Teen for Christ, B.E.A.R Closet will be reaching out to serve low-income families, foster parents, expectant parents, grandparents raising grandchildren, and any family struggling to care for their babies and children. "Our church recognized the need in our community and our youth were eager to reach out and somehow meet the need," states Patina Gossess, Cross UMC Youth Director. "The B.E.A.R Closet can provide families with a few basic necessities like clothing, diapers, and baby equipment which give them a few extra dollars in their pocket that can be redirected to other needs like food, or medicines," states Phyllis Gossess, Cross UMC Women’s Officer. "The outreach is also a very simple, practical way to reach out to our neighbors in need and share the love of Christ." The B.E.A.R Closet will provide free gently used clothing (sizing premiers to 10 toddler), shoes, baby equipment such as strollers, high chairs, swings, pack n’ plays, bouncy seats, bathing and hygiene products, bedding items, baby food items, as well as living encouragement to the families served. B.E.A.R Closet will be open the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. and the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. For more information or if you are interested in volunteer opportunities please call (828) 803-8790 or email TeensforChristBEARCloset@ymail.com.
Come join us at the 3rd annual McDowell County Friends Fair to Table Event. Your evening will be one of fine dining, locally sourced food prepared by experienced McDowell Local chef, and served with a smile. This four course dinner and the beautiful decorations will be improved by your presence - attendance is limited to 100 seated.
Funds raised will be used to provide fresh locally sourced food to be distributed to the food insecure of McDowell County. Sponsorships are available. Where: McDowell Local, 84 South Main Street, Marion NC 28752. Parking available in Public Parking lots in downtown Marion.
What: Baskets, Silent, Live, and Raffle Auctions. Tea is served.
Tickets are $50. Call 828-652-8194 or come by East Court Street Marion, 2nd floor for tickets or follow this link https://mcdowellcats.com/mcdowell-farm-to-table-
also accepting sponsorships.
Mitchell County
Evil Harton America Legion Post 122, 112, 828-675-3290 Call: (828)675-3290 AMERICAN LEGION ANNOUNCES NURSE- The News. American Legion Post 122 encourages any eligible resident who has been accepted to or is enrolled in a 1-2, 3 or 4 year program leading to certification as a Registered Nurse.
Bits ‘n Pieces

122 representative Les Heaver’s about applying for the American Legion Depart-
ment of North Carolina’s Scholarship. The $500.00 scholarship is available to 5 nursing students who reside in North Carolina and are enrolled in a qualifying program in a North Carolina school. The American Legion Post 122 may endorse ONLY 1 applicant each year. The applicant will be selected by the Post Officers. The most qualified applicant’s application will be endorsed by the Post Commander or Adjutant and forwarded to the Ameri-
can Legion, Department of North Carolina, where the selection process will occur in October. All nominees will be contacted by mail, by the Department Headquarters staff, with the results of the selection process by the end of November. The nomi-
cees will be contacted by mail and a telephone call if they wish to complete, providing the address of the college to which the check is to be mailed.

Applications must be received at the Department Headquarters no later than Sep-
tember 25, 2018. Complete details about the scholarship and the application form can be found online at American Legion, Department of North Carolina – Colen Family Memorial Nursing Scholarship. For more information, contact Les Heaver – (828) 675-0230 or (828) 208-2675. The application and supporting documentation, including “end-of-year” missing curriculum grade does not receive letter of acceptance from the educational institution (if applicable) must be received at American Legion Post 121, PO Box 761, Burnsville, NC 28714 no later than Au-
gust 15, 2018 for review and the scheduling of an interview with Post 122 officers.

Bear Creek Baptist Church – Women’s Prayer Breakfast July 13th - 8:00am at DT’s. Celebrate Recovery
This is a Christian and Biblical Based Program, giving help and hope to men, women and families suffering from addiction. Any questions contact Josh Winaue at 828-385-0061.
There will be a meeting every Thursday night with someone there to talk to men, women, and their families.

Main Street Spruce Pine – Aug 2-5 Grassy Creek – First Friday Concert, Aug. 3, –Central Park Empty Bowls Fundraiser, Aug. 20, –First Baptist Church First Friday Concert, Sept 7, –Central Park Fall Clean Up, Sept. 15, –Downtown Spruce Pine Mural Mapping Day, Oct. 17, –Downtown Spruce Pine Antiques Fest-


Grassy Creek Baptist Church in Spruce Pine will celebrate its 200th anniversary on August 5th with Homecoming and Decoration of the cemeteries. We have invited all previous living pastors and a lot of previous music leaders, pianists, and other staff to be present for this special occasion. Loren Harvis of the Lexington Register has graciously agreed to come and the congregation will invite you to join us to celebrate this milestone. The worship service will begin at 10:00am followed by a covered dinner on the grounds. For more information call the church office at 828-675-2000.

Historical Society — August 20th Talented local musician Will Ritter will present a program on traditional mountain music. In 2015, Will thrilled the MCHS audience by playing several instruments and singing Appalachian music.

Good News Bible Club: There will be a new chapter for Mitchell Yancey Avery and McDowell Counties. Growth is always training. Dates for the new volunteers at: Aug. 4th Burke and McDowell - Glenwood Baptist Church 9-3
Aug.18th Avery and Yancey county to be announced again.

Mitchell Baptist Association 17th Annual Meeting, Monday Aug. 27th at Grassy Creek Baptist Church in Spruce Pine. First Session 3:30-5:30, Break for a meal and then Second Session 7:00. Tuesday Aug 28th at Ledge Baptist Church in Bal-
venville 7:00pm. Speakers: Monday:Rev. Bruce Cannon Tuesday:Rev. Brandon Fitts.

Back to School Bash Aug. 11th Begins at 10:00am. On the hill behind Spruce Pine Chevrolet Sponsored by the Faith Based Community. Hamburgers, hot dogs, inflatables, and school supplies. ALL FREE. For more info contact Rev: Marcus Barfield 828-656-3044 Pam date Aug. 18.

Mitchell County Chamber - 2018 Grassy Creek Gem Show! The 34th Annual Grassy Creek Mineral and Gem Show is put on by the Parkway Fire and Rescue to raise money for new equipment. Over 60 US and International dealers with almost any kind of jewelry, penstone and mineral specimens, fossil, lapidary equipment and more you might want. Each booth is 20 feet by 40 feet and is LOTS of items for sale. Parking and admission are free.
Food is available.
Dates: July 28th through August 3rd.
Hours: 10 to 5 daily with many vendors open earlier and later because they are staying with their booths.

Address: 136 Majestic View, Spruce Pine, NC 28777. This location is on the fall above the post office location on Hwy 276 South.
Contact: Donna Collins collidonna@yahoo.com 828-755-5139 http://www.grassycreekgemshow.org

Mountain Community Health Partnership cordially invites you to attend our Patient Appreciation Day, Friday August 17th 9am-3pm.
Our locations are:
Bakersville Health Center 86 N. Mitchell Ave. Bakersville, NC 28705 Calo Health Center 116 Seven Miles Ridge Rd. Burnsville, NC 28714 Specific Health Centers Style Drive Spruce Pine NC 28777
We will be having snacks and giveaways. The theme will be “Celebrating Our Health Care Heroes.” Our stuff will be wearing our great superhero shirts. We will also be celebrating our staff nominated “Superhero.” If you have questions please call 828-668-6621 to reach me.

NC Mineral and Gem Festival — Eems through Aug 5th. The NC Mineral and Gem Festival is one of the oldest and longest running events in our area and it takes everyone to make it happen each year! Please consider joining join- ing the volunteer team for 2018.
It takes nearly a hundred volunteers to make this event happen for our community every year! And it takes our great sponsors too!
Our sponsors’ support helps us spread the word about the event throughout the southeast to help bring more people to the event and to our local businesses.

THANKYOU FOR SUPPORTING: RELAY OF THE BLUE RIDGE!

Mountain View CI’s: NCLET Coordinator come on! Come All! Saturday, August 18th A COLOR FUN RUN will be hosted by Mountain View CI’s NCLET at City-Drive-In in Spruce Pine, NC. This COLOR FUN RUN is to benefit the North Carolina Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics.
Registration includes a 2018 NCLET Event Cotton T-shirt for $25. Registration without a T-shirt is $15. All children under 10 years of age and all Special Needs participants are FREE! Be sure to wear a white T-shirt you don’t mind getting col-
ted, as the color will be thrown from various points along the course, as well as the finish line. This is an un-timed fun run.
Not running but still want to participate or contribute to the event? Small cups of powder will be available for purchase to be thrown at runners during and at the end of the race. All proceeds benefit the North Carolina Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics.
Registration information available now until the morning of the run, with packet pick-up Saturday morning 7:00 – 8:30 am. The race will begin at 8:30 am, starting at City-Drive-In with a route through downtown and ending at City-Drive-In, the finish-
line. For more information on registration, participation and/or sponsorship, please contact Peggy Dell, 828-385-2511 or peggy.dell@ncsf.gov, or Sam Greene, 828-264-2488 or samantha.green@ncsf.gov

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

The River Arts Glass Tour Fridays in August—3rd, 10th 17th and 24th. Call 828- 682-7215 for more info.

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 fellowshiping, come join us for breakfast at the Spruce Pine Fire. We will be ending by 10:00am. Open to all.
For more information call Barbara Harrell at 828-467-3443 or email at barbarah@
bcnew.com. July meeting is 11th, at 8:00am.

Yancey County

Parkway Playhouse Parkway Playhouse is pleased to present Godspell from July 28th — August 11th. A small group of people help Jesus Christ (Alan Law) tell different parables by using a wide variety of games, storytelling techniques and a hefty dose of comic timing. As eclectic blend of songs.

Higgins Memorial Kairos Training - Training for the Kairos Walk at Mount Airy Community College begins Aug 18th. There are three training Saturdays and participants must do two of the three. This is a desperate plan to help more people from our church sign up to participate. Without more help we will have to severely limit the number of intimates that we can bring the love of Jesus Christ to. The walk will be October 18-21. For more information contact Jim Swan at 286-0295 or Parris Bishop at 206-0205.

Partners Aligned Toward Health - The Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force has completed an update of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Resource Guide, which is now available to this email, and also available at partners.org/resources. The Resource Guide contains many Mitchell and Yancey resources as we have been able to locate, and also includes regional resources for services that are not available within our two counties.

continued on page 19
Fastest Land Animal in the World

By Christy Lowman
Burke County

Did you know that God created an animal that can run up to 75 mph? That's faster than the speed limit for cars on the interstate! This animal is known as the fastest land animal in the world. Do you know what animal I am talking about? The cheetah! Can you imagine seeing a large yellow/tan cat with black spots pass you while you are standing on the back seat of your parent's car? If you were having a race that is exactly what would happen! The cheetah can reach 75 mph in about 4 seconds. However, they can only hold this top speed for a few hundred yards. Cheetahs live mainly in Africa and a few parts of Iran. They eat hoofed animals like gazelle and wildebeest calves and sometimes rabbits and birds. Since they are only really fast for a short period of time, timing is everything when it comes to catching their dinner. For this reason, these cats will sneak up on their prey in the tall grasslands. Their long tails are very important to the cheetah. The tail is used to quickly steer the car which way it wants to go while running at top speed. Cheetahs do not roar like other big cats. They “chirp” instead! Chirping is done mostly when cheetahs are reunited with family members, when they are in trouble, or when the females are looking for a mate. They also purr, bark, and hiss. No two cheetahs look the same. Their spot pattern is unique. Just like people’s fingerprints are different and unique from each other.

God equipped the cheetahs with special paw pads on the bottoms of their feet for traction. They also have semi-retractable claws that help grip while they are running on the hard ground. Even though they don’t wear visible shoes they could not be the fastest animal on land without their special feet.

Peace, is such a sweet word. Having peace is one of the best things you can experience in life. The only way you can have it is if you give all your worries, cares, and wants over to God. God is the only one who can grant us true peace. Once you have experienced it, you will never want it more and more because life is nothing but chaos without it.

Now, I will tell you that it is hard to give all our worries and problems over to Him! As human beings, we want to fix problems ourselves, we don’t want to wait for God to help us. Once you decide that you can’t handle things or for things without God you will experience peace and it is the best thing ever! Go ahead and try it! Tell God about your worries and problems you are facing. Ask Him to fix them for you, and trust that He will! Once you trust Him to fix your problems you will feel the best feeling ever, peace.

Our most, kind, heavenly Father, I ask that you will help each one of us give all our problems over to you. Help us trust you wholeheartedly to fix our problems and to take our fears and worries away. Only through you we can experience true peace. I pray that you will help each child here to experience it. Most of all I thank you for the gift of peace, it is a breast of fresh air that we all need to make it through our journey here on earth. Thank you for taking care of us and for loving us! In Jesus’ name I pray AMEN.

with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace.
Ephesians 6:15 NIV
Casting all your care upon Him, be careful for you. (1 Peter 5:7 KJV)

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https://animals.mom/facts-can-keetah-run-before-vest-183.html

Christy Lawman is a Christian author and illustrator who lives in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains with her husband and two children. She enjoys writing and illustrating books for all ages. Some of her short stories are published with Guidestones and ZCL. 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 on Facebook and let her know! You can buy her books at https://www.amazon.com/ dp=by-line_or_book_17e=UFS&field-author=Christy%Lowman&search-alias=book&ref=sr_1_1&ie=UTF8&qid=1491417635&sr=8-1&keywords=Christy+Lowman.com
You can reach her at http://www.facebook.com/authorChristyLowman or christy@blueyes@yahoo.com.
Interruptions
By Dr. Tracy Jesup
Burlington, NC

"The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, 'Come away to a deserted place by yourselves and rest a while'. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. And many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things." — Mark 6:30-34

Thou art the last time you were interrupted. Perhaps your sleep was interrupted when you forgot to set off your alarm on a Saturday you didn't have to work. Maybe a news anchor appeared on the screen during your favorite television program and read the words, "We interrupt this program for a special news bulletin." One of the most frequent causes of interruptions is technology as our train of thought often is broken by a text, email, or phone call. Even the most carefully planned calendar can dissolve quickly as one thing after another invades our schedule.

Since interruptions are a part of life, the key is learning to handle interruptions gracefully. In the book Out of Solitude: Three Meditations on the Christian Life, Henri Nouwen writes, "A few years ago I met an old professor at the University of Notre Dame. Looking back on his long life of teaching, he said with a funny wrinkle in his eyes, 'I have always been complaining that my work was constantly interrupted, until I slowly discovered that say interruptions were my work'."

No one was more familiar with interruptions than Jesus, and his handling of life's interruptions with grace and compassion is unmatched. In today's passage, the disciples have returned from their mission, having been sent out by Jesus, two by two (Mark 6:6). No doubt, they were excited to debrief with Jesus and tell him about the wonderful things they have accomplished by his power and authority. Sensing their need for rest due to the crowds and realizing that there had been a long time even to eat, Jesus says to them, "Come away to a deserted place." (v. 33).

However, the crowds are not deterred by the boat ride taken by Jesus and the disciples. They "hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them" (v. 33). Jesus could have dismissed the crowds and continued with his plans for rest and relaxation, but the Bible says, "As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things." (v. 34).

Jesus' compassion for those who interrupt his plan takes priority over his concern for a carefully followed calendar. Later in the same chapter, he will dismiss the crowds and go up on a mountain to pray (v. 44-46), but not before he has a shepherd to wander and desperate sheep. Charles Cousar writes, "It may be better to read this story not from the perspective of Jesus but from the perspective of the crowd, one of those whose frantic and often unfocused life desperately seeks an answer. Jesus seems never put off by our interruptions, by our constant need of his compassion and teaching."

In further addressing the issue of interruptions, Nouwen calls this the great conversion in our life: "to recognize and believe that the many unexpected events are not just disturbing interruptions of our projects, but the way in which God molds, forms, and prepares us for his return... (When we believe that patience can make our expectations grow, than "data" can be converted into a vocation, wounds into a call for deeper understanding, and sadness into a birthplace for joy.

Prayer: Lord, give us discernment to see interruptions not as moments of frustration, but as opportunities to open to your hand at work.

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

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian liberal arts university that prepares students to become critical thinkers, effective leaders and compassionate servants in the global community. Emphasizing a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics, Gardner-Webb ignites learning and service opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.

When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. Luke 21:30

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Sample Day Trip
Tour the Waldensian Museum Lunch & Downtown Shopping Tour the Trail of Faith Tour Waldensian Heritage Winery

Historic Valdese

Upcoming Events in Valdese

Family Friday Nights
Free concerts every Friday Night May-September.
7pm at the Wells Fargo Parking Lot

Valdese Farmers Market
May 18-September 28 Fridays 11-4pm
Old Rock School Front Lawn

43rd Annual Waldensian Festival
August 10-7pm: Music by Little Johnny Traller Trash opening for The Artimus Pyle Band Honoring the music of Ronnie Van Zant. A Savannah Festival.
August 11-9:00AM-PM: Over 150 craft, art, and food vendors. Live music and performances all day. Closing with The Band of Oz at 7PM.

From This Day Forward Outdoor Drama
Fridays & Saturdays from July 13-August 11.
Call 828-522-1150 for tickets and more information.

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Your Government Pages

US House of Representatives NC District 11

My Resolution to Force Transparency

Rep. Jim Jordan (R-OH) and I recently brought our resolution to the House floor—the resolution that will compel the Department of Justice to turn over all remaining relevant documents owed to Congressional investigators within 7 days. The House voted, and the resolution passed. We are incredibly grateful to our colleagues for their support.

Many of you who have been following this story are probably aware by now—that has been our ongoing fight to allow Congress to do its constitutional duty of oversight. For nearly 8 months, the Department of Justice has been given the opportunity, yet refused, to be transparent and answer questions about their conduct—evasions rising to the level of major, ongoing, and unexplained misconduct by one of the most powerful and sensitive departments.

We are tired of the Department of Justice giving us the runaround. It is clear they are not in cooperation, and we are done talking. I’m glad my colleagues joined with us to put this to a vote.

I want to thank my colleagues for their support. One way or the other, Americans will find out what truly occurred at their Department of Justice on their taxpayer dime.

Major Supreme Court News

We have had huge news coming out of the Supreme Court recently. As you may know, the Court upheld a pro-life organization’s First Amendment rights and prevented government from forcing them to advertise abortion services; they upheld the President’s constitutional right to protect the American people and enforce implied travel restrictions for security concerns; and they ruled that public sector employees cannot be forced to subsidize political opinions they disagree with through union dues, which is a textbook First Amendment issue. All of these rulings were absolutely critical and major victories for originalism.

Perhaps most crucial, though, was the news that the Court would now have another vacancy this summer with the retirement of Justice Anthony Kennedy. This means President Trump now has an opportunity to nominate yet another originalist Justice—one who will respect the rule of law and not legislate from the bench. President Trump is expected to announce his selection next week.

This was a successful week for a Supreme Court that is hopefully returning to respecting our founding principles of limited government and constitutional order.

This November, when voters go to the polls, they will decide on whether six proposed constitutional amendments will be become part of our North Carolina Constitution. Two of these proposed are a constitutional amendment to expand victims’ rights, and a constitutional amendment to protect the right to hunt and fish.

In bipartisan votes, both the North Carolina Senate and House passed legislation to place on the November 2018 ballot a constitutional amendment for voters to consider that would provide better protections and safeguards to victims of crime and their families. A victims’ rights amendment was added to North Carolina’s Constitution in 1996, which gave some crime victims basic civil rights to participate in the justice system, but House Bill 551—Strengthening Victims’ Rights further advances these rights by:

• Expanding the scope of crimes under which protections to victims are extended
• Requiring that victims receive effective and timely notice of all court proceedings
• Expanding victims’ rights in these victimized by juveniles
• Giving victims a greater voice in the process by allowing them to be heard at plea, conviction, sentencing, or adjudication hearings
• Creating an enforcement mechanism to allow a victim to file a motion with the court if they are being deprived of their rights

While protecting the rights of victims, the bill makes sure that those rights do not interfere upon the rights of the accused. In addition to North Carolina, this constitutional amendment will also be on the ballot in five other states.

Both the North Carolina Senate and House of Representatives passed bipartisan legislation that will let voters choose whether to amend the North Carolina Constitution to safeguard citizens’ right to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife. Senate Bill 677—Protect Right to Hunt, Fish and Harvest bills into both chambers, and voters will now consider the constitutional amendment on the November 2018 ballot. Of the southeastern states, only North Carolina and Florida have not written the right to fish, hunt, and harvest wildlife into their constitutions. Twenty-one other states already guarantee this right in their constitutions, and in all states that have placed this constitutional amendment on the ballot, voters have approved it.

I plan to vote for these two amendments to our state constitution and hope you will also. 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.

On Monday, President Trump nominated Judge Brett Kavanaugh to replace retiring Justice Anthony Kennedy on the Supreme Court. Judge Kavanaugh, of the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals, deserved the serious, thoughtful consideration of the U.S. Senate, as mandated under the Constitution to give “advice and consent” to the President. As the Senate prepares to do this important work, I look forward to further reviewing this highly respected nominee’s life and legal experiences, and how they’ve prepared him for the nation’s highest bench.

Judge Kavanaugh’s credentials indicate he is prepared and ready for the task ahead. A graduate of Yale College and Yale Law School, he has clerked for several distinguished judges, including Justice Kennedy. He has authored more than 300 opinions as a judge on the D.C. Circuit Court and bound tame to teach at Harvard Law School also given to his community. He’s active in his church and faiths, coaches his daughter’s basketball team, and volunteers at local schools and homeless shelters. When accepting President Trump’s nomination this week, Judge Kavanaugh focused first and foremost on his gratitude toward his family, and spoke as a proud father to two young girls.

Yet before his name was even released, certain members of Congress and special interest groups began attacking Judge Kavanaugh’s record, saying he would threaten “the destruction of the Constitution.” Democrat Leader Chuck Schumer went so far as to say he “will oppose him with everything he’s got.” I believe most Americans are turned off by these knee-jerk reactions, and believe the life and work experiences of a nominee deserve thoughtful and considered study by their elected leaders. They want us to ensure that the next Supreme Court Justice is qualified, and can be trusted to uphold the Constitution and our rule of law. I intend to do just that as the Senate carries out its duty. I hope my fellow Senators will also treat the confirmation process for our nation’s highest court with the respect the American people deserve and expect.

GOD BLESS AMERICA

www.brcnews.com August 2018 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 32
The House and Senate held their last caucuses of the legislative Short Session on Friday, and the bodies are now adjourned until later this year.

I would like to thank the citizens of House District 118 for the opportunity to serve them. For everyone who has contacted me this session to discuss policy and to request help with state government, thank you for providing invaluable input.

Legislature overrides Farm Act veto
The House and Senate voted this week to override Gov. Roy Cooper’s veto of Senate Bill 711 — NC Farm Act of 2018.

Foulacious lawsuits against farms of all sizes are putting farmers and their families at risk. The Farm Act simply defines very clearly the types of nuisance suits that may be brought against farms in North Carolina.

People have been buying property around hog farms that were established well before they bought the property, then suing the farmers for nuisance — sometimes from many miles away. That’s just not fair. The farm was there first, and the Farm Act limits these suits to properties that lie within one half-mile of an operation, and to within one year after a farm is started or a farm makes major changes.

Attorneys in other states, particularly in Iowa, have brought numerous suits against farming operations. In North Carolina, attorneys are showing up at the front doors of people who have lived near farms their entire lives and saying, effectively, “If you sign this piece of paper, I’ll win you millions of dollars in court.”

We are bombarded with fake news about farming operations. We are told by the media and special interest groups that farmers have no regard for people who live nearby.

An example of fake news about farming operations has been the media’s and special interest groups’ portrayal of the recent Smithfield Foods lawsuit. In court, the judge in the case did not allow photos. A plaintiff in the case had a hog farming operation sprayer her home with manure from eight feet away, but an aerial photo of the area plainly showed the farming operation was a mile-and-a-half away.

There is false information everywhere meant to build a narrative that puts money in the pockets of out-of-state attorneys. How else could a farming operation be laid off from a home be portrayed in court and in the media as being right fast away from a home? Despite deep erroneous and caused characterizations of lawsuits, the Farm Act does not affect any pending lawsuits in any way.

The target of this type of lawsuit is a multi-billion dollar industry for as much money in frivolous court damages as they can. Chicken operations, cattle operations and others will be next.

Agriculture is our state’s number one industry. As of 2017, there were 47,300 farms in our state operating on 1.1 million acres with a total annual economic output of more than $50 billion. I will not stand idly by as attorneys try to skim off the backs of hardworking farmers and literally take food off of people’s tables.

Legal practices seeking to win frivolous nuisance suits are playing the media and special interest groups like fiddles. The media and special interest groups then turn and play the people of our state like fiddles as they seek advertising dollars and donations.

Reports in the media and from special interest groups are simply not true.

If you want to see for yourself, I would encourage you to visit some farming operations in North Carolina.

Agricultural is an up-and-coming industry across our state, and personally witnessing the dedication of farmers to their trade may be a good excuse to visit a farm.

North Carolinians have a right to participate in agricultural activities without a pervasive, real fear that these assets will be taken by frivolous, unjustified lawsuits. People who are truly negatively impacted by agricultural activity would still have recourse in court with the passage of Senate Bill 711.

Most people eat three times a day, and the food they eat does not originate at angles — that food is grown and harvested on a farm. Senate Bill 711 strikes a balance between farmers and property owners who live nearby, and, therefore, I voted to override the governor’s veto of the bill.

The bill is now law.

Legislature puts constitutional amendment on ballot
North Carolina voters will have an opportunity to vote on several constitutional amendments this November.

Constitutional amendment bills were passed by the House and Senate by a three-fifths majority this week. In accordance with our state constitution, the governor cannot veto them.

- House Bill 1092 Coast. Amendment — Requires Photo ID to Vote
- Would amend the Constitution of North Carolina to require that every person offering to vote in person present photo ID before voting in the manner prescribed by law
- Senate Bill 75 Const. Amend. — Max Income Tax Rate of 7%
- Would lower the maximum income tax rate for families and businesses allowed by the state constitution from 10% to 7%
- Senate Bill 814 Judicial Vacancy Sunshine Amendment
- Would not change the process for regular judicial elections, but only reforms the process for filling vacancies in the state courts system
- Establishes a Nonpartisan Judicial Merit Commission and local merit selection committees appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Governor, and the General Assembly
- None of these branches appointing authorities could be granted a majority of appointments to the commissions
- Senate Bill 677 Protect Rights to Hunt and Fish
- Proposes a state constitutional amendment to voters providing that the people of North Carolina have a right to use traditional methods to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife, subject only to certain limitations promoting wildlife conservation and resource management

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Your Government Pages

NC Senate District 46

As the legislative short session winds down, the Senate turned their attention this week to looking at constitutional amendments to be put on the ballot this November for North Carolina voters to consider.

Senate Passes Bill to Put Constitutional Amendment Protecting Right to Hunt and Fish on Ballot This Fall
In a 44-4 vote, a bipartisan Senate passed legislation Wednesday that will let voters consider whether to amend the North Carolina Constitution to safeguard citizens’ right to hunt, fish and harvest wildlife.

If Senate Bill 877 [https://www2.ncleg.net/BillLookUp/2017/877] passes the House of Representatives, voters will consider the constitutional amendment on the November 2018 ballot. Twenty-one other states already guarantee this right in their constitutions. Hunting and fishing are integral parts of North Carolina’s heritage, economy and conservation efforts. I believe that North Carolinians deserve to have their voice heard when it comes to protecting these rights and I am confident voters will be eager to ensure that North Carolina remains a sportsman’s paradise for future generations.

Voters Could Choose Merit System to Fill Judicial Vacancies Between Elections Under Proposed Constitutional Amendment
Voters would have an opportunity to amend North Carolina’s Constitution this fall to implement a non-partisan, merit-based system to fill judicial vacancies between elections, under a constitutional amendment proposed Wednesday.

If Senate Bill 814, the Judicial Vacancy Sunshine Amendment, [https://www2.ncleg.net/BillLookUp/2017/sb814] becomes law, voters will consider a constitutional amendment on the November 2018 ballot that would:
Empower the people of the state to nominate candidates to fill judicial vacancies.
Authorize a non-partisan merit commission, appointed by the Chief Justice, the governor and the General Assembly, to evaluate those nominees and rate them based on their professional qualifications and merit.
Direct the General Assembly to review the qualified nominees submitted by the nonpartisan commission and forward at least two nominees to the governor for consideration.

Provide that the governor will appoint the nominee he or she considers most qualified to serve a provisional judicial term.
Require the appointed judge to stand for election following the governor’s appointment in order to continue holding the judicial office.

The Judicial Vacancy Sunshine Amendment would not change the process for regular judicial elections. But it would end the practice of patronage judicial appointments like WRAL’s report of former Gov. Bev Perdue’s appointment of three of her employees to judgeships on her last day in office [https://www.wral.com/outgoing-nc-governor-appoints-4-new-judges/1929263/].

After various House and Senate committees spent months – including dozens of hours of public hearings – considering the issue of how North Carolina selects its judges, it was clear to us that North Carolinians want to elect their judges, and that they want a transparent and accountable process for selecting judges. The current process of filling judicial vacancies has no transparency or accountability whatsoever, with governors placing whatever they want on the bench. This amendment fixes that broken system and ensures that vacancies are filled based on candidates’ qualifications, rather than their political connections.

Senate Overrides Governor’s Vetoes
The General Assembly this week voted to override Gov. Roy Cooper’s politically motivated vetoes of two bills – Senate Bill 486 [http://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2017/Senate/PDF/5496-v4.pdf], which tightens election security measures to protect against the threat of outside influence and Senate Bill 757 [https://www.ncleg.gov/Sessions/2017/Bills/Senate/PDF/5757-v5.pdf], which makes changes to judicial districts in four counties.

Senate Bill 486 protects the states elections from outside interference by implementing a number of security measures. It requires criminal record checks for election officials with access to sensitive materials and forbids any voting system used in an election to be connected to a network, both of which were suggested by the bipartisan NC State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement. [http://www.neobserver.com/opinion/op-ed/article/2018/07/07.html] Additionally, it prohibits a new party from selecting a candidate who was on a primary ballot in that year for another party and lost.

Although we shouldn’t be surprised at this point by Gov. Cooper’s continued willingness to put his personal political interests over the interests of the citizens of our state, I was still disappointed that he was willing to jeopardize the security of elections in our state by vetoing Senate Bill 486. Making sure that our elections are secure, so the public can have confidence in the outcome is of the utmost importance and I am happy that we were able to override his vetoes and strengthen the integrity of our elections.

As always, if I may be of assistance to you, please contact my Raleigh office via phone or email. It is a pleasure to serve you in the state Senate.

NC House District 86

Rep. Hugh Blackwell
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NCSSM Morganton Update
A new second campus of the North Carolina School of Science and Math (NCSSM) is being built in western North Carolina. Although located in Morganton in western North Carolina, and perhaps having heightened appeal to students and families from the region, it will serve junior and senior high school students from the entire state. Once the school opens in fall of 2021, each student applying can specify his or her first and second preference as to either the new Morganton or older existing Durham campus. Students accepted will be residents on campus for their last two years of high school. Each school will operate under the control of the University of North Carolina Board of Governors.

The new Morganton campus is now in the planning phase with two steering committees whose primary focus is to actively engage communities and individuals from across the greater western part of the state. These committees include representatives from UNC, community colleges and K-12 education as well as from state and local governments, business and industry.

The External Engagement Steering Team is tasked with raising $5 million for a 1.3 match with a $11 million appropriation which we in the legislature approved in June. The additional $20 million, along with funds approved by state voters in the statewide NC Connect Bond issue, will go towards building the full Morgan campus as laid out in the approved master plan. With funding seeds met, the project should be completed in 2021 and a first class of 150 students admitted in August 2021.

A second team is Campus Operations. It has two main charges. First is to advise on “nuts and bolts” issues such as schematic designs, building needs and school infrastructure. The second focus is another form of community outreach and engagement. This involves building partnerships with businesses and industries that may provide internships or lab experiences for students. It will also include promoting collaboration and campus recognition for the new Morganton campus with other educational institutions in our region of the state.

Contact us if we are ahead of schedule. When the campus is operational, I am confident it will be a great asset. More of our best students will access rigorous education to prepare for the “high tech” careers of the future and without having to move to Durham.

www.brownews.com
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Burke United Christian Ministries

Bless the Pantry
By David Burleson
Burke County

The Burke United Christian Ministries (BUCM) held a “Bless the Pantry” event on Sunday, June 24 to dedicate the area and to show our thanks for being able to expand the food pantry. The Rev. Kevin Frederick said the blessing and Jessica Splay shared comments from the BUCM Board’s perspective on how the larger pantry will provide greater services to those who come to our ministry. Burke United Christian Ministries is very thankful for the following foundations that made this project possible: the Burke Community Foundation, the Rastin Family Foundation, and the Cannon Foundation. A huge thank you goes to Roofing Brothers for the outstanding work they did.

The pantry renovation is a perfect example of what can be accomplished when a community works together. BUCM continues to be blessed with wonderful supporters and volunteers. Because of our community’s support, BUCM has been able to meet the needs of our Burke County Neighbors in the following areas:

- A total of 48,330 individuals representing 22,210 households received services.
- Soup Kitchen served 66,485 meals (Adult - 61,910, Children - 4,575, Food Pantry distributed 809,801 pounds of food to 19,612 individuals, Clothing Closet provided 4,320 individuals with clothing valued at $64,226.75, Senior Store brought cheer to 192 individuals, Wood Ministry provided loads of wood to 107 individuals, Baby Bucks Ministry provided diapers and wipes valued at $1,828. Volunteers gave 42,112 hours valued at $989,923.00. Homeless Assistance Provided
  - Homeless Supplies - 527 Individuals received material valued at $4,934.50
  - Laundry Vouchers - 77
  - Rain Hill Shower Units - 459
  - Showers - 1,501
  - Crisis Financial Assistance Provided
  - Clothing - $24,385.44
  - Heating - $46,400.66
  - Rent - $28,334.19
  - Utilities - $28,218.95
  - Fuel - $1,106.08
  - Total - $112,635.32

As evidenced by the statistics above, Burke County is a caring and supportive place to live and work.

On June 30, BUCM held its first ever golf tournament, Chipping for Change at Silver Creek Plantation. The tournament would not have been possible without the work of Ms. Haven Wooley who put this very successful tournament together for BUCM. A big thank you also to Terry Rogers and his staff at Silver Creek Plantation for all their help and support. Without our sponsors, the tournament could not have been the success it was. We are greatly appreciative of the following sponsors:

- Wally’s, Food Lion, Chic-fil-a, Jake’s Wayback Burgers, Chip Saunders, Pepsi, Grey & Betty Carwell, Visual Perfection, Carbon City Body Shop, Rastin Foundation, Carolina Health Care, Boggs, Crump & Brown PA, Larry McMahan & Ron Denton, Tom Pore, Mobile Services, AJ’s Steak House, Small & Martin

Our half hole sponsors were: Randy Meggs, Nationwide (Kelly Messer, his mother & Keith Bowers), Athletic Performance Lab, Burke Bedding

A big thanks to our hole in one sponsors: Case Farms, Randy Bristle, Mark Biff

With the high summer demand for additional food, the funds raised from the golf tournament will be used to meet this season’s demands in the soup kitchen and food pantry.

I want to invite our community to attend our major fundraiser event, Picnic on the Parkway, to be held on Saturday, August 18 at the Morganton Elk’s Lodge beginning at 6 p.m. Tickets are $50 and sponsorship opportunities are available. Come out and enjoy an evening of good food, music and fellowship. Great items will also be available in a silent auction. For additional information call us at (828) 431-8703 or e-mail us at burlesonla@bellsouth.net.

Remember that our ministry is here to assist those in Burke County who need a hand up and we ask that you consider being part of what we do for others. Your prayers are greatly appreciated.

David Burleson is Director of Burke United Christian Ministries
Cow Patty Bingo
By Gloria Hukins
Mitchell County

For the last 4 years the Farm Bureau Women’s Committee has awarded a scholarship to a local student pursing a degree in an agriculturally related field. This year the Women’s Committee set out to fundraise for their scholarships with their 2nd annual Cow Patty Bingo event. The committee teamed up with Mitchell County 4-H Livestock Club to help this youth organization raise funds for their upcoming livestock events. Cow Patty Bingo is played by letting a cow out into an area marked off into a grid. Whichever square the first cow puts its head in is the winner of the event. Names associated with a numbered square were drawn by Mitchell County 4-H on the morning of Cow Patty Bingo. The event was held at the Rhododendron Festival in Bakersville Saturday June 16th. A large crowd gathered as the first dairy calf, owned by Charlotte Hubbard, was released into the pen. After 5 minutes they had their first winner Rebecca Street receiving $50 in prize money. The second dairy calf, owned by Lisa Silver, was then released and left a cow patty in a square less than a minute into the second event. Shane McKee was the lucky winner of $100 during this round. Everyone truly enjoyed watching the calves mill around chewing on grass and exploring their time at the Rhododendron Festival. Thanks to our major sponsor of this year’s event, Umain Energy Solutions. Granville as well as to our other sponsors: Young’s Fuel Service, Farm Bureau Insurance and Griffiths Merchandise General Store. Special thanks to the members of the Farm Bureau Women’s Committee, Mitchell County 4-H, and countless volunteers for their hard work in putting on this event. The money raised will go towards youth with a passion for agriculture in Mitchell County and continue to grow agricultural leaders for the future. Remember to mark your calendars for next year’s Cow Patty Bingo, where you just might be the lucky winner!

Gloria Hukins is County Liaison/Licensed CSR at Mitchell County Farm Bureau and attends Shagbass Baptist Church.

The Inspiring Word

Faith
By Pastor Terry Creech Th.D.
Mcdowell County

If you read last month’s column, you will recall we looked at Faith, specifically the definition and 5 expressions of Faith. If you missed that column, I suggest reading July and August’s column for a deeper look at Faith. This month I want to turn your attention to the practical application of Faith. In other words, how Faith plays out in your everyday life.

A verse we should all be familiar with is Hebrews 11:1-3 where we read, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.” This verse speaks of the world we understand that the world was formed by the work of God, so that things that are seen were not made of things which do appear.” In the verses, which follow Chapter 11:1-3 we find that many people call them the roll call of faith? Take some time and read them slowly and thoughtfully. You will find the testimony of God’s people who have endured trials, tribulation, persecution, hatred, false accusations, and many other things. Faith can take on flair without any protection from the attack of Satan. Faith did bring them through this attack, yes, they were scarred and barraged but they were also full of praise to their Lord and Savior. Faith does not place man in a position of knowing God’s comfort and contentment, Faith prepares us as the present for what God knows is coming in the future. We trust, submit and obey.

Tailing about faith brings my heart to focus on men like Elijah. God called Elijah into His service as a prophet. He preached the word of God as it was in the King and nation of Israel. King Ahaz, our Bible tells us did more to provoke God than any of Israel’s previous kings. God could have simply struck down Ahaz and placed a godly king on Israel’s throne. However, God chose another route. He wanted to work through Elijah. Elijah did not follow God because of the power he had been given. Elijah lived and served by faith and God wanted it put on display for the world to see. Elijah faced his own doubts. Elijah depended on ravens to feed him. Elijah traded being thirty for being hungry when he went to the widow woman and her son. Elijah met everyone of these struggles with Faith! Faith prevailed and brought Elijah through it. This same Faith can bring you through the deepest and darkest valleys of life. Faith may not be easy but it is powerful when approached God’s way.

You may be thinking, I am not Elijah. I am God. God had his weak moments too. After Elijah by faith defeated the prophets of Baal and God consumed them by fire from heaven. Jezebel, Ahaz’s wife sought the life of Elijah. Elijah was frightened, ran, and hid in a cave. He could not hide from God. God called Elijah out and asked him what was going on? Elijah told God that Jezebel had killed all the prophets except him and now he was going to die. Elijah failed his faith. God gave Elijah these very specific orders, for example go to Damascus and after anointing two leaders, he was to find Elisha and begin preparing him to be a prophet. God also told Elijah He had seven thousand prophets like him in Israel. No matter how bad it looked, God was always one step ahead of the problem and God always used the problems to reveal His strength even through Elijah’s weakness.

Friend that is the same role God wants to play through our life. You may not live in Israel but you do live in the presence of evil and wickedness. The book again Curituma has issued the Army of God and said that this army is the shield of faith, Ephesians 6:16 “Above all, take the shield of faith, whereby ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.” It is with this inner God who strengthen you and prepare you with the courage needed for the issues that lay in front of you. It may not be a wicked government. It may be an illness, an addiction, a part other; will no forgive and I am sure there are countless circumstances God can allow in our lives. Just understand this Faith will bring you through them. When does your testimony for the Lord will encourage someone else to do the same. That is how God uses us to bring glory to Himself through our weakness. His strength shines forth. Do not run to a cave and try to hide from God. He knows where you are there and He knows who to put in your life to help you through. It may even be someone you have to train. The duty, that is just God’s prove His name! Friends until next time I pray God’s blessing upon your life and family. Remember when you share Jesus you share hope!


Terry Creech is pastor of Calvary Missionary Baptist Church in Marion NC. You can contact Terry by email at terry.creech@ gmail.com or by phone at (828) 688-6120.

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Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church

So They Say You’re “Judging”?
By Shawna Thomas
Burke County

“But they said, ‘Stand aside.’ Furthermore, they said, ‘This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them. ‘So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break down the door.’ (Genesis 19:9)

The response of the people of Sodom to Lot when he attempted to protect his guests from the immorality of the city is very revealing — and unfortunately very typical of our own age.

The residents of Sodom said about Lot: “already he is acting like a judge.” Perhaps you have heard this kind of response before? Perhaps you have uttered it? It is so often the response of the worldly person to anyone who confronts them about their sin: they claim that the person is “judging.” But think about WHO is saying it here: people who were clearly sinning, and who very shortly, in fact, experienced the fiery judgment of the Almighty! In light of this passage:

— If someone accuses you of “judging,” don’t take it to heart. Know that was exactly what SODOM said about a righteous person too.
— Don’t be quick to pull out the “you’re judging!” card yourself, lest you be found responding just as the sinners of Sodom did! It is self-condemning!
— And don’t be so afraid of others saying it about you, that you back down and start compromising with the standards of the world around you. You don’t have to be a very discerning judge to see that it’s becoming a lot more like Sodom every day.

Shawna Thomas is Senior Pastor at Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church in Morganton. Her sermons and devotionals are available at www.shawnathomas.com

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ACROSS
1 Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” (Mark 15:34)
5 Esau's grandson (Gen 36:12)
10 When I ______ on sackcloth, people make sport of me. (Ps 69:11)
13 They gathered twice as much, two ______ for each person (Ex 16:22)
15 The words of ______, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa (Amos 1:1)
16 They lef _______ and camped at Hor (Num 33:32)
17 It's total length will be 25,000 cubits and its ______ 10,000 cubits (Ezek 48:13)
18 This is the ______ of David's mighty men: Jashobeam (1 Chr 11:11)
19 The ______ was upon the earth forty days and forty nights (Gen 7:12)
20 ______ creatures and hyenas will live there (Jer 50:39)
22 But he ______ the craving of the nations (Prov 10:3)
23 I tear down your father's altar to ______ (Judg 6:23)
27 Soar like the ______ and make your nest among the stars (Obad 1:4)
28 Father of Samson, (Judg 13:2)
32 Speak now in the ______ of the people (Exod 11:2)
33 Appeal, request (2 Chr 6:19)
36 There before me was a man riding _______ (1 Chr 13:2)
38 Remember the former things, ______ of long ago (Isa 46:9)
47 _______ to the LORD the glory due his name (Ps 96:8)
49 Nebuchadnezzar called the astrologers to tell him what he had (Dan 2:1-2)
46 The screech owl will _______ our columns (Zeph 2:14)
47 Now therefore _______ than somewhat the grievous servitude (2 Chr 10:4)
49 Son of man, take thee _______ and lay it before thee (Ezek 4:1)
50 All the ______ of the earth will fear him (Ps 67:7)
52 Grinding him like grain with ______ (Prov 27:22)
53 The body of a human being (Isa 58:11)
55 Earnest wages to put it into _______ with holes (1,3) (Hag 1:6)
59 The _______ and the fine linen, and the hoods (Isa 3:23) KJV
61 Judge fairly; defend the ______ of the poor (Prov 31:9)
63 Rid yourselves of all such things as these. anger, ______, malice (Col 3:8)
66 King David had him brought from Lc _______ (2 Sam 9:5)
68 Left handed judge (Judg 3:21)
70 Which _______ shadow of things to come (3,1) (Col 2:17)
71 Do not ______ Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised (Acts 1:4)
72 Hagar ______ Abram a son (Gen 16:15)
73 She answered and said unto him, “The Lord shall in ______ (Mark 7:28)
74 Your _______ will be the coast of the Great Sea (Num 34:6)
75 Were not all ______ cleansed? Where are the other nine? (Luke 17:17)

DOWN
1 Both _______ and high, rich and poor, together (Ps 49:2)
2 God has ascended shot of joy (Ps 47:5)
5 Darius the king of Persia took over the kingdom (Dan 5:31)
4 Those who practice magic, the idolaters and all liars (Rev 21:8)
6 We found out that the island was called _______ (Acts 28:1)
7 Who _______ O LORD God, and what is my family? (2 Chr 7:16)
8 I have been alive again and was _______ (Luke 13:32)
9 When he saw Queen _______ in the court, he was pleased (Est 5:2)
10 Each gate made of a single _______ (Rev 21:21)
11 I will walk in the truth that _______ in my heart to fear thy name (Ps 86:11)
12 Will increase by thousands, by _______ of thousands in our fields (Ps 144:13)
13 When the queen of beauty heard the name of Solomon (1 Kings 10:1)
16 Do you rely on the law and about your relationship to _______ (Rom 2:18)
20 Joshua spared _______ the prostitute, with her family (Josh 6:25)
21 Like the garden of Eden, behind them, a desert _______ (Joel 2:3)
24 That may _______ you some spiritual gift (Rom 1:11)
26 We sailed to the _______ of Crete, opposite Salmonie (Acts 27:7)
29 Know _______ that wisdom is sweet to our soul (Prov 18:26)
30 Josiah fought against Pharaoh king of Egypt (Jer 46:2)
31 Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine _______ (Ezek 7:6)
33 The fear of the _______ length to life (Prov 10:27)
34 To _______ that were under the law (Gal 4:5)
35 LORD shall smite Israel, as a _______ is shaken (1 Kings 14:15)
37 Were bound in their costs, their hosen, and their _______ (Dan 3:21) KJV
58 Have not I given you this order? Be strong and _______ (2 Sam 11:28)
59 You will bring me _______ head down to the grave in sorrow (Gen 42:38)
60 His eyes are on the ways of men; he _______ every step they take (Job 34:21)
63 Let them also _______ love thy name be joyful in thee (Ps 5:11)
64 We have as an anchor of the soul, both _______ and stedfast (Heb 6:19)
67 The stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe and the _______ (Deut 14:18)
69 Animal house (Dan 6:19)

(Dan 3:21) KJV
40 Tell them everything I command you, do not _______ a word (Jer 26:2)
41 Go, _______ everything you have and give to the poor (Mark 10:21)
42 You shall assign by name the _______ to carry (Num 4:32)
45 _______ of Broken Walls, restorer of Streets (Isa 55:12)
46 If ye have _______ grain of mustard seed (2,3) (Matt 17:20)
47 _______ for a camel to go through the eye of a needle _______ for a rich man (Matt 19:24)
50 _______ is there any taste in the white of an eye? (Job 6:6)
52 For his wrath can _____ in a moment. (Ps 2:12)
53 A fire devours before him, and around him a tempest _______ (Ps 50:3)
56 There was what looked like _______ of glass (1,3) (Rev 4:6)

Solution on page 14
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Transportation: Automotive Systems Technology
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Welcome to the Front Porch
By Ken and Jan Merop
Every County

I loved our expansive front porch that wrapped
around one side of the house.
The stairway leading up to it was wide, too,
like welcoming arms saying, “Come on up and
sit awhile.”
Ours was a quiet block yet had enough activity
to visit with neighbors or just bask in the serene
setting.
As I get into my teen years and want to go to school functions, my Mum always
warned me about not leaving myself vulnerable.

“Have your keys in your hand. You don’t want to be fumbling in the dark look-
ing for your key.”
She would always be up and waiting for me. Sometimes leaves or dirt
clung to my shoes and I’d hear her say, “Wipe your feet,” just as I had already
dragged some messes into the house. But, I was home safe. We could deal with
messes later.
Have you ever thought of God’s grace like that front porch? When I was re-
cently reminded to consider that, my childhood house came to mind.
Spiritually speaking, that front porch depicts God’s grace. The wide stairway
beckons us to come and just be. His gift of grace (or undeserved favor) is like an
open, spacious porch that is wrapping around the house like giant arms to envelop
and protect.

On this spiritual porch, I’m out of the elements. Here is a place I can’t earn...
it’s a gift from our holy God who made himself known to us by his advent at
Christmas. This grace is not only welcoming, it is saving. Someday, we know we
can’t just bask in the grace offered, we must receive it, and it’s available through
that front door. But, we don’t have the key.

Referring to being our Shepherd, Jesus said in John 10:9, NKJV, “I am the door.
If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”
By grace and through his sacrifice at Calvary, Jesus became our door to salva-
tion and eternal life. Our faith in him is that key which unlocks the door.
And even though we may walk in some dirt from past labors, scars or humility,
the Holy Spirit within us acts as a cleansing agent, ever teaching and guid-
ing...just like parents who helped clean up messes I might have wreaked.

THE DOOR
A solid door forbidding entrance? That depends...
It’s rugged sandness keeps intruders out
and families safe inside.
But those who hold a key in their hands
gain entrance with ease.

Our faith is that key that unlocks salvation’s door.
Jesus knocks at the door of our hearts. Will we let Him in?

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock.
If anyone hears My voice and opens the door,
I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.
Revelation 3:20, NKJV”

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Ken and Jan love residing in the mountains of Every County. Visit Jan’s new blog
@passacendonsden.net. Journeying with Jan, and Ken’s photos at http://www.
photography.com.
About Gale
By Beth Davis
Mitchell County

For over 20 years, Gale was the victim of unspeakable abuse by her partner. Almost immediately he isolated her from everyone. He was controlling, manipulating, threatening, and physically abusive. Early in their relationship, the first abuse was a beating. He pushed her to the ground, and Gale wouldn’t give him the keys. He hit her in the face, knocked her to the ground, and wrestled the keys from her. Afterwards, her father told her: “You’re sure glad you came!” Gale lied to the hospital, telling them she tripped over her dog. Gale later met with threats against her beloved, loyal dog, Sparkling, to make sure and control her.

Once, they were at a family Thanksgiving dinner. She was surrounded by his family when he came from the kitchen, walked straight to her... in front of everyone... and slapped her so hard that her face stopped to the side, and she couldn’t see anything. As a child, Gale asked him to please drive her alone in her home. The entire side of her face was bruised... which was highlighted by her hand prints.

Since then, she’s been hard of hearing in that ear and has had ongoing neck problems.

Another gruesome time, Gale was too late coming home from work for his liking. He beat her up with a 3-pronged flashlight, which bared her eyebrow open. When she finally wrestled the flashlight from him, she showed him through the window. The glass cut her leg in places deep enough to actually see the bone. He wouldn’t let her go to the hospital or seek medical treatment, and he called repeatedly for help until she was dead. All that could do was elevate her leg, pour peroxide on her wounds, and wrap her knees in toilet paper, then put duct tape around her knees to pull those legs down on her. She still has the scars.

He got forward to a camping trip to Pisgah National Forest. He thought they could make a new start in the mountains, and things between them would be much better.

He quickly reverted to his usual abusive self; he immediately forbade her to make friends, let alone talk to other campers. They endured this for nearly a month... cooking on a dirty fire pit, washing clothes in a creek, and living in a tent. Their brand new car was stolen. That was the last straw for Gale and her emotional companion, Sparkling. Sparkling had any form of contact with her mother.

Thankfully, because this happened on Federal Land, he was sentenced and served 9 years in a Federal Penitentiary. Otherwise, it could have happened sooner.

Having nowhere to go, Gale and Sparkling made their way to Mitchell County SafePlace... one of the only four shelters in North Carolina to accept pets.

Years later, Gale found herself in yet another abusive situation while trying to return to her loaner parents. A family friend was trying to get Gale to the shelter, so they could talk to Gale. In the meantime, she called her only one child she has left. Tracy said, “Mom, is there anything I can do?” She had no option but to allow her to contact the children. They couldn’t even talk on the phone. They knew no one that Gale was trying to get her to call.

Gale: Hey Tracy. So glad you still love & care about me. I am really alone & hopeless now. I’m very isolated & in need of help. I can’t use this phone, even if I want to. They’re going to be in a hotel. I won’t be getting a room. I’ll be there with the children. They won’t be able to see me. They can’t even talk to me. You’ll have to know if they’re trying to get me. I’ll call you later.

Tracy: Write me at P.O. Box 344 Spruce Pine NC 28777. Of course I will love you. And distance doesn’t change that! Call me anyway.

Gale: FS I love you too.

Tracy: Let me know what you need and I’ll try to make it happen.

Gale: I cried & hurt too much thinking of how much you & everyone there helped me. And now I just feel I let you all down. I’m crying now, Tracy. I have to face it but I love all of you. You were closer to me than my own family & it hurts me so much when I think of how I let you down. Please forgive me. I’ve regretted leaving so very much. Spruce Pine was home to me more than anywhere I’ve ever been. I’ve been abused now in ways I didn’t realize could happen.

Lost my sobriety, my license & my car. I really gave up on life for awhile. I did pray many times & have 4 years sobriety again. I am in a situation now. A desperate one. I really am afraid too. I can’t rent now, they aren’t here. I’ve been slapped, pushed, forced into a lot in the last 2 to 3 years. My daughter has a man friend. He’s a control freak, a hateful one. He was thrown up for his. I am clean & sober. No probation now. But they too. Drugs, cocaine, pills, whatever he had. He’d beat her & use her to beat me. They are so tight down. He gets away with a lot. So does she. He says if I call the law or even him he’ll hit her & steal from him. Hence I get locked up. Nobody here to set bail for him. We want to get rid of my daughter and take over this trailer. She lives with him. He supplies her habit. My heart has been shattered by my daughter. She does what he says. Seals from me, abuses me as she does. I’ve tried everything. She’s on the lease agreement. Her girl, legally. There’s nothing I can do. She has to steal. I run my life physically & financially. I pay all the bills & all the pain. I stay in my room to keep from arguing. They tried to move me to the shoe store 3 months ago. I have no rights here without a fight. I can’t even keep my food in the kitchen. Tracy. She’s going to steal that later. Right now we need to figure out what to do next. Do you want to come home?

Gale: I have never felt so lonely. I truly want to leave. Before I get hurt bad.

Gale: Thank you Tracy. Thank you so much. I’ve gone to wait until this weekend while we are gone. If they find out our meal & home tickets are leaving there will be a fight. I have to find a way to Fryeville too. 20 miles away from here. I’m coming home then. If I have to, I will. But I’ll be with those I love & love me. I do love you.

Tracy: You let me know what day you want to leave there and I’ll have a ticket waiting for you at the bus station. Love you very much.

Gale: Tracy. Can you get me a bus ticket for tomorrow out of Fryeville? I would be so over grateful & I will not let you down ever again.

Love, Gale

Tracy: I’ll go into the office this morning and see what I can do. I’ll text you back around 11. Okay?

Gale: Alright. See if everyone is still mad at me too. I can’t do all I can make it up to them. I’m truly sorry for the wrong I’ve done. I’ll be waiting for your answer. Thank you ever so much.

Tracy: No one is mad at you, just worried.

Gale: I’m sorry anyway.

Tracy: Your ticket is purchased. You leave Fryeville on Sunday at 12:45 and get to Asheville at 8:30. Pick up ticket at station in your name. Password is Sparkling. Love you.

Tracy: Show up next when you get on the bus. Call me when it’s safe to do so.

Gale: OK. I will. Just confirmed my ride to the station.

Tracy: I am unable to meet the bus this evening. I have booked and paid for a room at the Fryeville Inn on Main St. Trike will be at the bus station and the most will bill the trip. I’ve already paid for it. Conni and I will be there to pick you up at 4pm. You are roomed until then.

The wonderful folks at Mountaineer Inn in Asheville put Gale in a room right beside their office. Requesting Gale would be hungry, the office manager stocked the room with snacks and meals. Delivery for her, and the manager covered the pizza... and never charged us for it.

The long road was a happy ending.

When Gale got to their shelter, she weighed 87 lbs., was pale, gaunt, and bone. All her clothes were taken. After several weeks of recovery and nutrition, Gale was finally ready to branch out. She found an admirable apartment within walking distance of everything. We found her a serving machine at a local diner so she could use her small skills and talents to make herself at home. Her contractor has filled and finalized her last color back... and the mutations to change her story in hopes of giving others hope. And, she’s a regular fixture at SafePlace. In all, Gale’s finally in a good place... and that’s a good thing!

Beth Davis is the Resource Development Coordinator at Mitchell County SafePlace. She can be reached at 828-755-4101 or bethdavis520@gmail.com.

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Marlene’s Meditations

Please Stop Laughing So I Can Worry!
By Marlene Houk
Burke County

Icy Packed ice. Coating the gorge section of the intersate for miles. We crept along in the swag van, six miles an hour. For 3 hours. The five of us spread out over the ten-passenger van that had begun the six-hour journey to happily in the sunshine of Kentucky. Now, we crammed, coiled coconuts on the Neal December day with my husband and son the little Escort in front of us.

My Southern bones protected at this tender. My DNA has not a molecule of grappling with icy roads and keeping a cool demeanor. The farthest north I had ever ventured was Philadelphia, PA. The rest of summer I couldn't even claim an expertise with dangerous winter roads within 5 generations. But, here I was, on the small scale of a major Interstate with lots of other cars who had the bright idea of traveling on this bitted cold gray day. Fear-incurable gripped my mind and I longed for the southern climate and the glare of brilliant midday sunshine. My voice was frozen, and I could only utter monosyllables to my questions or remarks.

Relentless giggles from my daughter and twelve-year-old great-niece, and an occasional chuckle by the driver, my niece, finally eased me from my icy attitude. Absolute silence reigned from the farthest back seat from my thirteen-year-old great nephew. I was baffled. Could they not see the treacherous scene? Were they immune to the dooms of silent cars racing in the snowy ditches and snagged next to the guard rails? Did they not understand the incredible dilemma before us? Why weren't they on their knees praying?

And, yet, they sang merrily, composing goofy lyrics and babbling with laughter at their silliness. My daughter and great-niece have enjoyed years of this close relationship, and today was no different. They did not hesitate to revel in each other’s company, inventing all sorts of reasons to snicker at their own jokes and jest with the driver who invited them to more putdowns. Eventually their voices penetrated my numbness, and I actually smiled at them. As they continued, my answering joined theirs in a cheery chorus of crazy antics.

Finally, we made it to the end of the ice and picked snow. What began as absolute terror for me, ended with the suggestion to create see-things with “I survived the gorge on December 31, 2003” and lyrics to their new songs.

That was four years ago, and I still remember my giggles. Even though the winter day was clouded with ominous fear, I eventually enjoyed my daughter, niece, and great-niece’s absurdities. They totally ignored the glastly weather and instead, totally immersed themselves in the frivolity within their cozy van. My niece skillfully drove. The Lord blessed, and we emerged from the gorge, ready to continue our conversations in the sunshine.

Jesus says in John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, giveth unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

I think about that scene when I can’t control my world, when it seems a slippery slope, and when monsters intrude in the corners of my mind. And, I occasionally break and run from their and control over my mind, I take the key of peace, unlock my prison cell of worry, and run into the sweet arms of Jesus, enjoying His security and love. I need to do that more often.

Oh, yes, of course, not forgetting my great-nephew. He was in the land of video games, totally oblivious to the outside world which he couldn’t control in the first place. That reminded me of John 14:15 which says, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.” Could I, like my great-nephew, practice total oblivion to the world’s sway? Could I be so immersed in the Scriptures that I am unaware of the world’s storms or at least unaffected by them? What a wonderful thought.

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

Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force

Dealing Effectively with Addictions
By Schell McCall, PATH Executive Director
Mitchell and Swain Counties

At the July 10th meeting of the Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force at the Mausy Phillips Center in Spruce Pine, members were treated to a special presentation by Dr. Michael Newberry, MD. Dr. Newberry is a practicing Psychiatrist known especially for his research and work in the area of addictions. Among several insights were his contention that addictions must be treated as diseases that individuals develop, rather than as choices that they make. Helping to prevent addiction diseases, especially with mental health interventions is critical. He pointed out that, since at least 80% of addicted individuals relapse, detoxification must be considered a first step, followed by other immediate treatments.

The Task Force was congratulated by Elizabeth Flemming, Program Director of the Rural Pain Management and Substance Use Disorders Initiative of MAHEC (Mountain Area Health Education Center) as being a model for other communities with its demonstrated successes and inclusive membership which includes two counties, government leaders, law enforcement, education, health professionals, community citizens, business people, and faith community representatives.

The Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force is a program of Partners Aligning Toward Health. To learn more, support their work, or get involved as a volunteer, contact PATH staff at (828) 682-7999, info@pathwnc.org, or www.pathwnc.org/programs/prevention. Follow the efforts of the MYSAT at www.facebook.com/MitchellYanceySubstanceAbuseTaskForce.

Sudoku

Solution on page 14

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Morganton Seventh-Day Adventists Church

Tell Yourself the Truth
By Rick and Cindy Mercer
Burke County

Mark was conducting a series of Bible seminars in São Paulo, Brazil, when he met a woman named Anna who believed her life was worthless. She was estranged, intelligent, and outgoing, but extremely depressed.

On her twenty-third birthday she decided to take her own life. Before ending it all, she wrote letters to her family and her close friends, and she even wrote a letter to God.

Miraculously, at the very time she was writing these letters, the telephone rang. The person who had called did not know her, but he immediately sensed Anna’s distress. He began gently encourage her and present her with hope. Then he invited her to some evangelistic meetings that Mark had been conducting by his home. Anna came desiring a new life and longing to be healed from her brokenness. She came longing for the pain and hurt within to go away.

Anna sat spellbound at Mark talked about how, in Christ, we’re valuable; in Christ we’re loved; in Christ we’re accepted; in Christ we can be made whole. Anna embraced her self-talk. She confronted the lies swirling around in her head. She accepted the truth that in Christ’s eyes she was valuable. The lie that had imprisoned her unravelled.

As Mark shared the story about Anna, he said, “The truth, of course, was obvious enough. But it had to sink in. The Holy Spirit impressed her with reality. God made that impression real in her mind, and His light shone in her heart.” This was the beginning of healing for Anna.

Here in the thought that changed her thinking, “He [Christ] made us accepted in the Beloved” (Eph. 1:6). If we are accepted, we are not rejected. If the Father accepts us through Jesus, then I can accept myself. When we accept Jesus by faith we reside in His righteousness. The Father accepts us, as He does His own Son. All of Christ’s good works and His righteous living are credited to our account.

“There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1). Mark continued to remind Anna as did many others that the Father will not condemn His own Son. Through Christ we are as truly accepted by the Father as if we were His own Son. He welcomes us. He embraces us. He accepts us.

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Allen’s Offerings

One Focus
By Allen Buchanan

One Focus was the singing trio that was formed in 1979 in Mitchell County. The first time I met Libby, I was impressed with her talent. Libby and her sister, Susan, were members of the Martlets, a local a cappella group. After Libby joined the group, she became a regular featured singer. She was a natural talent and quickly became a star within the group.

Today, One Focus continues to perform and share their story. They have released several albums and are active in many community events. Libby and her sister, Susan, continue to be a part of the group. Their music is a combination of traditional and contemporary styles, and their performances are always a treat.

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