

BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS



Freedom to Hope

By Marlene Houk

Isaiah 61:1 *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;*

"Every dollar we had went to buying drugs," Julie says. "We used to be a family involved in sports with two young boys, but now we'd sold our house, our car, everything to finance our drug addiction." Years later, destitute, homeless, and desperate, Julie met someone at a women's shelter who said, "You've got to go to Freedom Life."

Freedom Life, tucked into the foothills of western North Carolina, operates in the perfect spot to serve an area of significant need in the McDowell community. They are committed to ministering to the complex needs faced by men and women who are currently incarcerated in jail or prison, who are in transition from jail or prison back into the community, or who have a criminal record and simply need help. In seeking to provide assistance to justice involved men and women and their families, Freedom Life uses a holistic approach that groups their very complex needs into four main areas:

- Spiritual
- Relational
- Mental/Emotional/Addiction/Physical Health
- Practical (job, housing, transportation, financial, basic needs like food & clothing)

According to the website: www.FreedomLifeMinistries.org, in 2012, Danny Hampton, who at that time worked as a Prison Chaplain and Case Manager for McDowell Mission, saw the potential and need to create an entirely new ministry to help people whose lives had been impacted by judicial prosecution and incarceration. Six years later, this faith-based solution to addiction and reentry offers amazing results of freedom to hope.

Freedom Life offers "Life Plan" development and guidance that includes multiple levels of engagement depending upon a person's own commitment to their life transition and transformational need. The plan may be as simple as a hot meal and room for the night or as involved as addressing all four areas of need mentioned above at the same time. In Julie's journey, her Life Plan included faith. She says, "I wake up every morning thanking God because Freedom Life has pulled me out of the pit." Julie works full-time, a new experience since twelve years ago when she became an addict. She now owns a car, and has a place to live.

Freedom Life provides personal and pastoral guidance, resources, and hope. The results may vary from managing others in the process of recovery and reentry through workforce development to singing in the music outreach team or working outdoor festivals. Some have regained custody of their children. Planning toward new and transformed lives offers hope to all. Many individuals are living proof that the program works and goes beyond expectations.

Chris relates his experience to Freedom Life. "I was in a car wreck in 1996 and during that time I wound up getting hooked on prescription painkillers. Eventually that led me to prison several times. I prayed to God and asked him for help. That's how I got to meet Danny Hampton. Now, out of prison, I play in the music ministry here [at Freedom Life] with Ray and David and Danny and Scott. It's a feeling like I've never had in my life, better than any drug that I've ever had."

Help and support in the form of practical areas such as housing resourcing,



workforce development, and medical needs propel the clients to greater success. Counseling and support groups help restore mental and spiritual health. Bible Study and pastoral care lift depressed spirits. Freedom Life also provides grief counseling, addiction accountability, parenting resources, in-prison ministry, and preparation for reentry.

"I didn't think nobody wanted me unless I was drinking or using," says Kim, a participant in the Freedom Life program. "I was in jail around Thanksgiving of last year when God sent Danny [Executive Director], Melissa [Client Care Director], and Scott [Music Ministry] to me. They were my heroes. But this is a beautiful journey. It's so easy to talk to the people at Freedom Life. They not only helped me with my medical concerns, but they showed me the right way to go." The goal of Freedom Life is to "build an interconnecting support network of churches and other community agencies and organizations. This community support system is the backbone of an overall effort to provide help and support to men and women both currently incarcerated and released." Over eighty organizations, churches, and government agencies work with Freedom Life to assist justice involved individuals.

Not only does Freedom Life's ministry affect the incarcerated and reintegrated individuals, but the non-profit also impacts their families and communities. Danny, a client, and Chase, his son, reflect on this influence. Chase says, "December 18, I got to move back in with my Dad, just because of Freedom Life's ministry and the grace of God. It's unbelievable now what my life is as compared to my life as a child. My little brothers are coming back in two months, and I couldn't be more excited." Chase's father adds to his son's appreciation. He comments, "It's time to grow up, you know, and realize how much we are hurting our kids and the damage we've already done to them and try to change and reconcile. Sitting here with Chase today is proof that it can happen, but it didn't come from just sitting around and wishing it. It takes a lot of work. I thank God for Danny Hampton and Freedom Life."

In 2017, Freedom Life:

- Ministered to 930 men and women in jail and prison and over 160 men and women in the community
- Rejoiced over 270 men and women who committed or recommitted their lives to Christ
- Led over 120 Bible studies and facilitated over 100 Bible based support groups
- Provided over 2,500 hours in Bible based spiritual counseling
- Performed multiple concerts in prison, jail, churches, and the community
- Helped multiple volunteers offer mentoring/discipleship in jails and opened their third transition house
- Provided over 20,000 miles of transportation and over \$63,000 in financial resourcing
- Attained a 7% recidivism rate among level three clients (Recidivism is the likelihood that the person will commit another crime: the lower the number, the more successful the program.)

Freedom Life participates in statewide efforts to reduce recidivism. They work with the State Reentry Council Collaborative and established a local McDowell Reentry Council in November of 2018. They also work regionally to help surrounding counties develop Reentry Council capacity. In an incredible, God-sent decision in September of this year, the federal government awarded Freedom Life \$ 500,000 for their Second Chance Act grant, one of only eleven national awards. Along with other local grants such as the Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, regional and state grants such as the Kate B. Reynolds Foundation and Melvin R. Lane, this federal grant will enable the organization to facilitate the

continued on page 5



Does your child experience **any** of the following?

- Test anxiety
- Bullying
- Difficulty remaining in class
- Excessive worry
- Sadness
- Self-harm
- Difficulty sitting still
- Difficulty paying attention

Crossnore Clinical Services now offers outpatient therapy services by licensed or associate-level clinicians (LCSW, LMFT, or LPC) employed by Crossnore School & Children's Home. Models used by clinicians vary based on the needs of the child and family. Services are provided on the Avery County campus and bi-lingual services are provided, subject to availability.

**Call toll-free 1-866-892-6213 for more information
and to schedule an appointment.**



100 DAR Drive | P.O. Box 249 | Crossnore, NC 28616
Toll-Free (866) 892-6213 | www.crossnore.org

Contents

In Every Issue

Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm - p. 15

Life Lessons - p. 9

Your Government - pp. 32-33

BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

Publisher/Co-editor – Doug Harrell
828-467-0280
dough@brcnews.com
Office Manager/Co-editor – Barbara Harrell
828-765-6800
828-467-3644
barbarah@brcnews.com
Sales:
Doug Harrell
828-467-0280
dough@brcnews.com
Church Directory:
Doug Harrell
828-765-6800
dough@brcnews.com

Distribution:
Mildred Parker
Sid Houk
Brent Ramsey
Carolyn McMahon
Graphic Design / Layout
Lynn Yaccarino
lynn@brcnews.com
Blue Ridge Christian News
261 Oak Ave.
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Office – 828-765-6800
Fax – 828-766-9157
info@brcnews.com

"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



Visit Us Online At: www.brcnews.com



Thank You For Supporting Our Advertisers!

Serving: Avery - Burke - Madison - McDowell - Mitchell - Yancey Counties

ADVERTISER CLASSIFICATIONS

APPLIANCES

Jonathan's Used Appliances (11)

AUTOMOBILES - Dealers

Buchanan Young (37)

John Greene Chrysler (7)

AUTOMOBILES - Tires

Spruce Pine Tire (41)

BUILDING SUPPLY

Summit Building Supply (10)

BEEF

Harrell Hill Farm (46)

CHURCHES

Altapass Baptist (4)

Bear Creek Baptist (4)

Berry Chapel Baptist (4)

Burkmont Baptist (4)

Faith Fellowship (4)

First Advent Christian (4)

First Baptist Spruce Pine (4)

Grassy Creek Baptist (4)

Great Hope 7th day Adventist (4)

Morganton Seventh day Adventist (4)

Pine Branch Baptist (4)

Plumtree Presbyterian (4)

Spruce Pine United Methodist (4)

St. Lucian Catholic (4)

The Bridge (4)

West Burnsville Baptist (4)

CHIROPRACTIC

Cruz Chiropractic (16)

COLLEGE

McDowell Tech (47)

CPA

Jamie Miller (34)

DENTIST

Scott Murphy (23)

EVENTS

Billy Graham (17)

Crossnore School (2)

Freedom Life (43)

Yancey Senior Center (10)

FARM SUPPLIES

Griffith's General Store (19)

FURNITURE

Buck Stove (45)

L&B Furniture (42)

Peoples Furniture (35)

GUN SMITHIN'

Pappy's (44)

HEALTH CARE

Bakersville Medical Clinic (21)

Carolina Home Care (15)

Pruit Health Care (48)

HOSPICE

Hospice and Palliative Care of the
Blue Ridge, Inc (5)

Hospice of McDowell Care Partners
(9)

Hospice of Rutherfordton (35)

Hospice of Yancey (25)

HOUSING

Clayton (26)

INSURANCE

Fortner Insurance (5)

Miller Insurance Group (24)

Mitchell Co. Farm Bureau (36)

Nation Wide / Trent (39)

Premier Insurance (14)

PAWN

Mountaineer Pawn Shop (39)

PHARMACY

The Prescription Pad (31)

PLUMBING/HEATING

Burleson Plumbing Heating (31)

REALTORS

Whitson Realty (27)

REHABILITATION/NURSING

Brian Center (6)

RESTAURANTS

Abeles Resturant (42)

Bantam Chef (22)

Bubba's Good Eats (15)

Western Sizzlin (5)

RETAIL

Grassy Creek Clothing (16)

Mountain Time (46)

TAX

Jackson Hewitt (41)

THRIFT STORE

Hospice and Palliative Care of the
Blue Ridge, Inc (45)

TRANSPORTATION

Mitchell Transit (7)

Yancey Transit (11)

TREE SERVICE

Ray's Tree Service (20)

Church Directory



The Bridge Church of WNC

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

Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin

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

"Home of Tri County Christian School"
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 17:21)

Berry Chapel Baptist Church

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

Pastor - Steve Williams

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

**Where Everybody is Somebody
And Jesus Christ is Lord!**

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church

2187 Jamestown Road
Morganton, NC
828-684-8212

Pastor Rick Mercer

Sabbath (Saturday)
Bible Study - 9:30 am
Sabbath Worship - 11:00 am
Vegetarian Buffet after church
Wednesday
Praise, Prayer & Proclaim -
7:00 pm
www.morgantonsda.org

Faith Fellowship Church

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

Pastor: David Gillespie

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

Altapass Baptist Church

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

Dr. Marcus R. Benfield

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

**"A Christ-Centered,
Bible Believing Church"**

Grassy Creek Baptist Church

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

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

West Burnsville Baptist Church

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

Pastor: Terry Long

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

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

Burkemont Baptist Church

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

For more information,
please visit
www.burkemontbaptist.org

Dr. Luke A. Lane

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

Plumtree Presbyterian Church

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

Pastor Ryan Bridgeo
pastor@plumtreepresbyterian.org

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

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

Bear Creek Baptist Church

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

Reverend Bruce Cannon

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

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

Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church

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

Pastor Barry Mahorney

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

Pine Branch Baptist Church

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

Reverend Bobby Joe Greene

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

**A Bible-believing Fellowship
Loving God and Loving People**

St. Lucien's Catholic Church

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

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

First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine

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

**Dr. Rocky Branch
Senior Pastor**

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

**Knowing God, Seeing God, Serving
God, Submitting to God!**

Spruce Pine United Methodist Church

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

Pastor Rev. Jeremy Troxler

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

The mission of Spruce Pine United
Methodist Church is to be a beacon on
a hill spreading the Good News of Jesus
Christ through: Worship, Fellowship,
Education, and Nurturing Service

First Advent Christian Church

211 Lenoir Road
Morganton, NC 28655
828-437-8206
www.faccmorganton.org

**Pastor Patrick Bradshaw
Associate Pastor Javier
Guzman**

Sunday School 10:00 AM
Sunday Worship 11:00 AM
Wed: Youth Meal 5:30PM -
Meeting 6:30PM
Adult Bible Study/Prayer 6:30PM
Choir Practice 7:15PM
Sat. Band Practice 4:30PM

**Preaching Christ Crucified, Risen
and Coming Again!**

You can let tourists, visitors and even neighbors know where your church is and when you meet by listing in the BRCN Church Directory. This visible and effective advertising is specially priced at \$300.00 per year for our churches - approximately \$5.75 a week!

**Call us at 828-765-6800 to enroll in
this important outreach effort.**

recovery and reentry of even more candidates.

Julie's two sons, caught in the life of addiction through their mother, have now started on the journey back to health and freedom through Freedom Life. She says, "It's been an amazing journey. I learned how to apply the Bible to my life through Freedom Life. I've cried. I've allowed those who care to peel back my life like an onion. And I've realized Jesus's death and resurrection 2,000 years ago still works today."

"I trust Freedom Life," Monica, another client says, "I think God sent them to me."

Jessie, whose past includes involvement with the justice system, agrees that Freedom Life transformed her. She says, "I spent time with Danny Hampton and Melissa and through spiritual counseling, I found a home church. It's OK to not know what you're going to do with your life. Because no matter what, at the end of the day, God knows. He knows the past, the present, and the future." By God's grace, Jessie was able to regain custody of her two beautiful daughters.

Are you willing to labor together with Freedom Life? Volunteers for transportation, mentoring, office work, and other areas are needed. Monthly giving (online or by mail) enables this amazing ministry to continue the programs necessary to restore the lives of justice-involved individuals. Your giving is so important because grants that Freedom Life has been blessed to receive are only for a short time and sustainable income through contributions like yours must be there to replace the grant funding. Currently Freedom Life is needing to raise \$200,000 to replace grant funding that will be ending in 2019.

Let's help people like Julie, Kim, and Chris to recover and reenter our communities as productive citizens for God's glory. Let's help them to find freedom to hope! Contact Freedom Life at (828) 559-2224, email: info@freedomlifeministries.org or go to their website: www.FreedomLifeMinistries.org

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



Do you run a local business?

So do we.

Your Auto-Owners Insurance policy comes with a local agent – someone who understands you and the protection you need.

Celebrating 100 Years 1919-2019



Spruce Pine
Burnsville

Newland
Banner Elk

www.fortnerinsurance.com



LIFE • HOME • CAR • BUSINESS



Making Each Moment Count
Services Offered

- 24 Hour Nursing Services
- Pain & Symptom Management
- Volunteer Services
- Chaplain & Bereavement Support
- Social Work Services
- Ongoing Patient & Family Services
- Ongoing Patient & Family Educational
- Respiratory Therapy

(828)-765-5677



Hospice and Home Care
of the Blue Ridge, Inc.
Hospice, Palliative Care & CAP

WANTED

THE WESTERN SIZZLIN STEAK OF THE WEEK

- NOTORIOUS FOR BEING A GREAT VALUE •
- KNOWN TO BE "FLAMEKIST" TO LOOK IN THE JUICES •
- LEGENDARY FOR A BOLD AND DELICIOUS FLAVOR •

South Hwy 226
Spruce Pine, NC
Spruce Pine Shopping Center

828.765.9151

Laughter is Healthy for You

By Buddy Freeman
Madison County

Many banks have a new kind of Christmas Club in operation.

The new club helps you save money to pay last year's gifts.

Nothing destroys the Christmas spirit faster than looking for a place to park.

Christmas is a race to see which gives out first—your money or your feet

Christmas shopping should include buying toys for children that have fathers who would enjoy playing with them.

Christmas is the time of the year when Santa Claus comes down the chimney and your savings go down the drain.

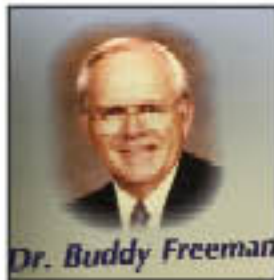
Christmas shoppers are people with the "brotherly shove."

On Christmas eve Santa carries the bag. After Christmas dad is holding the bag.

A mother gave her grown son two sweaters for Christmas. The next time he visited, he made sure to wear one. As he entered her home, instead of the expected smile, she frowned and said, "What's the matter you didn't like the other one?"

A Mall Santa is taken aback when a woman, around the age of 35 gets in line to sit on his lap. When it is her turn, she sits down on Santa's lap. Santa tells her, "we don't normally listen to the Christmas wishes of adults." The woman says, "I've only got one wish and it's for my mother." Santa said, "Oh, that is nice of you. Okay, we'll make an exception this time. What would you like me to bring your mother for Christmas?" The woman answers, "A Son-in-law."

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



Dr. Buddy Freeman

By Billy Graham's Prayer for a New Year

This prayer from Billy Graham, written for The Saturday Evening Post in 2008, is just as relevant more than a decade later.

Our Father and our God, as we stand at the beginning of this new year we confess our need of Your presence and Your guidance as we face the future.

We each have our hopes and expectations for the year that is ahead of us—but You alone know what it holds for us, and only You can give us the strength and the wisdom we will need to meet its challenges. So, help us to humbly put our hands into Your hand, and to trust You and to seek Your will for our lives during this coming year.

In the midst of life's uncertainties in the days ahead, assure us of the certainty of Your unchanging love.

In the midst of life's inevitable disappointments and heartaches, help us to turn to You for the stability and comfort we will need.

In the midst of life's temptations and the pull of our stubborn self-will, help us not to lose our way but to have the courage to do what is right in Your sight, regardless of the cost.

And in the midst of our daily preoccupations and pursuits, open our eyes to the sorrows and injustices of our hurting world, and help us to respond with compassion and sacrifice to those who are friendless and in need. May our constant prayer be that of the ancient Psalmist: "Teach me, O Lord, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to the end" (Psalm 119:33).

We pray for our nation and its leaders during these difficult times, and for all those who are seeking to bring peace and justice to our dangerous and troubled world. We pray especially for Your protection on all those who serve in our armed forces, and we thank You for their commitment to defend our freedoms, even at the cost of their own lives. Be with their families also, and assure them of Your love and concern for them.

Bring our divided nation together, and give us a greater vision of what You would have us to be. Your Word reminds us that "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 33:12).

As we look back over this past year we thank You for Your goodness to us—far beyond what we have deserved. May we never presume on Your past goodness or forget all Your mercies to us, but may they instead lead us to repentance, and to a new commitment to make You the foundation and center of our lives this year.

And so, our Father, we thank You for the promise and hope of this new year, and we look forward to it with expectancy and faith. This I ask in the name of our Lord and Savior, who by His death and resurrection has given us hope both for this world and the world to come.

Amen.

© 2008 Saturday Evening Post Society. Reprinted with permission.
Do you have hope for the new year—and for eternity?



**Out of town? You can still
check out our new Website
www.brcnews.com
And find us on Facebook**

Do you have a joint replacement surgery scheduled? The Brian Center Spruce Pine invites you to reserve a room with us ahead of time. Call us a week before surgery to tour the building, meet our therapy staff and see where you will be staying. Its our goal to provide a smooth transition from the hospital to our building and get you back home as quickly as possible. Contact Michelle Plummer @ (828)765-7312 or Heather Steuer @ (828)284-8362 to make your appointment today.

- Orthopedic Rehab Program
- We accept Medicare / Medicaid / Managed Care Ins.
- VA Contract
- Respiratory Therapy In-House
- Speech Therapy

- Physical Therapy In-House
- Occupational Therapy In-House
- Licensed Nursing Staff 24-Hour / 7 Days a Week
- Beautiful Flower Gardens and Waterfall
- Call us for Reservation Program



5 Star Medicare Facility

**218 Laurel Creek Court, Spruce Pine, NC
Located off 19E, Next to Brad Ragan Park**

**Phone: (828) 765-7312
Fax: (828) 765-7295**

Billy Graham Answers:

For many years Billy Graham has taken questions and answered them from a Biblical standpoint. We have included several of these in the paper this month on the beginning of a New Year. Search and find them throughout the paper. These are little gems of wisdom.

Q: Every year, I always make a long list of New Year's resolutions, but since I never keep them I've decided this time to make just a few. Does the Bible say anything about making resolutions?

A: Yes, the Bible certainly encourages us to examine our lives and resolve to change them if necessary (although not just at the beginning of a new year). The Psalmist, for example, made a resolution to keep his speech pure: *"I have planned no evil; my mouth has not transgressed"* (Psalm 17:3).

Why, however, do so many of our resolutions fail? Sometimes it's simply because they aren't realistic. Instead, they're only wishful thinking, with no way to make them actually happen. For example, you might resolve to make a million dollars this year, but if you don't have any way to earn it, it probably isn't going to happen. Other resolutions fail because we aren't willing to make the sacrifices necessary to reach them.

But the real problem is within ourselves—within our own hearts and minds. We'd all like to be better people, but no matter how hard we try, we find ourselves tripped up by our own moral failures and weaknesses. Even the Apostle Paul experienced this: *"I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out"* (Romans 7:18).

What is the solution? The solution is to turn to God, confessing our sins to Him and seeking His help to live the way we should. Begin the New Year by turning to Jesus Christ and inviting Him into your life. Then ask Him to help you become the person He wants you to be. This is what Paul did, and that's why he could say, *"I can do all this through him who gives me strength"* (Philippians 4:13). Begin the New Year with Christ.

Q: This past year wasn't very good for me, and I can't blame anyone but myself. I know I need God, but how much do I have to clean up my life before He'll have anything to do with me? He must be very angry at me.

A: The most important truth I can tell you is that God still loves you, in spite of the fact you've spent most of your life ignoring Him. No, God doesn't love your sin—but He does love you, and He wants to forgive you and come into your life and change you.

And that's why God won't refuse to have anything to do with you until you've cleaned up your life! He knows how weak you are, and He welcomes you just as you are. If God didn't love you, Jesus Christ never would have left Heaven's glory and died on the cross for you. But He did—because He loves you! Let the truth of God's Word sink deeply into your soul: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16).

Think of it this way. When you're sick, do you have to wait until you're almost well before you can see the doctor? Of course not. Your doctor will help you no matter how sick you are—and the same is true with Christ. Jesus said, *"I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance"* (Luke 5:32).

Don't stay on a dead-end road; don't reject Christ any longer. Instead, by faith turn to Him today, repenting of your sins and asking Him to forgive you and save you and come into your life. It's the most important decision you will ever make. Ready for a new start? Receive God's forgiveness now.

Q: Every year I make a long list of New Year's resolutions, and every year I forget every one of them. Is it just a waste of time to make a list of New Year's resolutions?

A: No, it's not a waste of time to examine our lives and admit that we need to make some changes—if we're honest about actually doing it. Unfortunately, most lists of resolutions aren't really resolutions at all; they're only a series of wishes, without any plan for making them happen.

But let me suggest you ask yourself two questions as you think about your list. First, what is God's goal for you during the coming year? What does He want to see happen in your life during 2018? In other words, don't just write down anything that happens to come to mind; seek instead God's priority for your life. Perhaps you have never given your life to Jesus Christ—and if not, make this your first step. And if you do know Christ, make it your goal to draw closer to Him during the coming year. Jesus said, *"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness"* (Matthew 6:33).

Second, how will you achieve God's goals for your life? Goals are important—but if we don't have any plan for reaching them, we'll probably fail. Take time to read God's Word and pray every day. In addition, ask God to guide you to a church where you'll hear God's Word, and also find friends who can help you spiritually.

New Year's Day is coming up soon. May it mark not only the beginning of a new year for you, but also the beginning of a new life. And it will, as you seek God's will and learn to walk with Christ every day. Want to find new life in Christ? Find out more.

START SOMETHING NEW SALES EVENT



NEW 2018 Jeep Wrangler Unlimited "JL"
V-6 Engine, Automatic Transmission, Keyless Entry Technology Group, Power Windows/Locks, Hard Top

Buy For ONLY \$39,000



NEW 2019 Ram 1500 Limited Crew Cab 4X4
HEMI V-8, Heated front & Rear Seats, Navigation, Blind Spot detection, Adaptive Cruise, Panoramic Roof, Loaded!!

**MSRP \$64,865
Buy For ONLY \$57,000!**



NEW Jeep Grand Cherokee Upland 4X4
3.6 Liter V-6 Engine, Heated Seats & Steering Wheel, Power liftgate, power seat, Remote Start, SWEET!!

Buy For ONLY \$34,500!!



I-40 Exit 100 • 910 Jamestown Rd. • Morganton, NC 28655
www.johngreenecdj.com • **828-584-5337**



Happy New Year

In the New Year Transportation is not a worry for Mitchell County Residents.

Mitchell County

Call **688-4715.**

Come ride and give us a try!

Medical, Shopping, Work in County, Cancer Treatments, Day Care, Airport, etc.

Low Fares, Friendly, Safe, Reliable

**Check out our new Website-www.brcnews.com
And find us on Facebook**

God Helping Prisoners

By Jody Griffin
Mitchell County

Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

A new year arrives, bringing new opportunities to live and serve in God's Kingdom. It's the very reality that serves a theme of the ministry of the Chaplain! Over and over I hear from men who are struggling to make sense of their circumstances and who are striving to navigate their way through incarceration. And over and over I point them to the One Who has the power to help them begin again. I call these my "Top Ten Tips" for surviving and even thriving in prison!

1. Start with this moment. The past truly is the past and we cannot change it. But in THIS moment, we can embrace the gift of God and begin the rest of our lives as a "new creation"! (Read 2 Corinthians 5:17)

2. Live in the Truth. We have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. No need to deny it, but our focus should be forward! Yes, I've made mistakes, but from this day forward I am trusting God to help me overcome those mistakes and become the man I am created to be for the GLORY of God! (And for the benefit of myself and those who love me.)

3. Live life in the smallest increments of time possible, paying attention to how this day/hour/minute/breath is my opportunity to reflect the new life I have received!

4. Acknowledge the Victories. When you overcome temptation to take instead of giving, tear down instead of build, or hate instead of Love, enjoy the sweet sense of accomplishment!

5. Own up to the defeats. NO ONE is going to get it right ALL of the time. When you fall, admit it. God already knows, but desires that we confess our sin. He is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness!

6. Take advantage of the opportunities to worship God, study the Scriptures, fellowship with other believers and participate in the Kingdom of God we have been invited to see and experience!

7. Realize that there are many (Hundreds? Thousands? Perhaps even Millions?) people who have experienced redemption in their own lives and who are praying for you!

8. Let THIS be the day that you begin again... and then Tomorrow and then the next day and so on until you have experienced Grace so much that you are ready to offer it to yourself AND to others.

9. Use the resources right in front of you to grow in understanding and wisdom. The wise man LEARNS and GROWS. The foolish man keeps repeating the same mistake expecting a different result!

10. Begin with those closest to you and then work your way outward until you have been completely honest about your journey. Remember that the Bible is filled with "less than perfect people" who God used to do great things.



Happy New Year! And I pray for a Happy New You!

PS. Last month I made a plea for your prayers and commitment to this ministry in an ongoing fashion. Some have given through the Facebook Fundraising Page for High Country Prison Ministry. Others have made personal contributions in other ways. Currently, HCPM is pursuing different grant opportunities to keep this Ministry a reality at AMCI. God Bless You for your prayers in that regard and in your faithful gifts!

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

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

Q: I can't wait for this year to end. It's just been one problem after another—family sickness, a couple of deaths, financial issues, you name it. I begged God to solve them, but nothing happened. Where was God in all this?

A: The most important thing I can tell you is that God knew what was going on in your life, and He deeply cared about you, even if it didn't seem like it at the time. In the midst of a terrible time for God's people, the prophet Jeremiah could still say, "His compassions never fail" (Lamentations 3:22).

Frankly, I wish I knew why God allows hard times to come to us, but I don't—not fully. What I do know is that evil is real, and sometimes it seems to gain the upper hand, at least for a time. I also know that God knows all about evil and suffering, for His only Son, Jesus Christ, endured the suffering and death of the cross. But beyond the cross was the empty tomb, and because of Christ's resurrection, you and I can have hope—both now and forever.

When hard times come we can do one of two things: We can either become bitter and turn against God, or we can turn in faith to Him, and find in Him the strength and hope we need. Which will it be for you?

As you stand on the threshold of a new year, turn to Jesus Christ and ask Him to come into your life. Then ask Him to give you His strength and wisdom as you face life's challenges. Remember: When we know Christ, nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39). Find peace with God today.

Q: It's been a hard year for me, and I'd give almost anything to know what the new year has in store for me. How can I find out? A woman in our town claims to be able to tell your future, and I'm almost willing to give her a try.

A: I sincerely hope you won't go down this path. At best you'd simply be wasting your money—and at worst you could find yourself getting entangled with occult spiritual forces that are enemies of your soul. The Bible warns us to avoid occult practices, and calls them "detestable to the Lord" (Deuteronomy 18:12).

Only God knows the future; no matter how hard we try, even our best efforts will only be guesses. But this ought to encourage you—because if God knows the future, then you can trust your future into His hands! Wouldn't it be better to face the future with Him than without Him? God loves you, and you can trust His promise to be with you and guide you. The Bible says, "For I know the plans I have for you ... plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11).

Don't be deceived by those who claim to know the future, and don't be burdened by worry and anxiety about your future. Instead, ask Jesus Christ to come into your life and commit your future into His hands. Then Him to help you trust Him every day, and to live the way He wants you to live.

In addition, I urge you to seek out a church where you can grow in your faith, and have fellowship with people who can help you make right decisions about your future. You need them—and they need you.

Put your future in God's hands.

Q: My brother died in a car wreck last New Year's Eve. He'd been to a party and had too much to drink, and he ended up killing not only himself but also the two passengers in his car. Please urge people not to drink and drive. It just isn't worth it.

A: Thank you for your heartfelt concern, which I hope every reader will take very seriously—especially as we stand on the brink of a new year. What better New Year's resolution could we make than to turn away (with God's help) from everything that harms us?

Every year alcohol and drugs cause thousands of deaths and injuries on our highways, and I support every effort to get drunk or impaired drivers off the road. Alcohol, the Bible says, can be as deadly as a poisonous snake: "In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper" (Proverbs 23:32).

Unfortunately, we read or hear of fatal automobile accidents so often today that we seldom give them a second thought. And yet almost nothing is more tragic than the sudden death or injury of someone we love in an automobile accident. In my view good driving isn't just a good habit; it's a moral and spiritual obligation that every driver should take to heart. Jesus' words should apply to our driving as much as any other part of our lives: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12).

May your brother's death turn your heart and mind to eternity, and Jesus Christ and to His love for you. Life is uncertain; we never know what tomorrow holds. But when we know Christ, we know we are safely in His hands—both now and forever.

Have you placed your hope in Jesus?



By Doug Harrell

As the years have passed I have realized more and more how important our heritage is to each of us. Our values are certainly influenced by our growing up years and the lessons taught by our parents, our teachers, church leaders and others that have influenced our lives. We are a product of our heritage, but we can change that heritage if we determine to do that! That can be good or bad, depending on the decisions we make on a day to day basis. I have seen people that grew up with Godly parents and teachers that went astray, I have also seen people that grew up in terrible situations but turned their lives around and became wonderful, productive members of society. One of the lessons that I have learned, and am still learning, is that God gives us a mind, a will and the ability to make decisions and that if we make stupid decisions we will get stupid results. It is sooo vitally important that we constantly search for wisdom in making good decisions, and the greatest source of wisdom comes from God's word. As we go into the new year, take time to search for this wisdom and make a commitment to the health of your mind, not just your body. We tend to think about the health of our body constantly but worry little about having a healthy mind when really the mind controls most of what we do. *"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her."* Proverbs 4:7-8.

As we start the new year, I have found it to be critical to make goals and plans for the things that I would like to accomplish for the year, as the Bible says, "A people without a vision shall perish" and many people today just go with the flow. If we are to be fruitful, we must direct the flow and again, we need to always be seeking God's will for our lives as we make the plans. *"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones."* Proverbs 3:5-8 Barbara and I have for years taken a day at the end of each year to spend really talking together about our goals and vision for the year coming up. To be really effective, we have found that we must take the time to write down our goals and then we must make a plan that we can follow. This plan must start with steps that we need to make now, not a year later. What path do we need to be on and what changes do we need to make in our lives to make the goals become a reality. New Year resolutions are great and quite common, it is also quite common to discard them after a few weeks into the New Year. The act of writing down, reading your goals back to yourself, and writing down a plan of action that will lead to the accomplishment of the objectives is critical to success. The old adage "The height of stupidity is to expect a different result from doing the same thing over and over again." If things are to be different you must act differently. If you are going to buy a ticket to travel, the first thing you must determine is where you are wanting to go. This is totally true in life.

Another thing that you must work on if you are to change and accomplish things with your life is that you must first learn to love yourself! This may sound egotistical, but it is really not at all. One of the great commands of the Lord is to love thy neighbor as thyself, this means that we are expected to love ourselves. The only way we can truly love ourselves is to be in the will of God and to make right decisions daily. Think about how God would react to the decisions you were getting ready to make. The little bracelet that people wear that says WWJD "What Would Jesus Do" will make you stop and think. Do the right things, ask for God's divine wisdom and directions, set goals for yourself that are in agreement with God's will, make a plan of action that is in line with what God would condone and move forward with your life. The year 2019 can be your year to excel, have faith and take the first step toward the changes you want to make and stay on track by spending time seeking wisdom each day. God Bless and Happy New Year.

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



Red Letters

By Allen Buchanan
Mitchell County

Wonder how many of us use words or phrases every day without ever considering their origin or definition. Many publications offer a new "word of the day". My wife and I have a mutual friend that occasionally shares her 'new word' with us. Those that play Scrabble rely on such words to beat their opponents.

Everybody begins a new year with a new calendar. It's possible the new calendar you will be using has new "words for the day." Another calendar feature that comes to mind are those wonderful "red letter days." Wonderful because the red letters mark holidays that more often than not give you time off of work.

A red letter day is any day of special significance or opportunity. According to Wikipedia the use of red ink dates all the way back to the Roman Republic (509-27 BC). In medieval manuscripts, initial capitals and highlighted words were written in red ink.

In my life, another use of "red ink" stands out within the pages of the Holy Bible. These red words are there to indicate Jesus speaking. When I open God's word and see those red words, I know that they require special attention. They reveal that Jesus placed great importance on helping people who needed it most; the poor, the sick, the orphans, the prisoners, and the weary. He urged all those who follow Him to do the same. Jesus' words weren't just meant to be read; they were meant to be lived out. If you respond to Jesus' words, your faith should touch the lives of those you help and point them to the hope they need.

As a fan of David Crowder, I recently purchased his latest release, "I KNOW A GHOST". The song "Red Letters" gripped my heart and soul reminding me of the special "red letter" day in 1965 when I accepted Jesus as my personal Saviour. If you think about it, without Jesus all of us are prisoners of the world. We are held in bondage by Satan and our life just drags on. Sure, Satan has us blinded by all the lies he tells us. Until we grow tired of the old life and accept Jesus, until He breaks the chains, we cannot change on our own. Once you accept those "red letters" spoken by Him in His Word, change will come. Once you accept that Jesus died on the old rugged cross you will you gain eternal life and a home in heaven. May 2019 be filled with many red-letter days with Jesus!

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



Hospice is about quality of life.

Start the conversation.

828-255-0231
missionhealth.org/hospice







Veteran Visits Wife's Grave Over 1,300 Times

By Dr. Jim Denison

Ted Richardson is a ninety-three-year-old veteran. He and Florence met as teens, then he left to serve as a Marine in World War II. But he took her picture with him everywhere he went.

They got married after the war. Ted says Florence always took care of him—for seventy-two years. So, now it's his turn to take care of her.

Ted visits his wife's grave six days a week, without fail, taking three buses to get there. He cares for it meticulously, trimming weeds and brushing away leaves. He has already arranged for his church to bring flowers to Florence's grave after he dies.

He has already visited over 1,300 times. He says it's worth it to be close to the love of his life.

Adversity is opportunity

As you look back over 2018, what events come to mind?

If you're like most of us, your challenges and problems loom large. If someone you loved passed away, their death marked your life.

History feels the same way. When we think of David, Goliath is followed immediately by Bathsheba. Our first thought about Abraham Lincoln or John F. Kennedy is usually their assassination.

But we don't have to let our losses define us. Like Ted Richardson, we can choose to honor the past by the way we live in the present. And we can view adversity as the opportunity it is.

In Zechariah 13, the Lord foretells of a day when "one third" of the people will survive the judgment to come (v. 8). Then "I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refines silver, and test them as gold is tested" (v. 9a).

With this result: "They will call upon my name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'They are my people'; and they will say, 'The LORD is my God'" (v. 9b). Three ways to redeem our challenges

Gold and silver must be refined to be useful to the craftsman who employs them. Water must be purified to be healthy for those who drink it.

We should view adversity as opportunity, for three reasons.

One: Adversity helps us evaluate the health of our souls.

Charles Spurgeon, commenting on the fact that reeds depend upon water for survival (Job 8:11), asked himself: "Do I only serve God when I am in good company, or when religion is profitable and respectable? Do I love the Lord only when temporal comforts are received from His hands?"

He then observed that "a godly man often grows best when his worldly circumstances decay."



In fact, this is an excellent way to know that a person is godly. As C. S. Lewis noted, turning on the light doesn't create rats in the cellar—it merely reveals them.

When we respond to adversity by turning away from God, we discover that we sought his blessings more than his presence. But when we trust him in hard times, we discover that our faith is deeper than our circumstances.

Two: Adversity provides a platform for persuasive influence.

The Christians whose faith has most impressed me are those who have suffered the most while remaining faithful. We think of Joseph in prison, Daniel in the lion's den, and John imprisoned on Patmos. I am remembering parents who lost children, patients who endured horrific physical pain, and spouses who walked loved ones to the gates of paradise.

A skeptical culture watches Christians suffer to see if we believe what we say. Hard times can be powerful times for the gospel.

Three: Adversity invites us to recalibrate our life purpose.

Robert McFarlane was Ronald Reagan's National Security Advisor, a twenty-year veteran of the Marine Corps, and the architect of the Iran-Contra plan. When his plan failed, McFarlane resigned his position and later attempted suicide.

I heard him speak several years ago at the National Prayer Breakfast. He described the incredible power he had achieved, the ladder to success he had climbed. But then Bud McFarlane told us with tears in his eyes that it was nothing. He got to the top, and there was nothing there.

Only after he fell off that ladder did he discover that it was leaning against the wrong wall—that life really consists of loving God and loving people. Nothing else.

"The whole of humanity needs you"

One prediction for 2019 I can make with certainty is that, as Jesus noted, "in the world you will have tribulation" (John 16:33). But every time adversity finds us, we can view it as an opportunity to evaluate ourselves spiritually, impact others with our faith, and refocus our lives.

And we can know that God will use us in spite of—and often because of—our challenges and failures.

If you wonder across the coming year if your flawed life can make a difference, remember this reflection by Catholic theologian Michel Quoist:

If each note of music were to say: one note does not make a symphony, there would be no symphony.

If each word were to say: one word does not make a book, there would be no book.

If each brick were to say: one brick does not make a wall, there would be no house.

If each drop of water were to say: one drop does not make an ocean, there would be no ocean.

If each seed were to say: one grain does not make a field of corn, there would be no harvest.

If each one of us were to say: one act of love cannot save mankind, there would never be justice and peace on earth. . . .

The whole of humanity needs you as and where you are.

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

Something for every home.



Whether you're replacing windows, expanding your home or building new from the ground up, Silver Line® provides the reliability, low maintenance and affordability you're looking for in a vinyl window or patio door. Silver Line products are backed with a Limited Lifetime Warranty* for peace of mind.



www.summitbuildingsupply.com



SUMMIT
BUILDING SUPPLY

252 Possum Trot Rd.
Burnsville, NC 28714

828-682-9841

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Jeremiah 29:11



YANCEY SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER

COME JOIN US FOR LUNCH
SERVED MONDAY THOUGH FRIDAY
11:30-12:00
60 AND OVER EAT FREE

828-682-6011
503 MEDICAL CAMPUS DRIVE
BURNSVILLE, NC

Reading Specialist Receives Grant For Flexible Seating

By Cheryl Shuffler
Burke County

Drexel Elementary School reading specialist Suzanne Jensen received a \$1,000 grant for flexible classroom seating from the Betsy and Fred Cranford Endowment through the Alpha Nu Chapter of the NC Delta Kappa Gamma Educational Foundation.

As a reading specialist, Jensen works with students on improving their reading skills. She said research shows that students improve academically when study time incorporates movement versus a traditional stationary seated position.

Jensen said, "Many of my struggling readers also have focus and attention problems. Using active seating in the classroom gets students moving and helps improve cognitive performance, time on-task, concentration, and overall attitude toward learning.

Flexible seating allows students to wobble, rock, or bounce which increases oxygen to the brain and core strength. It helps keep young minds more alert and focused. A positive learning environment helps students feel more comfortable during class which in turn helps improve motivation for learning."

Jensen is grateful for the grant that allowed her to furnish her classroom with the bright, colorful seats that have a creative and modern look. She said the flexible seating allows students to quickly pair up or work in small collaborative groups without having to move chairs or desks.

Jensen's goal is to see struggling readers get more excited about coming to reading class. "A more exciting learning environment is one way to help students improve attitudes towards school and learning," she said. "Many of my students have trouble concentrating and are wiggly in stationary seats. These seats should give them some wiggle room without being disruptive while helping them stay focused on the lesson. An uncomfortable student is a distracted and unproductive student. These seats make it much easier to move around for partner work and collaborative group work in the classroom than the traditional student chairs."

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam said, "Kudos to Mrs. Jensen for seeking out this grant to upfit her reading classroom with this flexible furniture. We know that students today learn much differently than we did, and this is another great example of how we are meeting students where they are and doing what we can to help them be as successful as they can. Thank you to the Cranford Endowment, Alpha Nu and Delta Kappa Gamma for making opportunities such as this available to our teachers."

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



I Know Who Holds Tomorrow

By Bruce Cannon
Mitchell County



As this article is read the New Year will most likely have already come. The previous year will have passed, and we will be facing many challenges and opportunities ahead. I am so thankful that while we do not know what tomorrow holds, we know who holds tomorrow. This is the message of the song: I Know Who Holds Tomorrow by Alison Krauss

*I don't know about tomorrow; I just live from day to day.
I don't borrow from it's sunshine, For it's skies may turn to grey.
I don't worry o'er the future, For I know what Jesus said.
And today I'll walk beside, Him, For He knows what is ahead.*

*Many things about tomorrow, I don't seem to understand
But I know who holds tomorrow, And I know who holds my hand.*

Our Heavenly Father knows everything and is already in our tomorrows readying grace, arranging circumstances and will be our merciful and faithful High Priest when the trials or hardships of life come.

Our world is constantly changing. Leonard Sweet, Christian futurist, made the following comment, "If you were born before the year 1960 the world you were born in no longer exists." He is referring to those values once held dear being cast aside by so many, so quickly. Things such as absolute truth, strong work ethics, integrity, honesty, respect for authority and so forth are some of those things of which he speaks.

While some changes are good, many are not. Recent news stories substantiate my point. For instance, the news articles dated December 2018 state that Asheville, NC is readying itself for the sale of recreational marijuana. Recreational marijuana is already being sold in ten states with thirty-three selling medicinal marijuana.

My wife and I recently traveled to Colorado to visit the Rocky Mountain National Park. We saw some of the most beautiful sights created by our God. But, we also saw marijuana sales outlets in what seemed like every town.even the smallest of towns got in on the action. I cannot imagine what western North Carolina would be like with recreational marijuana sales. What a tragedy that would be!

According to the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL), state legislators in twenty-one more states considered bills in 2018 that would legalize adult-use marijuana for recreational purposes. Twenty-two states and the District of Columbia have decriminalized small amounts of marijuana with North Carolina being one of the twenty-two.

2019-- what are you going to bring our way? Will it be a further distancing from God? Or, will it bring revival to His Church? Pray with me for the latter. Indeed, the need for the Church to be what the Lord intended it to be has never been greater!

What is the answer? Prayer! A genuine spiritual awakening! A powerful move of God upon our state and national leaders! We must claim and practice passages such as II Chronicles 7:14 and God will hear our prayers, forgive our sins and heal 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.



**ASHEVILLE ELDERLY AND DISABLED VAN
GOES TO ASHEVILLE MON. THRU FRI. 7:00 AM - 4:30 PM
CALL: 828-682-6144**

"Serving the Community"



**Jonathan's
USED
APPLIANCES**

- Come and see the friendly staff at Jonathan's for all your appliance needs.
- We repair all major brands of appliances.
- We repair Monitor Heaters!

**Cash It, Don't Trash It!
We buy your used appliances!**

**149 Roan St., Spruce Pine, NC
828-766-9005 • (Cell) 828-766-9389**

We Deliver!

- Washers
- Dryers
- Stoves
- Refrigerators

New Year's Resolutions

Compiled by Barbara Harrell
Mitchell County

People have been making New Year's resolutions for 3,000 years, going all the way back to the ancient times of the Babylonians. The start of a new year that makes us think about new beginnings and a way to mark a brand new starting line. A "resolution" is a determination to do or not do something. It's a plan for your future actions or ways of thinking.

In reality, there's no difference whatsoever between 11:59 p.m. on December 31 and midnight on January 1. No magical reset button gets pushed, and no cosmic calendar flips over to erase all the bad things from the last 365 days. (I know. Bummer...)

The Bible doesn't forbid us from making goals and plans for the upcoming year. There's nothing wrong with planning ahead, so long as you realize that God may or may not change those plans. Proverbs 16:9 says, *"The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps."* (Also see James 4:13-17.) When you boil it down, that's all New Year's resolutions are anyway—personal plans and goals. **Here are 10 New Year's Resolutions Every Christian Should Make:**

1. Resolve to stay faithful to Jesus Christ. He is the one Truth, Way and Life. There's no reason to look elsewhere.
2. Resolve to not let anything – a career, a significant other, social media, a house – become an object of worship.
3. Resolve to watch your language and not speak any destructive talk, especially involving the name of God.
4. Resolve to prevent burnout by putting aside work one day a week. Trust God to provide for your needs that day and just enjoy the time He's given you.
5. Resolve to talk to your parents on a regular basis, and show them love and respect.
6. Resolve to be angry less. Channel any feelings of rage, which Jesus said are as severe as murder, into worshipping God and serving others.
7. Resolve to honor your commitment to your spouse. Whether in thought or in deed, stay pure and loyal in the union God made.
8. Resolve to not take anything that's not yours, including stuff you can hold and put in your pocket, and plenty that you can't, like music downloads, streaming movies and hours on your timecard.
9. Resolve to speak about others only with truth and love, not gossip.
10. Resolve to be content with what you have, and not worry about that others are amassing.

If these sound familiar, good! SHARE these New Year's resolutions to encourage people to live a life that honors God.

Here are some resolutions for teens. Would these fit your lifestyle?

Improve Your Prayer Life

Simple enough, right? Just get better at praying. A lot of Christian teens make this resolution and soon fail because they take too big a step at first. If you're not used to praying often, jumping into an active prayer life can seem like a daunting task. Maybe start off praying each morning when you get up, or even while you brush your teeth. Start off giving five minutes to God. Then maybe try adding another five minutes. Soon you'll find that you're going to God more often and for more things. Don't worry about what to talk to Him about, just talk. You'll be amazed by the results.

Read Your Bible in a Year

Getting into the habit of reading the Word is also a common New Year's resolution for many Christian teens. There are plenty of Bible reading plans out there that guide you through reading your Bible in a year. It just takes discipline to open up the book every night. You may not even want to read the entire Bible, but rather use a year to focus on a specific topic or area of your life that you want God to help you improve. Find a reading plan that works for you.

Help Other People

God calls on us throughout the Bible to do good works. Whether you adhere to the idea that you need good works to get to heaven, like Catholics do, or not, like most Protestants, helping others is still a part of a Christian walk. Most churches have outreach activities or you can even find local volunteer opportunities through your school. There are so many people who just need a bit of assistance, and helping others is a great way to set a Christian example.

Get Involved in Church

Most churches have youth groups or Bible studies geared toward Christian teens. If not, why not be the one to get a group together? Start your own Bible study or put together an activity that some of the other Christian teens at church can enjoy. A lot of youth groups meet one day a week, and those meetings are a great way to meet new people who believe and can help you grow in your walk.

Become a Better Steward

One of the most challenging issues for Christian teens is the idea of stewardship, which is the process of tithing. Most Christian teens don't make a lot of money, so it becomes harder to give. Typical teen activities like shopping and eating out make it difficult to have money left over. However, God calls on all Christians to be good stewards. In fact, money is mentioned far more often in the Bible than other topics like getting along with your parents or sex.

Use a Devotional

Reading your Bible is an essential part of anyone's Christian walk because it keeps your head in God's Word. Still, using a devotional helps you take the concepts in the Bible and apply them to your everyday life. There are numerous devotionals available for Christian Teens, so you should be able to find one that fits your personality, interests, or your place in your spiritual growth.

Plant Some Seeds of Faith

How many times have you evangelized to friends or family? Make it your goal this year to talk to a certain number of people about your faith. While it would be



great if someone converted or "got saved" through your discussions, don't get too caught up on that number. You'd be amazed how many people will end up believers from a discussion you have about what God has done in your life. It just may not happen while you know them. Also, use platforms like Facebook or Twitter profiles to demonstrate your beliefs. Plant many seeds of faith and let them grow.

Get to Know Mom and Dad Better

One of the most difficult relationships in a Christian teens' life is with his or her parents. You're at a time in your life when you are entering adulthood and want to start making your own decisions, but you will always be your parents' child. Your different viewpoints make for some interesting conflict. Yet, God dictates that we honor our parents, so take some time to get to know Mom and Dad a little better. Do things with them. Share bits of your life with them. Even a small amount of quality time with your parents will go a long way in helping your relationship.

Go On a Mission

Not all mission trips are to exotic places, but almost all mission trips will change you forever. Between the spiritual preparation before you leave on your trip to the work you will do on the trip itself, God works through you and for you as you see people eager to hear about Christ and as you hear their appreciation for the things you are doing on your trip. There are mission trips like War Week that takes place in Detroit to Campus Crusade for Christ Student Venture that conducts trips around the world.

Bring Someone to Church

A simple idea, but it takes a lot of courage to ask a friend to come to church. Faith is something most Christian teens have difficulty discussing with non-Christian friends because it is often something very personal. Yet, many Christians would never have come to Christ without that one friend who asked them to come to church or talk about their beliefs. For every person who might shoot you down, there are two or three other people who will be curious about why your faith is so important to you. Taking them to your youth group services or activities can help show them why.

Okay, now that we have looked at some resolutions for teens, adults and even children, let's examine some things to look at in putting our list together.

As you begin to choose the various things you want to focus on in the next year, examine them individually, and ask yourself these questions:

1. What's my motivation?

God looks at the heart, and that means He is aware of our motivations (1 Samuel 16:7). Sometimes we do things so automatically that we forget to even think about WHY we want to do the thing. Examining your own heart is a good practice whenever you're making a decision to change. We will value accomplishing the goal more when our motivations are in the right place.

For example, while wanting to lose weight is a great goal, we must ask ourselves, "Am I wanting this for pure vanity or for truly better health?" Also, exercise can become an obsession or an idol if we allow it to take over our time and attention. 1 Timothy 4:8 says we should keep exercise in perspective: *"For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."*

2. Am I being realistic?

Any New Year's resolution we make is only as good as our ability to actually complete it. We've all made the mistake of getting in over our heads by over-committing or making super-awesome goals for ourselves that are, in reality, impossible. Once the time comes to enact our resolutions, we become paralyzed with inaction because the feat seems too great.

Many Christians have made New Year's resolutions to pray more, read the Bible daily, and go to church every Sunday. That's great! But if you're not in the habit of these things right now, those prospects are going to look pretty daunting. Start small and work your way up. No one said you have to accomplish your New Year's resolutions by the end of the first week. They're your goals; you make the rules!

3. Is my New Year's resolution God-honoring or self-honoring?

How do you know if your New Year's resolution is God-honoring? It sounds a little Captain Obvious, but PRAY about it. Ask God if your resolution is something He desires for you too (James 1:5). If a New Year's resolution is not God-honoring and/or it is not a part of the plan He has for you, your results are going to be quite different.

4. Am I willing to let God help me?

"I can do all things through him who strengthens me." — Philippians 4:13

"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." — John 15:5

Ask God to show you how to accomplish those goals and what steps you need to take. He may only give you the first step, but that's okay. You can trust Him to stick with you through to the end! If possible, look for an accountability partner to help cheer you on. There's nothing like encouragement and high-fives from a good friend who wants to see you win. ☺

If you are properly motivated and dedicated, and you are willing to allow God to be a part of the process of getting you to your end goals and accomplishing your New Year's resolutions, then your chances of success are going to skyrocket. You can't do it alone. God's strength and the people He puts in your life are what will keep you going when you're ready to give up.

New Year's Day is a great opportunity to start making positive changes for your life. But that doesn't mean you can't make plans and goals at other times of the year. You don't have to wait until January 1 or Monday morning or next month before you start. You can start TODAY. All you need is life in your veins and a determined heart that desires what God desires for you.

"Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun." — Psalm 37:5-6

Barbara Harrell, loving mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Part owner Blue Ridge Christian News.

What if I Stumble? What if I Fall?

Sent By Alan Griffin

"My name is Katy. I had gone to church all my life. Rarely would I miss a Sunday. I had been involved in my Sunday school class and with the Youth. I am a good person and I had taken my church and school life seriously. In a matter of nine months I started doing things I had told myself for years that I would never do. I have always been in control of my actions until my family moved to a new place. I had always lived in an area where I didn't feel safe to walk down the street. When I waited at the bus stop in the morning I was afraid of strangers passing by. When my family moved to the new house it seemed so different.

The townhome we moved into was new and clean. Kids played outside, and there were so many things to see and do. I met many nice kids my age, and we did things together every day after school. I had a boyfriend, but not long after I moved we broke up. So, I started dating a guy in the neighborhood. "Tony" was really cool and everybody liked him. We started spending more and more time together until one day Tony asked me to smoke some weed with him and his friends. I said no. However, he continually kept bringing me into a group of people who smoked every day until I finally succumbed to the pressure.

Tony and I continued to hang out with all the gang, smoking weed after school every day. We would go off by ourselves and start making out until the desire was so out of control I relented to having sex. After that Tony treated me differently. He wasn't as affectionate anymore, and sometimes he wouldn't even bother coming over to get me. We finally broke up a couple of months later.

I can't, for the life of me, figure out what happened. I have disillusioned all my friends at church. Everyone knows what I have been doing, and it has destroyed my reputation. I used to be well respected because I had always tried to do what was right, but now all that is gone. I succumbed to peer pressure. We give in to peer pressure because we want to be liked. I just want to fit in and not have anyone laughing at me. I was curious how all these things worked, and I wanted to try something new. Everyone else was doing it! I had no idea that it would change me the way it did."

As a young adult we can do many things to deal with and even avoid peer pressure. We have to stand up for what we believe in and learn how to say the word "NO". We should defend our friends in the same situation and when the tables are turned they will defend you. If we can't make up our mind about a situation we should talk it over with people we trust. Most times when we come into a pressured situation we do well defending our self the first time, but when we are constantly placing ourselves at risk we will eventually succumb to the pressure.

We have to remind ourselves where we stand. If we are in a situation where people are trying to change us, we have to remember who we are. We are sons and daughters of God and a representative of Jesus Christ. Don't let someone else lead you into a situation. Lead them to Christ. If you have a boyfriend, make him focus on you. You shouldn't be running after him. Remember the goals and plans you have set in life. Don't let a bunch of foolishness like drugs and premarital sex get in the way of your dreams. Keep a comfort zone of people you can trust around you. Turn peer pressure into positive pressure.

We were called to mix with sinful people to keep our distinctive Christian value. We are not to lose our faith by absorbing the values of the pagan world. We are not to be isolated from unbelievers either. Giving into temptation is a gradual thing. "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death." James 1:14-15 When we are enticed by temptation we originally don't plan for it to go beyond the first step, but the reality of it all is sin always takes us one step further. When you give into temptation you will soon realize that you will continually and habitually practice the temptation that has ensnared you. "If I only give in this one more time I will not ever want to give into it again." Immorality is a disease and you are only deceiving yourself. The more times you submit to temptation the stronger the desire becomes. As time goes on the enjoyment of the desire fades and you will require stronger drugs and more illicit sex to reach the same fulfillment of your desires.

The saddest thing about all of this is we lose our relationship with God. It is so gradual that most of us don't even realize we have fallen out of fellowship until it is too late. Sin deadens our spiritual longings and makes the still small voice of God inside of us deaden to the point we don't listen anymore. Now when we try to quiet our desires our spiritual being will be at war with our physical being. "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish." Galatians 5:17 However, we can achieve victory by setting out to fight temptation every day. "Therefore, let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 God will help you fight temptation. He has given us a direct path of communication to Him through prayer. Secondly, He has given us the sword of the spirit which is the Word of God.

Temptation by its very nature is a lie. Satan with his deceitful nature presents what is evil as good and what is harmful as helpful. He presents drugs as an antidote to boredom, but they are really a poison. He enslaves you with sexual desire, but presents it as liberation of the soul. Temptation always offers something that sounds good, but in the end it only brings death and destruction. "Satan was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a

liar and the father of it." John 8:44

There is a method to the way Satan deceives us. He tries to attack us when we are weak. When our bodies are sick or when our mind is depressed. Satan will often attack us when we are idle. When boredom comes creeping in he leads us to temptation. He will lead us to doubt God's wisdom trusting more in our own reason than the Word of God. Relishing the praise of man over the written truth, we start feeling sorry for ourselves, neglecting our prayer life, rebelling against our parents, lying, stealing and cheating like it was our only way to achieve success. We have a false sense of security and we become over confident in our own ability. We may even decide that we don't need God anymore and stop all association with our church life.

We are lost in our trespasses and sins. We have turned our back on our blessed Savior and there is only one way to get Him back! Repent, which means to stop what we know we are doing wrong and go towards what we know is right. "Nevertheless, I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lamp stand from its place—unless you repent." Revelations 2:4-5 True repentance is where we are sorry for sinning against God. Turning from that sin, completely stop doing that sin and turn to our Heavenly Father whose Spirit lives inside of us. When we stop committing sin it is not because we fear the consequences of sin. It is not because we fear the judgment of God. True repentance from the heart looks at the sin with hatred and moves away from sin. We look at sin in its true light and realize that our Savior was crucified on the cross to defeat the things we have been doing. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." 1 John 1:8-2:2

You cannot overcome the power of sin by yourself. It is absolutely impossible. You will try and fail until you finally give up. You have to turn back towards God. He alone has the power to heal you. He is the Great Physician.

1.) "Therefore submit to God..." James 4:7 Surrender your entire life to Him. Pray to Him, "Lord I have made a miserable mess of my life. Please come in take control of my life, my will and my emotions." Take a spiral ring binder and write Him a letter every night for 90 days. Tell Him everything that happened to you during the day. Tell Him how lonely you feel because I know you feel the loneliest you ever have in your life. You are going to have to abandon all those people that lead you astray. You cannot have a relationship with them. You cannot help them because you are in a position now where you can't even help yourself.

Prayer is an extremely important weapon that God gave us to fight temptation. Your spiral binder or prayer journal helps you to put your thoughts together before you go to your Heavenly Father in prayer. Two things we want to ask our Father daily if to "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Jesus said, "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Matthew 26:41 This means we should pray on a daily basis and when we are tempted. When we pray our prayer journal we should go to a room by ourselves and close the door. Get down on our knees and elbows and read our prayer out to God.

This is consecrated prayer. Then we should be in a prayerful mind continuously. Our eyes should be open as we carry on a conversation with God as we walk, drive, ride or even talk to others because He is constantly talking to us. Dear Heavenly Father, "I surrender all resistance in my soul. Please enter my mind at will and speak the Words of life to me. Remove me from the world of the lost so that Your love will fill my heart with unspeakable joy."

2.) "Resist the devil and he will flee from you". James 4:7 You have to fight for this. This is not given to you. You are fighting for your life and everything you have believed in since birth. Fight. Resist. Expel the notions and desires of your past. Refocus your life on things you use to do prior to your temptation. Concentrate on your work or studies. Write a letter to one of your old Christian friends and let them know how you are doing. Keeping your temptations or your sinful past a secret is a mistake. Compose a testimony of the temptations you suffered through and share it with others. Show how God is changing you and how you came about this change. This will lead others to change and cause you to become stronger in your faith.

3.) "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you..." James 4:8 Don't just



continued on page 14

Premier

INSURANCE SERVICES, INC.

Providing you knowledgeable assistance and high quality service.

Proudly serving the great citizens of Western NC for 25 years with Health, Employer Group Health Plans, Medicare Plans, Life, Annuities, 401K Transfers and Long Term Care Coverage

275 North Main Street • Marion, NC 28752
828.652.1553 local • 888.528.1553 toll free



Contact one of our knowledgeable agents today

Crossword Solution

A	F	I	G		P	A	I	R	S		D	A	R	T
B	A	D	E		S	I	T	E		M	I	C	A	H
O	M	E	R		A	M	E	N		I	M	A	G	E
W	E	A	S	E	L		M	E	L	T		S	E	E
			H	A	M		S	W	A	R	M	E	D	
C	O	L	O	S	S	E			Y	E	A			U
A	N	A	M	E		L	A	M	E		R	A	M	P
G	E	M		D	I	S	C	E	R	N		H	I	S
E	S	A	U		S	E	T	S		A	T	O	N	E
S			S	E	A			H	A	B	I	T	A	T
	A	S	E	N	A	T	H		B	A	D		No.238	
L	I	P		E	C	H	O		A	L	I	G	H	T
A	L	A	R	M		E	N	O	S		N	O	A	H
D	E	C	A	Y		M	O	R	E		G	A	T	E
E	D	E	N		B	E	R	E	D		S	T	E	M

COPYRIGHT 2018 BIBLEWORDGAMES.COM ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Sudoku Solution

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

read your Bible, consume it. We must take in the Word of God for our own use. We must take on its appearance. It must be a part of our very being. When we eat food it becomes us. When we read the Bible it becomes all of us. When we simulate the Word of God it is received into our hearts and it saves our soul. People don't change themselves. People don't change people. If that was the case there wouldn't be any crime or hatred. It is the Bible that changes people. "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saint." Ephesians 6:11-12, 14-18

4.) "Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded." James 4:8 Refrain from any sin whatsoever. Carry on a continuous conversation with God at all times. As you walk to your class discuss with Him the things you read in your Bible that morning. Avoid thinking about the things you did while you were on drugs. Wash your hands of the people and the places you use to know and go. Above all resist. Fight. This is your future.

5.) "Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom." James 4:9 This is not a pleasant task. This will not be a happy time for you. Cry Out To GOD! Beg Him for His help because He says, "With My love I will keep you by My power alone. I don't care where you have fallen or where you have been. I will never forsake you. My love never ends, it never ends." Through the years of depression I had separated myself from God, and I had found myself in a state of emptiness that was unbearable. On November 8th, 1997, I got down on my hands and knees and cried out to the Lord for help. Little did I know I was changed instantly.

6.) "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up." James 4:10 I know for a fact that God had His hand in healing me. For those many years I was a stubborn, hard headed, self-indulging fool that placed my will above everybody else's. The hatred I had inside of me it was no wonder I did the things I did. "For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Titus 3:3-7 He changed me into a loving, caring person who is now consumed with the welfare of others. My goodness He has changed me. I no longer live for myself which is the emptiest existence there is on earth. I live for my Heavenly Father and my King and Savior Jesus Christ. There is no obstacle great enough to stop my service to Them. I went from a person who was condemned to die to a servant of Jesus Christ and a son Of God.

I have a prayer for you, "Dear Heavenly Father, I pray that you will submit yourself to God. Surrender your life to Him that you will trust Him and obey His word. I pray that you will resist the sin and temptations that have trapped you into a lifetime of suffering. I pray that you will draw near to God through daily Bible study and prayer. I promise you that He is eagerly waiting to draw near to you. I am begging you to wash your hands of your sinful life, purifying your heart and separating yourself from the people that have led you astray. I especially want to pray for you during your time of struggle when you are fighting addiction, loneliness and despair. I realize the days will feel long and the nights even longer. I pray for you all these things so that one day a new dawn will rise in your life and all the things in your past will be gone. You will be a new creation. Designed, developed and molded into a servant leader of God. You will have need of absolutely nothing save your Bible and the faith that it delivers through the power of the Holy Spirit. Your light will shine forth by your actions and words. I pray that your blessings will be many and one day, I will see you shining like a star when we are all free from sin again.

In Jesus Christ's name I pray. Amen

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



The Rest of the Story

Doug Harrell

As any of you that have worked around heavy equipment know, getting seriously hurt is always possible and can happen in an instant! I literally also fell off that backhoe when I realized what had happened. Clint moved up to the backhoe at the same time I was moving the lever and I did not see him until it was too late! As you can imagine, the bucket of a backhoe does not give when it hits a human body, and it, hit Clint square in chest! Scared was an understatement. I just knew I had hurt my dear friend seriously and maybe killed him! You can understand the relief I had when Clint, with his usual bravo, looked at me and came out with his customary, strong as a bull, comment. Read and enjoy.

Funny Farm –

Dear friends,

One morning I set out to gather a few heads of slightly rotting cabbage for my friend Boris the Hog. Picking my way through the cabbage patch, searching for the ones not fit for human consumption, was relaxing for me. The cool mountain air, punctuated with the FOUL odor of cabbage, invigorated my body and spirit for the challenging day ahead. And I loved delivering the vegetables to my piggy friends as they squealed and grunted in delight upon my arrival. This was the ONE CHORE I knew how to do and rarely screwed up ☺. Having fulfilled my role as “Caterer to the Pigs” I returned to the farmhouse to learn my fate for the balance of the day.

Sanford & Son...

Farmer Doug has a large workshop where he repairs, jury-rigs and invents farm implements. As many of you know, there are literally thousands of doo-dads and moving parts that go into keeping a farm productive. And, call me crazy, but I never imagined the plethora of things that can break during a day's work.

When I first perused the parts, pieces and tools in this shed, I surmised that it must be a scrap-metal/junk yard...somewhat akin to Fred and Lamont Sanford's place. Auto engines, pointy sharp shards of metal, large chains, oil cans, gas cans, a huge compressor, big tall tanks of heaven knows what, carburetor de-gunk junk, a little filing/sharpening wheel, fan belts of every make and length...you name a gizmo or piece of junk and you'll find it there. Every now and then an old American Motors Rambler would show up, Doug would disassemble and rebuild it only to replace it with another.

Farmer Clint “The Welder”...nahhh

Hardly a day passed that Doug would not remark, “Well, we have another opportunity for repair.” Rest assured, my friends, the “we” in his statement refers to him and Jesus because I can't repair anything. Left to me, a “fix” would be to call Mr. John Deere himself to come and correct equipment malfunctions!

Many times Doug would draft his brother, Farmer Larry, to jury-rig broken stuff. They like to walk in circles around the fractured hicky-doo's, scratch their chins, and talk gobbledey gook about what is broken and how to correct the malfunction. They call it “Harrell Hill Engineering”, I call it gibberish. You may recall when they hovered around a broken down old jeep, then suddenly they lifted the hood and inserted a piece of mulch to make it run. And purr it did...that's nuts, I don't care who you are! Nevertheless, I now walk around with a scrap or two of mulch in my pocket for emergencies ☺.

Doug was preparing to perform some herculean task, like moving a mountain, with his GIANT backhoe. But first we needed to grease all the ball joints – AND I HELPED – and then there was a broken something-or-other that needed welding. Now I loved watching Doug weld things. Secretly I always hoped he would teach me that skill...but so far to no avail. I guess he figures my spiritual gifts do not include handling a torch? Whatever his reasons for making me sit on the sideline I still enjoy watching the sparks fly and hot metal drool. And it would be ever so cool to wear that welder's mask, but alas it won't happen ☺.

As my buddy fired up that welding torch I wondered to myself, “Hmmm, that weld is mighty close to the fuel tank... ‘flame-thrower meet diesel fuel’ ...not a great combo.” I mentioned the concern to Farmer Doug who peered over his safety glasses and gave me that smile that says, “Pollard, it's best if you don't say anything at the moment.” So I stood aside and watched in awe.

We finished the welding job – Yes I said “we” even though I was but a casual observer – and it was time to loosen up the joints on the backhoe.

Now the bucket on this monstrosity has a kind of herky-jerky motion; rather than a smooth move from side to side or up and down it's more like a sudden hurch. This abnormality isn't a problem, of course, if a man is working in the field alone. On the other hand, it could be hazardous to an onlooker standing a wee bit too close.

He Flies Through The Air With The Greatest Of Ease...

Doug was focused on his weld and making sure everything was mechanically sound as I moved in for a closer look. Unaware of my proximity to the bucket, he manipulated the lever to one side when...BAM...that 4,000,001 lb bucket literally leapt to the side to catch Farmer Clint in the middle of my chest.

Now it's one thing to imagine being slapped by a backhoe but, as you might ex-



pect, I was startled and terrified to find myself performing these aerial antics only to have an abrupt STOP as I was smashed against the shed wall. I think I exhaled rather noisily as every gram of air departed my lungs.

And you think I was surprised? Farmer Doug appeared as though he'd seen a ghost! I need you to know that he is very safety conscious and always took extraordinary measures to avoid putting me in harm's way. Yet, it seemed, despite his best efforts I could be seriously injured.

Hit Me With Your Best Shot!...

Having recovered from the initial shock of being a human cannon ball, I quickly wriggled and wiggled all my parts and decided God had protected me from injury. And seeing the terror on the face of my friend, I remarked...“Is that all you've got?”

Farmer Doug, ashen and pale-faced, looked down at me from high atop the backhoe and said, “You could have been REALLY hurt. You scared me to death!”

I thought perhaps a little comic relief was in order as I replied, “You hit me but I SCARED YOU? Well, let me tell ya something, pal – Farmer Clint took your best shot and I'm still standing...strong like bull!”

As I recall we walked across the road to the farmhouse and had our regular morning cup of cappuccino with Barbara. Not much was said about my mishap with the backhoe, it was a too-near-miss with disaster. We just relaxed and enjoyed another gorgeous day at Harrell Hill Farms.

Surely God was watching over me and Farmer Doug that day as once again I cheated death on the Funny Farm ☺.

Humbled in the Hills,
Farmer Clint



Carolina Home Care Specialists, INC

Excellence in Personalized Care

Medicaid Covered Services

- In-Home Care for Children & Adults
- CAP for Disabled Adults & Children
- CAP Choice
- Pediatric Nurse Aids

Other Services

- Private Pay
- Insurance
- VA Homemaker Service
- Companion/Sitter
- Respite

Our In-Home Aides are supervised by a registered nurse who is available during all hours worked by the aide.

Phone (828) 765-4343 • (866) 765-4340

Happy New Year!

828-678-3388 394 East Main St. Burnsville, NC



- Numbness or burning in feet or hands
- Sharp electric like pains
- Pain on walking
- Difficult sleeping due to pain
- Prickling or tingling in feet or hands
- Balance problems

You may have Neuropathy. Pharmaceutical treatment for neuropathy has not proven to be effective in the long term. Our office has had excellent results in the reduction and elimination of symptoms by using a multi therapeutic approach including low level laser therapy, spine care and nutrition.

**CALL US AT 682-6157 FOR A CONSULTATION TO SEE
IF YOU ARE A CANDIDATE FOR CARE.**

CRUZ
Life Center

Burnsville, NC
(828) 682-6157
(800) 772-7955
ruzlifecenter.com

*Natural Health Care
Solutions for Your Life*

**LASER THERAPY
CHIROPRACTIC
HEALTH COACHING**

"Since 1982"



**BIG
Winter
Sale**

Grassy Creek
CLOTHING

12451 Hwy 226 S., Spruce Pine (828) 766-7502

www.grassycreekclothing.com

Hours: 8:30am-5:30pm Mon.- Sat.

Closed Sunday
-Go to Church

The late Dr. Billy Graham once said, "The Christian life is not a constant high. I have my moments of deep discouragement. I have to go to God in prayer with tears in my eyes, and say, 'O God, forgive me,' or 'Help me.'"¹⁰ It comforts me to know someone as faithful as Dr. Graham has said something like this because I too have experienced discouragement on many occasions.

There were the times when as a pastor I was broken-hearted at the spiritual lethargy and backsliding of my parishioners. Nothing I did to stir them seemed to make any difference. It was hard when certain members of the church betrayed me or purposely made it difficult to lead effectively. It was especially difficult when the Board of Deacons at one church called for my resignation, when I had done nothing worthy of censure or dismissal. Instead, I had been proclaiming the unadulterated Gospel of Christ, which some found offensive. It was terribly discouraging as a young pastor to discover that doing right doesn't always lead to a right result or that I would be rightly treated by people who should know what was right.

As executive director and lobbyist for the Christian Action League, there have been a lot of discouraging experiences.

There was the time when my lobbying activity blocked the proposal for a state-operated lottery dead in its tracks, when suddenly and unexpectedly everything

changed, and that damnable predatory racket gained passage by one vote.

Then there was an egregious piece of alcohol legislation that I was sure

my advocacy had killed, but it later revived and passed by an act of political treachery. Certainly, painful was when a rogue federal judge overturned the Marriage Protection Amendment added to North Carolina's Constitution – a measure that I had labored on for ten years to see passed. Then there was the repeal of HB 2, commonly known as the bathroom bill, good sense legislation meant to protect women and children from having to share restrooms, showers, and locker rooms with men. HB 2 died from the media's mammoth smear campaign and formidable political pressures from Leftists groups. Nothing done was effectual to save it.

Not long ago when I was discouraged and in a dark place, I hid away in my bedroom. While lying on the bed, Kim, my wife, came in and urged me to share what was troubling me. I opened up and recalled some of the things I've mentioned in this article, and concluded: "So many losses! So many disappointments! It causes you to ask, is it worth it? Why labor so passionately, so sacrificially, in the face of such failure?"

Seeking my comfort, Kim tenderly kissed me on the cheek and said, "Yes, it was worth it. It was worth it because Jesus is worth it! And it is worth continuing because He is worthy. He is worth every arduous mile of the journey, every insult, every injury, every inconvenience, and every incapacitation."

Tears filled my eyes. How could I ever forget that Jesus was worth it?

O God, forgive me, help me.

Indeed, I cannot separate the causes for which I have given much of my life from Jesus Christ himself. I pursued them in obedience to his call. But the defeats can be somewhat disillusioning – somewhat confusing – that righteousness often doesn't succeed – that evil many times wins the day. It can be very discouraging. Nevertheless, what lifts my heart out of the muck and mire of lost confidence and enthusiasm is that Jesus is always worth the effort to defend or advance the purposes of God.

Our Lord doesn't call upon us to succeed, but to be faithful.

Think of it. Noah preached for decades while the people of his day only scoffed at the truth. The prophets proclaimed the Word of God to wayward Israel, but Israel did not turn from her sins, and God's own people murdered many of them. What about Jesus? When He came to the end of His ministry, it appeared as though His disciples hadn't actually believed him. Despite three years of concentrated and exhaustive ministry, His inner circle forsook Him, and the religious authorities had Him crucified. The Disciples of Christ suffered tremendously for their faith, and most of them died violent deaths.

Still, the apostle Paul admonished: "So, my dear brothers and sisters, be strong and immovable. Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless" (I Cor. 15:58).

Knofel Staton has beautifully stated that followers of Christ need to be positive and optimistic and encourage each other as they approach the end of days.

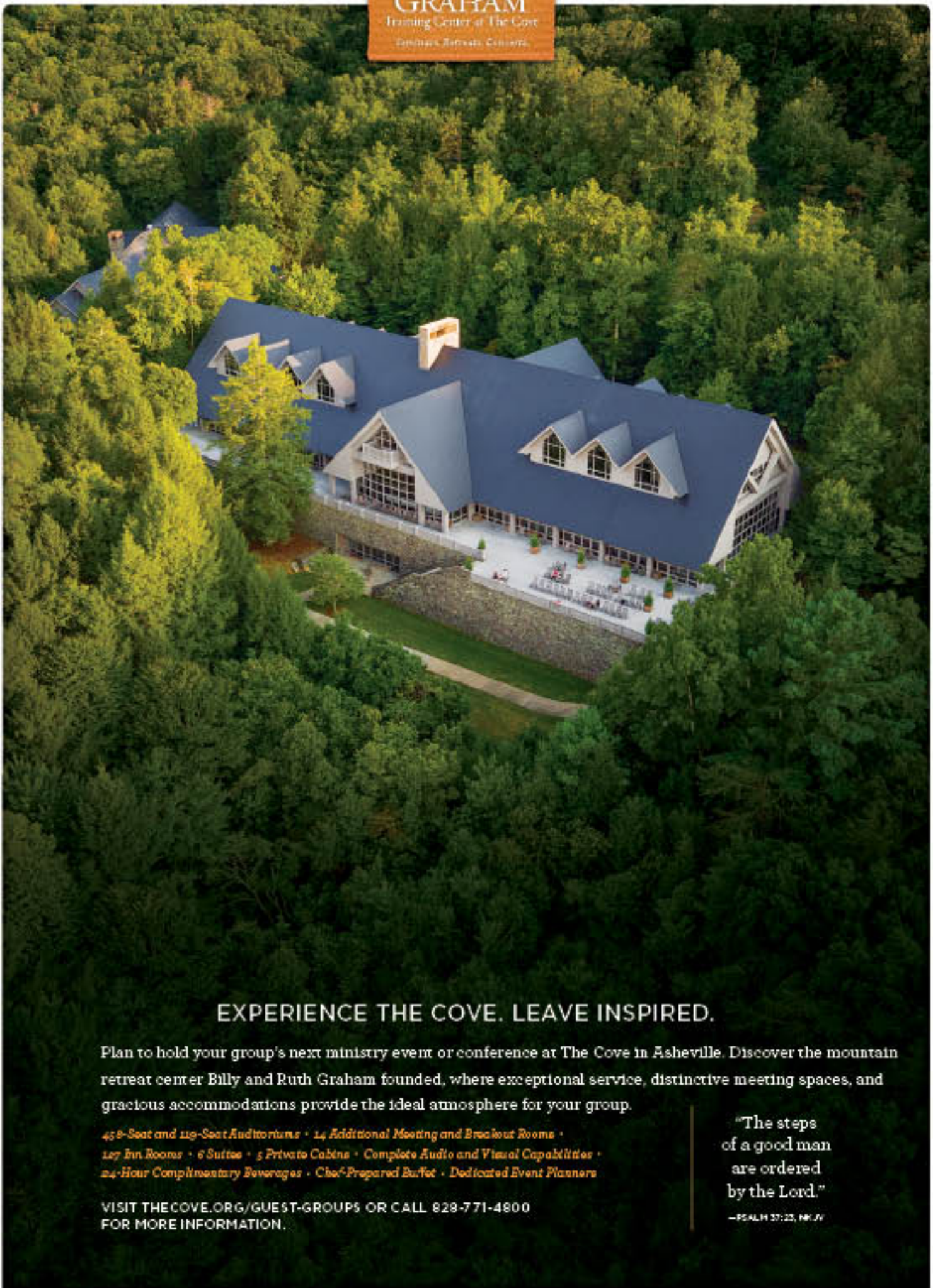
"Christians should preach the kind of hope that will cancel depression, the kind of values that will cancel self-pity, the kind of victory that will cancel defeatism, the kind of power that will eliminate weakness," says Staton. "Christ has already won! So, has everyone who is in Christ! We are already winners because of Him."

One day we will see the Lord take all of our labors for his name's sake and weave them into an incorruptible kingdom tapestry, where the words of Christ's model prayer will finally be answered, "*Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*" (Mt. 6:10).

Yes, it's worth it. It's always worth it because Jesus is worth it.

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

**BILLY
GRAHAM**
Training Center at The Cove
Seminars, Retreats, Conferences



EXPERIENCE THE COVE. LEAVE INSPIRED.

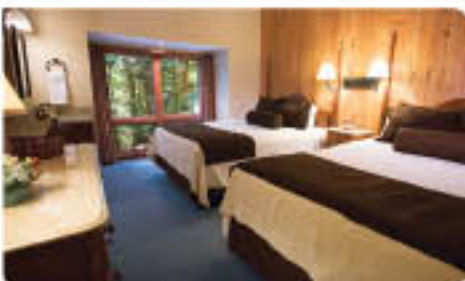
Plan to hold your group's next ministry event or conference at The Cove in Asheville. Discover the mountain retreat center Billy and Ruth Graham founded, where exceptional service, distinctive meeting spaces, and gracious accommodations provide the ideal atmosphere for your group.

*458-Seat and 119-Seat Auditoriums • 14 Additional Meeting and Breakout Rooms •
127 Inn Rooms • 6 Suites • 5 Private Cabins • Complete Audio and Visual Capabilities •
24-Hour Complimentary Beverages • Chef-Prepared Buffet • Dedicated Event Planners*

VISIT THECOVE.ORG/GUEST-GROUPS OR CALL 828-771-4800
FOR MORE INFORMATION.

"The steps
of a good man
are ordered
by the Lord."

—PSALM 37:23, NKJV



A MINISTRY OF BILLY GRAHAM EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION



@THECOVE NC 828.771.4800

"Standing By The Cross"

By Shawn Thomas
Burke County



One of my favorite stories of the Civil War is of a Union officer whose unit was coming under particularly heavy fire from the Confederate cannon. Someone rode up to him and said they thought they knew why they were getting so much heat: this officer had posted "Old Glory," the American flag, in such a prominent position overhead, that it made a great target for all the Confederate artillery, and they were focused on bringing it down. They suggested to him that he move his flag to some less conspicuous position and it might lessen the fire. But the officer looked up at the flag and said: "Let it wave high; it is our glory." In just a few moments that officer fell to Confederate fire. But he stood by his "glory" to the end.

Just as our country's flag is the glory of the patriot; so, the cross of Jesus Christ is the glory of the Christian. And just as the soldier is called to stand by his flag; so, we as Christians are called to stand by the cross of Jesus Christ.

I love the picture of 1:25 here when it says: *"Therefore the soldiers did these things. But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene."*

These were such brave women; even though Jesus had been arrested, and was being crucified, they did not abandon Him. There they were, bravely "STANDING BY THE CROSS OF JESUS."

One of the very remarkable things about the Bible is its emphasis on women — centuries before the cause of women's rights was adopted by the "modern world." The Bible has consistently lifted up examples of godly women throughout its pages. This is one of those places. All of Jesus' disciples (except John) had scattered (Matthew 26:56 says "then all the disciples left Him and fled"); Peter had just denied Jesus three times to a slave girl; but these women stood there by His cross. (In fact, many point to the role of women here as one of the evidences of the reliability of the New Testament accounts of Jesus' death and resurrection. If someone were "making up" a story that they wanted people to believe, they would NEVER have made up a story which featured WOMEN as the first witnesses to Jesus' resurrection, because women were not generally respected in that society. But the reason it says the women saw Jesus is because they DID! They were indeed the ones who first saw Him risen from the dead. And they were the ones the Bible says were there "STANDING BY THE CROSS.")

"Standing by the cross" here I believe is more than just a description of their physical location. It also pictures their commitment to the Lord: "standing by the cross."

Now just a word about "the cross." Most of us know what "the cross" is. It is what Jesus was nailed to, and what He died on, that day. Over time, and because of its meaning, many of us have "glamorized" the cross. We've made it into ornaments and pieces of jewelry. Even many LOST people wear ornaments featuring the cross. But we need to remember what it originally was: the cross was the Roman instrument of the death penalty. It was the "electric chair," or the "hangman's noose," of their day. Jesus and the others were put to death on the cross, in the most gruesome and tortuous way.

But in another sense, what happened on the cross IS glorious. I Peter 2:21 says that *"He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross,"* so that we could be forgiven and come back to God. That is the message of the gospel. That is what Christianity is all about: what happened on that cross.

But today we are abandoning the message of the cross; it is not "popular" any more. But true followers of Jesus will imitate the example of these women, and stand by the cross of Jesus! Now, that does not mean that we need to literally "go" to a cross somewhere and physically "stand by it," like they did. But I want us to think of some practical ways in which we DO need to "stand by the cross" of Jesus:

How are you going to get into heaven? One of the most famous questions used in evangelism is to ask a person, "If you were to stand before God, and He were to ask you, 'Why should I let you into My heaven?,' what would you tell Him?" I want you to think about that for a moment, right now. If you were to stand before God right now, and He were to ask you, "Why should I let you into My heaven?," what would YOU say to Him? Think about what YOUR answer would be.

There are a whole lot of wrong answers to that question — and unfortunately some of you right now had some of those very wrong answers in your mind.

— Some of you just said, "Well I'm trying my best to be good."

— Or "I try to treat everyone right, and live by the Golden Rule, or the 10 Commandments."

— Or "I go to church," or "I got baptized."

If you said ANYTHING like that, anything that is based on what YOU are or good things that you have done; you need to listen to me right now: NONE of those things is going to get you into God's heaven. The Bible says in Romans 3:20 that by our own works, NO ONE will be justified before God. Nothing WE can do for God will save us.

There is only ONE way we can be saved: and that is by the cross of Jesus Christ. See, God made us to live with Him in heaven forever, but every one of us sinned, and rebelled against God, and we deserve to be punished apart from Him forever — that is what hell is. But God is merciful, and despite our sin, He made a way for us to be forgiven. But as we saw last week, there was only ONE way — and that way was through the cross. If God Himself, God the Son, Jesus Christ, would become a man, and live a perfect life, and die on the cross, then God could pour out His punishment for our sins on Him, then He could forgive our sins, and we could be saved. But the cross was the only way that could happen. And the only ones who will be saved, are those who will put their trust in the cross of Jesus. It's not the good things we do for God that saves us. It is the good thing that GOD did for US, at the cross of Christ. We've got to put our trust in the cross.

That's why the Apostle Paul said in Galatians 6:14 "But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." When he's talking about "boasting" there, he's talking about where your hope for salvation is. He's saying, I'm not trusting my religious heritage as a Jew; I'm not trusting my good works in obeying God's Laws; I'm not trusting in anything else; He's saying my only "boast," my only HOPE of heaven, is in the CROSS of Jesus. For his salvation, Paul was saying, I am standing by the cross!

And if you are going to be saved, that has to become your trust too. Your answer to that question, "Why should God let you into heaven?" Has to be "I DON'T deserve to be there! The only way I will get in, is by the CROSS of Jesus, and what HE did for me."

It not "fashionable" these days to preach about things like "sin," and "the cross." I say it is not fashionable "these days." The truth is, it has NEVER been "fashionable" by worldly standards to preach and teach the cross. In fact, the first image or "art" that we have of Jesus Christ was basically a "graffiti" left in the early Roman Empire. It showed a man with the head of a donkey, hanging on a cross, and under it was written, "Archippus worships his God!" That's just an example of how many of the Romans thought that the cross of Jesus was foolish.

And that's exactly what Paul said in I Corinthians 1:17-18 *"For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void. For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."* He said this gospel featuring the cross is foolishness to the world — but as we have seen, it is the only thing that God has ordained to save us. So, we must NOT abandon the message of the cross. It must always be the center of our ministry.

It was for Paul. He wrote: *"And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified"* (1 Cor. 2:1-2). Paul was saying to the Corinthians, if you remember when I came, THIS was my ministry among you: I preached Christ crucified — the message of the cross. He said, in fact, I preached it so much, that you might have thought I didn't know anything else BUT Christ crucified! The cross was SO much Paul's message and his focus.

And the cross must be OUR message and focus too. Everything we do in ministry needs to point people to the cross of Jesus.

In our dealings with other people, and our personal witnessing, we need to "stand by the cross." We need to remember that it is only the message of the cross that will save anyone. So, we need to make sure that we tell people about the cross when we talk with them.

Listen: our unique personality; our cool behavior; our witty intellect, will not save anyone. We may make great friends of people, or attract a lot of admiration from others, but we will not see anyone genuinely saved unless we "stand by the cross" and share Jesus Christ crucified.

Jesus Christ crucified is the gospel. Remember, we looked at I Corinthians 15 a few weeks ago, where Paul shared about what "the gospel" is, and he said it was "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." THAT is the gospel; talking about how Jesus died on the cross for us. So, if we are going to be successful witnesses, we have to share the message of the cross. If we don't share about the cross with someone, we can't really say we have shared the gospel with them.

In Acts 8, the Lord brought Philip to the Ethiopian Treasurer, who was reading the Book of Isaiah, but didn't understand it. And the Bible says that beginning with this scripture, Philip "preached Jesus to him." (:35)

That's what we need to share with people: we need to "preach Jesus to them." We need to share that message of the cross. Sometimes we do everything BUT: we share about our church, or about a 12-step program, or whatever. But we need to be sure we share the cross. The cross is the only thing God has said that can really save and change someone.

Now, don't misunderstand me. There are a lot of good things we can do to "plant seeds" in people's lives, and a lot of these are great things to do. When we live a godly life in front of others, or do acts of kindness, or build relationships, or whatever, we are in a very real sense "being a good witness" — and this is good — but I never really consider myself as having "witnessed" to someone, unless I have said something about Jesus dying on the cross for our sins. Because that is the gospel. That is the only message that will ever save anyone you know. We've got to personally "stand by the cross" and share that message with others.

We need to ask ourselves: are we really willing to "stand by the cross" of Christ, even if it costs us?

But you know what the truth is? We all fail Jesus, don't we? But here's the thing: Even when we let Jesus down; even when we DO fail to "stand by the cross", and we don't witness, or share, or stand by Him like we should — THAT IS WHAT HE WENT TO THE CROSS FOR! Because we ARE going to fail. ALL of Jesus' disciples failed, didn't they?! Peter (who said he'd never deny Him) wasn't there at the cross; Thomas, who so boldly said, "Let us go too, that we may die with him," he wasn't standing by the cross. Neither were all the other disciples except John and those women, and they failed Him in other ways. ALL HIS DISCIPLES FAILED JESUS. And you know what the truth is? WE WILL TOO. And that is what the cross is all about: Jesus didn't die so that all of us "good people" could be saved. He died to save SINNERS; who admit they've failed Him:

Peter failed Jesus; Thomas failed Jesus; and you & I have all failed Him too. But that is exactly what the cross is for: Jesus bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that all of us sinful failures could find the forgiveness we need, at the cross.

That's why we preach about the cross. That's why teach about the cross. That's why God calls us, like these women in John 19, to stand by the cross.

Shawn Thomas is Senior Pastor at Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church in Morganton. His messages and devotionals are available at www.shawnethomas.com

The Choice of Forgiveness

By Chris Rathbone
Mitchell County

Many years ago, I struggled with trying to forgive someone who had hurt me deeply. The feeling of betrayal that was in my heart was almost crippling to me spiritually. For many months it seemed the situation was on my mind continuously. First thing in the morning and the last thing on my mind before sleep, if I was able to sleep. There was a wide range of emotions that seemed to come and go. Some days it was anger. Some days it was a broken heart and tears. Often I would experience feelings of wanting revenge, rehearsing in my heart the words my flesh wanted to say to the one who had harmed me. Many prayers were prayed asking God to help me forgive. I knew what the Lord would have me to do, but carrying it out was the hard part.

One of the most well-known portions of scripture that deals with forgiveness is found in Matthew 18:21-35. Peter asks Jesus how many times he should forgive a brother that has sinned against him. Peter even suggests that 7 times might be sufficient. Jesus answers Peter "seventy times seven." Jesus isn't necessarily saying that after 490 times you don't have to forgive someone, but rather he was painting a picture of unlimited forgiveness. Jesus teaches a parable in the following verses about a certain king who took account of his servants. There was found a servant who owed him "ten thousand talents". Some disagree on exactly how much money this servant owed. However, it is believed to be equal to several million dollars in modern money. The point is that there was no way this servant would be able to come up with the money. The king commanded that the servant and his family be sold along with all his possessions. The servant realized his situation and fell down before the king and begged for the king's patience and he would pay him. Even though he promised to pay the debt, more than likely there was no way he could. An incredible event then takes place. The king is moved with compassion, sets the servant free and forgives all his debt. Can you imagine that?

The parable doesn't stop there. Jesus teaches that the same servant who had just been forgiven so much went out and found a fellow servant who only owed him a few dollars. He laid hands on him, even grabbed him by the throat and demanded payment. His fellow servant fell at his feet and begged for patience in paying what he owed. However, there was no compassion in his heart. He had his fellow servant put in prison till the debt was paid. There's no way a man can work to pay his debt if he is in prison!

When his fellow servants saw what he had done in refusing to forgive, they told the king about what had happened and this servant who had been forgiven so much was brought before his lord. The king called him a wicked servant and said to him, "I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldst not thou have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?" His lord was angry with him and had him delivered to the tormentors (prison) till he paid the debt he owed. Jesus also gives a warning that the same shall be done to us if we don't forgive others their trespasses.

You see in this parable, the servant who refused to forgive was placed in a prison of his own making. Had he remembered the compassion and forgiveness that he was given and extended the same to others, he would not have been placed in prison. By his own doing, he was in a prison of unforgiveness. A prison that only forgiveness would have helped him avoid.

The Lord began to deal with my heart using this parable with my own forgiveness. He helped me to first of all realize once again what a great debt of sin that He had forgiven me. Secondly, he helped me to realize that if Jesus was willing to forgive me, I should choose to forgive others. Even if my old flesh doesn't feel like it wants to.

I'd like to tell you that all this happened immediately, but it didn't. Matter of fact, I must confess that it took probably a couple of years. Have I forgotten what happened? No. But I have chosen to forgive what happened. Yes, it was a choice that Jesus helped me make because in my flesh I didn't want to. Payback is what my flesh wanted, but in my spirit, Jesus wanted me to choose forgiveness because of how much He had forgiven me.

There are some things that Jesus reminded me of through that experience. First, how much He loves me to forgive me like He did. There wasn't any way I could pay the debt of sin that I owed, and Jesus forgave me by his grace and mercy. I did not deserve forgiveness, but He gave it to me. Another thing he reminded me of is that He expects me to extend forgiveness to others. Even when it's hard to do so.

There's also some things Jesus taught me through that experience. When we choose to harbor unforgiveness towards someone, we put ourselves in a spiritual prison. We seem to believe we are getting back at someone but truthfully we are only harming ourselves. It costs us spiritually because as long as we have the sin of unforgiveness in our hearts our relationship with Jesus will never be what it should be. We put ourselves in prison and the whole time we're there the key to get out is ours and we refuse to open the door.

We must remember some things also. There are people who will hurt us and know they have hurt us, and they will ask for forgiveness. There are people who will hurt us and know they have hurt us, and do not care, and will probably never ask for forgiveness. There are people who will hurt us and possibly don't know they hurt us because we never told them. The key of forgiveness is not held by the ones who may have harmed us, but the key is ours. Forgiveness is more for us than it is the offender. Its sets us free from the torment of this prison we are in, so we can move on. If we choose to hold on to the hurts of the past it will keep us from healing in the future. We'll be confined endlessly with invisible chains that will hinder where God wants us to go in our relationship with Him.

This issue has been on my heart for a while. I felt as though there is someone who will read this that needs to choose forgiveness and be set free from that prison.



I want you to realize that you aren't the only one who struggles with unforgiveness. With the help of the Lord, you hold the key to freedom from this prison. It's not easy but it is possible. Even if the offender never asks you for forgiveness, Jesus asks you to forgive anyway. It's for you, not just them. It will take time, prayer, and a whole lot of Jesus my friend! Why not start this New Year by opening the door of the prison of unforgiveness. Choose forgiveness....because Jesus did for you.

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

GRIFFITH'S GENERAL STORE

"A Little Out Of The Way, But A LOT Less to Pay"



SAVE UP TO
\$250.00
OFF THE
PURCHASE PRICE!



We Service Monitors & Heaters



WOOD STOVES & ACCESSORIES



Jonsered



Tipton Hill, NC
4301 NC 197 North
Green Mountain, NC 28740

Ph: (828) 688-2369
Fax: (828) 688-5479

Jerry & David Griffith
davidgriffith58@frontier.com
griffith25@frontier.com

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

Churches Look to Work Together to Share Resources, Support Neighbors

By Colby Boston
Mitchell County

Churches in Mitchell County are invited to learn about a program that is helping to coordinate resources and services to support people in need in Macon County. The program, Healthy Neighbors Network (HNN), uses software to connect churches and allow them to communicate about people in need, keep track of who needs help, and coordinate volunteer support.

HNN is modeled after the Congregational Health Network (CHN) program in Memphis, Tennessee. CHN started in 2006 and now has 500+ churches and 700 volunteers working together to support their community.

Colby Boston, Volunteer Engagement Specialist at Blue Ridge Regional Hospital, was on the team of representatives from across western North Carolina who traveled to Memphis in 2015 to learn about the program. "It was amazing to see what the Memphis program was doing," said Colby. "They were using the CHN program to rebuild the neighbor connection and safety net that had been lost since the introduction of HIPAA in 1996 and were working within communities to coordinate care in a HIPAA compliant way that allowed neighbors to help neighbors in need. As soon as I heard about CHN I knew it would be a good fit for Mitchell County."

"Every day we hear about people in our congregation and in our community who need help," said Rev. Jeremy Troxler of Spruce Pine United Methodist Church. "Sometimes we can meet the need and, other times, we either don't have the resources or the people power to help. If we can connect with other faith communities, we can share our strengths and resources to do more."

Healthy Neighbors Network is currently up and running in Macon County, with eighteen (18) churches and agencies coordinating services. Since their program launched in June, they have served 197 people with 140 acts of kindness and coordinated over \$15,000 in aid. In Macon County, 57% of the financial assistance has been directed to housing needs—rent assistance or utilities. 40% of the assistance has been directed to providing food security.

"We had a phone call with two of the pastors from Macon County—a Lutheran minister and a Baptist minister," said Rev. Dr. Marcus Benfield from Altapass Baptist Church. "It was really helpful to hear how they are working together across denominations to support people in need. I'm excited about the opportunity of starting a Healthy Neighbors Network program in Mitchell County."

Faith leaders interested in learning more about Healthy Neighbors Network are invited to an informational meeting Tuesday, January 15 at 6:00 p.m. in the Community Room in the Mauzy-Phillips Center (189 Hospital Drive, located beside Blue Ridge Regional Hospital). Dinner will be served so please RSVP with your name and congregation to Colby.boston@msj.org. For more information about Healthy Neighbors Network Mitchell County, call Colby Boston at 828-766-1872.

Colby works with Blue Ridge Hospital and will be heading up the HNN.



Greetings Friends and Happy New Year!

Pastor Ed Couser
Yancey County



Recently while reading chapter one in the Gospel of Luke, the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth caught my attention. Reading about their experience, reminded me, that their story is one of great faith and hope. Luke 1:5, provides the setting, "the days of Herod." It was a dark time because Herod the Great was an evil person (see Mathew 2). Yet in the midst of this darkness, there were two shining lights, Zechariah and Elizabeth. In Luke 1:6, we get a glimpse of their characters; "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." The word "walk" in Scripture has to do with a person's life, especially their conduct. Zechariah and Elizabeth conducted their life according to God's Word. They patterned their lives after the divine standard, His ten commandments. To me, Biblical righteousness is an inward quality that manifests itself in loving obedience to God. Living our lives after the divine standard, His ten commandments does not save us, instead it is a love response to our God who saves us. Salvation is a free gift from our Lord, all we have to do is accept it. So, Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in their character; their love for God motivated them to be obedient to His Word, and they were steadfast in their faith in God. They were committed to living out their faith. What a living testimony they were for God.

Luke 1:7, provides us with an insight to a challenge they were facing; "they had no child." For a Jewish couple to be childless was thought to be a sign of God's displeasure. At the very least, this resulted in shame and reproach (see Luke 1:25). Surely, to have a child was a desire of their hearts. Certainly, they prayed. They waited. But only hearing silence. What do you and I do when God is silent? Zechariah and Elizabeth could have reacted in anger and bitterness.

Instead they continued serving God with hope in their hearts. Nothing had changed except the passage of time. Zechariah and Elizabeth still were steadfast in their devotion to God. Why? They did not let their personal challenge keep them from loving and serving God. Nothing had changed, They were still right before God. They still patterned their lives after God's Word. They loved God and refused to allow this to become a stumbling block in their relationship with Him. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6). Faith knows that silence does not last forever. "While he was serving" (Luke 1:8). Zechariah is getting ready to hear from God. What if he had quit? How often do we miss out on hearing from God because we cease serving and trusting in Him? While Zechariah was serving God, an angel of the Lord (Gabriel, Luke 1:19) appeared. Gabriel came to announce that they would have a son. Luke 1: 14 - 17 emphasizes John the Baptist's role in God's redemptive plan. John would be the forerunner who would announce the coming Messiah - Jesus!

Zechariah and Elizabeth were willing to be used by God, they learned that God's silence is not forever. They were faithful to Him in spite of their challenge. What about us? We are waiting for Jesus' second coming. As we wait, will we continue to serve and worship Him, in spite of our challenge(s)? What I need is the kind of faith displayed in the lives of Zechariah and Elizabeth. Like them, we need to trust the Word of God. Jesus is coming again, (Titus 1:2, "God does not lie"), could He come in 2019? No one knows the day or hour of His appearing, but until that glorious day, let us continue to lovingly obey God's Word and remain steadfast in our faith, like Zechariah and Elizabeth!

Ed Couser is the pastor for the Burnsville and Erwin Hills Seventh-day Adventist Churches. Previously he served churches in Ontario (Canada), New York, Kentucky and North Carolina. He also is a retired Chaplain, Lieutenant Colonel, having spent 29 years in the US Air Force. Pastor Couser, and his wife of 25 years, Carol have four adult children: Melissa, Kaylee, Meagn and Drew. He enjoys sharing the love of Jesus and encouraging others to prepare for His soon return.



RAY'S TREE SERVICE

- Hazardous Tree Removal
- View Clearing
- Pruning
- Chipper Service
- Bucket Truck Service

- Hedge Trimming
- Hemlock Wooly Adelgid Control
- Landscaping & Grading
- Retaining Walls
- Stump Grinding

Certified Arborist • Insured • Free Estimates
Serving This Area 10 Years

(828) 467-1113

Obedient Heart Fellowship

Will the Real Abomination Please Stand Up?

By Jim Huskins
McDowell County



The so-called holiday season is winding down. Everyone has recently celebrated something, but I am amazed at how few Christians even notice a winter celebration which John 10:22 refers to as the Feast of Dedication. This observance was important enough for Jesus to make a trip from Galilee to Jerusalem to keep it.

Dedication is not one of God's appointed times listed in Leviticus. Rather, it commemorates an event in Jewish history which foreshadows a prophecy in Matthew 24:15,16: "So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains."

While this prophecy may have additional fulfillment in the actions of the future antichrist, it was at least partially fulfilled in the year 70 when Titus of Rome put an end to Jewish sacrifice and offerings by ordering his army to destroy Jerusalem, burn the temple, and erect pagan idols where the Temple had stood.

Remarkably similar events took place in the year 175 B.C.E. when Judea was ruled by Syrian leader, Antiochus Epiphanes. He invaded Judea, occupied Jerusalem, plundered the Temple, and stopped all the commanded sacrifices for three-and-a-half years. He made capital crimes of studying Torah, circumcising children, keeping Sabbath, keeping God's feast days, and following God's dietary laws. His goal was to put an end to these practices, and he tortured or murdered any found faithfully keeping God's instructions. He killed anyone who would not sacrifice to Zeus or eat pork. He martyred at least 100,000 righteous Jews.

In 167 B.C.E., Antiochus erected an altar to Zeus in the Temple. He sacrificed a pig on the altar and sprinkled swine blood in the Holy of Holies. These events provoked a revolt led by the Maccabees family. Within two years, a rag-tag guerilla insurgency of faithful Jews defeated the most powerful army in the world. In 165 B.C.E., the Temple was liberated, and a new altar was constructed. The Temple was rededicated, and an eight day festival was proclaimed to honor this event. The name for this festival comes from the Hebrew word for dedication: Hanukkah. Among other things, Hanukkah is a time to be reminded that those who oppose God always attempt to keep others from obeying God.

The agenda of Antiochus Epiphanes is a type and shadow of the actions of Titus of Rome which resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. When Jesus foretold those events in Matthew 24, he referred to the desecration of the Temple and the accompanying ban on worshipping His Father as the "Abomination of Desolation." Antiochus and Titus both foreshadow the character and actions of the coming antichrist.

During our recent celebration of Hanukkah, my wife and I were struck by a sobering realization: The abominable agenda of Antiochus Epiphanes and Titus of Rome is still with us. That agenda is: You must profane the Sabbath. You must profane God's festivals and holy days. You must set up idols. You must eat unclean animals. You must not circumcise your sons. You must not remember God's instructions for living, the Torah. The shocking source of this call to action—to which Jesus referred as abomination—is no longer some pagan king or general. The group which promotes this exact agenda is the immense, world-wide body which claims to love and serve our Messiah.

The early Church, under the leadership of the Apostles and their disciples, kept Torah. They recognized that their obedience had nothing to do with salvation, but they also knew that we who accept salvation by grace through faith have no option but to attempt to live lives of obedience to the One who made us and saves us. First John 2:3,4 tells us that our obedience is proof of whether we have received saving grace. The entire book of James underscores this truth. The second chapter of the Book of Ephesians has a tenth verse. The Great Commission of Jesus concludes with "teach them to observe all my commands."

The truth of obedience to Torah was lost in the Fourth Century when first the Roman Empire and then the Roman Catholic Empire began forcing "Christians" to follow the agenda of abomination: made it illegal to keep Sabbath and required worship on the day dedicated to pagan sun gods; replaced God's holy days and festivals with celebrations venerating pagan gods at winter solstice and following spring equinox; falsely proclaimed that Jesus revoked God's clear dietary instructions given in Leviticus; forbade the study of Torah and made the possession of Hebrew language scriptures a capital offense.

Since the Roman Emperor, Constantine, supposedly converted to Christianity in 313, every generation has seen a systematic assault against those who attempt to keep Torah. Hanukkah is a time to remember the fact that, following the perfect sacrifice of Jesus, the bodies of His followers are now God's Holy Temple. Given our human frailty, these temples need constant rededication. The only way to achieve that rededication is sincere repentance and obedience.

God never gave us the option of choosing how we will worship and serve him. On the contrary, He gave us clear instructions on how to live and obey. Adam and Eve attempted to dictate terms to God, and the result was catastrophic. Should we pattern our lives on the words of well-intended but misinformed human teachers, or should we diligently study the entire Word of God to learn how He wants us to dedicate His temples of grace?

Obedient Heart Fellowship believes that the entire Bible is true and relevant. We accept salvation by grace through faith in Jesus, and we attempt to love and serve Him by keeping his commandments. We meet each Sabbath—Seventh Day—at Abba's House, 72 South Main Street in Marion. 10:00 A.M. 828-460-7913

Jim & Beverly Huskins are members of Obedient Heart Fellowship.

Our family, caring for yours.

Accepting new adult and pediatric patients at all MCHP Health Centers

We care for your entire family.



MCHP

MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY
HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

We Accept Medicaid, Medicare, and Most Insurance

We Have A Sliding Scale Program If You Are Uninsured
Or Need Help Paying For Your Care

Bakersville
688-2104

Celo
675-4116

Spruce Pine
688-2104

Youth Education

- ATOD Education with 100 Mountain Heritage High Freshmen
- Prevention education with 280 middle school health students

mitchell / yancey

substance abuse task force

a program of path

Youth 2 Youth

- 40 active Y2Y members
- Red Ribbon Week activities in 7 schools
- Over 300 student pledges to be drug free
- 3 Sticker Shock campaigns
- Plan & help lead WNC Teen Summit with 100 youth

Community

- Distribute 312 lockboxes & 500 RX drug disposal kits
- Parent/Family nights at 3 different schools
- Weekly Home Remedies program
- RX Disposal campaign with 2 pharmacies
- Faith panel meetings
- Drug Take Back Day
- 2 Safe Needle Disposal pilot sites
- Take part in Overdose Awareness Day
- 35 newspaper ad/articles

Visit us online for updates
and more info:
Facebook & pathwnc.org

How To Read The Bible In The New Year (And Why You Should)

By Brian Upshaw



Early in my ministry, I met a sweet widow named Marie. Marie was a godly woman. She was a poet, a prayer warrior, and a lover of Scripture.

I remember once that Marie told me that she had read through the Bible from cover to cover more than 20 times in her life. Her declaration both inspired and intimidated me.

Common sense indicates that Christians should read the Bible, but the reality is that few people read any part of the Bible, much less all of it. A recent study conducted by LifeWay Research revealed that more than half of Americans have read little or none of the Bible.

However, Bible reading is foundational and critical to our spiritual growth. A LifeWay Research study also identified Bible engagement as the top spiritual discipline that a believer could participate in, but the same study found that only 45 percent of Christians engage with the Bible on a weekly basis.

During the 2018 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Dallas, Texas, Robby Gallaty, pastor of Long Hollow Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tenn., shared the recommendations of a disciple-making task force that was commissioned two years ago by the North American Mission Board and LifeWay Christian Resources.

The task force made three recommendations to churches, the first of which was to increase efforts toward Bible engagement. The others were to examine the connection between salvation decisions and group involvement and to examine the number of groups that multiply on a regular basis.

"Bible engagement is more than just reading the Word," Gallaty said. "It is allowing the Word of God and God Himself to lead us and change our direction, our actions and our thinking." Gallaty pointed out that when people engage the Bible, they give more, serve more, go more and evangelize more.

In an effort to increase Bible engagement, Gallaty encouraged churches to participate in "80x20" challenge so that by the end of the year 2020, the percentage of believers who engage the Bible would increase from 45 percent to 80 percent. A special website — 80x20.org — includes resources such as articles, Bible reading plans and apps for smartphones or tablets. Many of the resources are free.

Bible reading is a popular New Year's resolution, and there are a number of popular reading plans available online and through apps like YouVersion. Following are some plans you may want to consider, some of which are also available on the 80x20 website.

Bible reading is foundational and critical to our spiritual growth. Foundations 260 (F260)

The F260 plan is a 260-day reading plan that highlights the foundational passages of Scripture that every disciple should know. This plan was designed for those who have never read the Bible before or those who may have attempted to read through the Bible in a year in the past, but failed. It includes one or two chapters of reading for five days each week with weekends off, which can be used as catch-up days if needed.

Chronological Reading Plan

In this article titled, "Why you should consider reading the Bible chronologically," author Trevin Wax writes, "This plan takes you through the Bible's grand narrative, so that you can follow the storyline chronologically, helping you see how the Bible fits together to tell one big story that points to Jesus Christ." The CSB Day-By-Day Chronological Bible incorporates daily readings from author and New Testament professor George Guthrie's "Read the Bible for Life" plan. I have previously used this plan and love it so much I will be using it again in 2019. M'Cheyne plan

Developed by and named for the 19th century Scottish minister Robert Murray M'Cheyne, this plan takes readers through the Old Testament once and the New Testament and Psalms twice over the course of a year. Each day includes readings from two Old Testament passages, one New Testament passage and a passage from either the Psalms or the Gospels. The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's Embrace Women's Evangelism and Discipleship Ministry is encouraging N.C. Baptists to utilize this plan as part of its Bible reading challenge in the coming year.

Moravian Daily Text

This past year, I used the Moravian Daily Texts in my daily Bible reading. The first printed edition, known as Die Losungen (Watchwords), was published in 1731. The readings were organized by Count Zinzendorf for the Bohemian and Moravian refugees who had settled on his estate fleeing persecution. This is the same plan that Dietrich Bonhoeffer used. The plan takes readers through the Old Testament and New Testament in two years and the Psalms each year. It is a little more liturgical in that the Sunday readings are based on the church calendar. Using this plan served as a reminder not only of power of the Word, but the great providence of God in preserving His Word throughout the generations of the church. It has helped me understand that I am a part of something bigger than my own spiritual growth, a great tradition of discipleship.

These are just a few of the many available Bible reading plans you may want to consider. Others will take you through the entire Bible in as little as 90 days or anywhere from one to three years.

No matter which plan you choose, make a commitment to engage with the Bible in the year ahead. As Don Whitney, author of *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*, has said, "No one is changed by an unread Bible."

How do you plan to read the Bible in 2019? What other plans have you found helpful? Leave a comment below so others may be inspired and encouraged to read the Bible in the new year.

continued on page 37

Est. 1971

Bantam Chef

Drive - Thru

1116 Rutherford Road • Marion, NC 28752
(828) 652-7023

Open Monday - Saturday
6:30 - 11am Breakfast

11am - 9pm Lunch & Dinner
(Winter Hours - Close at 8:30pm)

Since 1971, Serving Marion
and the Surrounding Communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you!!



Matthew 14:16-21

And Veterans

Bantam Chef proudly practices and promotes
recycling for a cleaner community

and a greener environment.



Ask about our ongoing *recycling* program
and how you can participate in our contributions
to *CarePartners Hospice & Palliative Care* |
McDowell



We serve
SOFT ICE CREAM
Cones • Shakes • Sundaes
Floats & Boats

Bringing Light in the Darkness

Jewish Practice Of Tikkun Olam Brings Light At Dark Time Of Year

By Kiesa Kay
Yancey County

Joel Edelson only meant to sell books to pay for college. Instead, going door to door, he became the first Jew many of the folks in a rural area he traveled had ever met in their lives.

"I became an ambassador for Judaism," says Edelson, president of the Mountain Synagogue in Franklin, recalling his experience in the Midwest, still vivid decades later. "Soon, people in the rural area started telling each other about me, welcoming me into their homes, urging their neighbors to meet me. My difference from them became a way to open doors."

In his own way, Edelson became a bridge between cultures, and by reducing prejudice, he did tikkun olam, a Hebrew phrase often translated as repairing the world. Deeds both big and small can fulfill the mitzvah, or command, of tikkun olam.

"Each person carries a divine spark that can bring light into the lives of others," says Rabbi Shaya Susskind, executive director of Chabad-Lubavitch WNC, an organization that provides social, religious and educational opportunities at The Chabad House of Asheville. "This world has to become a place where everyone feels at home. God, too, has to feel at home here. Traditions and kindness never become ancient or outdated, but are timeless."

Setting the world right
In the Lurianic rabbinic tradition, divine sparks scattered as the vessels holding the light of creation shattered in their travels through the universe. With tikkun olam, each person has a duty to restore the world, sending those sparks back home to the creator.

"At this time of year, when it is so dark, many religions celebrate the bringing of light," says Rabbi Rachael Jackson of Agudas Israel Congregation in Hendersonville. "Every act of tikkun olam lightens burdens and helps set the world right."

For some, tikkun olam means restoring the world through social action. For others, tikkun olam manifests most clearly in a warm smile shared on a cold night. Through tikkun olam and an understanding of the unity of all creation, human beings can create a better home for all beings, Susskind says.

"Tikkun olam means making the world a better home, for ourselves, for others and even for God," Susskind says. "We can do this through philanthropy, charitable acts, extending a hand, sharing a kindness. If someone's not feeling well, smiling or offering a kind word can be so healing. Without a doubt, who I am today as a father, a person, a spouse and a teacher, literally has been built on singular comments from parents, friends, teachers and others who took the time to care."

A duty to help
Every individual and each branch of Judaism has a slightly different perspective on tikkun olam, but for all — be they Reconstructionist, Reform, Conservative or Orthodox — doing good for others deeply matters. It's a duty, one of the 613 mitzvot, or obligations, for leading a fulfilling life.

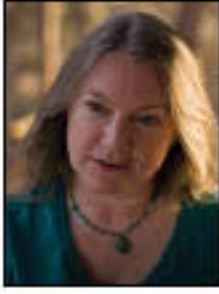
"Each one of us can do something to help in this world," says Jackson. "We can't solve everything, but we can help. It doesn't matter how you help, as long as you do something to heal the hurt in the heart of the world."

Every time someone does an act of kindness, or gemilut hasadim, and every time someone gives charitably, or tzedakah, a little bit more light — long ago shattered and scattered — returns to the shining beauty of the Lord, Susskind says.

"So many times, we ourselves don't even know when a simple, kind gesture can be completely life-changing. When we speak, we don't quite realize the effect it can have," Susskind says. "Sometimes a meaning we never intended can leave a person hurt, or something kind can make another person feel so much better, far out of proportion of what we intended, and it works in both directions."

The deep-rooted commitment to tikkun olam exists at the core of religion, says Sam Hausfather, head of the Lotte Meyerson Tikkun Olam Committee at Congregation Beth HaTephila, a Reform congregation in Asheville. Making a difference to others, to the community and to the world becomes central to daily life. "Being raised Jewish, tikkun olam is something built into you because so many of the stories and holidays emphasize that we were once slaves in Egypt," Hausfather says. "It's our responsibility to work for a better world so other people don't experience that struggle."

Social justice and sharing kindness
As Jackson says, tikkun olam is both fundraising and friend-raising alike. "At Agudas Israel, we donate to many nonprofits, including Boys & Girls Club, the Hunger Coalition and many others," Jackson says. "We choose different organizations each month for Mitzvah of the Month, determining what the organization needs and how we can help. We also fund the Interfaith Assistance Ministry." Beth HaTephila interprets tikkun olam as doing acts of social justice, Hausfather says, through supporting communities in need and advocating for issues. Groups from the congregation volunteer monthly at MANNA FoodBank, provide meals



SHARING THE LIGHT: Lay leader Peri Gordon, second from left, leads the annual women's Shabbat service at the Mountain Synagogue in Franklin, flanked at far left by Karen Katz, lighting the temple Shabbat candle, and including past President Glenda Greenman, fourth from left. The women-led event can be seen as broadly fulfilling the aim of tikkun olam. Photo by Joel Edelson

at the Veterans' Restoration Quarters (a program of Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry) and read to preschoolers at local Head Start classes. They also work with the sanctuary movement to provide assistance on immigration issues and to give direct support to families. Many synagogues and churches, too, work with Homeward Bound's Room in the Inn, which provides housing for homeless women in Asheville.

Sometimes, tikkun olam revolves around special holidays. "On Yom Kippur, we have a fast day, so we all donate the food we would have eaten that day instead," Jackson says. "On this one day in the past year, our 160 congregants at Agudas Israel donated 1,500 pounds of food."

On the first night of Hanukkah this month, The Chabad House of Asheville hosted a ribbon-cutting and grand opening of the Chabad House on McDowell Street, which offers a new place of belonging for the Jewish community. Tikkun olam helps the whole world feel like a better place to belong, Susskind says. "In a way, the home in our hearts becomes a portable sanctuary within us, within the hearts of each one of us and part of who we are," Susskind offers.

Mountain Synagogue in Franklin provides a home for a Holocaust Torah, a treasure saved from ashes and despair. Tikkun olam there includes a mitzvah day, when community members gather to serve others.

"Hate is taught, so if we can learn not to teach hate, but to share kindness, then it's a lesson learned," Edelson says. "We always embrace new people and help in any way we can."


Kiesa Kay, a playwright who lives in Western North Carolina, can be reached at kiesakay.com. For tickets to her play about Rebecca Boone, contact the Orchard at www.altapassorchard.com, 828 765 9531, or White Horse Black Mountain, at www.whitehorseblackmountain.com, 828 669 0816.



MEETING NEEDS: Volunteers from Asheville's Congregation Beth HaTephila prepare and serve lunch for up to 100 homeless vets every month at the Veterans' Restoration Quarters, a program of Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry. Photo courtesy of Congregation Beth HaTephila




Scott W. Murphy, D.M.D., P.A.
General Dentistry for the Family



We Love To See You Smile!

Always Accepting New Patients • Insurance Filed For You
Monday - Thursday 8-5
Friday 8-2
(828) 433-1223
341 East Parker Road, Morganton, NC 28655



The Grace of God

By Rev John McCoury
Roan Mountain, Tennessee

This month we will look at James(2:5-7) The emphasis here is on God's choosing, and this involves the grace of God. If salvation were on the basis of merit, it would not be by grace. Grace implies God's sovereign choice of those who cannot earn and do not deserve His salvation (Eph. 1:4-7 and 2:8-10). God saves us completely on the basis of the work of Christ on the cross and not because of anything that we are or have.

God ignores national differences (Acts 10:34). The Jewish believers were shocked when Peter went to the Gentile household of Cornelius, preached to the Gentiles, and even ate with them. The topic of the first church council was, "Must a Gentile become a Jew to become a Christian?" (Acts 15) The answer the Holy Spirit gave them was, "No!" In the sight of God, there is no difference between Jew and Gentile when it comes to condemnation (Rom. 2:6-16) or salvation (Rom.10 1-13)

God also ignores social differences. Masters and slaves (Eph. 6:9) and rich and poor are alike to Him. James teaches us that the grace of God makes the rich man poor, because he cannot depend on his wealth; and it makes the poor man rich, because he inherits the riches of grace in Christ. (Review James 1:9-11.) "The Lord Maketh poor; and maketh rich: He bringeth low, and lifteth up. Raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them . Princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory (1 Sam. 2:7-8a)"; From the human point of view, God chooses the poor instead of the rich. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty (1Cor1-26-27)The poor of this world become rich in faith; as sons of God, they inherit The wealth of the kingdom It is possible To be poor in this world and rich in the next, or rich in this world and poor in the next (1 Tim. 6:17-18)". Or, you could be poor both in this world and the next, or rich in this world and the next. It all depends on what you do with Christ and the material wealth He has given. God promises the kingdom to "those that love Him" (James 2:5), not to those who love this world and its riches. James gave a stern rebuke in verses 6 and 7."When you despise the poor man you are behaving like the unsaved rich people." In that day, it was easy for rich persons to exploit the poor, influence decisions at court, and make themselves richer. Unfortunately, we have the same sins being committed today; and these sins blaspheme the very name of Christ Our Lord who was poor, and He too was the victim of injustice perpetrated by wealthy leaders of His day.

The doctrine of God's grace, if we really believe it, forces us to relate to people on the basis of God's plan and not on the basis of human merit or social status. "A class church" is not a church that magnifies the grace of God. When He died, Jesus broke down the wall that separated Jews and Gentile (Eph. 2:11-22). But in His birth and life, Jesus broke down the walls between rich and poor, young and old, educated and uneducated. It is wrong for us to build those walls again; we cannot rebuild them if we believe in the grace of God.

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

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. - Romans 15:13



Take Him Out and Stone Him

By Kurt Bomar
Avery County

Deut. 21:18 "If someone has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, 19 his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. 20 They shall say to the elders, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a glutton and a drunkard." 21 Then all the men of his town are to stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid."



There are a lot of difficult passages in the OT that are thrown in the Christian's face as being inconsistent with a loving God. This is one of them. I hope to shed light on this passage as well as others later this year because 2 Tim. 3:16 tells us: All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,

And, 1 Pet. 3:15 says:

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."

So why was this drastic action taken over a rebellious son, and why did all the men of the community (many of whom may have liked the young man) have to have his blood on their hands too? I think for several reasons.

First, for proper motivation. The pain that would have followed such a drastic action would certainly make the men resolved, as they walked back to their tents, to do whatever it took to make sure their own sons didn't follow the same path of rebellion and receive the same fate.

Second, evaluation. If I were one of those men, I'm sure I would think back on what I knew of the young man and wonder "could I have done something in his life to turn him around when I had the chance?"

And third, Proclamation. The stoning proclaimed that rebellion was neither a "stage" nor an inevitable part of growing up. It was simply not to be tolerated.

If it still seems too harsh, remember that when God starts a new work it is vitally important that people realize that he is "deadly" serious about what His standards are. Here a new nation was being birthed and they would be the standard for the whole world to follow. Therefore, they must start out pure. Remember when another new work was started, the Church, Ananias and Sapphira, who lied to the Holy Spirit were also supernaturally killed on the spot. (Acts 5).

So, what is different today? Paul tells us that the punishment for rebellion is always death (Rom. 3:23)

But because another son, the perfect son, became sin and took my place on the cross—I am forgiven completely. The standard for sin hasn't changed, but Christ has paid the price and for that we should be eternally grateful.

Inspired by A Pillar by Day, Jon Courson p.392.

Selah, (think about it)

Kurt Bomar is pastor of Walnut Grove Church.



Miller
Insurance Group, Inc.

AUTO•HOME•BUSINESS•LIFE

(828) 765-1711



Erie
Insurance®

7548A Hwy 19E, Spruce Pine, NC • www.miller-insurance-group.com

**WE ARE COMMITTED TO
DOING OUR BEST FOR YOU!
And Our Community**

*"INSURANCE is the most IMPORTANT thing
a person has because it protects him against
the loss of everything he has in the world."*

-H.O. Hirt, ERIE Founder

Never Easy
By Carolyn Dotts
Mitchell County

While grief is never easy, this is the time of year when grief becomes almost impossibly difficult. The holidays seem to intensify the sense of loss, which is often due to heightened expectations that often accompany special days. The empty place at the dinner table, the gifts that are no longer purchased, the altered or abandoned traditions all contribute to a feeling of depression. In spite of the spirit of excitement, bright holiday decorations, and anticipation of the big day, those in grief struggle to be present and to participate, and often pretend by putting on a mask to disguise the grief. In last month's issue I wrote about GriefShare which is a ministry of Western Carolina Church in Spruce Pine. Surviving the Holidays and Loss of A Spouse are both designed to address some of these feelings. Each is a single 2-hour presentation.

Since then, with much prayer, consideration, and counsel, I feel the Lord is leading our team to start up GriefShare again. Loss of A spouse will be offered by Western Carolina Church on Thursday, January 17 at 6:00pm in the church wing. Participants will view the video presentation, followed by discussion for those who desire. While sharing is encouraged, it is not required, so just listening is an option. A take-home journal is available for each person attending. There is no charge to attend, and light refreshments will be served. For additional information or to RSVP, please contact Carolyn Dotts at the church office 828-765-4633 or 828-467-1433. This seminar is open to everyone, whether or not you have lost a spouse. While RSVP is suggested, it is not necessary in order to attend, so please join us.

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



Q: Did people in Biblical times celebrate New Year's Day, like we do now? Or is it only a holiday that doesn't have any religious significance, but just celebrates the beginning of another year?

A: Every year, God's people in Old Testament times celebrated the end of the old year and the beginning of the new one (just as people of Jewish heritage do today). Their calendar was somewhat different from ours, and this celebration always occurred in the fall.

For most people today, New Year's probably has little religious significance; it only marks the beginning of another year. However, people in Bible times saw the end of one year and the beginning of another very differently. For them, it marked the end of the annual harvest and reminded them of God's goodness to them. In fact, they celebrated one of their major annual festivals then, setting aside time to thank God for His kindness and mercy (see Leviticus 23:16).

What will the end of this year and the beginning of the new one mean to you? Will you celebrate it as so many do, not even thinking about God or how He wants them to live? Or will you pause to look back over the past year, thanking God for His goodness, and seeking His forgiveness for the ways you failed? Most of all, will you pause and commit the coming year — and your whole life — to Jesus Christ? Only God knows what the future holds, either for us as individuals or for our world. But when we know Christ, we know we belong to Him, and we are securely in His hands forever. Let the Psalmist's words be your guide: "Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him" (Psalm 37:5).

Find peace with God today.



"Faces you know."

"Faces you trust."

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

~ Anne Richardson

Yancey
Hospice and Palliative Care

"Your only nonprofit, local, community Hospice"

856 Georges Fork Road, Burnsville, NC 28714

828.682-9675

ronnieg@hospiceofyancey.org

Lees-McRae College

Richmond Community College Sign 2+2 Articulation Agreement For Human Services Program Students

By Nina Mastandrea
Avery County

BANNER ELK, N.C. — In a recent articulation agreement between the two institutions, Richmond Community College human services technology program students will now be able to seamlessly earn their bachelor's degree online at Lees-McRae College.

The transfer student agreement allows Richmond Community College students who have completed their Associate of Applied Arts degree in human services technology to transfer into the human services program at Lees-McRae and earn their Bachelor of Arts and Applied Science (B.A.A.S.) with ease.

Transferring with 65 to 66 credits fulfills the general education core curriculum in the Lees-McRae online program. Completing the core curriculum allows incoming students to focus on the courses needed for their human services degree.

"Thanks to the outstanding education a student receives at Richmond Community College, we know that students are well-prepared to complete a rigorous undergraduate degree through Lees-McRae College," Provost and Dean of Faculty Todd Lidh said. "We are proud to partner with Richmond CC and be a part of a student's journey to a career or to advancement in the human services field."

Human services-related job growth is expected to be more than 13 percent through 2024, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Jobs in the human services field can be found in mental health, child care, family services, social services, rehabilitation, correction, and educational agencies.

"This career field is vital to a caring and helpful society, and I am glad we can contribute to the preparation of current and future professionals here in North Carolina and beyond," Lidh added.

Richmond Community College, located in Hamlet, North Carolina, offers educational opportunities, cultural enrichment, and workforce development and training that enhances the quality of students' lives and supports economic development in Richmond and Scotland counties, according to the RCC website.

Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina, Lees-McRae College is a private, four-year college offering diverse baccalaureate and graduate degrees, strong athletic programs and outstanding faculty. Field-specific career preparation and hands-on learning enhance the broad core curriculum. For more information, please visit www.lmc.edu or call 828.898.5241.

Nina Mastandrea is the content manager of Lees-McRae College

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.
Hebrews 11:1



NC Baptists on Mission

Hold Dental Bus Clinic In Spruce Pine

By Rev. Don Ford
Mitchell County



The Medical/Dental Bus Ministry of the North Carolina Baptist Men began in 1989 to assist with the physical and spiritual needs of residents across our state. North Carolina Baptists on Mission offer the use of the mobile medical/dental units to churches and service organizations within NC to assist people without insurance, the elderly, minority groups and more.

On Saturday, December 1, 2018, Spruce Pine First Baptist Church hosted a dental clinic in Mitchell County. Liberty Hill Baptist Church prepared breakfast while SPFBC provided lunch for those in attendance. Over 30 individuals including dentists, hygienists, nurses, interpreters, counsellors and other assistants volunteered their services and time for dental screenings. The Mitchell Baptist Association sponsored the clinic covering costs for patient materials, dental bus mileage and driver lodging.

There are currently two mobile dental units serving North Carolina. The newest vehicle was placed into service only a few months ago. Each unit is equipped with two dental exam rooms. Treatments include restorations (fillings) and extractions. A third unit was recently retired after 20 years of service and permanently located in Murphy, NC to serve as a stationary clinic for the 5 most Western NC Counties.

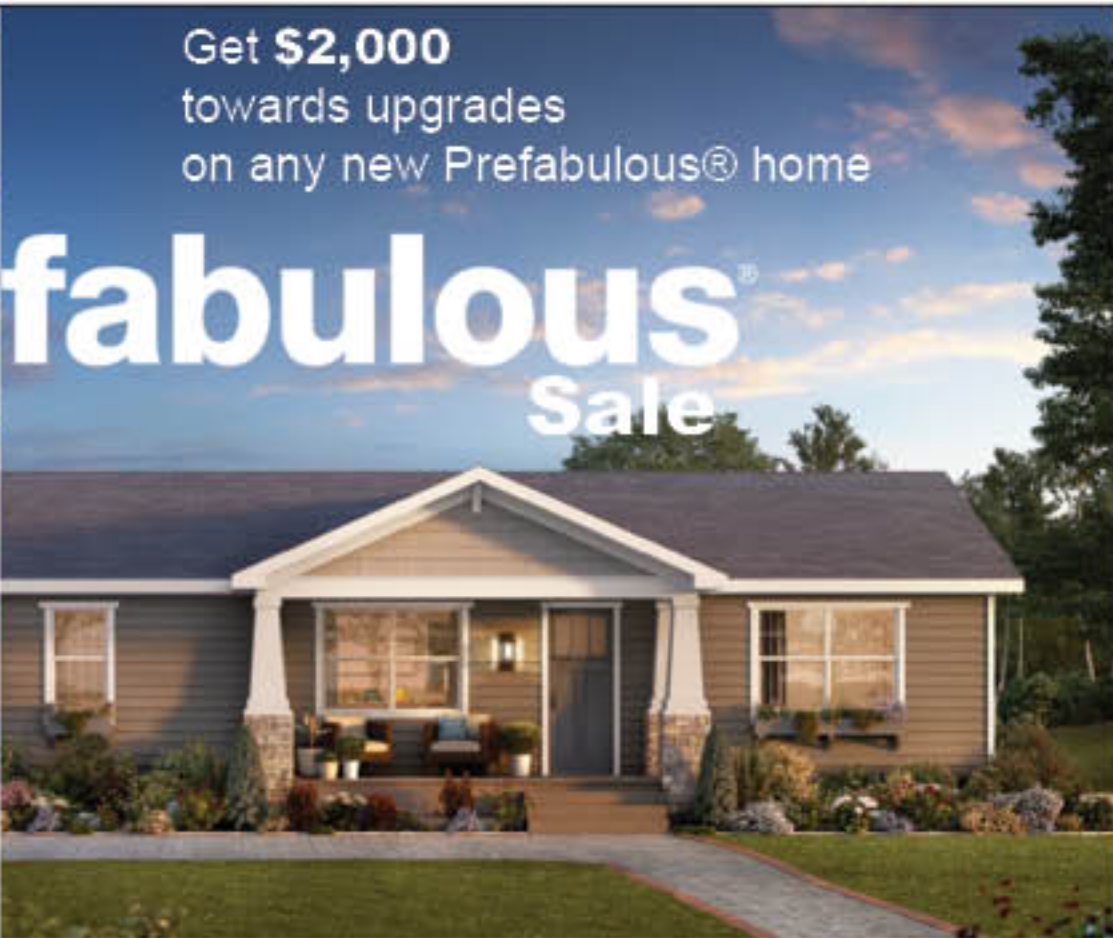
Many thanks to the churches and volunteers who helped to serve 34 patients at the Mitchell County clinic. A big "thank you" to Dr. Taylor Townsend, Dr. Charlie Nash, Drs. Kyle and Rebekah Duncan and their staff who made the clinic such a success!



NCBM Dental Bus at SPFBC

Rev. Don Ford, Clinic Coordinator Don Ford has served God as a minister for over 40 years. He and his wife Deborah live in Spruce Pine and have one daughter who lives in Atlanta, GA.

Out of town? You can still check out our new Website: www.brcnews.com And find us on Facebook



Get \$2,000 towards upgrades on any new Prefabulous® home

Prefabulous® Sale



828-433-8455
1276 Burkemont Avenue
Morganton, NC 28655
www.claytonmorganton.com

Christ, the Ark of Safety:
A Message from Billy Graham
By Billy Graham



History records for all to see that nations have been destroyed not by enemies from without, but by the deterioration that is evidenced by immorality, dishonesty, greed and pride from within.

Apparently, some of us living today have come to the point where we do not know where Christianity stops and where modern society begins. The good life has become inseparable from the maximum possible consumption of things.

We even have a muddled conception of Christianity. We accept a religion in general, presided over by a God in general, with extremely hazy ideas about what it all means. But since this seems to be the popular view, we are quite undisturbed about it and flit about in our little orbits, blissfully unaware of the frightening tragedy occurring.

The Bible many times warns that toward the end of history as we know it, there will be a return to pre-flood conditions of gross sin and wickedness. The Scripture says concerning the people of Noah's day, "Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5).

Christ referred to this condition in Matthew 24 when He said, "As the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24:37-39).

As the great Day of Judgment draws ever nearer, we see these very things happening about us. It would seem that we were reading from an article in a modern magazine as we read Paul's word to Timothy, "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!" (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

This certainly leaves no room for doubt as to what the world is going to be like just before the climactic event that will ring the curtain down on history.

Many people are asking—are we living in the closing days? I do not know. The closing days of history may be a hundred years or a thousand years from now. But there are many indications that we are now living in the closing period of history, and we are warned from the Scriptures that we are to repent and return to Christ as that day draws nearer.

All ancient civilizations have gone down to destruction through sin. Rome went on a gigantic spree toward the end of her history—just as the world has been doing now for the past several years. Nero committed suicide in 68 A.D.; Rome's overthrow came more than 400 years later. One moment, almost omnipotent power was within Rome's grasp; and the next, destruction.

The world today is heading the same way. Immorality and uncleanness occupied the minds of Roman rulers and of antediluvians. So today, we see a world saturated with sexual sins in places high and low.

A few years ago, the sensibilities of intelligent, clean-minded citizens were shocked and startled. Now familiarity has bred a measure of contempt. Protests are of no avail, and they are ignored by those who have deliberately chosen the way of sin and death.

The days of Noah are returning to the earth, and a catastrophe as great and terrible awaits those who refuse to enter into the ark of salvation, which is Jesus Christ.

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Here was one of the great men of all the ages, God's chosen man, the one person who had remained true to God amid a scoffing, sin-stricken world. One by one, Noah's friends and relatives who believed in God died before the flood came.

The carpenters who helped him build the ark were themselves eventually lost. This is a warning to millions who belong to the church today. You are helping to build the church but have never really known Christ as Lord and Savior. We are reminded of the words of our Lord when He warned that there would be those in the latter day crying out, "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:22-23).

There are thousands of people today who think they are saved, who have a false notion that they can be a Christian and live any way they like. In their manner of living, they are indistinguishable from the world. It is true that they attend church with some regularity and do many good works, but they are not resting in the blood of Jesus Christ for their salvation, and they are not doing the works of faith that are required as an evidence of one's relationship with God.

The Bible says there will come a day when we shall call upon God, but He will not answer. There will come a day when we will seek God, but we will not find Him. The Bible teaches that we will have had our chance. The Bible warns against hardening our hearts against God. The Bible warned the people of Noah's day, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever" (Genesis 6:3). You cannot come to Jesus Christ unless the Spirit of God brings you, and unless you yield to the prompting and urging of the Holy Spirit. I beg of you to come to Christ while there is yet time.

Outside the ark, men and women were struggling for their lives, clutching at pieces of driftwood until the pitiless hand of death reached up and drew them down beneath those cruel and relentless waves. All were lost. There was not one soul outside the ark who did not perish. They had had their chance but tossed it

away. There were hundreds that day who were close to the ark and yet lost. This fearful scene from the Bible is a prototype, a shadow of that day of judgment that lies before our world. The Bible says, "It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

The ark is a symbol of Jesus Christ. In this day, when the clouds of judgment are beginning to gather, Christ is the refuge. You must cross the threshold and pass into the ark. Accept Christ now as your Savior before it is too late.

Are you in? You may be close, but are you inside? The universal and terrible storm is coming. The days of Noah may be soon upon us. Are you ready for the Day of Judgment?

Even if the world does not end in your lifetime in a cataclysmic judgment, the moment you die will be the end of the world for you. The world that you live in will die with you. Are you ready for death? Are you ready for the judgment that is to come the moment you step out into eternity?

History repeats itself. What happened thousands of years ago will happen again. There is a possibility it could happen in this century or even in this decade. However, while there is life, there is hope. The Spirit of God is knocking faithfully at the door. If we repent, mend our ways and throw off our sins, we can yet be used of God to bring healing and help to a dying civilization.

Let me ask you—do you know Christ? He is the only One who can redeem us. But before He can come in, we must be broken, repentant and contrite. The Lord will not despise a broken and a contrite heart. The Bible says that during Israel's crisis, God sought for a man who would stand in the gap, but He found none (see Ezekiel 22:30). Will you be one who will stand in the gap to stop the floodtide of evil that is deluging the world?

Let Christ into your heart today. You can then be saved and be inside the ark. The storm of judgment can break; but it will never touch you, because you are in Christ Jesus. And "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). ©1960 BGEA

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture verses are taken from the Holy Bible, New King James Version.



WHITSON

REALTY

"The Broker That Gets Results"

HOMES • FARMS
LAKEFRONT • LOTS
ACREAGE • COMMERCIAL

REALTOR®

South of I-40
3800 Sugar Hill Rd.
Marion, NC 28752

Dennis J. Whitson, Broker | 1999 Realtor of the Year

(828) 738-3540

www.WhitsonRealty.com | dennisw@WhitsonRealty.com

Burke County

Catawba River Baptist Association—The churches of CRBA are concerned with the vast drug abuse present in Burke county and we want to help by beginning a Celebrate Recovery ministry. If God has put this type of burden on your heart and you are willing to help us begin and lead this ministry, please give us a call at 828-437-0137. You may also contact Robby at rsmith@crbanc.org. Your help and prayers are greatly appreciated

Great Hope Seventh Day Adventist Church The Forks over Knives movie will be shown at the Old Rock School's Waldensian Room (downstairs) in Valdese Thursday, January 3, 7:00 pm. This is a film that can save your life! The film features leading experts on health that will have people talking for years. Do yourself a favor for the new year and see this movie and invite others to come, too. A love offering will be taken to cover expense!

Reversing (& preventing) Diabetes Classes will again be offered for 6 Mondays, January 7 through February 11, 6:00 pm. Scientific evidence will be shared in a group setting, along with healthy and tasty food samples. These classes are worth much but are offered free at the Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church at 2907 US Hwy 70 in Drexel (across from the Foothills Thrift Store). Class size is limited so please pre-register by calling Sharryn at 828-334-0084.

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist-Burke County—The Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church's former Community Service Thrift Store is RE-OPENING as The Giving Heart Thrift Shop! Located at 402 East Main Street in Glen Alpine, N.C. 28628. The new store will be open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Like us on Facebook @thegivingheartthriftshop

The Giving Heart Thrift Shop will be offering gently used / brand new clothes of all sizes and for all ages! As well as, furniture and small home goods!

God's Closet - Morganton FREE Shop Day!

When: Sunday, February 3, 2019, from 2:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m.

Where: Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church

2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C. 28655

Town of Valdese—Movies at the Rock—The Chronicles of Narnia: the Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe January 11, at 7:00pm.

The "Italian Christian School for Pastors and Missionaries SELIM" in Torre Pellice (Waldensian Valleys, Italy) organizes a second six-week intensive language course for beginners (see attachment for more information): from Monday 18 February 2019 to Friday 29 March 2019.

If you are in contact with or you know Missions engaged in Italy or Pastors or Missionaries preparing to come to Italy, we ask you the courtesy to turn them this email with its illustrative attachment: our school SELIM has sprung up just to help these brothers to prepare linguistically themselves in the best possible way for their mission in our country (see also our internet-page: <https://romussi.wixsite.com/sorgenteim>). For this reason, the Missionaries and Pastors engaged in Italy and their accompanying families benefit from a significant discount of 33% on the price of the course! (And private missionaries from poor countries in the world can apply for scholarships!)

But our courses are also open to all those who have pleasure or need to learn Italian well and desist to do it among believers in an environment of faith. If you know in your community or among your acquaintances persons who like, as a beginner, a six-week intensive language course in Italy, in a Christian environment and in a very interesting place of the history of faith (Torre Pellice, official "City of the Reformation" and capital of historic Waldensian Valleys, a very friendly small town in the quiet foothills of the Alps, with low rental prices for furnished apartments), we are very grateful if you forward this offer. In all cases we would be very grateful if you would make this offer known in your community.

We thank you for your help!

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, Bereavement 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.303. 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 Families with Children

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

(Baby Equipment and Resource Closet)

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

Asheville Street Baptist Church is in need of a pianist. Please call Lynn Burnette at 828-439-2421 for more information.

First Baptist Morganton currently has 55 adult choir robes that they would like to make available to another church. If your church is interested please contact David Thayer @ 828-437-2544 ext. 16.

First Baptist of Marion—Belize Mission Trip February 5-12, 2019 FBC's relationship with the Baptists of Belize will continue this winter by sending a mission team to work in the western region of the country. Our construction crew will continue work on the Santa Elena Baptist Primary School, helping complete a second story addition. The medical team will provide free medical clinics to underserved communities near the Guatemalan Border, where there is a large immigrant population. Our team will stay in Santa Elena at the Aguada Hotel. The week will end with two nights at San Pedro on the coast. Funds to cover our ministry costs are already raised. However, each team member provides their own travel costs, which is estimated at \$1,100 per person, covering airfare, ground transportation, lodging, international travel insurance, T-shirt, and most meals. For more detailed information, promotional flyers are available near the Chapel or see Scott Hagaman. A minimum of 10 persons are needed to launch this mission trip with a maximum number of 25. A valid passport is required, which should not expire within 6 months of travel. Registration Form and \$100

Mitchell County

Bear Creek Baptist Church—Women's Prayer Breakfast Jan 11th ,8:00am at DT's.

Celebrate Recovery

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

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

Mitchell County Baptist Association Happy New Year -Baptist Mission Rally--Baptist Men Region 9, Tuesday, February 19, 2019 Newbridge Baptist Church at 199 Elkwood Ave. Asheville, NC—Meal at 5:45 and Program at 6:50

Associational Mid-Year meeting on February 25, 2019 at 7:00pm —First Baptist Church in Spruce Pine, NC

Baptist Men's Day is January 27, 2019 to recognize the awesome work the Men do in our churches.

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday will be observed on January 20th.

Mitchell County Chamber—YaYa Village We are announcing the Opening of YaYa Village Commercial Share Kitchen!

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

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

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

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

Sign up for 2019 After Hours!

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

2019 After Hours

January: David on the Corner, Bakersville, NC

February: OPEN

March: OPEN

April: OPEN

May: Loafer's Glory Rafting and Tubing, Bakersville, NC

June-November: OPEN

We do not have After Hours in December.

Book Signing with Janie DeVos!

Get a glimpse inside Janie DeVos' newest book that will launch at the Market on Oak January 12th. Janie will be at the Market on Oak from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

"Miami in the 1920's is a city with two faces. By day, it's a dazzling beacon of industry; when the sun goes down, neon signs flash and decadence reigns. As Prohibition takes hold, speakeasies and illicit distilleries spring up alongside lavish mansions. Nothing can slow the influx of tourists thirsty for strong liquor—or quell the greed of those eager to provide it.

Caught between these two worlds, and two very different men, beautiful Lily Strickland throws herself into re-building her grandparents' Art Deco hotel while reveling in everything the city's nightlife has to offer a blonde-bombshell flapper. When her shy, unassuming sister is caught up in Miami's vicious mob underworld, Lily turns to the doctor she's loved for years. But it may be up to a young pilot and former rumrunner to save her sister and salvage the legacy her family

has worked so hard to build"
Summer 2019 Workshops at Penland!
Summer 2019 workshop descriptions are here!
A few fun facts:

- * We're offering 103 workshops this summer.
- * Scholarships are available for all 103 workshops!
- * Registration opens January 15.
- * Scholarship applications open January 1 and are due by February 18.

Toe River Arts locations will be closed the month of January to sweep, mop, clean and give our spaces some attention. We would love to have some extra help on January 5th at our Spruce Pine location and January 12th at our Burnsville location.

Interested in volunteering? Contact us at info@toeriverarts.org

Roan Mountain Resolution Hike-Roan Mountain is celebrating the New Year with a resolution to hike. Join Park Ranger Phil Hylan for a beautiful 1.5-mile morning trek up to Ravens Rock. Ravens Rock offers a beautiful winter overlook of the park and mountain landscape. Hikers will start and end their adventure at the Campground Picnic Shelter 3 across from the camper check-in station. There will also be a warm fire to greet participants along with hot chocolate and coffee on the front and tail end of the hike. This is a free event, but we request that you sign up on this page by clicking the registration link to help us have a count of our participants.

Ravens Rock is 0.9 miles in distance with steep ascents and declines making this a moderate to strenuous difficulty hike. Be sure to wear good hiking shoes meant for rocky and rooty terrain. The 0.6 mile distance is added from the walk to and from the trail head. Be sure to dress in layers for the weather and bring water for the hike. A camera is recommended for the overlook views. Happy New Year!

Run For Holland-I have exciting news that I couldn't wait to share! After 5 years of being organized Run For Holland has finally received it's 501(c)(3) status. This means that we are recognized by the IRS as tax exempt and that we can give donors tax deductions when they make charitable gifts. The ability to apply for grants and other public or private allocations available only to IRS-recognized, 501(c)(3) organizations.

With that being said, I want to ask you all to consider donating to Run For Holland as 2018 comes to a close. To date, we have been able to give over \$53,000 in grants to the local disabled community and hope that being "official" will allow us to do even more in the years to come. Run For Holland started with a small vision to help the local disabled community through awareness, whatever that meant. Because of people like you it has grown into a Non-Profit organization that is reaching thousands of people per year through awareness, education, and financial support.

Can you help us grow our budget for 2019?

PS registration is open so feel free to sign up for the 2019 race on Saturday May 18th 2019.

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

Comprehensive Transportation Plan-Mitchell County, the towns of Bakersville and Spruce Pine, the High Country Rural Planning Organization (HCRPO), and the North Carolina Department of Transportation – Transportation Planning Division (NCDOT TPD) are working together to develop a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) that will identify transportation needs and long-term solutions for the next 25 to 30 years. The study includes alternative modes of transportation (bicycle, pedestrian, and public transportation).

The public is encouraged to provide feedback for the Mitchell County CTP by taking an online survey at the link below. The deadline to take the survey is November 9th.

Hard copies of the survey are available at
-Mitchell County Administration building
-Bakersville Medical Clinic
-Bakersville Medical Clinic/Spruce Pine
-Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce
-Mitchell County Transportation Authority
-Museum of NC Minerals

You may return the survey to Bakersville Medical Clinic (BKVL or SP Office) or Mitchell County Administration Office.

Yancey County

ASAP- Join ASAP on February 23 for our 16th annual conference hosted at the AB Tech Conference Center in Asheville, NC. This one-day business and marketing conference provides beginning and established farmers tools to grow their farm businesses. The conference includes workshops led by experienced farmers and agricultural professionals, a Grower-Buyer Meeting, one-to-one consulting, exhibitor hall, a new farmers market manager track, and much more. Learn more about the 2019 Business of Farming Conference.

Want to promote your business to local farmers? Consider sponsoring or exhibiting at the conference! It is a unique opportunity to reach farmers who are seeking resources to grow their farm businesses. Contact Robin Lenner for more information.

Street Ministry in Burnsville--Hello, I'm Roc Robinson a local Christian Rapper/ Street Minister out of Burnsville NC. I have had my ministry going since 2015 and now working on my 3rd album. My ministry host events to raise money for different local nonprofits and to share testimony. I also go around to these different churches and share testimony/perform for free or a love offering. I have done shows at Higgins, Mount Pleasant, Griffith Chapel, and 3 at the Burnsville town center. My music is produced by Ryan Anglin at The Bridge Church there in Spruce Pine. I am looking to expand my testimony of hope thru Christ to our neighboring counties then states. I'm letting. If you would like to talk more about my ministry and aim in our community you can contact me on my cell or email. I'm giving you a link to my first Christian Rap Tracks Called "Vision" thanks and God Bless Y'all!

Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse ---Stay Alert!

Mayland Community College --Contact Allen for January Info.

Allen Cook
Director, Mayland Small Business Center
Mayland Community College
(828) 766-1295
acook@mayland.edu



As part of our spreading “Good News”, we have provided these pages for information for your organization or church that would be of interest to the public. I send out reminders in a group email to remind those of you who have requested it, or used this service regularly. If you wish to be added to the email please email me at barbarah@brcnews.com. One of the things any of you using this service needs to remember is that we publish only once a month and the info has to be submitted a month ahead. When sending info please send to my email: barbarah@brcnews.com.

A great way to get your meeting dates, events, and other info to the public.

The Old Coat

By Timothy W. Tron
Burke County

Today, in an effort to keep my current wardrobe from becoming too worn from work on the Retreat, I dug through some of the bundles of items tucked away in storage, landing upon my old farm coat. My hand reached into the well-worn pockets of yesteryear landing upon an odd feeling shape. Retrieving the metal objects, the curious figure of T-post wire wrappings came into view. The edges of the coat had frayed, the cuffs torn in places where the barbed wire so often would catch. Many nights, out in the freezing cold, or daytime blistering summer heat, invariably a tree would fall across a fence, and its immediate repair would be required. The jacket had been my comfort from those bone-chilling nights.

Cattle always had a sense of finding a "hole" in the fence line. Anytime the call came in, "You've got cows out," the dagger would hit home and the job of finding the livestock, getting them back in, and then repairing the breach in the wire would begin. Each time, the anxiety of fighting time, fearing the loss of one's livelihood from the possibility of an animal getting hurt or killed by a car always pressed in upon me. In all, it was not something that I missed of my former life. Yet, it was those times of dread, those tribulations that produced the character of who I am today. Knowing that those things that once created turmoil today provide me contentment in the darkest of times. In a manner of speaking, I fear less of what is to come than I once did, knowing from whence I came.

When the seemingly impossible task looms ahead, do we cringe in fear or do we, as so often referenced to in the Bible, gird up our loins, with faith as our shield, and boldly march forward into the fray? Would we find ourselves, as the Apostle Paul, reflecting back on our lives and finding contentment in all; all being our deepest lows, and our highest peaks?

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound, everywhere and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."—Phil. 4:11-12

Pastor Joe's sermon today spoke to the very thing that I had found myself lacking; contentment.

The past four years, since beginning my journey in Christ, there has not been one day where I have not been challenged; often beyond what I thought possible. To cover the entire length of time and the events therein would take more than a couple pages of manuscript. But to summarize, it began with moving an entire farm of 20+ years and selling a house with land. To add to the complexity, since God never makes anything easier than we expect, my learning curve for becoming the Director of the Trail of Faith only compounded the level of stress, as many would call it. Looking back, it was the moment when we literally stood on that far distant shore and began our journey across; our River of Jordan, if you will.

To imagine the immensity of it all, simply consider what it would take to uproot your family, farm, and life and leave the world you once knew behind, to cross that proverbial river to a new life where nothing was certain. As if blinded, like Saul, and then having one's eyes reopened, our life began anew in a strange world, in a foreign town, in a job that was anything but simple. Through it all, the ever-present thought was with me, "If it is God's will, then it shall be done." The peace of mind that simple saying that brought was the saving grace that kept my life sane. In all the struggles, in all the blood, sweat, and back-breaking days of labor to make it happen, my heart was always content to be doing, "The Will of God."

Again, to rewind and revisit that entire stretch of time would require a story worthy of another novel; perhaps in time. Yet, one of the highlights, or challenges, if you will, that signified all that was yet to come was the final night of working with my previous employer, Genband. For the last two weeks, I had requested to work remotely. Happy to keep me on as long as possible, and because I had a fantastic Director, they approved my offer. From my perspective, it was purely selfish, in the fact that we needed the extra income since I had left that previous life, and as such, there was no severance package. When you leave, you leave it all. Now it wasn't simply working remotely that made those two weeks a challenge; rather, it was also the fact that at the same time, I was working days in my new position at the Trail of Faith, I was working nights with Genband. The learning curve at the Trail was much more than had been anticipated. To compound the issue, my new employer at the Trail had literally dismissed all the former office help, so that in addition to my new role as Director, I was now left learning how to run the books and manage the office, which had previously been done by two separate individuals, on my own. Mind you, this is not a complaint, rather a reflection of the difficulty presented in those last few days of working two jobs, but more technically, four roles to be exact. Through it all, I remained content that this was God's will.

When the last week of the final two-week period arrived, as you might imagine, I was physically running on fumes. To add to the level of pain, I had barely four hours sleep in the last three days. My spiritual life had become ablaze with all that was possible. It felt as if there was no night in the day, in that every waking moment something Godly was transpiring. So, when I prepared for my last night of work with Genband as the Emergency Recover (ER) Manager, I literally planned to simply log in, receive the customary hand-offs and then let my team run with it, as I dozed off and on through the night.

Before logging in that night, I went to the altar of a nearby church and prayed. In that prayer, I asked God for strength and guidance, to help me make it through the night and beyond. The next day at the Trail I had two tours booked, and there was nobody to lead them but me. In other words, I needed all the help I could get. As God would have it, easy was not in the plan.



In ER, we supported equipment not only made by Genband but nearly everything that had once been made by our previous owner, Nortel. This meant thousands of pieces of equipment around the world would have their support go through my team who were located in the Research Triangle Park (RTP), NC; 24x7x365. Yes, we supported the world.

About an hour after our customary start, one of my engineers announced that he heard the smoke alarm going off. At first, I thought he was joking. Soon, others came back acknowledging that he was not joking. Knowing that our ER Teams rarely adhered to the alarms, they kept on working. Not long after, security came through and told everyone to get out; this was not a test, there was really a fire.

In all my 25+ years working in or around the original building in which my team was housed that night back in the RTP, there had never been a fire in any of our buildings; never. Yes, there had been minor alarms, smoldering wires possibly at worst, but never, again, I repeat, never a full-blown fire that caused the overhead sprinkler to engage; but that night was the first.

That was when the world seemed to begin to spin out of control.

During the course of a night, my position was to direct calls, handoff tasks to my team, or reach out to our next levels of support around the world. Meanwhile, I would run conference calls and work on equipment when there wasn't another engineer available. It was at that moment, as my team told me they would try to reconnect when possible, the realization of what my night would become hit me. If I had not been working remotely, our team would not have been able to perform their job. If God had not put me in this new place, we would have dropped the ball, and our company would have been held liable by hundreds of companies that had our support written into their contract.

Through the entire course of 25+ years, my background through the Telecom Industry had led me from one end of support, research, and beyond. My technical background covered all that was possible in the realm of communications; wireline, wireless, optical, and data. If anyone could run our team solo, I was one of the few individuals capable. At this point, it may sound as if I'm bragging, but that couldn't be further from the truth. My point is merely to emphasize that this was more than a coincidence, this was the hand of God at work.

From the moment my team evacuated the building to safety and then tried to regain connectivity from home, it was apparent things would get worse before they would get better. Because of the configuration of our equipment, my team could not get logged back in because of the equipment to connect with was in the office that was on fire; yet mine was not, it became apparent that the role of supporting the world relied on me. Again, the words returned, "If it is God's will, then it shall be done." Eventually, a couple of my engineers would find a workaround that was possible and were able to connect, but it was a far cry from having a full team.

We often joked that it was taboo to use the word "Quiet." I've met other support agencies that had that same thought process. For as soon as someone boasted, "Hey, it sure is quiet tonight," all hell would break loose. As you might expect by now, the night of the fire was as if someone had shouted from the blazing rooftop, "Hey, it sure is quiet." Calls rolled in, and it was all I could do to "Rack-em and stack-em," as we would say. There was no time to worry about hunger or exhaustion, but as the sunrise began to filter through the windows of the shack where I was living, the duration of the night's toll began to weigh on me. As the day shift ER Manager logged in and was briefed about the night's events and why he couldn't come into the office, the expanse of work that had been accomplished in one night began to weigh on my mind. One-by-one, I handed off the jobs to the incoming staff who were slowly getting logged in using the workaround that my team had found through the course of the night. With each greeting, there was not time for bittersweet goodbyes. They had to hit the ground running, so we barely had a chance to say our farewells.

When the last of the handoffs and calls were closed on my end, I stopped and prayed.

This was truly the work of God, "But why," I asked?

"Someday, it will become apparent," was the reply.

From working nights for nearly ten years, I had learned that when you are exhausted and need to stay awake, it was important not to eat. You could drink water or liquids, but once you ate a meal, the game was over; you would have to crash and sleep. So, after my head was able to clear enough to think about what was next, I realized that it was about time to open the Trail for business. Knowing there wasn't time for a nap, I took a shower after putting on a fresh pot of coffee. From that point forward, the day became a blur. Each time I felt my body beginning to weaken, I would lift up a prayer for strength, and each time, the feeling of electricity running through my body would flow through my being; each time there was a renewal of the spirit.

By the end of the day, after two wonderful tours and once the Trail was closed, I returned to the shack. There, I made a meal and waited for my family to arrive. They had made another run back to the previous farm to carry more household goods to our new life. I knew that I couldn't go to sleep and peacefully rest until they arrived. Fighting fatigue beyond belief, it was when the sound of their car



continued on page 31

Religion vs. the Gospel

By Jerry Lewis
McDowell County



It is so easy, and tempting, to be religious and void of the grace of God that leads to a joyful life. In these comparisons, Tim Keller helps us to see the allure of religion and the freedom of a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Take time to examine yourself on each of these. It's a lot to take in--and for many a paradigm shift. When we wander, we wander back into works-oriented salvation--not to grace.

RELIGION: I obey--therefore I'm accepted.
THE GOSPEL: I'm accepted--therefore I obey.

RELIGION: Motivation is based on fear and insecurity.
THE GOSPEL: Motivation is based on grateful joy.

RELIGION: I obey God in order to get things from God.
THE GOSPEL: I obey God to delight and resemble Him.

RELIGION: When circumstances in my life go wrong, I am angry at God or myself, since I believe, like Job's friends that anyone who is good deserves a comfortable life.

THE GOSPEL: When circumstances in my life go wrong, I struggle but I know all my punishment fell on Jesus and that while He may allow this for my training, He will exercise His Fatherly love within my trial.

RELIGION: When I am criticized I am furious or devastated because it is critical that I think of myself as a 'good person'. Threats to that self-image must be destroyed at all costs.

THE GOSPEL: When I am criticized I struggle, but it is not critical for me to think of myself as a 'good person.' My identity is not built on my record or my performance but on God's love for me in Christ. I can take criticism.

RELIGION: My prayer life consists largely of petition and it only heats up when I am in a time of need. My main purpose in prayer is control of the environment.

THE GOSPEL: My prayer life consists of generous stretches of praise and adoration. My main purpose is fellowship with Him.

RELIGION: My self-view swings between two poles. If and when I am living up to my standards, I feel confident, but then I am prone to be proud and unsympathetic to failing people. If and when I am not living up to standards, I feel insecure and inadequate. I'm not confident. I feel like a failure.

THE GOSPEL: My self-view is not based on a view of myself as a moral achiever. In Christ I am simultaneously sinful and yet accepted in Christ. I am so bad He had to die for me and I am so loved He was glad to die for me. This leads me to deeper and deeper humility and confidence at the same time. Neither swaggering nor sniveling.

RELIGION: My identity and self-worth are based mainly on how hard I work. Or how moral I am, and so I must look down on those I perceive as lazy or immoral. I disdain and feel superior to 'the other.'

THE GOSPEL: My identity and self-worth are centered on the one who died for His enemies, who was excluded from the city for me. I am saved by sheer grace. So, I can't look down on those who believe or practice something different from me. Only by grace I am what I am. I've no inner need to win arguments.

RELIGION: Since I look to my own pedigree or performance for my spiritual acceptability, my heart manufactures idols. It may be my talents, my moral record, my personal discipline, my social status, etc. I absolutely have to have them, so they serve as my main hope, meaning, happiness, security, and significance, whatever I may say I believe about God.

THE GOSPEL: I have many good things in my life--family, work, spiritual disciplines, etc. But none of these good things are ultimate things to me. None of them are things I absolutely have to have, so there is a limit to how much anxiety, bitterness, and despondency they can inflict on me when they are threatened and lost.

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

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. John 14:6

pulling up in the drive that I began eating.

Once I went to bed, I didn't get up for another 16 hours.

Why had there been such a challenging end to a previous life? Why had the struggle been so great? In the end, it was as if God was showing me what it was to "suffer need." When we reach the end of our physical life here on earth, we see many of our loved ones face those last few days in extreme pain. As we watch and pray for their relief, we learn that to cross over from this life to the next is not easy.

Jesus was tortured beyond belief, dying a painful death on the cross. His ending was anything but easy. It was as if the whole world had been consumed by fire, and in the end, the veil was torn in two on that day. Unlike certain death, we can trust that when we accept Christ into our lives, we face the end with a promise, that when we pass from this life to the next, we shall live forever more. Yes, to cross that River of Jordan and to reach that far distant shore will be the greatest beginning to an ending we shall know.

"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound, everywhere and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

Yes, although what we might face in our not so distant future may seem overwhelming, we can take comfort in knowing that we are not alone. We may suffer, we may be sated, we may be abased, we may have plenty, but in all things may we find true contentment. For as someone once said, true contentment is to, "Live above your circumstances."

May the challenge you face allow you to seek God in greater affections than ever before.

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

The old jacket still fits, even though it may not be presentable to wear in public; yet, it says more of who I am than one might know. To live above our circumstances is what life should be about, and in the end, always giving thanks to God for all that is.

Be content in all that you have.
Thanks be to God.

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



THE PRESCRIPTION PAD OF BURNSVILLE

"The Service You Deserve from the Neighbors You Trust"

- *We accept all major insurance plans
- *Drive-thru window
- *Easy transfers
- *Delivery service available
- *Over 150 years of retail pharmacy experience
- *Open 7 days a week
- *Locally owned and operated
- *Ask about our "Healthy Kids Program"



HOURS:

M-F 8am-7pm

Sat. 8am-4pm

Sun. 10am-3pm

730 E. Main St. • Burnsville

828-678-3914



HVAC MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

WHY ENROLL IN OUR MAINTENANCE PROGRAM?

- *PREVENT COSTLY REPAIRS AND BREAKDOWNS
- *CORRECTION OF DEVELOPING PROBLEMS
- *LONGER EQUIPMENT LIFESPAN
- *SAVE 10% ON REPAIR PARTS
- *FRONT OF THE LINE SERVICE
- *REDUCE ENERGY USE

STARTING AS LOW AS \$129 OR \$12 MONTHLY

Burleson Plumbing & Heating

141 HIGHLAND AVE
SPRUCE PINE, NC 28777
828-765-4043
BURLESONPLUMBING@GMAIL.COM
BURLESONPLUMBINGNC.COM

YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and spent quality time with friends and family. We had our two college students home for the holiday, and ended up spending two days of our four day weekend without power due to the ice storm. It was a little bit of an adventure, and I did learn how to run my generator, but it certainly gave us a renewed appreciation for electricity, and for the electric workers who spent much of their holiday helping to restore power to thousands of homes in our area. Once our power was restored on Sunday evening, it was off to Raleigh for the legislative session.

Voter ID: Senate Bill 824

This week the state Senate passed S824, Implementation of Voter ID Const. Amendment<<https://www.ncleg.net/Sessions/2017/Bills/Senate/PDF/S824v2.pdf>>, in response to North Carolina voters' wide support of a Constitutional Amendment requiring photo identification to vote. Senate Bill 824 would create a new "Voter Photo ID" that can be obtained for free at local county boards of election. The bill also allows voters to use a wide range of IDs in place of the Voter Photo ID such as NCDMV Driver's license or ID Card, US passport, Military or Veterans ID, Employee ID Cards from a state and or local government entity and several other identification forms. For anyone unable to get a photo ID due to a "reasonable impediment," they would be able to sign an affidavit and still cast a ballot. There would also be exceptions for religious purposes as well as anyone who was affected by a natural disaster within 100 days of the election. In instances where a person has his or her driver's license suspended or revoked, the DMV would be required to send them a special ID card automatically under the bill. I fully expect the bill to pass with very few changes and then sent to the Governor's desk. Since the bill was sponsored and passed with the help of both parties, I am hoping that the Governor will not veto the bill, essentially vetoing the mandate of the 2018 election.

As many of you know, on Election Day, North Carolina voters issued a clear mandate for voter ID by approving a constitutional amendment requiring a photo ID to vote. Despite the fact that the amendment passed with more than 55 percent of the vote, liberal activists are refusing to accept the will of the people, and are actively trying to hijack our democracy by asking liberal judges to cancel the voter ID results.

Here are some ID's that will be acceptable to use if S824 becomes law:

- * NC drivers license.
- * NC special identification card or other form of non-temporary ID issued by the DMV. US passport.
- * NC voter photo identification card.
- * Tribal enrollment card issued by a federally recognized tribe.
- * Tribal enrollment card issued by a tribe recognized by NC under Chapter 71A that is (i) issued in accordance with a process approved by the State Board requiring an application and proof of identity equivalent to the process for approving a college or university identification card, and (ii) signed by an elected official of the tribe.
- * Student identification card issued by a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina, the North Carolina Community College system, or eligible private postsecondary institutions, if approved by the State Board.
- * Employee identification card issued by a state or local government entity, including a charter school, if approved by the State Board.
- * Drivers license or special identification card issued by another state, D.C., or a territory or commonwealth of the US, only if the voter's voter registration was within 90 days of the election.

Hurricane Relief: Senate Bill 823

The N.C. Senate on Wednesday unanimously passed legislation continuing the ongoing Hurricane Florence recovery efforts by appropriating almost \$300 million more from the Hurricane Florence Disaster Recovery Fund, with much of that money going to help North Carolina farmers.

Senate Bill 823>, sponsored by Sens. Harry Brown (R-Onslow) and Brent Jackson (R-Sampson), appropriates \$299,800,000 from the Hurricane Florence Disaster Recovery Fund, and \$240 million of that will go towards aiding North Carolina farmers struggling to recover in the wake of Hurricane Florence. Agricultural losses in North Carolina were expected to top \$1.1 billion. The rest of the money will be appropriated as follows: \$23,500,000 to repair and renovate K-12 public school facilities- \$18,500,000 to match federal funding to mitigate or remediate coastal storm damage to beaches and dune systems-\$10,000,000 to provide assistance to commercial fishing assistance-\$5,000,000 to provide loans to small businesses affected by Hurricane Florence-\$1,500,000 to repair or replace food, food nutrition equipment and food nutrition supplies at school facilities \$1,000,000 to replace equipment at courthouses and cover cost of additional court sessions due to closures during Hurricane Florence-\$250,000 to match federal funding to remove marine debris-\$50,000 to the Wildlife Resources Commission to study and make recommendations on ways to address the problem of abandoned and derelict vessels in waters of the state. The bill also revises and coordinates the auditing and reporting requirements for Hurricane Florence as well as Hurricane Matthew, putting it under the authority of the Office of Recovery and Resiliency, established in the wake of Hurricane Florence.

After this latest appropriation, almost \$95 million remains in the Hurricane Florence Disaster Recovery Fund.

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 Senate District 46



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

NC Senate District 47



Sen. Ralph Hise
Ralph.Hise@ncleg.net
919-733-3460

On Election Day, November 6, 2018, over 55 percent of North Carolinians passed a constitutional amendment titled Require Photo ID To Vote. In my Senate district, the six-county average of approval for Voter ID was over 66 percent, with over 70 percent of voters approving in McDowell, Mitchell, and Rutherford counties, over 60 percent approving in Polk and Yancey counties, and nearly 56 percent approving in Madison

County.

In late November, the NC General Assembly returned to Raleigh to finish up the work of the 2018 short session. This included enacting enabling legislation for the Voter ID constitutional amendment approved by voters. Three senators, two Republicans and one Democrat, sponsored and filed Senate Bill 824 – Implementation of Voter ID Const. Amendment. The bill was discussed, debated, and amended by both Senate and House Republicans and Democrats as it worked its way through the legislative process. The 21-page bill covered a range of issues related to Voter ID, including showing of IDs for certain first-time voters; approval of student and employee ID cards for voting identification; exceptions based on religious objection, reasonable impediment, and natural disaster; rules regarding mail-in absentee ballots; voter education; and notice that fraudulent or false declarations are a Class I felony.

Section 1.2 of the bill specifically sets forth the acceptable forms of photo identification for voting identification:

- * Any of the following that contains a photograph of the voter and is valid and unexpired, or has been expired for one year or less:
 - * NC driver's license.
 - * NC special identification card or other form of non-temporary ID issued by the DMV.
 - * US passport.
 - * NC voter photo identification card.
 - * Tribal enrollment card issued by a state or federal recognized tribe.
 - * Student identification card issued by a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina, a community college, or eligible private postsecondary institutions, if approved by the State Board.
 - * Employee identification card issued by a state or local government entity, including a charter school, if approved by the State Board.
 - * Driver's license or special identification card issued by another state, D.C., or a territory or commonwealth of the US, only if the voter's voter registration was within 90 days of the election.
- * Any of the following that contain a photograph of the voter, regardless of whether the card contains an expiration or issuance date:
 - * US military identification card.
 - * Veterans Identification Card issued by the US Department of Veterans Affairs for use at Veterans Administration medical facilities.
 - * For voters over the age of 65, any of the identification cards above that bear a date of expiration that was not expired on the day that the voter reached the age of 65.

For any election held before January 1, 2021, any approved student identification card or employee identification card that does not contain an expiration date would be deemed an acceptable form of photo identification.

Senate Bill 824 – Implementation of Voter ID Const. Amendment was ratified and presented to the Governor on December 6. Despite the fact that a majority of North Carolinians passed a constitutional amendment requiring voter ID and that the implementing legislation was sponsored by a Democratic senator, along with significant bipartisan input, Gov. Roy Cooper ignored the wishes of the majority of his constituents and vetoed the legislation on December 14. Subsequent to the Senate and House overriding the Governor's veto, the bill was enacted into session law on December 19. However, shortly thereafter, the left-wing Southern Coalition for Social Justice and the North Carolina NAACP filed lawsuits against the legislation. Sue 'til blue is now the standard tactic for liberal groups who don't get their way.

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.

A "sinister," "cynical" New Year

Gov. Roy Cooper saw fit to label 55% of North Carolinians as "sinister" and "cynical" as he vetoed voter ID legislation on Dec. 14. The House and Senate met this week to override Gov. Cooper's ill-advised veto of Senate Bill 824, which will put our state in compliance with our constitutionally-mandated voter ID. The people spoke in November, and we delivered.

On Friday, Gov. Cooper also vetoed a bill that would allow liability coverage for Haywood County School buses that must briefly travel out of state. I worked with the Haywood County Schools Superintendent, the Attorney General's Office, the Dept. of Public Instruction and others for months to create that language.

The General Assembly is tentatively planning to meet on Dec. 27 to override the governor's additional vetoes. Whenever we meet, I will vote to allow the liability coverage Haywood County Schools wanted and the governor denied.

Happy New Year to you, too, Gov. Cooper.

Wasting disease hits Tennessee

The following is a press release from the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission.

With the preliminary detection of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in white-tailed deer in western Tennessee, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission reminds deer hunters of a new rule that prohibits the importation of whole deer carcasses and restricts the importation of specific carcass parts from anywhere outside of North Carolina.

The new rule, which was implemented for the 2018-19 deer hunting season, is an effort on the Commission's part to prevent the spread of CWD into the state. CWD is a transmissible, always fatal, neurological disease that affects deer and other cervids such as elk, moose and reindeer/caribou.

The rule states that anyone transporting cervid carcass parts into North Carolina must follow processing and packaging regulations, which only allow the importation of:

- Meat that has been boned out such that no pieces or fragments of bone remain;
- Caped hides with no part of the skull or spinal column attached;
- Antlers, antlers attached to cleaned skull plates, or cleaned skulls free from meat, or brain tissue;
- Cleaned lower jawbone(s) with teeth or cleaned teeth; or
- Finished taxidermy products and tanned hides.

Additionally, all carcass part(s) or container of cervid meat or carcass parts must be labeled or identified with the:

- Name and address of individual importing carcass parts;
- State, Canadian province, or foreign country of origin;
- Date the cervid was killed; and
- Hunter's license number, permit number, or equivalent identification from the state, Canadian province, or foreign country of origin.

These new restrictions aim to prevent the infectious agent of CWD from contaminating new environments by way of disposal of carcass tissues, particularly those of the brain and spine, as CWD contaminants can persist in the soil for years.

On Friday, officials with the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) announced they were enacting their Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan, following the preliminary positive detections of CWD in white-tailed deer in Hardeman and Fayette counties, which border the Mississippi state line. TWRA biologists are testing additional deer and are trying to contact the hunters who harvested the infected deer.

Out of concern for the serious effects CWD could have on North Carolina's deer herd, the Commission developed a Chronic Wasting Disease Response Plan in 2002, with subsequent revisions over the years to respond to the disease's ever-growing spread. The plan identifies and guides the agency's initial short-term (approximately one year) efforts if CWD is detected in the state's deer herd, or if CWD is detected in deer within 30 miles of its borders. Agency biologists also conduct statewide sampling of deer every year and attempt to sample all deer that show signs of the disease or die of unknown causes.

With Tennessee's preliminary detection of CWD within its borders, two states bordering North Carolina will have CWD in their deer herds. In Virginia, Shenandoah and Frederick counties, which border West Virginia, have confirmed cases of CWD.

About Chronic Wasting Disease

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) disease in deer, elk, moose and reindeer/caribou and is always fatal. The source of the disease is an abnormal prion (a form of protein) that collects in the animal's brain cells. These brain cells eventually burst, leaving behind microscopic empty spaces in the brain matter that give it a "spongy" look. As this occurs, it often causes behavior changes such as decreased interactions with other animals, listlessness, lowering of the head, a blank facial expression, and walking in set patterns.

CWD has no known impacts to the health of humans or livestock. However, the Commission recommends people do NOT eat:

- Meat from a deer that looks sick
- Any of the following organs: brain, eyes, spinal cord, spleen, tonsils and lymph nodes*
- Any meat from an animal that tests positive for the disease

*Normal field dressing coupled with boning out a carcass will remove most (if not all) of these body parts. Cutting away all fatty tissue will remove remaining lymph nodes.

How To Prep a Deer (Cape and Skull Plate) for Importation to NC

To help hunters better understand how to comply with new regulations, the Commission has posted a video "Preparing a Harvested Deer for Importation to NC," on its YouTube Channel, which features a demonstration by Taxidermist D. Price of Outback Taxidermy on preparation of a deer carcass for importation into the state.

For more information about CWD, visit the Commission's CWD web page.

Yancey community tops snow totals nationwide

Busick in Yancey County got 34 inches of snow as part of the recent Winter storm.

The community of 2,221 people, located in South Toe, topped the nation in total snowfall.

Happy New Year

From my family to yours, I hope you have a happy new year.

I look forward to working for you in the upcoming year.



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



A Year of Accomplishments

This year has been an eventful one in the United States Senate. We've gotten a lot done for North Carolina, which weathered devastating natural disasters, including Hurricane Florence. We've worked to strengthen our national defenses and fought for our men and women in uniform. And as a nation, we honored the legacies of some incredible American leaders we lost this year.

Forefront in most folk's minds are the natural disasters that tore through our state. Hurricanes Florence and Michael, and tornadoes in Guilford and Rockingham counties, left untold damage in their wake. They cost many their livelihoods, and some their loved ones. Senator Tillis and I, along with our colleagues in the House and Governor Cooper, have been hard at work securing vital recovery funding to help families, individuals, and businesses get back on their feet as soon as possible. Rest assured we will continue our work until the job is done.

I'm proud to have worked on several fronts this year to ensure America has an effective national defense and intelligence community. In January, Congress reauthorized essential intelligence tools to keep Americans safe. In May, we confirmed the first female head of the CIA, Gina Haspel. In June, the president signed the 2019 defense spending bill into law, securing nearly \$370 billion for North Carolina installations like Fort Bragg, Camp Lejeune, Cherry Point, and others.

America and North Carolina also experienced its fair share of loss. We said goodbye to great Americans in North Carolina and America's pastor, Reverend Billy Graham, Navy war hero, POW, and Arizona Senator John McCain, and the 41st President of the United States, George H.W. Bush. The world came to know all of these leaders for their kindness, generosity of spirit, and devotion to causes bigger than themselves. We could all stand to learn from their shining examples, and we are forever in their debt.

As we move into a new year, I am confident that Congress will continue fighting on behalf of the American people. I'm lucky to have such a great partner in the Senate in Thom Tillis and in the North Carolina delegation in the House of Representatives. It's truly an honor to serve our great state in Congress. Thank you and God bless.

Resolve to be a Witness in 2019

By Rev. John B. Sorensen

What are your resolutions for 2019? Would you like to share the Gospel with someone this year? Even if you've never prayed with someone to receive the gift of eternal life, this year is the perfect time to start.

New years are for new beginnings. This is the time when people evaluate their lives – physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. We can show them that the ultimate way to begin again is through a new life in Jesus Christ. But we can't accomplish that goal by remaining silent.

Every day, we hold conversations with people, but we often avoid the subject that matters most – that we can spend eternity with God. Why? Fear. If the idea of witnessing to someone is scary, don't worry. You are not alone. Fear is the number one reason why many Christians don't share their faith with others. But it doesn't have to be.

Start with prayer. Nothing we do for the Kingdom of God is effective without the backing of prayer. Make a list of ten people you would like to see come to Christ this year, and start praying for them . . . every day. Pray that God will open doors for you to share the Gospel with them and with others you encounter.

Look for opportunities. Keep your eyes and ears open. Genuinely listen to others as they talk and share their struggles. You will begin to see opportunities to share your faith with ordinary people wherever you go.

Remember your story. How did you first come to know Christ? How has your life changed? Your story is powerful. Share it. People are often open to hearing about how others have overcome the struggles in their lives. This is a perfect opportunity to share what Christ has done for you through your personal testimony.

Offer an invitation. Don't just share your story and wish them luck. Help them take the next step. Ask if they would like to pray to receive the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Invite them to a service or small group at your church. Offer to study the Bible together at a coffee shop or in the privacy of your home.

Keep praying. Most of us didn't become a follower of Jesus overnight. If you are able to, continue to follow up with the people you meet as they progress on their spiritual journey. Pray before and after every encounter. Pray for them each day. Continue to pray for them even after they accept Christ.

The best gift we could give anyone this year is the gift of a new beginning in Jesus Christ. So if you haven't done so already, resolve to share your faith with someone in 2019. May God bless you as you do!

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

Fear thou not; for I [am] with thee: be not dismayed; for I [am] thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Isaiah 41:10



The Gospel and Christmas

By Dr. Tom Walker
McDowell County



Christmas is a wonderful time of the year. It goes far deeper than presents, evergreen trees, bells, tinsel, singing and host of other things. The fact of the matter is the very core of Christmas, the heart of Christmas is that Jesus came into this world that He might die in the place of sinners. By doing that Christ made salvation possible to all men.

The Gospel of Christ primarily has to do with the death, the burial and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. At the same time, there would have been no death, burial and resurrection if it were not for Christ's virgin birth.

It should be recognized that Mary the Mother of Jesus was a virgin. Some modern translations translate virgin as a "young woman." That does not go far enough. Mary was a virgin for she had not known a man in an intimate, physical way. When she was told she would give birth to Christ she asked the messenger, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" That was Mary's way of declaring she was a virgin.

Isaiah 7:14 says, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Luke 1:27 says, "To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary."

The Gospel of Christ is dependent upon the virgin birth of Christ to provide the One who could be the source of the "good news." In the virgin birth, the Ancient of Days became a babe in Bethlehem. He who thunders in the heavens becomes an infant crying in a cradle. He who made all flesh became clothed with flesh. The Mighty God became a helpless infant. God and man became one in the body of Jesus the Christ. This incarnation is a miracle and a marvel.

Never forget the virgin birth is essential to have a Savior for mankind. Why is the virgin birth necessary?

It Is Necessary For Jesus to Be God

If you examine Isa. 9:6 Jesus is called, "Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace." When Micah speaks of the Messiah in Micah 5:2 he described Him as one "whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting." No mortal human being could measure up to all that I have mentioned in this paragraph. Jesus Christ, the Messiah is more than mortal. If Jesus were not the virgin born Son of God, He could not be the Messiah of Israel, or the Savior of all who would believe.

It Is Necessary For Jesus' Teachings To Be Justified

Jesus said in John 8:42, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me." In John 8:28 the Savior declares, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." Again, Christ said in John 6:32, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven."

No one but Jesus could make those claims for they were all true. The Jews understood Him in those statements to be claiming equality with God. Jesus was laying a claim to deity. If He were not virgin born, Christ could not have rightfully and truthfully made those claims.

It Is Necessary For Jesus To Be Heir To The Throne Of David

Notice what the angel Gabriel said to Mary in Luke 1:32-33, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Jesus is the rightful heir to the throne of David. Mary was a descendent of King David through her father Heli. If Jesus had been the biological son of Joseph, He could not have been a rightful heir to the throne of David, since Joseph descended from a man named Coniah. That would legally have kept him from the throne. Jer. 22:30 says, "Thus saith the Lord, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah."

It Is Necessary For The Reliability Of The Scriptures

When you read Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23 it is clear that a virgin would bear a son named Immanuel. If Christ was not conceived of a virgin mother, without a human father, the testimony of the Bible would not be true, and the reliability of the Scriptures could be questioned. Since it did happen as prophecy said it would the Bible is proven to be inspired and reliable. It is completely accurate in all its states.

It Is Necessary If Jesus Was To Atone For Sin By His Own Death

No man could make an eternally, effective sacrifice for the sins of mankind. All people have sinned (Romans 3:23) and all of us by nature are the children of wrath (Eph. 2). Jesus came and lived a sinless life through His divine nature filling the physical body in which He inhabited. Christ offered Himself to God as a lamb without spot or blemish (1 Peter 1:19 and Hebrews 7:25). The sinless life and virgin birth of Christ made it possible for the Sinless One to become our personal Savior.

It is not enough for you to realize intellectually that Christ was born of a virgin. To be ready to go to Heaven when you die or when the Lord comes, you must personally receive Christ as your Savior. Christ can come to live in your heart today and every day.

Have you knowing you are a sinner receive Him as your Savior. John 1:12 declares, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" KJV

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



Jamie Miller, CPA

Jamie M. Miller, CPA, PLLC

1136 Greenwood Road
Spruce Pine, NC 28777

phone: 828.765.4400
fax: 828.765.4880

2301 Rutherford Road
Marion, NC 28752

phone: 828.652.6777
fax: 828.652.6755



jamie@highcountrycpa.com
www.highcountrycpa.com

Marlene's Meditations

Wisdom Found

By Marlene Houk
Burke County

Proverbs 4:7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.

I stared at my new grandbaby, imprinting her image on my heart. Two months later, her personality is beginning to shine through and her interaction with family offers endless delight. Her body language, habits, and desires rise to the top of my priorities, and more time with her becomes priceless.

In much the same way, I am drawn to the Creator of my soul. His imprint on my heart emerges as top priority, and our relationship a constant, daily, interaction. To discover the facets of my relationship with Jesus Christ and my Father, and to spend more time with Him remains at the front of my mind. The Bible, much like texts and face-to-face video, fills the void until I can be in my Savior's presence.

Like noticing a newborn's uniqueness, one startling and clear observation from studying the Bible rises to the surface. The people in its ancient pages share some obvious similarities to us today. Clearly, biblical characters seem to match modern conflicts and drama in their emotions, reactions and circumstances. Hatred, deep love, jealousy, anger, envy, and determination look and act the same way as they have for thousands of years. Bible roles that include motherhood, fatherhood, extended family, leadership, husband and wife, and a myriad of other relationships operate in any millennia with matching vocabulary. And life repeats many of the same circumstances such as birth, death, miracles, and tragedies, whether the year is 3 BC or 2018 AD.

God created mankind with skills and abilities to experience a myriad of cultures, industrial advancements, and advances in all facets of life. But, He keeps our emotions, reactions, roles, and relationships within the same realm of possibilities as in Adam and Eve, the first humans. Thus, God enables us to study their stories, glean wisdom. This standardization of emotions, roles, circumstances, and thinking simplifies the processes of realizing the messages from the Bible. Their stunning victories and despairing defeats speak to us, and we understand their wisdom more quickly because we have experienced the same emotions, roles, and circumstances. Coming from the same viewpoint of life shortens the words needed to help us assimilate the Bible's messages.

Recently, a young woman asked on Facebook, "What is the best advice you can give?" My answer (adapted for this article) hopefully reflects how God created mankind with a sameness that facilitates our growth in grace and knowledge. (2 Peter 3:18) The acrostic is WISDOM.

W-I-S-D-O-M

W-Who in the Bible matches your need or challenge? Find him or her and listen to their messages.
Romans 15:4

I-Incorporate biblical concepts into all facets of life. This helps us to prepare for the storms.
Colossians 3:4

S-See the bigger picture. As a Christian, our lives are exquisitely detailed by our Redeemer, so relax and release control.
Phil 1:6, Jeremiah 29:11, 2 Samuel 22:33, Colossians 3:3, etc.

D-Don't allow emotions to rule the expression of your intellect and spiritual gifts. When we focus on God, He rules the expression of our intellect and our spiritual gifts. 2 Chronicles 20:12, Philippians 2:5

O-Observe the Lord's working in our lives. Focus is then transferred from ourselves to God. Our minds prepare to receive His answer, and our eyes open to biblical thinking. Ask yourself: What is the Lord teaching me about Himself through my life experiences? Proverbs 3:6

M-Memorize the Bible and teach your children to do the same. The Holy Spirit then has a foundation to use in His capacity as Teacher and Comforter. Joshua 1:8

After studying Bible women for ten years, I realize that the messages of all biblical characters offer spiritual richness and depth. I can relate to similar circumstances. This ability to identify with them enhances the process for acquiring God's wisdom. Our emotions, interests, abilities, and skills point us to God, and He designs the very fabric of our lives to show Himself to us.

When pictures of my granddaughter come through my text, my world stops on its axis as I enlarge the picture, save it to my album, and adore her tiny cherubic face. When we pursue the God who places us in the palms of His hands, and engraves the names of His chosen there; when we stop everything we're doing to dwell on His working in our lives, and when we place Him as our top priority, that is W-I-S-D-O-M!

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



The hospice you choose makes a difference.
Choose the one with:

- local staff
- two hospice inpatient units
- palliative care in all settings
- grief counseling for any adult
- Kids Path™
- Camp Erin



Serving Polk, Henderson, Rutherford, and McDowell in NC and
Cherokee, Greenville and Spartanburg in SC
(828) 245-0095 NC (864) 457-9100 SC (800) 218-CARE (2273)

New black
color available



New!

Toyostove
Laser L-730
Vented

OIL HEATERS
40,000 BTU - heats
up to 2,000 sq. ft.!



Sales, Service
and Installation

Peoples
FURNITURE COMPANY

274 OAK AVENUE • SPRUCE PINE, NORTH CAROLINA 28777
PHONE (828) 765-5557 • FAX (828) 765-5558
www.peoples-furniture.com

Dear Dave,

My mom is 75, and I'm the executor of her estate. She has \$500,000 in retirement accounts, and the only debt she has is around \$70,000 on her mortgage. Most of her money is in the stock market, with only \$20,000 in a money market account, and this worries me. She lives well within her means, so am I wrong to be concerned? Also, do you think she should go ahead and pay off her mortgage? Keith



Dear Keith,

Yes, I would recommend she go ahead and pay off the mortgage. If she can do that at age 75, and still have \$430,000 left, that's the way to go.

Now, being in the stock market at her age sounds like a shock to you. I don't think it's a bad thing at all. It's not what the typical financial planner tells you to do. For the most part, they'll tell you to get super conservative with your money as you get older. But from what you've said, she's not going to use this money. She's going to use the income from this money. So, the money's going to be left alone. If she's in good mutual funds, and not single stocks, I'm not worried about her.

Let's pay off the mortgage, and then she can start taking her income off the remainder. With the house payment out of the way, she won't need as much in terms of income, because she won't be sending money to the bank to pay the note on the house anymore. I'm comfortable with that. I'm 58, and I'm 100 percent into stocks through mutual funds. I don't have anything else, and I really don't ever plan on changing that!—Dave

Dear Dave,

What happens to my Roth 401(k) when I change jobs and go to a company that doesn't offer this type of investment savings account? How should you proceed in this situation? Jamie

Dear Jamie,

Anytime you leave one company for another, you should always roll your 401(k) from your former employer into an IRA (Individual Retirement Account). If it's a traditional IRA, you roll it to a traditional IRA. If it's a Roth IRA, you roll it to a Roth IRA. You would choose your own mutual funds, and you would manage your own accounts, with the help of a financial advisor of your choosing.

When it comes to choosing a financial advisor, my advice is to find someone with the heart of a teacher. A good financial advisor will help you make informed decisions about your money, and they will explain all aspects of your investments until you fully understand everything. In short, a quality advisor will never encourage you to invest in something you don't understand.

Also, look for someone with the ability to assess your overall retirement picture. You need someone who will help you map out a complete retirement plan, and your advisor should be able to explain the big picture and provide a comprehensive, easy-to-understand strategy for achieving your retirement goals.—Dave

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

Making The Most Of Your Opportunities In This New Year

By Pastor Steve Williams
Mitchell County



Howdy Folks, and a Happy New Year. All of us could say we have missed opportunities in our life last year. It might have been a good buy on a car, house, or some investment. True Story: Some years ago, at a resort area along the East Coast, a small community was having an open town meeting about some financial problems that they were facing. Among the two dozen or so people was one man, no one seemed to know who he was. They thought he was apparently visiting in that area and had just dropped in on the meeting. He started to make a comment on various projects as they were considered, but he was quickly interrupted; so, for the rest of the time, he kept quiet and still, and he left early. Just as he went out someone arriving late came in, & said breathlessly, "What was he doing here? Is he going to help us?" The rest of them said, "Who are you talking about? Who was that man?" The person who had just arrived said, "You mean you don't know? That was John D. Rockefeller. His yacht is in our harbor. Didn't you get his help? In despair someone said, "No, we didn't get his help; we didn't know who he was!" What a missed opportunity.

Have you ever wanted to kick yourself because you missed a golden opportunity? As Christians God is allowing us to enter into a New Year and I believe we need to take advantage of every opportunity that He gives us! Think about it. How many times did we miss opportunities to make a Positive Difference in Someone's Life, or to be a Blessing to Someone Who's Hurting? How many opportunities did we miss to Witness to a Lost Friend? How many missed opportunities to minister to our spouse or Children because we were too preoccupied? Many of us missed an opportunity to make an eternal difference in a person's life because we failed to seize the moment. Has an opportunity ever knocked on your door & you were so caught up in other things that it slipped through your fingers? I'm convinced that it has happened to all of us! But I pray that it will stop, and that we would wake up to the opportunities that will show up in our lives this coming year. Andy Stanley made the statement in his book "Visioneering," "We don't need to pray for more Miracles, we just need to be more sensitive to the opportunities that God brings our way." AMEN! Why is it that some people seem to take advantage of the opportunities that come their way, while others allow them to pass them by? It's easy to say, "Well, they were just lucky." I don't think luck has anything to do with it, they were just more sensitive to the opportunity God gave them! I'll never forget the story about the shoe salesman that went to Africa. He was there two weeks & he wrote his company back a letter saying, "Please bring me Home, nobody wears shoes over here." They sent another salesman in his place and in a couple of weeks, he sent a letter back to the company saying, "Please send all the shoes you can, because nobody wears shoes here....."

We must realize that we have the power to be a blessing in someone's life even today! This coming year you will have opportunities showing up all around you, take advantage of them— don't wait. So many people are waiting on the big thing to come around to do. Other people say I'm waiting on God to show me something, while they are already surrounded by so many needs of others. Don't wait for someone else to be a blessing! You be a blessing. Just be faithful in little things that God puts in your life. Remember little is much when God is in it. Building a great life for Christ is like building a house, you build it one block at a time. Touch a life today, tomorrow and the next day, and the next. The Bible says

in Ephesians 5:16-17 "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." I believe God's will is for us to take advantage of the opportunities He gives us each day. Who will you touch in this coming year?

Words of Wisdom for the New Year

- No matter what your past, your future is spotless. N/A
- Most successes are built on failures. N/A
- Obstacles are those things you see when you take your eyes off of God. N/A
- There's a place for people with no problems, it's called a cemetery. N/A
- Be a turtle: he makes progress when he sticks his neck out. N/A
- Start by doing the necessary, then what's possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible. N/A

Something to think about:

God wants to be a part of every little bitty, teeny tiny, itsy bitsy, thing in your day. But the question is will we let Him?

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



Get Real Auto-Home-Life

A Licensed Agency for



You cover the endzone. We'll cover everything else.

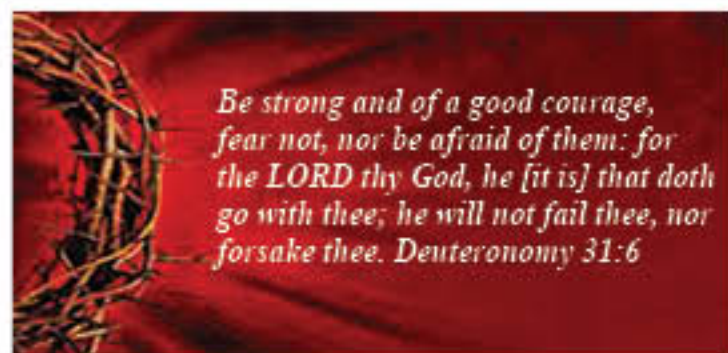
It takes a real team effort to protect what counts. That's why Farm Bureau Insurance has a home team of local agents ready to provide all the coverage you need, whether it's Auto, Life, or Health. Get Real Insurance. Get Farm Bureau Insurance.

Mitchell Co. Farm Bureau

157 Skyline Circle
Spruce Pine, NC 28777

Brett Cloer
Chris Johnson
Chasity Pitman

www.ncfbins.com | 828-765-9678
Bakersville, NC (828)688-3745



Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he [it is] that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Deuteronomy 31:6

JUST ONE REQUEST

Dear Master for this coming year
 Another year I enter
 Its history unknown;
 Oh, how my feet would tremble
 To tread its paths alone!
 But I have heard a whisper,
 I know I shall be blest;
 "My presence shall go with thee,
 And I will give thee rest."
 What will the New Year bring me?
 I may not, must not know;
 Will it be love and rapture,
 Or loneliness and woe?
 Hush! Hush! I hear His whisper;
 I surely shall be blest;
 "My presence shall go with thee,
 And I will give thee rest."
 --Unknown Author

HIS UNFAILING PRESENCE

Just one request I bring:
 I do not pray for happiness,
 Or any earthly thing—
 I do not ask to understand
 The way Thou leadest me,
 But this I ask: Teach me to do
 The thing that pleaseth Thee.
 I want to know Thy guiding voice,
 To walk with Thee each day.
 Dear Master make me swift to
 hear
 And ready to obey.
 And thus the year I now begin
 A happy year will be—
 If I am seeking just to do
 The thing that pleaseth Thee.
 --Unknown Author

EDITOR'S NOTE: Information from Baptist Press was included in this article, which has been updated from a blog post that first appeared on brianupshaw.com.

Brian Upshaw is the Disciple Making Coordinator for N C Baptist Convention in Cary, NC. As a pastor, I am passionate about Sunday School and small groups. My passion for Sunday School and small groups goes back to my childhood, specifically to a lady named Sue Creech. Most people reading this article do not know Mrs. Sue, but she is a lady that God used to transform... very September, churches across the state of North Carolina pause to reflect on, celebrate and sacrificially give to the North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO). The NCMO is an annual offering that provides support for the ministries of Baptists on Mission also known as N.C...



START SOMETHING NEW

SALES EVENT



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

2019 Chrysler Pacifica Touring L Uncompromised Versatility!



2019 Ram 1500's 15 to choose from- Motor Trend of the Year!



2018 Ram 2500 Laramie Mega Cab 4x4 Sport Group, Cummins & More



2019 Jeep Cherokee's 14 to choose from- The New Cherokee Leads the Way!



2019 Jeep Wrangler's Motor Trend SUV of the Year!



2018 Ram 3500 Crew 4x4 6 to choose from, All types of upfits



2018 Ram 2500 Tradesman Crew 4x4 Cummins, 7 to choose from



2018 Ram 3500 Crew 4x4 Tradesman We will upfit it for you.



BUCHANAN & YOUNG

BURNSVILLE | NORTH CAROLINA



CHRYSLER DODGE Jeep RAM

www.buchanananyoung.com

"Serving WNC For Over 50 Years"

828-682-2194 East Main Street, Burnsville, N.C. 28714



Crossword

ACROSS

1 seeing _____ tree afar off
having leaves (1,3) (Mark 11:13)
5 _____ of clean and unclean ani-
mals, of birds and of all creatures
(Gen 7:7)
9 projectile (Job 41:26)
13 _____ them farewell, saying,
I must by all means keep (Acts
18:21) KJV
14 Sell me some property for a
burial _____ here (Gen 23:4)
15 one of the minor prophets
16 Take an _____ of manna and
keep it for the generations to
come (Ex 16:32)
17 The God of peace be with you
all. _____ (Rom 15:33)
18 If anyone worships the beast
and his _____ and receives his mark
(Rev 14:9)
19 the _____, the rat, any kind of
great lizard (Lev 11:29)
21 made the hearts of the people
_____ with fear (Josh 14:8)
23 shine before men, that they
may _____ your good deeds (Matt
5:16)
24 Second son of Noah
(Gen 7:13)
25 They _____ around me like bees
(Ps 118:12)
27 To the holy and faithful broth-
ers in Christ at _____ (Col 1:2)
31 were comforted in your com-
fort: _____, and exceedingly (2 Cor
7:13) (KJV)
33 a people for himself, and to
make _____ for himself (1,4) (2
Sam 7:23)
34 Then shall the _____ man leap as
an hart (Isaiah 35:6)
37 They built a siege _____ up to
the city (2 Sam 20:15)
40 two stones the way a _____ cut-
ter engraves a seal (Exod 28:11)
41 so that you may be able to _____
what is best (Phil 1:10)
44 many believed in _____ name,
when they saw the miracles (John
2:23)
45 And _____ said to Jacob, Feed
me, I pray thee (Gen 25:30) KJV
47 silver in two bags, with two
_____ of clothing (2 Kings 5:23)
48 put an end to sin, to _____ for
wickedness (Dan 9:24)
50 LORD said to Moses, "Stretch
out your hand over the _____ (Ex
14:26)
52 wasteland as his home, the salt
flats as his _____ (Job 39:6)
54 Manasseh and Ephraim were
born to Joseph by _____ (Gen
46:20)
58 figs, which are so _____ they
cannot be eaten (Jer 24:8)
59 they shoot out the _____, they
shake the head (Ps 22:7)
60 the wall will cry out, and the
beams of the woodwork will _____
it (Hab 2:11)
61 a lamp unto my feet, and
_____ unto my path (1,5) (Ps
119:105) KJV
65 Blow the trumpet in Zion;

sound the _____ on my holy hill
(Joel 2:1)
67 son of Seth (Gen 4:26) KJV
69 First zookeeper
70 the creation itself will be lib-
erated from its bondage to _____
(Rom 8:21)
71 judgment is _____ acceptable
to the LORD than sacrifice (Prov
21:3)
72 for wide is the _____, and
broad is the way (Matt 7:13)
73 all the trees of _____, that
were in the garden of God (Ezek
31:9)
74 though they _____ like
crimson, they shall be as wool
(2,3) (Isa 1:18) KJV
75 there shall come forth a rod
out of the _____ of Jesse (Isaiah
11:1)

DOWN

1 hurling stones and shooting
arrows out of _____ (1,3) (1
Chr 12:2)
2 the _____ thereof was heard in
Pharaoh's house (Gen 45:16)
3 The man who was healed had
no _____ who it was (John 5:13)
4 Zipporah gave birth to a son,
and Moses named him _____ (Ex
2:22)
5 Speak to one another with _____
hymns and spiritual songs (Eph
5:19)
6 Her _____ is to be devoted to the
Lord (1 Cor 7:34)
7 units, parts, points
8 O LORD, _____ them in our
day, in our time make them
known (Hab 3:2)
9 when Isaac was old, and his
eyes were _____ (Gen 27:1)
10 For the LORD has _____
against his people (1,4) (Mic
6:2)
11 All day long the battle _____,
and the king of Israel (2 Chr
18:34)
12 Thou art my beloved Son;
in _____ I am well pleased (Luke
3:22) KJV
15 and thou shalt make the _____
of fine linen (Exod 28:39) (KJV)
20 I mean not that other men
be _____, and ye burdened (2 Cor
8:13) (KJV)
22 in the morning there was a
_____ of dew around the camp (Ex
16:13)
26 deface (Job 30:13) (KJV)
27 Like _____ full of birds, their
houses are full of deceit (Jer
5:27)
28 for your little _____, and for
your wives (Gen 45:19)
29 Jesus cried out in a loud
voice, "Eloi, Eloi, _____ sabach-
thani?" (Mark 15:34)
30 Salvation is found in no one
_____, for there is no other name
(Acts 4:12)
32 "you are worried and _____
about many things (Luke 10:41)
35 Be wise in the way you _____
toward outsiders (Col 4:5)



COPYRIGHT 2018

BIBLEWORDGAMES.COM

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

36 thrust him into a net and he
wanders into its _____ (Job 18:8)
38 consciences have been
seared as with _____ iron.
(1,3) (1 Tim 4:2)
39 Sir, your _____ has earned ten
more (Luke 19:16)
42 Abraham's son (Matt 1:2)
43 His name was _____ and his
wife's name was Abigail (1 Sam
25:3)
46 they decided to _____ the
money to buy the potter's field
(Matt 27:6-7)
49 who proclaim peace, who
bring good _____ (Isa 52:7)
51 The last _____ that shall
be destroyed is death (1 Cor
15:26)
53 whosoever shall exalt him-
self shall be _____ (Matt 23:12)
KJV
54 What _____ thee, O thou sea,
that thou fleddest? (Ps 114:5)
KJV
55 and keep some _____ between

the herds (Gen 32:16)
56 Your decrees are the _____ of
my song (Ps 119:54)
57 _____ your father and your
mother (Exodus 20:12)
59 ye lawyers! for ye _____ men
with burdens (Luke 11:46) (KJV)
62 "I'll send you a young _____
from my flock," he said (Gen
38:17)
63 either he will _____ the one,
and love the other (Luke 16:13)
64 Large crowds followed him,
and he healed _____ there (Matt
19:2)
66 Peter, however, got up and
_____ to the tomb (Luke 24:12)
68 King Solomom's mines had a
great deal of this

Solution on page 14



The Beauty of Brokenness

By Joyce Meyer

There's a story about a little boy who was very poor and needed shoes. He was standing in front of a shoe store, barefoot and shivering with cold. A woman approached him and asked him why he was standing there, looking through the window. He told her, "Well, ma'am, I was asking God to give me a pair of shoes."

The woman took the boy into the store, washed his dirty, bare feet and put new socks and shoes on them. The boy was so touched by her compassion that he asked her, "Ma'am, are you God's wife?" He assumed if she showed him that kind of love, she must be related to God.

This story is one of the best examples of what it means to walk in love. And our goal as Christians is to show God's love so people see Jesus shining through us. It Starts with Communion

Matthew 26:26 (ESV) says, "Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body.'" It's interesting to see here that Jesus blessed the bread, broke it, and then gave it to the disciples. We usually refer to this scripture when we have communion to remind us of the sacrifice He made for us. And just as He gave His life and was broken for us, we must be broken so we can live for Him.

We don't like to think about God breaking us, but it's really a wonderful thing. See, when we're born again, the seed of God's nature—all that He is—is planted in our spirits.

First Peter 1:23 says, "You have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God." And 1 John 3:9 tells us that as believers, "God's seed [His principle of life, the essence of His righteous character] remains [permanently]" in us (AMP).

This means we have what it takes to be like Jesus and love others the way He loves us. But we all need God to do a work in our souls for us to be able to walk in love. We have to grow spiritually for our soul—mind, will and emotions—to be molded into the image of Christ.

We don't need to pray for God to give us love, because we already have His love in us. We need to pray for Him to show us how to walk in love...for God to do whatever He needs to do in our lives so His love can flow through us to others. When we do, He will deal with whatever is in us that is standing in the way: pride, unforgiveness, selfishness, insecurity, fear or any other ungodly attitude or behavior.

How Brokenness Works

Isaiah 64:8 says, "O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our Potter, and we all are the work of Your hand" (AMP). I know what it's like to be broken and molded by God. I used to have so many problems; I was hard to get along with and harsh. There were a lot of things I didn't understand because I had been mistreated, and I thought it was good to be hard and not let anyone push me around. I believed everyone else had a problem, not me.

I remember praying so diligently for God to change my husband, Dave, because if he would just be the way I wanted him to be, then I would be happy. But one day God spoke to my heart so strongly and said, "Dave is not the problem." My response was, "Well, who is? It's just me and him. What do you mean Dave is not the problem?"

It was devastating to realize I was really the problem, but it was also the beginning of a beautiful work God wanted to do in me.

Even though I was hurting and hard to get along with, I really loved God and wanted to live for Him, but I had to give Him control so He could mold me into His image. I began to pray things like, "God, do whatever You need to do in my life to change me. I'm the clay and You are the Potter. Romans 8:29 says you foreordained me to be molded into the image of Jesus, and I want to be everything You created me to be."

The journey hasn't been easy, but I can honestly say that the hardest times in my life became blessings because God used them to bring me close to Him so I could really know Him and grow spiritually. That's His plan for all of His children.

I want to encourage you today to spend time with God and search out the promises He has for you in His Word. Trust His wisdom and do what He shows you to do. As you put your faith in God to break you, mold you and make you what He's created you to be, the Potter will make you an amazing work of His hand!

For more on this topic, order Joyce's four-CD series Live 2 Love. 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 (Hachette). She hosts the Enjoying Everyday Life radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit www.joycemeyer.org.



We're here
to help protect
your many sides.

AUTO | BUSINESS | FARM | HOME | LIFE | RETIREMENT

BURNSVILLE
(828)682-2325

SPRUCE PINE
(828)765-2790

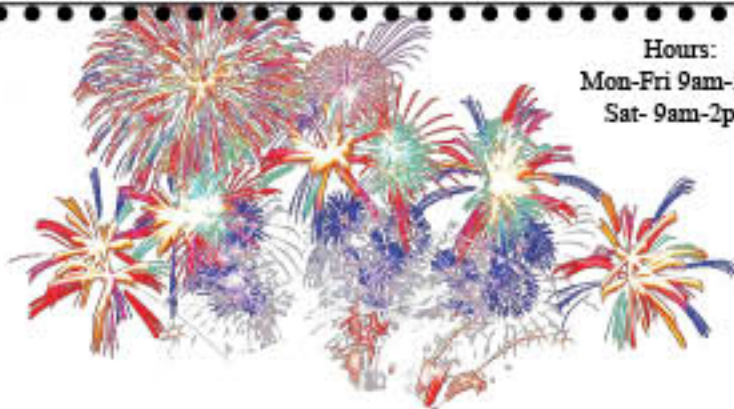
NEWLAND
(828)733-9500

MCDOWELL, MADSON, BURKE
(866)346-4202



TrentTeam.com Email: info@TrentTeam.com

Not all Nationwide affiliated companies are mutual companies and not all Nationwide members are insured by a mutual company. Nationwide, the Nationwide N and Eagle Join the Nation. What's precious to you is precious to us and we put members first because we don't have shareholders as service marks of Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company. © 2017 Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company. NPR-0718AO.2 (03/17)



Hours:
Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Sat- 9am-2pm

-NEW YEAR SALE-
Mountaineer Pawn
Shop



- All Jewelry up to 50% OFF EVERY DAY!
- We are extending our gun sale on all mark-downs through January
- Nintendo DS & Wii Games Buy 2 - Get one FREE!
- All DVD's \$1.00 each
- 15% OFF ALL CBD Products

828-765-7651

12513 S 226 HWY • Spruce Pine, NC 28777



The Smartest Thing You'll Ever Do

By Rev. Mark Creech

The Psalmist prayed to God, "Give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments" (Psalm 119:73).

I've met a lot of people in recent years that I thought were brilliantly smart. In their presence, I felt much like an intellectual pygmy. And though I wasn't looking for fault, I couldn't help but notice a common deficit in some of them: they had no spiritual judgment. It wasn't that they were ignorant. It's just that the things they had learned and embraced were inconsistent with God's Word. Their unbelief had dwarfed their understanding of what should have been the simplest of life's issues.

Charles Spurgeon once said, "A man without a mind is an idiot, the mere mockery of a man; and a mind without grace is wicked, the sad perversion of a mind... Fools can sin, but only those taught of God can be holy. We often speak of gifted men, but he has the best gifts to whom God has given a sanctified understanding wherewith to know and prize the ways of the Lord... He who made us to live must make us to learn; he who gave us power to stand must give us grace to understand."

Many years ago, I knew a man who had lived an impoverished and rough life. He was illiterate. By the standard of many, he was a hopeless and abject buffoon. One day he heard the Gospel of Christ and believed. He started listening to the Bible on cassette tape. Over time, he became a changed man. He was humble, gracious, sincere, and remarkably wise.

The last time I was with him, I listened to him teach a Sunday-School lesson that blew me away. He still couldn't even read, but he understood better than most what life was about, and what our Creator-God requires of us.

One of the most judicious individuals to ever live was King Solomon, who said, "*Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom*" (Proverbs 4:7). Solomon also said, "*Wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it*" (Proverbs 8:11).

What is wisdom? Wisdom is different than knowledge. We're living during a time when there is an explosion of knowledge, unlike any time in human history. Anyone can get an education today. Illiteracy has nearly been stamped out. Yet there seems to be very little wisdom. A wise person knows and comprehends what's true, what's good, and what's enduring. A wise person has the proper set of values, and all knowledge is filtered through these moral standards.

Dr. George Sweeping, former president of Moody Bible Institute, has rightly concluded:

"The wise man, the man who has been given wisdom from above, is the man whose life is an open book testifying to the saving grace of Jesus Christ."

In his epistle, the apostle James contrasted a life devoid of spiritual judgment with a life directed by God's wisdom. In chapter 3 and verses 13-18, James said that there is wisdom from above and wisdom from below. Earthly wisdom, he said, is characterized by envying, strife, confusion, and every evil work. Wisdom from above, however, is pure, peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, and without partiality and hypocrisy.

When James talks about carnal wisdom, his description matches our nation's current political and social climate to a tee. Why can't we come together? Why are we seemingly driven further apart with each passing year? It's because we have thrown out what God has said or we've revised or redefined it to suit our sensuous desires. We have become slaves to our passions and pleasures, and these push us to malice, jealousies, bitterness, greed, spite, and hatred.

Cicero said, "It is insatiable desires which over-turn not only individual men, but whole families, and which even bring down the state."

Is there any hope? Wise King Solomon also instructed: "*Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.*" (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

During the third century, the Bishop of Carthage, Cyprian, wrote to his friend Donatus: "It is a bad world, Donatus, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and good people who have learned the great secret of life. They have found a joy and a wisdom which is a thousand times better than any of the pleasures of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world. These people, Donatus, are Christians...and I am one of them."

Will you become "one of them" in 2019? Will you turn away from your sins, deny yourself, and receive Christ? Will you pray with the Psalmist, "Give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments"?

All of this may seem an overly simplistic answer to life's many conflicts. But trust me. It's the right start for a New Year and a new life. It's the smartest thing you will ever do. It's what our entire nation desperately needs.

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



Beneath the Surface

By Ken and Jan Merop
Avery County

Throughout the winter months, I would find myself looking at the areas that would be in bloom come spring.

Everything was dormant the first fall/winter/spring when we first moved to the North Carolina mountains. So, I had no idea what was beneath the surface. In fact, I didn't know anything was beneath the surface. The stick-like bushes certainly weren't pretty... yet Hydrangea and Flame Azaleas were waiting their turn to wow us...along with other varieties. I couldn't imagine what their buds held.

But, now I can picture the colorful array of perennials that are preparing to bloom. And I can't wait to see if the bulbs we planted in a newly formed rock garden last fall will indeed burst forth and brighten the landscape in spring and summer.

Life is like the seasons.

We experience the gloom of long winter nights when sickness or even death knock at the door of family or friends. Yet, in the midst of the cold realities of life, gentle snow falls from heaven's storehouse and blankets the world in winter white.

The purity of the glistening snow refreshes and restores a measure of hope. Other days we breathe in the refreshing cold air accompanied by bright sunshine and take a walk knowing these days will pass, too. These are the days of prayer, friendship and caring.

At last, what we've been waiting for arrives. The winter of our sorrow passes and we move forward with expectancy into what God has for us as April and May begin to bud. We hold onto the hope that a spring snowstorm won't freeze the beauty we've longed for. Sometimes it does, though. Then we summon more faith that we'll bask in the sunshine of spring and summer and the bloom of better health in the days ahead.

Ecclesiastes 3: 1, 2, 4, NLT reminds us, "*For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven. A time to be born and a time to die. A time to plant and a time to harvest...a time to cry and a time to laugh. A time to grieve and a time to dance.*"

Expect the God of Creation and Lover of our souls to be present in every season because "*God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart.*" (vs.11).

He is beneath the surface (as well as above and around) causing us to bloom where we are planted. And dance! Selah

FROSTY COVERING

The quiet expectation alive within the snowy atmosphere was an invitation for us to walk slowly under its canopy.

As we inhaled the clean mountain air and observed the delicate etchings of the snow's designs, we luxuriated in the artistry of our Creator's hand.

"All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."

Colossians 1: 16 & 17



Ken and Jan love residing in the mountains of Avery County. Visit Jan's new blog @ pauseandconsider.net, Journeying with Jan; and Ken's photos at kenmeropphotography.com.



Check out our new Website
www.brcnews.com
And find us on Facebook

L&B FURNITURE

McDowell County's Largest Selection of Furniture



Sofa/Loveseat
\$999



5 PC bedroom
\$999
FREE NIGHTSTAND



\$699

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



\$120



Desk
\$140



\$130



\$90



Mattress and 2 way
adjustable base
\$799



Upholstered bed
\$150

All Mattresses 40-60% OFF
Adjustable base starting at \$799

Exit 81 I-40 • 136 Worley Road • Marion, NC

(828) 652-7667

Tuesday - Friday 10am - 6pm
Saturday 10am - 4pm
Sunday & Monday Closed



Voted Best Breakfast & Salad Bar
in Morganton

I-40 at Exit 105

**Come See Us at Our New Location
Across the Street!**

**Morganton, NC
828-433-5400**

Are Screens Affecting Our Children's Brains?

By Dr. Jim Denison



The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has been studying the effect of screen time for children. The preliminary results are in and they're not good.

The NIH report shows that nine- and ten-year-old children who spend more than two hours in front of a screen each day score lower on thinking and language tests. This is troubling since the average "tweenager" spends up to six hours a day on their tablet or phone.

In addition, scientists have found that children with daily screen usage of more than seven hours show premature thinning of the brain cortex. This is the outermost layer that processes information from the physical world. While it's too soon to know with certainty that screen time usage caused the changes to the children's brains, scientists will be monitoring this relationship carefully.

Are your children addicted to technology?

The NIH report is just one example of the growing effect of technology on our children. Another study related smartphone use by children to sleep deprivation and other problems associated with poor attention spans. This is alarming since two-thirds of children take their smartphones to bed with them.

One group of scientists found that the more time four-year-olds spent interacting with media, the shorter their sleep was at ages four and six. A study published by Harvard Medical School has shown that blue-tinted light emitted by devices such as smartphones and tablets suppresses the production of melatonin, a sleep-inducing hormone vital to good sleep.

Counselors warn that digital addiction is a growing problem. The compulsion to continue playing video games or using technology is escalating. China has identified internet addiction as one of its main public health risks. In some parts of Asia, digital addiction rates may be as high as 26 percent.

Among American children between the ages of eight and eighteen, around 8 percent could already be classified as addicted. A 2010 study found that children in this age group spend more than seven hours a day consuming media.

Experts warn that victims of digital addiction can experience "destructive dependence, extreme change of personality, isolation, and physical signs during withdrawal." It's not surprising that researchers encourage parents to limit and monitor their children's screen time.

Practical ways to manage technology

In *The Tech-Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in Its Proper Place*, Andy Crouch offers practical commitments parents can make to help their children and family manage technology. Among them:

- Turn off technology one hour a day, one day a week, and one week a year.
- Use screens for a purpose and together rather than aimlessly and alone.
- Dedicate car time to conversation with no technology.
- Be sure spouses have each other's passwords and parents have complete access to their children's devices.

I would add this: community is vital to our souls. We were made to do life together. Every image of the church in the New Testament is collective—a vine with many branches, a body with many parts.

By contrast, technology isolates us. For every family that plays a video game together, there are multitudes of children (and parents) who play them alone. A computer or handheld device is intentionally isolating. It's hard for two people to use one keyboard or focus on the same screen.

Such isolation can be devastating.

The Wall Street Journal is reporting that loneliness undermines health and is linked to early mortality. It is worse for longevity than being obese or physically inactive.

While technology can foster a sense of community through social media, it's no substitute for in-depth personal relationships. Nothing replaces spending time with those we love. A screen is not a parent.

"We are familiar with his evil schemes"

Here's the bottom line: God intends parents to be the pastors of their families. We cannot delegate their souls to their teachers at school, ministers at church, or friends online.

Fathers are told to "bring [children] up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). We are to value our children as "a heritage from the LORD" (Psalm 127:3).

One of the many reasons I admire the Jewish culture is its commitment to the home and family. The father is responsible for teaching the Torah to his children. The parents are responsible for modeling Jewish faith and culture. The survival and prosperity of the Jewish people across forty centuries are largely due to this passionate commitment of each generation to the next.

The family is God's invention and design for us (Genesis 1:28). But the devil hates all that God loves. If he can use technology to isolate children from their parents and infect them with pornography, violence, and digital addiction, he will. Paul said of Satan, "We are familiar with his evil schemes" (2 Corinthians 2:11 NLT). Can you say the same?

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

**Check out our new Website-www.brcnews.com
And find us on Facebook**

Job Titles and Jesus

By Dr. Tracy Jessup

"John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. — Revelation 1:4-6



Often, I am kidded about the length of my title and I sometimes am asked to describe what it is that I do at Gardner-Webb University. In a September 7, 2017 article on Forbes.com entitled "How Important is Your Job Title?" contributor Ashley Stahl poses this scenario:

If you saw "Paranoid in Chief" at Yahoo on an application that you were evaluating, would you know that title is for the person in charge of all information security at Yahoo? More importantly, would you believe it? It looks more like a book title than a job title. And you don't want to be HR's resume entertainment on their lunch." Stahl concludes, "When applying for a job you not only give a job title, but what that job entails."

In writing to the seven churches in Asia, the Apostle John begins the communication of the revelation by stating titles of God the Father such as "him who is and who was and who is to come," (v. 4) and "the Alpha and the Omega...who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty" (v. 8). The work of God the Son is described in even more detail. Jesus Christ is "the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth" He also is the one "who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father" (vv. 5-6). All of these titles and descriptions reinforce the truth that this is the Almighty God sending grace and peace to his servants.

At the end of a sermon on Isaiah 9:6, Ken Langley, pastor of Christ Community Church in Zion, Illinois, shared the story of Aragorn in J. R. R. Tolkien's The Return of the King, the final book in The Lord of the Rings trilogy. "Aragorn, the rightful king of the west, has long labored in obscurity, forgoing kingly comforts to serve his subjects and fight their battles, repeatedly risking his life for them. At last he prevails over the forces of the dark lord, and is poised to enter the city where he will rule at last. When Aragorn enters the fortified city of Minas Tirith for the first time as king, the city's steward proclaims Aragorn's royal pedigree for all the citizens to hear: 'Here is Aragorn son of Arathorn, chieftain of the Dunedain of Arnor, Captain of the Host of the West, bearer of the Star of the North, wielder of the Sword Reforged, victorious in battle, whose hands bring healing, the Elfstone, Ellessar of the line of Valandil, Isildur's son, Elendil's son of Numenor. Shall he be king and enter into the City and dwell there?'"

John writes of another King - "Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth...who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father." Shall he enter our hearts, our churches, and our Christian universities and dwell there? Let it be so.

Prayer: Lord, we acknowledge who you are and pray that your kingdom will come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

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

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.

Freedom Life Enterprises:



- Marion Fabric & Upholstery
- Freedom Auto Detailing
- Freedom Landscaping - Commercial & Residential
- Cozy Cabin - Coffee, Gifts, Furnishings

78 West Marion Business Park
Marion, NC 28752 • 828-559-2700

Reflections for the Future

By Tracy Black
Mitchell County



Since we are observing the passing of another year and looking toward the future, I think it's important to look back at where we came from.

Many things have changed at SafePlace since its inception 23 years ago.. So many personalities among the staff and the Board of Directors have come and gone but there remains one constant, a deep and abiding love for those we serve. That tone was set by our original Executive Director, Joan Crummy. Joan gave strength to the women who needed her and was "harsh" to anyone who stood between her client and the justice she deserved. She set in motion the passion for this work that is still very much alive today.

Next came Barb Johns. Barb always gave every woman the attention she needed but was never shy to give you the "motivational kick in the butt" you needed to get you going. The greatest gift she left with us was teaching us to "always listen to our victims. They will teach you more than any book ever will."

Cynthia Nash has worked tirelessly on the board over the years. She has served in every aspect most notably as board President. Cynthia's gentle and quiet strength has inspired countless women and she is an important part of why we are what we are.

Lisi Szymczyk is a strong and dynamic woman. She served as board President. Lisi never hesitated to roll up her sleeves and do whatever work needed to be done. She expected excellence from those around her and we hope that we have lived up to those expectations.

David Pike was next to serve at the helm of the SafePlace ship. He continued the traditions that were set by his predecessors and was directly responsible for equipping us to be more efficient into the next decade.

Connie Sedberry served SafePlace for over 17 years holding the position of Executive Director for 6 years. Connie's forte was strong financial management and inspiring people with kindness and compassion. She firmly believed that preventing violence through education was the only hope of eradicating interpersonal violence and it is in that direction she has taken us.

Today, Loren Grano serves as Board President and I am honored to serve as an Interim Executive Director as this agency begins the hard work of finding the exact right person to lead us into the future.

As 2018 ends and 2019 begins, our collective prayer here is that one day soon we will be able to close and lock the doors of SafePlace because there is no longer any domestic violence, rape or sexual assault. Until then we will work with love and compassion utilizing the gifts that were given us by those who came before us.

Tracy Black is the Associate Director for Mitchell County SafePlace. She can be reached at 828-765-4015 or tracyblack@bellsouth.net.



Sudoku

Solution on page 14

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

© StatePoint Media

Tax Reform and You

By Rachel Cruze



Taxes, everyone's favorite subject.

There's been a lot of buzz about the new tax reform bill this year. Change is always hard, and taxes are harder. And with all the changes taking place this year, the thought of filing your taxes can feel overwhelming at best. While most of these changes should simplify the process, a lot of people are wondering how this reform will impact them and their bank accounts.

The good news is there are some nice things in store for most people with the tax reform. Let's walk through a few you should know before filing your taxes.

Updated Tax Brackets and Lower Income Tax Rates

The new tax brackets and income tax rates are one of the most talked about changes when it comes to the tax reform. The main thing you should know is that the seven tax brackets we already have in place will stay that way, but tax rates for each are going down through 2025. For example, if you're single making \$50,000 a year, your tax rate will drop from 25 percent to 22 percent. In 2026, these cuts will expire, unless there is another bill in the future that changes. For now, people are paying less in taxes.

The New Standard Deduction

The standard deduction is dollar amount that you're able to deduct from your taxable income. Under the new reform, the standard deduction has nearly doubled! Before the reform, the standard deduction for an individual was \$6,350. Now, it's \$12,000. For a married couple it used to be \$12,700, and that has gone up to \$24,000. So, if you're single and would normally do an itemized deduction, if it equals less than \$12,000 you would take the standard deduction instead.

Changes for Married Couples

Married couples will rejoice this tax season. Before the tax reform, some married taxpayers were bumped into a higher tax bracket when they combined their incomes. The new tax brackets have doubled for people filing jointly, so no more marriage penalties this time!

Updated Child Tax Credit

People with kiddos will be happy with at least one part of the new tax reform. Previously, parents who made less than \$110,000 jointly and \$75,000 individually received a \$1,000 tax credit for qualified children under age 17. Now, that credit has increased to \$2,000 and the income limits were raised to \$400,000 jointly and \$200,000 individually. If you have kids and fall below those income levels, that's \$2,000 back in your pocket!

More Reason to Give

If there wasn't enough incentive for charitable giving before, there is now. Before these changes, taxpayers used to be able to deduct up to half of their income in qualified charitable donations. That limit has been increased to 60 percent of your income!

These are just a few of the changes from the reform. If you still feel overwhelmed, don't worry. Even the IRS is scrambling to keep up with the changes this year. If there ever was a time to consider hiring a professional to do your taxes, this would be the time to do it. You don't want to guess on your taxes!

About Rachel Cruze

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

2018 Was a Good Year

By David Burleson
Burke County



The holidays are a very special time for everyone at Burke United Christian Ministries (BUCM). With the help of our wonderful community and some very special elves, our ministry was blessed to distribute over 200 Senior Santa bags and treat bags for some very special individuals. BUCM also had the privilege of hosting Pictures and Breakfast with Santa for our children and families and Dinner with Santa for those we serve. A big thank you for everyone involved, especially Elf Terre, Chefs Wendy and Sammy, our staff and all of our soup kitchen teams.

BUCM is truly blessed to have the greatest volunteers ever. On December 12, we celebrated Christmas with our volunteers and Santa. Our soup kitchen teams prepare home cooked meals every day, our food harvesters collect food from our sponsoring grocery stores and restaurants, our pantry workers assist our clients when they shop and then stock the shelves, the clothing store volunteers help sort, price stock and sell clothes and our clothing closet volunteers help stock the closet and assist clients and the homeless with their shopping. The majority of our volunteers work approximately four hours per week. I would encourage anyone who has a little time to assist others, to consider coming by BUCM and talking with our volunteer coordinator, Elizabeth Norris or me about the many opportunities that are available. Just email us at bucmdirector@gmail.com, call (828) 433-8075 or come by and visit. We truly believe that "Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain loving one another." - Erma Bombeck

Looking back, 2018 has been a truly outstanding year at BUCM. With the support of our sustaining churches, community donors, volunteers and staff the needs of many have been met. Last year at the Burke United Christian Ministries a total of 48,330 individuals were served representing 22,210 households. These services included providing over 66,500 meals, distributing over 800,000 lbs. of food from our food pantry, assisting 4,320 clients with much needed clothes and providing over \$128,000 in crisis assistance to families in need. Currently, we average over 70 client assists per day and you can imagine how much food and clothing are necessary to meet the ever-increasing demands for our ministry.

In 2018 BUCM was once again honored to partner with Burke United Way, the Burke County Schools, and the Outreach Center to meet the back to school needs of our students. With a grant from United Way and the Burke Community Foundation Youth Philanthropists, we were able to help almost 600 children with back to school clothes, shoes, coats and other necessities.

Also, the many food and clothing drives in 2018 have been instrumental in allowing us to minister to our clients. A big thanks to schools, clubs (especially the Freedom and Patton Anchor Clubs, churches, businesses, and others that assisted with these drives. With the support of the HOWI (Homeless Outreach Warming Initiative) committee, assistance was provided to over 399 homeless clients. With the assistance of the First Methodist Church of Morganton and Birch McMurray and Chris Witherspoon, over 50 loads of firewood were delivered to those in need. From clothes to showers, food to encouragement, we take very seriously our ministry to the homeless of Burke County.

The successes of 2018 have motivated BUCM to expand our ministry for 2019. The need for education advancement is a priority for many we work with at BUCM. Because of a very generous donation from the employees of James Tool and principal owner, Jeff Toner, a computer lab and education resource room has been established at the Burke Mission Station. With this new Life Enrichment Center and the support of Western Piedmont Community College, the Burke United Christian Ministries is offering GED and ESL



classes for anyone in our community who need them. With the support of the Community Foundation of Burke County and the partnership of Blue Ridge Community Action, a Circles Program will be offered in 2019. This program provides classes in financial literacy, healthy eating and living, job training, parenting and provides the opportunity for participants to be exposed to the many resources in Burke County. Our vision for the future for the Life Enrichment Center will be to offer evening and summer tutoring for our younger clients, provide clients the opportunity to take online college classes, provide job skills training and budgeting classes, and provide clients access to job vacancies. By working closely with the Community Foundation of Burke County, cooking classes, nutrition classes and food preservation classes will be offered. BUCM truly believes that education is the key to enhancing the quality of life for our clients.

The Burke United Christian Ministries' facility got a facelift in 2018. With a grant from The Cannon Foundation, our pantry moved to the old clothes sorting area and the current pantry was converted to a welcome center and craft area. This grant also provided funding to upgrade our soup kitchen in order to better serve our clients along with additional showers for the homeless. We also plan to enlarge our Saved for You Clothing and Craft Store with a grant from the Huffman-Cornwell Foundation to better serve our customers.

These upgrades and enhancements provided by our community will be instrumental in supporting those we serve in the future. With continued support, encouragement and the prayers of the supporters of BUCM the future looks very bright. My God richly bless you in this new year.

David Burleson is Director of Burke United Christian Ministries

PAPPY'S

GUNSMITHING & BACKWOODS LIVIN'

NEW LOCATION

Disabled Veteran
Owned and
Operated



- Full Service Gunsmithing
- Dutch ovens
- Survival foods & more
- Essential oils
- Outdoor cooking systems



613 West US Hwy 19E Bypass • Burnsville, NC 28714
(across from TD Bank)

(828) 536-5250 • pappy@backwoods-livin.com

Morganton Baptist Church

This Year, I'm Going To...

By Pastor Dan Qurollo
Burke County

Most likely, you are thinking the same thing that I am thinking: where did 2018 go?!! It surely seems that the older we get, the faster the years pass by. The beginning of a new year is often filled with many resolutions that often soon fall by the wayside. I have often thought that the first few months of a year would be the perfect time to be an exercise equipment salesman! Others look at a new year and regard it as a clean slate. To them, this is a chance to make things better.

Tragically, many of these resolutions fall by the wayside within the first few months of the year. The treadmill becomes a rack on which clothes can be hung. Resolutions to become a better person often fade with the passing of time, leaving individuals more disheartened than ever before. What happened? Why did these resolutions that were made sincerely seem to fall so quickly by the wayside?

One of the greatest problems with many resolutions is the basis on which they are made. For some, the motivation is a selfish motivation to gain greater favor or acceptance with certain individuals. For others, the motivation is to create what they regard as a more favorable life. While other motivations can be listed, the problem with such motivations is they are often insufficient to sustain enduring change. For example, the person who seeks acceptance but fails to discover it will often be quick to abandon the resolution. When a more favorable life seems unattainable, people are quick to abandon the resolution they thought would produce that. These resolutions are not rooted in that which is going to last.

When it comes to the matter of resolutions and desiring change, one cannot do so successfully without relying on God, the One responsible for changing lives. Those who accept Him as Savior are described as "new creatures" in 2 Corinthians 5:17. He desires to make us more like Him and is constantly at work in our hearts to achieve His goal, but He will not force His way upon anybody. When we submit ourselves to His plan and depend upon His strength, we will discover the strength to make truly lasting resolutions – resolutions that have eternal benefit. We will discover the joy of a life that is well-pleasing to Him. Such a resolution is the greatest resolution one can make!

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



Happy New Year!

Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge

Thrift Store Furniture Drive



Clear Clutter Change Lives

For more Information Contact
Ginger Robinson at:
(828)-688-6400



Hospice and Palliative Care
of the Blue Ridge, Inc.
Hospice, Palliative Care & CAP



Beginnings

Buck Stove is passionate about building quality products here in the Western North Carolina Mountains. Maybe you know us by your old wood stove, or Buck Stove is new to you. No matter what time of the year, we welcome you to build memories around Buck Stove.

Buck Stove would like to invite you to stop by our manufacturing facility. Whether you are heating your home or sprucing up your patio, we are sure to have something that you will love. Our outdoor living store has weather proof polywood furniture, customizable fire pits, and our newest addition tiny houses. With six current models, the options and styles are endless to choose from. Also, ask us about our custom metal work. Our address is: 200 Ethan Allen Drive Spruce Pine, N.C. 28777 828-765-6144 www.buckstove.com

Traditions

Friends & Family End of Season Sale

Happy New Year!

ALL HEARTH AND PATIO ITEMS FOR



INCLUDES: WOOD STOVES GAS STOVES & OUTDOOR FURNITURE



105 WEST MAIN STREET
BURNSVILLE, NC 28714

828-398-5943

CELL 828-385-3243

Buck Stove

MOUNTAINTIMEONMAINST.COM

CHONEYCUTT@BUCKSTOVE.COM



Harrell Hill Farms

200 Years of Freshness



Grass Fed Beef For Sale
USDA Inspected
Shrink Wrapped & Labeled
No Added Hormones
No Antibiotics
Locally Grown
1/4 - 1/2 & Whole



HarrellhillFarms@aol.com

828-467-0280

www.harrellhillfarms.com





Put Your Forward For A Brighter Future at McDowell Tech!

In Marion, Home of the Big Foot Festival



Apply today! Three Easy Steps

Step 1:

Complete Your NC Residency Form

Step 2:

Complete Your McDowell Tech Application

Step 3:

Complete Your Financial Aid Application

For more detailed admissions instructions,
please visit:

www.mcdowelltech.edu/admissions/
828-652-6021

Spring Registration Going on Now!

EO/AA

Classes Begin January 7th!

Images: Clip Art Library



Avery County:
(828) 733-1550

Mitchell County:
(828) 688-3421

Yancey County:
(828) 682-7825

Pruitthealth.com

PruittHealth Home Health would like to take the opportunity to serve you in your time of need! We strive to provide the best quality services for your home health needs.

Our services include:

- **skilled nursing**
- **physical, occupational and speech therapies**
- **medical social work**
- **home health aides**

We serve Avery, Mitchell, Yancey and surrounding counties.