



BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS



Be Still and Know That I Am God

By Joyce Peterson Boone

As each day passes, I find I simply must make more time to obey this commandment from God. To me, He is saying that if I am to know Him, I must tithe my time in such a way that there are still, quiet moments in which no one is allowed but my God and me.

During these private appointments, I stand as a lone babe before His mighty loving presence and I find out anew just who I really am. As there is no noise, pretense, interruptions, or distractions allowed to interfere with our fellowship, He permits me to look at my true self, (which is often times buried deeply under layers of hurried moments, lost tempers, an overload of responsibilities, unbalanced priorities, convictions which belong to forty-three other people, and many other unrests which face most humans living today's race for survival.)

Now I ask myself, "Is survival at this cost really worth it? Is this a race in which I want to take part?" Well if you are already one who knows the richness of these still quiet times with God, you know the answer.

For one thing, being still allows us to see the greatness of God in suing ones as small as we humans to bring His mighty plans into reality. Only when we shed all pretenses will He use us to the maximum. Quiet times introduce us to our real selves. Only when we know who we really are can we begin asking God to completely clean up our lives and to fill us with a truth and purity we can claim as our own from Him!

Being still before our God makes self-examination possible before diseases such as jealousy and greed take hold in our hectic lives. Left untouched, these imps take root and choke out the very joys our Lord intends for His children, our Savior said that He came that we might have a more abundant life. I have found that this rich abundant life is manifested most of all through still quiet times with my God!

When I do enter into this still state, I can at last see my life in a more objective way. I see a too busy mother, a too tired wife, frivolous concerns filling precious moments, undesirable attitudes crowding my mind and heart, and most importantly, I see myself as a member of the human race, a sinner saved by grace and His blood, an imperfect mortal who is loved by an Almighty God!

Another benefit of being still in God's presence is being shown what is really important in this present life. Too often we forget we will be here only a very

short while. Quiet times bring us face to face with the reality of our swift passing from what we now know, into what we choose to believe by faith. After making our tiny mark upon this our place in time, we shall all spend an unending eternity somewhere. Where he spends it is each man's choice. A still quiet time with God enables us to ponder over this idea and to make serious decisions relative to our priorities in life.

We have read that old bottles cannot be filled with new wine. To me, this says that I cannot expect God's richest blessing of the Holy Spirit to fill me until I am cleansed from the inside out. I must know what is in my inner-most secret self. I must realize what is in my own life which is contrary to God's laws. I must see myself as God sees me. I must examine my thought patterns and my words and squarely face the reality of what shape my own private life is in at the present.

Now, you know we humans just can't do this self-examination while we're racing around to all our projects, committee meetings and various obligations, but we say, "Things won't get done if we don't keep up our hectic pace!" However, I'm asking myself, "Aren't we putting the cart before the horse?" Shouldn't our first efforts be directed toward knowing what and who we really are in God's sight? Are many of my well-meaning activities rushed through in an effort to keep from knowing who and what I really am in God's sight? Do I rush about only to avoid personal responsibility, such as aging relatives, a problem child, a demanding mate, a guilty conscience, a faithful prayer and Bible study schedule? Am I afraid of what I will have to deal with if I am still?"

As God's child, I have had to "put on the brakes" in my life and say, "Whoa-aa, slow down, buck up a little." We must be sure we are traveling at the correct speed and for the proper reason!

Lately I have been using more of life for still quiet times with my precious Lord. He is teaching me much. He tells me that He never rushed when He was on earth. Instead, He ministered quietly, slowly, lovingly, as He went through one day at a time.

As I look back over my life, I see that the sweetest times, the times of wisdom, learning and love, came when I obeyed His commandment to: **"BE STILL, and know that I am God."** Psalm 46:10.

Joyce Boone lives in Spruce Pine, works at Mayland Community College, and she is married to Henry Boone. They attend Bear Creek Baptist Church. Joyce is an awesome prayer warrior.



Mine Creek Baptist Church

The Government and the Christian

By Preacher Chris Rathbone
Mitchell County



The political meanderings of our government are front and center it seems in our nation. News networks, which I chose to not watch much, are obsessed with all that is going on. The news channels have become, for the most part, tools for political influence for one party or the other. Our society has moved past the days of reporting the news to twisting or distorting it to try and influence its watchers to one side or the other. Personally, I just try to watch the highlights to keep up with the basic stories. I choose not to watch all the personal commentary and talk shows that seem to care more about trying to persuade people to come over to their side than actually reporting the truth. Honestly, sometimes it's like watching a movie that was produced using a tabloid paper as the script! Lately, stories will come out as "breaking news" and are reported one way and then a few days later it turns out that the way it was "reported" was way different than what actually happened. Sadly, a lot of Christian people have been negatively influenced by this modern method of media. Many are finding their source of truth and conviction from their political party instead of from the Scriptures. Go ahead and prepare yourselves because this article is going to ruffle some political feathers.

What does the Bible say about the government's role in the world? Are we as Christians simply to ignore what government leaders do? Do we just say and do nothing when it comes to the government's influence in our communities and our nation? What do we as Christians do when the government begins to lean towards sin and shame? Do we just accept corruption from our leaders and never cry out for accountability from those in power over us? Are we not allowed to have a voice when it comes to protecting the most innocent among us? When perversion is on parade are we to keep silent for fear that someone will say we are getting too political? Do we have a Christian life that never influences our political persuasions? The questions are never ending in this area. There is a portion of scripture that I believe helps us to understand how the government and the Christian are to relate to one another:

"Romans 13:1-7 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers (government). For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God (government is a God ordained institution): and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation (judgment or consequences from that government)."
"For rulers are not a terror to good works (those who conduct themselves righteously) but to evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power (because it was instituted by God)? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword (of justice) in vain; for he is a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil (punisher of the wrongdoer). Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."
"For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute (taxes, ouch!) to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." Parenthesis are mine of course.

Here are some Biblical truths that need to be highlighted for both—the Christian and the government:

1. Government is a God-ordained institution. Vs. 1-2
God has ordained the government. Like it or not, it is given by God for the benefit of man. For sure man has messed up God's intent, but still the truth remains that government is God's idea. The power that government has comes from Him, not from man or his political persuasions.
2. Government is to promote that which is good and punish that which is evil. Vs. 3-4

The purpose of government is the protection of goodness and the punishment of evil. God is good and therefore would never promote sin or evil. The person who has the responsibility of serving in government positions will give account to a Holy God in how they ruled. Those in government positions must realize that the main responsibility of government is to promote and protect goodness and execute judgment on evil. Man's sin and corruption has tainted this institution for sure. Injustice and wickedness abound in our government. Man has come to believe that

he is the creator of government and not the Creator. This is why our government is unable to function properly. Our rulers have abandoned the purpose that God has given, and the result is what we are witnessing today. Many in our society are abusing the power of government to promote wickedness. Justice for the evildoer is neglected because man does not understand the purpose of government according to Scripture. Again, government is to promote and protect goodness and punish that which is wicked or evil. Not the other way around.
3. Christians are to be subject to government. Vs. 1, 5-7

When a government is functioning the way God intended, Christians are to subject or submit themselves to this government. If we believe that God has ordained government according to this scripture, then it is our duty to be subject to that government. Good government is not a terror to good people, only to the wicked. Even giving tribute or custom, which is taxes, is commanded. Ouch, I know that hurts, but it is scripture. But it also says to give fear and honor. This means to respect authority and laws that are put in place for our good and evil's punishment. Now the question that many will ask is this, "Are we as Christians to submit to a government even if it is telling me to do wrong?" My answer is "Absolutely not!" The institution of government is ordained by God but not everyone in that institution is making decisions based on God's word. Obviously the heart of a wicked person is corrupt and if they serve in a government position more than likely they will not promote goodness. He or she will promote wickedness. The Bible states: *"Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. Titus 2:12. John teaches us: Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God. 3 John 1:11."* We as God's church are never to participate in wickedness, even if government sanctions it. For when government sanctions wickedness and evil it has left God's ordained purpose. When Pharaoh ordered the Hebrew midwives to kill babies, they feared God more and refused. When a law was passed so Daniel could not pray as he wished, he prayed anyway. When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were ordered to worship an idol, they refused, even when threatened with death. The disciples and apostles were ordered on numerous occasions to stop preaching the Gospel of Christ, but guess what, here we are some 2000 years later still preaching the Gospel of Christ! There is never a time when God who is holy would ask His people to promote sin and wickedness nor ask us to neglect doing that which is good and right.

What do we do? Pray for our leaders. Pray that God would raise up righteous leaders for our nation and communities. Speak out to our leaders. We must not be timid when it comes to reminding our leaders of the purpose of government or their responsibility as a leader in government. We must work both in our local communities and our nation as a whole to promote the righteousness that God, who is holy, will bless. *"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people. Proverbs 14:34. When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn. Proverbs 29:2."* When those in authority promote ungodliness it is the responsibility of God's people to proclaim righteousness. We cannot stand by and be silent when we are to be light in this world. No, my hope is not in government, politics, or politicians. My hope and trust is and always will be in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. His word is my guide and I believe it to be the best way to strive to live in this world. The Word of God will stand forever and is written for the benefit and blessing of mankind. We reject it at our own peril. God help us to stand for Him in this lost and dying world. God help us to be a light in the darkness. God help us to pray for, preach to, and promote Godliness in our government. For in doing so, we all will benefit from God's blessings.



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

No.3 Grill

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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



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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

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Grassy Creek Baptist Church

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

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

West Burnsville Baptist Church

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

Pastor: Terry Long

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

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

Burkemont Baptist Church

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

For more information,
please visit
www.burkemontbaptist.org

Dr. Luke A. Lane

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

Plumtree Presbyterian Church

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

Pastor Ryan Bridgeo
pastor@plumtreepresbyterian.org

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

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

Bear Creek Baptist Church

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

Reverend Bruce Cannon

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

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

Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church

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

Pastor Barry Mahorney

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

Pine Branch Baptist Church

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

Reverend Bobby Joe Greene

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

**A Bible-believing Fellowship
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St. Lucien's Catholic Church

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

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

First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine

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

**Dr. Rocky Branch
Senior Pastor**

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

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Spruce Pine United Methodist Church

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

Pastor Rev. Jeremy Troxler

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

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**
pbradshawfaccmorganton@gmail.com

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

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From Sorrow to Celebration

By Marlene Houk
Burke County



Do you know the definition of sibilance? Many famous authors, musicians, and poets use this literary device to create feelings and draw in readers and listeners.

The website, www.litcharts.com, defines this literary device: "Sibilance is a figure of speech in which a hissing sound is created within a group of words through the repetition of 's' sounds."

An example of sibilance is: "Sadly, Sam sold seven serpents to Sally and Cyrus in San Francisco."

The site also explains why authors like Shakespeare, John Donne, Milton, and even modern songwriters like Bob Dylan use this method. The following list helps explain why they use sibilance.

- It can make the words in phrases more memorable because they share sounds in common.
- Sibilance increases the sonic or "musical" quality of words. It also encourages the reader to spend more time looking at, sounding out, and thinking about those words.
- Because it encourages readers to pay more attention to language, sibilance can have the effect of slowing down the reading process, and strengthening reading-comprehension as a result.
- It encourages repeated reading. Sibilance aids in memorization and recitation.
- Sibilance can imitate, or do the thing that is being described, rather than simply talking about it.

Schlegel, Chris. "Sibilance." LitCharts LLC, May 5, 2017. Retrieved February 23, 2019. <https://www.litcharts.com/literary-devices-and-terms/sibilance>.

God has designed language to reflect his unparalleled brilliance and infinite genius. Even the way we use letters to bring understanding and enjoyment to the reader and listener reflects his design.

Like using sibilance in writing, God uses our praises to him to bring about change in us. As sibilance produces an effect, so our praises to God result in astounding and joyful changes in us. When we begin our relationship with him in salvation, we receive the rights and privileges of praise. What does praise change in us? The following shortlist reveals a few of praise's glorious effects:

- When Sarah, Abraham's wife, ignored God's covenant with Abraham and gave her maid to her husband to have a child, the LORD still allowed her to have her own baby, at a miraculous age of 90 years old.

Even though we are stopped by the brick walls of our own sin, God looks beyond the cracks of our failures and continues with his plan for us. Like Sarah,

the eternal light of faith comes shining through those fissures. Then, we too, like Sarah, can laugh as we praise him for his faithfulness to us.

Genesis 21:6 *And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me.*

- When we feel lonely, isolated, or rejected, the LORD is near to us when we praise him.

Psalms 22:3 *But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel*

- When we feel imprisoned by the world's notions or shackled by life's troubles praising God will break the binds that keep us from enjoying life. Like the disciples in the following verse, praising God can change your emotions from despair to delight. Your shackles will fall off. When you are in the pit of life, and the gloomy fog of failure surrounds you, praise him.

Acts 16:25 *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.*

- According to Forbes, Americans spent 445 billion dollars on skincare products in 2017. But the greatest beauty enhancer is free. The simple act of praise beautifies us with a glow from within that surpasses any product discovered by the industry. Praise is one of the greatest beauty enhancers of all the ages!

Psalms 33:3 *Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright.*

- When we realize that we are accepted by the King of the Ages, because of his beloved Son, Jesus, we can exult in our rescue. Acknowledging God's redemption brings a reflex action of praise.

Ephesians 1:6 *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*

- When we realize that our enemies are beneath us, and that God is in control, our praise becomes a commitment.

Psalms 27:6 *And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore, will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.*

Singing happy songs replaces the receptors that stress destroys. God knows what we need to enjoy him. Like the literary device of sibilance that offers a happy musical sense to a poem or prose, praising God brings the melody of joy that lifts our souls out of the gloom and points others to the God who draws them with loving kindness.

Jeremiah 31:3 *The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore, with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.*

So, pick up your harp; lift your voice, and sing with sibilant praise to the LORD!

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

Thank You!

Hospice and Home Care of the Blue Ridge would like to express a heartfelt thank you to all of the wonderful people in our community who made Valentines Day very special for our patients. Thanks to your generosity over four hundred and fifty carnations, ferns and handmade Valentines were delivered to each of our patients. We are very blessed to be part of such an amazing community. We would like to thank the following people for making this very worthy project possible.



Stephanie Medford of Spruce Pine Florist
Randy Bonner of Western Carolina
Deyton Elementary
Montessori School
Tri-County Christian
Harris Middle School
First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine



We would like to extend a very special thank you to our Hospice Volunteer, Jacqueline Hinshaw For realizing just how much a project like this would mean to our patients and for working so hard to make it happen.



Morganton Baptist Church

Consistent with the Gospel

By Dan Qurollo
Burke County

Early in the history of the church, believers were committed to the spread of the Gospel. Evangelism was never regarded as something in which only church leaders or a handful of individuals were to engage; rather, they determined as individuals to share the good news of what God had done in their own life. Their personal testimony and love for God compelled them to share the Gospel, regardless of the cost. For some, the sacrifice was their life.

One such individual was a man named Polycarp, a pastor in the city of Smyrna. He found himself standing before the proconsul who demanded that he recant his faith in Christ. He responded, "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?" The threats escalated to the point he was threatened with wild beasts, but he remained undaunted. They then threatened him with fire to which he answered: "Thou threatenest me with fire which burneth for an hour, and after a little is extinguished, but art ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punishment." With that, he was sentenced to burn at the stake. But the fire would not burn him. Out of exasperation, they pierced him with a dagger. He was praised not primarily for his courage but because his death was

"altogether consistent with the Gospel of Christ."

His passion for Christ compelled him to remain courageous in the midst of persecution. Even in the presence of the threats of pain and torture, he remained true and faithful. Even in his death, his life was regarded as consistent with the message he proclaimed.

What about you? To date, we have not been asked to die for Him, but we have been asked to live for Him. When people observe your life, do they see a life consistent with the message you proclaim? Or is it filled with inconsistencies?

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



Parkway Playhouse

Parkway Playhouse Announces Endowment Fund And Planned Giving Program

By Hunter Taylor, Education Coordinator
Yancey County



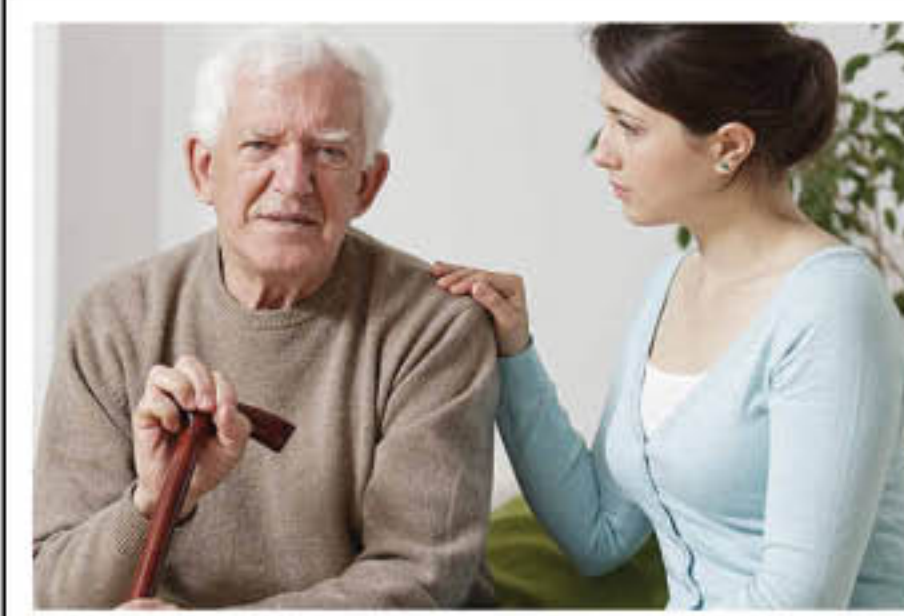
Parkway Playhouse is pleased to share with the community that through the wonderful generosity of Warren and Larissa Bare we have established an endowment fund. This represents a commitment to the long-term growth of Parkway Playhouse. Contributions to the endowment fund can be made via our website or by contacting Executive Director, Jeff Bachar at jbachar@parkway-playhouse.com As Parkway Playhouse expands our educational opportunities and outreach in the community through grants, donations and other sources of revenue the endowment fund will be grown thoughtfully and deliberately over many years.

In addition, as part of our new planned giving program we can now accept donations of stock. We'd be happy to talk with you about planned giving through your will, retirement plan, trust or insurance policy. More information is available on our website as well: parkwayplayhouse.com

For more information about Parkway Playhouse, including performances, classes, and volunteer opportunities, please call 828-682-4285 or visit the Parkway Playhouse website at www.parkwayplayhouse.com.



Hunter is the new Coordinator of Education at the Parkway Playhouse.



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First Baptist Church Marion

A "Glorias" Journey

Press Release
McDowell County

First Time in Carnegie Hall for the Sanctuary Choir of First Baptist Church in Marion, North Carolina



On Sunday, March 31 at 2 pm, as part of MidAmerica Productions' 36th annual concert season, members of the Sanctuary Choir of First Baptist Church in Marion will be part of a chorus of more than 140 voices, brought together to perform the New York premiere of Michael John Trotta's new Gloria under the baton of the composer, and John Rutter's Gloria, a modern classic, conducted by Ray Adams. The New England Symphonic Ensemble will accompany both works.

"The eight members representing the Sanctuary Choir of First Baptist Church, Marion, are honored to be performing the Rutter Gloria and premiering Michael John Trotta's Gloria at Carnegie Hall," says Ruth Wakefield, Director of Music Ministry. "This will be the experience of a lifetime!"

The Gloria text, from the Ordinary of the Catholic mass, has inspired innumerable musical settings over its sixteen-century existence. On March 31, audiences and singers will have an unusual opportunity to compare contemporary versions by two different composers side by side. Both Trotta and Rutter employ similar performing forces – chorus, brass, percussion and organ – and both begin with buoyant brass fanfares. But each work has its own character, reflecting the composers' personal reactions to the hallowed words.

The choir will consist of members of the following ensembles:

- Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Chamber Choir, Scotch Plains, NJ (Jan Allen, Director)
- Indian River Choral Union, Vero Beach, FL (Ray Adams, Director)
- Oak Park High School Chamber Choir, Oak Park, CA (Heidi Cissell, Director)
- Indian River Charter High School Concert Choir, Vero Beach, FL (Gary Miller, Director)
- Central Bucks East High School, Doylestown, PA (Christopher Villante, Director)
- Sanctuary Choir of First Baptist Church, Marion, NC (Ruth Wakefield, Director)
- Brewer High School Varsity Mixed Ensemble, Fort Worth, TX (Mark Wynn, Director)

Sharing the Playbill

The March 31 concert will also include a performance of the Fauré Requiem, featuring soloists Megan Nielson, soprano and Suchan Kim, baritone. Sterling S. Poulson will lead a choir drawn from the following ensembles:

- Dock Mennonite Academy Touring Choir, Lansdale, PA (Emily Grimes, Director)
- Choral Arts Society of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT (Sterling S. Poulson, Director)

The concert will conclude with a performance of Morten Lauridsen's contemporary classic, Lux Aeterna, conducted by Geoffrey Paul Boers with a chorus of more than 140 drawn from the following three ensembles, all from Washington State:

- Symphony Tacoma Voices, Tacoma, WA (Geoffrey Paul Boers, Director)
- ChoralSounds Northwest, Lake Forest Park, WA (Ryan Ellis, Director)
- The Liberty Choirs, Renton, WA (Robin Wood, Director)

Purchase Tickets

Concerts in the Isaac Stern Auditorium/Ronald O. Perelman Stage are \$150, \$100, and \$50. Tickets may be obtained by contacting CarnegieCharge at 212-247-7800, visiting the Carnegie Hall Box Office at 57th Street and 7th Avenue in New York, NY, or by going online to www.carnegiehall.org. For more information, contact molly.waymire@piptix.com

Background Information

About Sanctuary Choir of First Baptist Church – Ruth Wakefield, Director
First Baptist Church of Marion, North Carolina, has a long history of excellence in church music ministry. The Sanctuary Choir in particular makes an impact weekly, ministering in worship. Ruth Thomas Wakefield is the current Director of Music Ministry.

About MidAmerica Productions

Maestro Peter Tiboris created and conducted his first concert in New York on January 7, 1984, at Lincoln Center, featuring The American Symphony Orchestra, soloists, and three choruses, the Louisiana Chorale of Acadiana, Camerata Singers of Baton Rouge, and Collegiate Chorale of New York. Although he didn't realize it at the time, Mr. Tiboris had just started his own successful production company, MidAmerica Productions, which would become the foremost independent producer of choral concerts in Carnegie Hall.

During its 36 years, MidAmerica Productions has brought together conductors, soloists, and choral and instrumental ensembles from the U.S. and abroad to appear at New York's top venues, including Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage, Weill Recital Hall, and Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall; and Alice Tully Hall and Avery Fisher Hall (now David Geffen Hall) at Lincoln Center. In addition to presenting instrumental and classic choral works, MidAmerica Productions has championed the works of contemporary composers with approximately 92 World Premieres, 21 United States Premieres and 100 New York Premieres.

Additionally, MidAmerica Productions has presented concerts in numerous U.S. cities and in countries throughout the world, including Greece, England, Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Italy, France and Russia.

He sendeth the springs into the valleys, which run among the hills. Psalms 104:10

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High Country Prison Ministry

People Who Care

By Jody Griffin
Avery and Mitchell Counties

I was in prison and ye came unto me. Matthew 25:36

There are people who live day to day and never give a thought to what others may be going through and there are people who somehow carve out time in their already busy lives to give just a little more of themselves. The ones who find time to serve others are some of the most important people in the world.

At AMCI, and in countless other prisons around North Carolina, these folks are demonstrating to men and women wrestling with despair that there are in fact people "out there" who care! These people care that the incarcerated are living with the consequences of their actions. They care that spouses, children and 'significant others' are restricted from contact and long to have their father/son/brother/friend home with them again.

These people don't get paid for the use of their time/energies. No, they volunteer to come into the prison to teach, to encourage, to disciple to bless.

Volunteers can sometimes feel unwanted because of mandatory regulations that limit their access and activities. They can often wonder if their presence matters at all.

I'm here to tell you that YES, they matter! YES, they make a difference! YES, they help the potential for restoration and renewal possible!

Every day I see and hear of volunteers who have faithfully come to this prison because they wanted to lift up the incarcerated and be part of the team effort to restore that person to their family.

When the day comes for a person to be released from prison they will long remember those who gave hours, days even years to be with them while they were locked up.

Each year volunteers are recognized by the institution for their dedicated service. One volunteer is selected as VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR but EVERY SINGLE ONE is valuable to the mission embodied in their actions and attitudes.

To the 80 plus men and women who serve as volunteers at AMCI, we say THANK YOU for your contributions to our cause! You are such a blessing to us! We thank God for you and for all that you do!

I think you ALL are wonderful, and I give God the Glory for the calling/equipping/serving that you bring our way!

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



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



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Dave Ramsey

Dave Says

Dear Dave,
My mom is single, and she co-signed on my student loans for college. Would it affect her credit if I couldn't or didn't make the payments? Terri



Dear Terri,
Yes, it would. The truth is, your mom shouldn't have co-signed for you in the first place. There's only one reason lenders want a co-signer, and that's because they're afraid the person taking out the loan won't be able to pay back what's owed. You'll be trashing your and your mom's credit if you don't pay the bills on time. If she co-signed for you, and you don't do the right thing and pay back the loans, she'll start getting phone calls looking for the money, too. I don't think you want to subject your mom to the stress and hassle of collector calls or bad marks on her credit, do you?

Believe me, I understand what happened. Your mom loves you, and she wants the best for you. She's willing to do whatever it takes to help her daughter succeed. What I want you both to understand going forward is that the idea you have to borrow money to attend college—or do anything else, really—is a myth. There are many ways to get a great education, and find excellent career opportunities, without borrowing a dime. Scholarships and grants are everywhere these days. There's absolutely nothing wrong with working before and during college to help cash-flow an education, or you can begin your studies at a community college where the costs are much less.

In addition to four-year schools and community colleges, anyone looking to further their education shouldn't ignore the possibility of trade or technical schools. At these institutions, you can get valuable training that's highly marketable. Not to mention completing a trade or technical school program usually takes less time and is cheaper than a bachelor's degree.

My goal here isn't to fuss at you or beat you up, Terri. It's just very important you understand what's at stake—now and in the future. My hope is to give you and your mom some good information that will help each of you make smarter, more informed financial decisions down the road! —Dave

Dear Dave,
My daughter is in college, and I've always warned her to stay away from credit cards. Recently, I learned she got a department store credit card despite my advice. She has stayed within her credit limit, but she has never made any of the payments. At this point, she owes about \$3,500. She's a good student, and I want to look at this as a young person's mistake. Should I pay it off for her this one time? Joseph

Dear Joseph,
You're right, this is a typical young person's mistake. Like a lot of mistakes our kids make, it's one that's bad and wonderful at the same time. It's bad because, if she had just listened to dear old dad, she would've avoided a mess. It's wonderful, though, because it gives you the opportunity to provide her with a real world, teachable moment.

I understand you wanting to help her out "this one time." It means you have a good heart, and that you care about your daughter and love her. There's a reality here, though, I hope you won't overlook. It's her debt, not yours. She knew what she was doing when she signed up for that credit card. She knew what it meant, what was expected, and she is the one who should have to make good on the repayment. The entire deal is legal and fair.

At this point, my advice is to put your arm around her, talk to her, and lovingly explain where she went wrong and why it was a bad idea. You can even help her find a part-time job if she doesn't have one right now, so she can pay off her debt and get out of this mess. But leave the payments to her. My guess is by the time she finishes working her tail off to pay this debt she will have learned a lesson she'll remember for the rest of her life!—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.

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By Doug Harrell

Keeping the main thing the main thing is the focus of my thoughts this afternoon as I sit here contemplating what to write about for Life Lessons this windy Monday afternoon. We so often get caught up in chasing our tails round and round as we go down life's turbulent trail. We chase after this, then we decide we want that, and then something else tends to catch our fancy. Many of you will remember the song about looking for love in all the wrong places and that is what we are so often inclined to do. We go through our lives trying to reach happiness, fulfillment, contentment, self-worth or self-esteem. We think that the big house, the big income, the prominent position, the fancy car or the beautiful mate will make us happy. When that doesn't work, many turn to drugs and alcohol, an extramarital affair, or something else to fill the gap in our lives. If those things brought happiness, why do we see such disarray in the lives of the Hollywood elite, the Jet Set crowd? Those things do not work folks.

The only thing that ever brings us true happiness is a relationship with our Lord and Savior and the life that comes from accepting His will and following His footsteps. The Bible tells us that a people without a vision shall perish and to follow that vision we need wisdom, which comes from the words and instructions of our Lord, wisdom found in His path that is laid out for each of us. Proverbs 1:7 *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."* We must first seek wisdom, no one can force it on us. We, you and me, must make the decision to diligently search for it. James 1:5 *"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."* God is faithful to keep his promises and He promises to give us wisdom if we seek and ask, the ball is in our court. If you want to really enjoy life, follow the instructions, don't be like many of us are, speaking to myself now, and try everything before we take the time to read the instructions. Proverbs 3:13 *"Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding."* The rewards are everlasting and eternal, don't miss them. Focus on keeping the main thing the main thing! God Bless.



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

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I Once Was... But Now I

By Jerry Lewis
McDowell County



John Newton's famous hymn includes the well-known line, "I once was lost but now I'm found, was blind but now I see." Paul encourages us in Romans 12:2 to present our bodies to God as a living sacrifice in view of "the mercies of God." Newton never lost sight of God's mercies. We shouldn't either.

So, I'm wondering, how would you fill in the blanks? I once was _____, but now I _____.

- I once was drunk, but now I'm sober.
- I once was greedy, but now I'm generous.
- I once was an adulterer, but now I'm faithful.
- I once was self-centered, but now I'm compassionate.
- I once was addicted, but now I'm clean.
- I once was a cheater, but now I'm honest.
- I once was angry, but now I'm content.

Paul, writing to the Corinthians, warned them about indulging in unrepentant sin. Those who do will not experience heaven here...or in the life hereafter.

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10, ESV)

And then he makes an astounding observation!
And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11, ESV, emphasis mine)

And such were some of you. He's writing to reformed idolaters, homosexuals, adulterers, thieves, greedy, drunkards, verbal abusers (revilers) and cheaters. They once were _____, but now they are _____.

Live today in light of God's mercies. We all need a gracious memory of the sin from which God has saved us.

I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am.—John Newton

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

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The Other March Madness

By Tracy Black, Interim Executive Director
Mitchell County



March is a most wonderful time of year in North Carolina. The beginning of Daylight Savings time serves as the harbinger of the first day of Spring which follows close behind. The promise of new life fills us with hope for brighter days to come. And let us not forget that most hallowed time of all for all North Carolina sports fans, March Madness! Basketball reigns supreme and with all the powerhouse colleges in NC, the hope of bringing the National Championship home is ever present. Yet with all these wonderful things going on there is another madness that is happening, and it is the madness of domestic violence.

I've talked with many people over the course of my career in the domestic violence field and one thing is clear, domestic violence is "crazy making"! You see, not every day in one of these relationships is horrible. Many, if not most, have experienced some of the most wonderful times of their lives with this person. They've laughed with absolute abandon, shared the joy of child birth, or shared the pride in the accomplishments of children. But the flip side is equally true; they've experienced the most horrific times in their lives with this person also. They've spent years of walking on egg shells not knowing when the next outburst of violence will occur. They've been belittled and/or degraded, beaten and oft times raped. Victims are left to wonder which the real person is.

To complicate matters, the abuser (man or woman) doesn't show this private face to the rest of the world. The public face that is shown is much different. The rest of the world sees a person who is fun loving, gregarious, kind and caring and seldom sees that much darker face that is only shown at home, in private with the curtains drawn. The victims hear "What a great guy" or "You're so lucky to have her" or even "It must be wonderful to be married to him!" This leaves victims confused and wondering "He's wonderful to everyone else, is it me or am I just crazy?"

So, what can we do to end this madness? For the most part, we must believe the victim. Understand, for years they've heard that no one will believe them and when they finally seek help and we discount or doubt them it just validates what the abuser has said. Rarely, an accusation of abuse is proved to be untrue, but we mustn't penalize the many for the misdeeds of the few.

And more than anything else, we must educate the younger generations about abuse. SafePlace is now seeing second generation victims and abusers. Please join Mitchell County SafePlace or your local domestic violence program in the fight to end this madness. We can't do it without you!

Tracy E. Black, Interim Executive Director Mitchell County SafePlace



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A Most Unlikely Pair

By Christy Lowman
Burke County

The ocean is a vast open area where survival can be tough. Some animals have decided to work together so they can survive. They have become the most unlikely friends. This type of relationship is called a symbiotic relationship.

Jellyfish have always fascinated me. Several types of them have become friends with fish. Instead of eating them they let them live among their tentacles. These fish are small, vulnerable fish. They have learned that they are immune to the jellyfish's stings making it possible for them to take refuge under the jellyfish. While protecting the small fish, the jellyfish uses him as bait to lure bigger fish for food. When a bigger fish comes closer to eat the small fish the jellyfish will sting him with his tentacles. This is how the jellyfish gets its food and in return the small fish gets to eat whatever scraps are left. The jellyfish doesn't have to work as hard to find food. The small fish not only has a protective shelter, but is also fed. Their teamwork provides a win for both of them!

This type of teamwork is one of many that shows how animals have teamed up to survive.

We are the same way. If we work together with one another we can accomplish things that we could not have done on our own. It is very possible that while doing this, you might find an awesome friend that you enjoy being around, a person that you would have never considered a friend. For example, when I was growing up we got new neighbors. They were a sweet elderly couple, that I started visiting on a regular basis. I would go over and keep them company and would help them out when needed. In return, I made new friends and they became my adopted grandparents. Not only did I hear fascinating true stories, but the man taught me about all kinds of rocks and what it was like to be a rock hound. The lady taught me how to crochet, about gardening and growing flowers. The best thing they talked about was God and how He had made a difference in their lives. The time I spent there was priceless, we kept each other company for many years. We were an unlikely trio, but we were able to help each other out, while cherishing each other's friendship. The life skill of learning how to crochet has blessed me in my life. It started me

on the path to learn more about crochet. I've made and sold items, donated prayer shawls to the sick, and developed my own crochet patterns. The stories of the Navy, and of going on rock hunting adventures spiked my love for rocks and

adventure. I was also able to experience God's love through them. My neighbors blessed me and in return I have been able to bless others.

I challenge you to team up with others to look for ways to help other people out. Visit shut-ins that are no longer able to come to your church, visit people in local nursing homes. Take meals to the homeless. These are just a few examples of things you could do. I not only guarantee you that you will find a new friend, but you will also be blessed by that person as well!

Jesus went out and met with the people that were not popular, some had diseases, some were not liked, etc. He did not act like He was better than anyone, even though He was. He washed the disciples' feet before the Last Supper to demonstrate how we should love one another and that we should serve others. I challenge you to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Go out and show love to others! Yes, YOU can team up with others to make a difference in this world!

Dear Lord, please help each one of us be bold in serving others, help us be the hands and feet of Jesus. I pray that others will see You and Your love in us and in each and everything we do. Help us work together to accomplish great things in Your name. Amen

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 NIV

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

A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones. Proverbs 17:22



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MARCH
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A New Vision for Mitchell County DSS

By Sara Ross, Director, Mitchell County DSS
Mitchell County



On January 1st, 2019 I was honored to become the new Director at Mitchell County DSS. I had spent 20 years preparing for this exciting and challenging position with various job titles and responsibilities leading up to this tremendous opportunity in my life. My experience had centered mostly around the advocacy and care for people from all ages in life; from childhood while Director of a foster care program, to adult mental health, substance use, and intellectual/developmental disabilities in a managed care organization and comprehensive care provider, to senior dependent care in skilled nursing facilities. All these roles have helped to shape my approach to sharing my first commandment, to love others. Primarily, my burning motivation in life is advocating for quality care served with dignity for vulnerable individuals, often navigating physical and mental challenges. I am extremely excited to be able to further that motivation in a position that will hopefully have a tremendous impact on the Mitchell County DSS and the community that we serve.

During the first two months on the job I have been focused on defining the vision and goals for the organization, in collaboration with county administration and current Mitchell County DSS staff. One of the most pressing situations we are currently facing is the need for foster homes for Mitchell County's youth in crisis.



We are also looking for applicants to join our team in the capacity of Child Welfare, Income Maintenance and Quality Assurance workers. The core values that we are looking for are applicants that are willing to learn, that want to be part of a team that is committed to the betterment of the organization, and that have a commitment to the well-being of the population being served. Training will be provided in many instances, and state applications may be filled out and emailed to DSSapplicants@mitchellcounty.org.

We face a big challenge with the many issues that our population is dealing with, but with commitment across the spectrum of the community, we can make a tremendous impact for good in the lives of those we are striving to serve. I look forward to further collaboration with the faith community, law enforcement, schools, hospice, local and regional resources and the public at large. We pray for and covet your support in the endeavor to make a difference for good in our wonderful community.

Sarah is the new Mitchell County DSS Director.



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The Blessings Of Hosting A Celebrate Recovery Ministry

By Rev. Bruce Cannon
Mitchell County

"For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." (Matthew 25:42,43)

The will of God for a local Church will always be based upon two things: 1) the gifts, talents and abilities He has given to the Church; and 2) the needs of the people who live within the ministry area of the local Church. He puts within the Church those gifts, talents and abilities needed to minister to the needs of the people living around it.

Over a decade ago the Lord began to open my eyes to the many struggling with addictions – primarily drug addiction. I was serving in the capacity of Director of Missions in central North Carolina working with forty churches at that time and began to receive phone calls almost daily from family members trying to find help for their son or daughter, brother or sister or other family member. What I discovered was that there were very few Christian ministries operating to help persons recover from addictions, and, that the needs were tremendous.

Having lived in Western North Carolina for the past three years I see the needs are as great here! And, as when I lived in the central part of our State, the opportunities for help are very limited.

In December 2016 the Lord laid upon the heart of Josh Wise, my wife and I to investigate the possibility of starting a Mitchell County Celebrate Recovery. The needs were there but would my Church support this ministry? I am proud and excited to say they did and are! Every Thursday evening at 6pm Bear Creek Baptist Church (327 Bear Creek Church Road, Bakersville) opens its doors and provides a free meal to those who come seeking help for a hurt, habit or hang-up. The ones who attend are welcomed and loved by my Church family. At 7pm a worship service is held which focuses primarily on addiction recovery and is followed by small group meetings for those struggling with addiction AND a small group meeting for families.

I would love to encourage every congregation to begin a Celebrate Recovery. It has been and is one of the greatest ministries our Church has ever been involved in. It is absolutely exciting to see one whose life was unmanageable due to addiction give their heart to Jesus and find the strength to say "no" to drugs. It is wonderful to see the relief in the eyes of a parent or spouse when they see the recovery being made by their family member. It is extremely exciting to see how God blesses this ministry and uses it!

Please consider starting a Celebrate Recovery in your Church. Local groups are needed in every county! If Bear Creek Baptist Church can help you start one or if you have questions about how to do so please contact our Church Office at 828-688-4331.

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.



Getting High and Loving It

By Steve Wilson
Burke County

Have you ever mentioned something in passing without even thinking about it? Maybe it was a long time desire to do something new or perhaps you verbalized a "bucket list" entry to someone. That was my case a couple years ago. But I'll begin with a true confession...

I'm afraid of heights...there, I said it...I own it. I can even admit that I get more than a little panicked on a step stool. I know my family gets quite the enjoyment from this little "quirk" when vacationing. We will arrive at a spectacular panoramic view and the rest of the folks will go running up to the railing, admiring the views and here I am stuck in place. Acrophobia takes over, my legs lock up, and my arms shoot out as I take small, zombie-like steps toward the safety of whatever barrier is between me and the "death drop". After FINALLY catching up to the rest of the group, I wrap all ten digits in a death grip around the railing and declare, "yep, what a nice view!" before reversing the process and moon walking back to safety.

It is with this memorable backdrop in mind that I present the next precious moment. It is Christmas at our house and like all households, great expectations abound as we carefully unwrapped hidden treasures. It was my turn, so I picked up a package to reveal my surprise. And so it was...a gift certificate for a Hot Air Balloon ride! I remained speechless, unable to respond in part, because I could not breathe. Panic and the possibility of incontinence came in waves as all I could utter was "thanks, honey"...My sweet wife evidently noticed my unsettled response and replied, "well, you have mentioned more than once in the past of how cool it would be to go up in a hot air balloon, of what a sense of freedom that would be. Don't you remember?" At that moment, I couldn't really remember who I was, let alone what I mistakenly uttered in my foolish past...

Fast forward ten months. My "free ride to the heavens" was still sitting on my chest of drawers, just as dormant as my desire to schedule the "great adventure". Driven on by the guilt of not using the gift, the looming expiration date, or perhaps the fact I couldn't find anyone willing to buy this "once in a lifetime" opportunity, I picked up the phone and made a date with destiny.

The day quickly arrived when it was time to take the plunge (poor wording) and we arrived at the airport a couple of hours before dusk and found the other you've-got-to-be-out-of-your-mind adventurers. We were divided into groups and soon were herded toward our "baskets of bliss" where we took part in assembling the basket to the balloon and making other preparations for our departure. I was an obedient soldier; following orders as requested, only as a result of a cerebral mix of pride, stubbornness, fear and a healthy dose of both adrenaline and stupidity. After our ride was flight ready, as luck would have it, the wind started to kick up. Sensing the possibility of being dragged down the air field, the pilot ordered the three saucer-eyed passengers into the basket.

The first two, a husband and wife team, climbed aboard and were immediately tossed toward the propane tanks as the wind caught the balloon and rocked the basket south. Once it was in an upright position again, it was my turn. I placed one foot in the foothold and swung my other leg over the edge of the basket as if

continued on page 18



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Hospice and Home Care of the Blue Ridge

People In Need Grant

By Kim Cuthbertson
Mitchell County

Mitchell County Hospice and Home Care of the Blue Ridge is please to announce it has received a People in Need Grant from The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina. These funds will provide respiratory therapy supplies for the Breathe Easy Expansion Project.

Hospice and Home Care of the Blue Ridge is a local non-profit hospice that provides end-of-life care and support for their community. Breathe Easy provides services for patients diagnosed with respiratory and pulmonary disease as a primary or secondary condition. Hospice of the Blue Ridge is one of the few hospice providers who employs a full-time respiratory therapist to help provide care, education and support for patients and their families.

The Community Foundation is a non-profit organization that manages charitable funds and makes grants in the 18 counties of Western North Carolina. CF-WNC works with corporations, families and individuals to provide a permanent pool of capital to help people in the 18-county region. For more information, visit www.cfwnc.org

Kim is the Director of community development at Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge.



Walnut Grove Church

Why?

By Kurt Bomar
Avery County



There are a lot of difficult passages in the OT. This is one of them. I hope to shed light on this passage as well as others 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

Why? This, the shortest question of all is often the most difficult to answer. Why does my loved one have to lie in a bed of suffering? Why did he/she have to die? Why did my child have to be in that auto accident? Why was I abused as a child? Why did you allow me to get cancer or some other dreaded disease?

These questions have been asked through the ages; often the unmentioned charge is "God you're not being fair!"

There are many ways to respond to these questions but let me just point you to one for now.

There was a fellow in the Bible that asked such questions. He was considered one of the most righteous men in the Bible. He was known for loving and honoring God and being kind, patient, and generous to a fault. He was the kind of man that you would have loved to have as a neighbor.

His name was Job and despite his righteousness God systematically allowed Satan to take everything away from him. First his possessions, next his family and finally his health. In fact, ironically, the only thing he didn't take from Job was his wife. Perhaps this added to his pain as she seemed to be a thorn in his side during this ordeal.

He then had to endure the emotional pain of his "friends" telling him that it was all his fault and that God was really punishing him for his many sins.

After meditating on all his misery Job said "Why?" I feel sorry for Job and if anyone deserved a clear answer to that question it would have been him.

And God did give him an answer. An answer I believe that applies to all of our "whys?" too. But notice the answer was to a different question. God never touched on "why" rather he answered the question of "Who."

Who, Job, created the universe? Who makes the dawn come up each day? Who created all the great creatures on Earth? Who tells the great Seas where to stop? Who makes the lightning flash? Who provides food and shelter for the wild animals? Over 60 times in chapters 38-41 of Job, God continues to redirect Job's question of "why" to "Who."

I think what God was saying is "Job, I love you more than you can know, but I am God and you are not. I have plans you can't even comprehend and it's not always for you to know why I'm doing what I'm doing. Sometimes suffering is required to advance my plan."

One example comes to mind. When I think of Jesus feeding the 5,000, there was joy and excitement but there is not any indication that any were changed on that mountainside. On the other hand, on another mountain, called Calvary, there was unimaginable suffering of another righteous man. Another man who cried out "Why Father?" In the darkness of that hour lives indeed were changed. A dying thief got saved. An enemy centurion saw the power of God through this suffering and all humanity was forever changed.

The point is God is not asking us to undergo anything he didn't allow to happen to his only Son.

When you are tempted to ask "why?" I suggest we should instead remind ourselves of "Who?" We may never get the answer to "why", but we can always get the answer to "Who?"

Kurt Bomar is pastor of Walnut Grove Church.

Crossword Solution

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

Sudoku Solution

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

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Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

The Rest of the Story
Doug Harrell

Back in the day! When Clint and I first met we were in the corporate world and that is a far piece from where we ended up on the farm. As you can see, Clint's adventures did not just start here on the farm, but were preceded by his antics in the corporate world as well. He just continued the tradition of screwing up on the farm, in reality, he was one of the smartest and most intellectual men I have ever known and worked with. Long live the adventures!

Farmer Clint's Near Death Experience

Dear friends,
"Back in the day" I was a corporate hotshot...or so I thought @. I tell you this only to explain how and why I commandeered a Cessna Citation jet from Dallas, TX to Anchorage, AK.
As Vice President of Marketing for GTE Directories, I was responsible for business development, or simply making certain our key customers were happy campers. My domain was worldwide as we had a range of customers from Alaska to Hawaii, from Hong Kong to Malaysia, and from Belgium to Austria. Anyway, I was asked to visit our customer friends in Alaska so I scheduled the corporate jet and invited members of my marketing staff to go along.



A County Boy Makes Good!

Please understand, I am a country boy; I grew up traveling on Greyhound Bus Lines. (Mostly I moved about in the back of my dad's 1956 Chevy station wagon – along with my six brothers and sisters. Funny to think back, no seat belts, frolicking in the back of the car, sticking my arms out the windows, etc.)
My dad was a hardworking man but we barely got by from paycheck to paycheck. I mowed lawns as a kid, I sold greeting cards from Boy's Life magazine to make money; I gave my earnings to daddy to help with household bills.
So the very idea of having personal access to a jet airplane was a novelty I never dreamed! Heck, I didn't know companies had airplanes. Oftentimes during my corporate life, when I had amazing experiences and glimpses into "the lifestyles of the rich and famous" – like the night I was invited to dinner with First Lady Nancy Reagan at the Waldorf Astoria in NYC – I looked to heaven and spoke to my departed dad, "Look at me daddy! Who could have guessed I would do this?"

Bound For The Last Frontier

I decided to do something different on this trip; to have some one-on-one time with three of our clients. (Most meetings occur in sterile corporate board rooms or hotel meeting rooms). I arranged for a full-day trip of King Salmon fishing on the Kenai River. My customers, all native Alaskans, were thrilled and I was excited that we would have "bonding" time away from the day-to-day pressures of big business. And, being an ardent fisherman, I couldn't wait to "tie into" a King Salmon. Wow!
We arrived at the Kenai River where our guide was ready with all the gear we'd need for a memorable trip. It was early May, as I recall, only a month after the "breakup", when the icebound river gives way to spring temperatures and massive ice flows exit for the ocean. My point – the water was cold, very very cold.

Fish On!

It was a beautiful, sunny day as we climbed aboard the metal boat there were six of us in all. The temperature was about 40 degrees so were dressed in long johns, sweaters, heavy coats and gloves. I had slipped on chest waders over my clothing in case we did any wading along the shore. The guide told us the King Salmon were running fast and furious; they had caught three large Kings earlier in the week.
A couple of my client friends caught fish...it's always a good idea to let the customers enjoy success FIRST @. Their catch averaged about 20 pounds, very nice sized King Salmon and the first I'd ever seen! I had no strikes and wondered, to myself, if I would catch one...I think I can, I think I can, I think I can @!
Late afternoon I cast a silver spoon near the bank; it barely hit the water's surface when the BIGGEST FISH I'd ever seen exploded to the top of the river swallowing my lure. That fish nearly stripped all the line off my pole before the guide was able to maneuver the boat close enough to get him turned. I reeled and reeled, struggling to get the monster close to the boat. Some 20-25 minutes later I landed an EIGHTY FIVE POUND King Salmon. I was so excited that I nearly fell overboard...but not yet!

Time Running Out

We didn't catch any more fish that afternoon, possibly because we were caught up in admiring my earlier catch. Also, there were many anglers on the river now, both guided trips and along the shore. Our guide explained that there is an early evening curfew on the Kenai River, a time when all fishermen must be off the river and no fishing is allowed. So he wanted to move upstream and try our luck in a tributary or two.
I was sitting on the bow, heavy laden in my waders and other gear, and holding my fishing rod as the boat moved rapidly up-river. I turned around to say something to one of my friends when the guide made a sharp left turn into a smaller stream.

Man Overboard!

As our boat veered left my body went straight...rod, waders, boots and all I landed in the Kenai River.

Two of our folks witnessed my plunge, screamed at the pilot/guide and pandemonium broke out topside. As I was helplessly sinking to the bottom of the river, I felt the force of a heavy metal object glance off of my skull – out of desperation and not knowing what else to do, my friend Todd had thrown the anchor overboard in hopes of stopping the boat.

Memories From The Deep

At some point in my descent I felt the bow of the boat pass over my face; I kicked at the bottom knowing that the prop could be the next object I would encounter. I literally felt the swirling current from the screw as it passed overhead.
I remember thinking to myself, "I am going to die"; but I did not panic, nor did I take on water. The very next memory was a vision of my body, fully awake floating in what looked like a field of cotton. The sun was warm, the surface was soft, I was comfortable and happy...very happy.

Popping Up Out Of The Water

At some point, obviously, I surfaced in that raging river. My friend, Cheryl, said it looked like I was just standing there as the river rushed on both sides. She described the scene as, "You looked like a bobber, just bouncing on the water; as if someone were holding you up!"
The guide moved alongside and several of the men hauled me into the boat. I awakened to someone pounding on my chest and hearing the words, "Hypothermia, hypothermia," from my friend Tom. When a person is immersed in cold water, their skin and nearby tissues cool rapidly. When the core temperature drops below 90° F serious complications begin to develop. Death may occur at about 80° F; however, a person may drown at a higher temperature due to loss of consciousness or inability to use the arms and legs. I screamed back at him, "Stop beating on me, I am fine!" And I was.

Back On Shore

The guide motored quickly back to the shore as the others removed ALL my clothes and covered me with a tarp; one even laid on top of me to provide a modicum of warmth. As I sat on the bank, trying to squeeze my fat self into some skinny clothes, bearded men came up and began touching my shoulders, one said, "Man, you ain't 'sposed to be here. I saw the whole thing and you shouldn't be alive. Nobody survives a fall into the Kenai River!" Again my friend Cheryl spoke up, "I timed it, you were underwater more than 8 minutes...you should be dead, Clint." About that time my friend Todd apologized for hitting me on the head with the anchor!
For the next several weeks I was literally disappointed that I had "come back." Although I did not want to be absent from my family, the sensation I had in that cotton field was unlike anything I can even describe. The only term that comes to mind is heavenly.

A Changed Life For Farmer Clint

That experience fueled an intense fire within me to better understand God's purpose for my life. I sat in church whenever the doors were opened; I developed a voracious appetite for Scripture; I literally sought out missionaries and ministries which I could and would support. I gave my life over to Jesus Christ in a whole new way.

Looking Back And Looking Up

My trip and death in the Kenai River occurred in early May, 1990...nearly 25 years ago. Since that time God has shown me His glory; He has demonstrated His power; He has led me on incredible missions; He has broken my heart for the sad, lonely and broken people in this world; and He has delivered me from the very depths of despair and death.
This Farmer Clint, the one whom you have come to know as the klutz of Mitchell County...the man who screws up more than he straightens up...the fellow who doesn't know a backhoe from a road grader...your goofy neighbor who screamed like a girl when face-to-face with a groundhog...This Farmer Clint loves the Lord God with all his heart, strength, soul and mind.

Still humbled in the hills,

Farmer Clint



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A Promise Kept

By Patricia Jackson
McDowell County



As I studied Second Samuel, Chapter 9 regarding the promises made between King David and King Saul's son Jonathan, I remembered a promise made to me as a six-year-old girl. One fall afternoon in 1950, a large black car came slowly up our dirt drive. The two men and two women explained they were from Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and would like to see a field of cotton on the stalk, with cotton bolls. I begged my mom to let me take them to a neighbor's field, and she reluctantly agreed, a very important task for a six-year-old girl. When we reached the neighbor's field, I hurriedly climbed up the red bank and pulled up a handful of cotton stalks. They planned to take them back home to show other farmers. As we rode back to my home, they asked me questions about what size clothes I wore, what toys I had, and promised to surprise me with a gift for helping them.

The next school day, my teacher located Oshkosh, Wisconsin on the map, and I eagerly told her of the visit on Saturday and that I was going to receive a gift from them. Each day, as I came home from school, I ran to the mailbox, looking for my promised gift. Several weeks passed, October and Halloween came and passed, but no gift. November and Thanksgiving came and passed, but no gift. As Christmas approached, I asked my mom why I had not received a promised gift. She explained that many people make promises and show kindness, but very few keep them.

Second Samuel, Chapter 9 is not about a little girl's broken heart over a broken promise but a great King who fulfilled his promise to the son of his friend Jonathan. This account of David and Jonathan is an example of true biblical friendship, a covenantal relationship. Jonathan was to be second in command in David's future reign, and King David was to protect Jonathan's family (1 Samuel 20: 14-16 and verse 42).

In their relationship, we see qualities of true friendship and the fulfillment of a promise. First, Jonathan sacrificed for David. In 1 Samuel 18:4, we read that Jonathan gave David his robe, garments and military items (sword and bow). The significance of this gift was that Jonathan recognized David as the future king of Israel. Rather than being envious or jealous, Jonathan submitted to God's will and sacrificed his own right to the throne. Second, in 1 Samuel 19:1-7, we read of Jonathan's defense of David, as he convinced his father King Saul not to kill David and remember the things David had previously helped him. In an earlier verse, 1 Samuel 18:1 we read that "Jonathan loved him as his own soul." When David learned of Jonathan's death, he "lamented." We recall that Jonathan died with his father and two brothers in battle, their bodies desecrated by the Philistines, later retrieved and taken to Jabesh and their bones buried there.

In the first part of Chapter 9, David inquired if there was any left of the house of Saul, that "I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake"? Mephibosheth had inherited an estate from Jonathan, Saul's son. Ziba was the chief steward of the estate, much like we would have an executor in charge. David's question showed a great love because Saul made himself an enemy of David. When the news came that Saul, Jonathan and two other sons of Saul had been killed, Mephibosheth's nurse fell, while fleeing with him, resulting in his permanent lameness. She rightly feared that the leader of a new royal dynasty would execute every potential heir of the former dynasty. Since the son of Jonathan was the rightful heir to the throne of Israel, Mephibosheth could be a rival or threat to David.

In verse 4, we find that Mephibosheth is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel. This speaks of Mephibosheth's low station in life, not owning a home, instead of living in the house of a wealthy benefactor. He felt secure as long as he believed King David didn't know his location. When "King David sent and fetched him out of the house," he must have been terrified. He had no doubt lived in fear that David would do as other kings did and massacre every potential rival to his throne. He was not aware of the promises made between David and his father, Jonathan. When he met David, "He fell on his face and did reverence" knowing David might execute him, his grown son and five grandsons. All were a potential threat to the throne and by tradition, could be executed.

In verse seven, David reassures Mephibosheth, telling him "fear not, that he would restore thee all the land of Saul, thy father." The profitable land of Saul's had been incorporated by David or controlled by Ziba. Now David was instructing Ziba and his servants to till the land and bring in the fruits to provide for Mephibosheth's general financial needs. David also told Mephibosheth he "shalt eat bread at my table continually" as well as his son Micha. It was a high honor to eat at the table of the King. These actions were the direct result of King David keeping the promise made to Jonathan and went far beyond giving Mephibosheth what was rightly his, in addition to Mephibosheth the honor of a close relationship with the King.

In Luke 22:30, Jesus told his disciples "they may eat and drink at his table in heaven." This promise is to us also. God's kindness is extended to us for the sake of his son Jesus and is based on a promise covenant. If we honor our covenant with Jesus, we will receive more than we ever had; have access and fellowship with our King. Chapter nine is a pattern for us in serving and ministering to others and a lesson in honoring promises we make as Christians.

Corrie Ten Boom lived in the Netherlands When the Nazi's invaded, sending Jews to concentration camps, her family hid and provided for many of them. She was later sent to a concentration camp. She continued to teach the Bible to others and after release wrote: "The Hiding Place" which became a movie. She wrote, "Let God's Promises Shine On Your Problems." Words of inspiration we can apply to our heart!!

Patricia Jackson is a member of Redeemed Free Will Baptist Church, Glenwood, NC. She is also a grant writer for non-profits and a published author. She lives in Rutherford County with her husband.

The New Morality

By Billy Graham

Statements by Protestant clergymen condoning sexual immorality have given a new license to people everywhere. One teenager frankly told me some time ago, "My pastor says sex is all right if it is meaningful to me." Many church leaders now advocate a so-called new morality.

What they propose is a standard in which the ultimate criterion for right and wrong is not the command of God, but individuals' subjective perception of what is good for them and their neighbor in each situation.

This is not a new morality—this is the old immorality. When more than 900 clergymen and students gathered some time back at Harvard Divinity School to ponder the new morality and its significance for the church, some of the statements made by clergymen were almost unbelievable. Time magazine reported that the clergymen agreed generally that in some respects the new morality is a healthy advance.

Very little was said by these clergymen about the terrible price paid for sexual immorality—venereal diseases, deep emotional disturbances, guilt complexes and suicides.

The moral problem threatens the very security of the nation. Nearly every nation of the past fell because of immorality and corruption. And the most disturbing fact about it is that even church people have become so calloused to these things that we are no longer appalled at what is happening.

Hardened to Sin

We are becoming hardened to sin. As Jeremiah the prophet said, we have lost our ability to blush (Jeremiah 6:15). We have become so accustomed to immorality that it no longer seems to us to be immoral.

Instead of church leaders thundering forth as prophets of God to warn people about the penalty of their sins, we are taken up in so much social planning that we have no time for the Bible. Would to God that the church would go back to preaching the Bible and quit watering down the Gospel! Would to God that we would lift the standards high and call people to cross-bearing and self-denial! We in the church have watered down the message and made it so meaningless to be a Christian that many rebel against the church and turn away in disgust.

Who is to blame for this deteriorating moral situation? Don't point an accusing finger at young people. It is the older generation that has failed. The school, the church and the home have failed to communicate God's standards.

The Seventh Commandment plainly says, "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). Nowhere does the Bible teach that sex in itself is a sin. But from Genesis to Revelation, the Bible condemns the wrong use of sex. Men and women in their sinful natures have taken what was intended to be a glorious and complete act of love between two people and have made it something low, cheap and dirty. The Bible is one of the world's most outspoken books on the subject of sex, and the Bible condemns sex outside the bonds of matrimony. The fact that immorality is rampant doesn't make it right; the fact that some clergymen may condone it doesn't make it right.

The Bible says, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 16:25). Under the Jewish law, adultery was punishable by death. Under God's law today, it also results in spiritual death. The Bible says, "She who lives in pleasure is dead while she lives" (1 Timothy 5:6). The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), and "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20).

Committing Immorality

There are many ways that you can commit immorality. First, you can commit immorality by evil imaginations. In Genesis 6:5 we read, "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." Solomon said, "As [a man] thinks in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7).

If your thoughts are evil, then your acts will be evil. If your thoughts are godly, then your life will be godly. If God destroyed the world once for its continual evil imaginations, it is reasonable to believe that all the sin, lust and immorality in the world today grieves His heart just as much as they did in that day.

Many people dream of sin and imagine sin—and if granted the opportunity, they would sin. All they lack is the occasion to sin. So, in the sight of God they are sinners as much as though they had actually committed immorality.

Second, you can commit immorality by a look. The Bible places "the lust of the eyes" (1 John 2:16) right along with other major sins. Jesus said, "Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). Peter spoke of "eyes full of adultery" (2 Peter 2:14). No wonder Job said, "I made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman?" (31:1).

Third, immorality can be committed in the way you dress and in the way you act. If women deliberately dress to entice a man to sin, then they are guilty whether the act is committed or not.

Several years ago a girl said, "I came forward in a meeting and accepted Christ. A few nights later I was going to a party. When I put on my dress and looked in the mirror, it seemed as though Jesus were looking at me. I went to my wardrobe and changed my dress, and now I dress as though Jesus were my escort each evening."

Fourth, immorality can be committed by reading and looking at pornographic literature. Our newsstands are filled with the most vile literature the world has ever known. Many books are written with the deliberate idea of arousing sexual passion. Those who write and distribute such books are going to have a terrible price to pay on the day of judgment, and those who buy and read such material



are also going to have to give an account to Almighty God. Perhaps you have broken God's Seventh Commandment. Maybe you have been unfaithful to your wife or husband. Maybe you have yielded to sexual immorality. There is hope for you.

Good News

For anyone who is guilty, I have good news. Christ Jesus died upon the cross for you. He shed His blood for you, and the Bible teaches that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7). Today you can come to the cross and be forgiven of every sin that you have ever committed.

When you come to know Christ, there dwells within you the Holy Spirit, who gives you supernatural strength to overcome temptation and evil, so that when you face it, you don't face it alone. The Spirit of God gives you the power to say, "No."

"The Bible condemns sex outside the bonds of matrimony. The fact that immorality is rampant doesn't make it right; the fact that some clergymen may condone it doesn't make it right."

All of us are tempted. If you have not been tempted, you are the only one in the world. Even Christ was tempted. But the Bible teaches that temptation is not a sin. The sin comes only when we yield to the temptation.

"Ah," you say, "but I can't resist the temptation." Yes, you can! God will never allow you to be tempted beyond your ability to resist the temptation. He will make a way of escape for you (1 Corinthians 10:13).

If Christ lives in your heart, you don't have to yield to any temptation. For the true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, there is a way to escape. The Holy Spirit makes that way.

Make sure that your heart is consecrated to God. The word means "set apart." It requires that you present your body to God. We cannot be dedicated to Christ without giving Him our bodies.

And don't be conformed to this world. The Scripture says that we are to yield all of our body to the Spirit, to righteousness, so that the Holy Spirit can dominate us every moment of the day. Then, the Bible says, sin shall no longer have dominion over you, but you will be renewed in your mind by the mind that was in Christ.

How do you renew the mind? By reading the Word of God every day. It fills your mind with God's thoughts for the day, and you will find that those thoughts will drive out the evil.

Watch your thinking, for in the battle between the imagination and the will, the imagination usually wins. Watch your reading. Be discriminating about what you see. Be careful where you go. If you deliberately put yourself in the place of sin, you will likely yield. You cannot take fire into your bosom without getting burned (Proverbs 6:27).

Desire is expelled only by a higher desire. Let the love of Christ be the fire that eats up those sinful things.

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

This [is] the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Psalms 118:24



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Laughter is Healthy for You

By Buddy Freeman
Madison County



A hunter said, "it's getting awful late and we have not hit a thing yet."
The second hunter said, "let's miss two more and then go home."

An older couple took their small grandson to their worship service. The choir came marching out in their white robes. The little boy whispered, "Look Pa Pa, they are going to get haircuts."

A little girl was fascinated the first time she saw her grandpa take out his false teeth. She stood there shocked and said, "Now, take off your nose."

A five year old girl had gone fishing with her grandfather. After so long her grandfather asked, "Are you having any luck?" She replied, "No, I don't think the worms are really trying."

A man came home and found his wife crying. He asked, "Honey, why are you crying?" She said, "I baked a special Pie and the dog ate it." He said, "Don't worry, I will get you another dog."

A defendant named Joshua stood before a judge. The Judge, who happened to be a biblical scholar, asked the man, "Are you the Joshua who made the sun stand still?" The accused replied, "No, your honor, I'm the Joshua who made The moon shine."

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

mounting a frisky steed. Unfortunately, as soon as my body was in the basket, the wind rocked the balloon in the opposite direction and I immediately became intimate with the other three basket cases; strangers no more...

There was no time to think or react as the pilot announced it was now or never and released the tether from the anchor pin. What happened next was nothing short of miraculous. We were suddenly free, floating upward as the earth below us fell away. I saw my wife as she was waving to me, smiling broadly and probably thinking of my life insurance policy as she grew smaller and smaller. I looked out and all around me as my fear vanished, replaced by pure adrenaline and excitement. This was a different world I was in and I loved it! The now gentle autumn breezes carried the balloon over the once familiar landscape as I gained my bearings and began my search for familiar landmarks. Overhead and in the distance were other balloons, launched moments before our own, no longer landlocked humans but instead, novice aeronauts. As I peered below, I could see treetops retreating behind us, revealing evidence of being embraced by cool October nights; exhibiting their festive fall colors that temporarily distracted the mind from the thoughts of cold winter months to come. A family was running around in their country farmyard, playing with their five herding dogs while enjoying the last remaining hour of daylight.

All of this overwhelmed the senses and diverted the reality that there were four human beings nestled in a small wicker basket, suspended only by nylon and hot air, and all sharing the same space with three propane tanks—just awesome!! Match anyone? But those facts seemed insignificant in comparison to the opportunity to see the magnificent landscape before us; the bigger picture.

We all, at times, need to be taken away from the ordinary to experience the extraordinary. We are so busy living our mundane lives, so content in leading a "heads down-worker bee" existence that we fail to see the big picture, what God truly has lined up for us, what our mission should be. There are times when we will be asked to step out in faith, into the unfamiliar for the sake of the greater good. How willing are you? What is holding you back from setting yourself (and all of your baggage) aside for the benefit of another? For only God sees the bigger picture; our task is just to trust and obey. Like the pilot of the hot air balloon, God knows what needs to be done, how to navigate a circumstance, and what to steer away from. All you have to do is sit back, listen, and act when called upon to do your part.

When the sun finally started to set, our mission transitioned from being spectators to participants, tasked with looking for high tension cables and possible landing locations, while spitting into the air to calculate wind direction. And even though we descended on to the hard earth of reality, safe and sound, we were still on a collective high, knowing we shared life changing moments that we would never have experienced if we had held back and remained in our sane, safe little world. Am I still acrophobic?... YES! Would I take part in another hot air balloon excursion some day? In a heartbeat! For I have savored the sweetness of the extraordinary and yearn for another taste.

Steve Wilson is from Granite Falls and he does some writing in his spare time, mostly reflections on how God is seen through even the small experiences of our lives. He currently has a blog site called: <http://www.lifesimplyspoken.com> where he posts his stories.

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How to Enjoy Life

By John McCoury
Roan Mountain, Tennessee

As we look at Ecclesiastes 5:1-20 we need to Learn to let God be God; that is the first thing He declares to us. The lessons of life will fall into place when you learn that. God is in charge of life, so let Him be in charge; take these lessons from His hands. The place to learn that is in the house of God. When you go there, guard your steps; in other words, enter thoughtfully, expect to be taught something. In ancient Israel, of course, the house of God was the temple in Jerusalem. There sacrifices were offered, and the people were instructed about what they meant. There the Law was read, and the wisdom of God about life was given to people; this marvelous Old Testament was unfolded, with its tremendous insights into the truth about life, about what humanity basically and fundamentally is. The temple was the only place in the land where people could learn these things. In our day the house of God is no longer a building. We must be clear about that. You, the people, are the house of God. What the Searcher is saying is that when you gather together as the people of God, be expectant; there is something to be learned.

Second, he says, listen carefully. A fool is somebody who utters usually false things. What the Searcher clearly has in mind here is our tendency to complain and murmur about what has been handed us in life. When we gripe and grouse about our circumstances, we are really complaining against God. We are complaining about the choice God has made in His wonderful plan for our life. We will never learn to enjoy anything that way, not even our pleasures, let alone our pain. So, he says, listen carefully, for among the people of God the truth of God is being declared;

the wisdom of God is being set forth. A man said to me, I have been going through a painful experience this past week. I learned to see myself, and it horrified me. I saw things in myself which I despise in others. That is encouraging. There is a

man who is learning truth about himself. Lord, forgive me for my smooth-tongued attitudes when I come into Your presence. Teach me to guard my steps and listen carefully to Your words. What is the first thought that pops into our mind when we ask: Who is in charge? Have we learned to let God be God and to humbly inquire and listen to His wisdom? Enjoyment does not come from possessions or riches; nor does it come from companionship, popularity, and fame; or from the approval and admiration of others. Enjoyment comes by knowing the living God and taking everything from His hand with thanksgiving, whether it is pain or pleasure. That is the gift of God, and that is the lesson of this great book. Notice how the chapter closes: He seldom reflects on the days of his life, because God keeps him occupied with gladness of heart (Ecclesiastes 5:20). Have you ever met people like that? They have lived a full life, but they never talk about the past. Some people live in the past. William Randolph Hearst, who amassed one of the great fortunes of our time, ended his days amidst all the luxury and splendor of the castle that he built in southern California, sitting in a basement, playing over and over again the movies of his paramour from Hollywood in an effort to find a degree of enjoyment from the past. When people discover the richness of life that God has provided, they do not think of the past or even talk about it. They do not talk about the future, either, because they are so richly involved with the savor of life right now. How good it is to know the living God, to know that He controls what comes into your life. He expects you to make choices; Scripture always encourages that. But rejoice in the wisdom of a Father's heart and richly enjoy what is handed you day-by-day; that is the secret of life. Such a one seldom reflects on the days of his life because God will keep him occupied with gladness of heart. Yes, Lord. It is so good to know You and be given the freedom to enjoy all that You provide for me day by day. True enjoyment in life comes from a specific knowledge which results in constant thanksgiving. This is the great lesson and gift of God that enables us to enjoy life?

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



But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Galatians 5:22



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

Mitchell County Chamber Partners with Mitchell County Schools

By Patti Jensen
Mitchell County

Mitchell County Chamber Partners with Mitchell County Schools for Students@Work Month

The Mitchell County Chamber and its new workforce development initiative is partnering with the Mitchell County Schools to present the Students@Work Month to Mitchell County's middle school students during the month of March.

Students@Work is a project of the North Carolina Business Committee for Education in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. The goal is for North Carolina businesses to help middle school students in their community see the opportunities that exist in the workplace.

The Chamber is working with Pam Pitman, Business Career Coordinator at Bowman Middle School and Shea Renfro at Harris Middle School to coordinate the events. "The Chamber was eager to be a part of this project in Mitchell County Schools to bring our local business and industry community together with the middle school students at both Harris and Bowman schools," said Patti Jensen, Executive Director of the Mitchell County Chamber. "We appreciate the opportunity that Kim Hodshon, CTE Director of Mitchell County Schools and the Business Career Coordinators at the middle schools gave us to partner with them."



Instead of taking place during one concentrated week, Students@Work™ program will be held throughout the month of March with a specific industry focus for each week during the month. The students will have exposure to local business and industry and a variety of careers through speakers, exhibits by local businesses and field trips.

The specific focus weeks are:

March 4-8: Education, Healthcare and Public Service

March 11-15: Small Business and Entrepreneurship

March 18-22: STEM (science, technology, engineering, math)

March 25-29: Hospitality, Tourism and Retail

The Students@Work™ program is a perfect example of the types of engagements that the Chamber's new workforce development initiative plans to have with Mitchell County students to raise the exposure, awareness and education of the types of careers that are available in Mitchell County," said Jensen. "In addition, our member businesses are interested in knowing ways that they can support our local schools and the workforce development programs in the county."

Businesses are encouraged to participate in the Students@Work month by signing up to speak to students about their business, industry or career during the industry week that highlights their business sector. Speakers can choose one or both schools and can work with the coordinators to select a day and time slot that works best for them. Businesses are also invited to set up a booth/table during the lunch breaks at the middle schools to highlight their company and provide information for students. Any business interested in being a part of the Students@Work week should email Pam Pitman at Bowman Middle at ppitman@mhslive.net, or Shea Renfro at Harris Middle at srenfro@mhslive.net. Businesses may also call the Mitchell County Chamber office with any questions they might have.

About the Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce

The mission of the Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce is to support business and promote community. The Chamber is made up of hundreds of businesses, industries and individuals whose goal is to promote Mitchell County, the surrounding region and its economy.

The Chamber operates two locations in Mitchell County. The Mitchell County Visitor's Center is located in the Museum of N.C. Minerals, just off the Blue Ridge Parkway. The Visitor's Center greets over 200,000 visitors each year and provides them with information about the county. Administrative offices for the Chamber are located on Crystal Street in downtown Spruce Pine.

Patti Jensen is Interim Director of the Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce.

The Prayer Triangle in Witnessing

By Rev. John B. Sorensen



Prayer is one of the greatest privileges of having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. God speaks to us through His Word, and prayer gives us the opportunity to communicate with Him. When we pray, we become aware of our dependence on the Lord at all times.

So, it makes sense that prayer is a critical element in sharing our faith. Every aspect of our outreach efforts should be thoroughly covered with prayer from the beginning to the end and everything in between.

Ask God to Lead

God brings people along our path every day who need to hear about Him. Many of us walk past these divine appointments without ever noticing them. When we ask, God opens our eyes to see opportunities to share the Gospel wherever we go.

Prayer Challenge: Make a list of ten people you know need Jesus and pray for them by name. Keep that list in your Bible or a place where you will see it every day. Then look for opportunities to share your faith with them.

Don't Go Alone

God commands us to "go into all the world" but doesn't leave us to accomplish that task alone. "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses..." (Acts 1:8). While it is our responsibility to share the Gospel, it is the Holy Spirit who brings understanding to the person hearing it.

Prayer Challenge: Every time you share your faith with another person, invite the Holy Spirit to join the conversation. While speaking with someone about God and His love, inwardly pray for the Holy Spirit to intervene in that person's heart.



Invite Others to Pray

Even in today's culture, people are more willing to accept prayer than we think. One church in Fresno, California, reserved a booth at the local farmers market and hung a banner that simply said, "Need Prayer?" They were amazed at how many people stopped by for prayer and the opportunities it created to share the Gospel. Some visitors made professions of faith right there.

Prayer Challenge: When you share the Gospel with someone, offer to pray with them. Invite them to accept the gift of eternal life through prayer right where they are. "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." (Romans 10:13).

We all can become effective witnesses for Christ. Ask God today to reveal people in your life who need the Gospel. Begin to pray daily for them. Rely on the Holy Spirit to direct your conversations.

The Gospel is powerful. Share it with boldness.

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.

Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 1 Peter 1:8



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Lost In a Lost World

By Alan Griffin

So many people are dying, blinded by the darkness of their minds. Some are living an illusion of racial pride, while others believe it is nation against nation. Just another form of hatred—placing themselves above others, condemning those who do not agree with their way, and killing those who refuse to submit to their authority. Religious hatred has always been rampant in the world.* We can now add the term “revolution” to religious factions, because they are just as violent as all the others. Everyone thinks they have the answers, and no one is willing to bend. Economic worries bring religious entitlement, and this brings social gridlock where we are divided one against another, and in the end this will result in war.

Reason is not a term used in the search for understanding anymore. No one wants to look at things as they really are, but they have a blinded influence that leads them to insanity. Reality is glanced over for religious and political ideology. Reason is the comprehension of a sound mind using good motivation and judgment and is grounded in the reality of intelligent fact. Removing all falsehoods and stripping things down to pure reality is the beginning of reason. It is knowledge and wisdom of how things really are. I hope and pray that in the end love finds us all safe and free from the darkness that has consumed this earth into jeopardy.

I believe everything in the Bible is true. I try to be obedient to how the Bible tells us to live. I try to be fruitful by sharing the word of God with others. I try to set a good example for others to follow, and to help those of us who are in need. When I was consumed with sin I envisioned this to be a hard life, living without the things I desired. I found out I was wrong, because living in sin I was without the most important thing there is: a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through daily Bible study and prayer. Laugh if you like, turn your nose up, and walk away. I think the worldly person, the unsaved, is the one who is unrealistic. They spend their whole life pretending that they are in the know, and that they are in charge of what they think and say. They have to pretend day after day that they are not going to die. It is a fuzzy reality and a fantasy, and in the end age brings forth death, and death brings forth separation from God.

I believe the Christian is the true realist. He is already in preparation for the future. He is making ready for the next step in life, a life with God throughout all eternity. We owe our confidence to Christ, as we wait to be delivered into the future, coming unto the full knowledge of God. During the lifetime of the sinner he is forced to close his eyes to the truth. He pretends it isn't there so he can continue on with his evil ways. When one of his friends falls over dead he simply says, “too bad” and moves on. In the back of his mind he knows that one day he will be next because he hasn't made any plans for his future. He is forced to go through life pretending and believing his own lie.

“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword”; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken. Isaiah 1:18-20 (NKJV) The message we receive from God shows us how deceitful the appearance of the world is. It takes into account the relationship between God and man, the relationship we have with sin, the responsibility and accountability we have because of it; the cost we pay for living in sin is judgment and death. Christian belief is always on the side of reason.

The view of the world is that we are always on an upward trend. No one should be fooled by this. If you have lived on this earth long enough, you realize everything is getting worse. In my life I have seen sin completely consume the world. Mankind has been struggling for a long time, and it should be obvious to everyone that things are not getting better. Man has a distinct desire for sinfulness, and it should be proof to everyone that there is a very basic problem with man. It is the thoughts that come from within that cause us to sin. We are sick on the inside. We are a fallen race that was led captive by our ancestors, and we have lost our freedom to the power and control of Satan.

To escape this horrible plight, we have to give ourselves away to gain control, we have to surrender our life to set ourselves free through Jesus Christ. “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.” Isaiah 1:16-17 (NKJV) I base all these observations on the fact that the human race is perishing. A fireman can save a man from a burning house, but he can't stop the man from going right back in the fire again. A pardon is based on our intention of reforming; unless we turn toward God and turn away from sin, forgiveness doesn't do us any good because we continue in our old ways, running back into the fire of hell. In spiritual matters, there is no reason to teach forgiveness if our intention is not to reform.



Don't go through this world being a spectator. Drugs, alcohol, television, and video games are all spectator sports. Get involved with life, and feel the difference a personal relationship with God can make. Doing what's right in life is good for the soul, and if we are willing to be obedient we will not only enjoy the good life here on earth, but we will have a future life with Christ that will take us throughout eternity. God is calling you with sound doctrine and reason. The voice of the Lord is calling out to you: “Come now, and let us reason together.” Consider God's gracious plan of salvation, and yield to His Spirit and obey. “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow, Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.” I was lost but now am found, and I was blind but now I see the wonderful world God has in store for me.

*Paraphrased from the Moody Blues song, “Lost in a Lost World.”

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

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Peter's Vision

By Jim Huskins
McDowell County



I was taught from the cradle that Christians are free to eat any type of meat. A cited text is Peter's vision in Acts 10. When I point out that this passage is not about food, I am often asked, "If God did not want Peter to kill and eat, why did he tell him to do so?" This is a valid question, and my response is, "Did God actually want Abraham to kill Isaac?" Of course not. In both cases, our Creator was conveying a radical teaching through extreme imagery.

Peter was instructed three times to kill and eat something which God's Torah forbids using for food. He knew that he should not violate a basic command of Torah, and verse 17 says that he was perplexed when Gentiles from the house of Cornelius arrived asking for him. Cornelius, a God-fearing gentile, had been granted the appearance of an angel bearing a message from the Father. The message was that Cornelius was to send for Simon Peter, and that Peter would, "Declare to you a message by which you will be saved." (Acts 11:14) Emissaries from Cornelius arrived where Peter was staying immediately after he had seen the vision of the unclean animals and was troubled concerning its meaning.

Peter did not immediately awake from the vision and think I'm supposed to start eating meat that God declared to be abomination. This event took place ten to fifteen years after Pentecost. The fact that he had never eaten anything unclean gives lie to the claim that Jesus did away with dietary laws in Mark 7 or Matthew 15. Peter was an Apostle of Christ's Church. He knew that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. He knew that Jesus kept Torah and taught that it would be in effect for as long as heaven and earth remain. Nothing in the record of Peter's vision gives any indication that Peter considered even for a second the possibility that this vision was God saying that He had changed His mind about what is and is not food.

Peter's vision is no more about food than God's test of Abraham's faith was about murdering the son of the promise or Joseph's dream meant the sun, moon and stars would literally bow down to him or Pharaoh's dream was about skinny cows eating fat cows or the Parable of the Sower was about farming. Peter's vision was about God bringing Gentiles and Hebrews together. This act would involve bridging an unimaginable cultural divide, and our Father knew that such a process would require, among other things, powerful metaphor.



Acts 10:17-23 is gripping. It says that while Peter was perplexed about what his vision might mean, three gentiles sent to him by Cornelius arrived. He was instructed by the Holy Spirit to accompany these men without hesitation. He met them at the door, told them he was the one they sought, and invited them to lodge for the night. Without his vision and the prompting of the Spirit, Peter would NEVER have invited Gentiles to lodge in a Jewish home. The miracle of God's plan for unifying his children is already taking place.

The next day, Peter accompanied these men to Caesarea to the home of Cornelius where he had assembled his family and friends to hear what Peter might say. When we encounter God, we want everyone we care about to know it. We want everyone we care about to know Him. Cornelius had received a divine message, and he refused to shut up until everyone he loved shared in that message. Peter found many gathered inside the home of Cornelius to hear a word from God.

We know without doubt that Peter's vision has nothing to do with food because Peter himself, through the power of the Spirit, interprets that vision for us in verse 28: "God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean." He did not say that God now requires us to eat shrimp cocktail or ham sandwiches or cat fritters or rat fondue. He said, "God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean." He repeats this interpretation before the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15. The meaning and message of Peter's vision is that, through faith in God's Son, Gentiles are now able to join God's chosen people.

God never changed his mind or his instructions regarding what he established as food for humans. Those instructions were clearly stated in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. Those instructions were clearly taught by Jesus and clearly understood by the early Church. Those same instructions will be clearly enforced by our Messiah when he returns.

The latter part of the book of Isaiah is a series of Second Coming prophecies. Isaiah 65:1-5 includes a list of behaviors which provoke Messiah to His face. Prominent on that list is eating pig's flesh and the broth of tainted meats. Isaiah chapter 66 includes the powerful prophecies of peace like a river and the comfort of a loving mother, but it also includes, in verse 17, the promise that those found eating pig's flesh will come to an end.

Many who claim to follow Christ "sincerely" believe that God's dietary requirements have been changed or rescinded. That's not what the Bible teaches. Jesus made it clear in Matthew 7:21-23 that our sincerity is irrelevant. The standard by which we will be judged is our obedience. We will not on that day be able to use the excuse that someone taught us incorrectly.

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

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Enjoying Everyday Life

Take the "Do Not Disturb" Sign Off Your Life

By Joyce Meyer

Jesus was a master storyteller. Many times when people asked Him questions, He responded with parables to help them understand the point He was trying to make.

For example, in Luke 10:25-28, a lawyer, who is described in The Amplified Bible as "an expert in Mosaic Law," asked Jesus, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" When Jesus asked him what the Law said, the lawyer's response was, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself" (v. 27).

When Jesus told him he was correct, the man then asked, "Who is my neighbor?" and Jesus responded by telling him the story of The Good Samaritan.

In this parable, we read about a man who was going from Jerusalem to Jericho when he encountered robbers who stripped him and beat him, leaving him half dead. After this, a priest came along, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. Then a Levite (a very religious man) came by and did the same thing.

Verses 33-35 (ESV) say, "But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.'"

I love how Jesus said the Samaritan "had compassion" for this man, so he stopped his journey to care for him and then take him to a place where he could safely rest and receive the help he needed until he was better. It wasn't a quick, easy job, either. And this Samaritan was going somewhere, just like the priest and the Levite, but he was willing to be interrupted to take care of someone in need.



Make Allowances for Divine Interruptions

We all have moments when something comes along that can interrupt our plan, and sometimes they are "divine interruptions" we should take. We shouldn't be so focused on doing what we want, or planned, to do all the time that we limit God when He wants to use us to help someone else. That's like walking around with a "Do Not Disturb" sign hanging around our necks.

I often hang this sign on my door at hotels when I don't want to be bothered, and that's okay. But it's not okay to have this attitude when God wants to interrupt our plan.

If we're really going to love people the way Jesus loves us—following the example He showed us of how to walk in love—then we can't have a selfish, self-centered mindset that says, "Don't bother me. I don't want you in my space!"

A Day in the Life of Jesus

Matthew chapter 8 gives us some insight about Jesus' life on Earth. Verse 1 says, "When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him" (ESV). Notice that Jesus "came down from the mountain." He spent time alone with His Father before He went about His day, reaching out to others. If He needed to do this, then we need time alone with God even more!

In verse 2, a leper came to Jesus and asked Him to heal him. "And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, 'I will; be clean.' And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." Jesus made Himself available to people in need as He followed God's plan each day. He was willing to go to people who had needs. When we see people in need but it's not convenient for us to help them, it's easy to say, "God bless you! I can't stop what I'm doing to help you but I'll pray for you!" And there will be times when distractions and interruptions are not part of God's plan.

But I've found that many times, God wants me to allow Him to change the course of my day so He can use me to bless someone else. It could be a small act of kindness that only takes a few minutes or it could be something that totally changes my day. Either way, when I'm following Jesus, I never have regrets! I want to encourage you to pray every day, "God, what can I do for YOU today?" You'll be amazed at the ways He works in and through your life when you do—even when it interrupts your plan.

For more on this topic, order Joyce's three-CD series Do Unto Others. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting www.joycemeyer.org.

Please note: The views and opinions expressed throughout this publication and/or website are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Joyce Meyer Ministries.

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.

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America Moving from Abortions 'Safe, Legal and Rare' to Merriment over Infanticide

By Rev. Mark Creech

NC Democrats Introduced Abortion Bill Similar to New York's in 2017

Much of America was shocked to learn about New York's passage of a law that allows for an abortion during all nine months of a woman's pregnancy, and for any reason. The law so expands abortion that even a child born alive in a botched procedure isn't protected. The new law says health care practitioners that are not physicians may also terminate the child within the womb. It removes abortion from New York's state criminal code, meaning if a baby in utero was to die from an assault on a woman there could be no severe prosecution. Furthermore, the New York law allows young girls of every age to have an abortion without parental consent.

The passage of the abortion bill was met with cheers and thunderous applause in the Gallery of the State Senate. After signing the legislation in the Capital's Red Room, Governor Cuomo ordered the state's One World Trade Center's spire, the Gov. Mario M. Cuomo Bridge, the Kosciuszko Bridge, and the Alfred E. Smith Building, to be lit up in celebratory pink.

If ever the country was seemingly and largely immunized from the unspeakable evil of child-killing, what happened recently in New York should be the antidote. Wickedness is always progressive, and Americans are moving from the so-called objective of making abortions "safe, legal and rare" to merriment over infanticide.

What adds to these alarming circumstances is that "before New York's legislature voted to remove gestational limits on abortion, seven states and Washington, D.C. already had laws allowing third-trimester abortions," reports the Christian Post. Those states say CP are Alaska, Colorado, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, and Vermont, and the nation's capital. What is more, every state that has laws banning late-term abortions still allow it under certain circumstances, one of which can include "mental health" – a loophole in abortion rights law large enough through which a locomotive could pass.

Just recently a Virginia delegate, Kathy Tran (D), pushed for the passage of her bill, which failed, but would have allowed abortion at every stage of pregnancy including during labor. Rhode Island's Gov. Gina Raimondo (D) has been pushing for legislation that allows abortions until live birth and also tramples parental rights by allowing minors to have an abortion without parental consent.

North Carolinians needn't rest easy either. In 2017, companion legislation introduced by Democrats in the state House and Senate was very similar to New York's new abortion law. Neither piece of legislation, S. B. 588 – Whole Woman's Health Act and H.B. 563 by the same title, were acted upon by the House or Senate, and it's a good thing they didn't. The legislation would have legalized late-term abortions, repealed the state's "Woman's Right to Know," law, legalized sex-selection abortions, allowed physician assistant abortions, allowed post 20 week abortions to be performed in clinics, eviscerated statistical reporting of abortions, expanded the type of physicians who could perform abortions to any physician and not simply an OB/GYN or those with experience.

Certainly, if the Democrats had been in the majority and not the Republicans, the legislation would have succeeded, and our current Governor, Roy Cooper (D), would have gleefully signed it into law. That's not being politically partisan; it's just the reality of the matter.

Three years before the Supreme Court's decision to legalize abortion, Dr. Malcolm Watts wrote for the California Medical Association:

"The traditional Western ethic has always placed great emphasis on the intrinsic worth and equal value of every human life regardless of its stage or condition. This ethic had the blessing of the Judeo-Christian heritage and has been the



basis for most of our laws and much of our social policy...This traditional ethic is still clearly dominant, but there is much to suggest that it is being eroded at its core and may eventually even be abandoned..."

We are now at that point in our national history where the core erosion is giving way to abandonment.

If this barbarism ever ends, it will be because those who love Christ and know the Word of God have fearlessly pro-

claimed the truth and shown the way. The media certainly won't do it. The news media was once good for telling the whole story, but not anymore.

In yesteryear, the newsreels displayed in their reports the emaciated dead bodies of Jews piled like cordwood that had been killed by the Nazis. During the Jim Crow era, the media presented pictures of blacks lynched from trees with White Supremacists standing around like it was a community picnic. When the Vietnam War was going on, major news outlets brought the horrific images of that conflict into our living rooms. American troops were bared as they were: bloody, burned, shot and blown to pieces. These days, however, we never see the news showing what happens to an infant during an actual abortion, especially a late-term abortion. We can't hear the silent scream. We don't see the doctor plunge the poisonous needle into the little one's beating heart. We never see the legs, arms, torsos, and other body parts of unborn children oozing from a bloody birth canal or cast into the trash after the abortionist's knife has done its ghastly work. Neither do we witness the infant from a spoiled abortion left underneath a pile of towels, neglected on a cold clinic table, or twisting like a live piece of refuse in a bedpan.

All of these grisly things remain hidden and kept in secret. It would seem if the state of New York had done something so stupendous as to light up a city with festive lights, then the news media ought to let the public see what's actually being celebrated. But do you think that will happen? No, because if they did, the practice of abortion might be abandoned in a New York minute.

Christians need to see that it can no longer be business as usual. This is not to subtly suggest violence, or some unlawful means must be employed to halt the blitz on life's sanctity. God forbid! Nevertheless, it is to suggest Christians lovingly sharing the Gospel of Christ with people in the abortion field, educating others from a pro-life perspective, contributing generously to the pro-life cause, and supporting politicians and legislation which will protect and preserve life. Most importantly, Christians need to stop being hypocritical and having abortions themselves.

It is also to suggest that if Christ's emissaries and other pro-lifers cannot demonstrate a passion equal to or superior to that of abortion proponents, the killing will continue. It will grow until next it is the aged, the weak, the sick, the political reject, etc. If they can find a justification for celebrating the destruction of an innocent and defenseless gestational nine-month-old baby, they can find the same for killing you!



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



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Mitchell County 4-H

Rookie 4-H Robotics Team
Competes at State Championship

By Kim Slotnick
Mitchell County

This rookie robotics team, Lazer Catz, is made up of five boys and 2 girls that are all part of a 4-H Club called Appalachian 4-H'ers. The Catz have worked hard to develop their research and strategy to compete in FIRST Lego League's Into Orbit challenge. This years' FIRST Lego League challenge was to identify a physical or social problem faced by humans during long duration space exploration. Then teams need to design a solution to solve their identified problem and share the solution with others. Each year FIRST releases a real life scientific challenge for Lego League robotics teams to research. They are also judged on a set of Core values such as professionalism, graciousness, and teamwork. The fun part of the challenge and the part where true sportsmanship comes into play is the robot game. This is where the teams build an autonomous robot to compete in accomplishing themed obstacles for points. Participants gain many life skills during their exploration of the scientific theme, such as, problem solving, critical thinking, and public speaking. They learn engineering concepts and basic computer programming while creating an autonomous robot.

The Lazer Catz got to compete at a regional competition in Lawndale on 1/12 where they qualified to compete at the State FLL Championship held at North Carolina A&T State University on 2/2. The team has had a great experience and they are excited to learn and participate in the new challenge to be revealed in the fall of 2019.

If you want to know more about this program and others like it, please contact Mitchell County 4-H at 828-688-4811.

Kim Slotnick is 4-H Program Assistant for the NC Cooperative Extension-Mitchell County Center, you may contact her at kim_slotnick@ncsu.edu.



HAVE YOU
By Joy Harwood Baldwin



Have you ever prayed a prayer
And wondered if He heard
Or cried so many tears alone
While pondering on his Word?

It seemed that no one cared at all
Your problems were your own
You could not find an answer
The burdens you carried alone.

At times when you are sleeping
God is working on a plan
Mighty things begin to stir
Though you can't see His hand.

There's an unseen realm around you
And in God's perfect hour
His kingdom with dominion
Will show His awesome power.

So trust Him with your whole heart
You'll hear Him in the thunder.
And see Him in the lightning
As He casts your foes asunder.



Lazer Catz Front L-R: Sypris Dark, Noah Allmon, David Harrison, Back L-R Charlotte Hubbard, Josh Silver, Jesse Silver, and Asher Hartzog.



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

"Faces you know."

"Faces you trust."

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

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Penland School Of Crafts

Penland School Community Open House

By Robin Dreyer
Mitchell County

Penland School of Craft will host its annual Community Open House on Saturday, March 2 from 1:00 to 5:00 PM. The whole campus will be open with hands-on activities (and a few demonstrations) in clay, iron, glass, metals, papermaking, pastepaper painting, photography, letterpress printing, textiles, and wood. No admission charge. All ages are welcome (but please leave your dog at home). Don't wear your fancy clothes. For more information or directions, visit penland.org or call 828-765-2359.

Penland School of Craft is an international center for craft education dedicated to helping people live creative lives. Located in Western North Carolina, Penland offers workshops in books and paper, clay, drawing and painting, glass, iron, metals, printmaking and letterpress, photography, textiles, and wood. The school also sponsors artists' residencies, an outreach program, and a gallery and visitors center. Penland is a nonprofit, tax-exempt institution which receives support from the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural & Cultural Resources, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. More information at penland.org

Robin Dreyer is the communications manager and staff photographer at Penland School of Crafts.



Penland staff member Daniel Beck assisting a visitor at the Penland Community Open House.

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7

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Grants For Mountain Farm Diversification Awarded

By Jennifer Ferre

WNC AgOptions announces 2019 awardees
MILLS RIVER, N.C.—Diversifying farmers in western North Carolina are receiving support to offset the risk of expanding and trying new ventures. WNC Agricultural Options awarded 39 farm businesses a total of \$216,000 in \$3,000 and \$6,000 grants on Thursday at the Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center in Mills River. Farm projects include a new meadery operation, the expansion of heirloom wheat and rye flour production and an agritourism endeavor that will create a new “Pizza Farm.”

Six of the farm business received \$3,000 and 33 received \$6,000. The N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission is the exclusive financial supporter of WNC AgOptions, which aims to build sustainable farming communities in the mountain region by providing resources directly to farmers.

“The WNC AgOptions program has proven success stories,” said Bill Teague, Chairman of the N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission. “We continue to be amazed at how these producers utilize these funds to ensure their family farms grow and remain profitable.”

Ryan and Launi Higgs of Blue Ridge Apiaries in Caldwell County will be producing mead, an alcoholic beverage created by fermenting honey, to complement their existing fourth generation honey production operation. The meadery will not only allow them to diversify, reducing the financial risk in offering one product—honey, but will also add value and increase income. “Producing mead offers a new revenue stream independent of our current revenue stream,” said Ryan. “We cannot compete with commodity honey prices outside of our region due to the constraints on honey production in North Carolina. This makes the proposition of adding value to our honey crop all the more attractive and sensible as a means of insuring economical sustainability.”

In Buncombe County, Anne and Aaron Grier of Gaining Ground Farm will be expanding heirloom wheat and rye production. “While we have been growing small grains for more than 10 years, we have determined varieties that are the best fit for our operation and need to scale up in order to be economically viable,” said Anne. “Over the last couple years we have seen an increasing demand for our heirloom flour, and we see this as an important way to diversify our offerings with a unique product.” The Griers will be purchasing needed equipment that will allow them to expand to grow five acres of grain by 2020.

Carl Evans and Julie Mansfield of Mountain Harvest Organics in Madison County will use their grant to transition from crop production to produce value-added products and services by becoming a Pizza Farm.

“We hope to become a food destination for people in our community and the Asheville area by combining our 20 years of growing fruits and vegetables along with our passion for making pizza using a wood-fired oven and with ingredients from the farm,” said Carl. The goal is to draw people to their farm and encourage them to wander the fields to see pizza toppings growing and then enjoy a pizza prepared with fresh farm ingredients right before their eyes. “The farm tour aspect of our Pizza Farm will educate people about agriculture and challenges facing small farms.”

“N.C. Cooperative Extension is excited to be a part of a program that is making such impressive impacts in the agricultural community,” said Ross Young, Madison County Extension Director and WNC AgOptions steering committee leader. “Agriculture is a thriving and ever-changing economic engine in western North Carolina with new enterprises and creative ideas emerging daily. WNC AgOptions plays a crucial role in helping many of these farmers fulfill a dream that may not be attainable otherwise.”

The administrator of WNC AgOptions is WNC Communities, a non-profit organization that has been supporting agriculture in the region since 1947. WNC Communities provides a unique forum for leaders in western North Carolina to carry out innovative programs to improve the quality of life for rural communities, as well as managing programs to enhance the agriculture and forestry sectors.

“WNC Communities is honored to be the administrator of this annual funding opportunity designed to support farmers in their quest to try new techniques or implement innovative farming practices,” said Jennifer Ferre, Interim Director of WNC Communities. “WNC AgOptions strengthens our agricultural community, ultimately benefiting us all.”

Members of the WNC AgOptions steering committee include: representatives from N.C. Cooperative Extension, N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services-Marketing Division, WNC Communities, Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project and other leaders in agribusiness. For more information, see the following: WNC Agricultural Options: www.wncagoptions.org; N.C. Cooperative



Extension Centers: www.ces.ncsu.edu; N.C. Tobacco Trust Fund Commission: www.tobaccotrustfund.org; WNC Communities: www.wnccommunities.org.

2019 WNC AgOptions Awardees

County	Award	Farm	Project Name
Avery	\$6,000.00	Tucker Hollow Farms	Bedding and Propagation Greenhouse
Avery	\$6,000.00	SkyeFarm LLC	Skye Lavender Farm Venue
Buncombe	\$6,000.00	Addison Farms	Vineyard Creek, Cold Storage and Drying Facility
Buncombe	\$6,000.00	Gaining Ground Farm	Expansion of Heirloom Wheat and Rye Flour Production
Buncombe	\$6,000.00	S.D. Morgan Farms	Less Sediment/More Seed
Buncombe	\$6,000.00	Wild Berry Farm	Multi-Use Shed
Burke	\$6,000.00	"Pick Dee's Barrie" at Skydance Farm	"Park and Pottery" Agritourism Infrastructure for "You-Pick" Berry Farm
Caldwell	\$6,000.00	High Country Herbs LLC	Farm Mechanization
Caldwell	\$6,000.00	Blue Ridge Apiaries	Value Added Diversification: Seasonal Mead Production
Cherokee	\$6,000.00	Two Crows Farm	Product Production Expansion for Third Quality Fiber
Cleveland	\$6,000.00	Dollar Down Farm	Growing Under Rolling Thunder
Cleveland	\$6,000.00	Hudson Pottery Farm, LLC	Chain Storage for Expanded Marketing
EDCI	\$3,000.00	Long Family Farms and Gallery	Mushroom and Medicinal Extracts and Oil
EDCI	\$6,000.00	Dagan Farms	Mechanical Cultivation for Sustainable Weed Management
Haywood	\$6,000.00	Two Trees Farm/Sustainable LLC	Outdoor Kitchen and Classroom Space
Haywood	\$6,000.00	Rice Family Farms LLC	Building Whangler Portable Canal
Henderson	\$6,000.00	Holt Orchards	Building Rackers to Horse Packing Line
Henderson	\$6,000.00	McConnell Farms	Enable to Label - A Custom Labeling Project
Henderson	\$6,000.00	Bee-critical Farm and Garden	Honey House
Macon	\$3,000.00	Balsman Girls' Cattle Farm	Heifer Replacement Program
Madison	\$6,000.00	Dry Ridge Farm LLC	Laying Hen Expansion
Madison	\$6,000.00	Mountain Harvest Organics	Pizza Farm
Madison	\$6,000.00	Highgate Farm	Post-Harvest Care and Storage Facility
Madison	\$6,000.00	Jenkins Angus Farm	AI Cattle Working System
Madison	\$6,000.00	Caroline Flowers	Dahlia Crop Expansion
McDowell	\$6,000.00	Beekeeper INC	Bee Hive Transportation Upgrade
Mitchell	\$3,000.00	Tater Hill Farms	Tater Washer
Mitchell	\$6,000.00	Sink Hole Creek Farms	No Till Seeder
Polk	\$6,000.00	TK Family Farm	TEW model M-4 Fruit Packing/Sorting Line
Rutherford	\$6,000.00	Moss & Thistle Flower Farm	Sustainable Floriculture for Local Markets
Transylvania	\$3,000.00	The Farm at Owyun Valley	Produce Packing Shed
Transylvania	\$6,000.00	Clem's Organic Gardens	Machinery for Storage Vegetable Production
Transylvania	\$6,000.00	Pitch Pine Farm	Mechanized Root Harvesting Equipment
Watauga	\$3,000.00	Phil Moss Farm	Paperpot Transplanter for Increased Production
Watauga	\$3,000.00	Mountainview Farm LLC	Wash, Pack and Storage Facility
Watauga	\$6,000.00	Heartwood Farms Ltd	Rabbitry
Watauga	\$6,000.00	Treebeet Hill	Cucumber Beetle Suppression with Alternative Row Cover and Insecticides
Polk	\$6,000.00	3M Livestock	Diversifying Farm Operations
Yancey	\$6,000.00	Pink Boole Farm LLC	Goat Barn Renovation/Milking Operation

Jennifer is the Interim Director of WNC Communities Foundation.

H4PE
MITCHELL COUNTY

EASTER EGG HUNT
April 20th
11AM - 2PM

Registration at: First Baptist Church Spruce Pine
Egg Hunt : Riverside Park
(Below the Church)
Lunch : First Baptist Church

CHURCHES:

Donations: wrapped candy, Food for lunch

Volunteers needed for:

Giving out Fliers

Registration

Help prepare and serve lunch

Leaders for age groups

Outreach (donations)

Clean up

Contacts : Janice Branch 828-385-6204
Church Secretary : 828-765-9411

Please
set up
a info
booth
4 your
church

IF BAD WEATHER OCCURS WE WILL STAY IN CHURCH



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

Our Association is partnering with Joni & Friends ministry in an effort to provide wheelchairs for those in need around the world. If you have a wheelchair you are not using (condition does not matter) please consider bringing it to our CRBA office in Morganton. We will be collecting wheelchairs over the next few months and then will repair them and give them to a person in need. This new ministry will bless families in locations around the world.

To God Be the Glory!

We have an exciting mission opportunity for folks in our Association. There are many people in the eastern part of our state who are still recovering from recent hurricane devastation and we want to take a team of men and women March 18-22, 2019 to do clean-up and some construction in Lumberton, NC. This trip will not cost you anything as all supplies, lodging, and food will be provided free of charge through our partnership with Baptist on Mission. If interested, please call our CRBA office at 828-437-0137 for more information and to register.

CRBA will be hosting a Community Night of Prayer on the National Day of Prayer May 2nd from 7 to 8 p.m. at the chapel of the Waldensian Trail of Faith in Valdese. This will be a great time of worship and prayer as we seek the Father for help in our community. This is a free event (no offering will be taken) where pastors and community leaders will be leading this special time of prayer.

Hickory Grove Baptist Church - Charlotte, NC - April 5-6, 2019
Special features include Mission Breakout Sessions, Volunteer Supper, Mission Testimonies, Mission Fair Exhibits and much more. For more information contact Tracey Ford at 800.395.5102 x 5596. Register online

This April we will be collecting grocery store gift cards for our North Carolina Children's Homes. If you would like to provide food for these wonderful children being taken care of by the loving Children's Homes of North Carolina, please purchase gift cards at any grocery store and bring them to our CRBA office. This is a great mission project for individuals, Sunday School classes and churches.

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist-Burke County - The Giving Heart Thrift Shop - Offers gently used and brand new clothes of all sizes and for all ages! As well as, furniture and small home goods!
OPEN Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Location: 402 East Main Street, Glen Alpine, N.C. 28628
Like The Giving Heart Thrift Shop on Facebook @thegivingheartthriftshop
The Giving Heart Thrift Shop is a ministry of the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Fletcher Academy Choir will be performing at the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church on Saturday, March 15th., at 10:45 a.m. The Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church is located at 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C.

The Mount Pisgah Academy Acrobats Team will be performing on Saturday evening, March 30th., at the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C.

Leadership Burke 2019 Registration - This year's program begins March 14th-15th with a two-day classroom-based leadership development experience led by Linda Lindsay, a consultant to Fortune 500 companies and President of the Lindsay Consulting Group. The class will be exploring Burke County's economic drivers through on-site visits involving manufacturing, healthcare, education, retail, tourism, government, and more.

The class will meet every 3rd Wednesday each month until November 20, 2019. Class space is limited.

Registration must be submitted by March 8, 2019. Leadership Burke Registration

Date: March 13, 2019
Location: TBA
Contact: Tonia Stephenson
Email: tstephenson@burkecounty.org
Date/Time Details: TBA
Fees/Admission: \$600.00 per person for Members
\$850.00 for non-members
All fees must be paid by March 13, 2019

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!

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 - Malachi Bible Study Led by Lisa Harper Thursdays, February 7- April 4 5:30 p.m. - Fellowship Hall Call the church office 652-6030 to sign up. Deadline is Thursday, January 31. There is no workbook to purchase for this study.

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

Vacation Bible School June 24-28, 2019 More information to come SOON!

Mitchell County

Bear Creek Baptist Church - March 31 at 6 pm Landmark Quartet with Ronnie Webb will be at Bear Creek.

Women's Prayer Breakfast March 8th, 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. There is also a Children's program.

Grassy Creek Baptist Church - Loren Harris, baritone singer of the Kingdom Heirs, will be holding a Choral Conference & Singing School in Spruce Pine. It will be Friday, March 8th(6-9pm) and Saturday, March 9 (9am-3pm) at Grassy Creek Baptist Church. Choir members, music directors and all who love to sing are invited to join us. Please call to reserve your seat today, as space is limited. Cost is \$20/individual, \$35/couple and \$45/ family. Lunch will be provided on Saturday. Please register by calling Patricia Edwards at 828-682-1248. Deadline to register is March 1

Grassy Creek Baptist Church will present the Easter Drama, "Three Days That Changed the World" three times this year! The dates are Wednesday, April 17th and Friday, April 19th at 7:00pm and on Sunday, April 21st at 11:00am. This drama depicts the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ accompanied by music by the GCBC choir. Pastor Nathan Silver and Music Director John Hall, along with the congregation of GCBC, invite everyone to attend. For more information or to reserve seats for a group, call the church office at 765-4620.

Mitchell County Baptist Association - Associational Bible Drills will be Saturday, March 16 at Bear Creek Baptist Church

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@mitcheilcountychamber.org.

March: Toe River Arts Spruce Pine Gallery & The Mitchell House

April: The Mitchell News Journal

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

June: The Brian Center

July: KB's

August: Mitchell County Animal Rescue
September: The Switzerland Inn
October-November: OPEN
We do not have After Hours in December.
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.

Mitchell County Historical Society Dear Members and Friends: We are proud to announce The 3rd Annual History Bee is Thursday, March 21, 2019. Fifty-Eight (58) Mitchell County students took part in the 2018 History Bee, and this year is shaping up to be even better! The event begins at 6:00 PM in the Historic Courthouse in Bakersville, and the public is invited to attend.

Participants in the History Bee are eligible to win a cash prize. In each division (Grades 6-8 and Grades 9-12), first prize is \$500, second prize is \$300, and third prize is \$200. Besides a chance to win a cash prize, each participant receives a History Bee tee shirt.

There is no cost to enter, but students must register by March 9th to be included in the competition. We are having some trouble with our website, so please see below three attachments: our poster, the registration form, and the rules of the competition.

All questions in the Bee will come from Voices of the Valley, Elizabeth Hunter's history of Mitchell County. In past years, some teachers provided special tutoring and study sessions for their students; in addition, MCHS loaned these teachers copies of Voices of the Valley to help prepare students.

For more information, contact MCHS at 828-688-4371 or 828-385-0564. You can turn in completed registration forms to our office (between 10am and 4pm, Weds.- Fri.), or leave them under the door at the Historic Courthouse at 11 N Mitchell Ave, Bakersville. You can also mail them in to MCHS, POB 651, Bakersville, NC 28705. We have alerted teachers about the event, so your students could turn their application in to them.

Toe River Arts June Studio Tour Applications 2019 Blacksmith Exhibit

Delivery of Work: March 19th - 23rd
Open to all blacksmiths working with anvil and hammer and participating in the Fire on the Mountain Festival (separate event sponsored by Spruce Pine Main Street). Artists can submit up to 3 pieces.
Email Kathryn for more information
2020 Toe River Arts Exhibit Proposals
Deadline: March 23rd

We are accepting 2020 proposals for our Spruce Pine Gallery. Applicants do not have to be Toe River Arts members or live in Mitchell/Yancey counties. Collaborative exhibits are encouraged.

Open to all current Toe River Arts member artists/craftpersons. A self-guided art/craft studio tour and open house. Toe River Arts provides Tour Guides, road signs, exhibition of participants' work, and other promotion.
Deadline: Wednesday, March 6th

Giftshop Jury Applications

Open to current Toe River Arts members living in Avery/Mitchell/Yancey counties. Submit up to 3 pieces for review for one or both galleries. Work must be original, handmade, professional, ready for display, and sellable in the Toe River Arts venue.
Deadline: Friday, March 16th

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

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.

Yancey County

Burnsville Wedding Expo Presented by White Falls Catering

Say I do in the mountains of beautiful Burnsville, NC.
The Burnsville Wedding Expo is coming to the Town Center February 16th, 2019 from 11am-3pm!

Everyone is welcome to come see the wide variety of exhibitors and learn how they could help make a bride & grooms big day even more special. Meet and sample the offerings of talented vendors that could help with all aspects of weddings, receptions and other celebrations. There will be a fashion show hosted by David's Bridal, a chance to dig in a cake for an engagement ring, door prizes, raffles, goodie bags for the brides, free samples and much more! Admission \$5.

Any vendors interested in participating please visit <https://wp.me/p4Kt3k-Lh> contact the Town Center at (828) 682-7209, email towncenter@townofburnsville.org or call Amelia Hoilman at (828) 208-0044.

ASAP 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 ---Partners Aligned Toward Health Save the Date Burnsville 5K fit families May 11th

Mayland Community College

Mayland Earth to Sky Park—Join us at the Earth to Sky Park and Bare Dark Sky Observatory as we take part in the 2019 NC State-wide Star Party! April 13th, 6:00pm Watch the groundbreaking for the new planetarium and enjoy astronomy related activities for children, a food truck, and plenty of star gazing hosted by the MCC Astronomy Club. The event is FREE and open to the public.

Plant swap April 27th 8:00am-10:00am free heirloom tomatoes, shop for spring plants and bring plants to swap.

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

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

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

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.

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Don't Follow Your Heart

By Dr. Tracy Jessup



"The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse – who can understand it? I the Lord test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings." — Jeremiah 17:9-10

One of my favorite film series is The Pirates of the Caribbean, which takes its name from the iconic theme park ride created by Walt Disney. Besides his ship, The Black Pearl, an unusual compass is considered Captain Jack Sparrow's most treasured possession. He consults it constantly and guards it carefully, even from his most trusted shipmates. Richard Platt and Glenn Dakin describe the compass in the book, Pirates of the Caribbean: The Complete Visual Guide:

"Although it appears to be useless (the needle never points to the north), Jack's compass has supernatural qualities. The compass cannot be used to navigate in a conventional sense, but it does direct the owner to whatever he or she most desires" (p. 14).

In other words, the compass helps Jack follow his heart. The advice sounds harmless enough. People probably have given it to you. You even may have given this advice to others. It is a popular phrase often glamorized in movies, books, TV shows, and music. "Follow your heart."

Yet today's passage reminds us that we have every reason not to put confidence and hope in the choices we make when we follow our hearts. Why? *"The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse – who can understand it?"* (Jeremiah 17:9)? Like Jeremiah, Jesus also pointed out the fallen condition of our hearts. *"For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person"* (Mark 7:21-23).

Only God, who searches our hearts and examines our intentions, knows and understands us fully. Our hearts are inclined toward sin from the day we were born, and our hearts turn away from God every time we put our trust in someone or something other than God. *"Cursed are those who trust in mere mortals and make mere flesh their strength, whose hearts turn away from God...[but] blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord"* (Jeremiah 17:5, 7).

Writing for Relevant Magazine, Trudy Gine Amoranto observes, "Our hearts were never designed to be followed. They were designed to be led by God. But how do we allow our hearts to be led by God? Some may refer to this as something outrageous supernatural, but being led by God is basically being obedient to Him. If we allow our hearts to be led by God, we are allowing our hearts to be led by the ultimate comforter, deliverer, strengthener, provider, counselor, helper, and a savior beyond perfection"

Prayer: Lord, teach us your ways, that we may live according to your truth. Grant us purity of heart, so that we may honor you" (cf. Psalm 86:11)

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.

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 Samford 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.

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Victims Of Innocent Suffering:
Biblical Help And Hope

By Dr. Jim Denison



Stories about innocent suffering make the news daily. Five watercolor paintings attributed to Adolf Hitler failed to sell at auction last weekend, reminding us that the Nazi dictator was a failed artist before inciting the deaths of six million Jews and twelve million other victims in World War II. Nearly one hundred children have died in Africa from the second-deadliest outbreak of Ebola in history. More than eight hundred people have reported symptoms. And the appalling report about clergy sexual abuse in the Southern Baptist Convention continues to make news today. Tragically, no organization is immune to such abuse. Abuse over the last several years. Sexual abuse scandals have rocked the Presbyterian Church USA, the Boy Scouts, gymnastics, swimming, hockey, college football, and political leaders as well. A study found that nearly five hundred schoolteachers were arrested in 2015 on sexual abuse charges. Shockingly, about 10 percent of children in eighth through eleventh grades were found to have been subjected to some form of sexual abuse by an adult at school (most often a teacher or coach). Where is God when such tragedies occur? "Why have you forgotten me?" Job 9 poignantly describes the pain innocent victims feel when God seems to fail them. Job pictures the omnipotence of the One "who alone stretched out the heavens and trampled the waves of the sea . . . who does great things beyond searching out, and marvelous things beyond number" (vv. 8, 10). But this omnipotent God seems impervious to Job's cries for help: "If I summoned him and he answered me, I would not believe that he was listening to my voice. For he crushes me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds without cause" (vv. 16-17). In fact, according to Job, "When disaster brings sudden death, he mocks at the calamity of the innocent" (v. 23). This must be how many victims of sexual abuse feel about God. Job is not the only person in Scripture to complain about innocent suffering: "I say to God, my rock: 'Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?' As with a deadly wound in my bones, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me all the day long, 'Where is your God?'" (Psalm 42:9-10). Jesus cried from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). "Choose life" How are we to reconcile God's power with his love? Let's consider five biblical facts. One: God does not cause innocent suffering. God is holy (Isaiah 6:3), sinless (1 Peter 2:22), and perfectly just (Deuteronomy 32:4). He does not tempt anyone to evil (James 1:13). Misused free will causes much of the innocent suffering in the world, as when Judas betrayed Jesus (Matthew 26:47-50). Disease and natural disasters cause much innocent suffering as well. Two: God must allow us to misuse our freedom, or we are not truly free. He set before his people "life and death, blessing and curse" and called them to "choose life" (Deuteronomy 30:19). Three: Disease and disaster are a result of the Fall. When the first humans sinned, the natural order was disastrously affected (Genesis 3:17-19) and remains fallen today (Romans 8:22). Four: God sometimes intervenes to prevent the consequences of sin and the Fall. He did not keep Herod from executing James, but he sent angels to keep him from executing Peter (Acts 12:1-11). Jesus healed many who were sick (Matthew 8:14-17) and calmed the stormy Sea of Galilee (vv. 23-27). Five: God redeems all he allows. I've discussed this principle elsewhere. For today, I'll summarize by stating that because God is sovereign, he must allow all that happens (1 Chronicles 29:11). Because he is holy, he can never make a mistake (Isaiah 6:3). However, he makes a mistake if he allows anything he does not redeem for a greater good (cf. Romans 8:28). Therefore, our Lord redeems all he allows. We may not see or understand his redemption on this side of heaven (1 Corinthians 13:12), but we can trust it today. "So are my ways higher than your ways" Here's the mystery: Since God sometimes prevents innocent suffering, why doesn't he always? If God is as cruel as he seems to be when he allows a minister to abuse a child, why did he allow his Son to die for our sins? Why does he forgive our sins? Why does he prepare a place for us in paradise? But if he is as loving as he seems to be at Calvary, why does he allow innocent people to be abused? Perhaps God could explain this mystery to us but chooses not to. This seems unlikely since innocent suffering causes so many people to turn from faith in him. My father fought in World War II and did not attend church again because he could not reconcile his faith with the suffering he experienced. I cannot believe that God could have explained this issue to him but refused to do so. The Lord reminds us: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:9). Given that our minds are finite and fallen (Genesis 6:5), it seems much more plausible that God cannot reveal the mystery of innocent suffering to us because we cannot understand it. Just as a physics professor cannot explain Einsteinian relativity to a first-grader, so God cannot explain this enigma to us. "I believe; help my unbelief!" When we cannot understand God's ways, we can decide to reject his love,

grace, and power. But this is to turn from the Great Physician when we most need his help.

Or we can trust our pain to his love, knowing that our Father feels all we feel (John 10:29; Hebrews 4:15) and grieves with us as we hurt (cf. John 11:35). We can trust him to redeem our innocent suffering for his glory and our good. When we cannot see his hand, we can trust his heart.

Perhaps you're finding such trust to be difficult this morning. The father of a suffering son felt the same way. He said to Jesus, "I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). And Jesus did.

You can pray to God for the faith to have faith in God. Where is such a prayer relevant for you today?



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.

Sample Day Trip

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

Tours also available of the
P&W Railroad Museum • Village Park Mural
Art Galleries • Old Rock School

VALDESE

NORTH CAROLINA

Upcoming Events in Valdese

April Craft Market

April 13 • 9am-4pm
Over 45 handmade Craft Vendors, food, door prizes, and more!
Old Rock School • \$1 admission

Valdese Farmers Market

May 24-August 30 • 11am-4pm
Old Rock School Front Lawn

Family Friday Nights

7pm • Wells Fargo Parking Lot
May 24: Outshyne
June 7: Dirty Grass Soul
June 14: Emily Minor
June 21: The Night Move Band

Valdese Independence Day Celebration

June 28 • Downtown Valdese • 6:45pm Kick-off
7pm- Little Johnny Trailer Trash
9:15- On the Border- The Ultimate Eagles Tribute
Amusement Rides • Fireworks at dusk

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YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

NC Senate District 46



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



Last week, I co-sponsored Senate Bill 5, Building North Carolina's Future. The provisions of this bill will help meet and expedite the capital needs of our education system by creating a 'pay-as-you-go' plan that could provide over \$6 billion for K-12, UNC system, and community college construction and renovation needs over the next nine years, without having to borrow any money. Instead of incurring more state debt, this plan would use funds from the State Capital and Infrastructure Fund (SCIF) that was initially created in 2017 to meet the needs of the UNC System and other state agencies. SB5 will increase current SCIF funding by 12.5% to approximately 1 billion annually, and will allow K-12 schools and our 58 community colleges to apply for construction grants from the fund.

Although the purpose of SB5 is similar to the \$1.9 billion bond proposal that the NC House has proposed, there are some key differences. With the bond, there will be a \$1.2 billion interest payment over 30 years. By contrast, SB5 is a 'pay-as-you-go' plan, which will allow the state to address our educational construction needs without maxing out the state's debt capacity or jeopardizing our bond rating. Another difference is that SB5 would deploy construction funds to schools about two years faster than the proposed bond. This year, \$155 million of the SCIF will be spent on capital projects that are already in the pipeline. If SB5 is adopted, another \$150-\$200 million would be added annually as our current debt service decreases over time. The State Treasurer has said that SB5 would not affect the state's bond rating.

You can review Senate Bill 5 at: Building North Carolina's Future .

I would be glad to hear your feedback on this important issue.

The 2019 Elizabeth City State University delegation to the United Nations Youth Assembly paid us a visit this week. This group of students live in NC but have international backgrounds and international perspectives. The delegation wanted to learn more about our state legislature and the committee process before going to NYC in March, where they will be serving on various committees of the Youth Assembly 'representing' France. The students were able to not only tour the legislature and observe a committee, the students were able to sit down and do Q/A with the senior Senate budget writer, meet the representative and senator that represent ECSU, the Director of the Fiscal Research Division, a couple of lobbyists, and Lt. Gov Dan Forest. Not only did the delegates hear how NC is trying to help meet the needs of education and health care, but they also asked some great questions on a variety of topics: running meetings; handling personal and professional responsibilities, tips for career success, and the relationship between the state and federal levels of government in the area of policy. I want to thank Erica, Sanda, Able, Brenna, Pierre, Franck, and Diana for being willing to spend the day in Raleigh with us.

Note: The NC General Assembly also hosts a Legislative Youth Assembly. To learn more about the YLA contact Erica Gallion.

GOT POTHOLES??

NCDOT is committed to repairing potholes on state-maintained roads within two business days when they are reported using the online pothole reporting system.

To report potholes on other roads, contact the local public works department. For other issues or concerns about state-maintained roads, contact NCDOT or call 1-877-DOT-4YOU (1-800-368-4368).

House honors Boy Scouts

The House of Representatives hosted Boy Scouts from across North Carolina in February and received the 2019 Boy Scouts of America Report to the State.

In a written message in the 2019 Boy Scouts of America Report to the State, Senior Associate Supreme Court Justice Paul Newby praised the Boy Scouts for their work.

"The 2019 Report to the State recognizes some of the many contributions that Scouting and its members and volunteers have made in the field of emergency response. We take special note of the several Scouting Explorer Posts around our state led by local police departments, sheriff's offices, and fire and rescue stations -- each of which is training the next generation of Scouting First Responders," Newby said.

I would like to thank the young men and women of the Boy Scouts of America for their continued dedication to our communities.

Grants available for agricultural nonprofits

Reprinted here from Carolina Farm Credit.

Organizations may apply for up to \$5,000 per year to help in their endeavors to further the future of agriculture and contribute to the agricultural economy in North Carolina.

Fund Mission: The fund's mission is to build strong partnerships and alliances, leveraging the resources within the fund to preserve and promote the farmer, the family, and our rural communities.

Applications must be received by July 31, 2019.

Below are photos of grant recipients from 2018:



NC House District 118



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

YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

NC Senate District 47



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

Lt. Governor Dan Forest called on the legislature to ban a horrifying and barbaric practice known as female genital mutilation (FGM). Although a federal ban was enacted in 1996, this past November a federal judge declared the ban unconstitutional, ruling that states should make laws governing criminal behavior, not the federal government.

The Lt. Governor helped with drafting Senate Bill 9, filed by Senators Joyce Krawiec, Vickie Sawyer, and Deanna Ballard, which will make the practice of FGM on girls younger than 18 a class C felony, even with the consent of the child or her parents. A "no defense" clause in the bill prevents practitioners from claiming exemption from the law on belief that the practice is required as a matter of custom or ritual. FGM has no basis in religion; it is most widely believed by historians to have originated in Egypt centuries before Christ.

While the incidence of FGM has decreased globally, in the U.S. the incidence is increasing, more than doubling in the past 10 years. Following are key facts from the World Health Organization (WHO) released on January 31, 2018, regarding FGM:

- Includes non-medical procedures that intentionally alter or injure female genital organs.
- Has no health benefits for girls and women.
- Is mostly carried out on young girls between infancy and age 15.
- Can cause severe bleeding, urination problems, cysts, infections, shock, and death, as well as childbirth complications and increased risk of newborn deaths.
- More than 200 million girls and women living today are victims of this practice in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

Due to an influx of immigrants to the U.S. from countries where the incidence of FGM is high, the number of girls and women who have undergone FGM since 1990 has more than tripled in our country, with the Centers for Disease Control estimating that more than 500,000 females are living with FGM, and one third of those are children.

FGM requires zero tolerance. Currently, 28 other states have already enacted bans. As a co-sponsor of Senate Bill 9, I agree completely with Lt. Governor Dan Forest that this form of child abuse should be banned in our state.

As always, please share your thoughts with me on these or other issues related to state government by emailing me at ralph.hise@ncleg.net or calling me at 919-733-3460.



LWCF Set to Cross the Finish Line

This week, the Senate took long overdue steps toward permanently renewing the Land and Water Conservation Fund. As you know, this program has been a priority of mine for years. Renewing this program permanently gives federal, state, and local bodies the certainty they need to carry out their conservation mission. And LWCF is, without a doubt, the most important tool in their toolbox.

It restores and maintains historic battlefields across the country. It helps protect thousands of acres of treasured places and their water sources like the Blue Ridge Parkway's Waterrock Knob and the Great Smoky Mountains. And it maintains state parks and forests, including the recently opened Headwaters State Forest near Brevard.

North Carolina is truly one-of-a-kind. From the Outer Banks to the western mountains, we have a million excuses to put our phones down and get outside. LWCF makes sure that our children, our grandchildren, and their grandchildren will have the same incredible opportunities to enjoy America's natural wonders that we have now. That's why LWCF is so important. And that's why permanently renewing this program will rank right at the top of my proudest accomplishments in Congress.



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Market on Oak

Janie DeVos Book Signing

By Patti Jensen
Mitchell County

The Market on Oak Welcomes Author Janie DeVos for the launch of her third book in the Glory Land series. Author Janie DeVos will be at the Market on Oak in downtown Spruce Pine, Saturday, April 13th, from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 PM signing her newest book, The River to Glory Land! The River to Glory Land is DeVos' third book release in the Glory Land series.

"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."

Reviews for the book on Amazon say "epic tale told so well", "can't put them down, love the whole series", "super read". The Market on Oak invites the public to visit with author Janie DeVos and celebrate the launch of her newest book on April 13th. The event will give readers the opportunity meet the author, hear her read a selection from the book and discuss her writing as well as purchase a signed copy of the book.

For more information call the Market on Oak at 828-765-0571. The Market on Oak is located in downtown Spruce Pine at 262 Oak Avenue on the corner of Oak and Crystal.



Patti Jensen is Interim Director of the Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce.



Burke United Christian Ministries

Winter Months and Rainy Days

By David Burleson
Burke County



Winter months and rainy days bring many challenges to Burke United Christian Ministries (BUCM) and the clients we serve. This weather creates a high demand for food, clothes and homeless supplies. Because of our wonderful staff and volunteers at BUCM, breakfast and lunch has been served every day and dinner was served on our usual nights of service; Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday. We were also able to take care of the food and clothing needs of our clients, because of our outstanding staff and wonderful volunteers.

The winter months are particularly difficult for our homeless clients. During the last year, BUCM served 399 homeless clients. Of the 399 homeless clients, 58 were under 18 years old. With the support of the HOWI committee and other committed community members, winter has been a little warmer and comfortable for our homeless community.

The amount of food needed at BUCM for the soup kitchen and food pantry increases during the winter months also. We are extremely grateful to our churches, businesses, restaurants, grocery stores, civic groups and individuals that contributed food and supplies for BUCM. We are very thankful that several individuals choose to give BUCM their birthday and Christmas gifts to help others. This was especially true for many of our children and teenagers.

We are very thankful that several church youth groups collected food and funds during the national Souper Bowl of Caring event on February 3. This is one of the largest food drives of the year. A big thank you to the following youth groups and youth leaders:

- First Presbyterian Church Morganton – Scott Davis
- First Methodist Church Morganton – Youth Pastor, Larry Taylor
- First Baptist Church Morganton – Youth Pastor, Abby Williams
- Salem United Methodist Church
- Willow Tree Church

This drive brought in over 6,000 lbs. of food and over \$9,000 to use to purchase food. It is a blessing to see that our future leaders understand the importance of helping others.

We also appreciate the Burke County Schools for doing a Souper Bowl of Caring Food Drive for BUCM and other agencies in our county. A huge thank you to Dr. Larry Putnam, the staff and the students of the school system for their outstanding work and generosity. Our school system collected over 15,000 lbs. of food and this donated food will help support many in our community.

Also, gently used clothes, shoes and other supplies donated by our community have helped meet the needs of our clients. Coats and other warm clothes have been especially appreciated during the winter months. Because of the generosity of many in our community, our clients have clothing and other supplies to keep them warm.

During the winter months, we have seen God at work in tremendous ways at BUCM. When there have been needs, we have what is needed show up right on time. It has been a blessing to see what God has done through the people of Burke County.

I also want to thank everyone who participated in our breakfast fundraiser on Saturday, February 9 at Friday Friends. We greatly appreciate the staff at Friday Friends along with the Freedom and Patton Anchor and NHS members for helping to make our fundraiser a huge success.

If you are looking for a way to support BUCM and the clients we serve, please consider volunteering. We still need volunteers for our clothing closet and store, the food pantry, receptionist and to harvest food. If you would be interested in discussing being a volunteer or making a donation to BUCM, please call me or Elizabeth Norris at (828) 433-8075 or visit our webpage at bucm.net.

Burke United Christian Ministries is very excited about what God is planning to do in 2019.

David Burleson is Director of Burke United Christian Ministries



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Burke County Schools

Two BCPS Schools Excel At Breakfast Challenge

By Cheryl Shuffler
Burke County

The state is recognizing Table Rock and Walter Johnson middle schools for their second chance breakfast programs. They are top performing schools in the No Kid Hungry 6th Statewide Breakfast Challenge. The two schools are invited to Chapel Hill on Feb. 13 for the 2019 NC Child Hunger Leaders Conference in recognition of their efforts to increase the number of students who eat breakfast at school. No Kid Hungry NC presents the Breakfast Challenge Awards each year to the three elementary, three middle and three high schools in the state.

Burke County Public Schools initiated the Universal Breakfast Program, which gives every student in the district access to free breakfast, in 2017. To get more students to take advantage of the free meal, Burke County Public Schools has made it a priority to make breakfast part of the school day. This includes programs such as Grab and Go Breakfast and Second Chance Breakfast. Grab and Go allows students to grab a quick, nutritious meal to eat either in the cafeteria or in the classroom. Second Chance allows students to visit a breakfast cart in the hallway between morning classes.

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam said, "Burke County Public Schools wants to break down the barriers that keep kids from eating breakfast, whether it is because they arrive at school too late or think it's not cool to be in the free breakfast line. With our Grab and Go and Second Chance options and with all of our kids having access to a free breakfast, no one is singled out. The ultimate goal is to feed more students a healthy breakfast and get their day off to a great start. We know and studies show that students who eat breakfast make better grades and have better attitudes compared to students who don't."

Burke County Public Schools Food Services Management Coordinator Angie Hensley said, "We would like to thank the principals and cafeteria staff at Walter Johnson and Table Rock for their support of our school nutrition program. We are excited for them to attend the awards ceremony and be recognized for their hard work. In addition to the recognition, they will receive a monetary award that will go back into the Child Nutrition Program."

Burke County Public Schools partners with Chartwells K12 to provide breakfast and lunch in our school cafeterias as well as a supper feeding program at Mountain View Elementary School and Walter Johnson Middle School called "Eat Well After the Bell." Visit <http://burke.nutrislice.com/> for your school's meal menu.

A Burke County Public Schools high school band student has been invited to speak at the Brittany American Cemetery in France in June during a ceremony marking the 75th anniversary of World War II Allied forces invading northern France.

Luke Duckworth is a senior at Patton High School and will prepare a speech related to his experience in Normandy and what it means to honor World War II veterans and D-Day survivors.

Burke County's four high school bands — Draughn, East Burke, Freedom and Patton — will travel to Normandy, France June 2 - 11. The bands will participate in several performances and parades.

Luke said, "Truthfully, I was initially shocked that I had been chosen, but I am so honored and humbled to be given this opportunity."

East Burke High School Band Director Jonathan Berry said of Luke's selection, "This is a tremendous honor for our band programs, for Burke County Public Schools and for Luke. The request came to us based on our past efforts in support of veterans here at home and abroad. We — the BCPS High School Bands — collectively were asked to supply a student who can represent BCPS in this honor role well."

The four high school band directors discussed potential students and decided on Luke. Patton High School Band Director Chad Higden said, "Luke is an outstanding young man. He has been a true leader in the Patton High School Band. He is kind, trustworthy, dedicated and extremely talented. Luke will represent Burke County and North Carolina well."

Luke will deliver a three- to five-minute speech reflective of his experiences



in preparation for and in anticipation of the 75th D-Day commemorative events. He will represent not only the school system but the state, the country and his age group as well.

Luke said, "It means so much to be able to represent Patton, North Carolina and the United States," Luke said. "I'm extremely excited to honor the World War II veterans and D-Day survivors."

Luke said he is still working on his speech but will focus on his experiences in Normandy and plans to stress the importance of remembering D-Day and those who fought for true justice.

The events will be broadcast on French national television. In addition to the performances related to the official ceremonies, the band students will have time for some sightseeing.

Luke said, "I'm very thrilled to be immersed in the French culture and to step foot on one of the most important areas in modern history."

Luke is the son of Kenneth and Tessa Duckworth and the late Tracy Hunt.

The combined BCPS bands traveled to Hawaii two years ago for Pearl Harbor ceremonies and the East Burke Marching Cavaliers traveled to Normandy five years ago for 70th anniversary D-Day ceremonies.

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

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Emotions Can Be Dangerous

Dr. Terry Cheek
McDowell County

How often do we get caught up in the sins of others? Sexual immorality and perversion is growing exponentially, every day we discover what seems to be a greater depth to our depravity. Let's not fail to remember our failing ethics, and lack of honesty and integrity. It seems to be on display daily. The sincere Christian can become overwhelmed by emotion and if we're not careful, we can be drawn into a sin that I believe is more dangerous than any mentioned above. It is the sin which matches that of the Pharisee in the gospels. Let's take a quick look at an example from God's word.

From John chapter 8 we find the story of a woman caught in adultery. She is brought before the Pharisees and they in turn try to use the situation to trap Jesus. The Pharisees remind Jesus of Moses Law and ask the Lord what would He have them do? Jesus then writes in the sand and instructs the Pharisees "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."

The crowd disperses and Jesus asks the woman, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" The woman remarks to Jesus "no one" and Jesus replies "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

I admit this is a paraphrase of the Bible account. I have a reason for doing it. I find four things from this narrative which I feel we can all learn from.

- 1) It's easy to find fault in other people. Often, we know just enough to become judgmental and legalistic. If there is sin and we have absolute proof of it, we must be careful how we approach it. Our goal should always be to lead someone to repentance not rejection.
- 2) Fault finding leads to misuse of our Bible. The Pharisees knew the Law of Moses, by memory. Yet, they had no idea about the Law of Grace. Rightly dividing the word of God will lead us through the Law of Grace.
- 3) When confronting sin consult the Lord. Even though the Pharisees had wrong intentions by seeking Jesus in the matter, doing so was a teachable moment. We see firsthand how important it is to seek God's unchanging word as we confront sin in our life or the lives of others. We should seek the Lord prayerfully, patiently and profoundly.
- 4) Always point sin to forgiveness. Whether it is our self, or our neighbor, sin is forgivable. The Lord knows no big sin or little sin, He only knows sin. Sin separates us from God but through Jesus Christ our sin can be forgiven, and we can be restored to a lasting relationship with God. The Lord doesn't want us being the Judge of anyone, that is His job. He wants us to be His feet that carry the gospel to those needing forgiveness and be an example of that forgiveness.

Let's also remember the illustration of the fruit tree. The life of a Christian is to bear fruit, which is evidence of a born-again life. Which means we are saved sinners. The only difference between us and the unsaved is the blood of Jesus. We haven't earned it and we don't deserve it, but we should cherish it. We have answered the call of the Holy Spirit. We are saved!

Prayerfully avoid being led by emotions. It's not going to be easy, but it is necessary if we are to have a fruitful life. A life that points others to salvation by grace and through faith in Jesus Christ. Until next time may God keep you firmly in His grip!

Terry is the Executive Director and broadcaster of The Inspiring Word media ministry. You can contact Terry by email at theinspiringword@gmail.com Or by visiting www.theinspiringword.org



Some Basics To Ponder For Those Grieving

By Pastor Dennis Love
McDowell County



The Bible says in Romans 12:15; "Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep." How many times have you found yourself standing in line at a visitation and suddenly you think to yourself, "What am I going to say to that person who has just lost their spouse, or their child, or some other close family member?" Or, how many times have you gone through a visitation line and walked away without saying much at all? Over the course of the next several months, I want to share with you what to say, what not to say, what we can do and what we should not do when we encounter those who are grieving.

Listen to a few things that grieving people themselves said they wished people had known or said or done during their time of grief.

When my grandmother died from dementia, someone wrote, "I'm sorry you didn't get to say good-bye the way you wanted to." It still brings tears to my eyes that someone said exactly what I didn't even know how to express.

Almost a year after our infant son died, a woman at church talked about him, using his name in a conversation, and I almost wept with gratitude! I didn't realize how much it hurt that everyone tried NOT to talk about him to protect me from further pain, when in reality, the most pain I was experiencing was from others dodging his existence at every turn.

Our purpose in saying something to those grieving is simply to enter into the hurt with them and to let them know that they are not alone. Grieving people are not expecting us to make the pain go away. They're really just hoping that you and I will hurt with them! So, there are some basic things for us to ponder if we are willing to enter into their pain with them and bless them during the most trying and difficult time of their life. First of all:

Let the Grieving Person Take the Lead---We feel awkward when we go to see someone and there is silence, so we try to fill the silence with words. We forget the fact that there is great power and great comfort in just showing up and being willing to listen to the person who is grieving. **LET THEM TALK.** Let them be the first to state their feelings or their conclusions, then you can follow their lead.

Don't Assume---Have you ever found yourself saying to a grieving person, "I know it hurts and I know what you're going through?" That sounds good, but it is not true! Don't assume you know what someone else is feeling even if you have lost what they have lost.

Don't Tell Them What To Do---Often, we say things like: "You really need to eat something." "You should go to bed and get some rest." "You should go see your doctor." "You really shouldn't do that." NOW, you may be exactly right! But, instead of telling them what to do, come alongside of them and say something like: "I wonder if you tried to lay down for just a little while if it would help."

Don't Make It About You---The worst thing you can do around a grieving person is talk about yourself. Never talk about yourself unless you are asked or invited by the person to do so. Don't start a conversation with someone grieving by referencing yourself.

Esteem Their Grief---Make the person's loss great because it is! We minimize a loss when we say things like: "Well, God gave them a lot of years on this earth," or "You know, they were sick a long time, but they are not sick any longer." This is true, just don't say it at the visitation or the funeral unless they open the door first and allow you to do so.

Don't Be Put off By Tears---Even though tears can be awkward for some, they really are a gift. They wash away some of the toxins, the pain and the grief from within. We assume that when we go to visit a grieving person that they need cheering up. But in reality, what they really need is time, and your permission to let them cry and be sad.

Dr. Dennis Love is the Senior Pastor at Glenwood Baptist Church in Marion, NC. He and his wife Vicki have been married for almost 39 years and they have been in Marion for almost 5 years. They have two sons and three grandchildren.



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Valentine's Day

By Carolyn Dotts
Mitchell County

Valentine's Day is a special day to celebrate our love for one another. Children exchange paper cards and candy, and parties are often held in classrooms with delectable sweet treats, along with some healthier choices that are too often ignored! Teenagers surprise one another with cards, flowers and candy in lockers and cars, as they express their love and affection. Adult couples, single and married, celebrate their relationship in similar ways, often sharing a special meal together.

There is one group of people who are often unable to enjoy this day because their Valentine is no longer with them due to death. That is the widowed person, men and women both. They can feel as if they are forgotten. However, this past Valentine's Day, Thursday, February 14, 2019, many widows in our community were remembered and loved-on in a special way. Two young women from Western Carolina Church



approached me with the desire to do something special for widows. Morgan Hall and Kelly Jones both share a heart for widowed women. Morgan suggested a Valentine Banquet to recognize and honor them. She and Kelly planned and presented the entire event, although they did allow me to help a bit!

We put together a list of every widow of whom we knew, and invitations specially designed by Morgan were mailed to each one. An RSVP was requested because a count was needed for the meal catered by White Falls of Burnsville. Guests checked in and put on name tags, assisted by Maxine McKinney. A candlelit table of memory, attended by Sylvia Dellinger, was set up for the women who brought pictures of their spouses. A label identified each photo and which guest to whom it belonged. No detail was overlooked, including background music and lighting to set the mood. Many guests came with a friend which helped ease some awkwardness. The menu of lasagna, salad, garlic bread and coconut cake, was exceptionally prepared. The event was held at the Whitson Building in the refurbished restaurant section. The girls and their husbands set up and decorated the tables with elegant tablecloths and napkins, place settings of real china, glassware and silver, and gorgeous floral arrangements with candles. Each guest's meal was served individually by Morgan and Kelly, and they attended to refills and other needs throughout the meal.



Flowers and chocolate are standard for Valentine's Day, and this was no exception, as each lady carried home both, along with a matted verse, Jeremiah 29:11. "For I know the plans I have for you, plans to benefit you, not harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future." Following the dinner, I spoke to the women, telling my own story of widowhood briefly and God's plans in my life, ending with information about GriefShare as a resource for healing. Kathy Miller also spoke about her experience of healing through the GriefShare ministry.

The single session Loss of a Spouse seminar that was cancelled in January due to snow has been rescheduled for Thursday, April 4, 2019 at Western Carolina Church in the wing at 6:00 PM. All guests were invited to attend and received flyers and brochures about GriefShare and the individual events. The 13-week Fall cycle for GriefShare will begin in August and conclude in November with the Surviving the Holidays seminar. More information about these scheduled events will be featured in upcoming issues of BRCN. The public is always invited to all GriefShare events, even if they have not experienced a loss. I would like to encourage any person in a ministry to attend to learn how to help those they minister to who are in a season of grief. If you would like information about GriefShare, please contact Carolyn Dotts at Western Carolina Church, 828-765-4633 or 828-467-1433.

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.

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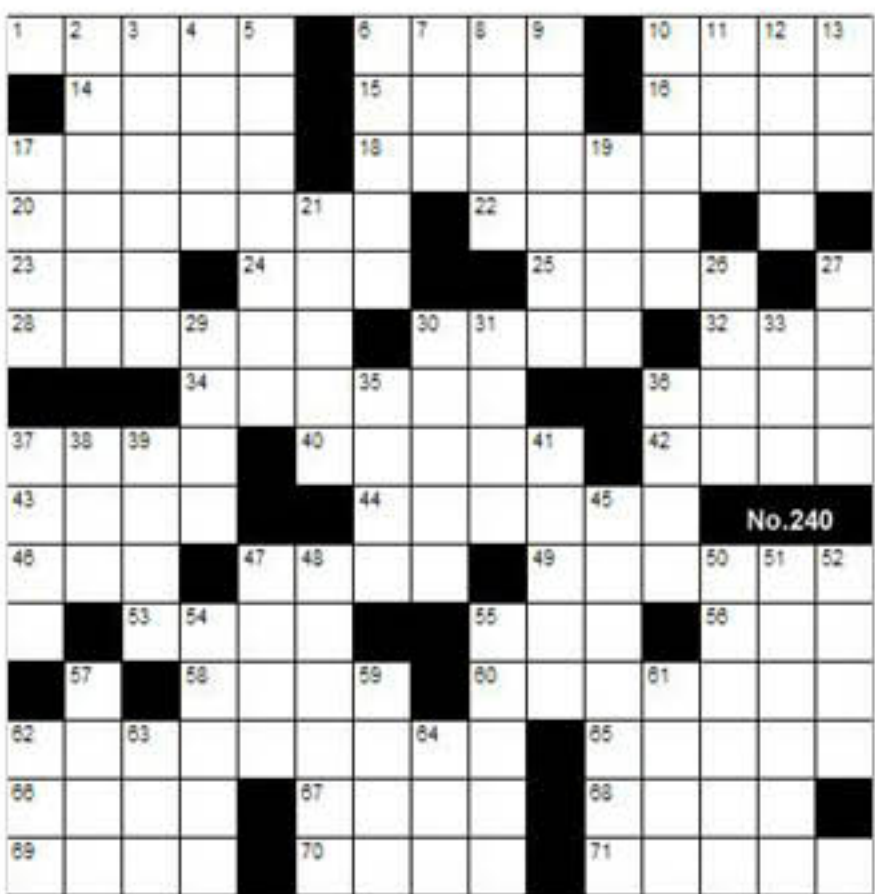
ACROSS

1 Rachel's husband (Gen 29:18-20)
 6 Its posts he made of silver, its _____ of gold (Song 3:10)
 10 with soap and my hands with washing _____ (Job 9:30)
 14 Remember, O LORD, your great mercy and _____ (Ps 25:6)
 15 the winds blew, and beat _____ that house; and it fell not (Matt 7:25)
 16 Master, we've worked _____ all night (Luke 5:5)
 17 the commander of Saul's army was _____ son of Ner (1 Sam 14:50)
 18 They reeled and _____ like drunken men (Ps 107:27)
 20 I will _____ the weary and satisfy the faint (Jer 31:25)
 22 there before me was a horse! Its rider was named Death (Rev 6:8)
 23 collect the weeds and _____ them in bundles to be burned (Matt 13:30)
 24 Do not let _____ unwholesome talk come out of your mouths (Eph 4:29)
 25 for wide is the _____, and broad is the way (Matt 7:13)
 28 the company of Korah, when they _____ against the LORD (Num 26:9) KJV
 30 a _____ like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure (Rev 11:1)
 32 _____ unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! (Matt 23:14)
 34 Through the window _____ Sisera's mother (Judg 5:28)
 36 who claim to be _____ though they are not (Rev 3:9)
 37 and loose his _____ from off his foot (Deut 25:9)
 40 The LORD reigns, he is _____ in majesty (Ps 93:1)
 42 also learn to maintain good works for necessary _____ (Titus 3:14)
 43 whether it be fat or _____, whether there be wood therein (Num 13:20)
 44 denieth me before men shall be _____ before the angels (Luke 12:9) KJV
 46 How _____ thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12) KJV
 47 brother of Cain (Gen 4:1-2)
 49 The two _____ arrived at Sodom in the evening (Gen 19:1)
 53 the _____ of his head began to grow (Judges 16:22)
 55 picnic pest (Prov 6:6)
 56 I will _____ down and sleep in peace (Ps 4:8)
 58 Saul _____ his thousands, and David his ten thousands (1 Sam 29:5) KJV
 60 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white _____ (Rev 3:5) KJV
 62 Philip, like Andrew and Peter,

was from the town of _____ (John 1:44)
 65 Asher remained on the coast and stayed in his _____ (Judg 5:17)
 66 Even in laughter the heart may _____ (Prov 14:13)
 67 Mockers _____ up a city, but wise men turn away anger (Prov 29:8)
 68 _____ though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death (Ps 23:4)
 69 were as swift as the _____ upon the mountains (1 Chr 12:8) (KJV)
 70 Thou art my beloved Son; in _____ I am well pleased (Luke 3:22) KJV
 71 the _____ forest has been cut down (Zech 11:2)

DOWN

2 ye say, The LORD saith it; _____ I have not spoken (Ezek 13:7) KJV
 3 I _____ on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one (Luke 22:29)
 4 them that had gotten the victory _____ the beast (Rev 15:2)
 5 deprive (Hos 9:12)
 6 His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are _____ (Song 5:11) KJV
 7 A man finds joy in giving an _____ reply (Prov 15:23)
 8 even if I washed myself with _____ (Job 9:30)
 9 the Philistines drew near to _____ Israel in battle (1 Sam 7:10)
 10 I saw something like a large _____ being let down from heaven (Acts 11:5)
 11 rowing device (Ezek 27:29) KJV
 12 reached for his sword, _____ it out and struck the servant (Matt 26:51)
 13 I will _____ to their numbers, and they will not be decreased (Jer 30:19)
 17 those who practice magic _____, the idolaters and all liars (Rev 21:8)
 19 I will be _____ and rejoice in you (Ps 9:2)
 21 look of contempt or scorn (Isa. 57:4)
 26 twenty he goats, two hundred _____, and twenty rams (Gen 32:14)
 27 I am _____ than the least of all God's people (Eph 3:8)
 29 _____ for me the gates of righteousness; I will enter (Ps 118:19)
 30 obey him and do not _____ against his commands (1 Sam 12:14)
 31 the first home of Adam and Eve (Gen 2:15)
 33 _____ no man any thing, but to love one another (Romans 13:8)
 35 He was given a crown, and he _____ out as a conqueror (Rev 6:2)
 36 abbr. for the seventh book of



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the O.T.
 37 and some of them they shall _____ and persecute (Luke 11:49) KJV
 38 Forsake _____ not, and she shall preserve thee (Prov 4:6) KJV
 39 The _____ which he sware to our father Abraham (Luke 1:73)
 41 a silversmith, which made silver shrines for _____ (Acts 19:24)
 45 Jeroboam _____ Israel away from following the LORD (2 Kings 17:21)
 47 What _____ you that you keep on arguing? (Job 16:3)
 48 but beat his _____ and said, 'God, have mercy on me (Luke 18:13)
 50 upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the _____ apostles (Acts 1:26)
 51 I have covered my bed with

colored _____ from Egypt (Prov 7:16)
 52 silver in two bags, with two _____ of clothing (2 Kings 5:23)
 54 The altar will be split apart and the _____ on it will be poured (1 Kings 13:3)
 55 lips that speak knowledge are _____ jewel (1,4) (Prov 20:15)
 57 Josiah fought against Pharaoh _____ king of Egypt (Jer 46:2)
 59 It is God who arms me _____ strength and makes my way perfect (Ps 18:32)
 61 For in him we live and _____ and have our being (Acts 17:28)
 62 have them shut the doors and _____ them (Neh 7:3)
 63 For I have not come to call _____ righteous, but sinners (Matt 9:13)
 64 Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to _____ in the desert? (Num 21:5)

Solution on page 14



Mayberry Doesn't Exist Anymore

By Russ Reaves

"Barney Gets His Man" is a favorite episode from The Andy Griffith Show. In that episode, there's a high-speed car chase, Andy carries a gun and an African-American citizen can be seen in the background when the criminal is apprehended. If that's the only episode you ever watch, you might think Mayberry is a center for urban crime with a diverse population. If you watch more than one episode, you realize that's not a good representation of Mayberry.

On the other hand, nothing much was true about Mayberry anyway. Though based on the towns of Mayberry and Pilot Mountain, the show was filmed on Hollywood backlots. Just about the only real establishment on the show was Snappy Lunch, where you can still get a pork chop sandwich today. You can get a haircut at Floyd's Barbershop, but that opened later because of the show. We don't like to think of Mayberry as fiction. Andy Griffith makes us nostalgic for the good ol' days. The only hardened criminals in Mayberry were passing through. Prankster Ernest T. Bass never did anyone any real harm. And on Sunday, everyone in town, including Otis the lovable drunk, gathered at the All Souls Church.

What remains unchanged is the Great Commission that Jesus imparted to the church to make disciples of all people. I travel to "Mayberry" a lot, and not just for the pork chop sandwich. I've got family nearby. I've run in the Mayberry Half Marathon. I also travel to Mayberry as a missionary. "Mayberry," or Mount Airy, is also known as pocket of lostness No. 159. Recently I stopped on the side of Haymore Street to look at some data about pocket No. 159. One of three families with children has no father in the home. One out of four adults over the age of 25 didn't graduate from high school. There is far more ethnic diversity than the TV show would have led us to believe.


About one in six families live below the federal poverty line. And 11,000 of the 16,000 people who live there do not know Jesus. Suddenly I realized that I was parked right in front of Andy Griffith's homeplace. We are definitely not in Mayberry anymore! Mayberry, if it ever existed like we see it on the show, certainly does not exist anymore. All across North Carolina are little Mayberry-like towns that aren't like they were a generation or two ago.

What remains unchanged, however, is the Great Commission that Jesus imparted to the church to make disciples of all people. Whether you are in pocket No. 159 or anywhere else, there are lost people all around you, often within the shadows of steeples of North Carolina Baptist churches. Filled with the Holy Spirit, and committed to the task of impacting lostness through disciple-making, your church and every member of it can make a difference. While some may wish for a return to Mayberry, we have the opportunity for something even better. As the gospel transforms lives in our communities, we find ourselves on the advancing edge of the kingdom of God.

by Russ Reaves / Strategic Focus Team / Baptist State Convention of North Carolina



Russ Reaves works for the North Carolina Baptist Convention on the Strategic Focus Team. Russ Reaves serves as a strategy coordinator for the Strategic Focus Team at the BSCNC. He is a native of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, and a graduate of Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute, Lancaster Bible College and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Russ holds a master of divinity degree with a dual concentration in Christian apologetics and biblical languages. Previously, Russ served as pastor of Conowingo Baptist Church in Conowingo, Maryland; Hillcrest Baptist Church in Kernersville, North Carolina; and Immanuel Baptist Church in Greensboro, North Carolina. He has taught a wide variety of courses in biblical, theological and pastoral subjects in several colleges and educational programs. Russ and his wife, Donia, and their children, Salem and Solomon, reside in Greensboro, North Carolina. In his spare time, Russ enjoys spending time with his family, reading, traveling and running.



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1. Amanda Question: Hello! Good article. Can you tell us how you pulled the statistics for Mount Airy and surrounding area please? Interested in the stats specifically. Thank you!

Reply

• Russ Reaves Thanks for a great question! We use a variety of demographic and mapping services which analyze streams of data ranging from the U. S. Census to the Annual Church Profile of NC Baptist Churches, with many points in between. We like to always specify that demographics are a snapshot in time, and they evolve, so we need to verify this information by getting out in the community to prayerwalk, prayer-drive, meet and converse with neighbors. Usually what we find is that our data is pretty accurate. Where there are anomalies, we can usually detect the reason for it (census bloc spillover, people group migration, gentrification, etc.). Even in those very rare occasions, however, when our data is proven wrong, we rejoice because followers of Christ have gone out to interact with the community and intercede for it. So, if we're wrong, please tell us! The data, whether it is right or wrong, is a starting point to catalyze missional engagement in the community.

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Storms

By Pastor Steve Williams
Mitchell County

We all have a bad day in our lives, regardless of who we are. And being a Christian doesn't alter that fact. Christians have bad days just like everyone else. If you think you ever had a bad day just listen to this. I think it will cheer you up. It is supposedly an actual statement, written by a bricklayer, and turned in to his company requesting sick leave.

"To whom It may concern. When I got to the building site I found that the hurricane had knocked off some brick from around the top of the building. So, I rigged up a beam with a pulley at the top of the building and hoisted up a couple barrels full of bricks." When I fixed the damaged area, there were a lot of brick left over. So, I placed the extra brick in a barrel, I then went to the bottom and began releasing the line. Unfortunately, the barrel of brick was much heavier than I was and before I knew what was happening, the barrel started coming down, jerking me up. I decided to hang on since I was too far off the ground by then to jump, and half way up I met the barrel of bricks coming down fast. I received a hard blow to my shoulder. I then continued to the top of the building, banging my head against the beam and getting my fingers pinched and jammed in the pulley. When the barrel hit the ground hard it burst its bottom, allowing the bricks to spill out. I was now heavier than the barrel. So, I started down again at a high speed. Halfway down I met the barrel coming up fast and received several injuries to my shins. When I hit the ground, I landed on the pile of spilt bricks, getting several painful cuts and deep bruises. At that time, I must have lost my presence of mind, I let go of the line. The barrel came down fast giving me another blow on my head and putting me in the hospital. Therefore, I respectfully request sick leave."

As a pastor I want you to understand that you can have a bad day even when you are following the Lord. I think of the time that the disciples and Jesus were caught in a sudden storm while crossing the Sea of Galilee. So powerful were the winds and the waves that they thought the boat would be sunk. They cried out to Jesus, who was asleep in the stern of the ship, "Teacher do you not care that we are perishing?" See, the disciples were on the ship because of the orders of Jesus and He was on the boat with them. It is very obvious then that a person can be obeying the Lord and be in a close relationship to Him and still get caught up in a storm. See, having Jesus in your life does not keep storms from coming. But when He is there, He gets you through them, when they do come. We must not compare being saved with being safe. We are so quick to say it was Daniel's faith that got him out of the lion's den, but we forget that it was also his faith that got him into the lion's den. God never promises us safety and security in this life, only strength to get us safe to the shore. We will all have Bad Days and experience Storms in this life. You might be facing a financial storm, marital storm or a physical storm or an emotional storm and you are not sure you are going to make it through safely. Remember the Bible is our Survival Manual. It is the Lord that helps us through our bad days, and through the storms that will come into our lives. If you get close enough to Jesus, whom the writer calls "the captain of our salvation in Hebrews 2:10, you will hear him say, "In the world you will have tribulations, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Place your life in the hands of God -He will help you.

Words of Wisdom:

- Trials teach us what we are; they dig up the soil, and let us see what we are made of. Charles Spurgeon
- A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor a man perfected without trials. N/A
- If we are faithful in the little things, we shall gain experience and strength that will be helpful to us in the more serious trials of life. Hudson Taylor
- No one is immune to the trials and tribulations of Life. Martin Lawrence
- We are always on the anvil, by trials, God is shaping us for higher things. Henry Ward Beecher

Don't Let your Trials Get You Down

A businessman was in a great deal of trouble. His business was failing, he had put everything he had into the business and he owed everybody. It was so bad he was even contemplating suicide. As a last resort he went to a pastor and poured out his story of tears and woe. When he had finished, the pastor said, "Here's what I want you to do, put a beach chair and your Bible in your car and drive down to the beach. Take the beach chair and the Bible to the water's edge, sit down in the beach chair, and put the Bible in your lap. Open the Bible; the wind will rifle the pages, but finally the open Bible will come to rest on a page. Look down at the page and read the first thing you see. That will be your answer, that will tell you what to do."

A year later the businessman went back to the pastor and brought his wife and children with him. The man was in a new custom-tailored suit, his wife in a mink coat, the children shining. The businessman pulled an envelope stuffed with money out of his pocket and gave it to the pastor as a donation in thanks for his advice.

The pastor recognized the benefactor, and was curious. "You did as I suggested?" he asked.

"Absolutely," replied the businessman. "You went to the beach?" "Absolutely."

"You sat in a beach chair with the Bible in your lap?" "Absolutely."

"You let the pages rifle until they stopped?" "Absolutely"

"And what were the first words you saw?" "Chapter 11 " So I filed for Bankruptcy.

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



Dazzled by the Dance of the Kites

By Ken and Jan Merop
Avery County

March winds whipped my hair back from my face and lifted my spirits high...like a kite soaring toward the clouds.

In the early evening hours along the beach near the lake, my husband, Ken, was eager to see what might present itself for his photographic eye. Ever his cheerleader and companion ~ and lover of cool, outdoor breezes ~ I accompanied him...book in hand for entertainment.

Around that time, a gentleman arrived with his kite. My eyes left my book and turned skyward where the kite soared and dipped buzzing in the breeze as the man skillfully maneuvered it.

However, the best awaited us.

After a time, leaving the one kite behind, he walked to his truck and I again returned to reading. Then I noticed him carrying what appeared to be another kite. Instead, it was a case holding five kites.

With great precision, he lined them up and then attached the lead to both hands. As he expertly navigated the kites, the wind lifted them from their sandy perch. With tails flying, they soared into the sky like planes in formation to put on a show.

And what a show they put on.

The whirring sound set my heart to fluttering. The flawless dancing kites soared, dipped, and waved swishing this way and that ~ elegant, colorful winged movement against white billowing clouds and blue sky that dazzled and amazed me.

Out there surrounded by God's creation of sky, lake, foliage, and relentless breezes, I was refreshed. But, watching this man make use of the gift of the wind and the natural beach backdrop, I felt my spirits soar.

It reminded me how the Holy Spirit of God ~ when invited into our hearts ~ is like the wind that lifts us up, up and away to realms we could not reach on our own. And as we respond to his promptings, we motivate others to catch the breeze of the Spirit so they can soar, too.

When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus (a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews) about being born again of the Spirit in John 3: 8, NKJV, he said, "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

A kite alone is a beautiful thing. But, like those five kites ascending, gliding, dipping and swooping, let's work together in the Spirit ~ catching the breeze for his glory. Selah

Dancing across the sky

Like ballerinas holding hands and gliding across the stage, these kites glided and dipped in the breezes... creating a dance of color and inspiration.

Let's let the Holy Spirit lift us together in a dance of hope and enthusiasm captivating others so they hear His music and dance for joy.

"Let them praise His name with the dance...for the Lord takes pleasure in His people."
Psalm 149: 3 and 4a



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.

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Snow Hill Baptist Church

No Regrets Family-In the Palm of His Hand

By Pastor Dean Honeycutt
Mitchell County

The Bible asks the question "how can two walk together unless they agree"? And the answer is-- they cannot. It is very difficult, if not impossible, for two opposing ideas to come together in the middle unless one or both parties give in. And that is where we are in America, we have two opposing ideas or ideologies that cannot meet in the middle. Jesus talked about this when he said, "you cannot serve two masters you will either love one and hate the other, or you will hold to one and despise the other." (Matthew 6:24)

When I was growing up, I never thought about politics or a Biblical Worldview. I am sure there was as much conflict in the world when I was a child as there is now. But honestly, I have never seen a time America was so divided and torn. Secularization has torn our country apart. It has removed our pulpits from a place of influence. We have watered down our Biblical moorings and foundational heritage so much that we do not know who we are or what we stand for. We have lost our way. The Bible warns of immorality and apathy. Hebrews 2:1 (KJV 1900)

"Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip."

We Christian people and the Church have let our spiritual and Biblical moorings slip. I cannot change what is going on in our government, but I can change what is going on in my life and the life of my family. I can give "more earnest heed" to what I know to be true and honest, and faithful. America is sliding, we are slipping away from God.

In Numbers 14 after being led out of a 430-year bondage in Egypt, Moses sent 12 spies into Canaan, the "land that flows with milk and honey" the promised land for the children of Israel. When they returned to Kadesh, Caleb wanted to go up at once and conquer the land and possess it as God had promised, but the others said we are not able to go up against this people because they are stronger than we are. We have two opposing views here and there is no middle ground. Either obey God or disobey God. The people began to murmur and complain against Moses and wanted to go back to Egypt, because they did not believe God. The Bible warns us about unbelief. Hebrews 4:1 (KJV 1900)

"Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

Joshua and Caleb speak out and tell the people not to rebel against God, because God has removed the defense of the people of the land, and that God is with them. However, it was too late for the people of God. They provoked God to anger, and for forty years these unbelievers would wander in the wilderness until all were dead except their children and Joshua and Caleb. God honored the faithfulness of Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, but He judged the nation of Israel for their unbelief. We need to keep this in mind-- God may honor our individual faithfulness, but is God pleased with America? Is America not like the "land that flows with milk and honey"-- has not God blessed America? Could we all not suffer because of our blatant disobedience to God?

The Bible says in the Book of Hebrews these unbelievers did not enter God's rest because of unbelief. Hebrews 3:18 (KJV 1900)

"18 And to whom swear he that they should not enter his rest, but to them that believed not?"

Hebrews 3:19 (KJV 1900)

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

God's rest here is not the "Land of Canaan" but heaven and everlasting life. To enter God's rest is to have eternal life. Hebrews 4:2 (KJV 1900)

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

Hebrews 4:9 (KJV 1900)

9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

My heart's desire was to write about the divisiveness and unrest we have in America today. Two opposing views on almost everything. America has turned her back on God. We have rejected God's "rest" which is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We have disobeyed God. My friend, America will never be great until God is Great in America. I am all for a wall to protect us from evil. But, America has built walls to keep God out. How can we ask God to bless our nation when we reject the grace of God in Christ Jesus? Hebrews 12:25 (KJV 1900)

"25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:"

My dear friend repent and turn to God. Take your family to church --be faithful to God. We are not called to change the world, we are called to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so He can change our heart before God destroys this world. It is obvious that America is divided and "a house divided cannot stand." Look to Jesus in these last days. He is the author and finisher of your faith. The world may be in turmoil, but God holds it in the palm of His Hand.

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

The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise him. Psalms 28:7



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Cardinal Insurance employees recently celebrated moving to new locations. Pictured, back row, from left, is Donna Taylor (Spruce Pine), Gaylene Potter (Newland), Martie McKinney (Bakersville), Chad Hughes (Bakersville), Michael McKinney (Spruce Pine), Teresa Young (Spruce Pine) and Susie Lewis (Newland). Pictured, front row, from left, is Jill Voland (Spruce Pine), Glenda Buchanan (Spruce Pine) and Katrina Hollifield (Newland).

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An Affliction of Conviction

By Timothy W. Tron

The cold gray light of dawn had yet to reach the brink of my window sill. Somewhere over the mountain, the light had yet to reach this side of the morn. Like waves crashing upon the rocks of a distant shore, I could hear, but I could not hear. The words of the young man from the day before returned; thoughts of music and farming combining as one. As he spoke, my mind reflected on the scripture references: ashes to ashes, dust to dust, as we are one with the earth from whence, we came.

I placed my materials at the judge's table well in advance of the start of the days Fiddler's Convention. As I returned with a fresh cup of coffee, a young man settled into my left, he too being a judge for the morning's event.

"William Ritter," he said as we shook hands. To his left, another judge began to sit down. They had known one another from other encounters and began to strike up a conversation of coming events, dances, and such. I casually listened as I watched folks of all ages filtering into the Lynnville Falls ballroom of the Plemmons Student Center at Appalachian State University where we were part of the 11th annual Fiddler's Convention. Our morning was to start with the youth guitar competition. Voices filled the chamber as I serenely sipped the bitter brew. Eventually, the keywords struck my ear that seemed to be a bit at odds, "Heirloom seeds and music."

"Did I hear you correctly," my attention now turned fully to the bearded young man sitting next to me?

During the course of their conversation, I had come to understand that they had connections through Warren Wilson College, where sustainable agriculture was taught and practiced. William had mentioned speaking at one of the events they had been talking about on the subject of heirloom seeds, music, and their connection.

"Tell me more," I asked, now fully vested in understanding his perspective; my own had already been retrieved and ready to compare. He shared how we too often take for granted those seeds that which are passed down from one generation to the next, and how much richer and sweeter those fruits and vegetables taste when compared to generic, run of the mill seeds purchased at your local farm supply store.

Nodding my head in agreement, I fully understood where he was going. He went on to say how old-time music is much the same, how society doesn't appreciate the traditional music and how it is passed down from one generation to the next; it too having a much richer and sweeter disposition upon the soul than other forms of music.

"It is our affliction," I said to him. He paused in reflection, thinking deeply about what I had said. You could tell he wanted to dig deeper, but before we could embark further, the emcee for our judging event called the program into order, and the participants began to perform, one after another. In our short, but rewarding time together, William and I found a common thread and bond.

Reflecting back to that moment, there had been so much more to convey that had sprung forth from that beginning. Like a seed being planted, those purposeful words of heirloom seeds and music, so too was our faith passed down from one generation to the next. Either one of which, that may be dropped, perpetuates a loss to the coming generations; their ancestral ties to the truth become endangered. Someone once said, "We are one generation away from apostasy."

As surely as I awoke this morning, I knew in my heart that God had planted me next to William Ritter for a purpose yesterday. Inside of me, there was a renewed sense of being and what the Lord had called me to do. The words, "Afflicted to be



Convicted," came to mind. I sat up in bed, searching for pen and paper in the dark before the words left me.

My life had been one of working the land, while soothing music reconnected my spirit to God. A vision of the past began to take hold. In it, there stood a figure in the cold light of day, there were no shadows, only the gray, bleakness of late winter. The boy picked up a handful of the dark earth and crumbled the rich soil through his fingertips. As tiny remnants of dirt slipped through his hand, he pulled his fist close to his face and inhaled, smelling the deep aroma of rich humus. His mind drifted back to the garden just outside Grandma Tron's tiny kitchen window.

It was early spring, and it was the dark of the moon. Easter was near. The family had been called in for the celebration of Good Friday. The cherry trees would soon be blossoming at the Roofless Church. Whenever the family gathered, they also came to work together. A Tron was not content to just sit; they had to keep busy. It was time for putting in the potato sets for the year's garden, and Grandma had the troops fully deployed. Most of the blooms on the trees and bushes had yet to come forth; summer was still a distant thought, but we knew if Grandma had said it was time to plant, then it was time to plant. The dirt was cool to the touch as his hands dug one hole after another, placing the sets carefully so that the eyes were facing up. Behind him, a cousin was following, laying straw into the bed, covering the seedlings, as yet, another cousin followed the other, pulling the soil back over both, tucking them into bed for their eventual resurrection. Grandma worked alongside us, whistling old hymns in the sweetest refrains. We often tried to mimic her, but our lips could never sustain the sweetness to which she carried her melodies. One after another, their gentle refrains blessed our ears, calming our youthful spirits. It was back-breaking work, but the reward, spending time with grandma, and then to be rewarded with a fresh plate of her fried potatoes, was well worth any toil.

He looked at his dirt-stained hands, the soil blackened beneath his nails; the sense of accomplishment and family; a feeling he would not soon release. The unnamed melodies forever planted within his soul; the bond of earth and song were inseparable. The two were in his blood forever part of who he was.

God had created man from the earth, breathing life into his nostrils, so that he could have life. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. 8 And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed." -Gen.2:7-8 After the sin, man was cursed to work the land, by sweat and toil; yet, again, it was who he was. "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." -Gen.3:17-19

God had intended for us to work the land from that point forward, but not only the land, our humanity as well. His only Son provided us with the path to eternal life through our salvation, but only such that we had been entrusted with the planting of those seeds of faith. Without them, the future generations would be lost to sin, and eternal death. It is our conviction of purpose to plant those seeds. Although we as sowers may never reap the harvest, it is up to us to carry on the Word of God unto the world, for these were Christ's own words, "18 And Jesus came and spoke unto them, saying, "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and on earth. 19 Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, 20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Amen." -Mat.28:18-20

As my fingertips glide across the keys, music connects me to another realm whereby God speaks through me in spite of me. The connection is undeniable. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." -Col.3:16

Like that feeling of dark soil slipping through our fingertips, its smell reaching our senses, reminding us of our irrefutable connection to the earth, and God's love. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Seeds of faith, the far-reaching ability to touch our hearts through music, and the ground upon which we trod; we are never far from the graces of God.

Long ago, the seeds of faith were planted in my soul. Grandma gently watered them with beautiful melodies of faith, which to this day, bring grace to my heart. We may pass from this life to the next one day, but until we do, we too shall break the ground and plant the seeds for those to come; lest they fall to the wayside and darkness prevail.

Preserve those heirloom seeds, music, and faith, if not for yourself, do it for those you love. Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. Let our affliction become our conviction in all that we do. 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



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Zion Hill Baptist Church
The Good News of the Gospel

By Dr. Tom Walker
McDowell County



In Romans 1:15 the Apostle Paul writes: "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also." The word "gospel" is used 95 times exclusively in the New Testament. Many have said the word "gospel" basically means "good news."

We live in a day of news. To our dismay, much of the news we hear today over most of the news networks is fake and biased. If the liberal media does not like a conservative politician, they will release reports on that person whether it is truly accurate or whether it is false. Our society is filled with fake news: it is biased, inaccurate, and untrue many times.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is genuine and reliable. That is why the Apostle Paul was ready at all times to preach it. He did not face the guillotine in Rome over a false message. Paul the Apostle felt like the truths he was given to proclaim were worth giving up his life over if necessary.

The word "gospel" in the Greek New Testament is translated in another place in the KJV as "glad tidings." A form of the word is used in Acts 13:32 in regard to the gospel message where it is called glad tidings. Actually, it is a form of the word to evangelize which means to spread the good news.

What is it that makes the gospel such good news? There are several matters we need to consider about it. It is good news because of several facts regarding it.

It is Good News Because It Is About the Lord Jesus Christ

In the Bible it is called the "gospel of Christ" eleven times in the New Testament. The message we preach and teach is about Jesus, His death, burial and resurrection.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 says:
"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

It is a message about how He came the lowly for the lifeless, the innocent for the guilty, and the resurrection and the life for those dead in trespasses and sins.

There is something about His name that makes it different than any other name. It rings the bells of our soul, warms and soothes the spirit of man, and gives us hope when nothing else can.

We should love to hear sermons about Christ, songs about Him, and testimonies concerning what He is able to do in one's life.

It is Good News Because It is Accurate and Reliable

The Gospel message is one that you can count on as being correct and truthful. There is nothing phony or fake in regard to the Gospel of Christ. When Jesus arose from the grave there were over five-hundred of the brethren who saw him at one time. That would stand in any court of law. Imagine that many witnesses to testify in court of a matter's validity and truthfulness at one time. That could have been done in regard to the resurrection of our Lord.

One of the greatest verses in the Bible, Titus 1:2-3 says, *"In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour."* In describing God Paul as he writes to Titus describes God as one who "cannot lie." Our faith and trust is in One who cannot give out anything that is false because of His flawless and perfect character.

You cannot take everyone's word but when it comes to what Jesus says, you can accept and believe it all. The Bible tells us a whale swallowed Jonah, but one preacher said, "If the Bible said Jonah swallowed the whale, I would believe it." We can confidently and completely believe all of what God has to say in His holy Word.

Christ did come (Luke 5:32); He did die on an old rugged cross (1 Peter 3:18), and Jesus did rise triumphantly and victoriously over death, hell and the grave (Matt.28:6).

It is Good News Because It Brings Salvation

Ephesians 1:13 declares: *"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."*

The Gospel of Christ is a gospel of salvation. In order to be saved, one must believe its claims. Salvation is a wonderful thing that only God through the truth of the gospel and the wooing work of the Spirit of God, can bring about in our lives.

Salvation is full. In it we find what we need for the present life and our future life in eternity. That is why Jesus said, *"I am come that ye might have life and have it more abundantly"* (Jn.10:10). Our Christian life is not one that just gets us by, it is a life of plenty of grace and help.

Salvation is free. Jesus paid it all and all to Him I owe. In Ephesians 2:8-9 it is referred to as a free gift. A gift is something you do not necessarily earn, but it is given out of a heart of love from someone who desires to be kind to you and who cares about you.

Salvation is forever. I am convinced that since we did not earn salvation, we cannot lose it because it is eternal, and it was given to me not as wage but as a gift from a caring God. God only has one kind of life to give---that being eternal life. One should read Romans 8:35-39 which says: *"Who shall separate us from*

the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." You can lose fellowship with the Lord, but you cannot lose salvation itself once you know you have been born again. No creature, including yourself, can free you from the grip of God's grace and love once you belong to Him.

How thankful we should be for the Gospel of Christ! It is good news!

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

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Sudoku

Solution on page 14

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Gardner-Webb Board of Trustees Announces the University's New President Office of Communications & Media Relations



Dr. William M. Downs Begins His Term as
13th President on July 1

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C.—The Gardner-Webb University Board of Trustees is pleased to announce Dr. William M. Downs has been named the institution's 13th president. He currently serves at East Carolina University (ECU) as the dean of the Thomas Harriot College of Arts & Sciences in Greenville, N.C.

Board members unanimously confirmed his appointment at a special meeting, capping a highly competitive one-year national search. His term as GWU president begins July 1.

According to David Royster III, GWU Board of Trustees member and chairman of the Presidential Search Committee, the new president has significant leadership experience and understands higher education on multiple levels. "He has served as a faculty member, department chair, program director and dean," Royster noted. "The Board of Trustees has faith that Gardner-Webb will thrive and continue to provide transformative opportunities for students under his guidance."

With over two decades of service in higher education, Downs has been at ECU since 2014. He is the W. Keats Sparrow Distinguished Chair in the Liberal Arts and a professor of political science. He administers 16 academic departments and 17 interdisciplinary degree programs in the College of Arts & Sciences, which has more than 6,000 arts and sciences undergraduate majors and more than 730 graduate majors. Downs also ensures the quality of general education curriculum for more than 23,000 undergraduate students. Working with his colleagues, he has introduced several initiatives to improve undergraduate research and international study opportunities.

"I am truly honored by the privilege and opportunity of serving as Gardner-Webb University's next president" Downs said. "So many things have attracted me and brought me to this moment...GWU's mission and underlying values, its people and programs, and its rich traditions of excellence. Together, we will have the chance to write a new chapter in the history of one of North Carolina's great universities. I cannot wait to get started."

From 1997 to 2014, Downs served various roles at Georgia State University (Atlanta), including area dean, department chair, director and professor. He is an accomplished lecturer, research scholar and the author of "Political Extremism in Democracies: Combating Intolerance." He has been a research fellow at Harvard University's Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, a graduate research associate at the Carter Center's African Governance Program and a Fulbright Research Fellow in Belgium.

The search committee worked in conjunction with the Charlotte-based executive search firm Coleman Lew + Associates, Inc. to help in the search process. Members of the Presidential Search Committee include trustees, GWU faculty and staff, and a student representative.

"I am delighted to welcome Dr. Downs to Gardner-Webb" said Jennifer Marion Mills, chair of the Board of Trustees. "He brings academic depth, significant leadership experience and vision to the position. We expect great things ahead."

A Raleigh native, Downs earned his Bachelor of Arts in political science (with a minor in journalism) from North Carolina State University (Raleigh) in 1988, and his Master of Arts ('90) and Doctoral ('94) degrees in political science from Emory University (Atlanta). Downs is married to Kimberly Harwood Downs and has two children, Rachel and Bradley.

Downs, his wife and children are lifelong followers of the Christian faith. "Kim and I actually met in fourth grade in a Raleigh Sunday School class, and we have been partners in our spiritual journey ever since," Downs said. "That journey has shaped who I am as an educator, as a husband/father, and as a member of my community. I fully embrace Gardner-Webb's commitment to providing rigorous academic programs in a compassionate Christian environment, and I look forward to celebrating the University's Baptist heritage. My family is eager to find a new church home in the Boiling Springs/Shelby area."

Located in the North Carolina foothills, Gardner-Webb University is a private, Christian, liberal arts university. Gardner-Webb emphasizes a strong student-centered experience and rigorous academics to prepare students to become effective leaders within the global community. Ignite your future at Gardner-Webb.edu.



Dr. William M. Downs



Jamie Miller, CPA

Jamie M. Miller, CPA, PLLC

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Hello March!

Hello Spring!



March 2019 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 45

Theme: "Love One Another"

By Monica Henley-Kritz
Mitchell County

Scripture: John 13:34 "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

Why Pray?
Do you believe in the power of prayer? Do you believe GOD hears our prayers?

Prayer is the best tool we have. We are in contact with GOD, The Creator of the universe. How awesome! Our nation is in real trouble. Unless something changes...unless we humble ourselves, unless we pray, unless we seek HIS face, unless we turn from our wickedness...our nation is headed for destruction. But GOD is faithful. HIS promises are true and sure. HE tells us in The Bible in 2 Chronicles 7:14, that when we do these things...humble ourselves, pray, seek HIM, and turn from our wicked ways...THEN HE will hear us, HE will forgive us, and HE will heal our land.

It begins with repentance.
Beginning on Thursday, April 25th, we plan to gather and pray at 12:00 noon at Riverside Park at the amphitheater (the 2nd entrance into the playground area). This will continue through Wednesday, May 1. These are called Days of Repentance, and I believe they are a very necessary part of the National Day of Prayer. So please plan to come each day at 12:00 noon for a time of prayer for our nation. Each day will have a theme, based on the 7 major areas of influence in a society: the church, media, military, the government, business, education, and the family.

The National Day of Prayer is on Thursday, May 2, and we plan to meet at 12:00 noon at Riverside Park for a time of prayer, as well as music and speakers. We will also have another time of prayer at 6:30 p.m. for those who work and cannot attend at 12:00 noon.

Please come. When we seek THE LORD with a sincere and an honest heart, HE will hear...HE will answer. In the book of Jonah in GOD's Word, GOD was ready to destroy Nineveh but when they repented, HE did not destroy them. Jonah 3:10 tells us that "God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not."

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



God's Children:
NOT Exempt From Suffering

By Shawn Thomas
Burke County



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

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

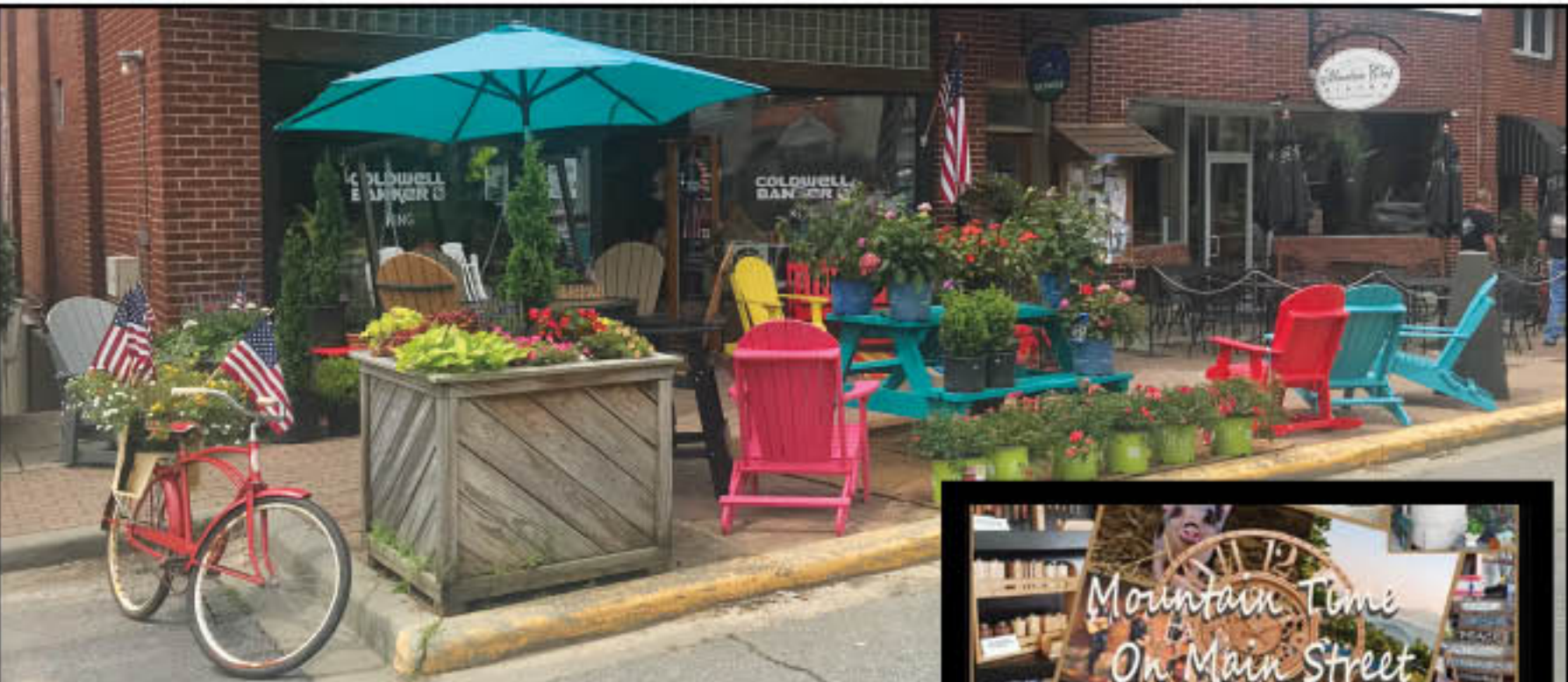
Hebrews 5:8, speaking of Jesus' time here on earth, says, "although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered." Being God's Son did not "exempt" Jesus from sufferings — and neither does being His child exempt US! Even though we are God's children, we will suffer in His will,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

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

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

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

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. John 16:33



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5 Questions to Ask Yourself Before Marriage
By Rachel Cruze



Marriage is one of the biggest decisions you'll ever make, so the last thing you want to do is go in unprepared. Money is the number one issue couples fight about. In fact, Ramsey Solutions released a study that shows money fights are the second leading cause of divorce, behind infidelity. So, making sure you're on the same page about your finances with your future spouse is extremely important. When you sit down and talk with your partner about your finances, it builds a different level of trust in your relationship. You'll wind up growing closer to each other as a result.

Talking about money can be uncomfortable at first, but it's so worth it! Before you say "I do," here are a few questions you should ask yourself as you get ready to have the money talk with your future spouse.

1. Where are you currently with your finances?

Both of you should answer this question and get it out on the table. How much debt do you have—including student loans, car loans, mortgages, credit cards and even personal loans? What's your annual income? How much do you have in savings?

Once you both have that information, you can make a plan to attack your debt. That leads us to a very important question—do you want debt to be a part of your marriage? I hope the answer is no, but you need to have this discussion. If you're determined to get out of debt and your spouse continues to pile up credit card debt, then you're headed toward a lot of marital stress.

Debt is a thief. It steals your money and your joy. The last thing you want to do is delay all of those dreams you have with your future spouse. Being debt free will allow you to turn your dreams into a reality. So, make a plan to get out of debt together, and don't let it be an option ever again.

2. Am I a spender or a saver?

You probably know the answer to this question immediately, right? Would you rather spend your time shopping at the mall or updating your budget in Excel? The spender and the saver are total opposites, but it's true what they say—opposites attract. Often in marriage, one person is a spender and one is a saver. And that's okay! Just because one likes to spend and the other one likes to save doesn't mean your marriage is doomed. You balance each other out.

The problems start when you go through life without understanding each other's natural tendencies. You have to start by embracing one another's differences. There is no right or wrong here. The key is to communicate and make a plan for your money together. Spenders shouldn't let all of the budgeting fall to the saver and vice versa. You are one now!

3. Do I understand how a budget works?

If you don't know how to make a budget, stop what you're doing and learn how to create one. I know what you may be thinking... "Budgets are the worst!" or "You can't have fun when you're on a budget!" Budgeting might seem restrictive but telling your money where to go instead of wondering where it went actually gives you permission to spend! It's also a great way to deepen communication with your spouse because you're planning for your future together.

Your budget is your game plan. With a zero-based budget, you list your monthly income at the top of the page. Then list all your monthly expenses—gas, food, rent, debt payments and so on—below that. The income minus the outgo should equal zero. Every dollar should have a "name." Give yourself grace. It will take a few months to get used to budgeting, but you'll get there!

4. What are your financial fears?

This might not be a fun question, but it's an important one. Fear can make us do crazy things, especially when it comes to your money. Fear is what leads to people hiding purchases from their spouse or getting a secret credit card. Both of which are bad ideas, by the way!

Maybe you're afraid because you don't have the security that comes with savings or maybe you're scared because you're living paycheck to paycheck, like most Americans. Whatever they are, share them with your fiancé. Getting your fears out on the table will help you to get on the same page when it comes to your values and money.

5. What are your dreams?

Where do you picture yourself (and your spouse) years from now? What type of lifestyle are living? You probably already know the answer, and these are things you should be sharing with each other, too.

Talking about money with your partner binds you on an intimate level unlike anything else. You wind up sharing your hopes and dreams together, and who doesn't want that? The honeymoon doesn't have to end when your wedding is over. Dream together, and make a plan for your money together. I promise, you'll add a sense of peace in your marriage that could not exist with debt!

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



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