Legacy of Blue Ridge Christian News

By Doug Harrell

A little over nine years ago I began having dreams about Blue Ridge Christian News almost every night. I would awake in the middle of the night thinking about this paper, and the fact that it was really struggling to stay afloat and continue to be published. A good friend and former employ-ee of mine had started the paper and I knew he was struggling to make things work out. Barbara and I had been in the publishing business for several years and were aware of how difficult it was, at times, to make all the pieces come together on deadlines and schedules that were so critical. Cash flow was always important everyday and every month. My friend had asked me several times to come help with the paper, or to take it over and I did not feel that I wanted to do that at all. I told Barbara repeatedly that I was not going to get involved with that paper. At this time, we were already past the age of retirement for most folks. It is just amazing how God works! The dreams kept coming night after night and I knew the paper was going away, it was going to fold and I think God was telling me, Doug, you need to do this paper, I want you there! Some are called to do different things and it became obvious to me that I was being called to step up and take on the paper. As things would happen during this time, a dear friend of ours, Clint Pollard, came to live with us on the farm for awhile after going through some very hard times himself. Just a few days after he came, I mentioned the paper to him and told him I thought he would make a wonderful editor. He just horse laughed and said I was crazy. Later he was to write a series for the paper called Funky Farm and that has been a legacy in its own right.

Within a few months of all these things taking place, I made the decision to take over the paper and made the surprise announcement to Barbara and Clint one Sunday afternoon after I made the decision on the Saturday preceding. You can imagine the looks on their faces when I made the announcement! Barbara’s first comments were “you did what, what are you thinking and what are you going to cut it?” I had not really told her or Clint about the dreams I had been having and I told her about those that Sunday. I told her that I felt like Isaiah, that I had been running from God and what He wanted me to do. I was not sure what was going to swallow me but I knew God was trying to send me to Nineveh to spread the “Good News” and that I was going to name the corporation The Nineveh (it actually get misspelled as Nineveh) Corporation DBA Blue Ridge Christian News. Our focus was to provide a vehicle to spread the good news of Christ across Western North Carolina and parts beyond. Isaiah 32:7 “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!” This became the key verse that we focused on over the years. God has blessed the paper with wonderful readers, contributors that have provided the content, and advertisers that have provided the funds to make the publication free to the readers over the past nine years. Our mission statement was simple and three-fold, a triple braided cord is not easily broken: TO SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS OF CHRIST, TO UNITE THE BODY OF CHRIST AND TO BE THE BEST ADVERTISING VEHICLE IN OUR MARKET AREA. These have remained our primary focus over the past nine years and we give thanks to the Lord for blessing the efforts involved in the process.

The time is now here to transfer the ownership and production to another person that God has put in place to carry on His work. We all face seasons in our lives, and changes come to each and everyone of us. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, “To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance. A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; A time to embrace, and a time to release; A time to search, and a time to weary; A time to keep silence, and a time to speak. A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.” Seasons can be challenging to each of us in different ways, but if we listen, God’s timing is perfect. The new owner and publisher of the Blue Ridge Christian News is a fine young man, young to me, anyhow, Brian Barrier from Morganton, NC. He and his wife, Michelle, and his mother-in-law Cathy, will be running the paper from the office here in Spruce Pine. Cathy will be doing the editing and organizing of the paper and Brian will be taking care of the business part of the process. Barbara and I are both excited about the future of the paper with Brian at the helm and know that he will continue the good work that the Lord has so blessed and carried on for the past nine years. We sincerely ask for your continued support and prayer as they put the Lord’s paper out each month in the coming years, and ask that you pray for Barbara and me as we slow down a little bit at the ripe young age of seventy-six. We will miss the interaction with so many of you that has helped make our lives so complete and fulfilling for the past few years. Our love and appreciation for you will never fail! Thanks for the memories, the hugs, the tears, the prayers that we have all shared together. To God be the Glory!

By Doug Harrell

www.brcnews.com
Memorial Day Picnic At The Orchard
By Donna Stafford
Mitchell County

This year, Memorial Day falls on Monday, May 27, and is the day when the orchards at Altapass celebrate with millions of others around the nation and the honor paid to the men and women who died while serving in the United States military. The Memorial Day picnic has become an annual event at the Orchard and a time to come together, enjoy a meal, music, and memories. Festivities begin at 10:30 a.m. and continue throughout the day until 5:30 p.m. There will be live traditional music, clogging, dancing, and food, lots of food—all to commemorate the national holiday and its meaning.

The Orchard had its origins in the 1800's and was known as Decoration Day—dedicated to honor the 620,000 Americans who died during the Civil War. On May 3, 1868, General John A. Logan, leader of an organization for Northern Civil War veterans, called for a nationwide day of remembrance. The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of placing flowers on graves, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of our country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet churchyard in the land, he proclaimed. The 30th was chosen because no other battle had that date as its anniversary. Decades passed, and the United States found itself embroiled in another major conflict, World War I. The holiday evolved to commemorate all American military personnel who died in all wars—over 1.1 million. In 1871, Memorial Day became an official national holiday and always on the last Monday in May.

In Orchard tradition, the memories come from music and food and friends. On the schedule are favorites, Town & Country, Country Just Us, with young Kevin Beddingfield sandwiched between. Kevin, now at the ripe old age of 10, picked up his first banjo at three. He taught himself to play by watching YouTube, then began professional clawhammer lessons at eight. Over his short career, he has won regional and national awards, performed on the radio, and is on track to achieve his goal of performing at the Grand Ole Opry. Come listen to this pint-sized talent.

The price of admission is a covered dish (enough to feed your family, staff, volunteers, and musicians, and please bring before 11:30 a.m.). Without a shared dish, the day will cost $15 that includes all the music and dancing you can stand. BBQ and burgers, water, wine, and beverages. Food will be served until 2 p.m.

The Orchard at Altapass is located at 1025 Orchard Road, Spruce Pine, NC 28777. For more information about any Orchard programs, please visit www.altapassorchard.org, or the Orchard at Altapass Facebook page, or call 828-765-9551.

Donna is the Director at The Orchard.

God's Beautiful Needlework
By Marlene Huk
Burke County

Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:

What is smocking? Is it:
A. fish bait
B. an insult
C. a sewing craft

My friend had smocked a lovely Easter dress for her toddler granddaughter. The pleating stood is precise folds, marching gently across her frock. Resting on top of the pleats, and seeming to float across the surface, were tiny flowers sporting bright pink that matched the Spring weather with attendant luxuriant green leaves. The powder blue cloth offered a perfect backdrop for the delicate handwork that spoke of loving attention to detail for a treasured princess.

As I drew the lovely garment closer, my mind totally absorbed in the craftsmanship, a thought drifted with the soft whisper of a dove's wings straight to my heart. This is how Christ designs His plan for His children's lives. Through my friend's passion to create an heirloom for her granddaughter, I caught a glimpse of my heavenly Father's care and infinite skill in crafting His plan for my life.

Looking back, I can see the precise way He pleated the folds of my life to produce a child of faith that would honor Him and sustain me. And from His cache of richly colored threads, He wove across those pleats that formed His plan the jeweled shades of flowers and contrasting rich green leaves that reflected His goodness and mercy in my life. Crowned by the smocking, He gently sewed in white seed pearls that seemed to float on top of the pleats. Their significance speaks to me every time I see them. "This is your legacy, child, for you belong to the Pearl of Great Price which is the Bride of Christ. Remember that." (Matthew 13:45-46)

Smocking can be seen in paintings as early as the thirteenth century (Jacques Liernier, 1270-1340) and even mentioned in Shakespeare's play of Romeo and Juliet (Act 2, Scene 4, Mercutio speaks). Originally, smocking, with its many pleats, created extra room in the garment for laborers and even extra padding on the shoulders for carrying heavy tools. This reminded me of how God leaves space room in His person-sized garment of righteousness for us. His skill in fashioning our frock leaves plenty of room for spiritual growth and includes extra padding to carry the burdens of life.

Perhaps now you can recognize smocking that was especially popular for young children in the 1950s and remains a classic garment for today. Let it remind you of God's careful attention to our lives as He saw a garment that reflects His deep love and care for each one of us as dear children.

Marlene Huk 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 marlenehuk@bellsouth.net

As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem. Isaiah 66:13

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“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace: that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation: that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”

Isaiah 52:7 KJV

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Shadows Gathering Over North Carolina: 
Alcohol Issues Matter Too
By Rev. Mark H. Creech

Shadows are gathering over North Carolina. Clouds are
approaching. The passion for gaining riches is set
to cast a pall across the land. But our eyes have grown
so accustomed to the darkness that it’s possible we
ignore the ominous tempest which it forebodes.

Only a few weeks ago, a Boeing jet plane crashed,
and 157 people were killed. Directly after that, Boeing
Max 8 planes like the one involved in the crash were
shut down worldwide. Yet excessive alcohol use leads

1,000 deaths every year and 2.5 million years of potential
life lost every year in the United States. In North Carolina the stats reveal 360 deaths and more than
3000 years of potential life lost annually, and despite these horrific figures hardly
anyone bats an eye.

Object to a legislative proposal that would dangerously make alcohol more acces-

sible and you are apt to be looked at as someone from the Pro-Earth Society.

Even more Christian organizations have given up on addressing the alcohol issue.

One highly esteemed Christian activ-

ist has written a book that is a

veritable encyclopedia on the
currently taboo social issues of
concern to evangelicals, but there isn’t a word about alcohol. When was the last
time you heard your pastor speak about alcohol use and abuse from the pulpit?

If you did, it was probably just in a passing reference and certainly not as entire sermon.

You see, the darkness is so thick with LGBTQ advances, pro-choice con-

ceptions, religious liberty issues — issues we deem much weightier — it hardly seems

consequential we should be concerned about alcohol and its related harms.

Nevertheless, what’s too outdated, what’s not urgent enough, what’s not Chris-
tian enough, about resisting policies that celebrate, as well as perpetuate, the reck-

less use of a commodity that blasts character, weakens minds, breaks up the home,

and produces crime and poverty?

Is it not also our patriotic duty as Christians to suppress forces that debase the
citizenship where the state governs and upon which all social and political groups depend for security, welfare, health, and happiness?

Christians may be divided over the question of whether to drink or not. But surely there should be unanimity on whether Christians support and work for policies that minimize and reduce alcohol-related harms. So why aren’t more Chris-
tians doing it?

Perhaps many fail to understand the depth and vast scope of alcohol-related problems? The list seems endless. There are serious diseases, disorders, in-

juries, social and legal troubles that flow from alcohol abuse and the irresponsible

public policies which exacerbate it.

Without listing these harms, one might consider the situation in this way.

Almost everyone has someone, either in their immediate family or part of their

extended family, negatively impacted by an alcohol-related crisis. Think about it.

Nearly every family has been in some fashion adversely affected. Is there any-

ting more with a more solemn distinction? Hardly!

Shadows are growing over the Old North State, and clouds are approaching.

There is a storm on the horizon because certain lawmakers in the North Carolina General Assembly assume it’s a new day and that few people care about the alco-

hol issue anymore.

They believe there now exists a vacuum where resistance once abode, and they intend to fill that void with policies based on faulty and fictitious notions of economic expansion. These proposals allow for greater alcohol outlet density, increased access to alcohol on college campuses, expanded days and hours of sale

on Sundays, reduced prices which encourage over-consumption, new venues of sale such as state fairs, and the dismantling of mechanisms that work to keep the alcohol industry accountable, provide efficient alcohol tax collection, protect the public from tainted products, and preserve the overall public’s health and safety.

Some of these legislative initiatives have already passed one chamber and are

soon to be taken-up in the next.

Read Related Story: State Lawmakers Exceedingly Careless About Proposals

for Alcohol Deregulation.

As early as Tuesday, April 30th, the N.C. House ABC Committee will consider
HB 516 — AOC Omnibus Regulatory Reform. This bill may be the worst alcohol
proposal in state history. The legislation is 10 pages in length and contains 28
different provisions, two-thirds of which would be categorized as hazardous by
decades of alcohol research.

Another bill that was filed this week, HB 971—Modern Licensure Model for

Alcohol Control, would privatize the sale of liquor in this state.

The title of the bill itself is deceptive. To insinuate there can be the same level of
alcohol control with privatization as with the state's current ABC system is an

continued on page 36
No Regrets Family--I Want To Thank You
By Pastor Dean Honeycutt
Mitchell County

In the Bible Jesus healed ten lepers, but only one returned to give Him thanks. I want to thank Doug and Barbara for all they have done for our mountain communities. They have been a blessing to many people throughout our area and beyond. When I heard the news that they had sold the paper I was sad, but I was also happy for Doug and Barbara. They took the Blue Ridge Christian News and expanded it into the paper it is today. They have always encouraged me and helped me. I admit I am not a writer or journalist, but they gave me a voice to express what God says. I have written articles on many biblical topics that would be controversial to some people, and never one time was I censored. Doug would say that is what God's word says and you are welcome to write about God's word. For that I thank you.

As I look back over the years, we (Blue Ridge Christian News) took on many issues in Western North Carolina. We upheld the sanctity of marriage between one man and one woman. We fought for the unborn and the sanctity of human life. We fought against the sale of alcohol in Mitchell County. We have been a voice and offered help to those who are struggling with addictions. We have shared personal testimonies to the life changing power of the Gospel. We stood on the Bible and upheld the Word of God. But most importantly we have shared the love of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ with thousands of people.

Doug and Barbara have always been fair and treated people with respect. They have been a blessing to many churches big and small. They have shared our events and supported our causes. Doug and Barbara, with tears in my eyes, thank you for all you have done. God bless you. Pam and I love you. Thank you for your friendship.

You two enjoy all that God has in store for you. You both have been through a lot and are a testimony to the grace of God even in suffering.

Pastor Dean Honeycutt shepherds Snow Hill Baptist Church in Bakersville, NC. He may be reached at 828-533-2251, snowhillbaptist@gmail.com, or visit their website at www.snowhillbaptist.com.

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The Waldensian Trail of Faith

Thank You's
By Sheryl Tron
Barke County

The Waldensian Trail of Faith would like to thank the many who helped make our new Easter Sunrise Drama "Resurrection Light" an outstanding success. With low 40's temperature and rain Saturday night, we had hoped for maybe 200 attendance, but to our joyous surprise 300 came out to give praise for Jesus who died on the cross for all of us!

Thank you: News Herald Hickory Daily Record, Lenoir News Topic, Blue Ridge Christian News, Focus Newspaper, OurLook News, The Asheville Citizen Times, Hall Rowes, WIKY, WAYFM, All Area Radio Stations for letting our greater community know about this wonderful Easter Production. Thank You: Catawba River Association, East Waldensian Baptist Church for a delicious breakfast for all. Town, Robert Oxygen, Director, Cast, Technical Support and Staff for being such a blessing to all in attendance.

We are so fortunate to have such a caring media in our area to help in making us a better community for all. God's blessings on each of you, we can't wait until next year!

Senator Jim Jacumin 04-10
President, Waldensian Trail of Faith
And all who witnessed "Resurrection Light"

Sheryl is the office manager at The Trail of Faith.

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Charity suffereth long, [and] is kind; charityenvieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

What Comes First
By Preacher Chris Rathbone
Mitchell County

This generation has been accused of being a generation that lacks commitment. That may be true in a sense but actually, if this generation is guilty of anything, it is being overcommitted. That is to say we commit ourselves to too many things that we could really do without. Our society has conditioned us to believe that if we aren’t busy all the time with something we are wasting our time on a futile task. Social media posts are replete with photos of all the activities that people are involved in. Recently an automotive commercial highlighted an SUV that has all the room to carry the things needed for a family that fills up their entire schedule. The parents proceeded to tell their neighbor about all the activities in which the family was involved. Obviously, the point was to sell the vehicle, but what caught my attention was the fact that the family portrayed had their entire calendar filled with too much...too much.

What I have witnessed being a pastor for around 17 years is how so many Christians and their families seem too busy for the things of God but have time for all the other activities. When asked upon to serve in some capacity in the local church many times I have found that many times, “Well pastor, I just don’t think I have time to commit you.” Let me pray about it and I’ll let you know.” For the most part what they are hoping is while they are “praying about it” someone else will commit to it. The problem is that most everyone else is thinking the same thing and churches have about 10% of their members doing 100% of the work while the 90% who have been “praying about it” complain about what the 10% are doing.

Talking with other pastors over the years this problem is rampant in most churches. Christian families commit to so much stuff they have no time or energy left over for serving the Lord through the local church. The things of God are scheduled around the things of the world when everything else is supposed to be scheduled around the things of God. Not only is it hard to ask Christian families who are willing to step up and serve in their church, it’s getting harder to find Christians who will place a priority on even attending services regularly. While larger churches may not feel the effects as bad, smaller local congregations often struggle from week to week because Christian families do not place a priority on worship attendance or discipleship. Parents who should be leading their children to church and setting the example of church attendance will all too often teach their children that it is okay to let everything else come before worshipping or serving the Lord with other Christians. What many parents don’t realize is that they have shown by example that church attendance is not important. Each generation will place less and less priority on the most important thing a family should be doing together, worshipping together with the church. God’s plan for teaching our families always begins at home. We as parents are ultimately responsible for discipling our next generation. If we are too busy and committed to so many things that we don’t have time to lead our children to church, folks we are too busy!

The Bible teaches us that the church is like a body with many different members (1 Corinthians Chapter 12). Each member of the body has a specific function. Even though each member is different with different gifts, each one is needed for the body to function properly. If you have ever experienced a member of your body, say your foot, the entire body is affected by leaving it compensating for the member of the body that isn’t functioning as it should. Paul wrote that the eye cannot say to the hand that it has no need of it anymore. The head cannot say to the feet that it has no need of it anymore (vs 21). Just as our physical bodies need all members to function as it should, the church as the body of Christ needs all the members to function as it should. I’ve heard people who proclaim they are Christians say that they don’t need to attend church. That statement goes against scripture. Our friends, whether we want to acknowledge it or not, we need each other. We need every member to fulfill the body of Christ. God has given us as part of his church. The eye guides the hand to grasp, just as the grasp guides the foot on a path, the feet carry the head down the path the head wants to go. We are many members of one body. There is to be no division in the body so that the members have the same care for one another (vs. 25). Just as a member of a physical body would die if separated from the rest of the body, so would a Christian who has separated themselves from the body of Christ, the church body.

As a pastor, over the years I have personally witnessed this happen to Christian individuals and families. It happens a little at a time. Miss a service here, miss a service there, miss several in a row, miss a meeting, attend only on special occasions, etc, etc. Then before you know it there’s no desire at all. The excuses begun to fly, sin begins to creep in, the spiritual life is drained, and often a total collapse of morality takes place and consequences begin to raise their head. Many times, the one who walked away from church is the very thing that was sustaining them with life giving nourishment, what will they blame for the consequences they are suffering? They’ll blame God, blame the church, blame some individual, etc, etc. And remember, all this started because they allowed everything else to come between them and Jesus and His church.

The point I am trying to make is this: Let’s keep our priorities in order. Let’s not forget learning about, serving, and worshipping Jesus should be the most important thing in our lives. He is to be first and foremost in our life and family. Would you stop for a while and take stock of what is going on in your family? What does your family as a whole place a priority on? Is it the things of God or the things of this world? Are you currently leading your family to worship with His church or are you leading them to believe in ok for anything or everything else to come before Him? Would you pause for a moment from all the chaos and ask yourself: What comes first?

P.S. Hebrews 12:24-25 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.
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**Figure It Out**

*By Jody Griffin
Avery and Mitchell Counties*

*I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake. (1 John 2:12, KJV)*

**Can there possibly be anything better than the reality of our sins being forgiven by God? And to think that this gift of forgiveness is not received by our accomplishment, but through the Name and by the sake of Jesus Christ! It truly is GOOD NEWS, or to be more precise, the BEST NEWS EVER REPORTED!**

An open and empty tomb testifies to the miraculous resurrection of our Lord! He is alive and sits at God’s right hand this very day making intercession for all humanity!

Just a few months ago I wrote about the moving experience of sharing in the public baptisms of a number of incarcerated men. The day is drawing near when there will be yet another Baptism Celebration for the community of Christian men who reside within the walls of AMC!

I cannot wait to witness it and to report to you of the miraculous transformation brought to men by the amazing grace of God in Jesus Christ! Please be praying daily for those whom the Lord would have to receive the free gift of salvation. Pray that the Lord would then desire to share their new life in Christ by being baptized in His Name!

In a recent conversation with a man who is serving a life sentence, I gained a new appreciation for this marvelous blessing...

“Chaplain, I know that I will spend the rest of my life in this place, but can I tell you something that might encourage you?”

“Sure you can” Replied
He went on, “I used to think that my punishment for the terrible things I had done was to rot in prison for the rest of my life and then rot in hell for eternity. But since God came to me and forgave me, I know now that my purpose for however long I live is to help the men in my block come to truth and experience the incredible peace that comes with being forgiven by God.”

I commended him for his perspective and for his determination to help those around him “figure it out.” (That is a common statement I make to countless men about the ONE THING needed to turn their lives around. They just need to “figure it out” as to the situation they find themselves in and the opportunity that is right in front of their faces to change the direction they are going, ask repent, and begin to go with God instead of away from God!) I thought about that conversation for days. And I wondered how long it had been since my own freedom had been kept from me by living the way this man now lives. And I wondered if there aren’t a lot of believers like me who could learn a thing or two from a life... The truth is, we ALL can benefit from a concentrated effort to “figure it out.”

Thank you for praying and giving to High Country Prison Ministry and thus for allowing me the privilege to experience moments like these!

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

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Hope & Help from Addiction Through Christ
Sowing Seeds
By Doug Harrell
Mitchell County

When you hear the words “sowing seeds”, what comes into your mind? Do you see a farmer out in the field sowing seeds by hand, or with a crank seeder, a gardener in the garden, or does mother picture pop into your mind’s eye? I have spent a lifetime sowing all kinds of seeds as a farmer, but today I want to talk about different kinds of seed that we sow, even if we never venture into a fertile field of dirt. Let me take a moment and look at different kinds of seeds that we sow in life. Let’s think about seeds that have a major impact upon the lives that we touch each day of our lives. Do we sow seeds of discord, do we sow seeds of distrust, do we sow seeds of sorrow? There are many kinds of hurtful and harmful seeds that we can sow daily. Most of the time our seeds are sown with our tongues rather than a seed cover. Are we concentrating on sowing positive seeds or negative seeds as we walk through each day? Jesus used a parable of the seed falling on the rocks, in the weeds and in fertile ground. Are we conscious of where we are sowing our seed, that is reticent in who we choose to run around with daily.

What does a seed really do? If you think about it, the seed is the beginning of all things. You need seed money to start a business, you need a seed to start a plant, you need a seed to start a life. Where do we get our seed? I plant bean seed that we call Daddy Doe beans.

These are seeds that have been saved for generations, and I guard them closely to make sure that I have a supply each year. When you really stop and think about it, our daily lives are a result of the heritage seeds that we have planted in our minds throughout our lives. We are constantly planting in our own mind, and in fact, in our bodies. If we plant healthy seeds in our minds and bodies we usually grow healthy minds and bodies, if we sow junk and bad stuff in our minds and bodies, we get back what we put in. Deuteronomy 22:9 “Thou shalt not sow the seed of thy vineyard with divers seeds, lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled.”

I want to encourage each of us to be conscious of sowing seeds of love in our relationships in our marriage, and in our families. We can be encouraged in life to those we come in contact with, if we will only try. When we speak to someone with sincere, encouraging words, we help give them strength to continue, in whatever situation they are facing.

The most important seed we can plant is the seed of salvation in the hearts of those around us. This can be done in many ways, you do not have to be a pastor, deacon or other person involved in active church work to sow the seed of salvation. Our daily life is always the most powerful sermon that can be preached. We need to always be ready, willing and looking for the opportunity to share the word of God and we can only do that if we, you and I, take the time to learn and study God’s word daily. If our lives are a shining example, others will be asking for the fruit. Several places in the Bible talk about the fact that you can tell a tree by its fruit. People will be attracted to you if you are genuine in your faith and have the love of Christ shining through your countenance. We need to plant the seeds that yield the harvest John talks about. John 4:35 “And another seven months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest.” Our most important task here on earth is to continually be sowing the seeds of salvation to our families and our fellowmen throughout the earth, starting with our backyards.

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.
The Power of a Testimony
By Dan Querello
Burke County

Christians are often easily intimidated when it comes to the matter of sharing one’s faith. We question what to do if we are asked a question for which we do not know the answer. What if they mistrust me or are offended by what I say? These fears often result in unwillingness to share our faith. However, the power of a testimony goes far beyond what we often understand.

The Word of God is filled with examples of individuals who testified. The Psalms are examples of times when various individuals testified regarding what God did in their lives. We find various songs such as those in Exodus 15 and Judges 5 that were sung after God miraculously delivered Israel. Frequently, Paul told his testimony. The man who was healed from blindness in John 9 had very few answers that satisfied the questions from the religious leaders. Yet, he was confident and said, “One thing I know that, whereas I was blind, now I see” (John 9:25). He did not know all that transpired, but he knew what took place and who was responsible for it.

When we share our testimony, our testimony is not to glory in the past. A person’s testimony is to point others to the work done by God. A sinful past is nothing about which to glory; nor is an innocent past nothing about which to be ashamed. The power of the testimony lies in the “grace of God that brings salvation” (Titus 2:11). A testimony simply starts in the past—regardless of the nature of that past—and proceeds to describe what took place. It is a testimony to point others to Jesus and the work He has done in one’s life.

As a believer, we should never be ashamed of what God has done in saving us. We ought to be eager to share our testimony. Of course, we must be sure our life matches our testimony, or our witness will be negated.

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

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Keys to Peace, Joy & Fulfillment in Your Life
By Joyce Meyer

When I tell people at our conferences that I’m going to teach about discipline and self-control, there is usually a negative response, like a groan or sour facial expressions. We tend to think of these terms as something bad or hard.

While I agree that choosing discipline and self-control is not always easy or fun, the truth is it’s vital to having the good life Jesus wants to give us (see John 10:10).

The bottom line is if you want peace, joy and fulfillment in your life, you have to exercise discipline and self-control.

Count the Cost
A big part of discipline is obedience. Being obedient to God, from the big stuff to the small stuff (and especially in the small stuff), is so important to having a peace-filled life.

Hebrews 12:11 ESV tells us that “for the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

Are you at a point in your relationship with God where you feel like He’s dealing with you about something but you’re not listening to Him or obeying Him? Have you “gotten away with” something for a long time and now it feels like God is telling you “He won’t put up with that particular behavior anymore”?

In my opinion, there’s nothing worse than going to bed or waking up with a guilty conscience, or trying to pray when you know there’s something between you and God that’s not settled.

I remember a time when God spoke to my heart that I needed to be more respectful of my husband, Dave, and not have an attitude when he asked me to do something for him. This was so hard for me because I had issues with submitting to people, and especially men, because of the abuse I had experienced for years when I was growing up.

But as I put my trust in God and followed His direction, He gave me the grace to do the right thing. And I firmly believe that if I hadn’t obeyed Him in this area of my life, I wouldn’t be doing what I’m doing today in ministry.

Delight in Discipline
Operating in disciplines and self-control to be obedient to God brings peace, which leads to joy. When we don’t obey, we often feel guilty, especially if we know we’re ignoring God on an issue. That kind of guilty thinking breeds condemnation and can make you think wrongly about everything in your life, including yourself. And that’s miserable way to live!

I’ve discovered that when God shows me something in my life that needs to change, it’s actually a really good thing. Because everything He tells us to do is for our good.

So now, instead of feeling bad when He corrects me, I choose to rejoice and thank Him for loving me and helping me have a better life.

I realize that rejoicing might seem like the complete opposite of what you want to do when you’re being disciplined by God, but it’s really the best way to respond. Even though it doesn’t feel good at the time, it’s necessary.

We all have dreams for our lives, whether it’s a closer walk with Jesus, better physical health, a different career, healthier relationships, or any other goal is life. But we can’t get there without discipline and self-control. You’ve probably heard the phrase “no pain, no gain.” I like to say, “you can’t have the peaks without the valleys.”

Many years ago, when God put it on my heart to teach His Word all over the world, there were a lot of things that needed to change in my attitudes, mindsets and habits. As I got serious about my relationship with Jesus and studying the Bible, I began to grow and develop the character of God in my life. It wasn’t easy, but it was more than worth the pain I experienced in the process.

Your Action Plan
It’s important to understand that discipline is more than just whip cracker. You can’t do the things God is showing you to do unless you lean on Him. Jesus says in John 15:5 that we must remain in Him because “apart from Me (that is, cut off from vital union with Me) you can do nothing” (AMP).

Spending quiet time with God in prayer and Bible study is how you abide in Christ. Start small by sitting still and listening for God to speak to your heart. Ask Him to show you what He wants you to do, and trust Him to do the work in you that needs to be done.

Be patient with yourself because it won’t all happen overnight. Second Corinthians 3:18 says we “are being transformed into the same image of Christ from one degree of glory to another” (ESV). Pray for Him to change you little by little, one day at a time, and know that something good is happening on the inside of you.

For more on this topic, order Joyce’s three-CD series Discipline and Self-Control. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, Enjoying Everyday Life, by calling (800) 727-9573 or visiting www.joycemeyer.org.

Please note: The views and opinions expressed throughout this publication and/or websites 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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A Follower Of Jesus
By Patricia Jackson
McDowell County

Mary Magdalene is one of the more prominent women of the Bible. Accounts of her life appear in all four gospels. Her last name of Magdalene, identifies her with her birthplace, just as Jesus was called “The Nazarene” because of His association with Nazareth. That she was free to follow Jesus in His journeying’s would suggest she had no home obligations and was financially sound. A recent movie “The Da Vinci Code” portrayed Mary Magdalene as a prostitute. There is no scripture referring to her as a prostitute.

Much of Jesus preaching had been in Nazareth. However, He and the twelve disciples also traveled from town to town along the Galilean countryside. It was here He encountered Mary Magdalene, a desperate woman, who at some point had been afflicted by seven demons. These demonic spirits may have been some kind of disease or mental illness, or perhaps she had epilepsy. Anyone with her condition would have been cut off from the temple, from normal life, powerless to change her hopeless life. We first learn of Mary Magdalene meeting Jesus in Luke 8:2. “And certain women, which were healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils.” Mary was dead in trespasses and sins, demon possessed.

The scriptures do not detail the circumstances surrounding Mary’s healing and conversion. When Jesus reached into this woman’s darkness and cast out demons, He brought her into His marvelous light, through his amazing grace. She was no longer a desperate woman. She was now a delivered woman. She had experienced the Lord’s power as she was instantly delivered from her bondage. “Then, that is the power Jesus possesses! 2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us “Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold, all things become new.” She was instantly delivered from her demon possession and set free, becoming a new creature, a redeemed woman. Mary was not redeemed with corrupted things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19).

Mary was so grateful for her healing; she gave everything and followed Him. Luke 8:2-3 tells us “that certain women which ministered unto him of their substance” something unusual in this period. Jesus and His disciples did not provide for themselves entirely by miracles, but also received support by the service and means of grateful people in the towns and also these women. Jesus had a different attitude towards women than the religious leaders and teachers of that day. The Rabbis refused to teach women and generally assigned them a very inferior place. Mary desired to follow and support Jesus because she knew first hand His healing power and love for those afflicted. She was privileged to have a one on one relationship with Jesus, hear His teaching, and serve Him. She was a devoted woman. When we receive salvation through Christ Jesus, we are no longer desperate, we are delivered, redeemed and should become a devoted follower of Jesus.

During the feast of the Dacorxx, Jesus prophesied Himself to be the promised Deliverer. Later, Judas betrayed Jesus. Jesus was crucified on the cross. John 19:23 says “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary, the wife of Cleophas: AND MARY MAGDALEN.” Mary waited through the shocking hours of Jesus abuse and suffering, watching the man gamble for His clothes. She watched Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea unfasten His body from the cross. She followed His body to the tomb and remained there with another Mary Matthew 27:66 “Among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary, mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee’s children.” These devoted women went as far as humanly possible, following Him to the sepulcher.

In Matt. 12:40 we read of Jesus’ prophetic words concerning His resurrection from the dead, “for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” The Roman leaders were aware of Jesus teaching and placed a guard of soldiers to defend the tomb. Aroth stone, a Roman Government seal was placed. For Mary Magdalene, the crucifixion, burial, Roman guard and seal on the stone was the end of her hopes and dreams. She had dedicated her time, financial resources and love to Jesus and now He was dead.

At the end of the Sabbath, towards the first day of the week, Mary and the other Mary encountered as angel of the Lord who told them Jesus was risen, and to go quickly and tell His disciples. With great joy, the women ran to tell the good news to the disciples. (Matthew 28). After the disciples saw the empty tomb, they went back unto their own home, but Mary stood at the sepulcher weeping. (John 20:11). “Mary.” When Jesus called her name, she saw the risen Christ and everything in Mary’s life changed. SHE WAS NOW A WOMAN FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT. We too can be filled with hope so can be filled with resurrection is real and that Jesus has risen and is alive. When Jesus get up on the third day, we got up with Him!! Good lord triumphed over evil, life over death.

Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord and that He had spoken these things unto her. The four gospels record Mary’s witness and her devotion to Jesus became one of the most loved and well-known hymns of the church. The song I am speaking of written in 1912 by a former pharmacist, C. Austin Miles. I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses .....
Thankful for the Storm
By Christy Young
Mitchell County

I think that we all can agree that life is hard! Storms rage over our body and mind, and feel defeated, we become weak. Storms may come in the way of sickness, broken relationships, financial struggles, spiritual battles, and more. We often question God, and wonder why He would allow these hardships in our lives. Through my own personal struggles, I admit I have questioned “Why?” But recently, I realized “Why Not?” Sometimes, we are faced with these difficulties, not because we are doing something wrong, but because God wants us to use our circumstances to glorify Him. How can we use the struggles we are faced with to grow spiritually and glorify God? His word teaches us that His grace is sufficient and made perfect in weakness. It’s encouraging to know that in my weakness, I am never alone. James 1:2-3 says, “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that your faith is tried, and shall make you perfect.” As the storm rages, talk to the Master of the sea. Pray and seek shelter in the arms of God. Trust and believe in faith that He is working in your life, and all things are good with God. He can rule the stormy sea and calm the angry waves. 

I recently experienced the peace that God gives when you turn your troubles over to Him. Faith turned my weakness into strength. I realized the only comfort I could find was in the arms of Jesus. Trust in the Father for refuge and strength. 

Psalm 9:1-2 says, “He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; he is my God, and I am trusting Him.” I found that I often seek your blessings at the end of a storm. My dad has been battling with liver disease. I knew without a liver transplant that dad was not going to survive. Tired, I prayed, and finally realized that God had a plan or purpose regardless of the outcome. On March 6th, prayers were answered and dad received a liver transplant. A gift from God! But... the transplant was not the only gift God granted our family. He blessed us with so many things. We felt his presence and grace, he allowed relationships to be restored, my boys experienced the power of prayer, and we have had the opportunity to share God’s love with so many. Some of the most devastating storms that we face turn into the greatest blessings. Suffering is never in vain. Rather, allowing the storms of life to defeat you, fight back with the assurance of your faith. Put on the armor of God! The adversary wants us to feel defeated, miserable, and hopeless. As a child of God, we are never hopeless or alone. Seek and you will find! You will find yourself in the arms of Jesus. You will find peace and comfort like you have never experienced before. I have found that storms, regardless of how they turn out (good or bad) make you stronger. You serve a strong God that is always sovereign and faithful. Thankfully, storms never last forever. Weakening the storm is part of life. Face life’s challenges with the protection of God, realizing that He is your shield of protection. Believe in faith that at the end of the storm, there is a rainbow. A promise that God is always with you and wrapping you up in His everlasting love. 

Christy Young is the blessed with of Chris Young and proud mother of Hunter and Holden. She is a life-long resident of Mitchell County, bookkeeper at Young, Miller & Giulioce, PA, and a member of Bear Creek Baptist Church.

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May 2019 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 13
New Writers Corner

"The Dream"
By Dana Joy
Burke County

Just about a month or so before our permanent relocation down south, I had a dream. I love when God gives me dreams but I especially find it fascinating and of extreme gratitude when He gives me the interpretation and clarity right away! The dream was centered on moving to our new home, and leaving the past commitments and usual routines of our old life behind. I was certainly up for the challenge, as my husband and I were about to enter a land that would envelop us in more peace and less hustle and bustle than we were currently experiencing. For one thing, we would be embarking on larger piece of land, located in the foothills of some of the most beautiful mountains of North Carolina, and looking forward to the daily encounters with people who seemingly go out of their way just to smile and say hello to you as you walk by. Having said all that, here was the dream...

“I was saying a tearful goodbye to my co-workers with whom I had the privilege of working for the past 10 years while residing in the Northeast. After the thousand and one hugs were over, I walked out the door and straight into my new home in North Carolina. As I sat down on the floor, playing with 2 of my little degrees, I suddenly felt a tangible warmth emanating with strength resting on my right shoulder! Wondering what this blanket of love was, catching me off guard from behind, I turned my head around and to my surprise, embarzayed upon a huge horse, a gentle giant, one of God’s majestic creations, smugling its massive head into my neck! How beautiful was this big baby! It was chocolate brown with a white streak running vertically down his face. As it rubbed it’s warm and fuzzy mane back and forth into the nook of my neck, I was in heaven! I absolutely loved this! Then the dream ended.”

The interpretation. Leaving my job and walking into our new home were the obvious. I honestly thought that the horse had represented an anticipated atmosphere of our new place... that we would be loving and enjoying every moment of our new life together with peace, happiness and joy! It wasn’t until the morning we woke up the day after our move that I realized that God, in His infinite wisdom, had brought extreme clarity to that dream... more than I could ever imagine! We spotted 2 beautiful horses practically in our own back yard! The neighbor, whose property a joins ours, has 2 horses! Astonished that this dream was truly becoming real, I rushed out the back door to fully experience the awe-inspiring message that God had conveyed to me in the dream! One horse was a beautiful sandy color, and the other... well, you guessed it! A rich, chocolate brown with a white streak ever so delicately painted from the top of his forehead down his gorgeous face! Wow!

I was given the liberty from my wonderful neighbor to spend as much time as I pleased with these two precious horses! After much research, I had come to understand how they communicate, sleep, play and even eat! I’ll never forget the day when that beautiful chocolate brown big bay just stood at my fence, which separates my property and theirs, staring at our house so intensely for the longest time. It would say “Hey... where’s my carrots? I’m waiting!” I’ve hung them to sleep, stroked their incredibly gorgeous manes, pried over them and even gifted them with hand massages across their back! But I must admit that the biggest thrill of all, is when this precious gentle giant rests his warm and massive head into the nook of my neck! What a love! What a gift! What a dream! And even more incredible is that I get to live this dream every day!

Dana Joy is the owner of Baking Creations By Dana in Morganton, NC. You can find her at 828-778-4293.
The Rest of the Story
By Doug Harrell

Clint wrote that to go in the paper five years ago so you can see from the title below. He is talking about ramps and I just this weekend had a ramp meal from one of our local fire departments and the ramps were served came from the same spot that Clint was talking about in his funny farm story. It is amazing how fast things go by and how things remain the same. May his good humor and legacy continue for many years to come. And yes, we will be planting cane. God willing, again in a few weeks.

Funny Farm

Dear friends,

This coming September will mark four years since I departed Harrell Hill Farms, aka “The Funny Farm,” to begin writing The Blue Ridge Christian News. I am astonished, as you should be that I still have stories to share having spent only six months on the farm. But I do... so here we go again...

Farmer Doug’s Warning

Farmer Doug had already planted his sorghum cane by the time I got around to knowing the difference between a hoe and a shovel. But he started chiding/warning me very early on, “Just wait ‘till we get into the cane...the fall, you know, I say wait... it’s like it’s gonna fail off!” Then he would give me that Farmer Doug smile. Now I did spend much of the summer weeding and fertilizing the cane patches; one of them was on the side of a mountain behind A.D. “Daddy D’s” house and I’m tellin’ ya, that sucker was straight up and down. When I was dispatched there, the first time I got there I thought I was lost. Suddenly I thought I needed help, and so I found that hill...but somehow managed to eat up at least one of the many sorghum paddies I went to.

Fully exposed to the baking sun, I walked — or should say crawled — row to row, trying to keep my feet from burning me. As I meandered among the stalks I began counting them — there were at least a gazillion on that mountain side. Now to mention the cane across the river; or the patch over by Rachel’s house, or the HUGE field near the farmhouse, among others. In my mind I conjured up an image of a person and a pocketknife slicing those stalks one-by-one. “Ain’t no way,” I thought, “I ain’t even going to try it.”

It didn’t help that every night, shortly before bedtime, Doug would remind me, “Just you wait... the cane harvest will be here before you know it.” As the months passed and my farmer confidence grew I would chide back, “I ain’t seened of cane case, Dolly.” But, to be completely honest, I was anxious and filled with dread about the prospects. Please, help me Jesus, I didn’t want to have to grow down acres and acres of sorghum with a scythe!

Digging Ramps: With Farmer Larry

Early one morning, before the chickens were even awake — I believe it was early to mid-April — Farmer Doug said, “Well, today I promised Larry (his brother) that you and Joes would help him dig ramps.” (Josh is one of Doug’s GIANTS [good ones who often drop-by for extended visits]). What the heck did he — Farmer Doug — think I was made of? He must have been mistaking Larry as a savior. Or maybe, he was just trying to save some money. “Oh, I don’t know what you’re talking about,” I said. “You need to figure out a way to get a ramp.” He said, “I don’t think you’re going to do it. We’re working at a church function today; we’re going to have a ramp.” Everyone in the world would hold a ramp on this day. Every farmer in the world was working on his farm. We had no choice; we had to get to work as soon as possible.

Larry was his usual self. He smiled at me, said, “Hi, how are you doing?” I told him I didn’t want to do it. He said, “You know what? I’m going to do it anyway.” I told him I was going to work on the farm all day. “But you’re the one who said you didn’t want to do it,” he said. “I’m just going to do it anyway.”

Larry took his ramp and placed it on the footpath. We walked through the woods to where the ramps were. We walked for hours, trying to get my mind around this new farm puzzle. The “All-Purpose” Hatcher

Young Josh and I dutifully followed Farmer Larry, like two little puppies, into the woods. We were soaking up every bit of knowledge we could get. Then we turned the ramp over and started the footpath. We walked for hours, trying to get my mind around this new farm puzzle.

The “All-Purpose” Hatcher

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Farmer Clint
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Take Some Extra Time Considering the Gospel

Remember again the verse from our text verses, "Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures." If salvation were something a person could only have for a while, depending upon whether they obey God all the time or not, it would not be good news. It would produce a sense of bondage and fear.

It would do us well to remember what Jesus said upon the cross. There were actually seven sayings of our Lord but one of the things He said was, "It is finished." In other words, Jesus in His death upon the cross and through His shed blood, provided an eternal salvation to all who believe in Christ. One songwriter in His lyrics put it this way, "In my hand no price I bring, simply to the cross I cling. Another song writer wrote, Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe, sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white as snow." The reason I will not have to go to hell is because Jesus died for me, in my place, as your substitute, that eternal salvation might be mine and yours. You can be secure and have peace about your salvation through what you see in the Gospel of our Lord, as revealed by the Apostle Paul. Rest in the Good News of our Lord, not in your good works.

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

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

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Tim’s Treasures

A Lesson Learned from Barney and Otis

By Timothy W. Tron
Burlington

The river was an angry confusen this morning; its icy waters swirled like molten metal, jutting their way down the mountain. The mood matched my own in some respect; these seemed to be turbulent times. There was darkeness all around, and it was as though God had closed His eyes to the world. It was as though He had called upon Him, lifting my prayers upon high, only to wait and listen to the best of my own pulse. Each day, there was only more news of evil growing.

My heart carried a heavy burden.

The problem seemed to say it best, “But was there then I criest, O Lord; and in the morning shall I pray unto thee?” Why did you turn your face from me? I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I sitteth, my tears have no end; I make my bed round about me of daily water; they compassed me about as webbing.” —Psalm 38:13-17

The chill in the air reached into the marrow of my soul. My roam weighed down by the scripture as my feet trod farther upon the forest path and eventually the highway to Colter.

On this round bend in the road, the general store began to come into view. There at the edge of the parking lot, stood Barney and Otis. Their tales wagging as they were guarded and tailed to see me coming. I could tell by their joy, they had not been captured and were in search of me. To give them a sense of security, I called out to them, “Hello, Barney, and Otis! How’s the morning Barney?” At the sound of my voice, they went into full-blown enthusiasm, barking and playing bit at one another as they began to walk my way. They greeted me with the heart-warming welcome of long-lost friends, separated by the ages of time. They belonged to the general store’s previous owner, but most of the town had adopted them as their own. They roamed freely, from one end of the village to the other, only to return to their abode at the base of the mountain.

I had never seen them. I had never given them any form of sustenance, rather, our friendship was based only on my petting them and giving them affection. “How uncanny,” I thought, that these dogs, named after the characters in the “Andy Griffith Show,” were able to recognize me. They recognized me by the sound of my voice, not by the sound of my feet. How I am not most important, best friend. Their companions to the dogs, and how they too relied upon the kindness of the people’s meals made their meals even more appropriate.

It was then that I knew of our own relationship with Jesus Christ came to mind. The Lord had provided us with His love and joy, not only when I was walking around the park, but also when we were driven to the beach. Jesus was the love of our lives.

As Jesus was walking toward the John the Baptist, he stood, and his two disciples, and looked upon Jesus as He walked, saying, “Blessed is the land of God who receives every sinner who comes.” They stood and recognized Jesus walking toward them. They were everlast at His presence and made the proclamation of salvation to which all would eventually be saved. They were saved everlast at His presence and made the proclamation of salvation to which all would eventually be saved. They were saved.

Jesus, walking toward the Baptist, was joyous in His love and acceptance of time with me. Leaning to myself, and shaking my head, I knew this wasn’t going to work; there would be no time to study scripture this morning, these two needed me more than I needed to study. From there, we made our way over to the bench in the front of the store, where we quickly made ourselves comfortable. I sat down on the bench, and prayed. Our time would come. Jesus, sitting at the side of my life, leaning in me so that He could touch me as He reclined back. I poured myself a cup of coffee and began to pet and talk to my devoted friends. Their warmth was as welcome as me was to them.

I felt as if I were coming over on time as our passage. My thoughts drifted as care passed, one after another.

My mind again returned to Jesus and His disciples. How many times would picture scenes as such the loved one leaving Christ’s bosom at the last supper. Christ sitting somewhere in Heaven, His disciples gathered close in His presence, taking in each other’s presence, their voices blending together, their time would come to an end. The passing of understanding in the silence of being one was ever present. Otis eventually fell asleep, his legs beginning to twitch in dream-like response to whatever he might be dreaming in that land of repose. Barney was content to continue to lean in my lap, his eyes closing over as he lay in sleep. God was being thanked, and blessed.

Christ is what I had been reminded by these two best of God’s creation. The joy that had been shown, in essence, lifted my own spirits.

Toward me, I placed in the mirror that and felt a joy that had been missing for so long. I had broken through the water, so to speak, and now I could breathe once more. My mind was at ease, my spirit was at ease, and I was at peace.

Unusually in once life, my walk was now in faith, yet, that had not always been so.

There had been a time where it was as if my life was running from God toward Him. That up came when I was in High School to rock put down at the scripture. I was driven by my heart. “While I suffer thy torments I am distracted. Thy frenzy leaketh over me; thy torments cut me off. They were reduced, and I was to be distracted in the presence of the sky and the ocean. So we were bound.

As a young man, I was old abandoned rock, just off of Ivy. 40 miles of South of Mt. Evans was a perfect place to be. It was known as Lake’s Park complete with walking trails and beaches.

Barney then was simply a dirt road that led to the water’s edge, a party location for most wayward youth.

There was that in the past over the course of a day’s exploration, we eventually came upon a hole, a large, round area in the floor of the pit. It was obvious deep because the change in the ground was in effect a small depression. We were not aware of this depression’s extreme depths. As would be typical for teenage boys fall of yogurt and trespasser, we immediately challenged one another as to who might go for the bottom. Up to this point, we had only covered modest depths of possibly 10-15 feet at most. None of us were appropriate free-diving experts, but with no depth gauges, so safety vests in case we passed out in an extremely deep dive. All we wore were our goggles and our cut of jeans shorts. Needless to say, God was watching over us, because we knew no better.

Preparing to go deep, we began to hyperventilate, a trick we had learned to hold our breath longer, but a potentially deadly tactic, unbeknownst to us. When the signal to go was given, we were most distant from any kind of escape. We were already closer than we planned. Running into the small depression in front of me there was something that I might not see, but it was a deep depth. A number of bars fell to the bottom but had not yet been known. Knowing time was short, I pushed harder and was suddenly rewarded with the sudden appearance of the ground. I paused, my eyes started at approximately 15 feet, and I was able to seek out any ancient reef crust in resting in the white sandy bottom, partially buried, where it had been爹 years earlier. My bars began for oxygen for my lungs.

Time was nearing in.

In an instinctive action, I pushed hard from the rock pit floor and began swimming for the surface. I pushed hard from the rock pit floor and began swimming for the surface. Those stones, no longer fit, were seen now as the water rushed past my face so swiftly that it tore away at the breathing tube which tried to stay below. My lungs had all but been depleted of the life source before I reached the top. It was close by now, a few feet more, but there was nothing left.

Time was running.

Feeling what little oxygen I could find from the depths of my soul, I savored each last taste of life as my lungs instantly began to exhale, down the surface. Looking back, God was with us that day.

Not our second was left; no one ounce of air remained in my chest as my body gave the surface, breathing the water in my body washed for that moment in tense for support above; the air of the earth. My body gasped for oxygen as my lungs filled their depleted reservoirs.

It was the closest I would or could ever come to not making it back from this.

This was all I told to my family in my mind, and I rested my hope in God. My heart couldn’t help knowing that although we might be encompassed by waters of darkness, with God we can break through the surface, finding ourselves from that bondage, and those trials that have held us hostage. That moment, when Christ enters our lives, we can emerge forth free from our sins; when our trials have left us weary, but our natural has been to joy, to be free; to be able to teach the meaning of the living, stronger, awakened, and able to receive His tender mercies upon our soul.

Yesterday, I sat by a waterfall waiting for God to speak to me; nothing came. As my footsteps echoed down the trail earlier this morning, I listened for His voice; nothing. I began to wonder if this would ever face for me.

It was when I last expected it, He spoke.

This morning, God used two of his creations, beings that only live based upon immoral actions, to break my soul. Yes, you can say God spoke to me through two dogs. Otis and Barney showed me through their actions toward me how we can too easily become involved in the sins of others. How they are those who determine the living, stronger, awakened, and able to receive His tender mercies upon our soul.

Our burdens can be lifted, and we can be set free from the bondage of sin. In times of trial, He is our life sustainer, to sustain us through the darkness. He is the light shining through the darkness.

Be confident in the darkness and trust in the Lord. There is hope, and where there is hope, there is the light.

Let the light shine in the darkness.

Thanks be to God.

Timothy W. Tron lives in Colterville, VA, with his family. He is the former Director of the Triest of Faith in Hidden, 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 timtron@live.com

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Dirk Nowitzki’s Retirement: Who We Are Is More Important Than What We Do

Dirk Nowitzki of the Dallas Mavericks retired from the NBA Wednesday night. I don’t normally write on Dallas-centric sports news, recognizing that we have more than 170,000 Daily Article readers in 203 countries and most of them probably care less about my local sports teams than I do. But Dirk’s story transcends Dallas and the NBA.

In fact, it makes a point worth considering for everyone who follows Jesus. Praise for “Uncle Dirk”

Nowitzki was undoubtedly one of the greatest players in NBA history: a league champion and Finals MVP, league MVP fourteen-time all-star, and the sixth-leading scorer of all time. He played twenty-one years with the same franchise, which is a record as well.

The San Antonio Spurs, the team he played in his last NBA game, showed a video tribute in his honor. A rival coach stopped the game in Los Angeles and called on fans to pay homage to him.

But the attention he has received in Dallas and across basketball is about much more than what he did on the court.

While Dirk’s salary was lucrative, he took pay cuts so his team could try to sign other players. He cared about the locker room atmosphere wherever the Mavericks played. His many unpublicized hospital trips to visit children (who called him “Uncle Dirk”) were just part of his commitment to his community.

The Washington Post celebrated his loyalty to his team and city. A writer in Washington, DC, praised him for his humility. At his retirement ceremony in Dallas, Charles Barkley called him “the nicest man ever.”

It was Dirk Nowitzki’s humility and service off the court, even more than his athletic achievement on it, that endeared him to sports fans across the country.

As he reminds us, who we are is more important than what we do.

Why is God’s world the way it is?

The Washington Post is reporting that “burnout is everywhere these days.” According to one survey, “65 percent of human resource leaders say burnout is sabotaging workplace retention, often because of overly heavy workloads.”

In other news, Minneapolis police announced that fifty-eight people were arrested in a sex trafficking sting during the recent NCAA Men’s Final Four tournament. Twenty-eight victims of sex trafficking were rescued.

Why is God’s world the way it is? Why is each day’s news dominated by crime and conflict, sin and shame?

You might blame the Fall, and you’d be right. When Adam and Eve sinned, all of creation was affected and affected (Romans 8:22).

However, if our fallen world is inherently sinful, how could Jesus have entered it and remained sinless (Hebrews 4:15)? If our fallen bodies are irrelevant to God, why did Jesus spend so much time healing them (cf. Matthew 9:32-34)?

The hands and feet of God.

The evangelical impulse to be “witnesses” to the lost is obviously biblical and urgent (Acts 1:8). But there is more to our calling on earth than leading people to faith in Jesus, then waiting until we die so we can go to heaven.

Christians are to “make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19), helping people follow Jesus in every dimension of their lives. We are to care for God’s creation (Genesis 2:15) and serve those in need (Matthew 25:35-40).

We are to show our culture that who we are is more important than what we do. And we are to lead people to the One who gives them abundant and eternal life (John 10:10; John 3:16).

As Frederick Buechner notes, you and I are to be “Jesus’” hands and feet in a world where he no longer has hands and feet.

How to minister to lepers

Perhaps you know the story of Joseph Damian.

A Belgian priest, he was sent in 1873 to minister to lepers in Hawaii. As soon as he arrived on Molokai, he began trying to build friendships with the residents of the leper colony there, but they rejected him. He built a small chapel and held regular services, but hardly anyone came.

After twelve long years, Father Damian gave up. While standing on the pier about to board the ship that would take him home to Belgium, he looked down at his hands. The white spots he saw could mean only one thing: he had contracted leprosy.

So, instead of going home, he returned to his work in the leper colony.

News of the missionary’s disease spread quickly through the community, and soon hundreds of lepers rushed to his aid. They understood his pain and despair.

The following Sunday, when Father Damian arrived at the chapel, the building was filled to overflowing. Then, began a long and fruitful ministry.

What made the difference?

The lepers knew that their minister understood their condition. They knew that he cared about them, that he could identify with them, that he was one of them.

This is the story of Christmas and Easter. It is the story of Jesus’ love for you and everyone you know.

Let’s make it our story today, to the glory of God.

NOTE: At Denison Forum, we know how challenging it can be to take a Christian stance on today’s issues.

That’s one reason we launched Biblical Insight to Tough Questions, a weekly YouTube video where I address a difficult topic from a biblical viewpoint.

I hope you are encouraged by today’s discussion: “What are your spiritual gifts? Are they the same as talents?”

Jim Denison Ph.D speaks and writes on cultural and contemporary issues. His daily articles are distributed to more than 113,000 subscribers in 258 countries. See more on the website at www.denisonforum.org. Copyrighted and printed by permission from Denison Forum.
For Those Who Have Lost Hope
By Billy Graham

Some of you who read these lines are held in the vicelike grip of sin's confusion. The despair of loneliness has settled down upon your soul, and at this very moment you are asking the question: “Is life worth living?”

For scores of people who write to our office, life has ceased to be worth living. To all of you I have good news. God did not create you to be a defeated, discouraged, frustrated, wandering soul, seeking in vain for peace of heart and peace of mind. He has big plans for you. He has a greater life for you. The answer to your problem—however great it is—lies as near as your Bible, as simple as first-grade arithmetic and as real as your heartbeart.

The Bible says: “In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Romans 8:37).

The Bible teaches that “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. And this is the victory that overcometh the world—our faith” (1 John 5:4).

Upon the authority of God’s Word, I declare unto you that Christ is the answer to every baffling perplexity that plagues mankind. In Him is found the cure for care, a balm for bereavement, a healing for our hurt and a sufficiency for our insufficiency.

Many of you are living lives of unbearable loneliness. You may be in a great city like New York or Los Angeles, but you are alone in the midst of the crowd. The only one to you is shut off, and you are shut out. Social barriers have prevented you from doing what you wish to do. Personality barriers thwart and hinder you.

You live in a world of blighting solitude. Or perhaps your captivity of many years has suddenly been taken away, and you are left alone in a big, empty house. Loneliness is no respecter of persons. It invades the palace as well as the hovel. Queen Victoria said after the death of her husband, Albert: “There is no one left to call me ‘Victoria.’” Even though she was a queen, she knew the pain of loneliness.

Many turn to drink because of loneliness. Others lose their sanity because of loneliness. Many commit suicide because of the despair of loneliness.

But thousands have found Christ to be the answer for their loneliness. Jesus said: “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20).

The Hebrew children were not alone when they were burned in the fiery furnace of persecution. There was one with them like unto the Son of God. Moses wasn’t alone in the Midian Desert when God came to comfort him and call him to a wider ministry. Elijah wasn’t alone at the cave when God came near and spoke in a still, small voice.

Paul and Silas were not alone in the Philippian jail when God came down and gave them a song at midnight.

Whoever you are, Christ can give you comfort and companionship.

Whatever color, race or creed, your heart yearnings are the same. The lonely, aching spot can be filled by Christ if you will open your heart and let Him in. Christ is the Answer to Sorrows

There are thousands of you who have tunned to God, but you are still carrying your burdens, when God invites you: “Can all your care on Me, for I care for you.” (see 1 Peter 5:7).

You who must go through the valley of the shadow of death, you who must say goodbye to those whom you have loved, you who suffer privation and misery, you who are unjustly persecuted for righteousness’ sake, take heart, take courage.

Christ is more than adequate for sorrow.

The Apostle Paul, who suffered as much as any person who ever lived said: “And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for his heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever” (2 Timothy 4:18).

Diseased, afflicted, scarred, bruised and battered by persecution, he held no bitterness but found in Christ a sufficiency for sorrow.

I talked to a man once who had lost his wife and three children in a fire. No man could have more reason to be bitter or show his sorrow than he. He gripped my hand with a strong grip. His face was smiling, and he said: “Tell the world that the grace of God is sufficient for even the worst sufferer.”

Christ is the Answer to Suffering

“Sickness is a byproduct of transgression. But that by no means indicates that Christians are never afflicted. The Bible says: “Many are the afflictions of the righteous” (Psalm 34:19).

Job was afflicted. Paul had an infirmity, Lazarus was sick. And good people down across the centuries have been promised no immunity from disease and infirmity. Many people have asked me, “Why do Christians suffer?” Rest assured that there is a reason for Christian people being afflicted. One reason God’s people suffer, according to the Bible, is that it is a disciplining, chastening and molding process.

The Bible says: “Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law” (Psalm 94:12, KJV).

Again, the Scripture says: “For whom the Lord loveth he corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights” (Proverbs 3:12, KJV).

From these Scriptures we learn that the chastening of affliction is a step in the process of our trial and complete development. It is a love tap from our Heavenly Father to show us that we have wandered from the pathway of duty.

Affliction can also be a means of refining and purification. Many people have come forth from the furnace of affliction more beautiful and more useful. We would never have had the songs of Fanny Crosby and she had not been afflicted with blindness. George Mathews would have never given the world his immortal song “O Love That Will Not Let Me Go” had it not been for his passing through the furnace of affliction.

Job, who was called upon to suffer as few men have suffered, said: “But he knoweth the way that I take, when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 18:10).

Affliction is the blast furnace in which sinners are smelted. It is in the midst of adversity that their true worth is revealed.

The Bible says: “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (2 Corinthians 4:17).

Your sickness can become a spiritual gymnasium where your soul is exercised and developed. Sickness is one of the “all things” that work together for good to those that love God. Don’t resent it. Don’t be embittered by it. You who are lying on hospital beds realize today that it is the love-stroke of a loving Heavenly Father who loves you so much He will not pamper you but will bring all things for your ultimate good.

Christ is the Answer to Encouragement

This is a world of thwarted hopes, broken dreams and frustrated desires. But Christ can take discouragement and despondency out of your life. You can put a spring in your step and give you a thrill in your heart and a purpose in your mind. Optimism and cheerfulness are products of knowing Christ.

The Bible says: “A merry heart does good, like medicine, but a broken spirit dries the bones” (Proverbs 15:14).

Christ is the wellspring of happiness. He is the fountainhead of joy “whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see him, yet believing you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8).

Christ is the Answer to the Problem of Sin

The Bible says, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). The Bible indicates that all the troubles of the world stem from the fact that men have broken the laws of God. There is a penalty for breaking God’s law, and that penalty is eternal death and banishment from His presence. However, the Scripture says that in Christ we have “reconciliation through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7).

And the Bible says: “He made atonement for our sins; He is holy and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Is your conscience smitten today because of sin in your life? Have you had the uncomfortable feeling that you are not in tune with God? Has the Holy Spirit been convicting you of the fact that you have broken the laws of God and need a Savior? Why not open your heart’s door and let Christ come into your life? “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

And the Bible says: “He purifies our conscience, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us…from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

In Christ you have eternal life. There is no other way. Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. There is no other way to God. Christ is the only way to know God. May you accept Christ in your heart and life and know Him as your personal Savior and Lord today. May you be saved today. May you be saved today. May you be saved today.

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May 2019 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 20
Church in a Bar?
By Rev. Mark Creech

Having church in a bar is a new phenomenon, but a growing one. It’s largely an informal movement started in recent years that has spawned hundreds of church services in dive bars across the country.

In an article for ‘The Wisdom Daily,’ Irwin Kalal says, “People have gathered for ‘Beer and Hymns’ in Portland, ‘Church-in-a-Pub’ in Fort Worth, ‘What Would Jesus Brew’ in Michigan, and the ‘Bar Church’ in D.C."

Kalal urges his readers to note the welcome message from one group in Boston, which reads:

“Welcome to the Pub Church! We are a church in a pub, and the Spirit is with us. In this place, feel free to move about, help yourself to food and drink, and express yourself openly! We come together with a variety of thoughts, stories, tales, and like minded people. We pray that it comes together with all our differences and with the Spirit, we participate in a new divine reality. This is sacred space.”

Supporters of this venue for worship argue it is an unconventional way of doing church, but also an answer to the decline of institutional religion in favor of a new kind of church experience. It draws people who would never attend a traditional church and it’s less judgmental, they say. It’s devoid of religiosity and focuses on relationships. Bar is a place, they believe, that one would likely find Jesus if he were here today.

I cannot deny the Scriptures tell us that Jesus was found among sinners and associating with them in places commonly rejected. I cannot deny that some churches have been strenuously unwelcoming, self-righteous, pretentious, hypocritical, and even abusive. Nor can I deny that God’s Spirit can do his work in the most unexpected places and situations. But for me, a partnership between a place that celebrates alcohol and the holy word of God is an unequal yoke that ultimately does more harm than good to both the sinner and the saint.

I think it’s difficult to justify the complaint that the traditional church has been too offensive for one to attend, but then ignore the villainy of the bar.

One poet expressed it this way:

The name of each saloon is a bar,
The finery of its names by far,
A bar to laugh, a door to hell,
Wherever named it named it well.
A bar to manliness and wealth,
A door to want and broken health,
A bar to honor, pride, and fame,
A door to sin and grief and shame;
A bar to hope, a bar to prayer,
A door to darkness and despair,
A bar to honor, useful act,
A door to bawling, senseless strife;
A bar to all that’s true and brave,
A door to every drunkard’s grave;
A bar to joys that home imparts,
A door to tears and aching hearts,
A bar to heaven, a door to hell,
Wherever named it named it well.

The Scriptures speak with the strongest of warnings about things that happen in a bar. “Wise is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise” (Proverbs 20:1). “Beware of him who gives his neighbor drink; pouring out from your wine bucket to make him drunk so as to gaze upon his nakedness” (Proverbs 23:10).

These passages indicate the individual who drinks and the barkeep who pours the alcohol shares in personal and corporate responsibility for the resulting harms.

Alcohol continues its flight upon every phase of human life. Despite the fact we’ve deplored its use in the present and so many priests and protesters Christians cast about in this same old shoes, the so-called holy rollers, which challenge its use as something better left alone, alcohol’s long trail of tears is undeniable. Day by day, science is supporting the contention that abstinence is the better way.

According to a recent study from the United Kingdom, a bottle of wine per week is like smoking ten cigarettes in the same period in terms of cancer risk. That’s significant when you consider that on average American who smokes consumes around 100 cigarettes a week. Whether a smoker or not, a bottle of wine every week increases the risk of cancer.

Studies are demonstrating that even moderate drinking is an important public health issue. A major new study from the University of Oxford, University of California, and the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences reports that alcohol use increases the risk of stroke. “There are no protective effects of moderate alcohol intake against stroke,” researchers determined. “Even moderate alcohol consumption increases the chances of having a stroke.”

Medical News Today reported this month, “A new study goes against the grain of previous research by suggesting that alcohol-induced brain damage does not stop when alcohol use ends. Instead, the harmful effects of alcohol may continue during abstinence. The findings have important implications for the process of recovery from alcohol dependence.” In other words, the negative impact of an alcohol disorder on the brain can continue after committing to a life of sobriety.

This is not to mention that excessive alcohol use leads to an average of 241 deaths every day and 2.5 million years of potential life lost each year in the United States from 2006-2010, shortening the lives of those who died by an average of 36 years. Excessive drinking was responsible for 1 in 10 deaths among working-age adults aged 20-64 years. And the economic costs of excessive alcohol consumption in 2010 (the latest figures available) were estimated at $249 billion.

Jesus said, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). The first part of Jesus’ saying fits the many outcomes of alcohol use and abuse. It’s a thief that can steal, kill, and destroy. But the mission of Christ is to give life and to give life more abundantly. The two purposes are diametrically opposed to each other.

Providing a Christian witness in a bar, I would say, is legitimate if the goal is to get people out of there. If its purpose is to get folks away from the bar so they can be instructed, encouraged, and held accountable for a holy life, that’s a worthy objective. But to set up God’s house in the devil’s lair where people are continuously subjected to temptations that steal, kill and destroy life, is a misapplication of Christian missions.

Reverend Dr. Mark Creech is Executive Director of the NC Christian Action League. You may contact him at rev.markcreech@christianactionleague.org or 919-787-9065

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Happy Mother’s Day

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Burke United Christian Ministries

By David Burleson
Burke County

We are very thankful that spring is officially here, and, hopefully, most of old man winter is behind us. The Burke United Christian Ministries is very thankful and appreciative of all the churches, groups and individuals that supported our work during the cold, winter months. As a team, we were able to meet the needs of hundreds of our friends and neighbors who needed just a little extra to make it through the cold winter.

As we look back over the winter months, we see God working through our ministry to support and encourage others. For December, January, February, March, and April, BUCM was able to do the following with the help of our community partners:

- Assisted 11,656 Families
- Assisted 23,043 Individuals
- Provided 444 Showers to the Homeless
- Provided 459 Homeless Food Packs
- Provided 204 Homeless Individuals with Tents, Sleeping Bags, Blankets or other Items
- Provided Fire Wood to 48 Families
- Provided Clothing to 1,337 Individuals totaling $67,212.52
- Provided Heat Assistance to 190 Individuals totaling $19,930.71
- Provided Rent Assistance to 81 Individuals totaling $10,584.10
- Provided Assistance with Utilities to 75 Individuals totaling $6,730.78
- Provided 25,162 Meals in the Soup Kitchen
- Served 3,727 families in our Food Pantry totaling 7,505 individuals with 181,341 pounds of food.

As evidenced by the above statistics, the winter months were busy at BUCM. This work could not have been accomplished without our wonderful volunteers and staff. On April 1, BUCM celebrated our volunteers at our annual banquet. We are very thankful to the following who made the banquet happen:

- Tom Colabella, Committee Chair
- Glenn Roop
- Stephen Kincad
- Ann Carr
- Jeannie Edward
- Brandi Belk
- Al Bornuth
- Brandy Sipes
- Wendy Mull
- Rhonda Norris
- The First Methodist Church of Morganton and Rona McManus
- The Freedom and Patton Anchor and Interact Clubs along with the National Honor Societies along with their sponsors, Kelly Baker and Michelle Gregory
- The Elk's Club Duncan
- BUCM Board Members for Hosting and Serving

Our volunteers are the lifeblood of BUCM. Each and every volunteer is vital to our ministry. A huge thank you to each soup kitchen team that prepares delicious meals for a daily lunch and dinner from Monday through Thursday and Saturday.

Our soup kitchen teams are as follows:

- AARP 3302, Bethel Church of Christ, Blue Ridge Health Care, Burke County EMS, Burke County Baptist Church, Catawba Lutheran (4 Teams), Christ UMC, Continental Yeve, Cowboy Church, Crosslink, Drexel First Baptist Church, Drexel Memorial, Enon Baptist, FAM - First Assembly, First Advent Christian Church, First Baptist Morganton, First Presbyterian - 2 Teams, First UMC, Fresh Fire Church, Gaston Chapel AME (2 Teams), Gibbs Chapel, Grace Baptist Church, Grace Episcopal, Grace Lutheran, The Rising Church, His Image Ministries, Hopewell Baptist, Laville UMC, Morgan Morgan's Elk's Lodge, Morganton Public Safety, Morganton Service League, Mt. Home Baptist (Men's Ministry, Youth, Senior Group), Mountain Grove UMC, Mull's Grove Baptist, North Morganton, UMC (2 Teams), Norwicg Chapel Freewill Baptist Pleasant Ridge Youth, Pursuit & PTs, Rainhill Wesleyan Church, Rhonda's Girls - Spicy Ladies, Salem UMC, Shiloh AME, Slade's Chapel, Snyrda Baptist, South Mountain Children's Home. St. Charles (2 Teams), St. Mary's / St. Stephen's Episcopal, St. Paul's Episcopal, Summit Community Church, The Rising Church and United Baptist, Victory Church, Walker Road Baptist, WINGNUTS, Zion Baptist

We also want to thank our other volunteer groups:

- Food Pantry Volunteers, Food Pantry Volunteers, Clothing Closet Volunteers, Great Writer, Clothing Store Volunteers, Crafters, Food Harvesters, Dining Room, Warehouse, Wood Ministry

As a community, we also have the opportunity to help provide food for our clients through our food pantry and soup kitchen. On Saturday, May 11, 2019, the Letter Carriers’ Food Drive celebrates its 27th year helping the hungry. For more than 20 years, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) has organized an annual nationwide food drive on the second Saturday in May. Using the unparalleled postal networks, letter carriers collect non-perishable food donations on that day as they deliver mail along their postal route. Please consider leaving some non-perishable food at your mailbox or post office to support this wonderful mission.

Also, volunteers are needed to help unload the mail carriers, carry the donations into the pantry, hold baskets onto the truck and deliver to Burke United Christian Ministries (BUCM).Volunteers of all ages, 5 years old to 99 years old. There is something for everyone. Volunteers will be working at the Morgan Morgan Post Office. Volunteer jobs include:

- Unloading mail carrier vehicles as they come in - Assisting with weighing the food
- Sorting donated food items into baskets - Loading full baskets onto truck
- Unloading full baskets at BUCM - Meeting postal food carriers at in areas of Burke County to pick up food

We will need volunteers from 1 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. or until finished. Please consider volunteering for a few hours. Anyone and everyone is encouraged to volunteer! Come help us make a difference.

If you are interested in volunteering, please give Elizabeth Norris a call at (828) 433-8075 and she can give you all the details about this wonderful project to Stamp Out Hunger. You can also go to this link: http://www.bucm.net/stamp-out-hunger/ to get additional information and to sign-up. The community does the donating, postal food carriers do the collecting - we need the help of volunteers to do the rest!

Be sure to mark your calendars for our second annual golf tournament on May 10, 2019.
Obedient Heart Fellowship

Refreshing
By James Hinkins
Adair County

In spite of popular opinion, texting is not as good as face-to-face conversation, virtual reality is merely dirty work, and milk does not come from cows.

Confession about milk has been on my mind, because we have something that most Americans never experience: a milk cow and her newborn calf.

All species of mammals produce milk after they give birth. Most milk in North America comes from cows. Milk does not happen until after the process of conception, gestation, and, before that, the process of laying down fat and energy that will be stored as milk. We all have a cow that is called “freshening.” Ideally, a cow is rebred about three months after freshening to begin her nine-month gestation. She is “near dry” — allowed to stop milk — two months after freshening. Two months of rest from production, and the cycle begins anew. This process is the body’s way of restoring its natural state, and it was a common practice in our family for the next century of enslavement. He led them to a land flowing with milk and honey.

Refreshment is a powerful, Biblical theme. King Saul’s disobedience led to God abandoning him. Saul then suffered from a “distressing spirit” and could not relax or sleep. 1 Samuel 16:22 says that when David played the harp, Saul was refreshed. And what does the Hebrew word for “refresh” mean? The same word translated “refresh” is “upshish.” It means to breathe or be breathed upon. It is closely related to “rush” — spirit — and also to “upshish” which is generally translated “soil.” In Hebrew terms, a “soil” is the union of a body of earth with the spirit or breath of God. It takes both body and spirit to be a soul, and Jesus came to restore — refresh — our soul on resurrection day. He did not come to free our spirit from the confines of our body. The idea that our “soil” can be separated from our body is a Greek concept, not Hebrew. In Hebrew thought, a “soil” is a lamp of man made alive and fresh by the breath of God.

We’ve been told that the Gospel was something new after Calvary, but Hebrews 4:2 tells us that the Gospel was proclaimed to the children of Israel in Sinai. Not a different Gospel. Not a state, burdensome list of rules. Not an impossible barrier between us and God. Those folks were given the unvarnished “Good News” along with clear instruction that His people must obey Him. The gospel they heard was not “fastened” and “homogenized” and “sanitized” to make it “safe.” God’s instruction for living was pure refreshment for a nation attempting to shake the bonds of slavery, but His Torah was also the basis for a covenant, and that covenant requires obedience.

In Jeremiah 31:31-32 God promises a “new” covenant with the “house of Judah and the house of Israel.” Most Christians stop at that point and miss the terms of that new covenant in verse 33: “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my Torah within them, and I will write it on their hearts.” The “new” covenant is nothing more — or less — than God writing His perfect Torah on our hearts rather than on tablets of stone. Many Christians claim that Hebrews 6:17 somehow proves that Torah has been nullified. “The Covenant He mediates is better since it is enacted with greater promises.” These are “new” and God’s purpose and delight and refreshment through keeping Torah. We have no doubt that this is the Hebrew writer’s message because he immediately quotes Jeremiah 31:33: “I will put my Torah into their minds and write it on their hearts.” (Hebrews 8:10.)

Our culture is enamored with “new” and “different.” We want the latest and the best. We’ve been taught that the “new” covenant cancelled everything before it, but our culture has been working since day one to teach us how to live in harmony with Him, with each other, and with His world. His teaching is not new, grace is not new, and He has never been.

A new moon is not new, its cycle is refreshed. A new garden is only new in the sense that the miracle of growth starts afresh. A fresh cow is not a different creature, but her capacity to serve her master is dramatically improved. The new covenant made possible by Jesus’ sacrifice means that the burden of our past sin is lifted away, and we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus. This Holy Spirit breathes into us the realization that the only appropriate response to salvation is to walk as Jesus walked.

How did He walk? He kept Torah. The “Only way to love and serve Him is to do the same.” What a refreshing option that would prevent to the lost and dying world around us.

And remember that almonds never lactate.

Obedient Heart Fellowship believes that the entire Bible is true and relevant. We accept salvation by grace through faith in Jesus, and we try to love and obey God’s people need to be ruled, and He has never been.

Jim & Beverly Hinkins are members of Obedient Heart Fellowship.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

Parkway Playhouse

Presents Along About Sundown
By Hunter Taylor, Education Coordinator
Barncounty

BURNSVILLE, NC: When an aspiring musician Ethan happens into Bascom Lamar Lunsford, the “Minstrel of Appalachia,” he embarks on a musical and historical journey. Along the way, charming characters such as Lunsford’s porch and the old-time string band’s songs inspire audiences and bring the music of Appalachia to life. This original musical, written by two of Lunsford’s own grandchildren, is a charming work sure to leave audiences smiling and humming.

Performances will be held on May 4th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 17th, and 18th at 7:30pm. There will be matinee performances on May 5th and 12th at 3pm. Ticket prices range from $15 for children to $34 for adults. All performances are at the historic Parkway Playhouse theatre, located at 265 Great Smoky Mountain Drive in Burnsville, NC. Tickets can be purchased by visiting the Parkway Playhouse Box Office (open 1:30pm Thursdays through Saturdays), calling 828-682-4282, or by visiting parkwayplayhouse.com.

This production is generously supported by the Mountain Arts Council. 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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The Inspiring Word

Under New Ownership
By Dr. Terry Cleek
Ad-Dowell County

By now probably everyone knows the BRCH is under new ownership. Doug and Barbara Harrell have taken such a blessing to the communities and churches in the Blue Ridge Mountains and foothills. Words cannot begin to express the gratitude we have for their faithful and generous work pursuing the Great Commission. Quoting from Barbra’s email: “As we all know, there is a time and a season for all things, and the season in our lives is changing at this point in time.” As I thought about this statement I reflected on my own life and ministry, how God has moved me and positioned me to assume roles I have never dreamed of. I have not had the privilege of meeting Brian Barrier but I am certain of one thing God has placed and positioned him and his family for His work through the BRCH. For a few moments this month lets think about being under new ownership.

That phrase causes me to immediately think business. But if really allow it to sink into my heart it takes me to salvation. Just trusting with Resurrection Sunday (Easter) our hearts should be overflowing with the thought of salvation. Being saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ is nothing more than putting our soul under new ownership.

For those who may not understand what I am talking about convict me and let me tell you a story about your life. Using Gods word to tell the story lets begin with Romans 5:12 KJV “Therefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” This one man was Adam. When he and Eve disobeyed God and ate from the tree of knowledge of good and evil they established what is known as the sin nature. That sin nature is passed to every male and female that has or ever will be born. The result of that Sin is death. Notice in Romans 3:23 KJV “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” All, that means everyone who has been or will be, born, even you and I. We also have seen that sin brings about death, not just physical death but spiritual death as well. Friend you don’t want to experience spiritual death. There is a better way. Instead of allowing sin to remain in ownership of your life why not come to Jesus. That’s right Jesus wants to take over ownership of your physical and spiritual life. Making a change of ownership requires us to be born again. In John’s Gospel Jesus is talking to a man named Nicodemus about being born again this is part of that conversation. John 3:5 KJV Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Jesus wants you to be born again. Jesus wants you to be under new ownership, His ownership. Friend, if you are reading this and you do not remember a time when you asked Jesus to forgive your sin, save your soul and take ownership of your life, you will do so today.

Allowing new ownership of your life makes room for so many new and wonderful opportunities. All the shame and guilt previously done will be gone. Paul reminds us in 2Corinthians 5:17 KJV “Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” This is a wonderful feeling. I know from experience. If you have questions or just need help getting through the transition of new ownership drop me an email. I will be happy to show you from God’s word how Jesus can make the transition happen.

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

Bear Creek Baptist Church

May is A Very Special Month Indeed
By Bruce Cannon
Mitchell County

What makes May a very special month? Two very important observances occur this month: Mother’s Day and Memorial Day. Both are very important in American life and should be embraced and celebrated by all.

First, May is the month where we are reminded that moms are special, to be honored, to be loved, spent time with, prayed for and cherished. What a very special gift God gave the family when He placed His love deep in the heart of a mom. Even those moms who are not believers feel love, concern for and feeling very thankful for their children. But Christian moms, most especially those who walk close to the Lord, are very special.

When those moms love their children, they do so with the full blessings of God, His wisdom, His power, His courage and His strength. And, there really is a huge difference! Those moms lead their children in the most important instruction in life….how to know God, how to walk with God, how to please God and how to be blessed by God. Those moms are extremely invaluable to a home, a nation and a Church.

They are a guarantee that the next generation can be strong and face whatever storms and winds that blow. They have the peace of knowing that their children will be prepared to succeed in the things that truly matter in life.

The second special event is Memorial Day. And while I am a little concerned that our respect for moms is waning and the family American family breaking down, I am deeply concerned about patriotism, the observance of Memorial Day, Veteran’s Day and other patriotic remembrances or practices in the U.S. When we will get to the point in America where it will be politically incorrect to honor our war dead, to pledge our allegiance to the flag or to honor our veterans? With knowledge and respect of the national anthem, the Pledge of Allegiance or the American being pulled from many sporting and social events, and historians revising American history, I see it as a very strong possibility that Memorial Day and other patriotic practices will begin drawing fire from those who were not raised to respect our values.

America was founded as a Judeo-Christian nation. “In God We Trust” meant a lot to our earlier citizens. It first appeared on a two-cent coin in 1854. It is who we still are! Our hearts still break when we lose soldiers in battle. We still love our flag. It still blesses our hearts to see people reverently during the National Anthem or Pledge of Allegiance.

These two celebrations are two that MUST not be allowed to weaken or go by the wayside. Again, thank God for Moms! Love her, pray for her, celebrate her and honor her this Mother’s Day and every day. And, observe Memorial Day! Remember that there are so many families who have received the tragic news that a soldier had been killed in battle that another soldier who faithfully served their country passed. We owe so much to those who were willing to leave home’s comfort and safety to fight for our freedom in all parts of our globe.

Thank God for Moms and thank God for our deceased, retired and active military!

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.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:18

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THE SHACK BY THE ROAD
By Joy Hardwood Baldwin

An old woman prayed
“Lord as lovely Roses grow
Give me love for your people
In my shack by the road.”

A beggar came by
And she made him warm food
As he went away thankful
Said “I won’t forget you”.

A young man was passing
With his car broke and old
She offered him shelter
In the shack by the road.

A sad girl was crying
The old woman wiped her tears
Then handed her Roses
She’d been growing for years.

Now the old woman lives
In a mansion I’m told
Still the Roses are blooming
At the shack by the road.

Comes to Yancey County
By Pierce Bingham
Yancey County

Celebrate Recovery is coming to Yancey County Wednesdays starting June 5th. Refreshments will be served starting at 5:30 PM, service time 6:30 PM with open share small groups at 7:30 PM. This is a community-based service open to all our neighbors who want the amazing healing and restorative power of Jesus Christ in their road to recovery from their hurts, habits and hang-ups. Celebrate Recovery is a Christ-centered recovery program based firmly in Biblical truth, drawing on scripture and 8 principals from the Beatitudes to bring hope, freedom, sobriety, healing and the opportunity to live life one day at a time through our Savior Jesus Christ. Celebrate Recovery was created over 25 years ago by John Baker and Rick Warren at Saddle Back Church. John’s book “Life’s Healing Choices” was adapted into a program with help from Rick Warren and since that time 10,000 people have been through the 12-step program at Saddle Back and 1.5 million have been through it worldwide by attending their local chapters. John Bakers own story is a long battle with alcoholism and his final deliverance through Jesus’ restorative power. The program is based on his discovery of that process and his hopes that others could benefit from his journey. The Biblical truths drawn on for the program are absolutely appropriate regardless of your hurt, habit or hang-up. Please come join us June 5th and start your road to recovery as a member of our Recovery family. All are welcome so you can show your support by coming along side of us in the service, through your prayers or by getting involved. For more information call Pierce Bingham at 828-208-6299. Service will be held in the main Sanctuary of Higgins United Methodist Church 191 N Main Street Burnsville. See you there!

Pierce Bingham works for the Yancey County Cooperative Extension as the Mountain Challenge Coordinator running programs for “At Risk Youth”. He serves on the executive committee of The Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force and is the Missions leader for his church Higgins UMC. In addition he is active and on the board of Mountain View, Blue Ridge Emmanuel, Burnsville Rotary and Reconciliation House. He lives in Green Mountain with his wife Dawn, has four children, three grandchildren and a farm full of animals.

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 Waynesville, “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.”

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

~ Anne Richardson

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Neuropathy

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

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

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First Baptist of Marshall

Humor
By Buddy Freeman
Madison County

A Hippie was filling out the physical education questionnaire form and came to the question, “Have your eyes ever been checked?” He wrote: “No, they have always been brown.”

The teacher asked a boy to spell Mississippi. The hillbilly student asked, “Do you want me to spell the river or the state?”

A Veterinarian, who is also a Taxidermist, has a sign in his office that says, “No matter what happens you will still get your dog back.”

When the Veterinarian and his staff go to lunch he puts a sign on the door that says, “SIT” “STAY”.

A teacher asked a little boy, “What is a possum?” He thought and replied, “A possum is a flat animal that sleeps in the middle of the road at night.”

An undertaker asked an elderly widow woman how old her husband was? She said, 98. Two years older than me.”

The undertaker said, “So you are 96?” She replied, “It’s hardly worth going home, isn’t it?”

Dr. Buddy Freeman is now serving as the pastor at First Baptist Church of Marshall, NC.
We Must Not Remain Silent
By Franklin Graham

As the progressive, secular left movement continues its toxic spread across our nation, there is little doubt that its primary objective is not only to suppress Christians and the Biblical worldview, but to harshly punish and completely silence our moral voice and values.

That was never more evident than with the announcement of Karen Pence, wife of Vice President Mike Pence, as the new archbishop of the media—even international press—for her part-time role as an art teacher at a Christian school in suburban Virginia.

Mrs. Pence had taught for 12 years at the school, which like most evangelical Christian schools in America, affirms traditional Biblical marriage between one man and one woman, with clear definitions of sexual identity according to Scripture. These are the solid, moral foundations that have undergirded civilizations for millennia.

If you read the headlines, you would have concluded that Mrs. Pence’s presence at the Christian school was a serious offense.

—Karen Pence, America’s second lady, is teaching at Virginia Religious School that bans LGBTQ students and employees” (The Washington Post)

—“Vice President’s wife to teach at anti-lgbt school!” (MSNBC)

—“Karen Pence to teach at school that bans gay students, teachers” (CNN)

The hostile, biased and ridiculous of Biblical morality is blatant and obvious. The media reported nothing about Karen Pence’s skill, gracious participation in the lives of dozens of children, only that the sexual morals of the school were aligned with the new immoral mantra of the radical left.

An article in The Federalist warned of the tyrannical agenda of secular progressives who make so attempt to hide their disdain for Biblical values.

“The left wants to penalize Christians for their faith. They are quite clear about their goals for orthodox Christians. They believe we are bigots, and that we should not be allowed to have our values, our work in government or hold good jobs.

If we will not recant and bend the knee to the sexual revolution, they want to close our schools, hospitals and charities, drive us out of our professions, shutter our businesses and get us fired for any job they believe above our station. A culture that considers sexual desire the essence of a person will not tolerate a rival Biblical viewpoint, but signpost and punish it.”

This is the point at which we come. The war against Biblical values and those who embrace them is full on. The gloves are off, and the radical left will look to crush all who hold to a Biblical worldview.

I promise that I will raise my voice each and every day against such injustice and wicked behavior. I cannot and will not stand idly by. By God’s grace and with God’s help, I will “fight the good fight, trusting in the sovereign hand of the Lord to work in the hearts and lives of His people to embolden them.”

The recent developments by pro-abortion activists and politicians—who are actually pro-murder—may serve to undermine just how for our nation has descended into moral bankruptcy.

On Jan. 22, the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed the Reproductive Health Act—Orwellian language if ever I heard it—legalizing abortion in the state of New York, throughout all nine months of pregnancy, with a doctor’s consent. It also decriminalized all state abortion laws and allows even unlicensed physicians to perform abortions. To celebrate their murderous new legislation, Cuomo had the One World Trade Center lit up pink.

One physician commented: “As a board-certified practicing OB-GYN for over 20 years, it is very hard to say publicly and unequivocally that there is ever a medical reason to kill a baby at term. … The decision to kill an unborn baby at term is purely for convenience. It is murder. … God help us.”

In Virginia, only an outcry from the public halted proposed legislation that would have expanded any restrictions on third-trimester abortions going to the floor for a vote. Gov. Ralph Northam’s comments in a media interview inquiring that infanticide is permissible following the birth of a live child was chilling and disgusting.

Karen Pence, a committed believer in Jesus Christ and ardent pro-life supporter, said in a tweet: “These VA & NY late-term abortions bills should be a call to action for all Americans. It would be unconscionable for us to let this moment pass in silence. We must reconnect ourselves to the sanctity of life to the center of American law.”

Amen!

While followers of the Lord Jesus Christ should never resort to violence, we must do all we can to resist evil. As Mr. Pence has said, we are not to remain silent when moral anarchists are attempting to extinguish any influence of Biblical morality in our government, schools, and businesses.

We can’t stick our heads in the sand and pretend these forces of evil are dormant. They are not, and if we remain silent, then our children and grandchildren will pay a tremendous price for our inaction.

I promise that I will raise my voice each and every day against such injustice and wicked behavior. I cannot and will not stand idly by. By God’s grace and with God’s help, I will “fight the good fight,” trusting in the sovereign hand of the Lord to work in the hearts and lives of His people to embolden them.

We must be like the Prophet Daniel, who continued to pray to Jehovah God even though he knew he was violating the orders of the Babylonian king to worship him alone. Looking west toward Jerusalem, Daniel “knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days” (Daniel 6:10). Daniel courageously obeyed God in the face of a pagan culture, even risking his own life in the process.

“The people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out great exploits” (Daniel 11:31). With God’s help, we will pray, we will stand boldly for God’s truth, and we will never compromise with a godless culture that defies and despises the principles of Scripture.

We stand, knowing that is the end, God will judge all those who are opposed to Him, and He will establish His perfect will and Kingdom on earth just as it is in Heaven. May this day come soon.

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

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

Bucknam Baptist Church is currently seeking a minister of music. Bucknam is located in Morganton, NC. The church has a two morning worship services at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. in the sanctuary. The church has an orchestra and is accustomed to praise and worship music as well as traditional hymns. We have a comprehensive music ministry with multiple choirs (preschool, children, youth/young adult and adult). We have a drama ministry that partners with the music ministry and participates in seasonal productions that often are on a large scale. We are looking for a man of God with a Master’s Degree from a seminary of like faith and a man with a heart for ministry that goes beyond mere talent. Please send resumes to IJava@bucknambaptist.org

 Catawba River Baptist Association - World Changers will be coming to Morganton, NC. July 15-20, 2019. Hundreds of students from around the country will participate in multiple mission projects around the area for families in need. This year a record number of students have signed up to come to our area. We are going to be the hosting churches to help feed the mission team’s lunch each day. Churches will provide lunch for 8-14 people, four consecutive days at the team’s designated construction site. We will also need volunteers to help at the school where the students will be housed. There are many ways to get involved. For more information or to volunteer call the CREA office at 828-437-0377.

Equip Conference, May 7, 2019, 9am at Mount Home Baptist Church. Allnight meal will be provided at 6 p.m., the rally and breakout sessions will follow. The list of classes are available below:

1. The Reformation: A History That Shaped Your Faith
2. Salvation's Sweet Savor: Experience the Joy of Belonging to Jesus
3. Discipleship for the Future (Sunday School / Small Group)
4. Bobby Smith, Leadership for the Future (Deacons/Eldeary Ministry)
5. Keith Dioua & Mike Claeisler, Ministry for the Future (Mission/Evangelism)
6. Jack Hedges, Prayer for the Future (Beginning a Prayer Ministry)
7. Mark Mirza, Please call the CREA office at (828) 637-0137 to reserve your spot and for more information.

2019 Waldensian Festival - Since 1976, on the second Saturday in August, Valdese holds a musical event to celebrate the “Glorious Return” of the Waldensians from exile in Switzerland to their native valleys in the Cortina Alps of Italy in 1489. This celebration is mirrored around the world by other Waldensian communities. The Town of Valdese continues to improve the Waldensian Festival each year and make it one of the best festivals in the state of North Carolina. The 2019 Waldensian Festival will concentrate on various crafts, great food, and top-quality entertainment. To achieve this goal, the committee continues to search for wonderful artists, food vendors and entertainers from around the country. Competitors that will participate to come together to make an unforgettable festival. The 44th Annual Waldensian Festival will be held on August 9 & 10, 2019. 2019 VENDOR APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE NOW!

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist-Burke County - God’s Closet - Morganton FREE Shop Day! Sunday May 5, 2019, from 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., at the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 118 Jesse Bounds Road, Morganton, N.C. FREE Children’s Clothing for ages 0 - 18 years old! Invite your friends and LIKE and SHARE @GodsClosetMorganton and @MorgantonSeventhDayAdventist-Church on Facebook!

Community Night of Prayer at the Waldensian: Trail of Faith 401 Church St. Valdese, NC. The event is May 2nd 7-8pm. People from over two dozen Churches will be coming together to pray for our Church, our community, and our world.


McDowell County

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 each month from 6:00 to 6:30 p.m. and the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays 4:00 to 11:00 a.m. For more information or if you are interested in volunteer opportunities call (288) 803-8709 or email TennsForCris/BEARcloset@yahoo.com

First Baptist of Marion - 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! Vacation Bible School will be here soon. We need volunteers to help with crafts. Kids will work on age appropriate craft projects all week long. Special art skills are not required for this position. See Christi or sign up on the bulletin board if interested.

McDowell will host 4-H District Activity Day - On Saturday June 15, NCCE- McDowell County Center will host 4-H District Activity Day. 4-H District Activity Day is a long lived tradition which draws 4-Hers from across the West District to come together to compete in 4-H Presentations.

We need your help! This activity is a large undertaking that requires volunteers. Let’s show our western 21 counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee McDowell County hospitality.

Mitchell County

Bear Creek Baptist Church - Women’s Prayer Breakfast May 10th, 8:00am at DT’s. Celebrate Recovery - This is a Christ and Biblical Based Program, giving help and hope for men, women and families suffering from addiction. Any questions contact Josh Wise @ 843-0601. There will be a meeting every Thursday night at 7:00pm there to talk to men, women, and their families. There is also a Children’s program.

Grassy Creek Baptist Church - The Tumblers in concert
Til-Country Baptist Temple-C232 Ridge Road-Spence Pine, NC May 31, 2019 at 7:00 pm Call 828-550-1345 for more information.

Hospice and Home Care of Blue Ridge, Inc.
1st Annual Golf Tournament- Saturday, June 8 - Grassy Creek Golf Course

Mitchell County Historic Society - On May 26th, we’ll be at the English Inn, where David Beddixx will give a presentation about Union Soldiers who were sheltered in an inn’s owner, Isaac L. English.

We’ll hear about the Overmountain Victory Historic Trail from Stark McDowell on June 17th at the Historic Courthouse.

Mitchell County Chamber - For the last 60 years, Spruce Pine has welcomed rock hounds and gem and mineral enthusiasts to the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains!

This event has been a major part of the history of Mitchell County for the past 60 years! Hundreds of thousands of people have traveled to our community to partake in this event.

The NC Mineral and Gem Festival has an over $1 million impact on our local businesses each year which is one of the main reasons we work so hard to make this events success each year.

But events like this don’t happen without the support of our local businesses and volunteers. As we make plans for the 60th year celebration we need our sponsors even more! We hope you will consider joining us this year as a community partner to help us make this year’s event something special. No matter the level of sponsorship, your support is very important!

Relay for Life of the Blue Ridge
Mitchell High School - May 17th, 5:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m.
For information on local event contact Rhonda Bucshelf at 768-1352

Second Annual Service Personnel Recognition Banquet
Altapass Baptist Church-3561 Altapass Hwy, Spruce Pine-May 10, 2019, 6:00 p.m.
For Freeman, Policemen, EMT’s
Please join us as we honor the ones currently serving and the ones that have given all.

This will include a meal for you and your significant other.

YaYa Village - We are announcing the Opening of YaYa Village Commercial Share Kitchen!

We 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 entrepreneur thrive in the food economy.

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 you about what you have in mind!

We are also serving Lunch on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm. Sign up for 2019 After Hours!

Business After Hours are held to provide a venue 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 purpose of these events is to connect Chamber representatives and 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 jk@jones@mitchellcountychamber.org.

May: Locust’s Glory Rafting and Tubing, Buckaville, SC
June: The Broom 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 Peachland:
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

Summer Workshops 2019

2019 Calendar of Events for Downtown Spruce Pine

Run for Holland May 15th, Downtown Spruce Pine
TRAC Studio Tour May 31 - June 2nd, Mitchell & Yancey Counties
Tourgistic June 13th, Downtown Spruce Pine
Downsday Tour June 30th, Downtown Spruce Pine
Reading is Alive Play July 6th, Central Park
SPACE Festival July 6th - 8th, Downtown Spruce Pine
Movies in the Park July 6th, Downtown Spruce Pine
4th of July Celebration July 4th, Downtown Spruce Pine
Movies in the Park July 12th, Central Park
Movies in the Park July 19th, Central Park
BBQ & Bluegrass July 27th, Downtown Spruce Pine
Soda Pop Art August 3rd, Downtown Spruce Pine
Mineral & Gem Festival August 4th, 4th Street Street Festival
Summer Concert August 10th, Central Park
Summer Concert August 17th, 17th Street
Walk a Mile Fundraiser August 19th, Downtown Spruce Pine
Fix Clean Up August 25th, Downtown Spruce Pine
Peteem’s Market September 1st, Downtown Spruce Pine
Merchant Trail and Treat September 21st, Downtown Spruce Pine
Business Monday November 25th, Downtown Spruce Pine
Kwanzaa Christmas Parade November 30th, Downtown Spruce Pine
TRAC Studio Tour December 6th, Mitchell & Yancey Counties

Farmers Market Every Wednesday at 5th & Main during April
For more information about any of these events, contact SIMS 785-2600

The Toe River Art - June Studio Tour
The Toe River Art Studio Tour is perhaps the largest and longest running studio tour in the country, you will find craftspeople and artists are nearly everywhere, many top in their field and several are the top in the country.

FREE, and self-guided, this adventure will lead you to a unique, carefully selected studio area.

A great way for artists to get seen and loved, and you can give a donor a tax deduction 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.

If you are interested, I am happy to give a tour of our space and organize anything you might need. Please contact me at 828-250-1151 or tees@oeoart.com

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 reached its 501(c)(3) status. This means that we will be recognized by the IRS and eligible for tax-deductible donations. You can also get a tax deduction when you make charitable gifts. The ability to apply for grants and other public or private allocations available only to IRS-recognized, 501(c)(3) organizations.

This year I am asking you to consider donating to Run For Holland as 2108 comes to a close. To date, we have been able to give over $50,000 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 provide disability resources to others like you and it has grown into a Non-Profit organization that is reaching thousands of people per year through awareness, education, and financial support.

Can we help you grow our budget for 2019?

PS registration is open so feel free to sign up for the 2019 race on Saturday May 10th, 2019.

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

Yancey County

Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse -- Partners Aligned Toward Health. Save the Date Burnsville, NC 11th - 15th. The 11th Annual Burnsville Fit Families 5K is Saturday, May 11th! Registration is still open.

Early registration ends on April 26th. Until then, the cost for registration is $25 for adults and FREE for children. After April 26th, registration fees go up to $30 for adults. Online registration closes on May 9th, but we welcome race-day registrations as well. You must register by April 26th to guarantee a tee shirt. Please note: Race-day registration is cash or check only. Register online here.

We still need volunteers! We need a few additional Course Marshalls to guard intersections and help ensure the safety of our runners. Please sign up here or email bnyamna@pathwc.org if you are available to help.

Come support the runners! Join in the fun and cheer the runners on their way! Come enjoy, crazy hats, bubbles, noise makers, and all manner of silliness! We welcome to encourage and energize the racers!

A Few Reminders...

* Race-day registration and packet pickup is all begins on race day at 8:00 AM in the Tipton Hill Community Church on the Town Square. Parking is limited.
* East Main, Town Square, West Main, North Main, and Green Mountain Drive will be closed in the morning for the 5K. Please take this into account for your arrival time and allow extra time to park.
* The race starts at 9:30 from the Town Square.
* We will have smoothies, music, and announce the race winners at Town Square after the race. Please plan to join us there after the 5K. (If it is raining, we’ll do this inside First Baptist Church.)
* Downtown area roads will close a little before 9:00 AM to ensure runner safety, and will reopen when the final runners cross the finish line.

And, finally, there’s still time to sponsor a runner!
Each child receives a race shirt, a goodie bag, a medal for participating, and a smoothie at the finish line. Your $25 donation will help offset those costs.
To sponsor a child, please click here or mail a check to PATH at the address below.
We look forward to seeing you at the race!

Meyland Community College
HELP! Social Media Marketing Tips for Small Businesses
Explore the ever-changing landscape of social media marketing while enjoying a light breakfast at the beautiful Burnsville Town Center. The basics of Facebook for business will be covered with step-by-step instructions for set-up. Instagram, YouTube, and other social media platforms will also be analyzed from a small business owner perspective. Find out how to post, proper use of hashtags, and how to boost content to this information packed class!
5/14, T, 8:00-9:30 a.m.

Fee Waived
Instructor: Robinson
Burnsville Town Center 828-766-1295

How to Grow A Start Your Business in the NC Mountains
Learn how to properly start a small business in the western NC Mountain region. Seminar will cover how to properly register your business, small business best management practices, and tips for growth.
5/22, W, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Cook Yancey 828-766-1295

Allen Cook, Director, Mayland Small Business Center (828) 766-1295 accoll@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 list of projects at https://baptistsonmission.org/Mission-Projects/United-States/New-Zealand or contact NC Baptists on Mission at 919-667-9877 or maburnett@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 numerous communities across the state with hands-on mission projects designed for 1st-6th grade children. Sign up your church for a weekend, mini-week, or full week at one of these locations:
Cottage: May 24-26, Randolph County, NC; Volunteer: May 24-26, Randolph County, NC. For more information contact Dollie Noss at dmcc@email.auburn.edu.

http://baptistsonmission.org/nc-teams

ASAP's 2019 Local Food Guide Is Here! The growing season has arrived in Western North Carolina and the Southern Appalachians! That means it's time to discover farms to visit, weekly farmers tailgate markets, new restaurants, and more opportunities to support the season and celebrate the farms that surround us. The latest edition of ASAP's Local Food Guide, the essential resource for finding Appalachian Grown™ food and farms, his now available this week.
“Red Letters” By Shawa Thomas Burke County

I recently watched David Crowder’s testimony about writing the popular song, “Red Letters.” He said when he was a little boy, he was sitting in a church service with his grandmother, and he was fiddling with the envelope or whatever — but he looked over and saw his grandmother’s Bible open, and it was one of those “red letter” edition Bibles, in which all the words of Jesus are printed in red. And he asked his grandmother: “Why are those words in red?” And she told him the story: that God Himself came down to earth in Jesus Christ, and those were the words that He Himself spoke while He was here. He said he made such an impression on him: these were the words of God; Words that ended up changing his life.

But he said when he was older, he began to research those “red letter” Bibles some more. They were the Iturdis of a man named Louis Klopisch, who lived in the late 1800’s. He wanted the message of the Bible and what Jesus had done for us, to be as clear as it could be to every man, but he didn’t know the best way to do it. One day, he was reading where Jesus said in Luke 22:20: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you” — then he had this idea: it was the blood of Jesus, that He did indeed “pour out” on the cross, that was the price for our salvation. What if everything that Jesus said was printed in the Bible in red, as a reminder that He had paid for our sins with His blood? And so, they began to print those “red letter” Bibles.

In fact, in some later versions, they took it even further. They went back into the Old Testament, and whenever there was a passage that predicted the coming of Jesus, or what He would do for us, they would print that in red also. So in those Bibles, if you started in Genesis and read through to Revelation, all through the Bible as you read, you could see this “scarlet thread” that ran all through the Bible, all these “red” verses that point to the blood of Christ that was the price for our salvation.

Well, the Bible tells us that “All scripture is inspired by God.” In a very real sense, you could print EVERY word in the Bible in red, because ALL the words of the Bible are from the Lord, and every single verse in it points to Jesus. And we need to make sure we remember that.

But the point that Louis Klopisch was making is true: it is the blood of Jesus that saves us, and we need to make really sure that we realize that. See, this is where a lot of people really miss the point of the Bible and Christianity. They think that Christianity teaches: “If you’ll be good, then you will get to heaven.” (Kind of like Santa Claus: “Be a good boy, and Santa will bring you a present.”) And they think God is like that: “Be good and I might let you into heaven.”

But the problem is, NONE OF US ARE GOOD! The Bible says in Romans 3:23, “there is none good, not even one.” It says all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We are not good, and we can’t do anything to save ourselves. We needed God to come to — and that is just what He came to earth to do. God the Son, Jesus Christ, came to earth, lived the perfect life we couldn’t live, and died on the cross and paid for our sins with His blood. He rose from the dead and will save whoever repents of their sins and puts their trust in Him as their Lord & Savior. But you have to realize, it is ONLY the blood of Jesus and what HE did that saves us. We cannot save ourselves.

Back in the 1800’s, Mark Twain wrote about a real-life incident that happened on the Mississippi River. A steamboat, carrying 200 passengers caught fire. The pilot of the ship told the captain that if they stayed there by the bluff (there was basically a cliff on that side of the river) they would all die, but if he just had enough time to run the ship into the sandbar, some distance away, then perhaps everyone could climb out and be saved. The captain told him, you need to abandon ship, if you stay there and try to take the ship to the sandbar, the fire will be up here by then and you will die. But the pilot told the captain: “If I abandon this post, nobody will be saved, if I stay here, no one will be lost but me.” He said, “I’ll stay.” And he did stay at his post, and took that steamboat to the sandbar. Two hundred passengers were on board that steamboat that day — but not a single life was lost — except that pilot’s. He did die in the fire, staying at his post, that the others might be saved.

These 200 people on that boat on the Mississippi that day, lived. But it wasn’t because of anything THEY did, was it? They didn’t do anything at all. The only reason they lived, was because of what the pilot did for them. And that is how it is with you and me, and heaven, too. We’ve all sinned, and you and I, one of us. And like the people on that boat that day, there is NOTHING we can do to save ourselves from the punishment of our sins. The Bible says, “By the works of the Law, NO flesh shall be justified in His sight.” It says salvation is “not of works, lest any man should boast.” There is nothing we can do to save ourselves. But Jesus died on the cross, and poured out His blood to pay for our sins, to do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

But we need to make sure we understand: we are NOT going to go to heaven because of any good things we have done for God:

— going to church doesn’t save us
— giving money doesn’t save us
— trying to be good doesn’t save us
— There’s nothing “good” that we can do for God that saves us. The only thing that saves us is what GOD did for us, when Jesus died on the cross for us and paid for our sins with His blood.

There’s an old hymn that says it so well: “What can wash away my sin? NOTHING — but the blood of Jesus.”

You’ve got to put your trust in Him, and in Him only. If someone asks you “How are you going to get to heaven?” DO NOT say: “I’m gonna try to be good” or “I’ll try to keep the 10 Commandments,” or whatever. NONE of those things are enough to save you. You won’t be good enough, you can’t keep all the 10 Commandments. You’ve got to trust what Jesus did to save you.

You’ve gotta be like a pastor I know, who, when someone asked him, “Why should God let you into His heaven?”, said, “He SHOULD!” But Jesus died on the cross and shed His blood for us, and THAT is my only hope of salvation.”

That’s the answer we all need to have. Your trust is in Jesus, and Jesus alone for your salvation. In those old “red letter” Bibles, John 3:16 is one of those verses that is in red. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

The promise of that “red letter” verse, was bought with the blood of Jesus. If you’ve never done before, ask Jesus to save you today, give you a home in heaven, and help you to follow Him from this day forward.

Shawa Thomas is Senior Pastor at Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church in Morganton.
His messages and devotionalis are available at www.shawanathomas.com
The Stairway To Heaven
By Steve Biez
Burke County

I suspect that many of the stairways that I have climbed, you have also climbed. Maybe you have been in Boston, like I have, and visited the historical site, Faneuil Hall. And you climbed the stairway of the monument tower. There are 294 steps in that stairway. I’ve never heard it called the stairway to heaven. Maybe you have been to Washington DC, like I have, and climbed the steps of the Washington Monument. That tower monument that honors the first president of America, George Washington, consists of 897 steps to the top. I’ve never heard it called the stairway to heaven. Oh, maybe you have been to New York and enjoyed a visit to the Statue Of Liberty. I have climbed the Liberty Statue stairway twice, from her feet to her crown. There are 354 steps if you are going to arrive at the crown on her head. I’ve never heard it referred to as the stairway to heaven. Or closer to home, you like me, have climbed the steps of Chimney Rock State Park. Its stairway has 401 steps if you want to see a fantastic view. But I’ve never heard it classified as the stairway to heaven.

There is a stairway that has 28 steps. A stairway, for some 1500 years, that has not been walked up, rather 7 person is going up these 28 steps on their knees. The hierarchy of the Church Of Rome, gave the title to this stairway. They called it Scala Sancti, Holy Stairs. However, if you were to ask the locals that live in Rome, they would call those 28 steps by its nickname, The Stairway To Heaven.

The white marble staircases is located in the old Lateran Palace in Rome, which for almost 1000 years, was the private residence of all the popes. Now the palace is basically an extension of St. John’s Cathedral. Why, you ask, are there 28 steps called Holy Stairs? The steps have been moved from their original sight. The stairway was not originally located in St. John’s Cathedral. Those 28 steps of white marble would have been found in the old city of Jerusalem. This stairway would have originally extended from the courtyard, rising to the porch outside the place where the residence of the members of Judas. The most famous of maybe you should say, the most notorious governor to ever live there was the man Pontius Pilate.

Thus, it was, on an early Friday morning in AD 31, on that stairway, Roman guards would have escorted Jesus of Nazareth up those 28 steps to face charges of sedition. On the top of those stairs, Pilate, using a basin of water as his prop, publicly showed his non-compliance. Pilate “washed his hands” signifying that he was clear of spilling the blood of this man Jesus.

Now you may say why the Church of Rome calls those 28 steps, Holy Stairs. You may wonder how did this stairway, make it from Jerusalem to Rome? In 316 AD, with much concern over the preservation of the sites we often hear called the Holy Land, Emperor Constantine’s mother, Helena Augusta, made a trip to Jerusalem. Her main goal was to locate and protect the important sites written about the life of Jesus. If you go to the Holy Land, you will see that there are churches built over many of these sites. This idea was established by helena. But, if the holy relics could be transported, she had those items housed to the city of Rome. Something interesting—Helena had almost a ton of dirt taken from off the traditional site of Golgotha, and transported back to Rome. That dirt would be used in the establishment of the Vatican Gardens.

The 28 step staircases would also be transported back to Rome. Supposedly the very story that Jesus would have walked up to stand before Governor Pilate. The so called Holy Stairs has been there ever since. And the Church Of Rome would proclaim this stairway as the ultimate indulgence. Pope Leo decreed that if one person to crawl up on hands and knees a love song in a hospital where a person is suffering by the stairway would be greatly reduced. And, the climber’s own sins were gone, if they could climb the steps on their knees. No wonder the locals named it, the stairway to heaven. In the year 1531, a German monk named Martin Luther, would travel to Rome, intent on climbing those 28 steps on his knees so that his sins would wash. We do not know on which of the 28 steps, Luther may have been kneeling on, when the words of the Apostle Paul, recorded in Romans 1:7, 13, exploded in his thought. THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH. Luther realized that the so called “stairway to heaven” did not wash away his sins. The indulgence of his day did not coincide with the word of God. When Luther stood up on the so called Holy Stairs, the world would never be the same again. The Protestant Reformation bailed across the world.

In the upper room, as the director and the disciples, celebrated the Passover Supper, we listen to the Lord to teach, the Church of Rome records the answer from Christ in John 14:5. “Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Jesus showed the stairway to heaven. He is the Stairs that connects earth with heaven because Jesus is the Living Way. I love the words we find in Acts 4:12 where we read: “Nor is there salvation in any other for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

There is one and only one, Stairway to Heaven. Jesus Christ is our Blessed Hope of Life eternal. Jesus Christ is one hope of having our sins forgiven. Jesus Christ is the only way, the only Stairway to Heaven. May we draw closer to Him today and every day.

Steve Biez, Pastor, Morganton Seventh day Adventist Church

Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Proverbs 30:5
This week I was proud to be able to cast a vote supporting S359, The Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act. This bill requires doctors to provide medical care to babies born alive during an attempted abortion. Allowing, breathing infants deserves the same rights as any other child, regardless of decisions that were made before birth. Thankfully the bill passed, but I still am struggling to comprehend the reason anybody could vote against a bill like this.

Even human beings, no matter their political leaning, should agree that an infant who is born alive should receive available medical care. Opponents have tried to portray this as an abortion rights issue, saying that this bill addresses a situation of concern only to a mother and her doctor. Frankly, I’m shocked that anyone would believe that deciding whether a live baby deserves medical care or should be left to die is a decision between a mother and her doctor.

Let me be very clear here, this bill has little to do with abortion. That is an important but entirely different debate. Once an infant is alive and breathing in this world, it is no longer up to the mother OR the doctor to decide if that child deserves to continue living. The only decision that should be made after birth is how to best provide medical and other appropriate care for that child.

During debate on the bill, opponents of the bill also alleged that there are no documented cases of post-abortion survivors in North Carolina. Whether that is true or not is irrelevant, there are some practices that are so horrible that we need to make it very clear where we stand before any child in our state becomes a victim. I will always stand on the side of protecting the life of a child before, during and after delivery.

On Tuesday, the bill passed the N.C. House of Representatives on a party-line vote and has been sent to Governor Roy Cooper. Hopefully, by the time you read this article, the Governor will have signed the bill into law. Sadly as the Democratic Party continues to move even further left and embrace a radical agenda, I fear that will not be the case.

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**US House of Representatives NC District 11**

Mueller Report Concluded: No Collusion

As many of you know, the Mueller report has been delivered to the Department of Justice, and we received the principle conclusions from the Special Counsel. The most important conclusion: there was NO collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia. The two-year long distraction is over.

This is a victory for many people, but most importantly, it’s a victory for the American people. Because as we’ve known all along, it was the hardworking Americans who elected President Trump—not Russians.

In the interest of transparency, we can expect Americans will be able to see more details on the report in the coming days. Attorney General Barr is working overtime to make the report available to the public and I support the President’s decision to do so. But transparency shouldn’t stop there. The public deserves to see the interviews, documents, and intelligence that “justified” this investigation in the first place. Let’s not stop at the report—let’s let Americans see the underlying documents. Let them decide for themselves whether this investigation was warranted—or whether it was a two-year long episode of political targeting, driven by FISA and DOJ executives who wanted to retain a legitimate elected President.

Jim Jordan and I also joined Fox and Friends to react to the news of no collusion.

Axios: Meadows vows to help Lindsey Graham investigate origins of Mueller probe

While the verdict of “no collusion” is critically important, here’s what is also important for Americans to know: it’s not just that there was no collusion, it’s that there never was any evidence of collusion to start with. As many of you know, several of my colleagues and I have been deeply involved in making sure we get to the bottom of how exactly the Mueller probe started. Americans deserve to know the truth.

Remember: the Russian dossier was fake, the FISA system was rashly abused, the ‘intelligence’ used by the Department of Justice and FBI was biased and inaccurate, and DOJ and FBI executives used leaks and the media to peddle the collusion conspiracy theory all along.

I’m thrilled we got to the truth, but make no mistake: this episode was reprehensible. It was a sham investigation with a $25.2 million price tag on the taxpayers. It should never happen again.

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**NC House District 118**

We have received an abundance of mail and numerous e-mails on HB53 “Second Chance for Life” and HB54 “Unborn Child Protection from Dismemberment Abortion Act”.

Rep. Pressnell is one of the primary bill sponsors of HB53. This bill directs that physicians who perform drug-induced abortions furnish patients with certain written information about the possibility of reversing the effects after the first dose of medication is administered. HB54 prohibits dismemberment abortions.

HB55—Address Direct Support Personnel Staffing Crisis. Sponsors: Dobson, Bell, Pressnell and Bull. This bill will address the staffing crisis impacting intermediate care facility group homes for individuals with intellectual disabilities. This bill is greatly needed to improve the retention rates and hiring rates for qualified direct support personnel who are the front-line of care and service delivery.

There have been numerous bills filed and heard in Education—One in particular is HB79 Academic Alignment Boards of Education and Community Colleges, this will allow school systems to align their start date to the local community college calendar, helping dual-employment high school students obtain college credit. This helps our students across the state generate college credit while they’re still in high school.

Rep. Pressnell along with the Co-Chairs are continuing their work on the Transportation budget. They are getting close to having their part finalized. In addition, talks are continuing with DMV in trying to resolve the closing of the DMV office in Madison.

**NC Senate District 46**

Sen. Warren Daniel
Warren.Daniel@ncleg.net
919-715-7823
On March 25th, U.S. District Judge William Osteen struck down our state’s law barring abortions after 20 weeks, declaring this law, in place since 2015, unconstitutional. On May 25th, sixty days after the ruling, abortions during any stage of pregnancy will again be legal in North Carolina. We are appealing his decision, which was in response to a lawsuit filed in 2016 by pro-abortion groups—Planned Parenthood, the Center for Reproductive Rights, and the ACLU. My decision, in response to Judge Osteen’s ruling, was to introduce Senate Bill 339 – Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act. This bill requires health care practitioners to provide the same care for every living baby in North Carolina, even if it was born alive despite an abortion. In addition, the bill includes the following:

- Recognizes that a child born alive despite an abortion is a legal person under the laws of North Carolina.
- Requires health care practitioners to use the same level of care for children born alive during an abortion, as they would for any other child, to preserve the life and health of that child, including transporting and admitting them to a hospital.
- Charges a health care practitioner who does not provide that care with a Class D felony, with a fine of up to $250,000.
- Requires health care practitioners or any employee of a hospital, a physician’s office, or an abortion clinic to report a health care practitioner who does not care for a child born alive and if they do not, they would be charged with a Class D felony with a fine of up to $250,000.
- Protects the mother by barring her from prosecution for not providing medical care or reporting a lack of medical care for a child born alive despite an abortion.
- Creates a civil claim for a woman whose child was born alive despite an abortion and the healthcare provider failed to provide care, and if care was not provided and it was not reported by someone required to report.
- Amends the existing murder statute to include “an intentional, overt act performed after the child is born alive.”

It is difficult toathom in my heart and mind the callous disregard for innocent human life that is present in our culture. I believe that all members of the General Assembly would agree that every newborn baby, once delivered, would be medically cared for as every other newborn. However, it was with a heavy heart that I listened to NC Senate Democrats in committee and on the floor oppose this life-saving bill. The bill passed both the Senate and House and was sent to Governor Cooper on April 16th. However, Governor Cooper vetoes the bill with following message. “Laws already protect newborn babies and this bill is unnecessary interference between doctors and their patients. This needless legislation would criminalize doctors and other healthcare providers for a practice that simply does not exist.”

Unfortunately, there are real instances of infants dying following an abortion, overtly or by neglect of care. Jill Stanak, a nurse who worked at a Chicago hospital that performed induced birth abortions, witnessed an aborted Down syndrome baby, born alive, who was thrown in a soiled utility room to die. She said, “I could not bear the thought of this suffering child dying alone, so I cradled and rocked him for the 45 minutes that he lived.” Additionally, a CDC study of infant deaths from 2003-2013 found 143 instances of live birth deaths during abortions.

It is a sad day in our state when our Governor vetoes a bill that clarifies and strengthens the punishment for not providing care to a living, breathing newborn infant. Apparently, he wants the “right to choose” to extend even past birth. As always, please share your thoughts with me on these or other issues related to state government by emailing me at ralph.hise@nclcg.net or calling me at 919-733-3460.

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May 2019 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 33
Penland School of Craft

Penland Kids Camps are Enrolling Now

By Robbi Dreyer
Mitchell County

Your child can wander into the woods with a puppet to super imaginative writing, make a traditional Appalachian folk instrument, fold an origami boat to spark a tale of magic in the sea, or learn to bake cookies and carve pottery this summer. All of this and more will be happening at Penland School of Craft’s Kids Camps, June 17-August 2. These one- and two-week long, half-day, art-based summer camps will give kids ages 3 to 18 an opportunity to create something magical this summer. Although some camps have already filled, there are openings in Dying to Dye with Plants (and Bugs!), June 17-21; Fabulous Felts and Clay Creations!, June 17-28; Appalachian Folk Arts, June 24-28; Fascinating Faces and Feet of Places, July 8-12; DIY Screenprinting, July 8-12; Insects in Action, July 15-19; Playful Pies, July 15-19; Jump for Joy! Create a Legend! Maskmaking, July 22-26; Fairy Tale Trail, July 29-August 2, and Origami Storytelling, July 29-August 2. To sign up for Kids Camp visit www.penland.org/local/kids-camp/. Space is limited, so get your registration in soon. Full scholarships are available. For additional information, contact Lisa at communityeducation@penland.org or 828-785-2359 x121.

A 2018 camper was asked, “What was your favorite thing about camp?” The answer. “Everything!”

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 metal, 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 Cultural, Natural 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 Craft.

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Peace and Forgiveness

Dr. Tracy Jessup

“When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so send I you.’” John 20:19-21

As I write this devotional, the world is continuing to watch the images of the devastating fire at the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. At the end of my junior year at Gardner-Webb University, I had the privilege of traveling to Europe with the University’s Concert Choir. My two favorite memories from that trip were visits to glasses of worship, namely the Westminster Cathedral and the Notre Dame Cathedral. The massive fire, which engulfed one of the most famous churches in the world, is a devastating loss. An editorial in The Guardian stated, “It feels as though the very heart of France and the soul of Europe have been suddenly and viciously ripped out.”

As I write this devotional, I am reminded that Holy Saturday coincides with the 10th anniversary of the Columbine High School shooting in which two students shot and killed 12 of their classmates and a teacher. Families, students, teachers, and first responders not only had to deal with the devastating loss and emotional trauma from the shooting, but also with people who have become consumed with it. On the heels of the 20th anniversary, many law enforcement officials were searching for a woman, infatuated by the Columbine attacks, who was considered to be armed and dangerous. The news promptly locked down the closure of schools in at least 10 school districts.

Today’s reading often gets overlooked in the last chapter of John’s Gospel. The first eighteen verses tell the exciting story of Mary Magdalene discovering the empty tomb, running to tell Simon Peter and presumably John, as well as her encountering two angels and eventually Jesus as he arrives at the empty tomb. Later, in that same chapter, Jesus appears to Thomas, dispelling any doubt about the resurrection by allowing Thomas to put his finger in the mark of the nails and his hand in his side (v. 27).

But in between these resurrection stories, the disciples are locked in a house continuing to fear for their lives. The reality of the resurrection has yet to emerge with full conviction among these followers of Christ. In the midst of their fear and uncertainty, he resurrected Jesus comes, bringing peace. “Peace be with you.” It is the familiar Hebrew word of greeting – Shalom. While it does mean peace, it means much more than simply the absence of stress or fear. Embedded in Shalom is the idea of completeness, wholeness, harmony, and fulfillment. And this is Jesus’ first word in his small band of followers after his resurrection. George Beasley-Murray writes, “Thus his Shalom! On Easter evening is the complement of his ‘It is Finished!’ on the cross, for the peace of reconciliation and life from God is now imparted.” (John, Word Biblical Commentary, p. 331)

Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, peace is in all its fullness is now a realizable blessing. Jesus not only brings peace and forgiveness, but he commissions us to be ambassadors of that same peace and forgiveness. “As the Father has sent me, I send you.” John 20:21

Prayer: Lord, as we live in the light of the crucified and risen Christ, help us be bearers of your peace in a troubled world.

Dr. Tracy Jessup serves as vice president for Christian Life and Service and senior minister at the University. He is a graduate of Gardner-Webb with a B.A. in Music and earned his M.Div. degree at Sanford University’s Beacon 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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May 2019 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 34
Death of Convenience

By Alan Griffin

Since 1980 there have been two billion legal and illegal abortions worldwide, and 97% of abortions are a death of convenience. Who is the victim? Who suffers? What is the cause? The baby is dead and buried, and its spirit has returned to God. The mother is the one who has to live with her decision, and the consequences have very far-reaching implications. Most mothers experience severe anxiety issues, and some 70% turn to drugs and alcohol to escape their pain. Their complaints to counselors include horrible nightmares involving babies, fear of sexual relationships, and feelings of being inadequate. All the mothers reported it was the most horrible experience in their life and they wish they would have looked at other options more seriously.

There is a website called the aborton-assembly where you can read the stories of mothers and their experiences, and get help. Where is the man in all of this? In most cases nowhere to be found. This is why it is so important to plan your life in advance. Set a schedule of goals in such a way that when you have accomplished one goal you have your next goal already in front of you. Just letting things happen in storybooks but in reality it can be a lifelong nightmare. We want to be with someone who is right for us, and we don't want to stray away from a possible future with someone who cares about us, but we have to create standards for those we love so that if they really care about us they will provide us with a secure future.

The most valuable thing we own is our sexuality, and/or our virginity. So we have a progression of events that develops into a romance that will last a lifetime.

A man will tell you anything necessary to have sex with you. One of my good friends told me one time, “I knew what he was telling me was a lie, but I wanted to believe it so much I had sex with him.” She had sex three times and became pregnant. Remember the day she called me and told me she had scheduled an appointment to have an abortion. It was June 24, 2015, and the appointment was the next day. I was to have heart surgery. I asked her over and over again and she would not respond so it was a tremendous heartbreak experience to go into surgery not knowing the outcome of that little boy. It was two days after my surgery when she texted me and told me she decided to keep him. I am here to tell you today that he is one of the most wonderful kids I have ever had the opportunity to raise our with. He is very kind, and if he also has a smile on him that is absolutely infectious. He wears a little red baseball hat at an angle on his head just like the old timers wore theirs, and he is to be around.

A progression of events is where we set moral standards to follow so we can avoid the pitfalls of life. We seek our companionship through groups at church. We socialize and interact with others so we can find someone we have things in common with, but sex is not how we develop a relationship. Before we commit the most precious thing in our life we need security. It begins with true love where we grow to know each other’s personality in confidence. Marriage is very important because it requires a commitment to each other. It also commits the families so they can become involved, and then we need to involve our pastor so we can go through marriage counseling. This way you have an understanding of how your relationship is going to work. Sex is a very big step in life because it will involve all the people above plus the possibility of a little bundle of joy. This is why we develop our life through a progression of planned events. It is very important that we keep the order in perspective.

If you have suffered loss I want you to know you have someone you can go to in prayer that has suffered in every aspect of humanity that mankind can throw at him. When you are sad, He is sad, when you cry, He cries, and when you are consumed with despair, He is there beside you. He paid the price for our mistakes so that there is nothing on earth or in heaven that can prevent us from being forgiven. I don’t care what anyone has done in the past, when they turn to Jesus Christ it is all put behind them. The sacrifice that Jesus paid for all our sins like a blanket so when we stand before God the Father we are shine in every way just as Jesus is shine. We don’t have to suffer mentally anymore. We don’t have to carry the blame because He carries it for us. We can move on with our lives and this time try to get things right.

It is normal to grieve a lost child regardless of the consequences. It tears a hole in our heart that time may not ever be able to repair. It creates an emptiness inside of us that causes a lot of pain. I can only express to you my own personal experiences, and when I surrendered my life to Christ the Holy Spirit of God came into my mind and filled the void of my despair. Did it happen overnight? No. It is a daily walk through life where we grow in confidence in our Savior. Through Bible study and prayer we are led through the valley of the shadow of death until we climb to the mountaintop where the Son shines into our life with love, hope, and forgiveness. God has forgiven us so we are able to forgive ourselves.

Dear Heavenly Father,

I accept Jesus Christ as my sin-bearer and I trust God to forgive my sins because Jesus Christ died in my place, I accept Him as my risen Savior who ever lives to make intercession for me, and I trust Him to keep me from day to day. I accept Him as my Lord and King to whom I surrender the absolute control of my thoughts and my life. In Jesus Christ’s name I pray. Amen.

I am here if you need to talk. You can reach me at alam@kidnchrist.com.

Prayer by R. A. Torrey

Alan Griffin started the kidnchristministries in November 2007. He has worked with inner city kids for 17 years. He found a need for specialized biblical literature that would reach people of all ages and has been writing since 2001. The ministry has expanded their websites to reach around the world. Kidnchrist.com, millennialchristian.com, townchrist.com, saviorschrist.com, pictureverse.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 alam@kidnchrist.com.
The Orchard at Altapass opens May 3 and invites you to take a journey back to simpler times and discover what makes the red barn on the Blue Ridge Parkway, mile marker 318.3, a destination. You start with the live traditional mountain music that is hard to beat. Kick up your heels and take to the dance floor. Can’t dance? No problem. Along with the music, free dance lessons are offered every weekend. Jump on a layzrider and listen to tales of the Revolutionary War and Mountaineers as they tracked through the Orchard. Walk all or part of the over six miles of trails; bird watch from the deck; observe Monarch butterfly growth. (Pick up some rainfall seeds—a Monarch favorite.) Enjoy a burger or veggie wrap from the Apple Core Grill opening in June. Then try some ice-melting homemade fudge or caramel-dipped apples for dessert.

Take a trail around the General Store, with a surprise on every shelf—from jams and jellies to honey and syrup, jams to toys to books, clothing and accessories to accessorizing your pet. And from start to finish, don’t forget the views that breathtakingly surround the Orchard, and apples, apples, apples beginning late June. Pick your own (purchased) or buy at the store. Heirlooms in all colors and varieties.

This year, in addition to all the free music during the week, the Orchard will host four evening performances beginning in June with Terry Haunnon’s Tribute to Johnny Cash and including a special Gospel and Bluegrass concert in August. There will also be two heritage plays and picnics on Memorial Day, Independence Day with all day food and entertainment. And mark your calendars for the fabulous furry fashion show, Doga on the Runway, on August 17.

Events continue on Saturday with fun experiences for children that begin after school lets out for summer; collaborative school programs, once a month Heritage Thursday programs with presentations by local historians, musicians, and storytellers, dance demonstrations/lessons. And make your calendars for the 20th anniversary of the Orchard in the fall.

2019 marks the 25th anniversary of the Orchard. For the past quarter century, Altapass Orchard’s co-founder, Bill Carson, with his wife Judy, have focused on saving the good stuff—preserving the area’s history and culture through entertainment and educational activities for all. The Orchard has grown with the apple trees—reaping and yielding more and more goodness. We invite you to come celebrate the 2019 anniversary with Bill, who is still out flattening and telling stories every weekend.

The Altapass Orchard is open in May, Friday-Sunday and June through October, Wednesday-Sunday, from 10 AM to 5 PM. It’s not a restful apple in the bunch. Come prepared to enjoy the people, music, art, and natural beauty of the Blue Ridge mountains in North Carolina. Call 828-765-9531 or visit www.altapassorchard.org.

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Kate Goff is the Programs Coordinator for the Toe River Arts Council.
Questions
By Dave Ramsey

Dear Dave,
I've heard you tell people to avoid debt consolidation companies. Why do you think debt consolidation is such a bad thing? Tom

Dear Tom,
The main reason is that debt consolidation makes you feel like you did something to really change your financial world when you didn't. That's part of the catch. Believe it or not, I hear people all the time say things like, "I took out a loan, and paid off all my debt!" No, you didn't. All you did was move your debt around. It's still there.

In cases like this, the biggest issue remains because you didn't do anything to address the real problems—you and your behavior. When you have debt, the number of payments you have left isn't the problem. The problem isn't interest rates, either. The problem is the person you look at in the mirror every day.

Until you get mad enough about your financial situation and the real reasons for it—until you fix you and your behavior—you'll never make any progress toward winning with money!—Dave

Dear Dave,

My husband and I are following your plan, and we're in the middle of saving up our emergency fund. When do you recommend buying a new car in the process? Do we have to wait until we've finished all the Baby Steps? Alanna

Dear Alanna,
I never advise buying a brand new car, unless you have a net worth of at least $1 million. At that point, you've got enough assets that you won't get rocked by the ridiculous depreciation that comes with buying a new vehicle.

Now, you don't have to drive a beater until you pay off your house or anything like that. I advise people to drive the minimum they can in terms of a car until they complete my first three steps. Baby Step 1 is a beginner emergency fund of $1,000. Baby Step 2 is paying off all debt except for your home. Baby Step 3 is fully funding your emergency fund with three to six months of expenses.

After you've accomplished these first three steps, then you can move up to a nicer car. Notice that I didn't say move up to a new car. I want you to save up cash, and get a really nice used car. That's what the typical millionaire does, and I want you to model your financial behavior after people who are in the position you want to be in some day!—Dave

Dear Dave,

I opened a credit card account with a boyfriend several months ago in both of our names. We're no longer dating, and I was wondering if I can get my name off the account.

Melody

Dear Melody,
Yes, you can. Call the credit card company right now, and tell them to take your name off the account immediately.

Find out if there's a balance on the card. If there is, and it was charged up while your name was on the account, you'll still be liable for that amount. They won't release you from responsibility for those purchases, but you can get off the hook for any future charges.

Then, send them a certified letter-return receipt requested—stating that you are no longer liable for additional charges on the card going forward. It wouldn't be a bad idea to call them again in a few days to make sure they got the letter, too.

You're learning a hard lesson here, Melody. You should never open any kind of joint account with someone when you're not married. And stop using credit cards!—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 100 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Find Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.

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The Love and Sacrifice of Two Mom’s

By Pastor Steve Williams
Mitchell County

Let me share with you about a mother’s love. I heard this story many years ago at a pastor conference in Winston Salem, NC by Pastor Mark Core. There was a mother, one time, who always wore sweaters and long sleeves. At a young age her daughter never thought anything about it. It was just natural to see her mother wearing gloves and long sleeves. But as she grew older she became embarrassed to go out with her mother because she was different. It came time for her to graduate from school and she went to her mother and told her that she didn’t want to wear those gloves and her graduation because they looked silly and that it would embarrass her if she did. The mother went away very upset with what she had been told. Well, the father had overheard their discussion and asked her to come and sit down with him because he wanted to talk with her. He said you very much and did not want her to feel bad about it. When she got home she showed the gloves and long sleeves because when you were a little baby our old house caught on fire and you were upstairs asleep, and no one was there but your mother. Your mother ran upstairs to get you and bring you down, but by the time she started down the stairs with you the house was engulfed with flames because it was so old. She wrapped a blanket around you and went down the stairs. When she got out of the house a neighbor was there and took you, because your mother’s arms & hands were burned terribly bad. They took you to the hospital and did all they could to help her, but it still left her arms & hands looking very bad. She never told you about this because she loves you and does not want you to feel bad about it. She went to her mother and told her how sorry she was for what she had said and the way she had acted. Graduation day came and there set mom and dad and when they called out her name she walked across the stage and received her diploma wearing a pair of gloves. Displaying her love and honor to her mom who sacrificially gave of herself to save her life.

I am also thankful for my wife, Beverly, and the many sacrifices she has made as a mother to our children, and also being the best pastor’s wife that a pastor could ever have. When I received my call from God to be a pastor, my wife was willing and ready to take on the role. Now it took on a lot of different things for her, life moving away from her family and hometown, where she had lived all of her life and leaving behind friends and things that were so familiar to her. She also faced with strong winds from a 4 bedroom house to a 2 bedroom 1 bath mobile home she was at College. We left behind a daughter who was a senior in Pinecrest High School in Monroe, NC. In the years to come her parents became sick and even died and it made it very hard for her to be there with them, the way she wanted to be. I have seen her do without so much, so her children could have things they wanted. She who experienced many heart breaking things in her life her first husband and brothers were killed in a truck accident when she was only 20 years old and she was left with a small baby. Then with our children she has Diverse Drug Addiction, Rehab’s and even Prison come into their lives, and then our son starting his life over in Nashville, Tenn. Then on top of all of that, me being a pastor and having to be gone so much of the time through a lot of these things, I know it even made it harder for her. But she has hung on to the hand of God and remained faithful through it all. Thank you God for my Godly wife.

Words of Wisdom:

• To be a good father and mother requires that the parents define many of their own needs and desires in favor of the needs of their children. As a consequence of this sacrifice, conscious parents develop a nobility of character and learn to put aside the selfish desires of their Sovereign. James E. Toward

• I stand here today - in the shadow of my parents’ and grandparents’ accomplishments - because of their willingness to sacrifice and look to my future. N/A

Things I have learned about buying my wife on Mother’s Day:

• Avoid all things useless
• Don’t buy Jewelry. The jewelry your wife wants, you can afford, and the jewelry you can afford she doesn’t want
• Don’t buy clothing that involves size. You have a one in 7000 chance of getting it right.
• Don’t buy anything with a plug in that is a NO. NO.
• Never buy a set of scales.

Something To Make You Smile:

I heard about a little boy sitting on his front steps with his face craddled in his hands, looking so sad. His dad came home then asked him what was wrong. The little boy looked up & said, "Well, just between us, Dad, I'm having trouble getting along with my wife, too!"

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 35 years. They have two sons and three grandchildren.

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

Glenwood Baptist Church

Why We Should Simply Show Up

By Pastor Dennis Love
McDowell County

Galatians 6:2

The Bible says in Galatians 6:2, “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” I want to continue to share with you some things we can say and do when we are reaching out to others who are going through a time of grief.

I think if we wanted to nail down what we should do to really minister to a grieving person we could sum it up in two words—“SHOW UP!” Now this really sounds simple, but the reality is we don’t follow up with it very well. Some of the reasons are as follows:

1. We offered to help, we even told them to call us if they needed anything, but they haven’t called, so we stay home.

2. We figure they have closer friends who are taking care of them, and they probably wouldn’t want us around since we are not family, so we stay home.

3. We figure they want their privacy, so we stay home.

4. We’re afraid we might say or do something wrong, so we stay home.

Let’s look at these reasons and then we will look at some really great ways of just showing up. Look at number one. What grieving people remember more than anything else is those who show up and those who do not show up! Here’s a few ideas that grieving people shared how their friends showed up in incredible ways:

• The father of David’s fellow school board members owned a car wash. He washed and vacuumed my family’s cars to use in the funeral procession.

• I had a friend who dropped off his kids with a babysitter each Tuesday morning and then came over to our house just to be here to help me in any way I needed. She helped me cook, paint the trim around my house, and many other things. But most importantly, she was there to love and care for me. She did this for months and months after our daughter passed.

Things you can do for the person who is grieving once you show up:

Help pack (if it’s an out of town funeral), Wash and vacuum the car, Watch the dog, Clean the house, Offer to make calls, Make or take the lunch, Wash and press clothes, Take their kids out, Stock the freezer. Buy groceries

Look at number two. It means a great deal to those who are grieving for people who are NOT close to them to simply show up and enter into their grief with them. Here’s what a grieving person said. A woman I had never met brought us dinner when she heard about our grief. And while she stood in my kitchen, she cried. No one else from church who knew us had grieved so well with me.

Look at number three. Here’s what grieving people with others would understand. They wish people would understand that grief is incredibly lonely. (Galatians 6:2) Just keep showing up in various ways and the grieving person will never forget it.

Look at number four. Anyone you are interacting with people, you are at risk of saying or doing something wrong. But the reward is worth the risk. Don’t let fear keep you from entering into their grief. So, there’s really no excuse or reason for us not showing up!

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Still Cruisin’ Workshop
By Carol Layton

North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) has a new workshop that helps older adults remain safe drivers while aging. The Still Cruisin’ workshop also shares information about new ID requirements in North Carolina. NCBAM regional directors across the state are available to present the workshop at your church, senior center, conference, or retreat.

The Still Cruisin’ workshop covers the advantages of a driver’s assessment, when to seek a driver’s assessment, assistive equipment available for drivers and passengers, and practice questions to prepare for driving tests. The history and purposes of the new REAL ID and how to obtain the gold star on your license will also be covered.

NCBAM offers more than 40 workshops that cover issues relevant to older adults. Call 877.506.2225 for more information or to be put in touch with the NCBAM regional director in your area.

Carla Layton is the Director of Communications and Administration for NCBAM at Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina

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Feathers and Petals
Reminders of God’s Care
By Ken and Jan Menop
Avery County

Fluttering wings call my attention to the activity at our bird feeder. Papa and Mama birds are eagerly preparing for their offspring.

The beauty of the cardinals, blue jays, doves, red-winged blackbirds, red-headed woodpeckers, and even some thrash bring delight and life to our backyard. They are examples of hardiness without a worry or care.

Do you think they knew the verse in Matthew 6:26, NKJV that uses them as an example for us not to worry?

“Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them.”

Tossing their God-given instincts, they take care of the moment not worrying about provision for the next season of baby birds.

With the arrival of springtime, trees bud, delicate flower petals open, and bright new shoots of green grass take over winter’s dry brown. I’m always eager to watch the flowers’ springtime fashion show.

Bright daffodils, tulips, lilies, roses and more varieties than can be mentioned vie for our attention as they display colors, textures and scents that dazzle.

There’s no surging around wondering how they may be more fashionable than the year before.

Do you think they knew the verse in Matthew 6:28 that highlights them as a model of humble, uncorced beauty?

“Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.”

That’s quite a comparison considering the riches and adornments at Solomon’s fingertips. He could choose any robe, crown, sandals, jewels — you name it — to wear anyone. Yet, Jesus chose to compare him to the simple perfection of a flower of the field.

Flowers being beauty and color into our world just by being.

Ah! Maybe that’s the secret. They know how to be; while we seem to always be doing... rushing here and there and trying to please everyone.

Perhaps it’s time for us to embrace the rest of those verses (31a, 32b, and 13).

Therefore, do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’... For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Does that mean not to be responsible? Of course not. But it does mean to exchange worry for trust.

Be like feathers and petals. Trust in God’s care. Selah

BURSTING FORTH

Spring has sprung!
BURSTING FORTH in glorious blooms and
punctuating the landscape with color and texture,
life is awakened.

Therefore, do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’... For your heavenly Father knows that you need all
these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all
these things shall be added to you.”

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And find us on Facebook

Ken and Jan Menop

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What Does An Ordinary Disciple Of Jesus Do?
By Zac Lyons

Recently, I’ve wrestled with a rather simple, though critically important, question for believers. What is the primary task of an ordinary disciple of Jesus?

We remember where we used to be before Christ, in His mercy, sought us out, rescued us and transfigured us from the kingdom of darkness into His glorious kingdom of light. Although, why does Jesus leave us here as sojourners in the world, rather than immediately taking us to be with Him on the day of our salvation? Simply put, He has work for us to do.

Did Jesus save us by the power of the gospel from our own sin and rebellion? Yes. Did He save us unto the Father? Yes. Did He save us into His community of faith — the church? Yes. Although, some of these reasons for salvation lend themselves to be the purpose for which He has us here in the world. Jesus also saved us to see His glory extended to all nations. This is the work He has for us to do, the very work He is doing, to see many from every nation, people, tribe and tongue represented around His throne. The two critical components of this work are when ordinary disciples of Jesus glorify God by loving our neighbors and by making disciples.

Neighbor-love to the glory of God

A teacher of the law once asked Jesus what He considered to be the greatest commandment. Jesus answered Him saying that the greatest commandment was the love of God and the love of others (Matt. 22:34-40). In His response, Jesus established the foundational principle that His disciples must have toward God and others. The primary motive for all we do must always be love — love of God and love for others.

He calls us to love people genuinely and sacrificially, engaging with them so as to wholly care for them (physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually). Neighbor-love must never be a means to an end but as a particular end by itself. Ultimately, our neighbor-love is incomplete if we provide meaningful care to people but never proclaim the gospel to those who will die and spend an eternity in hell.

Ordinary disciples of Jesus glorify God by loving our neighbors and making disciples.

Disciple-making to the glory of God

Jesus not only calls us to love God and others, but to pursue in love those who are far off and in need of being reconciled to Him through the gospel. In the same way He was sent by the Father to seek and save the lost, He sent His disciples to share the gospel and make disciples throughout the whole world.

Every disciple is sent by Christ to enter into the lives of lost people wherever they may be found, to evangelize and disciple them in community with other believers to love God, love others and make more disciples.

Since this missional work of disciple-making involves the spiritual transfer of a person from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, any such endeavors must be sustained and sustained in fasting and prayer. To avoid dishonourable relationships with lost people, we must share the story of our own redemption through the love of Christ to the gospel. While a conversation with an unbeliever about the gospel does not necessitate a long-standing relationship, it must be predicated by a loving encounter.

When we enter into the lives of lost people and authentically communicate the gospel with them, we cannot stop there. What if they express an interest in knowing more? What if they want to repent and place their faith in Christ? When a person wants to know more or give their life to Jesus, we must disciple them in the love of God and others and to know and obey all Jesus taught His disciples.

Where do we go from here?

Here are a few helpful questions every ordinary disciple might consider to begin with loving others and making disciples. These questions are best used in the context of Christian community:

1. Who do you know who is far from God where you live, work, shop, play or among your family? Where are the people in your neighborhood, city or town who are far from God?
2. How can we help one another to love and share with the people we know who are far from God?
3. How could you invite other believers to be with you when you spend time with your unbelieving friends?
4. What needs to change about us as Christians gather together to help one another create patterns of neighbor-love and disciple-making in our lives?

Zac Lyons, Bis Great Commission Partnerships / Baptist State Convention of North Carolina

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Philippians 4:13

SafePlace

Why Do We Need SafePlace?
By Tracy Black
Mitchell County

It was early November and there was a distinct chill in the air when she walked into my office. She looked to be about 18 years old with disheveled hair, soiled clothes, and a fair odor of dirt and perspiration. I asked her how we could help her, and she replied that she was cold and hungry. One of the other advocates fixed her some warm soup, got her a drink and I turned up the heat. I sat with her as she practically inhaled the food. When she finished eating she began to talk.

Until three weeks earlier Grace had been living with her mother. Her mother’s boyfriend had been beating her regularly until that fateful day when he raped her. Grace decided that anywhere was better than being there, so she packed up and moved into a tent in the woods. There she stayed until someone at a convenience store told her to come by and see if SafePlace could help her. We took Grace into shelter that day and helped her, the best we could, to find the resources to stand on her own.

There are hundreds of people like Grace right here in our community. There are 70 year old women who have suffered physical abuse for over 50 years, and little 13 year old girls who have been molested by their fathers for as long as they can remember who need loving support and a safe place to go in order to escape the pain.

On average, Mitchell County SafePlace serves over 750 women, men and children each year. We provide emergency shelter, food, support group meetings, court advocacy, case management, medical accompaniment, transportation assistance and assistance in finding housing. Through our thrift store, SafePlace Thrift and the Touch of Class, we are able to provide clothing, replace medications they had to leave behind when they escaped their abusers and everything they need to start a new home. Along with meeting the physical needs, SafePlace strives to meet the emotional needs too. There is an advocate on site at the shelter to talk and dry the tears of those who are in shelter. We also operate a 24 hour hotline answered by trained volunteers to be a lifeline for those who need it.

We are also tackling the root causes of domestic violence and sexual assault. Through our Love—Respect classes in the middle and high schools we are teaching girls and boys alike what a healthy relationship looks like. We provide resources and referrals, mentorship and information, all presented in a fun and entertaining way. Our Ali’s Pals program is presented to pre-school children. Using a variety of puppets and funny voices, we teach them the 4 and 5 year olds how to set personal boundaries and settle problems in a healthy way. Each week our staff presents a new lesson and the classroom teachers integrate these lessons into the regular curricula, reinforcing these concepts.

No one deserves to be treated like Grace and everyone deserves to have a safe home where they don’t have to be afraid.

THIS IS WHY WE NEED SAFEPLACE!

Tracy Black is the Associate Director for Mitchell County SafePlace. She can be reached at 229-765-4013 or tracyblack@bellsouth.net.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
Matthew 5:9

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The Fund for Mitchell County

Awards Grants Totaling $25,000.

By Lindsey Beam,
Communications Director.

Two grants totaling $15,000 were awarded to Mitchell County nonprofits by The Fund for Mitchell County. The Fund was established in 1999 by local residents to provide permanent charitable endowment to meet local needs. Gifts are added to the Fund’s principal to be preserved and invested, while grants from the Fund support nonprofits in Mitchell County. Since 1999, The Fund for Mitchell County, in partnership with CFNWC, has awarded 88 grants totaling more than $720,000.

The 2019 grants include:

- Appalachian Therapeutic Riding Center was awarded $1,000 for road improvements to provide safe access for school buses.
- Blue Ridge Partnership for Children was awarded $3,000 to purchase supplies, food, and materials for its Child & Family event.
- Camp Spring Creek Outreach was awarded $2,500 for a study that will evaluate small-group Orienteering sessions for 18 kindergartners.
- Maryland Community College Foundation was awarded $3,200 for an adult emergency needs fund.
- Mitchell County Animal Rescue was awarded $1,000 for a spay and neuter program for kittens and cats.
- Mitchell County Department of Cooperative Extension was awarded $2,500 to support its summer youth program.
- Partners Aligning Toward Health was awarded $1,500 for a summer tennis camp for youth.
- Pisgah Legal Services was awarded $5,000 to provide free civil legal assistance and advocacy to low-income residents.
- Special Olympics Mitchell County was awarded $2,500 for an its annual program at Appalachian Therapeutic Riding Center.
- WATT Community Action was awarded $2,750 to provide garden vouchers to low-income families.

"These grant recipients demonstrate the impact of our funding cycle," said Advisory Board Chair Nick Joerling. "Through the support of friends and neighbors, we are able to fund a wide variety of nonprofits and projects and continue to meet changing needs over time. We are very grateful to everyone who has helped build a permanent charitable resource for Mitchell County. We welcome additional gifts to the Fund that will enable us to support even more local programs with local dollars."

To make a tax-deductible contribution to The Fund for Mitchell County, donate online at www.FundForMitchellCounty.org or by mail to: The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina, P.O. Box 1101, Spruce Pine, NC 28777-1101, name line The Fund for Mitchell County. Contributions of any size are welcome.

The local volunteer Advisory Board includes: Nick Joerling (Chair), Beverly Arcury (Vice Chair), Becky Plummer (Secretary), Jamie DeVos, Sammie Ellis, Delphine Lamberton, Sue Ledford, Brandon Roberts and Brenda Spaulding.

The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina (CFNWC) works with families, businesses and nonprofits to strengthen communities through the creation of charitable funds and strategic grantmaking. A permanent charitable resource, the Foundation manages over $1,100 funds and has facilitated more than $234 million in philanthropy since its founding in 1990. Learn more at www.cfnwc.org.

For more information about The Fund for Mitchell County, contact Advisory Board Chair Nick Joerling at nickjoerling@gmail.com or 828-765-5392.

Lindsey Beam is the communications director for the Fund for Mitchell County.
Sharing Your Faith – with Confidence!
By Rev. John B. Sorensen

One of the primary reasons Christians don’t share their faith is fear. Some don’t know where to start. Others are afraid of facing difficult questions or simply rejection. We’ve all been there, and unfortunately, many believers never move beyond that fear.

The problem is, Satan knows this and often uses fear to keep us from sharing our faith. But let me encourage you to take that step in faith. Ask God to give you courage. Pray that He will open a door for you to share His love with another person. God loves to prepare people’s hearts to hear the Good News, and He is waiting for people willing to step out in faith and speak for Him.

Lin is just one example. After learning to share her faith, Lin admitted that she was still scared. “Every time I share the Gospel, I am afraid of being mocked, or judged, or ridiculed. But a pastor once knew said, ‘The fear of moving forward is often obliterated by moving forward. Do it scared.’”

Be yourself. Keep the conversation friendly. Ask questions about people’s spiritual lives and what gives them the most meaning. Take time to listen and understand where they are struggling. Share your story, how you came to know Jesus, and what difference it has made in your life. People love stories, and your story is interesting because it is unique.

Don’t push. When you speak to someone who is not ready to speak about spiritual matters, simply change the subject. Be genuinely sensitive to their needs, and show concern. God will open the door again in His time. Be patient. Wait on Him to lead, but continue to be available.

Address questions. Difficult questions may come up, but we don’t need to fear them. Answer as quickly as possible, then return the focus to the Gospel. If you don’t know an answer, be honest, but let them know you will find out. Remember to always return with an answer if you promise to do so.

Ready to take the next step. As we step out and share our faith, people will respond. Some will walk away, but others will be ready to take the next step.

Keep it simple. The Gospel is not complicated. Explain that Jesus died on the cross and rose again so that we could spend eternity with Him in Heaven. All we need to do is place our trust in Him alone.

God uses ordinary people like you and me to point others to Christ. Opportunities to share our faith are all around us. With a few simple tools, we can speak the Gospel with confidence and develop a passion for those who do not know Him. Keep in mind that fear won’t vanish immediately. It takes time and practice, but be patient. Keep praying. And in the meantime, do it scared.

Rev. John B. Sorensen, D.D. is the President/CEO of Evangelism Explosion International, headquartered in Arden, NC. 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.

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Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. Psalms 55:22
Mitchell County 4-H

Teen Retreat
Mitchell County

Mitchell County 4-H we had a wonderful time this year’s West District Teen Retreat. Teens in attendance from Mitchell County included the current west district president Lake Silver, Claudia Chander, Jessy-Kate Glenn, Emily Jordan, Jesse Silver, and Josh Silver. Teen retreat was held at the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain, NC on March 10th - 11th. Teens enjoyed various workshops that provided learning and leadership activities. These included Public Speaking, 4-H Livestock Opportunities, Coding with NC A&T Innovation Station, Ambassador Marketing, Hiking and Backpacking, and Intro to the Cherokee Language just to name a few.

Each teen also participated in this year’s service project. Teens weaved paper, heart baskets and put them inside for veterans as part of the project. Everyone enjoyed making the baskets knowing that their efforts made a difference to the individual receiving their gift.

Teens also enjoyed social activities at teen retreat. During the recreation time teens could choose activities such as playing instruments and singing, or disc golf and an interactive dance class. Everyone had a lot of laughs and enjoyed the time they got to spend with new and old friends.

Teens took part in voting as a delegation for the 2019-2020 officers team, and learning how the election process works. Lake Silver represented Mitchell County 4-H well as the 2018-2019 West District President and 4-H’ers can’t wait to see what the future holds for the West District.

Mitchell County 4-H would like to give a special thank you to Tri-County Builders Supply, Inc. for sponsoring the teens that attended this year’s retreat.

With their support Mitchell County 4-H teens gained an experience of a lifetime and are excited to start new projects and implement new ideas in their county 4-H program. Thank you!

Buck Stove is passionate about building quality products here in the Western North Carolina Mountains. Maybe you know us by our old wood stove, or Buck Stove is new to you. No matter what time of the year, we welcome you to build memories around Buck Stove.

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Freedom Teacher Meghan Welty Named Burke’s Teacher of the Year

By Cheryl Shaffer
Burke County

Meghan Welty, an exceptional children teacher at Freedom High School, has been named the Burke County Public Schools 2019 teacher of the year. Welty is in her seventh year of teaching and her fourth year at Freedom High School.

Welty started her teaching career at North Liberty School, where she also did in internships while in college. Welty, who originally wanted to be an occupational therapist, said her internship at North Liberty drew her into teaching. She said, “I have always possessed an unwavering passion for teaching...”

Weltys' dedication is evident in everything she does. “So that goals that were determined to be unreachable, suddenly become achievable.”

One of Weltys' recent accomplishments is a life skills apartment set up for her students to experience life on their own. It includes a functioning kitchen, living room and bedroom. Students practice cooking, dusting, making the bed, sorting laundry and other skills needed for independence. She has received numerous grants for this and other projects for her classroom.

At Freedom, Welty co-chairs the Exceptional Children Department and is on the leadership team and school improvement team. Her peers voted her teacher of the year in 2017. Welty is the second teacher in a row from Freedom to be named the district's teacher of the year, following Amy Howells as last year's teacher of the year for Burke County Public Schools.

Weltys' husband, Troy, is a 4-year-old daughter, Karaghen. The family also has two dogs, Cooper and Boone. Outside of school Welty enjoys spending time with family, friends and worshipping at church and across the world on Saturdays.

Weltys' family also has two dogs, Cooper and Boone. Outside of school Welty enjoys spending time with family, friends and worshipping at church and across the world on Saturdays.

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

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. (Mark 11:24)
Kid's Corner

The Great Emperors
By Christy Lowman
Burke County

Would you like to visit a continent where no one lives full time? A place that is a cold desert that has blizzard snowstorms instead of sandstorms? Winds that blow up to 200 mph and only stop when the continent is covered in ice. These are not towns or cities here. The coldest temperature recorded was -129 F, and that was in the inland. Have you figured out what continent I am talking about yet? Antarctica! It is the southern continent and at the South Pole Antarctica is home to the beautiful Emperor Penguins. This is the only place on earth where you can find them.

This penguin is known as the “Great Penguin” and is the largest penguin in the world. It grows to a maximum of 4 feet tall and can weigh up to 84 lbs. There are an approximately 195,000 Emperor Penguins alive and they can live up to 20 years old in the wild. Their main predators are Leopard seals, killer whales, and fur seals.

The Emperor Penguins are a flightless bird that can swim in the frigid water that surrounds the continent. They can dive to 1000 feet and can stay underwater for a maximum of 22 minutes without breathing. Here is where they find their meals of fish and squid. This penguin could not survive without their layers of waterproof feathers that keep them dry and warm, and their 1.2 inches of body fat that keep their body temperature up. They do have a molting period (where they lose their old feathers and grow new ones) that lasts 15 days. During this time, they cannot swim in the ice-cold ocean.

The Emperor Penguins do not lay their eggs in a nest like most birds do. Instead the daddy penguin balances their single egg on his feet for the incubation period of 65 days (until the chick hatches) to keep it protected and warm. The trickiest part of keeping the egg safe is when the momma penguin transfers the egg from one papa’s feet to the next. Dad has been known to lose the egg. If that were to happen the egg could die. Daddy duck is a scientist with his own purpose to keep the egg warm on their feet. Sometimes when the weather gets so extreme the ducks will huddle together to stay warm. The Daddy penguins stand out in the blizzard like conditions, below zero temperatures, and blinding winds without eating anything during winter to protect and keep their unborn baby safe. They are able to keep the egg 100 degrees while the temperatures around them are in well below zero. During this time, the ducks live only off their body fat burning as much as 45% of their total body weight. That would be like if you weighed 100 lbs. when you went on a diet and ate the egg on your feet, by the time the baby hatched you would weigh only 55 lbs.

When the momma penguins return, she will regurgitate food from her belly to feed the newly hatched chick. If for some reason the momma doesn’t return on time, the daddy will release a blood liquid that will feed the chick until the mom comes home. After the mother returns, she will take care of the chick for a time while the dad goes out to sea to keep them both safe. The chick will sit on top of one of the parent’s feet until it is strong enough to be able to handle the cold of Antarctica. The parents will then take turns, walking 6 times a day to find food for the chicks to eat. In December, when the weather warms up a day or two, the ice will melt, causing the waters to come closer to their homes where the babies will start feeding themselves. Eggs and chicks have only a 10 percent survival rate but isn’t amazing that their parents are willing to go through such extreme conditions, especially the dams, in order to help their baby. It is aavian!”

New Hope of McDowell

No Excuse for Abuse 5K Run
By Decca Triaks
Yancey County

New Hope of McDowell is a local non profit which provides aid to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. We have provided services to victims and survivors since 1983, originally as Family Services of McDowell. Our services include, but are not limited to, emergency shelter, assistance with Domicile Violence Protective Orders (restraining orders), court advocacy, case management, a 24-hour crisis line, support groups, clothing vouchers, legal referrals, community education, and more! Our services are vital to the community that we serve, because they provide an opportunity for victims to escape the dangerous situations they are in. They also promote awareness and education that can help reduce violence in families and relationships within our community. We have seen decreasing grant funds and individual donations that normally support our local emergency shelter, in the past few years. We need your help with fundraising, this year, as we host what is generally our most successful fundraiser, the 9th annual No Excuse for Abuse 5K run/walk. The success of this event depends largely upon support from community members like you!

The No Excuse for Abuse 5K run/walk will be held on Saturday, May 11th, 2019, beginning on the courthouse lawn at 9:00 a.m. Early registration begins at 7:45 a.m. Entry fees for the race are $25, and includes timing, a t-shirt, and a race bag for the first 100 runners. There will also be prizes for each different age group, and runners overall. Light refreshments is available after the race. We hope to see you there!

Anyone with questions should call 632-8581.

Decca Triaks is a native of McDowell County who returned to Marion in 2013, from Greensboro. She is currently a Client Services Advocate at New Hope of McDowell.

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

www.brcnews.com
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Christy Lowman is a Christian author and illustrator that lives in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains; with her husband and two children. She enjoys writing and illustrating books for all ages. Some of her short stories are published with Guideposts and ACSI. Christy gives all the glory to God in everything she does. A portions of 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/dp/0825457601 or https://www.amazon.com/dp/082545761X or http://www.christylowman.com or chrissy0920@yahoo.com.
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