

BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

Legacy of Blue Ridge Christian News



By Doug Harrell

A little over nine years ago I begin 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 employee 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 and 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 Funny 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 call 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 Jonah, that I had been running from God and what He wanted me to do. I was not sure what whale 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 got misspelled as Ninevah) 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 52:7 "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 change comes 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 refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; 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 parts 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!



The Orchard at Altapass

Memorial Day Picnic At The Orchard

By Donna Stafford
Mitchell County

This year, Memorial Day falls on Monday, May 27, and is the day the folks at the Orchard at Altapass celebrate with millions of others around the nation and honor 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.

Memorial Day had its origins in the 1800's and was known as Decoration Day—elected to honor the 620,000 Americans who died during the Civil War. On May 5, 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 strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their 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 1971, Memorial Day became an official national holiday and always on the last Monday in May.

In Orchard fashion, 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, Orchard BBQ and buns, coleslaw, beans, and beverages. Food will be served until 2 p.m.

The Orchard at Altapass is located at 1025 Orchard Road, Spruce Pine (mile marker 328.3 on the Blue Ridge Parkway). For more information about any Orchard programs, please visit www.altapassorchard.org, the Orchard at Altapass Facebook page, or call 828-765-9531.

Donna is the Director at The Orchard.



Kevin Beddingfield



Marlene's Meditations

God's Beautiful Needlework

By Marlene Houk
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 in 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 luxurious 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 thread, 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 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 saying, "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 (Luttrell's Psalter circa 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 so much room in His personally-tailored garment of righteousness for us. His skill in fashioning my 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 sews a garment that reflects His deep love and care for each one of us as dear children.



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

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

No. 3 Grill

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See our complete menu at no3grill.com

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Public

Casual Dress

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Sunday Brunch - 11:00am-3:00pm

Special Events - Private Room

Traditional American Cuisine



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

Isaiah 52:7 KJV



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

Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin

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

"Home of Tri County Christian School"
Our passion is to help connect the Body of Christ in this area in order to see the Fire of God transform our community, state, nation and world! (See John 17:21)

Berry Chapel Baptist Church

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

Pastor - Steve Williams

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

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

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church

2187 Jamestown Road
Morganton, NC
828-584-8212

Pastor - Steve Bietz

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

Faith Fellowship Church

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

Pastor: David Gillespie

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

Altapass Baptist Church

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

Dr. Marcus R. Benfield

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

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

Grassy Creek Baptist Church

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

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

West Burnsville Baptist Church

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

Pastor: Terry Long

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

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

Burkemont Baptist Church

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

For more information,
please visit
www.burkemontbaptist.org

Dr. Luke A. Lane

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

Plumtree Presbyterian Church

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

Pastor Ryan Bridgeo
pastor@plumtreepresbyterian.org

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

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

Bear Creek Baptist Church

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

Reverend Bruce Cannon

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

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

Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church

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

Pastor Barry Mahorney

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

Pine Branch Baptist Church

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

Reverend Bobby Joe Greene

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

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

St. Lucien's Catholic Church

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

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

First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine

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

**Dr. Rocky Branch
Senior Pastor**

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

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

Spruce Pine United Methodist Church

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

Pastor Rev. Jeremy Troxler

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

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

First Advent Christian Church

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

**Pastor Patrick Bradshaw
Associate Pastor Javier
Guzman**
pbradshawfaccmorganton@gmail.com

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

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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'll 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 to 241 deaths every day 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 accessible, and you are apt to be looked at as someone from the Flat Earth Society. Even most Christian organizations have given up on addressing the alcohol issue.

One highly esteemed Christian activist has written a book that is a veritable encyclopedia on 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 an entire sermon.

You see, the darkness is so thick with LGBTQ advances, pro-choice contentions, 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 Christian enough, about resisting policies that celebrate, as well as perpetuate, the reckless 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 citizenry whom 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 Christians doing it?

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

They believe there now exists a vacuum where resistance once abode, and they intend to fill that void with policies based in 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 ferries, 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 536 – ABC Omnibus Regulatory Reform. This bill may be the worst alcohol proposal in state history. The legislation is 16 pages in length and contains 26 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



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15 th Annual
Golf Tournament
06/08/19

Grassy Creek Golf & Country
Club, Spruce Pine, NC

Tee Time: 8:30 AM
Format: Captain's Choice
Contact Grassy Creek Golf & Country Club
for Tournament Information at 828-765-7436

Contact Hospice and Home Care of
the Blue Ridge for sponsorship
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Enjoy more than 200 artists, crafters and musicians

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 think 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 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 828-385-0213, snowhillbaptist@gmail.com , or visit their website at www.snowhillbaptist.com.



Thank You's

By Sheryl Tron
Burke 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 700 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, OutLook News, The Asheville Citizen Times, Hal Rowe- WHKY, JOY FM, And all Area Radio Stations for letting our greater community know about this wonderful Easter Production. Thank You: Catawba River Association, East Valdese Baptist Church for a delicious breakfast for all, Town, Roberts 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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Mine Creek Baptist Church

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, its being overcommitted. That is to say we commit ourselves too much to 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 missing out on a full life. Social media posts are replete with photos of all the activities families are involved. 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 so 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 always have time for all the other activities. When called upon to serve in some capacity in the local church the response is often, "Well pastor, I just don't think I have time to commit to that. 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 everything else when everything else is supposed to be scheduled around the things of God. Not only is it hard to find Christians 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 kids. If we are so 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 needful for the body to function properly. If you have ever experienced an injury to a member of your body, say your foot, the entire body is affected by having to compensate 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 feet 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 my friends. Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, we need each other! We need every member to fulfill the function God has given them as part of the body of Christ. The eyes guide the hand to grasp, just as the hand grasps what the eyes see. The head guides the feet 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 one for another (vs. 25). Just as a member of a physical body would wither and 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 month; attend only on special occasions, etc, etc. Then before you know it there's no desire at all. The excuses began to flow, 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 the very thing that was sustaining them with life giving nourishment, is what they will blame for the consequences they are suffering! They'll blame God, blame the church, blame some individual, etc, etc. And remember, this all started because they allowed everything else to come between them and Jesus and His church.

The point I'm trying to make is this: Let's keep our priorities in order. Let's not forget that 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 as a parent leading your family to worship with His church or are you leading them to believe its 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 10:24-25 *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to 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.*

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



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



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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 accomplishments 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 AMCI!

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 they 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!" I 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 faith 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'. (This 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, aka repent, and begin to go with God instead of away from God!)

I thought about this conversation for days. And I wondered how long it had been since my own freedom had been keeping me from 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 lifer... The truth is, we ALL can benefit from a concerted 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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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 another 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 tongue rather than a seed sower. 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 reflected 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 Dee beans.



These are seeds that have been saved for generations, and I guard them closely to make sure that I save 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 minds, 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 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 encouragers 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 seeds 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 "Say not ye, There are yet four 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.





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The Power of a Testimony

By Dan Qurollo
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 mistreat 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 bringeth 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 Qurollo 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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Enjoying Everyday Life

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 discipline 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 knowingly are 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 in 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 perks without the works."

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 behavior. 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 willpower. 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) 727-9673 or visiting www.joycemeyer.org.

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

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



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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 had financial means. 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 synagogues. 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 society, powerless to change her hopeless life. We first learn of Mary Magdalene meeting Jesus in Luke 8:2. "And certain women, which had been 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 and set free!! 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 past away; behold, all things become new." She was instantly delivered from her demons and set free, becoming a new creature, a redeemed woman. Mary was not redeemed with corruptible 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 up 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 Passover, Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the promised Deliverer. Later, Judas betrayed Jesus. Jesus was crucified on the cross. John 19:25 says "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother and his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleophas AND MARY MAGDALENE." Mary waited through the shocking hours of Jesus abuse and suffering, watching the men 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 27:56 "Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, 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. Atop the stone, a Roman Government seal was placed. For Mary Magdalene, the crucifixion, burial, Roman guards 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 an 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 bring this great news to the disciples. (Matthew 28). After the disciples saw the empty tomb, they went again unto their own home, but Mary stood at the sepulcher weeping. (John 20:11). "Mary." When Jesus called her by name, she saw the risen Christ and everything in Mary's life changed. SHE WAS NOW A WOMAN FILLED WITH HOPE. We too can be filled with hope knowing the resurrection is real and that Jesus has risen and is alive. When Jesus got up on the third day, we got up with him!! Good had 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 was written in 1912 by a former pharmacist, C. Austin Miles. I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses.....

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

Thankful for the Storm

By Christy Young
Mitchell County

I think that we all can agree that life is hard! Storms rage and our body and mind feel defeated, we become weak. Storms may come in the way of sickness, broken relationships, financial struggles, spiritual battles, and much 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 the trying of your faith worketh patience." As the storm rages, talk to the Master of the Sea! Pray and seek shelter in the arms of God! Be patient and believe in faith that HE's working in your life, and all things are good with God. He can rule the stormy sea and calm the angry waves. Nahum 1:7, "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust him."

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. Run to the Father for refuge and strength. Psalms 91:2, "He alone is my refuge, my place of safety, he is my God, and I am trusting Him." I found that often you find 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. I cried, I prayed, and finally realized that God had a plan or purpose regardless the outcome. On March 16, 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 than allowing the storms of life to defeat you, fight back with the endurance 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. Weathering 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 is a rainbow. A promise that God is always with you and wrapping you up in His everlasting love.

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



CBS Spotlights Gardner-Webb's First Trip to The Dance

TV Special Captures March Madness Excitement Through Students' Eyes
Gardner-Webb University and the men's basketball team will return to the national spotlight on April 7 at 3 p.m. in a CBS television special to air on Final Four Weekend.

From March 20-23, CBS commissioned a film crew to capture the excitement, energy and mayhem of Gardner-Webb's first NCAA Tournament appearance in school history. They documented March Madness on the GWU campus through the eyes of two students, junior Jada Robbs, of Shelby, N.C., and senior Will Marvel, of Buford, Ga.

Robbs' and Marvel's stories will be included in "CBS Four Sides of the Story, March Madness Begins," a segment that examines the NCAA Tournament's first week through four viewpoints (or four sides). From the student's engagement (Gardner-Webb), to the NCAA officials, to a veteran broadcaster, to the graduate assistants of 7-seed Nevada, all angles will be covered.

Marvel appreciated the chance to share his thoughts with a national audience. "I wanted to speak on the opportunities the University has given me and how it has impacted my life over the last four years," Marvel reflected. "I hope that after this program, people will see how special Gardner-Webb is, and ultimately, get a glimpse into how strong the future is for this university."

Robbs said she was honored to be included in the program and hoped to convey what it's like to be a student at Gardner-Webb. "Our school is something to take pride in," she affirmed. "We have great people and a great community, and the majority of those relationships are connected by the love of Christ."

The CBS team immersed themselves into the GWU (and Cleveland County) lifestyle for several days. Coverage included sunrises over Lake Hollifield, classroom visits where Dr. Anthony Negbenebor dialogued about the economics of Gardner-Webb's March Madness breakthrough, students watching tournament games in a residence hall, and a ride along with the student fans on the tournament game bus. The CBS crew were in the middle of the fan excitement on game day and welcomed home the team as they returned after their exit from the NCAA tournament. The crew also took in Cleveland County barbecue, livermush and even experienced Boiling Springs' staples – the Snack Shop and Bulldog Quick-Snak.

They were amazed at the generosity and the welcoming spirit of the community from start to finish, and offered that this should be named the capital of "Southern Hospitality."

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



Jada with crew



Will Marvel with film crew

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T	R	E	E		R	A	G	S		A	P	A	L	E
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Sudoku Solution

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

"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 walked by. Having said all that, here was the dream...

"I was saying a tearful good-bye 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 our new home in North Carolina. As I sat down on the floor, playing with 2 of my little doggies, 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, embarked upon a huge horse, a gentle giant, one of God's majestic creations, smuggling 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 its warm and luscious 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, who's 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 large 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 baby just stood at my fence, which separates my property and theirs, staring at our home so intently for the longest time as if to say "Hey....where's my carrots? I'm waiting!" I've sung them to sleep, stroked their incredibly gorgeous manes, prayed 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 855-778-4243.

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The Rest of the Story

By Doug Harrell

Clint wrote this to go in the paper five years ago as 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 they were serving came from the same spot that Clint was talking about in his funny farm story. It is amazing how fast time goes by and yet 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 'til we get into the cane fields this fall. You will swing that hatchet so many times your shoulder will feel like it's gonna fall off!" Then he would give me that funny 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 to weed the rows I felt like I was having to walk straight up a wall! Seriously, I thought I needed crampons just to hold my fat-self on that hill...but somehow managed to stay upright...at least most of the time.

Fully exposed to the baking sun, I walked – or should I say crawled – row to row, seeking weeds to pull. As I meandered among the stalks I began counting them – there were at least a gazillion on that mountain alone. Not to mention the cane across the river, or the patch over by Rachael Roberts' house, or the HUGE field near the farmhouse, among others. In my mind I conjured up an image of me and a pocketknife snipping those stalks one-by-one. "Ain't no way," I opined only to myself @.

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 skeered of cuttin' cane, dude!" But, to be completely honest, I was anxious and filled with dread about the prospects. Please, help me Jesus, I did not want to have to gnaw down acres and acres of sorghum with a scalpel!

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 Josh would help him dig ramps." (Josh is one of Doug's GIANT grandsons that often drops-by for extended visits). What the heck did he - Farmer Doug - think I was? Did he mistake me for an indentured servant, for heaven's sake? Oh yeah, I kinda was an indentured servant @ . In any event, I had no idea what he was talking about but replied with a cheery "Okey dokey, then!"

When told that I would spend the day "digging ramps" I thought we would be working at a church fixin' up wheelchair access points. Everyone in the world knows that a RAMP is something you roll onto, a device with a sloping surface that allows access from one level to a higher or lower level, or raises something up above floor or ground level. After all, I had been a corporate executive and I knew that a RAMP is a movable set of stairs used for boarding or disembarking from an aircraft. Heck I had logged more than 4,000,000 million miles on American Airlines alone...I knew what a RAMP was! Or did I?

But I didn't ask how one goes about "digging ramps" because I didn't want to appear stupid...which, as we now know, I really was!

Farmer Larry fetched Josh and me shortly after our farm breakfast, buckwheat pancakes and sweet sorghum molasses expertly prepared by Farmer Doug, and away we went. And he drove us into the wilderness someplace, I know not where and got out of the truck carrying a back of something. He told us to follow.

Now I'm thinking, why in the world would you dig a RAMP out here? There's nobody to use that danged thing, and even if someone needed it, how would you roll a wheelchair up through these woods? But I kept my mouth shut so as not to appear ignorant...which, as we now know, I really was! We walked into the forest, all the while I'm trying to get my brain around this latest farm puzzle.

The "All-Purpose" Hatchet

Young Josh and I dutifully followed Farmer Larry, like two little puppies, into the woods. We were joking back and forth, not sure what the dickens we were doing out here. When all of a sudden Farmer Larry stopped and told us to have a seat; we pulled up our piece of dirt and squatted on the ground.

Larry opened his mysterious bag and reached in to reveal the secret stash...out comes about 6 little tiny hatchets...smaller than any I'd ever seen. And he said, "Here's your tool." I mused, to myself alone, "My tool for WHAT?" He went on, "By the way, Clint, this is the cane axe too. Wait 'til you have to chop all that sorghum down, stalk-by-stalk!"

I just looked at Farmer Larry, not sure how to respond, and replied, "Yeah, Doug and I have already been over all that." I really wanted to appear farm savvy

and smart... which, as we now know, I really wasn't!

Anyway, he went on to explain that we were gathered in search of huge quantities of RAMPS...not wheelchair steps, not airplane departure steps, but RAMPS. He told us that Ramps are considered a spring delicacy, a wild onion of sorts, and even a reason for celebration. Heck they even have Ramp Festivals in some of our communities.

Larry compared the flavor and odor of ramps to a combination of onions and garlic, and the garlic odor is particularly strong. He joked about how the kids used to eat a bunch of ramps before school so the teacher would send them home because they stunk! "Oh goodie," I thought, as we began bending over to pick/dig the stinky plant.

Truth-be-told, the morning digging ramps was fun...the air was cool and the sun didn't penetrate the forest canopy; and I enjoyed Farmer Larry and GIANT grandson Josh's company. And I picked and I picked, and I picked some more RAMPS.

But, most important, I finally had firsthand knowledge of the tool with which I would mow down the sorghum cane! It looked like an axe for itsy bitsy people. Heaven help me.

And Then Came The Day Of Harvest

Sure enough the day came to begin the sorghum cane harvest. Farmer Doug, wry/crooked smile and all, said, "Well Pollard, this is the day you've been looking forward to." I sneered as we left the farmhouse for the fields; anticipating the worst day of my long life.

He handed me one of the ramp digging/pulling-cane chopping, itsy bitsy axes and began his obligatory "lesson" before setting me free to begin work. "Do this, don't do that...be careful of this...don't do that...swing it like this, not like that...blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." And off I went.

I chopped and I chopped and I chopped...stalk-to-stalk...fighting off yellow jackets, watching for man-eating groundhogs, hoping no brown recluse spiders were hiding in the cane. I swung and I chopped, for what seemed hours, and tried my best to keep pace with Farmer Doug.

That's another beef I have with this Mitchell County Farm Legend, he's seven years my senior yet whizzes by me like a speeding bullet when doing farm chores. GRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR @.

The good news is that the chop, chop, chop wasn't nearly as paralyzing as I'd prepared my psyche for it to be. But ya get halfway through a row and ya gotta pick the stuff up and carry it to the truck. More about the truck in a minute.

Doug would later laugh and say, "It's not as bad as I had you thinking, is it?" My reply, "Duh, why did you scare me like that?" It seems he wanted me to be prepared for the worst so that I would be pleasantly surprised. Yet, don't get me wrong, it is HARD, TEDIOUS, BACK-BREAKING work to be sure.

DANGER In The Chevy Pick-Up!

I finally got into the swing of using that axe and was making pretty good time harvesting cane – at least as far as getting it on the ground. But there was the matter of our friend who was driving the truck...that would be Daddy D Harrell.

As we chopped, chopped and bent over to pick up the stalks, Daddy D was supposed to move the truck, either forward or backward to ease our loading the product. Well, Daddy D's eyesight, hearing and reflexes weren't as good as they once were. So, every now and then we would have to fly into a ditch to avoid being run over by an out-of-control Chevy pick-up.

Daddy D would ride the clutch, at least, so sometime you'd hear the truck lurch forward or backward BEFORE IT SMASHED INTO YOU...that was the good news. The bad news is that if you didn't hear him coming and you'd shout out a warning, there was no way he could hear you. Farmer Doug warned, "The most important thing is to keep an eye on Dad. He would die if he hurt one of us...and he could." Holy smokes, not only do I have to swing a butter knife at a cane stalk, fight off aggressive bees and all manner of other grouchy critters, now I need to guard against being squished by Daddy D. Whew, what a special day this is!

Well, with but a few "near-misses" by the careening Chevy pick-up, I survived the first day of the cane harvest...and subsequent days. Why, even up until the day of making molasses God protected me and I came through that sorghum season with nary a scratch. It was a blessing and a major miracle!

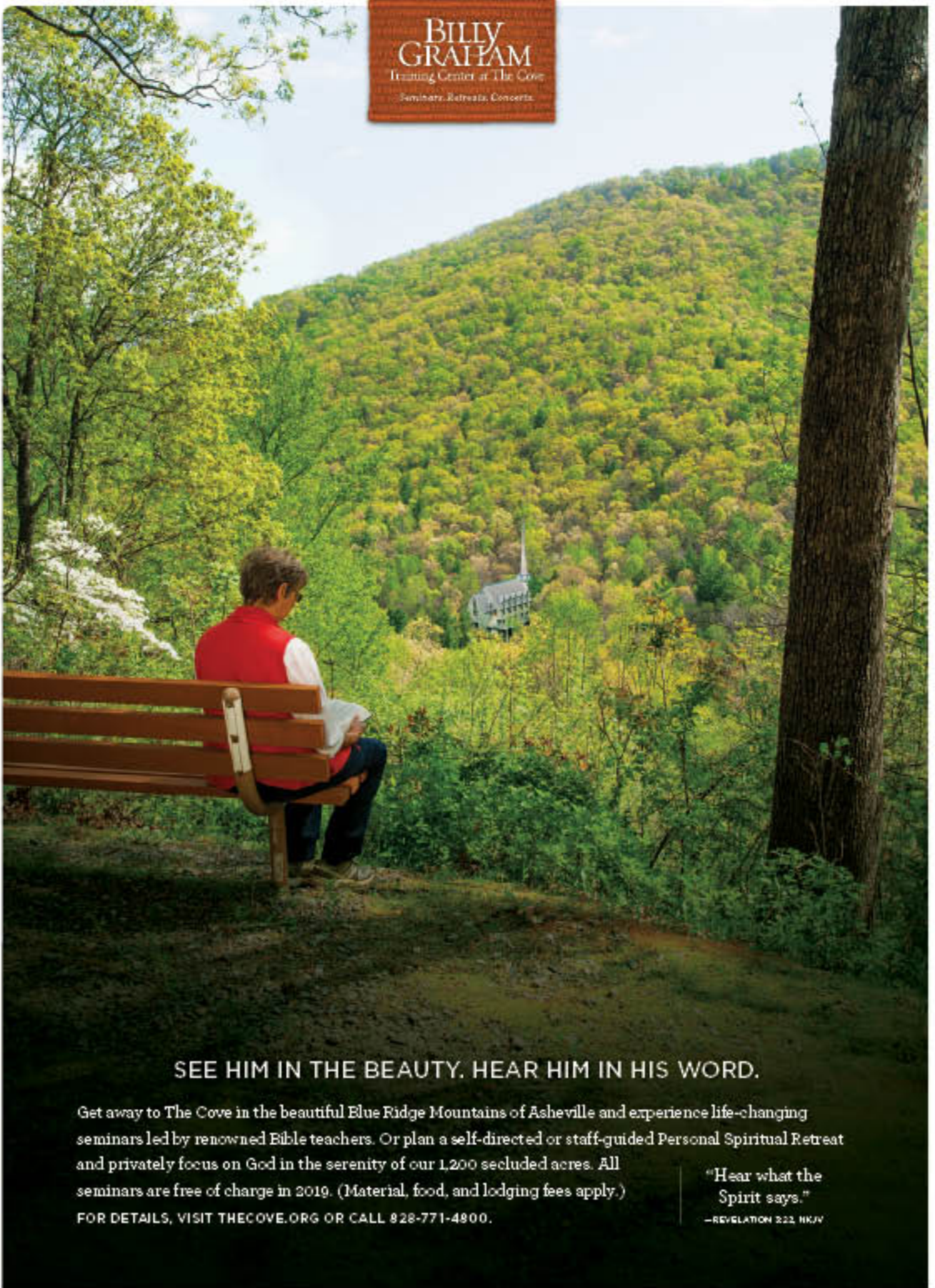
PS Farmer Clint Is Gone – I Think I'll Automate!

The very next year, in the fall of 2011, Farmer Doug decided he didn't want to chop, chop, chop sorghum cane any longer. After all, I don't have my "Pack-mule Farmer Clint" here to help me so I think I'll automate the process! And that he did.



Humbled in the hills,
Farmer Clint

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"Hear what the Spirit says."
 —REVELATION 2:22 NKJV



The Security in the Gospel

By Dr. Tom Walker
McDowell County



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

We live in a day of wide-spread insecurity. So many people are insecure in so many ways. Dr. Vance Havner wrote, "What sort of redemption is it which provides security against the past and future, but leaves us stranded in the here and now."

Security is definitely found in these verses which point us to the Gospel of Christ. It says in v.3 that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. That little word "for" is a word of substitution. To be a substitute is to do something in the place of someone else.

So many people live in uncertainty and anxiety concerning their salvation. There is no need for that because in 1 John 5:13, *"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."* 1 John 5:13 makes it very clear that it is the will of God for people to know they have eternal life. God made provision for us to know presently that we have eternal life because of the result of believing on the name of the Son of God. If a person does not know for sure that he or she is saved, they are out of the will of God for their lives. Make no mistake about it, it is God's will that we know we have been born again due to our personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. A person does not have to wait until death to know they are saved, because this verse in 1 John 5:13 is speaking in the present tense.

Forget Trusting Your Own Works

The gospel message makes it clear that we are saved by what Jesus did for us upon the cross of Calvary and not by what we are doing for Him.

Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* The Bible states salvation is not of ourselves, because salvation is a gift. A gift is something given by someone to a person who may not have earned the gift, but it is granted out of a heart of love from the giver of the gift to the object of their love.

The word "grace" itself means "unmerited or undeserved favor." Why can we not have a sense of security when we realize salvation depends upon Christ and not upon us?

How much clearer can the Bible be when it gives us the words about salvation saying: *"Not of works lest any man should boast."* Salvation is designed so that man cannot earn it by hanging on and holding out, because if man were saved by his works, then it would be he who would get the glory for salvation and not God. An old song I heard when I was a boy says in regard to salvation and Heaven, "If anyone makes it Lord, surely I will." That sounds a great deal sanctimonious. Looking at my works I would have to change the words to say, "If anyone comes short, Lord surely I do." Thank God for His grace and mercy that gets us into the family of God and keeps us in as a member of that grand and glorious family.

Take God's Word and Not the Word of Another

Romans 8:35-39 says: *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Paul the Apostle begins this passage by it being unbelievable to him that anyone or anything could ever separate the believer from the love of God. It is in a sense saying that man can be more powerful than the God of Creation Himself. That is a ridiculous assumption. No force in the universe is greater than the all powerful God of Glory!

After his opening in this passage, Paul makes a list of things that some might think could separate them from the love of Christ. The love of Jesus is a love that will not let us go. It is noteworthy that Paul faced the possibility of death from his enemies after he had given his heart to Christ because he said, *"For thy sake we are killed all the day long."*

Why should you hold your head down and live a life of uncertainty? It makes no sense at all in light of the fact Paul the Apostle said, *"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."* We will not just be conquerors in the life to come but in the here and now.

Look at the list Paul gives in this passage in Romans 8. He mentions death, life, angels, principalities, power, things present and things to come, height, depth; none of these things can sever the Christian from his or her place in the body of Christ. To make sure we cannot sever ourselves from Christ once we are saved, Paul adds, *"Nor any other creature."* I have heard people say, "Well, no one else can separate you from the love of Christ but you can separate yourself." The trouble is that does ring true with Scripture. You are secure for sure if you are in Christ Jesus by faith.

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

A Lesson Learned from Barney and Otis

By Timothy W. Tron
Burke County



The river was an angry confluence this morning; its icy waters swirled like molten metal, knifing their way down the mountain. The mood matched my own in some respect; these seemed to be turbulent times. There was darkness all around, and it was as if God had hidden His face from the world. Day after day I had called upon Him, lifting my prayers upon high, only to wait and listen to the beat of my own pulse. Each day, there was only more news of evil growing bolder.

My heart carried a heavy burden.

The psalmist seemed to say it best, *"But unto thee have I cried, O Lord; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee. Lord, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me? I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off. They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together."* - Psalm 88:13-17

The chill in the air reached into the marrow of my soul. My mind weighed deeply on the scripture as my feet trod farther upon the forest path and eventually the highway to Collettsville.

As I rounded the 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 recognized me and were thrilled to see me coming. I could tell their joy was restrained, for they had not been certain of who I was. To give them a sense of assurance, I called out to them, "Morning Otis, morning Barney." At the sound of my voice, they went into full-blown exuberance, dancing and playfully biting 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 tiny village to the next, making the store their second home.

I had never fed them, I had never given them any form of sustenance; rather, our friendship was based only on my petting them and giving them attention. "How uncanny," I thought, that these dogs, named after the characters on the "Andy Griffith Show," were so starved for attention, that they would react to warmly to someone whom they only saw at most, once a week. Then too, like the characters in the old T.V. show that seems to live on, Otis and Barney were reliant upon Andy to make their day complete. Otis, the town drunk, made use of the jail as his second home and depended on Andy's willingness to allow him to "Dry Out," instead of being subject to the penalties of prosecution for being publicly drunk. Barney, the ever-incompetent deputy, was Andy's side-kick, cousin, and most importantly, best friend. Their comparisons to the dogs, and how they too relied upon the kindness of the town's people made their names even more appropriate.

It was then that the idea of our own relationship with Jesus Christ came to mind. The parallel was striking; I was to the dogs, what Christ is to His believers. As Jesus was walking toward the John the Baptist, he stood, and his two disciples, and looked upon Jesus as He walked, saying, *"Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."* They stood and recognized Jesus walking toward them. They were overjoyed at His presence and made the proclamation of exaltation to which all would eventually know, but none had begun to know at that time. The dogs, like the sheep who knew the sound of the shepherd, also knew me by the sound of my voice. *"And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow; but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."* - John 10:4-5

The comparisons began to become clearer and clearer.

As Otis, Barney, and I walked toward the picnic table where I normally sit and read my Bible, they kept up their excitement, nearly knocking me down at one point. They could not contain themselves. They both leaped upon the table and continued wagging their tales in anticipation of sharing time with me. Laughing 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 front of the store, where we quickly made ourselves comfortable. I sat down on one end of the bench as Otis jumped up and stretched out, laying his head in my lap. Barney sat respectfully at the side of my leg, leaning into 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 to me as I was to them. They sat enraptured and still, swooning over me as our time passed. My thoughts drifted as cars passed, one after another.

My mind again returned to Jesus and His disciples. How many times would we picture scenes as such; the loved one leaning against Christ's bosom at the last supper; Christ sitting somewhere as He taught, His disciples gathered close in His presence, taking in each moment, savoring their time, knowing that as He had mentioned, their time would soon 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 chasing in that land of repose. Barney was reticent to continue to lean upon my leg. It was then that it had dawned on me; God was telling me that leaning on Christ is what I had been reminded by these two beasts of God's creation. The joy that had been shown, in essence, lifted my own spirits.

I took inventory of my heart at that moment 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 thoughts returned again to the scripture that had so enraptured me earlier that morning.

Unlike once in my 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, not toward Him. That trip we made when I was in High School to the rock pit returned as the scripture repeated in my head, *"While I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off. They came round about me daily like water; they compassed me about together."* Again, as before, the waters of life had become overwhelming to the point, it felt as if I were drowning; the sea of sorrow began to compass

about my soul.

We had taken up snorkeling, my friends and I, and wanted to practice in calmer waters than the nearby ocean. So, we found an old abandoned rock pit, just off of Hwy. 40, south of Ft. Myers. It was a perfect place to practice. Today it is known as Lake's Park, complete with walking trails and beaches. Back then, it was simply a dirt road that led to the water's edge; a party location for most wayward youth.



There in that pit, 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 obviously deep because the change in the color of the crystal-clear water was only because of the lack of sunlight reaching its extreme depths. As would be typical for teenage boys full of vigor and testosterone, we immediately challenged one another as to who might go for the bottom. Up to this point, we had only covered moderate depths of possible 10-15 feet at most. None of us wore appropriate free-diving equipment, no weights, no depth gauges, no safety vests in case we passed out in an extremely deep dive. All we wore were our goggles and our cut of jean 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 result, unbeknownst to us. When the signal to go was given, we began our descent into the deep blue void below. I can recall to this day, kicking with all my might as my ears struggled to clear and my head began to rack from the pressure pushing in on my skull. My own calculations to this day were that it was easily over 50 feet in depth, having free dove in other locations since that time with the appropriate gear. It was the darkest water we had ever seen. My fear led me to reach my arm in front of me in case there was something that I might hit before seeing it in this depth of darkness. My lungs began to call for air as the bottom had not yet been reached. Knowing time was short, I pushed harder and was suddenly rewarded with the sudden appearance of white sand. A momentary pause to look around only revealed an ancient beer can resting in the white sandy bottom, partially buried, where it had landed decades earlier.

My lungs began to scream for oxygen.

Time was nearing its end.

In an instinctive action, I pushed hard from off the rock pit floor and began swimming for the surface with all my might. Those strong, runner's thighs served me well as the water rushed past my mask so fiercely 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 now, only a few feet more, but there was nothing left.

Time was out.

Peeling what little oxygen I could from the depths of my soul, I savored my last taste of life as my lungs instinctively began to exhale, ... below the surface. Looking back, God was with us that day.

Not one second was left, not one ounce of air remained in my chest as my body hit the surface, barely clearing the water as my body wretched for that beautiful life source 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 would ever come to not making it back from below. That day still rings present in my mind, and as I read the 88th Psalm, my heart couldn't help knowing that although we might be encompassed by waters of darkness, with God, we can someday break through the surface, freeing 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 metal has been tempered in the fiery trials, we are stronger all the more. We burst forth into a new world 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 trod down the trail earlier this morning, I listened for His voice; nothing. I began to wonder again why was He hiding His face from me?

It was when I least expected it, He spoke.

This morning, God used two of his creations, beings that only live a life based upon instinctual behaviors, to awaken 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 too can survive some of the most challenging trials of life, by simply looking to Jesus and leaning on him. He is there for our asking; He is there if only we shall accept Him into our hearts. Our burdens can be lifted, and we can be set free from the bondage of sin. In times of trials, He is there as our life preserver, to sustain us through the darkness. He is our light. When we hear the sound of his voice, we know Him, and we go to Him. For those who do good, they love the light and go to it so that their deeds may be manifest.

All it took was a wagging tail and a moment of repose on an old wooden bench. 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.

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

By Jim Denison



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 adulation 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 attendants 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 achievements 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, "95 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 afflicted (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 9:35)?

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 only One who can give 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 Damien.

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 Damien 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 there 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 hut. They understood his pain and despair. The following Sunday, when Father Damien arrived at the chapel, the building was filled to overflowing. Thus, 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 column is distributed to more than 113,000 subscribers in 208 countries. See more on the website www.denisonforum.org. Copyrighted and printed by permission from Denison Forum.

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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 bigger plans for you. He has a greater life for you. The answer to your problem—however great it is—is as near as your Bible, as simple as first-grade arithmetic and as real as your heartbeat.

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

The Bible teaches that "Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome 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 hurts 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 lonely in the midst of the crowd. The world 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 companion 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 hurled into 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 Sorrow**

There are thousands of you who have turned to God, but you are still carrying your burdens, when God invites you: "Cast 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, sorrow and sin all contain the hiss of the serpent and are the result of the fall of man in the garden.



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 disciplinary, 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 loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights" (Proverbs 3:12).

From these Scriptures we learn that the chastening of affliction is a step in the process of our full 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 of 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 had she not been afflicted with blindness. George Matheson 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 knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold" (Job 23:10).

Affliction is the blast furnace in which saints 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 sickroom 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 Discouragement

This is a world of thwarted hopes, broken dreams and frustrated desires. But Christ can take discouragement and despondency out of your life. He 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 17:22).

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 inexpressible 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 "redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

And the Bible says: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful 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).

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, New King James Version. The Scripture quotation marked KJV is taken from The Holy Bible, King James Version.



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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 dives and bars across the country.

In an article for The Wisdom Daily, Irwin Kula, 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....

Kula 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, talents, hopes, and hurts; all we bring is welcome. We pray that in coming 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 it's also in response 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. A 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 atrociously unwelcoming, self-righteous, pretentious, hypocritical, and even abusive. Nor can I deny that God's Spirit can do his work in the most unbecoming sites and situations. But for me, a partnership between a place that celebrates alcohol and the holy work 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 fittest of its names by far.
A bar to heaven, a door to hell,
Whoever 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 an honored, useful life,
A door to brawling, 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,
Whoever named it named it well.

The Scriptures speak with the strongest of warnings about things that happen in a bar. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). "Woe to him who gives his neighbor drink; pouring out from your wineskins to make him drunk so as to gaze upon his nakedness" (Habakkuk 2:15). These passages indicate the individual who drinks and the barkeeper who pours the alcohol share in personal and corporate responsibility for the resulting harms.

Alcohol continues its blight upon every phase of human life. Despite the fact we've dignified its use in the present and so many pastors and professing Christians seem averse to those 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 the 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 determining that even moderate drinking is an important public health issue. A major new study from the University of Oxford, Peking University, 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 approximately 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 30 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 919-787-0606



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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 in 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 and March, BUCM was able to do the following with the help of our community partners:

- Assisted 11,656 Families • Assisted 25,043 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 1,637 Individuals totaling \$36,721.25 • Provided Heat Assistance to 190 Individuals totaling \$16,930.71 • Provided Rent Assistance to 83 Individuals totaling \$10,094.10 • Provided Assistance with Utilities to 73 Individuals totaling \$6,720.78 • Provided 25,162 Meals in the Soup Kitchen • Served 3,272 families in our Food Pantry totaling 7,595 individuals with 381,341 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 8, BUCM celebrated our volunteers at our annual banquet. A big thank you to the following who made the banquet happen:

- Terre Colabella, Committee Chair • Glen Reep • Stephen Kincaid • Ann Carr • Jeannie Edward • Brandi Belkie • Al Bormuth • Brandy Snipes • Wendy Mull • Elizabeth Norris • The First Methodist Church of Morganton and Rena McMahon • The Freedom and Patton Anchor and Interact Clubs along with the National Honor Societies along with their sponsors, Kelly Baker and Michelle Gregory • The Elks Club Dancers • 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 on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday evenings.

Our soup kitchen teams are as follows:

AARP 3262, Bethel Church of Christ, Blue Ridge Health Care, Burke County EMS, Burkemont Baptist Church, Calvary Lutheran (4 Teams), Christ UMC, Continental Teves, 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 Seniors, Grace Episcopal, Home Church, The Rising Church, His Image Ministries, Hopewell Baptist, Linville UMC, Morganton 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), Nowlings Chapel Freewill Baptist Pleasant Ridge Youth, Pursuit & PJ's, Rainhill Wesleyan Church, Rhonda's Girls - Spicy Ladies, Salem UMC, Shiloh AME, Slades Chapel, Smyrna Baptist, South Mountain Children's Home, St. Charles (2 Teams), St. Mary's / St. Stephens Episcopal, St. Paul's Episcopal, Summit Community Church, The Rising Church, United Baptist, Victory Church Walker Road Baptist, WINGNUTS, Zion Baptist

We also want to thank our other volunteer groups:

Food Pantry Volunteers, Front Office Volunteers, Clothing Closet Volunteers, Grant Writer, Clothing Store Volunteers, Crafters, Food Harvesters, Dining Room/Warehouse/Silverware, Wood Ministry

As a community, we also have an 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 conducted 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 ministry.

Also, volunteers are needed to help unload the mail carrier vehicles, weigh incoming food, sort the donated food items into barrels, load barrels onto the truck and deliver to Burke United Christian Ministries (BUCM).

Your help is needed! Volunteers of all ages, 5 years old to 99 years old. There is something for everyone. Volunteers will be working at the Morganton Post Office. Volunteer jobs include:

- Unloading mail carrier vehicles as they come in • Assisting with weighing the food • Sorting donated food items into barrels • Loading full barrels onto truck • Unloading full barrels at BUCM • Meeting postal food carriers in other 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 considering 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

continued on page 46

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Obedient Heart Fellowship

Refreshing

By James Huskins
McDowell County

In spite of popular opinion, texting is not as good as face-to-face conversation, virtual reality is merely pretending, and milk does not come from almonds. Confusion 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 birth. The act of having a calf—and thus being able to give milk—is called “freshening.” Ideally, a cow is rebred about three months after freshening to begin her nine-month gestation. She is “turned dry”—allowed to stop giving milk—ten months after freshening. Two months of rest from production, and the cycle begins anew. This process and its associated terms were common knowledge for most of our history, but when I tell people that my cow “came fresh” last week, I am generally treated to a blank stare.

I love the verb “to freshen.” It sums up the joy we find in owning a beautiful and gentle Jersey, the child-like delight surrounding the birth of a calf—this time a gorgeous female or heifer, the health benefits we and our family receive from the enzymes, proteins, healthy fat, and beneficial bacteria found only in fresh, unprocessed milk, and—best of all—the eye-popping thrill of the taste of fresh, raw, whole milk. Joyful Jersey Juice. Our milk is, in every way, refreshing. When God’s people needed to be refreshed following centuries 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 16:23 says that when David played the harp, Saul was “refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart.” One of the Hebrew words translated “refresh” is “naphash.” It means to breathe or be breathed upon. It is closely related to “ruach”—spirit—and also to “nephesh” which is generally translated “soul.” In Hebrew terms, a “soul” is the union of a body made of earth and the spirit or breath of God. It takes both body and spirit to be a soul, and Jesus came to redeem—refresh—our soul on resurrection day. He did not come to free our spirit from the confines of our body. The idea that our “soul” can be separated from our body is a Greek concept, not Hebrew. In Hebrew thought, a “soul” is a lump of mud 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 at Sinai. Not a different Gospel. Not a stale, 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 “Pasteurized” 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 8:6 somehow proves that Torah has been nullified. “The covenant He mediates is better since it is enacted on better promises.” Those “better promises” are that His children will find 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 creator 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 not changed.

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 taken away, and we are saved by grace through faith. Once we are saved, God’s 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 present 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 attempt to love and serve Him by keeping his commandments. We meet each Sabbath—Seventh Day—at Abba’s House, 72 South Main Street in Marion. 11:00 A.M. 828-460-7913.

Jim & Beverly Huskins are members of Obedient Heart Fellowship.

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

Parkway Playhouse

Presents Along About Sundown

By Hunter Taylor, Education Coordinator
Yancey County

BURNSVILLE, NC: When an aspiring musician Erhan happens into Bascom Lamar Lunsford, the “Minstrel of Appalachia,” he embarks on a musical and historical journey. Along about sundown, several musicians meet up on Lunsford’s porch for storytelling, and, more importantly, a chance to make music together. Lunsford’s life and songs inspire musicians and appreciators of Appalachian music everywhere.

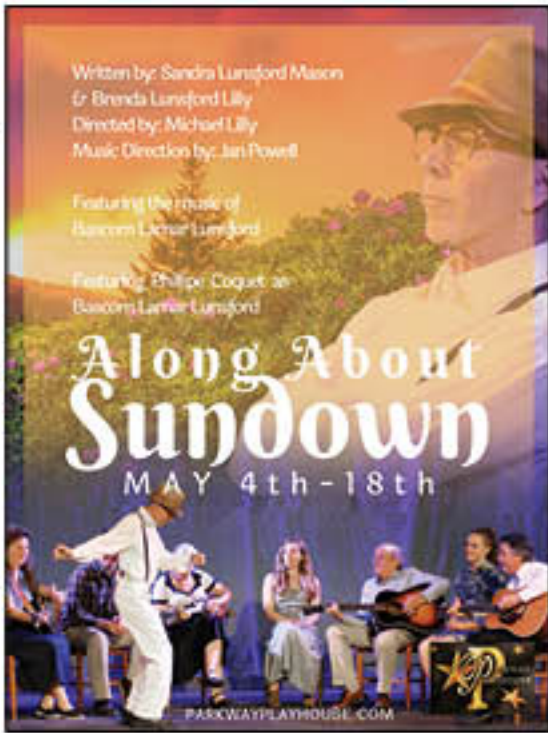
This original musical, written by two of Lunsford’s own grandnieces, is a charming work sure to leave audiences smiling and humming.

Performances will be held on May 4th, 10th, 11th, 17th, and 18th at 7:30pm. There will be matinee performances on May 5th and 12th at 3pm. Tickets range from \$13 for children to \$24 for adults. All performances are at the historic Parkway Playhouse theatre, located at 202 Green Mountain Drive in Burnsville, NC. Tickets can be purchased by visiting the Parkway Playhouse Box Office (open 1-5pm Thursdays through Saturdays), calling 828-682-4285, or by visiting parkwayplayhouse.com.

This production is generously sponsored by the Mountain Air Property Owners Association.

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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Under New Ownership

By Dr. Terry Cheek
McDowell County

By now probably everyone knows the BRCN is under new ownership. Doug and Barbara Harrell have been 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 Barbara'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'm certain of one thing God has placed and positioned him and his family for His work through the BRCN. For a few moments this month lets think about being under new ownership.

That phrase causes me to immediately think business. But if I really allow it to sink into my heart it takes me to salvation. Just finishing 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'm talking about sit down and let me tell you a story about your life. Using Gods word to tell the story lets begin with Romans 5:12 KJV "Wherefore, 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 Sin is death. Notice with me 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, "Verily, verily, 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 your 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, will you 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. Until next month may God keep you firmly in His grip.

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



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 feel 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 will we 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 kneeling taking place during the national anthem, the Pledge of Allegiance or the Anthem being pulled from many sporting and social events, and revisionists rewriting American history, I see it as a very strong possibility that Memorial Day and other patriotic practices will begin drawing ire 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 1864. 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 reverent 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 on 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 OR 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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-H.O. Hirt, ERIE Founder

Celebrate Recovery

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.*



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

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 80,000 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 Baker's own story is a long battle with alcoholism and his final deliverance through Jesus' restorative power. The program is based on his discovery in that process and his hope 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 Peirce Bingham at 828-208-0299. Service will be held in the main Sanctuary of Higgins United Methodist Church 101 N Main Street Burnsville. See you there!

Peirce 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 Kairos Mountain View, Blue Ridge Emmaus, Burnsville Rotary and Reconciliation House. He lives in Green Mountain with his wife Deena, has four children, three grandchildren and a farm full of animals.



"Faces you know."



"Faces you trust."

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

~ Anne Richardson

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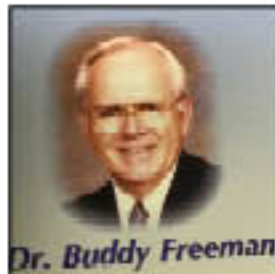
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Humor

By Buddy Freeman
Madison County



Dr. Buddy Freeman

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 hill-billy 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 goes 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.

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Billy Graham Evangelistic Association

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 treatment of Karen Pence, wife of Vice President Mike Pence, as she was savagely attacked by the media—even international pundits—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.

But 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” (BBC)

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

The hostility, bias and ridicule of Biblical morality is blatant and obvious. The media reported nothing about Karen Pence's skilled, gracious participation in the lives of dozens of children, only the fact that the sexual mores of the school were not 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 no 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 bigots should not be allowed to run schools, 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 stigmatize and punish it.”

This is the point to which we have come. The war against Biblical values and those who embrace them is full on. The gloves are off, and the radical left would like 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—only serve to undergird just how far 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—which legalized 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 in pink. One physician commented: “As a board-certified practicing OB-GYN for over 30 years, I need to say publicly and unequivocally, that there is never 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 repealed any restrictions on third-term abortions going to the floor for a vote. Gov. Ralph Northam's comments in a media interview insinuating that infanticide is permissible following the birth of a live child was chilling and disgusting.

Vice President Pence, a committed believer in Jesus Christ and ardent pro-life supporter, said in a tweet: “These VA & NY late-term abortion 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 recommit ourselves to restoring 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 11:32). 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 in 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 that 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.

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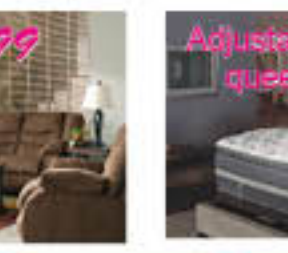


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Burke County

Burkemont Baptist Church is currently seeking a minister of music. Burkemont is located in Morganton, NC. The church has two morning worship services at 8:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. that are blended in worship style. 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 are often 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 llane@burkemontbaptist.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 needing 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 CRBA office at 828-437-0137.

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

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

Revitalization for the Future: Steve Sells

Discipleship for the Future (Sunday School & Small Group): Robby Smith

Leadership for the Future (Deacon/Elder Ministry): Keith Dixon & Mike Chandler

Ministry for the Future (Missions/Evangelism): Jack Hodges

Prayer for the Future (Beginning a Prayer Ministry): Mark Mirza

Please call the CRBA office at (828) 437-0137 to reserve your spot and for more information.

2019 Waldensian Festival - Since 1976, on the second Saturday in August, Valdese hosts an annual festival to celebrate the "Glorious Return" of the Waldenses from exile in Switzerland to their native valleys in the Cottian Alps of Italy in 1689. 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 unique 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. Choosing participants that will 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, 2187 Jamestown 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 Waldensians 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.

Town of Valdese Concert Schedule

2019 Season Lineup:

May 24: Concert Series Kickoff Celebration - Outshyne

May 31: Rated PG

June 7: Dirty Grass Soul

June 14: Emily Minor

June 21: The Night Move Band

June 28: INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION & FIREWORKS DISPLAY

Little Johnny Trailer Trash & Ultimate Eagles Tribute- On the Border - Eagles

Tribute Band

July 5: Southwind

July 12: Shake Down Band

July 19: The True Grass Band

July 26: Tony Bailey Band

August 2: Skaterink Jukebox

August 9 & 10: 44th Annual Historic Valdese Waldensian Festival

Friday Night Entertainment - Cassette Rewind & Gump Fiction

Saturday Entertainment - Gary Lowder & Smokin' Hot

August 16: Carson Hill

August 23: To Be Announced

August 30: Concert Series Finale Celebration - Tim Clark Band

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 the month 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. and the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. For more information or if you are interested in volunteer opportunities call (828) 803-8790 or email TeensforChristBEARcloset@yahoo.com.

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 Extension tradition where 4-Hers from across the West District will 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 help for men, women and families suffering from addiction. Any questions contact Josh Wise@ 385-0061

There will be a meeting every Thursday night with someone there to talk to men, women, and their families. There is also a Children's program.

Grassy Creek Baptist Church - The Talleys in concert
Tri-County Baptist Tabernacle-252 Ridge Road-Spruce Pine, NC
May 31, 2019 at 7:00 pm Call 828-850-3346 for more information

Hospice and Home Care of Blue Ridge, Inc.

15th Annual Golf Tournament- Saturday, June 8 - Grassy Creek Golf Course

Mitchell County Historic Society - On May 20th, we'll be at the English Inn, where David Biddix will give a presentation about Union Soldiers who were sheltered by the Inn's owner, Isaac D. English.

We'll hear about the Overmountain Victory Historic Trail from Starli 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 take part 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 event a 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 Buchanan at 766-1632

Second Annual Service Personnel Recognition Banquet

Altapass Baptist Church-3631 Altapass Hwy, Spruce Pine-May 10, 2019, 6:00 p.m.
For Firemen, Policemen, EMT's

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

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

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

We are also serving Lunch on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm
Sign up for 2019 After Hours!

Business After Hours are held to provide an opportunity for Chamber members to network while allowing the Member to sponsor a chance to address and/or showcase their facilities. Business After Hours are held monthly to bi-monthly, and generally on a Tuesday or Thursday (unless other arrangements are made). The Member sponsor and the Chamber representative will coordinate the event. After Hours begins at 4:30 p.m. and ends at 6:00 p.m. (unless other arrangements are made). Send your questions and reserve your month by emailing Kelly at kjones@mitchellcountychamber.org.
May: Loafer's Glory Rafting and Tubing, Bakersville, NC
June: The Brian Center
July: KB's
August: Mitchell County Animal Rescue
September: The Switzerland Inn
October-November: OPEN
We do not have After Hours in December.

Summer 2019 Workshops at Penland!
Summer 2019 workshop descriptions are here!
A few fun facts:
* We're offering 103 workshops this summer.
* Scholarships are available for all 103 workshops!
* Registration opens January 15.
* Scholarship applications open January 1 and are due by February 18.

2019 Calendar of Events for Downtown Spruce Pine	
Run for Holland	May 18th, Downtown Spruce Pine
TRAC Studio Tour	May 31- June 2nd, Mitchell & Yancey Counties
Troutacular	June 1st, Riverside Park
Downtown Day	June 8th, Downtown Spruce Pine
Reading is Alive Play	June 8th, Central Park
SPACE Festival	June 14-15th, Downtown Spruce Pine
Movies in the Park	June 14th, Central Park
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 19th & 20th, Riverside Park
Movies in the Park	July 26th, Central Park (rain date)
Mineral & Gem Festival	Aug 1-4th, Cross Street Building
Summer Concert	August 2nd, Central Park
Summer Concert	September 7th Central Park
Walk A Mile Fundraiser	October (TBD), Central Park
Fall Clean Up	October-TBD, Downtown Spruce Pine
Potter's Market	October 13 & 14th, Cross Street Building
Merchant Trick or Treat	October 31st, Downtown Spruce Pine
Small Business Saturday	November 30th Downtown Spruce Pine
Kiwanis Christmas Parade	November 30th, Downtown Spruce Pine
TRAC Studio Tour	December 6-8th, Mitchell & Yancey County

Farmers Market every Wednesday at Bank of America beginning in April
For more information about any of these events, contact SPMS 765-3008

Toe River Arts - June Studio Tour Applications- The Toe River Arts Studio Tour is perhaps the largest and the longest running studio tour in the country; you will find craftspeople and artists in nearly every medium, many tops in their field and several new-to-the-tour participants.
FREE, and self-guided, this adventure will lead you to some unique places situated between Mt. Mitchell and Roan Mountain. Visitors travel through valleys, past streams, across rivers, over hilltops, and experience breathtaking mountain vistas as they make their journey through the Toe River Arts region. Meet the artists, see where they create and where they live.
Toe River Arts will sponsor a Meet-The-Artist reception at their Spruce Pine location on Friday evening after the tour closes for the day. A sampling of participants will be on display geographically so one can plan a route for the rest of their journey.
Reception: May 31st, 5:30-7:30pm. For more information, please call 828.682.7215 or email.

Evensong at Trinity Church - The next Evensong will celebrate the Ascension of Christ on Sunday, May 26, 2019 with the music of George Frederick Handel and Ralph Vaughn Williams.
Trinity Church is located at 15 Hemlock Avenue in the English Woods neighborhood of Spruce Pine. For more information about Evensong or about the Church, please contact (828) 520-1151 or TECSP15@att.net.

Run For Holland - I have exciting news that I couldn't wait to share! After 5 years of being organized Run For Holland has finally received it's 501(c)(3) status. This means that we are recognized by the IRS as tax exempt and that we can give donors tax deductions when they make charitable gifts. The ability to apply for grants and other public or private allocations available only to IRS-recognized, 501(c)(3) organizations.
With that being said, I want to ask you all to consider donating to Run For Holland as 2018 comes to a close. To date, we have been able to give over \$53,000 in grants to the local disabled community and hope that being "official" will allow us to do even more in the years to come. Run For Holland started with a small vision to help the local disabled community through awareness, whatever that meant. Because of people like you it has grown into a Non-Profit organization that is reaching thousands of people per year through awareness, education, and financial support.
Can you help us grow our budget for 2019?

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

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

Yancey County

Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse ---Partners Aligned Toward Health Save the Date Burnsville 5K fit families May 11th. The 10th 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 brianna@pathwnc.org if you are available to help.

Come support the runners! Join in the fun and cheer the runners on their way! Costumes, crazy hats, bubbles, noise makers, music and all manner of silliness are welcome to encourage and energize the racers!
A Few Reminders...
• Race-day registration and packet picket up for all begins on race day at 8:00 AM in the Fellowship Hall of First Baptist 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 for parking.
• The race starts at 9:00 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 t-shirt, a goody bag, a medal for participating, and a smoothie at the finish line. Your \$25 donation will help to 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!

Mayland 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 when to post, proper use of hashtags, and how to boost content in 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 Start and Grow a Local 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 p.m.-3:30 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Cook Yancey 828.766.1295
Allen Cook, Director, Mayland Small Business Center (828) 766-1295 acook@mayland.edu

Baptists on Mission - Mission teams are needed to do Vacation Bible School, Evangelistic Outreach, and Construction projects in our partner states of Alaska, Vermont, Maine, and Pennsylvania. Mission teams can make a great impact in reaching these communities for Christ. Visit our website for full lists of projects at: <https://baptistsonmission.org/Mission-Projects/United-States/New-England> or contact NC Baptists on Mission at 919-467-5607 or mabernathy@ncbaptist.org
Deep Impact Kids Are you looking for a mission opportunity for the children in your church? Deep Impact Kids will be serving in many communities across the state with hands-on mission projects designed for 1st-6th grade children. Sign up your church now for a weekend, mini-week, or full week at one of these locations: Camp Cale, Red Springs, Shelby, Mundo Vista, Caswell, or Truett Baptist Camp. For more information contact Dollie Noa at dnoa@ncbaptist.org. Website <http://baptistsonmission.org/camps/di-kids>

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 savor 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, hits newsstands this week.

“Red Letters”

By Shawn 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 envelopes 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 it 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 invention of a man named Louis Klopsch, 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 Klopsch 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,

“*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 save us — 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 can’t 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 bank (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 sand bar, 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 sand bar, 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 will stay.” And he did stay at his post, and took that steamboat to the sand bar. 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.

Those 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; every 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 SHOUDN’T! But Jesus died on the cross and shed his blood for me, and THAT is my only hope of salvation.” That’s the answer we all need to have. Put your trust 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 whosoever believeth 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 it before, ask Jesus to save you today, give you a home in heaven, and help you to follow Him from this day forward.

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

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Morganton Seventh-Day Adventist Church

The Stairway To Heaven

By Steve Bietz
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, Bunker Hill. 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.

Or, 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 as the stairway to heaven.

Or closer to home, you like me, have climbed the steps of Chimney Rock State Park. Its stairway has 491 steps if you want to see a fantastic view. But I've never heard it classified as the stairway to heaven.

But, there is a stairway that has 28 steps. A stairway, for some 1500 years, that has not been walked up, but rather a person is to go up those 28 steps on their knees. The hierarchy of the Church Of Rome, gave the title to this stairway. They called it Scala Sancta, 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 staircase is located in the old Lateran Palace in Rome, which for almost a 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 those 28 steps called Holy Stairs? The stairs 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 city of Jerusalem. This stairway would have originally extended from the courtyard, rising to the porch outside the palace throne room of the residence of the governor of Judea. The most famous, or maybe I 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 shows his noncompliance. Pilate "washed his hands" signifying that he was clean of spilling the blood of this man Jesus.

Now you may see 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 336 AD, with much concern over the preservation of the sites we often hear called the Holy Land, Emperor Constantine's mother, Helenna Augustus, made a trip to Jerusalem. Her main goal was to locate and protect the important sites of the life of Jesus. If you go to the Holy Land, you will see that there are churches built over many sites. This idea was established by Helenna. But, if the holy relics could be transported, she had those items hauled to the city of Rome. Something interesting— Helenna had almost a ton of dirt taken from off of 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 staircase would also be transported back to Rome. Supposedly the very steps 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 to be the ultimate indulgence. Pope Leo decreed that if one were to crawl up on those 28 steps on their knees a loved one's time spent in purgatory 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 1511, a German monk named Martin Luther, would travel to Rome, intent on climbing those 28 steps on his knees so that his sins would vanish. 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, exploded in his thoughts. THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH. Luther realized that the so called "stairway to heaven" did not wash away his sins. The indulgences 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 blazed across the world.

There, in the upper room, as Christ and the disciples celebrated the Passover Supper, we listen in as the Lord endeavors to teach the truth. The disciple John records the answer from Christ in John 14:6. "Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." Jesus said, "I am 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 our 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 Bietz, 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



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YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

NC Senate District 46



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

This week I was proud to be able to cast a vote supporting S359, The Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act. <https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookUp/2019/s359> This bill requires doctors to provide medical care to babies born alive during an attempted abortion. A living, breathing infant deserves the same rights as any other child, regardless of decisions that were made before birth. Thankfully the bill passed, but I am still struggling to comprehend the reason anybody could vote against a bill like this.

Every human being, 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.

US House of Representatives NC District 11



Congressman
Mark Meadows
202-225-6401
www.meadows.house.gov

Mueller Report Concludes: 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 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 FBI and DOJ executives who wanted to retaliate against a legitimately 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 isn't 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 rampantly 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.

NC House District 118



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

And Who Says We Don't Get Much Mail?

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. Presnell 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.

HB88- Address Direct Support Personnel Staffing Crisis, Sponsors: Dobson, Bell, Presnell and Ball. 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. Presnell 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.



LT. Col. Retired Alan West and former Congressman from Florida, spoke to our caucus. He was truly motivating, a great Constitutionalist, and ask us to hold onto North Carolina and work hard to keep it RED!



Western Area Chambers of Commerce Event
- Good to be with Michael Ferguson, Wallace McDonald, and Matt Claypoll, all with Evergreen Packaging/Blue Ridge Paper Products

YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

NC Senate District 47



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

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 359 – Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act. This bill requires a health care practitioner 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 to fathom in my heart and mind the callous disregard for innocent human life that is present in our culture. I believed 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 vetoed the bill with the following message: "Laws already protect newborn babies and this bill is an 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 infants dying following an abortion, overtly or by neglect of care. Jill Stanek, 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@ncleg.net or calling me at 919-733-3460.



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Penland Kids Camps are Enrolling Now

By Robbin Dreyer
Mitchell County

Your child can wander into the woods with a puppet to inspire 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 sweet and savory pies 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 Felt and Clay Creations!, June 17-28; Appalachian Folk Arts, June 24-28; Fascinating Faces and Far Off 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 828-765-2359 x1218.

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, metals, printmaking and letterpress, photography, textiles, and wood. The school also sponsors artists' residencies, an outreach program, and a gallery and visitors center. Penland is a nonprofit, tax-exempt institution which receives support from the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural & Cultural Resources, with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts. More information at penland.org.

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



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 I send 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 places 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 20th 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 have 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, the F.B.I. and law enforcement officials were searching for a woman, infatuated by the Columbine attacks, who was considered to be armed and dangerous. The news prompted lockdowns and the closure of schools in at least 10 school districts.

Today's reading often gets overlooked in the twentieth 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 she remains 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 in a locked 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, the 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 to 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. 379). Because of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, peace 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," Jesus says, "so 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 to the University. He is a graduate of Gardner-Webb with a B.A. in Music and earned his M. Div. degree at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He also teaches in the undergraduate department of religious studies and enjoys the opportunity to serve the local church through interim pastorates, pulpit supply, and preaching revival services. He and his wife, Teresa, have two children, Christian and Anna.

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Death of Convenience

By Alan Griffin

Since 1980 there have been two billion legal and illegal abortions worldwide, and 97 percent of abortions are a death of convenience. Who is the victim? Who suffers the most? 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 depression, severe anxiety issues, and some 70 percent 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 hopeafterabortion.com 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 may sound romantic in the storybooks, but in reality it can be a lifelong nightmare. We want to believe what someone is telling us is the truth, and we don't want to shy away from a possible future with someone we care about, 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 goddaughters 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. I 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 same day I was to have heart surgery. I texted her over and over again and she would not respond so it was a tremendous heartfelt 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 hang out with. He just turned three, and he 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 a joy 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 out 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 humility 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 their past, when they turn to Jesus Christ it is all put behind them. The sacrifice that Jesus paid for us covers our sins like a blanket so when we stand before God the Father we are sinless in every way just as Jesus is sinless. 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.

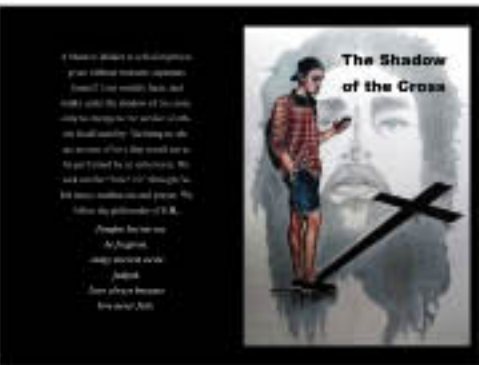
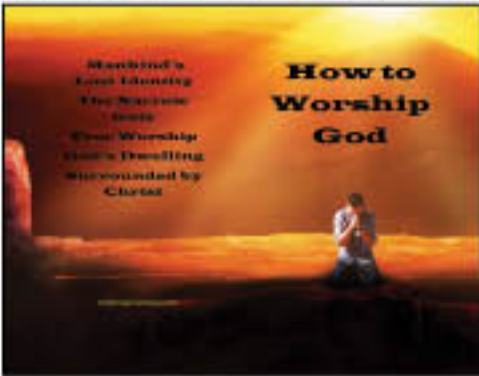
Dear Heavenly Father,

I accept Jesus Christ as my sin-bearer and I trust God to forgive my sin 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 alan@kidsnchrist.com.

Prayer by R. A. Torrey

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



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The Opening of the Orchard at Altapass

By Kate Groff
Mitchell County



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 328.3, 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 hayride and listen to tales of the Revolutionary War Overmountain Men as they trekked 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 milkweed seeds—a Monarch favorite.) Enjoy a burger or veggie wrap from the Apple Core Grill opening in June. Then try some lip-smacking homemade fudge or caramel-drizzled apples for dessert. Take a twirl around the General Store, with a surprise on every shelf—from jams and jellies to honey and syrup, games 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 (poles provided) 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 Hammond's Tribute to Johnny Cash and including a special Gospel and Bluegrass concert in August. Add to that, two heritage plays, and picnics on Memorial, Independence, and Labor Days with all day food and entertainment. And mark your calendars for the fabulous furry fashion show, Dogs on the Runway, on August 17.

Events continue on Super Saturdays with fun experiences for children that begin after schools let out for summer; collaborative school programs; once a month Heritage Thursdays with presentations by local historians, musicians, and storytellers; dance demonstrations/lessons. The list of happenings seems endless. "This year's Orchard's season is going to be spectacular, bringing communities together with live traditional music and dancing, picnics, plays, history and hayrides," said Donna Stafford, the Orchard's executive director. "Something for everyone—'kids' of all ages."

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 entertaining and educational activities for all. The Orchard has grown with the apple trees—ripening and yielding more and more goodness. We invite you to come celebrate the 2019 anniversary with Bill, who is still out flatfooting and telling stories every weekend.

The Altapass Orchard is open in May, Friday-Sunday and June through October, Wednesday-Sunday, from 10 to 5. Spend the day. There's not a rotten 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 Groff is the Programs Coordinator for the Toe River Arts Council.

argument devoid of any scientific verifications.

The arguments for privatization are largely rhetorical, with little to no basis in fact. Such contentions are espoused by the uninformed, those who hold libertine philosophies, or those with vested interests in the alcohol industry. Make no mistake, when proponents of privatization call for modernization, they mean liberalizing our laws—removing safeguards at the expense of social welfare.

Read Related Article: Privatization of Liquor Sales: What N.C. Would Lose by Shutting Down ABC

Shadows are amassing over the Tar Heel state. The demons conspire while we are distracted and not paying attention, and when we trust politicians to guard the best interests of their constituents. But we cannot afford to forget that evil forces are constantly working. As Pearl S. Buck warned, "It is when good people [good citizens] in any country cease their vigilance and struggle that evil men prevail."

Yes, pro-life bills are very important. Religious liberty measures are critical, as well as other legislative concerns that bear heavily on the evangelical conscience. But alcohol issues matter too!

It is not hyperbole to assert that an alcohol policy has within it the power of life or death, happiness or hopelessness, health or hell.

No one here is calling for Prohibition. Nonetheless, pastors, churches, and other Christian groups should call for the preservation and promotion of the best alcohol policies—those that sufficiently function to protect public health and safety. And without exception, concerned Christians in North Carolina should act now by contacting their state lawmakers in opposition to the bills previously cited.

To do anything less is not Christian and is a dereliction of Christian duty and citizenship. To do anything less and without zeal is to leave others, our neighbors to whom we are called to love as ourselves, to be caught in the storm.

Call to Action:

First, pray. The first and most important action to take is to pray. In Isaiah 43:22, the Lord charged his people with a glaring omission, saying, "[T]hou hast not called upon me, O Jacob." How unthinkable to boast of being God's people, the Church, and then we don't pray about matters. All the evangelism, all the Christian activism, in the world cannot move anything unless God decides to move upon the circumstances. Please pray that God will move upon our state's lawmakers to resist and vote down these awful alcohol policies that will unquestionably injure so many. Pray.

Second, share. Share this editorial and its "Call to Action" with your friends, your pastor, and church. Share it with anyone else you think might be sympathetic with its stated concerns. Post it on your Facebook page. (Its link is currently on the homepage of the Christian Action League's website.) Forward it to the people on your email list. Sometimes citizen Christians don't respond because they don't know. Share.

Third, contact. Contact your state Representative, preferably by email and phone to kindly express your dissatisfaction with these two bills:

HB 536—ABC Omnibus Regulatory Reform.
HB 971—Modern Licensure Model for Alcohol Control.

If you don't know who represents you in the North Carolina House, go to this link on the NCGA website: <https://www.ncleg.gov/RnR/Representation>

Then, do the following:

1. Click on "NC House" in the left margin.
2. Enter your residence address in the box in the right margin.
3. Look back at where you first clicked on "NC House" in the left margin again, and you should see your House District sited and your State Representative's name listed beside it.
4. Click on the name of your state Representative. It should provide you with his or her contact information.
5. Save this information to your computer so it will be easily accessible for future reference.
6. Contact your state Representative and urge him or her to vote against HB 536 and HB 971.

Contact.
This might take you a few minutes. But think of all that Christ did to save you. Certainly, you can give a little of your time and effort to bring redemption to others.

Don't be cynical. This kind of action really can make a difference.
Stay tuned. We'll keep you informed, not only about these alcohol measures, but also several important pro-life bills too.



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



Dave Says

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 600 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at [@DaveRamsey](https://twitter.com/DaveRamsey).



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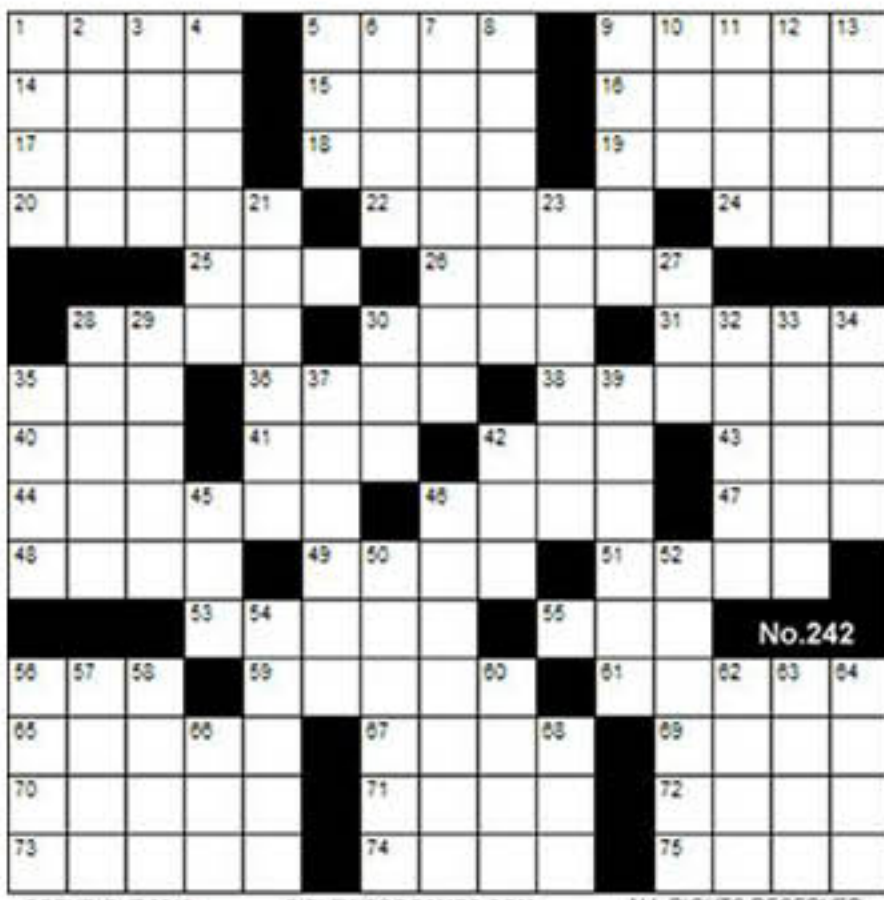
ACROSS

1 When he prophesies, his own parents will ___ him (Zech 13:3)
 5 from the ___ of Egypt to the Euphrates River (2 Kings 24:7)
 9 who ___ to be Jews though they are not (Rev 3:9)
 14 be in rest and at ___, and none shall make him afraid (Jer 46:27)
 15 The God of peace be with you all. ___ (Rom 15:33)
 16 before me was a man riding a red ___ (Zech 1:8)
 17 the woman saw that the fruit of the ___ was good for food (Gen 3:6)
 18 all our righteous acts are like filthy ___ (Isa 64:6)
 19 there before me was ___ horse (1,4) (Rev 6:8)
 20 Flee, save your lives, and be like the ___ in the wilderness. (Jer 48:6) KJV
 22 of gold five thousand talents and ten thousand ___ (1 Chron 29:7) KJV
 24 the chief priests had ___ with the elders and devised a plan (Matt 28:12)
 25 Old Testament liquid measurement (Lev 14:10)
 26 The last ___ that shall be destroyed is death (1 Cor 15:26)
 28 Then ___ Heber's wife took a nail of the tent (Judges 4:21)
 30 The LORD will fight for you; you ___ only to be still (Ex 14:14)
 31 I charge you under ___ by the living God (Matt 26:63)
 35 disciples followed in the boat, towing the ___ full of fish (John 21:8)
 36 twenty-five shekels ___ fifteen shekels equal one mina (Ezek 45:12)
 38 many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, ___ (Mark 3:8)
 40 In the third year of ___ king of Judah (1 King 15:33)
 41 a very long period of time
 42 Ascribe to the LORD the glory ___ his name (Ps 29:2)
 43 the two sons of ___, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests (1 Sam 1:3)
 44 chief man of the ___, whose name was Publius (Acts 28:7)
 46 honey from the ___ is sweet to your taste. (Prov 24:13)
 47 God saw ___ that he had made, and it was very good (Gen 1:31)
 48 a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the ___ (Isaiah 25:6)
 49 the wind will pick them up, and a ___ will blow them away (Isa 41:16)
 51 Our sheep will increase by thousands, by ___ of thousands (Ps 144:13)
 53 I commend unto you ___ our sister (Rom 16:1)

55 woman having an alabaster ___ of very precious ointment (Matt 26:7) KJV
 56 Be wise in the way you ___ toward outsiders (Col 4:5)
 59 You are bringing some strange ___ to our ears (Acts 17:20)
 61 if a man ___ a stone, it will roll back on him (Prov 26:27)
 65 Of how much ___ punishment, suppose ye (Heb 10:29) KJV
 67 a Levite who lived in a remote ___ in the hill country of Ephraim (Judg 19:1)
 69 O Sovereign LORD, ___ well with me for your name's sake (Ps 109:21)
 70 What can we say? How can we ___ our innocence? (Gen 44:16)
 71 a follower of the Way, which they call a ___ (Acts 24:14)
 72 God has granted even the Gentiles repentance ___ life (Acts 11:18)
 73 and they ___ fig leaves together (Gen 3:7)
 74 whose rider is called Faithful and ___ (Rev 19:11)
 75 let me have some of that red ___ I'm famished (Gen 25:30)

DOWN

1 Third son of Adam (Gen 4:25)
 2 the devil threw him down, and ___ him (Luke 9:42) KJV
 3 was what looked like ___ of glass, clear as crystal (1,3) (Rev 4:6)
 4 the ___ after his kind, and the grasshopper (Lev 11:22) KJV
 5 a time of ___, and a time of peace (Eccles 3:8)
 6 As ___ man who casteth firebrands (1,3) (Prov 26:18) KJV
 7 shall the shadow go forth ten ___, or go back ten (2 Kings 20:9) KJV
 8 So he pretended to be ___ in their presence (1 Sam 21:13)
 9 between us and you a great ___ has been fixed (Luke 16:26)
 10 LORD Almighty, will ___ off the boughs with great power (Isa 10:33)
 11 Bring me a heifer, a goat and ___ (1,3) (Gen 15:9)
 12 was in the ___ that is called Patmos (Rev 1:9)
 13 caught up together with them in the clouds to ___ the Lord (1 Thess 4:17)
 21 He hath ___ his servant Israel, in remembrance of his (Luke 1:54) KJV
 23 casts spells, or who is a ___ or spiritist (Deut 18:11)
 27 Therefore I will praise ___ among the nations, O LORD (Ps 18:49)
 28 father of David (Ruth 4:17)
 29 we spend our years as ___ that is told (1,4) (Ps 90:9) KJV
 30 father of Joshua (Moses' aide) (Josh 1:1)
 32 the sword, not of ___ man, shall devour him (1,4) (Isaiah 31:8)
 33 gives honest testimony, but a false witness ___ lies (Prov 12:17)
 34 the LORD sent thunder and ___, and lightning flashed down (Exod 9:23)
 35 Unless I see the ___ marks in his hands and put ___ (John 20:25)
 37 they ___ an accusation against the people of Judah (Ezra 4:6)



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39 borrower as for lender, for ___ as for creditor (Isa 24:2)
 42 Even the ___ in the field deserts her newborn fawn (Jer 14:5)
 45 the sucking child shall play on the hole of the ___ (Isa 11:8) KJV
 46 thine age shall be ___ than the noonday; thou shalt shine (Job 11:17) KJV
 50 And I saw ___ coming out of the sea (1,5) (Rev 13:1)
 52 second book of the Old Testament
 54 They ___ counselors to work against them and frustrate their (Ezra 4:5)
 56 the poison of ___ is under their lips (Rom 3:13) KJV
 57 Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of ___ (Jude 11) KJV
 58 he did the things that were com-
 manded him? I ___ not (Luke 17:9) KJV
 60 left for Ramah and went to the great cistern at ___ (1 Sam 19:22)
 62 I have neither ___ on usury, nor men have lent to me (Jer 15:10)
 63 vain for you to rise up early, to sit up ___ (Ps 127:2)
 64 The LORD is ___ to anger, abounding in love (Num 14:18)
 66 But as the serpent beguiled ___ through his subtilty (2 Cor 11:3)
 68 Our forefathers ___ the manna in the desert (John 6:31)

Solution on page 14



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 Corts. There was a mother, one time, who always wore gloves 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 she didn't want her to wear those gloves to 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 "honey the reason your mother wears gloves and long sleeves is 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 back down the stairs with you the house was engulfed with flames because it was so old. She wrapped a blanket around you and down the stairs she ran. 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 her to the hospital and did all they could do to help her, but it still left her arms & hands looking very bad. She never told you this because she loves you very much and did 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 her 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 task. Now it took on a lot of different things for her, like moving away from her family and hometown, where she had lived all of her life and leaving behind friends and things that were so very familiar to her. She also was faced with sizing down from a 4 bedroom house to a 2 bedroom single wide trailer at Fruitland College in Hendersonville, NC while I was in college. We left behind a daughter who was a senior in Piedmont 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 that her children could have things they wanted. She has also experienced many heart breaking things in her life: her first husband and brother were killed in a tractor trailer accident when she was only 20 years old and she was left with a small baby. Then with our children she has seen Divorce, 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 defer many of their own needs and desires in favor of the needs of their children. As a consequence of this sacrifice, conscientious parents develop a nobility of character and learn to put into practice the selfless truths taught by the Savior Himself. James E. Faust
• 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 useful
- Don't buy Jewelry: The jewelry your wife wants, you can't 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 cradled in his hands, looking so sad. His dad came home just then & asked him what was wrong. The little boy looked up & said, "Well, just between us, Dad, I'm having trouble getting along with your wife, too!"

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



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.

One of David's fellow school board members owned a car wash. He washed and vacuumed my family's cars to use in the funeral possession.

I had a friend who dropped off her kids with a babysitter each Tuesday morning and then came over to my house just to be there 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, Mow or rake the lawn, Wash and press clothes, Take their kids out, Stock the freezer, Bring groceries

Look at number two. It means a great deal to those who are grieving for people who are NOT so 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 at church 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 wish 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. Anytime 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!

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

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

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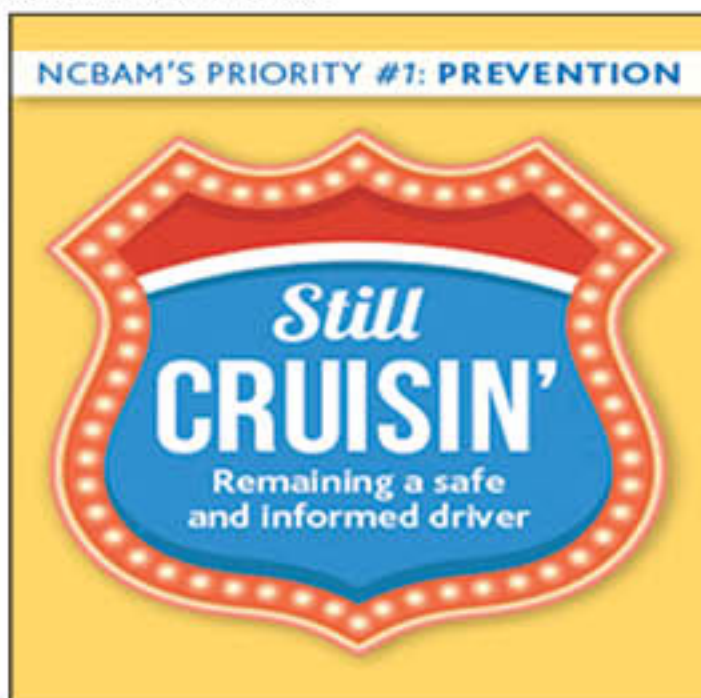
Still Cruisin' Workshop

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 877.506.2226 for more information or to be put in touch with the NCBAM regional director in your area.



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

Feathers And Petals Reminders Of God's Care

By Ken and Jan Merop
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 black birds, red-headed woodpeckers and even some finches brings delight and life to our backyard. They are examples of industriousness without a worry or care.

Do you think they know 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."

Trusting 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 browns. 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 scurrying around wondering how they may be more fashionable than the year before.

Do you think they know the verse in Matthew 6: 28 that highlight them as a model of humble, unconcerned 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 wow anyone. Yet, Jesus chose to compare him to the simple perfection of a flower of the field.

Flowers bring 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 33). *"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.

The springtime of the soul is not unlike it. Faith and hope no longer sleep, emerging vibrant, alive!

"Awake my soul!...I will praise you, O Lord... For great is your love." Psalm 57: 8a, 9a, 10a



Ken and Jan love residing in the mountains of Avery County. Visit Jan's new blog @ pauseandconsider.net, Journeying with Jan; and Ken's photos at kenmeropphotography.com. kenmeropphotography.com is currently off-line. But Ken's photos can still be seen at ken-merop.pixels.com.

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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 transferred 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, none of these reasons for salvation lend themselves to be the purpose for which He leaves 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 wholehearted love of God and sacrificial love for others (Matt. 22:34-40). In His response, Jesus established the foundational posture of love 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 initiated and sustained in fasting and prayer. To avoid disingenuous relationships with

lost people, we must share the story of our own redemption through the love of Christ in the gospel. While a conversation with an unbeliever about the gospel does not necessitate a longstanding 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 when we as Christians gather together to help one another sustain patterns of neighbor-love and disciple-making in our lives?

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

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



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

3 Locations for Your Convenience



The new Spruce Pine Cardinal Insurance office is located at 11995 S. Highway 226.



The new Bakersville Cardinal Insurance Office is located at 431 S. Mitchell Ave.



The new Newland Cardinal Insurance Office is located at 416 Pineola St.

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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 19 years old with disheveled hair, soiled clothes and a faint 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 in 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 finding housing. Through our thrift stores, 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 AI's Pals program is presented to pre-school children. Using a variety of puppets and funny voices, we teach these 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 828-763-4015 or tracy-black@bellsouth.net.

SECOND ANNUAL SERVICE PERSONNEL RECOGNITION BANQUET

ALTAPASS BAPTIST CHURCH FAMILY LIFE CENTER

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MAY 10, 2019 AT 6:00 P.M.

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A SMALL TOKEN

Please join us as we honor the ones currently serving and the ones that have given it all. With the uniform goes an enormous burden that those in civilian clothing cannot comprehend. Allow us, if only for a short time, to lift you up.

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7 Tolls. Responded. Served. Protected. Defended. Sacrificed. Suffered. Loss of Life.

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



*Meal for you and your significant other

*Short program

*Prayer for protection and wisdom

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FOR MORE INFORMATION:
DR. MARCUS BENFIELD (828) 850-3346



The Fund for Mitchell County

The Fund for Mitchell County
Awards Grants Totaling \$ 25,000.

By Lindsay Hearn,
Communications Director.

Ten grants totaling \$25,000 were awarded to Mitchell County nonprofits by The Fund for Mitchell County.

The Fund was established in 1999 by local residents as a 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 CFWNC, 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 safer access for school buses.

Blue Ridge Partnership for Children was awarded \$3,050 to purchase supplies, food and materials for its Child & BLOCK event.

Camp Spring Creek Outreach was awarded \$2,500 for a study that will evaluate small-group Orton-Gillingham tutoring provided to 18 kindergartners.

Mayland Community College Foundation was awarded \$3,200 for a student emergency needs fund.

Mitchell County Animal Rescue was awarded \$1,000 for a spay and neutering program for kittens and cats.

Mitchell County Department of Cooperative Extension was awarded \$2,500 to support its summer youth program.

Partners Aligned 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 equestrian program at Appalachian Therapeutic Riding Center.

WAMY Community Action was awarded \$2,750 to provide garden vouchers to low-income families.

"These grants comprise our first independent cycle, marking the progress and growth of the Fund," said Advisory Board Chair Nick Joerling. "Through the support of friends and neighbors, we are able to fund a wider variety of nonprofits and projects and can continue to meet changing needs over time. We are very grateful to everyone who has helped to 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, memo line: The Fund for Mitchell County. Contributions of any size are welcome.

The local volunteer Advisory Board includes: Nick Joerling (Chair), Beverly Ayscue (Vice Chair), Becky Plummer (Secretary), Janie DeVos, Sammie Ellis, Delphia Lamberson, Sue Ledford, Brandon Roberts and Brenda Sparks.

The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina (CFWNC) 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 1978. Learn more at www.cfwnc.org.

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

Lindsay Hearn is the communications director for the Fund for Mitchell County.



THE FUND FOR
MITCHELL COUNTY
A CFWNC AFFILIATE FUND



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Located in Ledger, The yellow
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Hospice and Home Care
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Hospice, Palliative Care & CAP

Happy Mother's Day

Sudoku

Solution on page 14

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

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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 I 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 life 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.

Be 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 trying. And in the meantime, do it scared.

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



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Let the Beauty of the Lord our God be upon us and
establish thou the work of our hands. Psalm 90:17

*Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he
shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. Psalms 55:22*

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Mitchell County 4-H

Teen Retreat
Mitchell County

Mitchell County 4-H'ers had a wonderful time at this year's West District Teen Retreat. Teens in attendance from Mitchell County included the current west district president Luke Silver, Claudia Chandler, 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 30th -31st. 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 candies inside for veterans as part of the project. Everyone enjoyed making the baskets and 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 officer team, and learning how the election process works. Luke 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!





Mitchell County 4-H

2019 Summer Fun

Kaley Brown, 4-H Youth Development Extension Agent
10 South Mitchell Ave, Bakersville, NC 28705
Phone: (828) 688-4811
Email: kaley_brown@ncsu.edu





4-H Summer Fun is a special program sponsored by Mitchell County 4-H through the NC Cooperative Extension. Activities are open to all youth ages 5-18. Workshops are designed for specific age groups and there are limited spaces. We invite you to join us for a fun and exciting time. You do not have to be a current 4-H member to participate.

To Enroll in 4-H Summer Fun, you must be enrolled in 4-H Online. If you have never been enrolled go to <https://nc.4honline.com> and set up a profile using these instructions:

SETTING UP A PROFILE

1. If you need to create a family, select "I need to setup a profile", complete the fields required and click Create Login.
2. Follow the instructions on the on the Family Information page and click Continue. Set up only one (1) Family Profile Per Household!

After adding the family, add your family members to that family profile. Use the following to determine the type of membership to add:

- Adult: 4-H Volunteers
- Youth: 4-H Youth between the ages of 5 and 19 who are involved in a 4-H program

IMPORTANT! Adult record should only belong to adult volunteers. For adults and youth, the next pages are authorization releases and health forms for risk management. These are important to have completed in case you get injured during 4-H Summer Fun.

UPDATING A 4-H ONLINE Profile For Youth Who Were Enrolled in 2018

- 4-H members and volunteers must enroll in 4-H annually.
- Go to the 4HOnline login screen.
- Login to your family account.
- Review and update the information for each youth member and/or yourself!

Click on the "Edit Tab" to access the youth/volunteer personal information and click Enroll for current 4-H year.

- Continue through the profile and make any necessary changes.

When you've made all the necessary updates- Click "submit enrollment."

****If you need help enrolling with 4-H online please call the 4-H office at (828) 688-4811 *****

Early Registration for current 4-H members will be on Thursday, June 6th from 8am-5pm.











Early Registration for the public will be open on Friday, June 7th from 8am-5pm.

Participants will receive a Mitchell County 4-H t-shirt with registration.

We will continue. Please take advantage of the early registration dates to ensure your child's space in the workshop of their choice. Registration will be accepted at the Mitchell County Cooperative Extension Center located at 10 South Mitchell Ave., Bakersville, (828-688-4811). Payment is expected at the time of registration.

We are excited to announce that **scholarships** for youth wishing to attend Mitchell County 4-H Summer Fun programs are available this year through WAMY Community Action, Inc. To find out if your family is eligible please bring verification of income from the past year or 90 days from June 6th. This can be in the form of pay stubs, print out, social security award letter, or personal statement. No bank statements will be accepted, however. If you are a current 4-H member you may bring these on our June 6th registration day between 8am and 5:00pm. For general public applicants please bring your information on June 7th between 8am and 5:00pm. WAMY representatives will be available during these times at the Mitchell County Cooperative Extension Center for your convenience.

No registration for Summer Fun will be accepted over the telephone. Light snack and water will be provided at each workshop. Participants will need to bring a bag lunch to all events requesting such. All events and field trips will continue rain or shine.




Beginnings

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Traditions



Saturday, June 29 at Silver Creek Plantation with tee off time at 1:30 p.m. It will be a captain's choice, 4 person team format with the opportunity to purchase muligans. Just call (828-433-8075) or email (bucmdirector@gmail.com) for details and to register. Dinner will follow the tournament.

BUCM is once again asking for churches to consider doing a Backyard Bible School during the summer for the children who come to our ministry. Last year's Bible School was a great success. If any church is interested just give me a call at (828) 433-8075 or email me at bucmdirector@gmail.com.

Please continue to lift our ministry in your prayers and come by for a visit any time. Let's be reminded of the words of the writer to the Hebrews "And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." - Hebrews 13:16

David Burleson is Director of Burke United Christian Ministries



Jamie Miller, CPA

Jamie M. Miller, CPA, PLLC

1136 Greenwood Road Spruce Pine, NC 28777	2301 Rutherford Road Marion, NC 28752
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Freedom Teacher Meghan Welty
Named Burke's Teacher of the Year

By Cheryl Shuffler
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 an internship 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 individuals with disabilities, but it was in room 131 at North Liberty that I fell in love with teaching."

Welty said she is grateful for the opportunity to do something she loves every day. She said, "I have a passion for teaching students with disabilities. I love providing students with opportunities to learn and grow. I love teaching my students that they are capable of accomplishing anything they set their minds to. Their victories are my victories; their failures are my failures. I believe that each action, each lesson, each hug, each laugh, and each moment molds them into productive citizens and life-long learners."

Welty believes in building awareness to the benefits of inclusion for her students and creating avenues for those in her school and the community to partner with students of varying ability levels, she said, "So that goals that were determined to be unreachable, suddenly become achievable."

One of Welty's 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 as well. She is the second teacher in a row from Freedom to be named the district's teacher of the year, following Amy Howell as last year's teacher of the year for Burke County Public Schools.

Welty and her husband, Troy, have a 4-year-old daughter, Keraghen. 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 Satu Mare, Romania.

Welty grew up in Morganton and graduated from Freedom High School. She graduated from Appalachian State University with a BS in Special Education - Adapted Curriculum.

Burke County Public Schools

Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam, Debbie Jennings, the director of Secondary Education and CTE for Burke County Public Schools, and Freedom High School Principal Felicia Simmons surprised Welty with the announcement on Tuesday in her classroom. Simmons then informed the school over the intercom of the honor.

Jennings said, "Mrs. Welty loves and advocates for her students and that is evident when you walk into her classroom or the life skills apartment. She is passionate about what she does, and the students respond to that passion. Mrs. Welty is well deserving of this honor."

Larry Putnam said, "Whether she is teaching a lesson, cheering on her students at Special Olympics or helping them learn independent living skills, Mrs. Welty has a smile on her face and excitement in her voice. We are honored that she is representing Burke County as our teacher of the year."

Each school in the district selected a teacher of the year. The school-level recipients completed a written portfolio and submitted videos in which they talked about teacher leadership, student-centered classrooms, accountability and their platform as teacher of the year. A committee reviewed the portfolios and videos and selected finalists for an interview.

Putnam said, "Congratulations to all of the schools' teachers of the year. They are the best of the best. We are grateful to have a district full of passionate and creative teachers who put students first."

The Board of Education will recognize Welty and all school-level teachers of the year at the May 13 Board of Education meeting. Welty is now eligible for the regional teacher of the year.

Cheryl Shuffler 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

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 0.5% of the continent is not covered by ice. There are no 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 southernmost continent and at the South Pole. Antarctica is home to the beautiful Emperor Penguins. This is the only place on earth that 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 high and can weigh up to 84lbs. There are an approximately 595,000 Emperor Penguins alive and they can live up to 20 years old in the wild. Their known predators are Leopard seals, killer whales, and fulmars.

The Emperor Penguins are a flightless bird that can swim in the frigid water that surrounds the continent. They can dive to 1800 feet and can stay underwater for a maximum of 22 minutes without breathing. Here is where they find their meals of fish, squid, and krill. 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 35 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 her feet to the dad's feet. This has to be done very carefully and slowly, if by chance the egg falls off of one of the parent's feet onto the ice, the egg will freeze within seconds causing the baby chick inside to die. After this successful transfer, the momma penguin goes out to sea to feed for a little over two months and does not return until the baby is born. During this time the daddy penguins keep the egg tucked under their brood patch (an extremely warm feathered skin whose sole purpose is to keep the egg warm) on their feet. Sometimes when the weather gets so extreme the dads will huddle together to stay warm. The Daddy penguins stand out in the blizzard like conditions, below zero temperatures, and blinding winds without eating a single thing 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 dads live only off their body fat losing as much as 45 % of their total body weight. That would be like if you weighed 100lbs. when you first put the egg on your feet, by the time the baby hatched you would weigh only 55lbs.

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 white 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 fill his belly up. 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 ice 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 tiny bit, the ice will melt, bringing the sea waters closer to their homes where the babies will start feeding themselves. Eggs and chicks have only a 10 percent survival rate but isn't it amazing that their parents are willing to go through such extreme conditions, especially the dads, to help their baby's chance to survive? They take their responsibility as parents very serious.

God knew you before you were forming in your mother's belly. He has appointed someone special to take care of you. God hand-picked this person (or persons) out to be your caregiver, knowing that they were the best fit for you. One day you will have the great responsibility of taking care of your own babies and perhaps God will lay it on your heart to adopt or foster other children. It will then be your job, just like it has been your parents or caregiver's job, to stand up and protect children still growing in their mother's womb as well as children already



born. You will not only make a difference in your own children's lives but, in other children you are around. How you act and what you do will influence how future children will learn and who they will become. That's why its so important to keep your family in church and to teach them about God. This is a great responsibility isn't it? But don't worry God has faith in you, that you will do your very best in these areas!

Dear Lord we thank you so much for entrusting each one of us with the great responsibility of taking care of the unborn children as well as our own children and perhaps other people's children. Help us to always protect them and do what is best for them. Help us teach young ones about You and Your ways so they will grow up they way You want them to.

"I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations." Jeremiah 1:5 NLT

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6 ESV

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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 HCI. Christy gives all the glory to God in everything she does. A portion of every book sold from the Small Bible Character Series will be donated to battle human trafficking. If you enjoy her books, like her author page on Facebook and let her know! You can buy her books at https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&field-author=Christy+Lowman&search-alias=books&text=Christy+Lowman&sort=relevancerank You can reach her at <https://www.facebook.com/authorChristyLowman/> or christysoaps@yahoo.com.

New Hope of McDowell

No Excuse for Abuse 5K Run

By Becca Trinks
Yancey County

New HOPE of McDowell is a local nonprofit 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 Domestic 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 so 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 7:30 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 refreshment is available after the race. We hope to see you there! Anyone with questions should call 652-8538

Becca Trinks 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



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