

BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS



"It is impossible to rightly govern a nation without God and the Bible."

George Washington

Bear Creek Baptist Church

God Bless America, Please!

By Bruce Cannon
Mitchell County



Another birthday is quickly approaching for our nation. America was founded by men and women looking for a place where they could worship God in spirit and in truth. History bears this out through so many speeches and documents from its beginning. For example, consider this:

In God We Trust was first inscribed on U.S. coins in 1864 under President Lincoln, and in 1956 Congress made it the national motto of the United States.

George Washington added "so help me God" to his inaugural oath; every president since has likewise asked for God's assistance at his inauguration.

Since its first meeting in 1774, Congress has opened its sessions with prayer, usually given by its official chaplain in both houses.

On October 3, 1789, one week after Congress approved the Bill of Rights, Pres. George Washington recognized "the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor," and therefore declared a national "day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors, including the Constitution, of Almighty God especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness."

The famous Liberty Bell of Philadelphia is inscribed with the message of freedom found in Leviticus 25:10, "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."

And, there are so many more examples of our nation being founded on the Lord

God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth.

My question is, "How are a few so able to demand removal of the symbols of our Christian heritage and succeed in doing so?" To borrow a phrase used by a few over the past years, "Is the tail wagging the dog?" Why can't the "dog wag the tail?" Does the majority rule? Or have the voices of a loud few out-shouted the softened, or silenced, voices of the masses?

Examples of our Christian faith and heritage being under attack include the Cross being removed from some public buildings, the Ten Commandments being removed from some locations, and the name of "Jesus" being barred from public prayers in some instances. These are but a few examples of the seeming movement to ban the Lord from America. And, while all of this is happening, it seems as if so many have lost their will to fight for our Christian freedoms.

What must we be reminded of this July 4th? *Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain. (Psalm 127:1) Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD. (Psalm 33:12)*

What must we do to help our current pitiable situation? 1)Pray! Pray that our governmental leaders and our Christian leaders will have the wisdom and gumption to stand for those time-honored principles that made our nation great. 2)Be! Be the change that America needs. Live out your faith in God so that everyone knows beyond a doubt that you believe in, serve, and love the Lord. Pray publicly. Carry your Word around openly. 3)Vote! Vote for those who have those time-honored Christian values. 4)Love! Love the Lord God with all your heart. Serve Him and He will give you the wisdom and power to be the change America needs.

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.



The Colors of *Hope*

Crossnore Fine Arts Gallery represents regional painters, sculptors, and fine crafts persons who want to take part in benefitting the children of Crossnore School & Children's Home. Join us for one of our Summer Gallery Shows and come see **the colors of hope**.

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Heart and Soul in Silver and Gold

Artist - Rachelle Davis, Jewelry Designer

Thursday, August 1, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

A Long Distant Vision

Artist - Bryan Koontz

Thursday, September 12, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Beyond the Veranda

Various Artists

Thursday, October 10, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Coming Around Again

A Stroll Through the 2019 Season

Thursday, November 7, 5:00-7:00 p.m.



205 Johnson Lane | Crossnore, NC 28616 | (828) 733-3144 | www.crossnoregallery.org

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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.fccradio.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



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No Regrets Family

Vaping - Is It Harmful?

By Pastor Dean Honeycutt
Mitchell County

Vaping among teens has skyrocketed over the past several years. "In 2015, the US surgeon general reported that e-cigarette use among high school students had increased by 900 percent. And 40 percent of these teen e-cigarette users had never smoked regular tobacco."

In our mountain communities, we have seen a huge jump in vaping. Coaches, teachers, and parents are concerned about the increased use of vape. "Today, more high school students use e-cigarettes than regular cigarettes. The use of e-cigarettes is higher among high school students than adults. In 2018, 1 in 5 high school students reported using e-cigarettes in the past month." (US Surgeon General)

What is vaping?

"Vaping refers to the act of inhaling and exhaling the aerosol, or vapor, created by a vaping device. A vaping device includes a mouthpiece, a battery, a heating component, and a cartridge that contains the e-liquid or e-juice. The e-liquid is a combination of nicotine, flavorings, and other chemicals. The battery powers the heating component, which heats up the e-liquid, also known as vape juice. As a result, the device produces water vapor. Users inhale this vapor into their lungs." There are many different types of flavors used for vaping. Vape cartridges are wrapped in cool designs and labeling that appeal to young people. Flavors include candy, bubble gum, cotton candy, strawberry, chocolate, watermelon, apple pie - just about anything you can imagine. All this, with a battery powered vaping device that produces a little smoke, is way more appealing than a traditional cigarette. Peer pressure, along with marketing techniques, lure youth into trying this highly addictive drug which is very harmful to the brain and lungs.

What are the dangers of vaping?

"No matter how it's delivered, nicotine is harmful to youth and young adults. E-cigarettes typically contain nicotine as well as other chemicals that are known to damage health. For example, users risk exposing their respiratory systems to potentially harmful chemicals in an e-cigarette" (US Surgeon General). Some of these chemicals include diacetyl, propylene, glycol, glycerol, and metals such as nickel, tin, and lead. All these have been linked to cancer, respiratory disease, and heart disease.

The vaping juice could also be laced with marijuana and other dangerous chemicals. These fine particles are inhaled into the lungs causing damage in blood vessels and the brain, also potentially leading the way to other drugs. Vaping is dangerous and harmful. Many teens are under the impression that vaping is less harmful than the traditional cigarette. Listen, all tobacco products are harmful. We can not see inside our bodies and see the damage of nicotine and alcohol. Believe me, it is there, and once the damage has been done one cannot get their health back. I am by no means perfect and will never claim such; however, I have seen the harmful results of nicotine and alcohol in the lives of family members who suffered from cancer and heart disease. Some people say of cigarette use "well, something is going to kill me. I just soon die of something I enjoy doing." Well, that is no way to live, especially for a Christian.

How can I help my teen?

1. In a loving way, share the dangers of e-cigarettes, drugs, and alcohol. Show them pictures of users and testimonies of addicts. A little scare tactic never hurt anything, but just be honest about it.
2. Live by example; do not do anything you would not want your child to do. Your influence as a parent is more powerful than you realize.
3. Pray for your child often.
4. Limit opportunities for peer pressure. You, by no means, can totally avoid peer pressure; however, you can provide opportunities with church events, camps, and an open, friendly atmosphere at home that encourages positive role models and fun times.
5. Every parent faces this, even Pam and I. We have dealt with and are dealing with the use of tobacco products. We live in an area where many of our grandparents made a living off growing tobacco. The very thing that provided income for my grandfather caused him to have a leaky heart valve. When told by a doctor to lay down the cigarettes and he could potentially add years to his life, my grandfather stopped smoking cold turkey. God allowed him to live long after the bad diagnosis of his heart condition.
6. The power of the Gospel is the only thing that can change a life and remove an addiction.

Consider this powerful testimony of a changed life.

"I'm thinking of my own life and the way I use to live it, Preacher Dean. I was an alcoholic, a drug addict, and the bars were my church many years ago. I bet you didn't know that about me or even think of me being that way, huh? I've been reading Hebrews and my old sins have come back to me. I had a DWI and was almost killed while driving drunk and messed up on cocaine and speed. So, my conclusion to Hebrews, after reading it so many times, is that if Jesus could pull me out of that life then He can do that for anyone who's saved. I've been washed in the blood of Christ, I believe in that blood and the cross, and I am a child of God. We can all have that. God was not going to let me go, was He?"

All of us worry about our children, and there is no guarantee that they would not try something at some point in their life. However, we can do everything within our power to keep our kids away from addictions. The devil wants to destroy their lives, but "greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4).

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.



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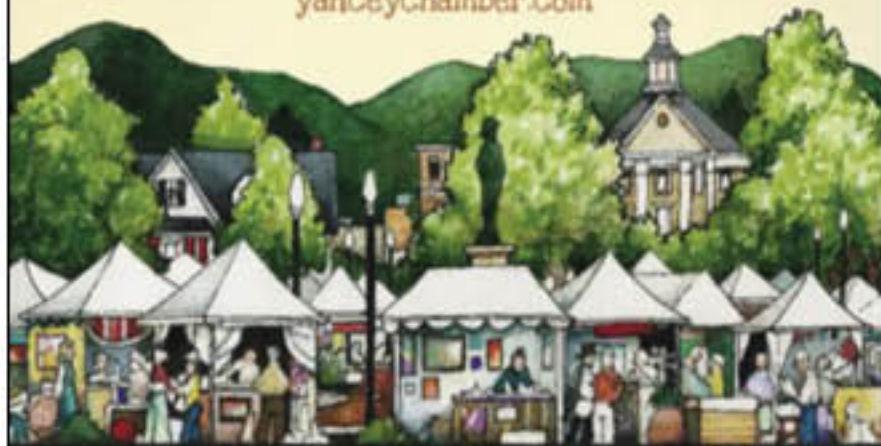


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Sunday School and Small Group Training for Busy Lives

By Rick Hughes

Do you ever say, "I would really like to attend that training, but my life is busy? I just can't find the time!" Good news! The Sunday School and Small Groups team has designed a convenient, self-guided learning platform to assist leaders not only to be trained but also to train others. The focus is on teaching, caring and sharing. These principles are based on 1 Thessalonians 2:8: "We cared so much for you that we were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us." The videos will guide you both to understand and implement principles of teaching, caring and sharing while developing leaders in your class.

What are these roles?

Teacher's Role

- Study and meditate on God's Word to teach people utilizing a variety of teaching methods
- Disciple/Mentor another teacher
- Pray for the group

Care Leader's Role

- Pray for people in the group
- Disciple others to assist in this ministry
- Create relationship opportunities for the group
- Pray for the group

Share Leader's Role

- Pray for people outside of the group
- Disciple others to assist in this ministry
- Create relationship opportunities for the group to engage lost people
- Assimilate new people into the group

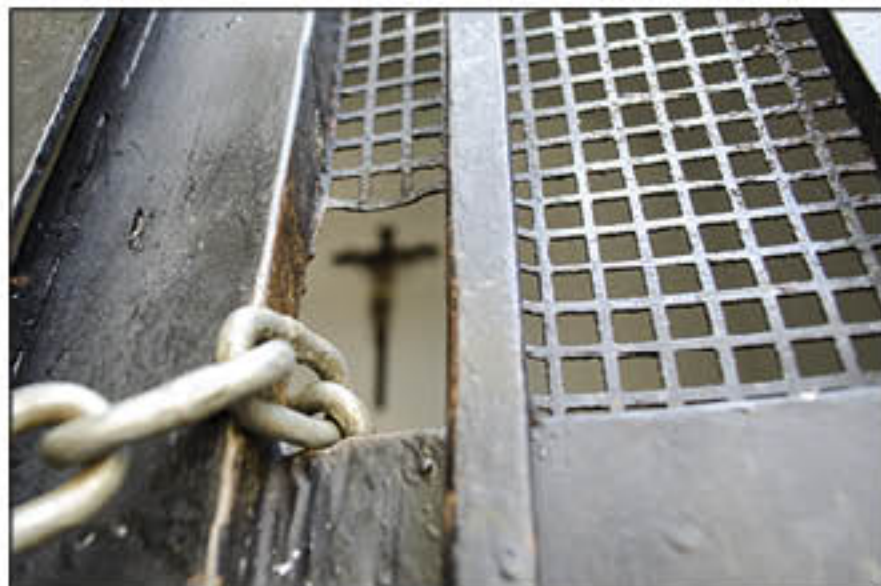
The video-based learning modules consist of experienced practitioners who offer simple tips that will allow you to take the next step in your growth as a Sunday School or Small Group leader. For more information, please go to <https://train.ncbaptistservices.org/>.

Rick Hughes serves as a consultant for Evangelism and Discipleship for the BSCNC. He is also pastor of the King Cowboy Church and is involved in revitalization of a small church.

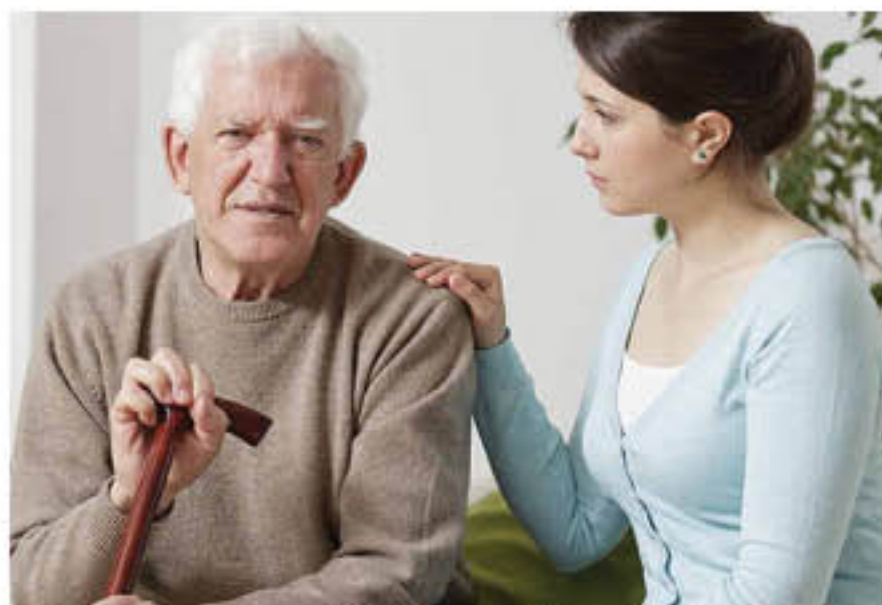


By Tim Eller

I have learned through life that you cannot win every battle. People so often want to argue and divide over the most intricate details of theology. People often desire to quickly burn someone at the stake for being a heretic. These defenders of the faith do more to destroy God's Kingdom than to build it up. Jesus told us to get the beam out of our own eye before trying to get the speck out of our brothers. In every church and on every pew if you look left and right you can see a family effected by the drug epidemic. If my People who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and turn from their wicked ways, I will heal their land. God said humble yourselves and pray, not get involved in an argument and affray. So pre trib, post trib, mid trib, or no trib. Can we stop fighting each other long enough to unify and fight against the kingdom of darkness that is destroying our families. If Christians would quit doing the devil's job of dividing and accusing the brethren, we could see revival. We need each other and we need God.



Tim Eller graduated from Carolina Graduate School of Divinity and has been involved in prison and jail ministry for the past fifteen years. Currently he is operating in the capacity of a servant of Jesus Christ.



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The Blood-Bought Life (1 Peter 1: 17-21)

By Shawn Thomas
Burke County



There is a man in Australia, James Harrison, whose blood is precious. Harrison has an antibody in his blood which is given to mothers whose systems would attack their unborn babies. When they discovered the antibody in his system, about 50 years ago, they were able to create a life-saving medication from his blood, which is now credited with saving more than 2 million babies! That's 2 million lives saved by one man's blood. That's pretty precious blood. But there's a blood that's greater: the blood of Jesus, which has saved countless millions not only from death, but also from eternity in hell as well. Our passage this morning talks about that precious blood of Jesus, and the difference it makes in our lives:

"If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. 20 For He was fore-known before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you 21 who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God."

The Bible says if you are a Christian, then you have a "Blood-Bought Life":
I. You Were Bought By The Blood Of Jesus Christ

Verse 18, addressing those of us who are children of God through Jesus Christ, says to us: "*you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold ... but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.*"

This word "redeemed" means "to liberate," or "pay a ransom" to set someone free. In Leviticus 25 in the Old Testament, God talked to Israel about how if a man became so poor that he had to sell himself into slavery, that one of his relatives could "redeem" him, or buy him back out of slavery (:49)

Well Jesus said in John 8:34 that every one of us who has sinned has become a "slave to sin." We "sold ourselves into slavery" as it were, into the hand of sin and Satan, and Ephesians 2 tells us we were under his control. But just like the relatives of a man in the Old Testament could buy him out of slavery, so the Bible says GOD bought US out of slavery. But the price of our redemption was costly. Psalm 49:7-8 says: "*No man can by any means redeem his brother Or give to God a ransom for him— For the redemption of his soul is costly, and he should cease trying forever.*" God says there, you and I can't pay for the redemption of a soul; It is too much.

What IS the price of the redemption of a soul? What is a man worth?

In the 1800's, a slave could be bought for \$1000-1200 (\$20,000 or more in today's money).

I just read in American Caesar, a biography of General Douglas MacArthur, that during the Japanese siege of Corregidor and Bataan during World War II, MacArthur and the Americans were trapped. A submarine managed to sneak in and bring MacArthur and his troops thirty-seven tons of ammunition. Of course, they could also send something OUT in that same space on the sub, so the General considered loading the gold bullion of the Philippines government on the sub, the Seawolf, so it wouldn't fall into Japanese hands — but he decided to send his army and navy pilots instead, because he said they were irreplaceable. He later told those pilots that they were "literally" worth their weight in gold! (William Manchester, American Caesar, p. 244)

Those pilots should have felt very precious: that they were literally considered more worthy of being taken out of there, than solid GOLD!

But the Bible says to us as Christians: listen, your soul was not just redeemed with silver and gold — but by something infinitely more precious: the blood of Jesus Christ!

Just like Jesus said, we had ALL sold ourselves into slavery to sin and Satan, when we chose to sin. And we should have been left there, and gone to hell — that is what we all deserved! But the Bible says, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" — Jesus came into the world, "the lamb of God," John said, to die on the cross and pay for our sins with His blood. I John 1:7 says "*the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin*" when we put our faith in Him.

So we have been bought out of our slavery to sin and Satan, NOT just with silver or gold, but the precious blood of the Son of God Himself!

Is that true for you? Do you know for sure that you have been bought with the blood of Jesus? You need to make sure — because there is NOTHING else that can save you from your sin:

- going to church won't save you;
- trying to be good won't save you;
- being "religious" won't save you.

It is just like the great song says: "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus." If you've never done it before, ask God today to save you because the blood of Jesus on the cross — make sure that you have been bought by the blood of Christ.

II. You Should Take Your Life Seriously

Verse 17 says: "*If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth.*"

He says if you call God your Father (in other words, if you claim to be a Christian, and you have been bought by that blood of Jesus) then you should "conduct yourself with fear" during the time of your stay on earth. Now, "conducting yourself with fear" doesn't mean that you should go around shaking in fear, peeking around every corner, waiting for something bad to happen to you. There are

people who do live like that — they're always afraid that something bad is about to happen to them. But that is NOT what God is saying here that we should do. What He IS saying is this: Take your life seriously. God bought you with the blood of Jesus, so your life is valuable. Those pilots who were evacuated from the Philippines had to feel valuable; they took the place of GOLD — so from that day forward they should take their role as pilots seriously. But God says YOU have been bought with something infinitely more precious: the blood of the very Son of God, Jesus Christ, Himself!

In light of that, you should "conduct yourself with fear," take your life, and your soul, seriously.

On the climactic day of the Battle of Gettysburg, on July 3rd of 1863, General George Pickett was about to lead his fateful charge, across a mile of open field, against the Union line. Just before he led the charge, an officer held out to him a little flask of whiskey, and said, "Take a drink with me; in an hour you'll be in hell or glory."

Well, Pickett refused; he'd promised someone he loved that he wouldn't drink. But here's the thing: what that soldier said to George Pickett that day is true of every single one of us. In an "hour" — maybe not literally an hour, but I can't say it's not for any of us — in what is going to seem to us to be a very short time — every single one of us here today is either going to be in hell, or in glory. (Some of you know I had a stepbrother pass away in Kansas this week. His brother had passed a few weeks ago after struggling with cancer for a couple of years — but Jim, who was my age, just passed away unexpectedly in his sleep!) You don't know when that is going to happen to you. You need to take that seriously.

You need to take your own life seriously. You need to take other people's lives seriously — like I mentioned a couple of weeks ago about how C.S. Lewis wrote that every person you meet will one day either be as glorious as a god, or as hideous as a demon, so he said you take every person you meet seriously. Take your soul, and other people's eternal souls seriously.

And because your soul matters, and because other people's souls matter, you need to take the life that you are living here on earth seriously. Listen: you aren't here by accident. You are not who you are by accident. God created you. He made you who you are, He made you the sex you are, He gave you the gifts and abilities you have; He has a plan for your life; and He thought enough of you to redeem you with the blood of Christ. GOD takes your life seriously, and YOU need to take your life seriously too!

You need to be asking yourself: What did God create me to be doing here on earth? What are you supposed to be doing with your time here? Are you investing your life in serious, important, eternal things — or are you basically squandering it? Are you living the kind of life that someone who has been bought by the blood of Jesus Christ, ought to be living?

A couple of weeks ago I mentioned that I had given our high school graduates a book by John Piper, called *Don't Waste Your Life*. In it he tells about how there was an 80-year-old woman from their church who was killed overseas while she was on mission. He said, is this a tragedy? His answer was, NO, this is not a tragedy. He said she died, serving Jesus Christ. It's not tragic to invest your life in something like that.

And then he said: "I'll tell you what's tragic." And he pulled out an article from Readers Digest, which talked about a couple named "Bob & Penny," who took early retirement from their jobs in the Northeast some years ago when he was 59 and she was 51. He said, now they live in Punta Gorda, Florida, where they cruise on their 30-foot trawler, play softball, and collect shells." Piper said; "Now THAT'S a tragedy ... As the last chapter (of your life unfolds, and) you stand before the Creator of the Universe to give an account of what you did, are you going to say: "Here it is, Lord—my shell collection"? Or I've got a good swing. Or look at my boat." He said, THAT is a tragedy; if you aren't living your life for anything bigger than that. (Now, there's nothing wrong with having a hobby or getting some recreation; we all need that — but you don't want to live your LIFE for these things. If you do, THAT is a tragedy!

That is what I Peter is talking about here. God made you; and God bought you, with the blood of Jesus. You need to take your life seriously and DO the important things that God has called you to do with your precious life.

Which means:

III. You Should Live Differently

We talked about this last week: how God has called us to be holy, because He is holy. Here he expands on that idea some more. He talks in :18 about how you were "*redeemed FROM the futile way of life inherited from your forefathers*" by the blood of Jesus. The word "from" there is literally "out of." You were bought OUT OF your old way of life by the blood of Jesus. This is important to understand. You are not just "washed" of your sins, you were BOUGHT OUT of your sinful lifestyle by the blood of Jesus, so that now you can live a new and holy life and live differently.

Revelation 1:5 says that Jesus "*loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood.*" That is important language. It doesn't just say He "forgives" our sins, but that He "RELEASED" us from them — He has set us free so that we do not have to continue in them any longer! If Jesus is really in your life, your life is going to be different than it used to be.

There is a bumper sticker expression that is "true" in a way, but which we need to be careful about. You've probably seen it; it says: "Christians aren't perfect, just forgiven." Well that's true. We aren't Christians because we are so good; we are Christians because we have been forgiven by the blood of Jesus, as we just saw, NOT by our own goodness.

BUT we need to be careful that we don't use that as an excuse, and have the attitude: "Well, I'm not any different from anyone else; I have the same sins they do, the only difference is that my sins are forgiven and theirs aren't." NO! That should not be the only difference. If you are a Christian, your sins HAVE been forgiven by the blood of Jesus, you HAVE been washed — but you have also

continued on page 11

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Statement of Charges: Calvary Has Settled the Debt

By Chaplain Jody Griffin
Mitchell County



"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

As a retired military chaplain, I have enjoyed the privilege of sharing the Good News of God's Grace with many people. In the military, as it is in civilian life, there are important truths to be learned. This is one of those lessons...

The words 'Statement of Charges' are universally understood by soldiers as they are introduced to them early in one's career and repeated often throughout. The intent is to instill a healthy respect for the proper use and maintenance of military equipment. Misuse your equipment and you may soon find yourself facing a detailed and hefty 'Statement of Charges'. What better way to foster a sense of personal responsibility than to hold one accountable financially! Withhold money from a soldier's check and you can bet they will be much more attentive to the condition of the tools of the trade!

If one can learn to appreciate the value of one's provided resources, then one is much more likely to try to preserve them! After all, no one wants to see their paycheck being absorbed by indebtedness.

In the world of the incarcerated, this reality is known by names such as restitution, fines, court costs, and fees. The writer's (that's me!) purpose of this article is not to argue the value of such. Rather, the purpose of this article is to get the reader (that's you!) to pause for a moment and consider the 'Statement of Charges' God could bring against all of us for improper use and careless maintenance of our lives and our relationships.

Chances are the debt we all owe in that regard is overwhelming. I know that I could never truly pay enough for the price of my transgressions. But God can, and as a matter of fact, God already has! Our debt has been paid in full! All that is required of us is to receive the gift of forgiveness. It's the best value the world has ever known! There is no need to spend all of one's energy trying to earn redemption. Our account has been settled! All statements of charges have been reconciled! To God be the Glory!

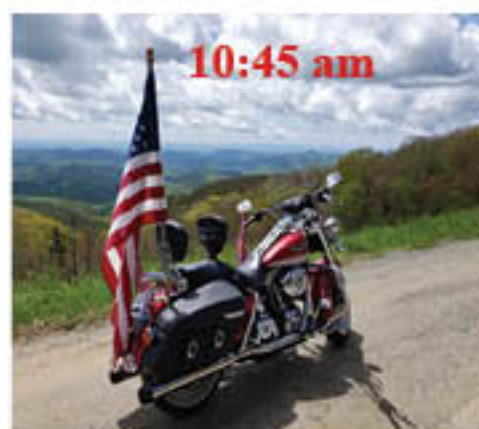
There are days when I still feel the weight of responsibility for my sins. On those occasions, I am called to remember what has been done on my behalf (Thank You Lord!), and I am entrusted with the responsibility of setting right the wrongs I have done to others. In a great sense, this is what drives me to serve now as Community Funded Chaplain at Avery Mitchell Correctional Institution. It is my privilege to share the Hope found in Jesus Christ whose death on a Roman cross on a hill called Calvary has settled the debt created by our misuse/abuse of the relationships we are given with family, friends and every single person. Thank you and God Bless You for your prayers and contributions of your time, money and energy that keep the Chaplain position at AMCI funded!

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



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By Doug Harrell
Mitchell County

The thing that we all strive for each day is the thing called happiness! We want happiness in our lives and in our hearts, we want to be accepted as one of the crowd, be chosen as part of the inner circle, to be the center of attention. Bottom line is that we want to feel loved and valued.

What happens in so many instances is that we search for love in all the wrong places as the old song I was lookin' for love in all the wrong places,

*"Lookin' for love in too many faces,
searchin' their eyes and lookin' for traces
of what I'm dreamin' of."*

We see people that are turning to alcohol, drugs, sex, food, fancy cars and you can go on and on.

We never find true happiness until we find contentment, learn to be content, not complacent, but accepting where God has placed us at the moment. Accepting God's will and being in His will won't always make us popular in the worldly views. In fact, we will be living in this world but not really be a part of this world. We will be born again as a new creature in Christ.

The picture Jesus painted in the sermon on the mountain list the attributes of those that would find true happiness for the long haul. We get all obsessed with happiness here for the brief moment of life, which passes quickly and forget about happiness for eternity, which is forever.

Matthew 5:6 "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

Many translations use the word happiness rather than righteousness, but we find true happiness here on this earth when we are willing to search diligently for God's will in our lives, when we are willing to follow and trod in His path. Take time to contemplate your relationship with your Savior today, put your trust in the One who can! Let your mind be filled with happiness from within, not from without.

Doug Harrell is a life-long resident of Mitchell County, Owner of Harrell Hill Farms, Inc., a member of Bear Creek Baptist Church.



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Be Still and Know That I Am God

By Christy Young
Mitchell County



We all feel overwhelmed at times. If you are like me, being overwhelmed seems to be a part of my daily schedule and is mostly of my own doing. I find myself taking on too much work or responsibility. Often just the daily routine of work, school, friends, and family can become a bit overwhelming. We often let all these responsibilities pile up on us to the point that it seems unmanageable. Sometimes we are faced with situations, whether it be sickness, financial trouble, family troubles, loss of a loved one, etc. where life seems unbearable! How do we press on? Where do we find refuge? The answer is God, Our Father!

The Bible speaks of Jesus feeling overwhelmed just before his crucifixion. Jesus was distressed, troubled, and overwhelmed. But Jesus took the burdens to His Father. What an awesome model! We, in troubled times, can also take our burdens to Our Heavenly Father. God is a God of peace. True peace from the troubles and temptations of this world comes from a relationship with God. In order to have that peace, we must be still, wait, and listen to the Father. In Psalms 46:10, He says, *"Be still and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the nations, and I will be exalted in the earth."* Exodus 14:14, The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.

In the hectic world that we live in, it's often hard to slow down long enough to appreciate the presence of God. As I grow in my faith, "Let go and Let God" take control, and spend time in prayer and stillness with God, peace abounds my soul and my hope is for Him. In the stillness of God, I can breathe, my faith is recharged, and my troubles seem to perish. I find rest in the presence and stillness of God. Sometimes we may need to remove ourselves from a situation, decrease our workload, or realize that it's okay to let go of some responsibility for a while. Whatever the case may be, we need to continually rely on God's strength and pray for peace. Psalms 46:1, *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."* Do not let the troubles of this world overwhelm you; fight your battles in the stillness of God.

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.



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been BOUGHT by the blood of Jesus OUT of your old worldly lifestyle, and you should not be living in that any more. You've been bought OUT of it! Jesus didn't buy you from your sins with His blood for you to just keep living in the same old sins!

In his epic biography of Abraham Lincoln, Carl Sandburg tells the story of a beautiful young slave woman, who was being sold at the slave auction in Lexington, Kentucky in the 1800's. A Frenchman from New Orleans and a minister, Calvin Fairbank, were going back and forth in the bidding, which kept getting higher and higher. It went past \$1000, past \$1200, past \$1400, then she was finally sold for \$1585 — an enormous price in those days. The minister, Fairbank, had won. The auctioneer gave the young woman to the minister and said, "What are you going to do with her?" Fairbank said: "Free her." He bought her, at a very costly price, to set her free. (Sandburg, Lincoln, p. 93)

And we need to understand that this is just what Jesus has done for US! He saw how we had sinned against God, and all the misery that our sin brought into our lives. So He came to earth to die on the cross to "redeem us OUT FROM of our sins." He didn't redeem us so that we could just STAY in our sins; He redeemed us FROM our slavery to our sins — so that we could turn from our sins and live the new, holy life that God planned for us to live.

So if you have been bought by the blood of Christ, you will NOT be content to just stay in your same old sins. You CAN'T be content in them! If you are content to just keep committing the same old sins, it is one of the best evidences that you have never truly become a Christian at all. When you have truly been bought by the blood of Christ, you will live differently. God's Spirit inside of you will not LET you be content with your old life. He's bought you for something better than that.

What if that Minister Calvin Fairbank had bought the young slave girl that day at the market in Kentucky, and set her free — and then came back some months later and found her, toiling again as a slave in a Lexington Kentucky plantation? He would be furious! He would say, "This is NOT what I bought her for! I bought her for the purpose of taking her OUT of this!"

But I wonder how many of us today the Lord might look at and say that same thing: "This is NOT what I bought you for!"

— as He looks at what you're doing with your body, would He say: "This is not what I bought you for!"

— as He watches some of the choices you're making, would He say, "This is NOT what I bought you for!"

— as He sees you wasting your time and your money as the precious moments of your life tick by, would He say to you: "This is NOT what I bought you for!"

Think about it: what in YOUR life today might cause Jesus say to you: "THIS IS NOT WHAT I BOUGHT YOU FOR!"?

God bought you, with the ultimate price: the precious blood of His Son. He redeemed you. And since He's redeemed you, He wants you to take your life as seriously as He took it when He paid for your sins. And He wants you to live differently. He wants you to live a better life than you used to live. He wants you to live the abundant life that He purchased for you, with the precious blood of His Son.

INVITATION:

— If you are a Christian, are you taking your life as seriously as you should? What is your purpose? What does God have you here for?

— Is there anything in your life that God might point at and say, "This is NOT what I bought you for!"? If so, confess and turn from that right now ...

— If today you would say, I am not sure I HAVE been bought with the blood of Jesus. You can make sure right now! Ask Jesus to forgive you, come into your life, and help you follow Him in a brand-new life from this day forward. He will!

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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Joshua: Training a Leader (Numbers 27:12-23)

By Dr. Jack R. Hodges, Jr.
Burke County



In an online article (insights.jmw.com) entitled, "Leaders Are Born, Not Made...and Other Popular Myths," by JMW Consultants, the writers join others in questioning the "so-called" truth which has gained much popularity in modern times. They join countless others who see that leaders possess a special set of qualities which seem to be an intrinsic part of their personality. We often find lists of such qualities throughout our society: visionary, energetic, dynamic, fair, inspiring, courageous, charismatic, and so on.

The writers argue that "while these descriptions certainly capture something about leadership, they don't get to the heart of it. It's not that you wouldn't use many of these words to describe strong leaders. The point is: these words describe what you see when someone is leading effectively. They are descriptions offered by observers — the people in the stands who are watching the game on the field. We suggest debunking the myth of born leaders: These qualities and behaviors are part of the result — not the genesis — of good leadership."

I would contend that God's people are both born and made to lead. Our calling as born-again believers, who are adopted by God as spiritual sons and daughters through faith in Christ, is to lead a broken, dark and lost world to the wonderful knowledge of the love of God in Christ Jesus. Our calling is to use each quality mentioned above (and so many more) to effectively invite and challenge those who are apart from God to place their faith and trust in Christ so that they can experience the goodness, grace, mercy, and amazing plans and purposes of their creator.

The Word of God abounds in men and women whom God has trained up to lead. One of those is Joshua. The first time we hear about Joshua is at Rephidim in Exodus 17. This is in the middle of the Exodus and during one of the stages of the journey when the children of Israel (Jacob) are facing an attacking Amalek army. Moses chooses Joshua as the military commander in the fight against the Amalekites. Joshua is the son of Num, from the tribe of Ephraim (Numbers 13:8). His original name was Hoshea (Num. 13:16) but was changed to Joshua by Moses. But let's backtrack to Moses before we go any further.

Earlier, Moses had reluctantly, but obediently agreed to go to Pharaoh and demand that he release the people of Israel from bondage and allow them to return to their own land (Ex. 3:7, 10). But fearing that Pharaoh will not listen to his plea because of the slowness of his speech and tongue, Moses begs the Lord to allow him to take Aaron along (Ex. 4:5). God's anger burned against Moses for his unbelief, but eventually agreed to use Aaron as Moses' mouthpiece. God's power and might worked through them to create fear in Pharaoh and he finally let the people go. The Exodus commenced and God led them by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea. We all know what happened there—Pharaoh and his army followed and were swallowed up in the sea trying to follow the children of Israel through the held-back waters. The wilderness journey continued, and it wasn't long until the people were hungry and thirsty. God fed them and gave them water to drink all along the way. They ate manna for 40 years and God supplied water as they moved from spring to spring in the desert.

In Ex. 16:35 we read, "*The sons of Israel ate the manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate the manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.*"

They came to an inhabited land. This place was referred to as Rephidim, a place which had no water to drink. The people found themselves in a difficult place in the journey. Although God continued to supply their needs, water was always an issue. But now, as they traveled into an inhabited region, a new threat existed. The Amalekites wouldn't take kindly to such a huge movement of people. They threatened to attack, and Moses had to act swiftly to prepare them for such an attack. That's where Joshua came in. We have no historical data that would give us any insight into Joshua's upbringing or training. Perhaps he had made a name for himself as a skilled lieutenant in the local Egyptian civil law enforcement. Perhaps he had done tours of duty in the Egyptian military. We don't know. But clearly, he had become known as a man of skill and valor, of tactical wisdom, and of leadership. So, when Moses needed someone to lead the defense of the traveling nation, he didn't turn to Aaron, his spokesman, he turned to Joshua. [Read Numbers 17:8-16]

From that moment on, Joshua held a special place in Moses' heart and served him as a trusted advisor and commander. Moses saw his devotion, his valor, his focus, and his perseverance, and character. Joshua was at his side from that moment on.

When God summoned Moses to come up to Him on the mountain (Exodus 24:12), He had stone tablets to give him which contained the law and commandments. Moses rose up and took his trusted commander, Joshua with him. Moses needed a strong and trusted servant to help carry the precious stone tablets back to the assembly.

After the law and commandments were presented to the children of Israel, Moses pitched a tent outside the camp and would enter that tent to meet face-to-face with the Lord. We read in Exodus 33:8-11 that Joshua, his willing and able servant, would always go up with him and enter the tent by his side. When Moses returned to the camp, Joshua stayed to guard the holy tent of meeting. How amazing is that! Joshua was the only one, besides Moses, that was allowed to see the face of the Lord.

And then, as the children of Israel were nearing the land of Canaan, the "promised land" (Numbers 13:1-4a), the Lord commanded that Moses send out men who were leaders of each of the tribes of Israel. In Numbers 13:8, we see that Joshua (Hoshea) from the tribe of Ephraim, was chosen to lead this expeditionary



force to spy out the land. The twelve leaders traveled to scope out the land and its inhabitants, to give a report of whether the land was good or bad, had strong or weak people, and had strong cities or not.

They went to the wilderness of Zin, into the Negev and Hebron, and to the valley of Eshcol. After 40 days, they returned and gave a report to Moses and the children of Israel. Although all agreed that the land was flowing with milk and honey, only Caleb and Joshua stood against the rest and declared that in spite of the stout resistance that the inhabitants of the land would surely offer, God would help them prevail (cf. Numbers 14:4-10).

Through every step along the pathway of deliverance, Joshua, the son of Num, was there. And when the children of Israel, after many years of battles and challenges, finally reached the mountain of Abarim (Mount Nebo), which overlooked the promised land of Canaan—God informed Moses that he would not be going over into the land. His job was done! His watch had ended! He was to appoint Joshua as leader over the entire clan.

Why not Aaron? Why not Caleb or any of the other tribal leaders? Because God needed a warrior to lead them into battle—and Joshua had proven himself a faithful servant who had the heart of a warrior and the courage of a lion.

Joshua would lead them on the conquest. He would go out and come in before the people and lead them with a courageous and faithful heart (cf. Numbers 27:15-23). His dedication to the Lord was unequalled and his zeal for the Lord's plans and purposes was unparalleled. Moses saw it—and so did the Lord God.

Regardless of what people say, leaders are made, not born. Gifted individuals must have training, hands-on experience, and good role models if they are ever going to realize their leadership potential. And that's just what Joshua had. His physical and mental training and spiritual and social leadership development was forged under the most dangerous and life-threatening conditions. He built character, strength, resolve, and unwavering faith in and through the strenuous, demanding, critical, and hazardous conditions and settings.

But perhaps the "most valuable aspect of Joshua's leadership preparation was the privilege he had of observing Moses in action," writes the editors of the devotional, 365 Life Lessons from Bible People. As Moses' personal aide, Joshua watched him navigate and deal with a rebellious and stubborn people. He saw Moses handle crisis and take care of both minor and major leadership challenges. And perhaps most importantly of all, Joshua got an insider's look at Moses' intimate, personal relationship with God.

Modern lingo would describe that kind of relationship as a mentorship. But I don't believe that Moses brought Joshua to his side to mentor him. Rather, he appointed him as a skilled and useful military mind and muscle who was crucial to the work and plans of God. Moses recognized the value of including this young man as a partner to the miraculous, amazing activity of God. He probably saw in Joshua a raw leadership ability that was perfectly suited for the enormous task of delivering God's people from slavery to freedom. Moses, in all likelihood, couldn't and didn't see Joshua being elevated to his place of leadership—but God did! And God needed this young man to see true faith and obedience in action. When the time and the circumstances were right, Moses heard the Lord and submitted to the will of the Lord God Almighty. He took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest, who laid his hands upon Joshua and commissioned him, just as the Lord had commanded.

I have been blessed along the pathway of preparation for ministry and service by godly men and women who recognized my heart, passion, and potential to serve the Lord. They gifted me with the privilege of walking alongside them as they faithfully served the Lord. As I walked beside them, I saw what genuine faith, deep devotion, and selfless sacrifice looked like. I learned the meaning of shepherding and the value of relationship. I practiced servanthood and humble obedience and waited for the Lord to use me and guide me. And that He did! To worlds, places, peoples, tongues, and opportunities that I could not even dream about. To God be the glory and honor forever and ever! Amen!

Perhaps you might consider finding and following alongside someone called and anointed by the Lord who leads with the heart of Moses, the passion of Elijah, and the love of Christ Jesus. Do so, not in order to climb the ladder of success or attain a position of leadership, but rather to serve God with the heart of a warrior and the courage of a lion. Perhaps, as a spiritual leader in your congregation, you might prayerfully consider taking on a Joshua. Discipling, grooming, equipping such a young man or woman for whatever marvelous plans the Lord may have for their lives? God bless each of you as you serve the Lord with gladness.

Dr. Jack R. Hodges, Jr. is the Senior Pastor at Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Morganton, Burke County. He has served as a pastor, a biblical counselor and a International Mission Board missionary.

Paying It Forward
By Tracey Jessup

"And he led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple blessing God."
--- Luke 24:50-53



Billionaire tech investor and philanthropist Robert Smith recently announced a grant to eliminate student debt for the entire 2019 graduating class at Morehouse College. Smith was giving the commencement address when he made a surprise announcement:

"On behalf of the eight generations of my family that have been in this country, we're going to put a little fuel in your bus. This is my class, 2019. And my family is making a grant to eliminate their student loans. I know my class will make sure they pay this forward...and let's make sure every class has the same opportunity going forward, because we are enough to take care of our own community."

According to an article in the Atlanta Journal and Constitution, Graduates were still in a daze following the announcement. Many of them were already thinking of ways to make good on Smith's request that they pay it forward. One student, Jonathan Epps, heads to Brazil in 2020 on a Fulbright Grant. When Smith asked them to pay their good fortune forward, "Epps immediately thought of the work he did as a tutor at Fickett Elementary School in Atlanta. 'I have been tutoring there for the last three years since the beginning of my sophomore year. It is a predominantly black school. As a student, I felt like I was paying it forward,' he said. As he moves into his career, he plans to serve others in a variety of different ways. 'Maybe it is giving money or doing community service on the weekends. Maybe it is in my job as a lawyer doing pro bono services. I don't think (Smith) meant for his vision of paying it back to be limited to one specific thing. We have to all do it in our own individual ways'" ("Morehouse grads already making plans to pay good fortune forward," by Nedra Rhone and Eric Sturgis, 5/21/19).

In the context of today's passage, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to his followers and commissions them as witnesses to proclaim repentance and the forgiveness of sins in his name. Then Jesus blesses the disciples, and as he blesses them, he is carried up into heaven. The disciples return to Jerusalem with great joy, awaiting the "power from on high." Luke concludes, "and they were continually in the temple blessing God" (v. 53).

It is important to note that Jesus blesses his disciples and they, in turn, bless God. While we do not pay forward the blessing of God in the same manner in which God blesses us, we do respond to the blessing of God by offering to God our witness and our worship. Charles Cousar writes, "Worship and witness belong together...Worship becomes the occasion when the story that must be told and retold among the nations is heard afresh, when the witness to the world is re-envisioned" (Texts for Preaching, p. 335).

Prayer: Lord, thank you for reminding us that we have been blessed to be a blessing, not only to others, but to you. May we always bless you in our worship and witness.

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.

Loss of a Spouse Seminar
By Carolyn Dotts



It's the classic story line-boy meets girl, they fall in love and get engaged. In the wedding ceremony, they promise to "...love and cherish one another until death do us part..." as some of the more traditional vows are worded. More modern vows tend to leave out the words "until death do us part...", but the inference is there; "We plan to spend the rest of lives together as a married couple." On that joyful day, it is a rare couple who look down the path of their married life to the possibility of being a widow or widower, but it is a reality. Statistics show that nearly one-third of the population in the United States age sixty-five and older represent those who are widowed, both men and women. Widowhood is an all too common occurrence in the life cycle of human beings worldwide.

Death of a spouse can take us by surprise, as in accidental, unexpected death, or it can be anticipated and prepared for, as in the situation of a terminal illness. Regardless, the result is still the same: the surviving member of the couple is left to deal with the loss and ensuing grief. Shock is usually the initial response to the loss, followed by a tangled web of emotions that cycle rapidly through the person, sometimes moments apart. It can leave the individual feeling as if they are losing their mind. Confusion and concentration, as well as forgetfulness and fatigue, are also common. Mental, emotional, and even physical pain can be part of this grieving process. The length of time is different for each person because grief is uniquely personal. Grief is also unpredictable: the individual can be "ambushed" by triggers such as a picture, a song or a scent that result in unexpected memories and flooding emotions that can render them helpless.

Daily, the widowed person must face what is called secondary losses. This is the loss of the roles that the deceased partner assumed in the relationship. The major role of companion leaves the widowed person alone with no one to talk to in the evening, eat a meal with, to go shopping with, or with whom to take a vacation. Other losses include someone who handles various household chores: yardwork, cooking, doing laundry, and taking out the trash. It can be difficult for the person to ask for help, and they may be financially unable to hire someone to help. Many other difficult aspects of widowhood exist for both genders. I plan to cover them in future articles.

There is help and hope available for widows and widowers right here in Mitchell County. Since 2008, the GriefShare Ministry, sponsored by Western Carolina Church, has been offering support to all those experiencing grief, no matter what the loss: spouse, children, parents, or friends. However, this is the first time that support is available specifically for those who have lost a spouse. GriefShare has produced a brand new two-hour seminar designed to offer care and practical teaching to help grieving spouses. It also acquaints the attendee with further support offered in the 13-week GriefShare cycle which addresses many other topics of grief.

Western Carolina Church presented the Loss of a Spouse seminar in April, and we are planning another presentation on Thursday, July 18 at 6:00 pm. There is no charge to attend, and both men and women are encouraged to join us. There will be light refreshments served. Attendees will share their loss if they are comfortable. No one is expected to speak, and silence is respected, along with confidentiality. A 35-minute video will be presented, followed by discussion. Each person will receive a participant guide filled with articles and other information for use at home when they feel ready. At this seminar, more information will be shared about the GriefShare 13-week Fall Cycle to begin in August.

For more information and registration, please call Carolyn Dotts at Western Carolina Church, 828-765-4633 or at 828-467-1433.

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

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

Faith Based Healthcare

Understanding Healthcare
Sharing Ministries

By Steve Gaito
McDowell County



For many Americans, healthcare has become the most significant expense in their budget. With the introduction of the Affordable Care Act (Obama Care), the cost of health insurance premiums has skyrocketed for millions of Americans that do not qualify for subsidies. But there is a reasonably priced alternative with the rapidly growing sector known as healthcare sharing ministries.

Healthcare sharing ministries manage plans that are not insurance in the traditional sense because they are structured to cover healthcare costs with equitable responsibility across all plan participants. As the name implies, the cost of these plans is shared by people of a similar faith to provide coverage for major health events and more. According to healthinsurance.org, over 1 million people have opted for these plans as of 2018. While these sharing plans differ from traditional insurance in several ways, many include networks and co-pays just like regular health insurance.

To participate in a faith-based cost-sharing plan, there are specific requirements for acceptance. Standard criteria for joining a healthcare sharing ministry might include verification of regular attendance at a church, adhering to certain lifestyle choices that encourage good health, and other elements that are affiliated with a belief in God. Many of these plans exclude pre-existing conditions or require a waiting period before these conditions are covered. Understanding that your health history and any pre-existing conditions may impact the potential benefits is vital in choosing the best option to help with healthcare costs.

Most healthcare sharing ministries offer three levels of plans. Catastrophic type plans are structured to help with major health events that might otherwise be financially out of reach for most Americans. Typical coverage would include only hospital and emergency room costs and usually require participants to pay out-of-pocket. They would then submit a claim to their healthcare sharing plan and recoup their expenses. This type of plan is a good option for people who don't regularly visit doctors but still want protection if a major health event should occur.

The second type of plan offered typically covers primary physician care, but the extent of coverage can vary greatly from plan to plan. Carefully reviewing a potential plan before signing up will prevent any surprises down the road. Some of these plans allow participants to see a doctor of their choice or restrict coverage to a particular network. One plan may provide coverage with co-pays while another may reimburse out-of-pocket costs after the fact. This type of coverage may be the best option for people who want reasonable access to regular healthcare and protection from the costs of a major health event.

The third type of plan found with healthcare sharing ministries is much more comprehensive and can be structured similar to traditional health insurance. Preventive procedures, annual physicals, primary care, lab work, and urgent care are just some of the types of coverage participants can expect with these plans. A co-pay structure is typical, so participants can keep out-of-pocket costs to a minimum. Some of these comprehensive plans even provide access to telemedicine resources where participants can consult with a physician 24/7/365. This coverage is an attractive option for people who want as much coverage as possible for prevention and maintenance as well as protection from major medical expenses.

If you are in relatively good health and want to save money, a faith-based health plan may be a good option for you and your family. It is not uncommon to see savings of \$500 a month or more depending on your age and the number of members in your family. Imagine what you could do with an extra \$6000 a year. One last feature of these plans is there is no annual enrollment so you can switch today and start saving immediately. As a Certified Financial Planner™, I know

that your hard-earned money can accomplish more with the right strategy. If you have questions, please call me and schedule a time to come by my office.

Steven W Gaito is a certified financial planner, owner of Faith Based Health Care and Retirement Resource Management, National Speaker on the topic of Social Security optimization, quoted in national publications like Money Magazine, US News and World Reports and Fox Business. Loves to educate and teach on financial topics like taxation of retirement accounts, long term care, healthcare, and efficient savings plans for small businesses. Has provided financial planning for missionaries through the International Mission Board.



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West Court Food Center

For almost 80 years, West Court Food Center has been known in McDowell County as the “working man’s friend” with its outstanding selection of produce and groceries.

A family-owned business since the early 1940s, the owners are still finding ways to meet the needs of customers in 2019 while remaining the ‘working man’s friend’.

James “Bub” Hollifield and his son, Mike Hollifield, keep tradition alive at the West Court Food Center. Bub became the owner of the store in 1962. Mike is the current owner and has worked at the store since “he could put a can of beans on the shelf.”

This supermarket, at 399 W. Court St., in Marion, is small but it’s got one of the best meat departments around.

For years, hungry customers and local restaurant owners alike have relied on West Court Food Center to provide them with a great selection of beef, pork and chicken. The store is known for its sliced ham, processed pork and beef for customers. And it’s probably no coincidence that this was one of the first places to sell Hunter’s Liver Mush.

But West Court Food Center has become well known for its own meat product which is made in the store. For a long time, folks have raved about the delicious sausage made and sold at the store. The store makes around 500 to 1,000 pounds on Wednesdays and it doesn’t last long once it is packaged and put out for sale.

Now at West Court Food Center is a new item, CBD oil, marketed as a cure-all for all sorts of ailments.

West Court Food Center also offers a variety of fresh, local produce and goods including their own product line.

“We have a lot of items that we don’t make them personally, that they are so good we put our name on them,” said Mike.

The store is open Monday to Saturday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Marion Business Association is proud to recognize West Court Food Center as Marion’s 2019 Business of the Year.



Mike Hollifield, James (Bub) Hollifield, Michael Hollifield, MBA Board Vice President Boyd Phillips

The Cost of Independence
Matthew 25:32-46

By Terry Cheek
McDowell County



July is upon us, with it comes Independence Day. We remember and celebrate our Declaration of Independence from England. With that declaration came the Revolutionary War. We cannot have one without the other. This is more than a history lesson, it is a life lesson.

Preceding a Declaration of Independence was a realization of dependence upon someone or something. Historically for the United States of America, it was England and their taxation and oppression along with economic, physical, and political sanctions of the colonists. The life lesson we learn from this is the tragedy of dependence in our society. Today there is too much alcohol, too many drugs, and too much domestic violence. The Justice system is overwhelmed with offenders. As a bi-vocational minister, I am employed with the prison system as a maintenance technician - a job I have held for many years. With my job comes contact and communication with inmates. These men have tremendous stories and many of them have tremendous testimonies. I also have the privilege to serve on a very special council as a community faith leader - the North Carolina Re-Entry Council, McDowell County Chapter. We are part of a larger State-wide group that addresses the difficult process of a released offender making the adjustment back into life on the outside of prison walls. Of course, the foundation of re-entry success is their attitude; they have to want to stay out of prison. If that’s their attitude, we want to help them break the dependencies that took them down that road and offer them independence from the old. But, as said earlier, it comes with a war. To name a few battles these folks face: there are physical battles, job battles, social battles, housing battles, family battles, perception battles, transportation battles, and, in my opinion, the biggest of them all, spiritual battles.

In McDowell County, our Re-Entry Council is fortunate to have Freedom Life Ministries to function as the wheels that move us forward. Danny Hampton leads this Christ-centered organization. From the FLM website, you will find a great deal of information regarding their work with Justice-Involved individual’s. For example, “Freedom Life serves justice-involved individuals and their families with programs designed to help our clients begin a journey to a new life”. I have known Danny for many years. He and his family came to our community, and very quickly Danny became aware of a problem - when offenders were released most of them returned to their old life and quickly became incarcerated over again. From that awareness, Danny became an advocate for those wanting independence from their old life.

The awareness and advocacy of Freedom Life Ministries and N.C. Re-Entry Council, coupled with my personal involvement with the Justice-involved, have moved me to become involved; to be the change I want to see in my community. The battles are real in the lives of these men and women. Those with the strongest convictions to succeed in gaining their independence realize they cannot do it alone. They need us to come alongside them and engage in the battle with them. Getting involved begins with the local church. We are the body of Christ; we are the hands of Christ extended into the world around us. From the passage given above we read this, “35 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.” Those who helped were rewarded and those who didn’t were judged. How did they know if they were doing the right thing? Well, Jesus answered that question too. “40 Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” The least of these are all around us. Will the body of Christ reach out into the local community and be the advocate for Jesus Christ?

Fellow pastors and Christians, these folks are not looking for a handout, they are needing a hand up. Freedom Life Ministries has an excellent music ministry that visits the local church. They have provided song services for me where the altars have filled, and I have seen the Lord Jesus Christ change lives through this ministry. If you have regular singings or a special event and will be using music, I encourage you to give them an opportunity to minister. If you are interested, give Danny Hampton a call, meet with him, and let him explain in detail what Freedom Life Ministries does for our community. Become aware of the battles and become an advocate by joining the fight for Independence these released offenders are facing. You can learn more by contacting Freedom Life Ministries at (828) 559-2224 or by visiting their website <https://freedomlifeministries.org>.

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



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Waiting on the Lord

By Alan Griffin

The dew is like a shower on the grass this misty morning where overcast skies hang low over the trees. The squirrels are already fighting among themselves as the robin turns her ear to the ground in hope of a tasty morsel. I need a rag to wipe the bench in the prayer garden this morning, and a coat to ward off the cold. I come, I sit, and I wait on the Lord to make His appearance. With all hope and anticipation, I empty my mind of a combination of events that soon will be as meaningless as all the labors that are done under the sun. People come and people go, but the world still carries on. The sun rises, the wind blows, just as the rivers empty into the sea. All these things are worrisome to many, but not me, because I am waiting on the Lord.

We practice a sound mind with the courage to strengthen our soul, and we ponder in our hearts the desires of the Lord. What have You for us to do today, Master? Where will Your Spirit lead us to journey, and what will You have us to do in Your presence? We have planted the seed of faith into the hearts of many, and we have watered the flock with Your Word. Fill us with Your Spirit, oh Lord, as we wait in true diligence and patience for the nourishment of our souls. Bless us with Your loving kindness and the perfect brightness of Your presence. We rely on Your merits to grace our meager existence, oh Lord so that Your will is done in us as the Father's will was done in You.

We recall the days of great suffering, the struggle with the flesh, and the chains of sin that bound our hands and feet, which prevented us from understanding the love You gave for us on the cross. Through Your perseverance You have made it possible for our spiritual eyes to be opened, permitting us to be illuminated with Your compassion and freed from the slavery of sin. We joyfully accept Your plan of salvation, the pouring of grace over our heads so we will not draw back to a state of damnation because we are those who believe in the saving of the soul. We follow You, oh Lord, with great confidence and endurance so that after we have done Your will we may receive Your promise of heavenly reward. We are rooted in the love of keeping Your commandments because we know that all the things with which we have been afflicted will work together for our good.

So we wait on the Lord by pressing forward with our faith so that we may say, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven because *they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint* (Isaiah 40:31 NKJV). We hope for what cannot be seen, and we wait on what cannot be heard by the human ear. We let our spiritual eyes and ears walk us through the theater of our mind, with all patience and longsuffering hoping to catch a glimpse of the enlightenment of our souls. *For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known* (1 Corinthians 13:12 KJV).

The Greek word for rest is anapausis. It means to bring our thoughts to an end and listen. Christ's rest is not a rest from activity but a melodious symphony of our will, our imagination, our conscience, and our soul harmonizing with God. As we remove the contemplation of life around us we enable the Holy Spirit of God to fill our soul with thoughts of our Creator. Quiet, listen, remain calm, and feel the tranquility of peace surrounding us like a sphere, engulfing us in God's presence. When we stop relying on our wisdom and intelligence, we are able to rely wholly on the Lord. When we dismiss our own self-confidence and self-will, we learn to give God the glory in everything we do because without Him we can do nothing right. So, we stop worrying about the future and the convulsion of mankind, learning to rest our mind in peace knowing God is in control.



We serve a living God who has promised never to leave us or forsake us so that no good thing will be denied to those who walk rightly in the Lord. We cease from our labors and allow the Holy Spirit to live through us the Christian life we cannot live on our own. We listen for the pulses of the Divine whisper as it sounds of sweetness to our ears. We reach deep into our soul and endeavor to prepare ourselves by daily exercises of meditation on the Word of God, and open up our heart to receive heavenly secrets. Speak to me, oh Lord, for Your servant listens for Your words. *Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain; my speech shall distil as the dew; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass* (Deuteronomy 32:1-2 KJV)

We serve a living God who has promised never to leave us or forsake us so that no good thing will be denied to those who walk rightly in the Lord. We cease from our labors and allow the Holy Spirit to live through us the Christian life we cannot live on our own. We listen for the pulses of the Divine whisper as it sounds of sweetness to our ears. We reach deep into our soul and endeavor to prepare ourselves by daily exercises of meditation on the Word of God, and open up our heart to receive heavenly secrets. Speak to me, oh Lord, for Your servant listens for Your words. *Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain; my speech shall distil as the dew; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass* (Deuteronomy 32:1-2 KJV)

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



Thou hast set all the borders of the earth: thou hast made summer and winter. Psalms 74:17

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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

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I don't do...

By Aimee Marler
Burke County

Luke 9:23: "Then he said to them all: 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.'"

How can three words change you today?
"I don't do" are the three words that changed my walk and how I view the tasks Jesus or God puts before me daily. For some background on these three words, I am taken back to vacation bible school (VBS) one year at church. I had asked a small group leader to help me during the mission lesson by washing the kids' feet, and, with a sour look on her face, she said, "I don't do feet". With these three words, she denied herself the blessing of serving others.

After this, I started thinking, what if other influential people in our lives said these three words at the beginning of sentences or statements. How would this affect others? For example,

Mom says, "I don't do kisses on boobies",

Dad says, "I don't do hugs",

Teacher says, "I don't do extra help", or

The preacher says, "I don't do hard or challenging sermons".

You may have encountered such statements in your life. How did they affect you? Maybe mom was too busy at work, on drugs, or just not around to comfort your boobies. It would make it hard for you to show compassion to your own children if you lacked an example. Maybe dad missed out on receiving hugs from his father, so he doesn't realize the importance of a hug or how it can allow bonding to occur between a father and a child. The teacher never needed extra help so he or she doesn't understand that the student just needs to hear it again or have it explained another way to help understand the content. The preacher does not want to cover the hard touchy subjects of the world because it may upset certain members of the congregation and make offerings decrease.

More importantly, what if Jesus used these three words to start His statements;

"I don't do forgiveness."

"I don't do grace."

"I don't do mercy."

"I don't do the CROSS!"

If Jesus had gotten His Heavenly Father to take the cup from Him in Matthew 26:39 in the Garden of Gethsemane, our futures would have been drastically different!

Your Heavenly Father will never ask you to do more than you can handle, BUT He does expect you to grow and be able to handle more challenges. So when Jesus or God asks you to do something out of your comfort zone, take the dare and see His power at work through you! In fact, washing the kids' feet that year during VBS was a huge blessing for me and something I will never forget.

"I don't do", changed my view on God's requests and my walk.

Will they change you?

Aimee Marler is a wife and mother of two boys that lives in Morganton. She is an active member of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church and currently works at Samaritan's Purse in Boone.



By Michelle Barrier
Burke County

On July 2nd, 1776, representatives of the 13 colonies, meeting in Philadelphia for the Continental Congress, voted to declare their independence from Great Britain. And, two days later, on July 4th, 1776, these representatives signed the Declaration of Independence, thus proclaiming to the world that they would no longer be under the rule of the English King. This was a huge step forward for this young, growing country and our founding fathers. They understood that unless they chose to make a change, they would continue to be governed by a king that did not have their best interests at heart.

Just like these men, we as Christians have a choice to make. Will we continue to live in the world and of the world or will we give ourselves to the Savior and live a life of freedom from the bondage of sin and with the hope of a greater future? The Bible says in Romans 6:22, "but now that you have been set free from sin...the benefit you

reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life". Our personal Independence Day is easy to attain. All we must do is acknowledge that we are sinners, believe in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection, and accept Him as our Lord and Savior. Freedom is within our grasp - declare your independence today and start living a life worthy of celebration!



To learn more about the history of the USA's Independence Day, complete this webquest! Answers can be found on page 41 of this edition.

4th of July Webquest

Complete the answers to these questions using the website below.

<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/july-4th>

1. What happened on July 2nd to make some people think that we should celebrate on that day?
2. When was the Liberty Bell rung? Why was it rung on this day?
3. Which three presidents and founding fathers died on July 4th?
4. What was a key feature of the earliest independence day celebrations? Why did this event stop happening?
5. When were fireworks authorized for the celebration of July 4th?
6. Where can you find the largest fireworks display on the 4th of July?
7. True or False - When the Revolutionary War broke out in 1775, not all colonists desired independence from Great Britain.
8. Who introduced the motion calling for independence?
9. Who wrote the majority of the Declaration of Independence?
10. _____ became the first state to make July 4th an official state holiday.

Michelle is a 4th grade teacher in Caldwell County. She attends Pleasant Hill Baptist Church.



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Morganton Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Photoshopped Growth

By Steve Beitz
Burke County

Just a short distance down the shore from Capernaum is where fisherman, still today, clean their nets in a natural spring that sprays up on a slope overlooking the Sea of Galilee. My wife and I were just recently in the Holy Land and witnessed fisherman cleaning their nets there beside the Galilee. It is a spot where it is claimed that the circumstances of Luke 5 take place. "Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and listening to the Word of God, He was standing by the lake. And He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake, but the fisherman had gotten out of them and were washing their nets. And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the people from the boat." Luke 5:1-3

Christ had not been with the disciples as they had fished that night on the Sea of Galilee. Peter and Andrew owned one of the boats, and James and John owned the other boat. At this moment, the disciples, although following Jesus for a year, were still full-time fisherman and only part-time disciples. They were what we might call, "weekend disciples" who were still putting in a full week of running a fishing business.

Jesus shows up on the shore that morning, possibly they had all synchronized a prearranged meeting, but maybe Christ just shows up. The disciples are rinsing out the debris caught in their nets. That was all they had caught, just debris.

Several times in the gospels we're shown that a crowd gathers unexpectedly. This is one of those times. And whatever they had planned for the day, Jesus adjusts the schedule to spend a substantial time talking with the multitude. But the crowd appears to have Jesus somewhat cornered as they close in around Him, and He is about to be standing in the lake. It is then that Jesus asks Peter to allow Him to get in his boat, and shove off away from the shore a little. The result is that Christ can sit in the boat and talk to the crowd without being pressed by His listeners, right into the water.

Following the closing prayer and the crowd begins to disperse, Jesus again calls on Peter to maneuver his boat. "When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." Luke 5:4

In verse three of Luke 5, Jesus had said put out a little, and now we see Jesus requesting that Simon launch out into the deep. Shallow and then deep. Christ is about to ask these weekend disciples to abandon the fishing business. But here we see Jesus first measuring His part-time followers, to see how much they have grown. Are they ready, for the deep end of the pool, or must they stay in the shallows, and just "put out a little?"

When I went to elementary school in Atlanta as a first grader, the school I attended offered swimming classes. I wanted to learn to swim, so I signed up for a beginner's class. They called it the "tadpole" level. They told us what time our classes were, and I showed up at the pool on my scheduled day. I remember thinking that it was odd, that none of the first graders that had also signed up for the "tadpole" class, were nowhere to be seen as those in the class gathered by the pool. Our instructor took us down to the deep end, and blew his whistle, signaling that we dive in and swim to the other side. I don't think that I had ever dived into the water before, but I gave it my best. The rest of the class left me in their wake as they swam for the other side of the pool. I had also realized that the students in the swimming class were from the 3rd, 4th and 5th grades. Strange I thought. As I splashed and sank and splashed and sank, the instructor came to my rescue and pulled me back to the edge of the pool. As I caught my breath, he asked, "can you swim?" and I shook my head back and forth with the officially recognized meaning of NO. The instructor then said, "then why are you in the advanced swimming class?" Come to find out, there had been a paperwork snafu and my name had been put in the advanced swimming class instead of the beginner's class. I was not ready to launch out into the deep. Simon, Jesus says, push out into the deep and we will discover if you have grown.

Throughout scripture, God shows sensitivity to the different stages of maturity in each person. For example, when God asks Abraham to push out a little into the shallows and leave Ur of Chaldaea, God does not present to Abraham His plan to have him sacrifice his son Isaac. I wonder if Abraham would have chosen to follow God's prompting at that stage of his growth if God had laid out the Mt Moriah appointment. Instead, God nurtured Abraham and became His friend, and only later, when the patriarch had grown enough, did God confront his friend with the ultimate test of loyalty.

When we spend time in the Old Testament, we see a pattern in which the Israelites keep repeating. It is a dangerous pattern of photoshopped growth. When an item is photoshopped, it is done to enhance the picture, hiding any blemishes and giving an altered appearance. Sometimes an item is so altered by the power of photoshop, it shows a fake situation.

The Israelites kept allowing religious practices, that were meant to deepen their relationship with God, only keeping them in the shallow end of the water. While sacrificing and fasting and not working on the Sabbath day, at the same time, they were heavily involved in idol worship.

And the pattern of staying in the shallow end would continue into the New Testament era. The Jews, in the days of Jesus, would attend church weekly, and be meticulous tithe givers and Sabbath keepers. However, they would simultaneously plan to murder Jesus. And it is rather obvious that the issue of deep worship or shallow rituals was in play. Despite their external efforts with rituals, God saw their internal motives. Their growth had been photoshopped. It wasn't real. The very rituals, which are ordained



by God to help us grow, were instead stunting their growth and leaving them in the shallows. In the book of Micah, God explains. "Does the Lord take delight in thousands of rams, in ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has told you O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:7,8

Without a doubt, God provided rituals so that they would help us grow. Rituals have validity only in that they assist in developing the relationship.

We can use the ritual of church attendance as an example. Going to gather with other believers can be one of the best ways to grow. It is where sound doctrine

is proclaimed, spiritual gifts used, mission efforts funded and mobilized, and the saints are edified. Church attendance is great stuff for launching out into the deep. Yet, while church attendance is designed for our growth, it can become an idol that we erect that symbolizes salvation. In other words, we think we are saved by church attendance...photoshopped growth. If church attendance is not motivated by a deep desire to grow closer to Christ and His people in worship and the Word, then we may be wading in a shallow pool of ritualism which I am calling, photoshopped growth.

Jesus, during His ministry, would try and point out to the Jewish leaders their propensity for confusing shallow and deep. Photoshopped growth, or genuine growth. Back to Peter. Christ checks what kind of growth Peter has acquired. And the Lord asks him, are you ready to get in the deep end with Him. So, launch out into the deep Peter and we will check the level of your growth.

Your growth, my growth, God measures us by His Spirit. Practices like church attendance, diet, stewardship etc., are all wonderful rituals that God has endorsed to help us grow deep. But, these same rituals, can be photoshopped which keeps us in shallow water. May these wonderful activities like church attendance and tithe returning, may they not be a way to give us credit for a deepness that is just shallow. But rather as our God designed them, may they lead us into a deeper and deeper place with God. Deeper yet, Lord, deeper yet.

Steve Beitz, Pastor, Morganton Seventh day Adventist Church.





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Enjoying Everyday Life

Simple Ways to Achieve the Life You Want

By Joyce Meyer



I think it's healthy to stop periodically and take inventory of our lives. It's important to ask, "Am I really living the life Christ died for me to have? Or am I settling for something less?"

Regardless of what's happened in the past or what obstacles seem to be in our way, God has a big, full life in store for each one of us. But it's up to us whether we're going to get the best out of life and make the most of our time, talents, relationships and opportunities.

The book of Genesis contains a great lesson in this area. It shares the story of Abraham's father, Terah, who gathered his family, packed up everything, and set out for his ultimate destination—Canaan.

However, Genesis 11:31 tells us, "...Together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Haran, they settled there" (NIV).

I wonder how many people start out to do one thing in life but settle somewhere along the way because they get tired or because it's convenient. It's not really what they want, but it's something they think they can "settle for."

Are there areas in your life where you have settled, or maybe just haven't made as much progress as you had hoped?

Are You Settling for Mediocre?

The Lord has called us to excellence, and we don't have to settle for mediocrity. The word mediocre literally means "to live halfway between success and failure." And that's where so many people live; they haven't completely failed, but they're also not where they really want to be.

This applies to every area of our lives. Maybe you've begun studying the Bible and you have a goal to really know God's Word and develop an intimate, close relationship with Him. If that's the case, don't settle for just reading a chapter a day to "put your time in"—stay determined to make it a priority and reap the benefits of truly knowing God.

Or maybe you have a goal to lose 20 pounds. If so, make a decision that you're not going to give up when it gets difficult. Even if you have a bad day and actually gain weight, be determined to bounce back the next day!

Sometimes we get used to the place where we are and forget there's something better. Life gets busy, complicated, or even comfortable, and we lose sight of the dreams and goals we used to have. That's when we need to stir ourselves up and become determined to attain every single part of God's plan for our lives.

What If...

Let's take a few moments to play the "What If?" game:

What if you decided to give God your all and seek Him with your whole heart?

What if you demanded the best from yourself instead of settling for "just average"?

What if you stopped making excuses why you can't accomplish your dreams and goals?

What if you changed the way you speak and refused to say anything negative?

What if you started confronting problems instead of running away from them?

What if you decided to stop procrastinating?

Can you imagine where you would be this time next year if you followed through with just one or two of these things?

Give It Your All

The Bible is full of scriptures that encourage us to do our best. 2 Timothy 2:15 says, "Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed..." (NIV).

I love that phrase, "Do your best." It may be easier to go halfway, but what could happen if you decided to give your best in your marriage, at your job, or any other area of your life?

Some of the greatest blessings in my life now are things that have required the most effort. Today, my husband, Dave, and I have the awesome privilege of sharing God's Word with millions of people through Joyce Meyer Ministries. Many times over the years it required tremendous sacrifice and the decision to keep moving forward when we felt like giving up.

Yes, it required time and effort to do everything God placed in our hearts to do, but I am so glad we didn't stop halfway when things got tough. I thank God that I didn't get discouraged and quit during the days when only 50 people were attending my conferences.

The truth is if you will give your best and do what you can do, God will do His part and do what you can't do!

So, don't settle for mediocre or halfway. God has an incredible, fulfilling and exciting life just waiting for you. Yes, it's going to require effort and determination; it may also require you to push past fear so you can enjoy greater freedom and success. But I promise you this: Whatever it takes, it's always worth it.

For more on this topic, order Joyce's three-CD series Simple, Practical Changes with Real Results. 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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Opposition to the Gospel

By Dr. Tom Walker
McDowell County



I believe the Lord would have us to see why some people are opposed to the Gospel of Christ. 1 Corinthians 16:9 says, "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries." The Apostle Paul lets us know where there are open doors, there will be adversaries.

An adversary is simply one who offers opposition; one who as an enemy has enmity at heart. Satan is referred to as an adversary in the Scriptures. 1 Peter 5:8 warns us- "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

You would think that everyone should have believed the Gospel and desired others to believe it. But, it is not that way. Some folks have not believed the Gospel, have not received Christ as Savior, and continue on with opposition to the Gospel of Christ.

Philippians 1:28 tells us: "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God." Paul the Apostle wrote to the Philippians believers and encouraged them not to be terrified by their adversaries. That word "terrified" in Philippians 1:28 comes from a word that has the idea of causing to fall or causing one to fly away. It points to one being scared. The believer is not to be intimidated by those who oppose the message he has to preach. Instead of being scared, panicky, or shaken, the one who has his or her faith in Christ, should be brave, bold, courageous, confident and encouraged.

If you recall from the Book of Nehemiah, Nehemiah went to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall. That was a good thing to do because their enemies had brought ruin to the wall. Even though they should have been commended and praised for doing such a thing, there were those who opposed them. Tobiah the Ammonite said, "Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall" (Nehemiah 4:3). How insulting to Nehemiah and his helpers to make such an offensive, ridiculous statement! You can be sure that anyone who does something good and for God or His people will have his or her critics. Even though they may arise, we need the attitude the man of God had when he said, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" (Neh. 6:3). He would not allow his adversaries to stop him from doing what God had called him to do. In Nehemiah's mind, he was not about to cease the work just to please a few adversaries.

We need to remember what Nahum 1:2 teaches us: "God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies." Spending too much time overly concerned about your adversaries as you do God's will, is not worth your time. Why do men oppose the Gospel of Christ? Here are a few suggestions why.

Preconceived Ideas

There are some people who are not searching for the truth. They have been taught something in opposition to what the Bible really teaches. For instance, Mark 7:8-9 says, "For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."

Tradition can be defined as: "The delivery of opinions, doctrines, practices, rites, and customs from father to son, or from ancestors to posterity; the transmission of any opinions or practice from forefathers to descendants by oral communication."

A child can be taught the wrong thing. There is nothing wrong with holding to what you have been taught unless it is contradictory to God's truth as revealed in the Scriptures. We must face the fact that the Word of God can be wrongly divided. Any interpreter of the Bible should rightly divide the Word of Truth.

Some people are taught repentance and faith in the Gospel is not enough. They must include their personal works to keep them saved and to maintain their spiritual relationship with God. To arrive at that conclusion, one has failed to look at the context of the Bible verses they are trying to interpret. Verses must be interpreted in their verse, chapter, book, and whole Bible context.

Perverved Lifestyle

The Gospel of Christ is a holy message that leads to holy living. John 3:19-21 gives us light on this matter: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

Many will not believe the Gospel because they love sin more than they love God. The sinner does not want to stop lying, stop sleeping around with the same sex or the opposite sex, and be held to God's moral and righteous standards. The lost person does not want to be accountable to God. He wants to live according to the dictates of his own heart rather than what the Bible teaches.

Some will not believe the Gospel because it brings about a change of life, a holy life, and leads to a confession and forsaking of a sinful lifestyle.

Peer Pressure

Just because the majority of people will not allow the Gospel of Christ to change their lives, does not mean that should be your attitude. The majority is not always right. In fact, Dr. Vance Havner calls the saints of God the "Master's minority."

Psalms 1:1 says "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners..."

Just because someone else is going the wrong way, does not mean that you should go the same way. People not only make choices from peer pressure, some people even buy out of the same. High tech products such as cell phones, video games, and other similar items are examples. Because so many young people have cell phones, all of them want a cell phone.

The dedicated Christian must be devoted to Christ. If the majority around you do not feel that way, don't let the pressure your peers put upon you make you go any other way than the way of the cross. If others around you want to rob and steal, you should not allow their lifestyles and practices affect what you believe about the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Personal Unbelief

Luke 24:25-26 says, "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

Some are slow to believe but finally do after being convicted of sin by the Holy Ghost. There are others who will not believe Christ and His Gospel. They go to the grave rejecting the good news of the Gospel and its claims. The result of unbelief is banishment from all that is good and holy in a place called Hell forever.

We who know and believe the truth about Jesus and what He has done for us love the truth of God and will stand for it until our earthly life is over.

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





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How Can Something So Ugly, Be So Beautiful?

By Christy Lowman
Burke County



A few days ago, we experienced astronomical amounts of rain. This caused the creek that wraps around the farm to overflow its banks, washing away all the fences. In one place a 15-foot bank collapsed from all the run-off water coming down the hill. When this fell, it took down trees which pushed 3 feet of rocks and sand on top of the existing fence we had at the corner of the property. My brother said, "It looks like Godzilla has come through here and tore everything up."

It did truly look like a completely different place. It's amazing what a lot of water can do. No wonder the Grand Canyon was made when God flooded the earth during Noah's time!

My father has thirty-four cows at the farm. Now, thirty-three because one must have got swept away during the flood. These cows love to set out and explore. When the fence is gone, they enjoy getting out.

After the flood, my brother and my family spent many hours over there putting up new fences.

On the first day, when we saw all the destruction I got frustrated. Nothing had gone right all day. I was stressed and overwhelmed. My basement had water in it back home and our ceiling had leaked, just to name a few things. I needed some good news instead of more bad news. I started feeling sorry for myself, asking, "Why does everything go wrong for me. Why can't something ever go right?"

My husband and brother went off to observe the rest of the damage. My kids and I stayed back. While I was waiting, I decided to take pictures of the things around me. Some of the pictures I plan to use in my upcoming middle-grade novel. I also took some pictures that I thought would make beautiful cards. One of the pictures I took was of a spiny, prickly milk thistle plant. The plant itself is ugly, but it has the most beautiful purple flower when it blooms.

I started thinking about this a little deeper. When we sin, it makes us ugly inside and out. Sometimes we put up barriers to separate us from God. Just like the milk thistle has prickles on its leaves and stem so the cows won't eat them.

It is hard for us sometimes to repent and say we are sorry to God for our sins. Sometimes, we like what we are doing wrong so we step farther away from God, and continue to sin. Just like the cows can't touch the milk thistle plant, sin separates us from God. He can't reach us until we repent.

But we need God, we can't live our life correctly without Him. Eventually, we will remember this and will want to come back to Him. When we are truly sorry and ask God for forgiveness, God forgives us wholeheartedly. He never thinks about what we did wrong again. He accepts us with arms wide open. The sin is completely wiped away. We are clean and beautiful. We want to be close to our Heavenly Father again after we ask for forgiveness.

It was at that point I realized how much we truly are like the milk thistle. When we ask God into our heart and ask Him to forgive us of our sins, He makes us beautiful just like He turns the spiny, ugly milk thistle plant into one of the most beautiful purple flowers there is. Sin makes us ugly, but God makes us beautiful.

Dear Lord, we are all sinners. Thank you for wiping away our ugly sin when we ask for forgiveness, instead of holding our sins over our head. Thank you for accepting us with arms wide open when we come back to you after we have sinned. Thank you for making us beautiful when we are sorry for our sins, just like the beautiful purple flower of the milk thistle. Help us to realize when we sin so we can say we're sorry. And help us forgive others when they treat us badly. In Jesus's name I pray, AMEN.

"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)

"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord." (Acts 3:19)

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

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

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Laundry List

By Jim Huskins
McDowell County

"But we are all like an unclean thing, and all of our righteousnesses are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). I am often told that this verse means that no Christian can do anything that God finds pleasing. Supposedly the deeds of even committed disciples are like "trash" in the sight of God. I challenge the universal application of this verse.

Isaiah's comment must be understood in reference to a specific audience: apostate Jerusalem before the Babylonian captivity. He was pointing out the wretched state to which the covenant people had sunk. They had come out of Egypt through the Red Sea and had been given the Torah—God's instructions for living—at Mount Sinai, but the children of Zion were now worshipping false Gods. "They are turned back and utterly put to shame, who trust in carved idols, who say to metal images, 'You are our gods' (Isaiah 42:17). 'How the faithful city has become a whore, she who was full of justice! Righteousness lodged in her, but now murderers' (Isaiah 1:21). 'For the look on their faces bears witness against them; they proclaim their sin like Sodom; they do not hide it. Woe to them for they have brought evil on themselves'" (Isaiah 3:9).

Amazingly, this apostate people had an illusion of righteousness. Some of them professed to be "holier than thou" even while burning incense on strange altars (Isaiah 65:3-5). God did not esteem their self-righteousness. He considered it pollution. He came to hate the Sabbaths and feasts that He had ordained (Isaiah 1:13, 14). The house of Jacob's apostasy had rendered its best acts of religion unclean.

In this context, the prophet broke into hyperbole by calling this imagined goodness "filthy rags." His rebuke and call to repentance were delivered with the force of a thunderbolt. This is the way the text should be read.

Some claim that this verse should be given universal application because Isaiah includes himself in the rebuke: "all our righteous acts." Remember the context of Israel's corporate guilt. Isaiah numbered himself among the covenant people. They had fallen into gross sin, but certainly not everyone in Judah was guilty. When the prophet refers to "our righteous acts" he is speaking of the nation as a whole. This is consistent with the Hebrew Scriptures. Daniel, though godly, confessed the sins of Israel as if he were the transgressor (Daniel 9:3-11).

The misapplication of Isaiah 64:6 is used to disparage good works, but it is impossible to think of righteous acts as something filthy and yet essential. How could filth be desirable? How will Christ judge the saints "according to their works" (Matthew 16:27) if He esteems all works repugnant?

If our best actions are trash in God's sight, then the book of James becomes unintelligible. The author would be saying that "faith without filthy rags is dead." That "a man is justified by filthy rags and not by faith only." "I will show you my faith through my filthy rags." "By filthy rags, faith is made complete." Christians would be enjoined to "stir up love and filthy rags." Paul would be encouraging young men to be "a model of filthy rags." (Titus 2:7) Jesus would be teaching: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after filthy rags" This absurdity permeates Scripture if Isaiah 64:6 is applied to all people everywhere.

The Bible teaches that acts of virtue and goodness are pleasing to God. He does not view them as filthy unless they are done with false intentions (Matthew 6:2). God was pleased with Cornelius' alms even before he was converted (Acts 10:4). This alone should negate the popular application of Isaiah 64:6.

Isaiah 64:5 says. "You (God) meet him who joyfully works righteousness, those who remember you in your ways." Genuine works of righteousness are valuable; God meets us when we walk in them. Are we told the opposite one verse later?

Jesus taught that God will reward even small works such as giving a child a cup of water (Matthew 10:42). The Son of God commands us to let our good deeds "shine before men," that they might glorify the Father (Matthew 5:16). Paul writes that we are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Ephesians 2:10). Paul urges the saints to "walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work" (Colossians 1:10). Pleasing God is connected to righteous works. They are not filthy rags. They are a delight to God.

Our works are imperfect, but Scripture affirms that God smiles upon righteous acts. No one will be saved without them. John 5:29 says that the resurrection unto life is for those who have "done good." God redeemed us to make us "His own special people, zealous for good works" (Titus 2:14). The entire scheme of redemption has as a focus good works and a glorious resurrection to those who have walked in them for Christ's sake.

Good deeds do not put God in our debt. We cannot merit salvation by balancing our works with our sins. Salvation and forgiveness lie in our covenant status with God through Christ. But the imitation of our Lord—which includes works (Acts 10:38)—is an obligation of the covenant. It is also a privilege and a joy.

God does not view our righteous acts as filthy rags. He sees them as costly apparel purchased with the blood of Christ.

For a better treatment of this topic, see "Filthy Rags" by Steve Jones at truthac-cordingtoscripture.com

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

Jim & Beverly Huskins are members of Obedient Heart Fellowship.

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



COME HOME

By Joyce (Joy) Harwood Baldwin
Madison County

*I'd wandered far away from home
No reason could I find
No comfort for my weary soul
No hope, no peace of mind*

*When I heard a distant call
"Son make your way back home
Your Father wants you near His side
My child why do you roam.*

*The bread is warm and filling
Sweet wine refreshing and good"
As I neared the old home place
In the doorway my mother stood.*

*"The family awaits to greet you
With blessings eternally
Cool rivers of awesome beauty
Rest under the lovely green tree."*

*The sounds of joy and laughter
Was music to my ears
Great love was overflowing
As I entered, He wiped my tears.*



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.



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The Strength of a Nation

By John McCoury
Roan Mountain Tennessee

The Strength of a Nation is one of the reasons I feel God's providence. My conviction is that God has blessed us with freedom and prosperity for a purpose. I share the conviction of Charles Haddon Spurgeon who said in 1884, "I assuredly believe that England has been raised up as a nation and brought to her present unique position that she may be a means of spreading the gospel throughout the nations of the earth. Where then is our nation's strength? First, the strength of the nation is in the home. The strength of a nation is found in the character of its people. But where is character shaped and formed? It is formed in the home! So, ultimately, the strength of the nation is in the home. Second, the strength of the nation is found in the spirit of its people who are to love and serve and keep the land. Whatever makes a person a good Christian ought also to make him a good citizen. It should make him patriotic. The scriptures say, "Honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, and honor the king" (1 Pet. 2:17). As Christians, we are to indoctrinate in ourselves and our children a love for, and loyalty to all that is great and good in our country's heritage, a profound admiration for its men of virtue, and a responsibility to see that the nation is kept strong and free. Our goal as Christian patriots is to work and pray that all persons may be governed by God and not ruled by tyrants. Third, the strength of the nation is found in our faith. Ultimately, the strength of our nation is found in its biblical heritage. This is not to say that all our founding fathers were Christians, or that they always lived by the teachings of the Bible. But it is to say they believed in God and established our nation on principles that come from scripture. Read the documents of our nation. Listen to our pledge of allegiance to the flag. Look at the inscriptions on our money and you will be reminded of our religious heritage. We often forget that, in declaring independence from an earthly power, our forefathers made a forthright declaration of dependence upon Almighty God. The closing words of this document solemnly declare: "With firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor. "In the summer of 1787 representatives met in Philadelphia to write the constitution of the United States. After they had struggled for several weeks and had made little or no progress, eighty-one-year-old Benjamin Franklin rose and addressed the troubled and disagreeing convention, that was about to adjourn in confusion. He begins by saying "In the beginning of the contest with Britain, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for Divine Protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard and they were graciously answered. "The very purpose of the Pilgrims coming to America in 1620 was to establish a government based on the Bible. The Mayflower Compact begins with the words, "In ye name of God, Amen. "Our founding fathers labored under the conviction that they were beginning something new, something unique and that it was being done under the watchful eye of God. It is that faith that makes us strong and it is that faith that will keep us strong. The nation and people can survive if we Keep Praying for our families, our nation and a place to pray.

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



Impacting Culture for Eternity

By Dan Qurollo
Burke County



As we celebrate another year of our nation's history this month, we rejoice in the freedom with which we have been blessed as citizens of this great nation. Our hearts are filled with thanks to the many who have sacrificed and continue to sacrifice so much in order to preserve the freedom we have in America. As citizens of this land, we have the responsibility to maintain the freedom for which so many have sacrificed. We dare not take it for granted or be indifferent regarding it, for such attitudes will inevitably lead to the loss of freedom.

But as a Christian, my heart is burdened greatly over the spiritual state of America. The news is filled with violence each and every day. Each day seems to be filled with senseless acts of violence and crime. This nation that once valued the teachings of the Word of God no longer regards God's instruction as binding. As a whole, America is a nation that has rejected God and His Word.

In such a society, it is vital that believers commit to the truths of God's Word in order to make the impact God desires. Believers have the responsibility to follow certain clear teachings of the Word of God:

1. Believers must pray for their leaders. Paul instructed Timothy, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Timothy 1:1-2). We have the responsibility as believers to continually pray for our leaders.
2. Believers must submit to governmental authority. Regardless of one's political preference, we have the responsibility to submit to all authority God has placed over us. Romans 13:1-2 teaches, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. 2 Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." It is vital that we submit to their authority unless it causes us to violate a clear command of Scripture (Acts 5:29).
3. Believers must strive to live distinct lives. Without a doubt, our society is becoming increasingly corrupt. As society continues to turn its back on God, society will continue to get darker and darker with each successive generation. It is time that God's people truly embrace the importance of living a holy and therefore distinct life in the midst of our society. Matthew 5:16 teaches, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Our light as believers should continue to shine brighter as society gets darker.

As believers living in this great nation, let's resolve to put these few principles into our daily practice. Only then will God truly be honored by those professing to name Him as their Savior. Let's do our part to turn the tide for God.

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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Reflections on the Gospel of John

By: Dr. Ken Day, Bible Teacher
McDowell County



The Gospel of Saint John is one of the most beloved books of the Bible. My belief is that if God were to write a sole book referencing the Messiah, this would be the ideal one. Prior to my conversion on the fourth of July in 1995, I had partaken in the reading of a Gideon New Testament Bible. This reading was accompanied by a Booklet of John published by The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. These publications were instrumental in my surrendering to Christ. Excitement filled my soul while reading The Gospel of John, and the experience was quite moving. This Gospel spoke to me in a remarkable way, especially with the walk of life I was in at that time. My perusal of The Gospel of John ignited an unceasing love for the book, and for that I am forever grateful.

The book of John tells us about Jesus coming in the form of man to reveal God the Father to mankind. This symbolic moment gives us the keys to abundant life here on Earth (John 10:10), and eternal life with God the Father (John 20:31). It shows us the pathway (John 10:9) and entry point, for those whom are called to seek their meaningful purpose in this world and beyond. This marvelous book can be read perpetually, as it is filled to the brim with good news for the believer seeking the renewal of life. This being said, let us now reason together, in the viewing of the introduction of John.

John 1:1-5 King James Version (KJV)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

Meditation on these scriptures, has brought about the question of who is speaking and whom is the speaking in reference to. Certainly, we know John the Apostle, the one who Jesus loved (John 13:23) is the writer. The Holy Spirit supernaturally inspired each and every word in the treasured Gospel (2 Timothy 3: 16-17). The one in which he is speaking to in a referential manner, he calls The Word. The Word simply is the second person of God's Holy Trinity, Jesus. This Word came about in the beginning and made everything. He is God himself. God is telling us, along with the entirety of the world, that Jesus was with God from the start, and that Jesus was the creator of all things. The Word is The Word of God; He is Lord, and Jehovah which is the holiest of names. Let it be put simply that he is the Personal Word. God whom was born of a virgin, descended to Earth with the purpose to empty himself outward in the form of man (Isaiah 7:14, Phil-

lipians 2: 6-7).

Why did the Personal Word, God himself come into the world? Verse 3 tells us that his purpose for coming is because he is life. What is this life that The Word wishes to reveal to us? God is telling us that he is the creator of all life in the universe, and that the very life we are privileged to live is because of him. He is our creator and provider. His very essence is life in this world, and the next world after death.

How do we know that the previous statement is truthful? Verse 4 reveals to us the key to know this life, and whether he is who John the writer says he is. John calls him the light of men; a light that outshines any darkness. To those who are reading this article and reading these presented scriptures; God's word declares to you, that The Word shines through any darkness present in your heart to allow you the vision of who The Word truly is.

Darkness is consumed with all evil and ungodly things in which the world possesses. This darkness displays a stronghold on all whom are enthralled with their evil deeds and refuse to come to this holy light. John 3:19 states *"And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil"*. My friends, may the vision be clear to you today as it was for me. I lived a life filled with darkness until July 4th, 1995, perhaps some of you are unknowingly doing the same today. Evil deeds were an enjoyment in my previous life, and the thought of God examining my life was quite a deterring factor prior to my conversion. Thanks be to God that one day, I came to the light and did not look back. The bible says in 1 John 5:11, *"And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his son"*.

Push aside any worries you might possess my friends and ask yourself if you have allowed God to examine your life. I would find it remarkable that all viewers of this meditation have allowed The Word to examine their life, and completely allow the light of Jesus' revelation to overpower the darkness. If you are a disciple of Jesus, give thanks to God for the day of your salvation. If not, allow God to shine his marvelous light on any darkness in your life. Now is the day of your salvation. One might find themselves asking, "What must I do to receive this life that has been spoken of?". The answer is found in John 8:12 that shares with us *"I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life"*. Simply pray to God that you want the light of Jesus to penetrate your life to obtain the key to eternal life. Ask God to help you turn from your lifestyle of darkness and believe in Jesus for your salvation. If you have prayed this prayer, I would love to know about the change of your eternal destiny. You can email me at Kenneth.Day.fb@gmail.com

Ken Day is an Agency Manager with Farm Bureau Insurance in McDowell County, and an Elder at Victory Church in Morganton.

Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: Matthew 24:32



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Following Instructions

By David John Valls II
Mitchell County

Have you ever tried putting something together without following instructions? At some point, most of us probably have, and it usually never works. Sometimes instructions are very basic, and other times, they are not. However, if they are not followed, we will have a much harder time trying to accomplish putting an item together. Instructions are provided for our benefit so that all the parts go together exactly right. In the same way, God has provided us with an instruction manual for our lives...His inspired Word, The Holy Bible! If we want to see all the parts and pieces of our spiritual lives fit together properly, WE ABSOLUTELY MUST FOLLOW GOD'S perfect instructions for our lives. His instructions show us where He wants us to be and where we need to be. Jeremiah 29:11 says "For I know the thoughts I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."

God knows His plan for our lives, and following His instructions guarantees our success. Yes, we will still have trials and tribulations, but God will be an ever-present help during those times. God's instructions will not only guide us through this life but will also prepare us for eternity (the expected end that Jeremiah spoke of). Are you following God's instructions for your life? The instructions that will get you to "the expected end?" God's Word is the greatest instruction manual that has ever existed. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 teaches us that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." God has given us perfect instructions that will work according to His plan for our lives. We may not always understand the outcome, but we must have faith in Him and His plans for our lives. The Bible tells us to trust in the Lord with all our heart and lean not unto thine own understanding.

We are not put on this earth to fulfill OUR desires, but rather to fulfill God's higher purpose in our lives. We are to be a vessel that with the touch of our Master's hand we can be molded into exactly what God desires us to be. Our natural desire is to please our flesh. The Bible instructs us to walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. It is with the help of the Holy Spirit that dwells in the heart of every believer that we can become what God would have us to be by following his divine instruction. As the Bible tells us, the prophecy came not in old time nor by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Let us always remember how important it is to follow God's instructions in our lives!

David Valls attends Middle District Freewill Baptist Church in Buladean and has been the adult class Sunday school teacher for the past 13 years.



Say It Ain't So

By Mike Stroud
Burke County

Have you ever heard someone talk about someone else? Say it ain't so. Our ears tend to perk up like the hair on a dog's back when we hear something we don't know about someone else. I have been watching a lot of the Dan Rather interviews of famous people we all know. It is funny because I always have preconceived ideas of who that person is based on what I have heard in the past and on the news headlines. After watching the interviews, I almost always say, those people are okay, and not what I thought of them. I never walked in their shoes, and I don't even know them. We think we do, though, by what others say about them.

I have found that this is not a good way to understand or reach people for the gospel. Anytime someone tells me about another person and what they have done to them or someone else, my view is always slanted about them. In a lot of cases, this view is just flat out wrong. It's like Proverbs 18:17 says, the first man seems right until he is questioned by another. I have learned just to accept people where they are. I'm not saying ignore the truth about someone's actions, or let it be known for the consequences. But, as a Christian, I like to give it a one-on-one, up-front and out-front view before I spew. It says in 2 Timothy 4:3, that we have "itchy ears". There is nothing like gossip and hearsay. This is a dangerous place to be as a Christian. We should be quick to hear but slow to speak. "Our tongue...is set on fire of hell" says James 3:6. The tongue causes a lot of harm to people, and a lot of the times, those are innocent people. Once you have said something about someone, it scars them. Those comments are never removed; they are maybe forgiven but not forgotten.

So, be the person that always uplifts others, never tears down, encourages with your words, and always builds up. We should always be wise as a serpent and gentle as a dove. I like to use the old Rail Road crossing statement, which I ignored one time when I was a young driver, and it almost cost me my life: Stop, Look, and Listen....and then proceed.

Mike Stroud is a member of Summit Community Church in Burke County and involved in the ministry team.



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

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Walls Called Salvation

By Caron Cline
Burke County

In the ancient world, walls were necessary for the protection of a city. Watchmen were placed upon those walls to warn the inhabitants of approaching enemies. The sounding of the trumpet provided adequate time for the men to arm themselves for battle. It was imperative that a city never be caught unaware of impending danger. There is an interesting verse of Scripture in Isaiah 60:18 concerning the future of the city of Jerusalem. Isaiah warned the inhabitants of Israel of the coming judgment of God as a result of their disobedience to His Law, particularly their involvement in idolatry. However, in the midst of such dire warnings, the Holy Spirit inspired a message of hope to the people for the future of God's holy city. Isaiah 60:18 says, 'Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise'.

The Hebrew word that is translated 'salvation' is 'yesha', and means 'deliverance; prosperity; liberty'.

Basically, God promised that at some point in the future, His people would not be protected by walls of stone or brick but by His salvation. Temporal materials would no longer be necessary.

Isaiah 61:1-11 provides an even clearer picture of the One Who was to come as the provider of these future promises. A deliverer would arise and bring good news to the poor, bind up the brokenhearted, and proclaim liberty to the captives. Ancient ruins would be built up; former devastations would be raised up; the wealth of other nations would come and instead of shame, there would be a double portion - deliverance; prosperity; liberty.

Fast forward approximately 700 years to the birth of Jesus Christ. The angel Gabriel announced the birth of Jesus to Mary in Luke 1:30. "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a Son, and you shall call His Name Jesus". Matthew records the words of the angel of the Lord to Joseph in chapter 1 verse 21. "She (Mary) will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins".

The name Jesus comes from the Hebrew name 'Yeshua' and means 'to deliver; to rescue'. The name Jesus is the Greek form of the name Joshua, which means 'God is our salvation'. The picture becomes even clearer as we read Matthew 1:23 which quotes the prophet Isaiah: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

God has come to be with us, in the form of a man, Jesus. He has come to deliver and to rescue fallen humanity by providing salvation by grace through faith.

The debt of sin has been paid through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. The offer of forgiveness for sin still stands available to anyone who will confess their sin, turn from that sin and commit themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus (God) is our salvation. He is our personal wall of protection and no weapon formed against the beloved of the Lord shall prosper. But there is yet another incredible gift from the Father of our Salvation. The resurrection and ascension of Jesus released the Holy Spirit to permanently indwell every child of God. Jesus said that whoever believed in Him, out of their innermost being would flow rivers of living water, symbolic of the Holy Spirit. This living water pours forth from the gates of our lips as a praise to our God for His great mercy and grace toward us. Our praise should echo the author of Psalm 146:1, 'Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being'. Stand firm, child of God, as more than a conqueror. Your salvation is impenetrable and your praise continual!

Caron Cline is a follower of Jesus Christ who loves to teach the word of God. Her desire is to see every believer growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.



Sharing Your Faith On Vacation

By Rev. John B. Sorensen



Let's face it. We all need a break and summer vacations are a great time to escape from the daily grind and get some much-needed rest. But when you leave, don't leave one of the most important things behind - sharing your faith in Jesus Christ.

Vacations are a great opportunity to meet many different people at places like hotels, restaurants, and theme parks. Each person we meet is an opportunity to share our faith. So, while you are planning one last get-away before the summer ends, be sure to include a plan to share the Good News you have found with someone else.

1. Invite God to join you.

Before you leave, pray together as a family that God will use you on this trip. Then pray daily on your trip for the people that you meet. God purposefully brings people across our path who need to hear that they can have hope in Jesus Christ. But the truth is, we walk past many of these divine appointments every day without ever realizing they are there. Prayer reminds us to pay attention and look for those opportunities.

2. Pack some extra resources.

Be sure to take Gospel tracts, copies of the Gospel of John, and a couple kids' evangelism cubes with you when you travel. Leave tracts for hotel clean-up crews or for a waitress at a restaurant along with a generous tip. You never know who you might meet along the way who is waiting to hear about the Gospel.

3. Begin a conversation.

People are more generally relaxed and willing to engage in conversation when they are on vacation than they might be in everyday life. Strike up a conversation with others who are on vacation. Share your personal story. Ask locals for information about Sunday services in the area. Talk to the people who are serving you at hotels and restaurants. A Gospel conversation can take place anywhere at anytime.

4. Be prepared.

Learn how to explain the Gospel in a simple manner before you leave. There are many Gospel presentations that are easy to learn. At EE, we teach one that uses the five fingers of your hand - something you will always have with you, even on vacation. But regardless of which one you learn, use it. Share it with others. But don't be caught unprepared.

Enjoy your get-away but take the Gospel with you on this year's summer vacation. Someone you meet might be searching for the eternal peace that only Jesus Christ can provide. And you might be the person to share that Good News with them.

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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Friday, Gerald Stines

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.

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!

Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church

Vacation Bible School - July 22-26, 2019 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Ages 5-12. The fun exciting theme is "Discovery Mountain" and will include Bible stories, singing, games, crafts and snacks.

Located at 2907 Highway 70E, Morganton (Drexel, across from Foothills Thrift Store). Call Judy to preregister - 828-443-4752.

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church Events- The Giving Heart Thrift Shop is OPEN every Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Like us on Facebook at [@thegivingheartthriftshop](https://www.facebook.com/thegivingheartthriftshop) The Giving Heart Thrift Shop is a ministry of the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Vespers in Israel, Part 3 - Saturday, July 13th., at 6:30 p.m., at the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C. We hope you will be able to join as Pastor Steve Bietz shares his experiences from his recent trip to the Holy Land.

Silver Creek Adventist School K-8 Registration Day - Monday, July 29th., 2195 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C. Interested in enrolling your child in Christian education? We hope you and your child will attend and see everything our school has to offer!

God's Closet - Morganton Free Shop Day! Sunday, August 4th., from 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., at the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C. There will be FREE clothes for children ages 0 - 18 years old. No documentation required. For more information visit our website www.morgantonsda.org and Like us on Facebook [@GodsClosetMorganton](https://www.facebook.com/GodsClosetMorganton) and [@MorgantonSeventhdayAdventistChurch](https://www.facebook.com/MorgantonSeventhdayAdventistChurch)

Town of Valdese Concert Schedule

2019 Season Lineup:

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.

Clinchfield Baptist Church - Clinchfield Baptist Church will be celebrating its 104th homecoming on Sunday, September 15th. We will be having a concert by "The Taylor's", during our morning worship service beginning at 11:00 a.m. We hope you can join us at 1150 East Court Street in Marion, N.C.

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.

Marion's Independence Day Celebration - July 4th - The parade will begin at 6:00 pm. A special spot will be reserved at the beginning of the parade for "Anything That Rolls." Skaters, bicycles and skateboards are welcome and are not required to preregister. Grand Marshall will be McDowell County Veterans. Little Miss McDowell, Ava Effler, will perform before the street dance. The Foothills Community Band will perform at 8:00 PM. The street dance with "Gotcha Groove" will begin at 7:00 PM. Fireworks will be at 9:45 pm. Everyone is welcome. For more information, call 652-2215.

36th Annual Mountain Glory Festival

Now Accepting Craft Vendor Applications

Saturday, October 12, 2019, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Marion - Where Main Street Meets the Mountains

Vendor applications for Marion's largest craft festival are now being accepted. For 36 years, beautiful downtown Marion has hosted this popular celebration on the 2nd Saturday in October. This year make plans to be part of the Festival, Saturday October 12th, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM.

Visitors will be looking for original handicrafts on Main Street three main blocks. Featured will be 150 craft, food, non-profit and sponsor booths of locally made arts and crafts; festival foods and local wines and beers. Plus, two stages presenting Marion's finest musicians.

Don't miss the annual Mountain Glory Quilt Show inside the McDowell Arts Council. The quilt show is the gallery's featured, October exhibit. The kids will have fun in the "Children's Arena" with hands-on activities and local entertainment.

You might even see Bigfoot, Marion's Official Animal! The festival is sponsored by the City of Marion. For festival information visit www.mtngloryfestival.com or call 828-652-2215.

Mitchell County

Bear Creek Baptist Church

Vacation Bible School - Theme is Jesus-The Guiding Light

Kick off Parade and Registration - July 13th @ 9:00 am

Bible School - July 21st-July 26th (6:00-8:30pm)

Grassy Creek Baptist Church - Grassy Creek Baptist Church will celebrate Homecoming on Sunday, August 4th. Rev. Daniel Stewart of Robbinsville will be the guest speaker and the Toe River Drifters will be supplying the music. Service begins at 10:30am (no Disciple Life classes) followed by a covered dish dinner in the Family Life Center. Pastor Nathan Silver invites you to join us for this special occasion. For more information call the church office at 828-765-4620. GCBC is located south of Spruce Pine on Highway 226 across from Parkway Fire Department.

Neighbors Feeding Neighbors Food Ministry

Events:

July 6, 2019 Community Meal

July 11, 2019 Pickup Food from 1:00-5:00 pm

July 15, 2019 Open Market from 1:00-5:00 pm

July 20, 2019 Community Meal

July 25, 2019 Pickup Food from 1:00 - 5:00 pm

Donations Accepted: Food, clothing, furniture, appliances, monetary, building supplies, cleaning supplies

Grassy Creek Golf Course - 5th Annual Fundraiser Baptist Men's Golf Tourna-

ment
July 6, 2019 – 8:30 Shotgun start - \$ 65 each person including lunch, Hole in one – new car

Celebrate Recovery - This is a Christ and Biblical Based Program, giving hip and help for men, women and families suffering from addiction. Any questions contact Josh Wise@ 385-0061
There will be a meeting every Thursday night with someone there to talk to men, women, and their families. There is also a Children's program.

Mt. Carmel Baptist Church - 195 Gouges Creek Road - Spruce Pine, NC
Vacation Bible School
July 8th – 11th
6 pm – 8:30 pm nightly
Family night July 12th 6pm
Theme: "In the Wild" Amazing Encounter With Jesus!
Transportation is available if needed. Call Chris at 467-2693

Mitchell County 4-H - Christmas in July (Spruce Pine Location)- Date: July 9th and 10th; Time: 9am-2pm; Ages: 9-13
Cost \$ 22.00; Drop off location: Deyton Elementary School
Nifty Knitting and Creative Crocheting 101-Date: July 11th and 12th; Time: 9:00-12pm; Ages: 12-18, Cost \$ 8.00 Drop off location: Spruce Pine Fire Department
Cloverbud Farmer for a Day- Date: July 15th; Time: 9-3pm; Ages: 5-8; Cost \$ 10 each; Drop off location: Mitchell Cooperative Extension
Junior Farmer for a Day-July 16th; Time: 9-3pm; Ages: 8-18; Cost \$ 10 each; Drop off Location: Michell Cooperative Extension
We-B-Grillin-Date: July 17-19th; Time: 9am-4pm; Ages: 12-18; Cost \$ 65; Drop off location: Mitchell Cooperative Extension
4-H Kids at Chefs Camp- Date: July 23rd-26th; Time: 9am-4pm everyday: Ages: 10-18; Cost \$ 75 each; Drop off location: Bakersville Baptist Church
Christmas in July (Bakersville Location)-July 29-30; Time: 9am-2pm: Ages: 9-13; Cost \$ 22; Drop off location: Bakersville Fire Department
Mitchell 4-H Shooting Sports Workshop-Date: July 29-31st; Time: 9:00am-3:00pm; Ages: 8-18; Cost \$40; Drop off location: Mitchell Cooperative Extension

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! We hope you will click on the link at the bottom of the page to check out the sponsorship kit and choose a level of support that fits your business!

SUPER SATURDAYS! AT THE ORCHARD IN JULY
The Orchard at Altapass presents another month in a summer of Super Saturdays! —heritage/creative adventures for all kids 6-12 through August from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Super Saturdays provide Appalachian-based activities that give children opportunities to learn while having fun. Sessions are FREE. The Orchard provides all materials. Parents are welcome.

July's lineup:
6: National Park Service Ranger Program with Tina
13: Learn about Water Quality with Whimsey, Toe Cane Watershed
20: National Park Service Ranger Program (July 6 class not required)
27: Create Puppets with Sherry Lovett
Located at 1025 Orchard Road near Spruce Pine, mm 328.3 on the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Orchard is a not-for-profit working orchard, music, and educational venue. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesday-Sunday. Family/ pet friendly. Wheelchair accessible. For information, please visit www.altapassorchard.org or call 828-765-9531.

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
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.
For more information, please call 828.682.7215 or email.

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

Higgins United Methodist Church - Celebrate Recovery will be launching on June 5th – It will begin at 5:15 with food and fellowship, large group worship at 6:15 and open share small group at 7:30. This will be held at Higgins UMC==. Feed-A-Child Yancey County
Higgins fills bags the second Tuesday of each month. We have been fortunate to have enough volunteers to fill the bags so far. They are going to continue the program this summer through the churches in the county that have Wednesday night meals. If you have any questions about Feed-A-Child they can be directed to Bill & Nancy Watkins at 828-675-5367.

Homecoming/Decoration at South Estatoe Baptist Church
Sunday Morning July 28 at 10:00 am
Special Singers – Beyond Measure
Preaching/Singing/Worship/Fellowship
Everyone Welcome

Baptists on Mission - Mission teams are needed to do Vacation Bible School, Evangelistic Outreach, and Construction projects in our partner states of Alaska,

continued on page 45

The Freedom of My Name

By Marlene Houk
Burke County



Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage

Who are you? Have you discovered the meaning of your name? I am convinced that my name is as important to God and even more so than it is to me.

My name is Marlene, and in Hebrew it means – from the tower. In fact, my name reminds me of Proverbs 18:10 which says, “*The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.*”

I asked my mom years ago why she named me Marlene. “I liked the name of the famous German actress Marlene Dietrich,” she answered. (Dietrich dominated the silent films and remained popular from the 1920s and even through the 1990s.) Names are important to God. Proverbs 22:1 says, “*A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold.*”

God bestowed upon Adam, the first created human, the thrill of naming the animals that he had created. Sometimes, he changed people's names in the Bible to signify the great change in their lives. For example, Abram's name changed to Abraham, and Jacob's name changed to Israel.

An article on CafeMom.com summarizes a few things about naming our children that emphasize outside influences in our choices for baby names. For example, the article discusses the fact from a new study that many parents name their children because of a “QWERTY” effect. This is a preference to use letters located on the right side of our keyboards. (This keyboard, called QWERTY, is named after the keys on the top row of letters starting at the left.) These names, mostly from the right-side keys, are popular today: Violet, Olivia, Liam, and Noah.

The article states that “Yet one study by the University of Oklahoma found that parents are more likely to pick patronyms (naming kids after dads – John Junior, Richard III) in the face of terrorist threats. After 9/11, patronym use soared.”

These attitudes reflect God's declaration of the importance of names. And he is especially committed to his children's names. He considers his children to be called by his name as 2 Chronicles 7:14 declares, “*If people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*”

The Lord considers names important, and this fact snagged my attention upon studying Rizpah, an obscure woman whose story is tucked into 2 Samuel 3:7-8 and 2 Samuel 21:8-13.

With a Judas kiss, Rizpah's world betrayed her through its culture and government. She lived in Israel, a nation that allowed its kings to acquire multiple wives and concubines. When Rizpah entered King Saul's world, the citizens and King Saul showered adulation and acceptance upon her. But, in total betrayal, without power, she watched helplessly as her innocent sons were snatched away and condemned to death by hanging. She plunged into the pit of despair, and no neighboring political power came to her aid for she possessed no connections. Her beauty could not save her, and the king who would have protected her was dead. The deceptive pleasures of fulfilling the role of a concubine had deserted her, and no beauty product or sparkling gown could heal the grief and rage she felt at this injustice to her blameless sons.

It finally dawned on me that she was trying to tell me something infinitely precious. Through the amazing repetition of her name – coupled firmly with her father's name – in eight short verses, she sends her message to us. This happens four times in eight short verses – a significant percentage.

Observe the growing repetition of her parentage that leaves its indelible mark on the pages of Scripture.

1. Aiah was Rizpah's father when she became King Saul's concubine as she began to climb the ladder of popularity and in her ascent to power and affluence. (2 Samuel 3:7)

2. Aiah remained her father when her life plunged to its deepest sorrow as her sons were jerked away from her. (2 Samuel 21:8)

3. The Bible repeats again, reassuring us that her father still claimed her when, out of her darkness, she acted in courage and resoluteness by driving away the vultures who would dishonor her sons even further. (2 Samuel 21:10)

4. And, in the fourth time, when she was vindicated by King David and her act of bravery honored by the respectful burial of her sons, she was still the daughter of her father. (2 Samuel 21:11)

Rizpah's message to us is this: regardless of circumstances, as God's child, your name and relationship with Father God remains the same. Your name, Christian, and your Father's name triumphs through the raging storms of life and miry pits of grief and anger. In spite of the devil's attacks and his attempts to imprison us and place us in bondage again, we are no longer slaves to sin. We are free! The devil tries to make us forget who we are. Romans 6:6 is our declaration of independence. “*Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*”

Our faith has no boundaries to limit our joy. Our chains of bondage to sin click open. And we can revel in a rich, deep relationship with Jesus as our Savior. Enjoy your freedom!

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

BIG Porch SALE

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**'The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you':
A D-Day reflection**

By Jim Denison



"The noise was deafening. The black smoke and the acrid smell of cordite, which was coming from the battleships firing the big shells. They are the outstanding things in my memory coming from that day."

That's how former British Royal Marine Les Budding, now ninety-three, remembers what history calls D-Day. On June 6, 1944, more than five thousand ships, eleven thousand warplanes, and over 150,000 servicemen took part in the largest air, land, and sea operation ever undertaken.

When it was over, the Allied Forces had suffered nearly ten thousand casualties; 4,414 were confirmed dead. But a foothold against Nazi Germany had been established in Europe.

Inflatable decoys and dummy paratroopers
Normandy is a region in northern France. It was selected the year before as the location for an Allied invasion under General Dwight D. Eisenhower's command. Code-named Operation Overlord, the invasion was preceded by a massive deception campaign.

Known as Operation Fortitude, this campaign involved a "dummy army" commanded by Lt. Gen. George Patton that pretended to target Calais, to the east of Normandy. German spy planes flying over southeast England reported the buildup of a massive invasion force, but the regiments of tanks and landing craft were mostly inflatable decoys.

Double agents and phony Allied radio traffic intended for the Germans confirmed the Calais strategy. The Allies also dropped hundreds of dummy paratroopers well inland of the eventual targets along the Normandy beaches.

As a result, Hitler was convinced that the actual invasion was merely a diversion. He was asleep when the invasion began; when he woke up, he refused initially to send reinforcements to Normandy.

An article every American should read
While the Allies made brilliant preparations for the invasion, D-Day was nonetheless horrific.

Imagine yourself on a flat-bottomed landing craft approaching Omaha Beach. German artillery shells destroy boats all around you. You finally make it to shore and jump into the water while carrying eighty pounds of gear. German snipers atop the high cliff then begin strafing your lines.

One American unit landing at Omaha lost 90 percent of its men.

"First Wave at Omaha Beach," an article in the November 1960 issue of *The Atlantic*, tells the story in detail. It should be required reading for all Americans as we pay tribute to the indescribable courage and sacrifice of those who fought for our freedom.

I once spent a day at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans. While I focused primarily on the war in the South Pacific where my father served, I also spent time at the D-Day exhibits. I was astounded by the complexity of the largest amphibious assault in history and humbled by the stories of the soldiers who risked—and many of whom gave—their lives for us.

A father's letter
This morning, President Trump is at the American cemetery at Omaha Beach, where more than 9,380 American service members who were killed at D-Day and the following operations are buried. Yesterday, he joined fifteen other world leaders to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the invasion.

British Prime Minister Theresa May read from a letter written by Captain Norman Skinner of the Royal Army Service Corp to his wife and their daughters just days before he was killed during the D-Day landings. He wrote to them, "Although I would give anything to be back with you, I have not yet had any wish at all to back down from the job we have to do."

"I shall always be grateful to the powers above for having been able to be with you, to have been loved by you," he told his wife. "I'm sure I will be with you again soon and for good. Give my fondest love to my Ann and my Janey."

Our best response to sacrifice
In light of all these men did to secure our freedom, what can you and I do to serve this nation they loved?

These imperatives are familiar but no less urgent: Christians can intercede for our military and their families and pray daily for our leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-2). We can express our heartfelt gratitude to veterans for their sacrifice. We can become engaged in public service; I am convinced that God is calling more believers into political leadership than are answering his call.

We can be salt and light to our post-Christian culture (Matthew 5:13-16), seeking excellence as our platform for spiritual influence. And we can serve the cause of freedom for which so many died on this day by sharing the gospel of eternal freedom in Christ (John 8:36).


The more we remember the courage of those who died for us, the more we are inspired to pay any price to serve our Lord and our country.

"The eyes of the world are upon you."

On the eve of the largest invasion in history, General Eisenhower told the Allied soldiers: "You are about to embark upon the Great Crusade, toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you. In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other Fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world."

And so, they did.

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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YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

As most readers know, the NC House failed to override the Governor's veto of Senate Bill 359, the Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act, by five votes. The bill would have been an affirmative statement that survivors of abortion were to be cared for as if the birth was intentional. The bill also would have required a record of such birth and would have placed penalties on doctors and other staff that failed to attempt to save the life of the newborn. It is worth noting that two women who are abortion survivors, Gianna Jessen and Claire Culwell, were present in the House chamber when the veto override failed. You can read more about these remarkable women at www.giannajessen.com, and www.claireculwell.com.

Back on March 15, the bill passed the Senate with two Democrats joining the Republicans in supporting the bill. After that vote, the two Democrats came under immediate criticism for voting to protect life. On March 16, four House Democrats joined with the Republicans to pass the bill that protects newborns. So, the bill rightfully passed both chambers with bipartisan support. It only took two days for Governor Cooper to veto the bill. In his veto message, the Governor called the legislation "needless" and he expressed his fear of "criminalizing doctors" "for a practice that simply does not exist." But cases like Kermit Gosnell and CDC reporting of infants that survive an abortion attempt contradict the Governor's claim. And the recent law passed by New York as well as the statements of Virginia Gov. Northam are indications of a larger pro-abortion agenda being advanced by Democrats nationally.

On March 30, the Senate Republicans were joined by Sen. Don Davis to provide the necessary 3/5th vote to override the veto. Following that vote, Democratic colleagues immediately attacked Sen. Davis on social media and liberal groups started a website to intimidate Sen. Davis and the four Democrats in the House. On June 5 the House held a vote to override the Governor's veto. 72 votes were needed to override the veto, meaning that seven Democrats were needed to join the Republicans in voting to override. Unfortunately, only two Democrats saw fit to vote to protect the survivors of abortion, Rep. Garland Pierce and Rep. Charles Graham. The override was defeated on a vote of 67-53.

"May we think of freedom, not as the right to do as we please, but as the opportunity to do what is right." – Peter Marshall
Happy Independence Day! Please have a safe and fun 4th.

NC Senate District 46



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NC House District 118



Rep. Michele D. Presnell
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North Carolina regulators approve Duke Energy's innovative microgrid project in Madison County - May 21, 2019
Sharing Buttons

- Solar panels and batteries will combine for microgrid development in remote mountain area of Duke Energy Progress' territory
- Backup power supply is designed to serve the town of more than 500 residents for hours in the event of an outage
- Part of Duke Energy's commitment for solar and storage technologies in western North Carolina

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Madison County will soon be home to an innovative microgrid installation after the North Carolina Utilities Commission (NCUC) approved Duke Energy's renewable energy project.

Read the NCUC's full order.

In the town of Hot Springs, the company will proceed with a solar and battery-powered microgrid system that will help improve electric reliability, provide services to the overall electric system and serve as a backup power supply to the town of more than 500 residents.

"Duke Energy's research work on microgrids has led to a large-scale effort that will better serve, not only these customers in a remote area, but also help us gain experience from this pilot project to better serve all customers with additional distributed energy and energy storage technologies," said Dr. Zak Kuznar, Duke Energy's managing director of Microgrid and Energy Storage Development. "Projects like this will lead to a smarter energy future for the Carolinas."

The Hot Springs microgrid will consist of a 2-megawatt (AC) solar facility and a 4-megawatt lithium-based battery storage facility. The microgrid will not only provide a safe, cost-effective and reliable grid solution for serving the Hot Springs area, but the microgrid will also provide energy and additional bulk system benefits for all customers. This will include reliability services to the electric grid, such as frequency and voltage regulation and ramping support and capacity during system peaks.

The project is part of Duke Energy's plan to meet power demand by balancing public input, environmental impacts and the need to provide customers with safe, reliable and affordable energy.

Another component of that plan is in the city of Asheville where Duke Energy will connect a 9-megawatt lithium-ion battery system at a Duke Energy substation site in the Rock Hill community – near Sweeten Creek Road. The battery will primarily be used to help the electric system operate more efficiently and reliably for customers.

Together, the two projects will cost around \$30 million and should be operational in early 2020.

Also in the region, Duke Energy is closing a half-century-old, coal-fired plant in Arden by January 2020 – and replacing it with a new 560-megawatt cleaner-burning combined-cycle natural gas plant.

Duke Energy microgrids

Duke Energy is a leader in microgrid technology. The company has a smaller microgrid project in North Carolina already operating. In Haywood County, N.C., Duke Energy has a 95-kilowatt-hour zinc-air battery and 10-kilowatt solar installation serving a communications tower on Mount Sterling in the Smoky Mountains National Park that has been operating since 2017. It is also currently working on proposed projects in South Carolina.

Previously, the company operated a microgrid that served a local fire station in Charlotte. It continues to operate a microgrid at its

Mount Holly research center in Gaston County.

About Duke Energy

Duke Energy (NYSE: DUK), a Fortune 150 company headquartered in Charlotte, N.C., is one of the largest energy holding companies in the U.S. It employs 30,000 people and has an electric generating capacity of 51,000 megawatts through its regulated utilities and 3,000 megawatts through its nonregulated Duke Energy Renewables unit.

Duke Energy is transforming its customers' experience, modernizing the energy grid, generating cleaner energy and expanding natural gas infrastructure to create a smarter energy future for the people and communities it serves. The Electric Utilities and Infrastructure unit's regulated utilities serve approximately 7.7 million retail electric customers in six states – North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky. The Gas Utilities and Infrastructure unit distributes natural gas to more than 1.6 million customers in five states – North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Ohio and Kentucky. The Duke Energy Renewables unit operates wind and solar generation facilities across the U.S., as well as energy storage and microgrid projects.

Duke Energy was named to Fortune's 2019 "World's Most Admired Companies" list and Forbes' 2019 "America's Best Employers" list. More information about the company is available at duke-energy.com. The Duke Energy News Center contains news releases, fact sheets, photos, videos and other materials. Duke Energy's illumination features stories about people, innovations, community topics and environmental issues. Follow Duke Energy on Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Facebook. <https://news.duke-energy.com/releases/north-carolina-regulators-approve-duke-energys-innovative-microgrid-project-in-madison-county>



YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

NC Senate District 47



Sen. Ralph Hise
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While there is a call from Gov. Roy Cooper and many other Democrats to expand Medicaid for able-bodied and childless adults, I and other Senate Republicans believe we should take care of a vulnerable population in our state who cannot take care of themselves at all and are our neediest citizens in terms of health care. These individuals are currently on our state's IDD (Intellectual/Developmental Disability) Medicaid program waitlist, and suffer from chronic disabilities that manifest at birth or during childhood, caused by either a mental or physical impairment or combination of both. These disabilities adversely affect their daily lives and can result in limited functions, including difficulties with the following: communication, learning, mobility or moving around, making decisions for themselves, living independently, caring for themselves, and being financially self-sufficient.

Currently, through the IDD Medicaid program, our state serves over 12,000 North Carolinians with intellectual/developmental disabilities, providing them with in-home care that allows for a better quality of life. However, there are an additional 12,000 citizens who are on the IDD waitlist for services. Appropriating funding to provide care for this group in desperate need would have a profoundly positive impact for these individuals and their families. One key provision of the Senate Health and Human Services budget is the allocation of \$32 million over the next two years for an additional 1,000 IDD North Carolinians to receive personal care services and in-home assistance, while also increasing access to care facilities for them. The Senate budget will also eliminate the CON (Certificate of Need) requirements for intermediate care facilities that would serve the IDD population. CON is a burdensome, time-consuming requirement that limits access and creates more expense for taxpayers. I have sponsored legislation for the repeal of CON in our state. Eliminating CON restrictions for these intermediate care facilities would provide more options for critical health services for IDD individuals. A \$3.6 million provision over two years will provide short-term financial assistance to group homes for residents with a primary diagnosis of IDD or mental illness.

Our priority is to expand care for profoundly disabled North Carolinians on the IDD waitlist, not expanding Medicaid to include an even greater number of able-bodied, childless adults. As always, please share your thoughts with me on these or other issues related to the state government by emailing me at ralph.hise@ncleg.net or calling me at 919-733-3460.

US House of Representatives NC District 11

House Democrats held an open hearing on the Mueller report to reinvigorate their "narrative" against President Trump, Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C. claimed.

House Intelligence Committee chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., was trying to keep the American people in tune with his caucus' activities through the latest hearing on the Russia investigation, Meadows told Sean Hannity Wednesday on "Hannity."

"Here's the thing that dawned on me today, you had another Mueller hearing here -- why was it open? Because they wanted to try to resurrect the whole Mueller narrative and try to do their best to make sure the American people are engaged but the truth of the matter is, they didn't get the result they wanted."

"They will continue to try, but the problem is they know the truth. Even some of the witnesses today here on Capitol Hill, they are supposed to be experts. They haven't even read to the Steele dossier, that's how not credible that was."

Schiff called the hearing to examine what he called the "disturbing findings" of Volume 1 of Mueller's report. That volume focused on allegations that the Trump campaign colluded with Russian officials during the 2016 campaign.

"Volume 1 of the report outlines a sweeping and systemic effort by Russia to interfere in the 2016 election for the benefit of Donald Trump," Schiff declared. "It establishes that the Trump campaign welcomed the Russian interference because it expected to benefit electorally from the information stolen and released through the Russian effort."



Congressman
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Senator Burr Honors the 75th Anniversary of D-Day

Today, Senator Richard Burr (R-NC), Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, issued the following statement on the 75th Anniversary of D-Day: "Seventy-five years ago today, more than 150,000 Allied troops sat on ships and on airfields across England waiting anxiously. They were preparing to embark on an extraordinary campaign, to storm the beaches of Normandy with unprecedented force and to march across Europe against Nazi tyranny. Early that morning, General Eisenhower addressed the young servicemen. 'The eyes of the world are upon you,' he told them. 'The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you.'"

"These ordinary men did not set out to make history, but to fulfill their duty and return home. Many did not. But their unwavering commitment to victory secured freedom for millions and serves as a reminder that liberty requires defending."

"Today, three-quarters of a century later, we honor the men and women who answered the call to service in World War II. May we never forget their sacrifice, and may we remain forever humbled by the legacy of the Greatest Generation."

In 2009, to honor the 65th Anniversary of D-Day, Senator Burr led a delegation of Senators to the official Memorial Day Ceremonies at the Normandy American Cemetery in France. Senator Burr recognized the nearly 10,000 American service members who gave their lives at Normandy, making possible the liberation of France and Europe during World War II.



NC House District 86

New Right to Try Legislation for Those with Terminal or Severe Chronic Disease

A few years ago, I was pleased to sponsor a bill in North Carolina to give those with terminal illness a right to try experimental treatment and medication not yet fully approved by the federal government. This year, I am happy to report that a follow up bill has passed the House in Raleigh and on Thursday last week was approved in the State Senate. I am optimistic that the Senate will complete full approval and that the governor will agree to sign it into law. The new bill currently making its way through the Senate would establish a right for those with terminal or severe chronic illness to try investigational treatments involving adult stem cells even though those treatments are not yet approved for general use and may still be in required clinical trials testing. In short, we are hoping to expand the choices and hope available for eligible patients who otherwise have exhausted their options.

Possible Help with Diabetics Needing Access to Insulin

In August of 2018 the Lilly Diabetes Solution Center opened in Raleigh NC with the mission to assist North Carolinians who need help paying for their Lilly insulin due to lower incomes, lack of insurance, or those in the deductible phase of a high-deductible insurance plan. By the beginning of 2019 the center was already helping approximately 10,000 people each month in accessing their insulin at a lower cost out-of-pocket. Because one out of ten adults in North Carolina is suffering from diabetes and approximately one in three is predicted to be experiencing prediabetes without being aware, services like these are all the more important to citizens. Gaining access to these lifesaving, but often expensive, medications can be difficult if one does not have adequate insurance or income. If you or someone you know needs assistance in gaining access to Lilly insulin at a lower and more affordable cost, the Lilly Diabetes Solution Center can be contacted by phone through their live operators between the hours of 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday. The number to call is (833) 808-1234. Additionally, the Center's website is available at www.lilly.com/diabetessolutioncenter



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2019 NC Mineral and Gem Festival Cheers to 60 Years!

By Patti Jensen
Mitchell County



2019 will mark the 60th Anniversary of the NC Mineral and Gem Festival in Spruce Pine. For sixty years, Spruce Pine has welcomed rock hounds and jewelry lovers to the NC Mineral and Gem Festival where they enjoy aisles and aisles of beautiful jewelry, gemstones, and minerals from around the country.

"Each year we welcome dealers to the Festival from as far away as California and as close to home as Little Switzerland," said Patti Jensen, Director of the Festival. "These dealers, and the thousands of visitors that come to the Festival each year, have a tremendous economic impact on our community."

Spruce Pine, North Carolina has been deemed the most important mining district in the world and has celebrated nature's resources in this mountain area for decades. "The world would come to a slow crawl without the rich minerals from the Spruce Pine area," said Patti Jensen with the Mitchell County Chamber.

"Spruce Pine provides over 90% of the world's purest quartz for the production of computer chips among many other uses. And did you know that the 'sand' at the Master's in Augusta is trucked in from Spruce Pine?"



The 60th anniversary event will feature many new additions to the weekend. The Festival will kick off on July 31st at 6 pm with a VIP event. This event is a one night only exclusive event and first look of the Festival. Guests will enjoy live music, food, drinks, a silent auction, and a 60th anniversary "swag bag". A special ribbon cutting will open the Festival on Thursday, August 1st at 9:30 am with special guests from our mining community, as well as sponsors, dignitaries, and more. All are invited to join in!

The popular mine tours will happen this year during the Festival on Thursday, August 1st and Friday, August 2nd. These tours are sponsored by The Quartz Corporation and visitors can visit a local working mine and dig for treasures to their heart's delight. Anything they find they can keep! The tours are a ticketed item and require reservations. Space is limited and these tours are very popular, so reserve spots early!

Festival-goers can enjoy shopping, ample parking, and nearby food services. Attendees can shop for fine jewelry from the top jewelers in the country, have their own custom jewelry designed on site, as well as shop for minerals, gemstones, fossils, and beads. Local gem mining establishments offer special mine tours as well as special events at their business locations.

The week is full of activities including an outdoor gem show, the Grassy Creek Mineral and Gem Show, sponsored by the Parkway Fire Department. This event is held the entire week from Sunday-Sunday and is just a few miles down Hwy 226 from the NC Mineral and Gem Festival.

The 60th NC Mineral and Gem Festival will be held August 1-4, 2019 at a new location this year. Just steps away from the former location and still located in the Spruce Pine Commons Shopping Center, the new location boasts a beautiful space and will also host food vendors, a gift shop, and a special exhibit from the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences. The physical address of the new location is 12085 South Hwy 226, Spruce Pine, NC. The times are Thursday-Saturday 10-6 and Sunday 12:30-5:00. Admission is \$4 with Senior Citizens admitted on Thursday for \$2 and Mitchell County Residents admitted on Sunday for \$2.

For more information contact the Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce at 765-9033 or visit www.ncgemfest.com. Sponsors of the Festival include Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce, Duke Energy, Quartz Corporation, Sibelco, Wal-Mart, and Springmaid Mountain.

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

And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. Genesis 2:3



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The Infallible, Everlasting Word of God

By Billy Graham

At Amsterdam '83, evangelists from every continent of the world stood and read together 15 points that became known as "The Amsterdam Affirmations," which provided a Biblical framework for those called to "do the work of an evangelist." The message below is taken from Mr. Graham's writings on Affirmation 1, which says: "We confess Jesus Christ as God, our Lord and Savior who is revealed in the Bible, which is the infallible Word of God."

How can we know the truth about God? Must we grope around in the dark, only guessing and never knowing the truth? Is religion just a matter of personal opinion or viewpoint, with one philosopher's ideas as good as the next? The Bible says no! It tells us that we can know the truth—because God has revealed Himself to us.

"One of the greatest needs in the church today is to come back to the scriptures as the basis of authority, and to study them prayerfully with dependence on the holy spirit for interpretation. Let the words of God burn in our souls. It is when we fill our hearts with his word that we overflow into the lives of others."

—BILLY GRAHAM, HOUR OF DECISION SERMON, NOV. 8, 1959

Since man's fall in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3), God has continued to reveal Himself in history. God chose a man, Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3), who became a great nation, the Hebrews. He miraculously delivered His chosen people from Egypt. Under Moses' leadership they crossed the Red Sea. He gave them the Ten Commandments. He gave Israel prophets whose divinely inspired predictions were absolutely trustworthy. Unfortunately, the Hebrews constantly complained, disobeyed and even defied God. At times they turned to other gods. God brought judgment after judgment on them for their disobedience. Thus, the history of the Jewish people, though chosen of God, is one of revival, blessing and judgment.

But most of all, He revealed Himself in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ. "No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him" (John 1:18). He confirmed that Jesus is truly God the Son by His miracles, and by raising Him from the dead (Luke 24:44-48; Acts 2:32). The message and faith of the evangelist are anchored in what God has done in history. They are not anchored in a church, religious traditions or personal feelings. They are anchored in the assurance of what God has done in history, recorded and revealed in the Bible.

If the evangelist is to "preach the Word" (2 Timothy 4:2) with authority and power, he must be firmly convinced of two things.

First, he must be convinced that the Bible, the written Word of God, was prepared under the direction of the Holy Spirit, who preserved the authors from departing from God's revelation in their writing so that they conveyed exactly what God wanted them to record. "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21). Even though the human writers of Scripture wrote as sons of their time and their own personalities often shine through in their writings, God ensured that the words and thoughts were inspired and recorded accurately as He intended. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Because it is God's inspired Word, the Bible does not contradict itself or teach falsehoods—because God cannot lie. With our human limitations we may not always understand every detail of Scripture, but we must never lose sight of the fact that it is God's Word and not man's ideas or opinions. As the Lausanne Covenant declares, "We affirm the divine inspiration, truthfulness, and authority of both the Old and New Testament Scriptures in their entirety as the only written Word of God, without error in all that it affirms, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice." Jesus constantly quoted the Old Testament and made it clear that it was the inspired Word of God. We who follow Christ must have just as high a view of Scripture as He did (see John 10:34; Matthew 5:17).

Second, if the evangelist is to preach with authority and power, he must be convinced



that the Word of God has the power to change lives (1 Corinthians 2:1-5). God has not promised to bless our eloquence or our human energy—but He has promised to bless His Word. "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:10-11).

Time after time in my ministry, I have quoted a Bible verse in a sermon—sometimes without planning to do so in advance—and had someone tell me afterward that it was that verse which the Holy Spirit used to bring conviction or faith to him. "Is not My word like a fire?" says the Lord, "And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29). Don't let anything or anyone shake your confidence in the trustworthiness, authority and power of the Bible.

Make it your guide for your life and your ministry, no matter what the future may hold for you.

"This collection of 66 books, written over a period of many centuries, yet forming a complete and accurate divine revelation, has been carefully handed down to us from the apostles of our Lord."

At one time in my life, I had a struggle believing the Bible to be the authoritative Word of God. Some professors and other intellectuals were expressing their own doubts about it and pointing to alleged contradictions in the Bible. I was young, just out of school, and was having my first experiences in preaching. Seeds of doubt began to grow, and I struggled over this question of the integrity of the Word of God. Then one moonlit night in the mountains of California I went out alone with my Bible. The turmoil in my mind was a sharp contrast to the peace and serenity of the natural beauty around me. Finally, I laid my open Bible on the stump of a tree and prayed, "O, Lord, I don't understand everything in this Book, but I accept it by faith as the Word of the living God." And I can truly say that since that moment I've never doubted that the Bible is the Word of God. Furthermore, God has confirmed this to me time after time, as I have witnessed the power of the Word of God at work in the lives of people.

Since that time, I have discovered that we need not fear the allegations or arguments of those who would deny the Bible's authority. There is external and internal evidence to show the absolute trustworthiness of the Bible. Externally, there is the evidence from such fields as archaeology and linguistics. Internally, there is the final word of the Lord Jesus Himself, who authenticated the Old Testament (see John 10:34; Matthew 5:17) and anticipated the New Testament (John 16:13-14). He employed and expounded the Old Testament as an infallible authority (see Luke 24:27, 44). We cannot examine the history, unity and prophecy of God's Word—let alone its staying and sanctifying power in our own lives as evangelists—without believing in its divine inspiration and authority.

The evangelist must be thoroughly convinced of the infallibility of Scripture. Only then can he preach with authority God's promise of salvation and forgiveness to all who call on the Name of the Lord and God's warning of judgment for those who do not.

We respect God-guided decisions of church councils. We praise Him for leadership He has raised up in His church throughout the ages. We are grateful for the heritage of church traditions that are in accordance with Biblical teaching. But our authority as evangelists does not originate in any of these. Our call and power to evangelize comes from the pages of this infallible Word of God—the Bible.

This collection of 66 books, written over a period of many centuries, yet forming a complete and accurate divine revelation, has been carefully handed down to us from the apostles of our Lord. Some is the very Scripture that Jesus Himself read and taught while here on earth. In it He is revealed. Him we believe, Him we trust, Him we proclaim as Savior, and Him we confess before others as our Lord. He is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

Because Jesus is one with God and was sent by the Father into human history (John 20:21), the cross is an objective demonstration of divine love (Romans 5:8). Our faith is built on the fact of Christ's resurrection.

That is why we rejoice! That is the foundation of the truth we declare and the Kingdom we extend as we "do the work of an evangelist."

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

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The Last Dragon

By Timothy Tron



Here in the woods, the pain seems distant.

All around are the sounds of the gentle hush of raindrops falling on the multitude of leaves. Each tiny patter whispers a secret to its hearer. It is as if God is soothing the recent sharp edges of life that have cut to my very soul; tween bone and marrow. Only He knows the passionate struggles with which the past months had presented themselves. It is not lightly nor without conviction that these memories now torment the heart of one who gave his all to hold onto the belief that this was his calling.

There were choices; there always are.

Like the tale of two roads diverging in the yellow wood, as Frost would write, "I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."

There is not one day, no not one – even those that made you wonder why you ever chose to teach – that I would give back. Their pain made the creases in our soul; etchings of love emblazoned upon our inner being, never gone, never forgotten.

Yes, it is only from the heart that I write this story.

Each day that we walk in faith, we know not where the path will lead. That first day that those keys turned the lock in the door, it felt as if I had entered the den of a sleeping dragon. There was the overwhelming feeling of a darkness present. As the door opened, the emptiness of room 3212 would echo silent cries; a foreboding of things to come. Eventually, that room would become the classroom from which many stories would unfold, both good and bad. I could never imagine how it would have ended. As we are only human, we can never fully comprehend what God has in store for us. When we walk in that journey in which He hath prepared, we are refined by the fires of trials and tribulations. When the love that we share is genuine, it becomes even more painful when a door closes.

The sound of the swollen creek reverberates the feeling of how my cup had runneth over these past few weeks; the culmination of seeds planted long ago had come to fruition; some still waiting; some may never grow; yet, in all, the thoughts of the students left behind return. The image of the expansive whiteboard in room 3212 returns. On it, in its entirety, drawn with dry-erase markers, from one end to the other, is the picture of a red dragon breathing fire on a sword inscribed with one word, "Mathematics."

It will be the last dragon.

Each semester, from the first to this one, God gave me the message of sharing my gifts through the telling my students of the parallels of the dragon and their fear of Math, the class that I would be called to teach. The first few days of each semester would find the dragon begin, always with the eye. From there, the image would slowly, during the course of the entire semester, grow into the final piece of artwork. To think of this as simply the entirety of this story would diminish the truth from all that there is to convey. It is more than just a picture, but a story of heartache, struggle, and a multitude of life's blessings to which one may never fully know.

Behind the scenes, Satan would attack, lying in wait ready to strike another blow. When it seemed there couldn't be any more things that could pummel my life further into the ground, there would be another twist that would sink my life into deeper darkness. Each time, from my knees, my cries would resonate to heaven; each time, God would give me renewed strength to carry on. Each time I drew closer to Him.

Just as I told my students not to fear Math (the dragon), so must we not fear the devil; for whom shall we fear if we have God? Yet, we should not be ignorant of his power and deceitful nature. *"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."* Eph. 5:12

Whenever there was doubt about the effectiveness of the light within, God would send a confirmation. These would be the moments that will be cherished.

One of the many beautiful memories was when one of my students finished his end of semester review package we called, Dragon Flippers. The purpose was to tie in all the units of the semester into a flip-review package and to also allow students who might not have been as mathematically inclined, to shine through their artwork, which was required on the cover. It was part of our end of semester review. Before the student handed his in, he pulled me aside to tell me something that will forever be with me. He told of how he had struggled with his own demons, and that through the light God had allowed to shine through me, he found a new purpose, a new reason to live. If you had known this young man, you would have never guessed that he would have such inner turmoil. He was the model student; always on time with his work, an "A" student, and as gracious as they come. He then handed me his project. As I fought to regain my composure, I looked upon the picture of a young man facing a mirror. In the reflection was an angry dragon looking back. Inside the package, he showed a pictorial description of Ephesians 6:14-17, and how he had used the armor of God to battle this demon. He then continued. He said that he would not be returning to High School but would finish his studies at home since his family felt the public school environment was not healthy for his wellbeing. He went on to share how he had read many of my devotionals and that because of those writings, he knew that God wanted him to do in life. "Mr. Tron, I want to thank you for helping me to see the demon within me and to show me how to defeat him. You have been the best teacher I have ever known." The flood gates opened as I watched him leave room 3212 through tear stained eyes, never to return.

The reason God sent me to Watauga High School would never leave my thoughts. Each day, after the pledge of allegiance, I would pray to God for guidance, strength, and wisdom. Behind me, a legion of His angels was there to protect and comfort me. For if it were not true, I would have never made it. Today, as

the rains fall all around, it is as if those same angels were crying, knowing that the place to which I had been called has found a way to push me out. In their mourning, my soul is once again warmed; their compassion, a representation of God's unending love, soothes the rough edges of my broken heart. No longer will I be able to stand before all those troubled teens to convey to them God's love, through my own, by trying to help them in their life's journey.

Early before school began during the last week of school when the morning sky had yet to awaken, another touching moment occurred. One of our EC teachers pulled me aside and shared what one of my students had said to her when he had heard the news of my leaving Watauga. In his words, she said, he couldn't understand why they would be getting rid of Mr. Tron, when I was the only reason, he (the student) made it through Math 2. She continued to tell me that the young man was considering dropping out of school. But once he began to do well in Math, he realized that if he could do that, then he could handle anything else that was required to graduate. She then said what touched her the most, when he said, "We need more teachers like Mr. Tron," he told her in a very solemn tone. Once more, the tears began to flow as my heart knew the struggles the young man had faced, both in the classroom and at home.

Stories like this one and the countless others made the door closing all the more painful. We are but of the flesh, and with that, we are weak. To know that our Savior has prepared for us a new path is comforting, but it doesn't make it hurt any less. When a door slams on your finger, the momentary pain is almost blinding; when a door slams on your heart, it bemoans your spirit to the core, driving you to your knees. It is from there, kneeling on the floor that we must seek Him most. Like those dry-erase markers with which the dragon had been drawn, the image could have easily been erased. So too are we here for a short time, as a mere wisp of smoke, here for a moment in time and then gone. *"Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."* James 4:14. To those we encounter we have but one chance to share with them the purpose for which we are called. Many times, we are unaware of the role or the effect we've had, as God is working through us, such that on the rare occasion we are told of these influences, then we too know of how much we are needed in this dark world.

Another heart-wrenching moment was when the students were saying goodbye after I had shared with them the rest of the story behind the dragon; how that I was sent there by God and that God was now leading me on. The young man told of how he had been in a deep dark pit, and because of what I had said to him, beyond the limitations of the state's standards for Math, he had been saved. Quickly I reminded him that it wasn't me, but rather, God speaking through me.

I remember the day of which he spoke vividly.

He was one of those students who had extreme anxiety for courses in which he struggled; Math was the worst. On one of the days in which not only was Math causing him to question himself, he had also been going through a spiritual battle. When my co-teacher came to the room and beckoned me to the hallway, I was more than a little concerned. She then shared with me how he had called for me and how he had told her he was lost without hope. As my footsteps carried me to the room where he lay, I prayed to God to give me the words to speak; there was no manual, there was no guidance for this sort of thing; yet, all I could think was simply to rely on God, His Holy Word, and that He would speak through me. As those prayers were lifted, a surge of what felt like electrical energy pulsed from my head to my toes.

Looking back, I know in my heart that the Holy Spirit was with us that day. When I opened the door, the young man was lying in the fetal position. His cheeks were stained from tears. As I walked in, he slowly sat up and thanked me for coming. I don't remember the words that were said, I don't know all that God had worked through me, all I know is that from that day forward, there was an obvious change in the young man's demeanor in my classroom. From that day forward, it was as if he had been born again.

It was just one of many stories that transpired over the past three years.

One cannot look back and move forward.

In the end, the dragon stood for more than a parallel to Math. As we learn in Revelations 12, the red dragon represents Satan, who chased the woman (the church), who had a child (Jesus). The dragon tried to kill the woman and her child, but the earth protected her. God becomes our protector in all things should we choose to believe. *"And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child. And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth. And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keeps the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."* Rev. 12:13-17

For many of my students, they realized that the dragon also stood for their ability to conquer any fear, including that of Satan. Their belief or unbelief was never questioned, rather, the light was present for all to see. In our walk, we can either

continued on page 42

Freedom Names Zimmerman
as Boys Basketball Coach

Cheryl M. Shuffler

Freedom High School Principal Casey Rogers announces Clint Zimmerman is slated to be the Patriots new boys basketball coach. Zimmerman has 11 years of teaching and coaching experience at Freedom. Zimmerman grew up in Burke County and graduated from Freedom High School in 2003. He played basketball and baseball at Freedom as well as in college at Roanoke College, where he majored in history.

Zimmerman met with the Freedom boys basketball team today. He said, "The easiest part about this transition is the culture has already been established. We have a great group of returners that know what being a part of this program means. Our expectations are pretty simple: be on time, be prepared, never criticize a teammate and represent Freedom on and off the court."

Before accepting the position, Zimmerman said he talked with his wife, Becca, and the Freedom coaching staff. He said, "My first reaction was to talk with my wife and make sure this was something that would be good for our family, for me her support and her thoughts and concerns were the most important factor in the whole process. My next reaction was to reach out to Coach Shade, Coach Noyes, and Coach Scott and make sure that those guys were going to stay on board. They all do such a great job and make such a difference in the program. I think Coach Rogers will be the first one to tell you that we couldn't have accomplished the things we have over the years without them."

Zimmerman follows Rogers as head boys basketball coach.



Clint Zimmerman

Rogers, who coached for 13 years, was named principal at Freedom on May 31. Zimmerman said he learned a lot from working under Rogers and looks forward to continuing the tradition of Patriot Pride. He said, "I have been very fortunate to work for Coach Rogers; he has poured so much of himself into this program and all the young men that have come through over the past 13 years. Working under someone that has been as successful as he has been and continues to be, teaches you a lot about the importance of organization, preparation

and developing relationships with the young men in the locker room. But honestly, I think the most important lesson that I have learned as a player and as a coach is the Freedom basketball program is not and has never been about one person, it's much bigger than that. 'Patriot Pride' is a real, tangible thing that was created 45-plus years ago and something that we will continue to build upon."

Zimmerman is the son of John and Kathie Zimmerman, the grandson of Betty Daniels and son-in-law of Bryan and Alani Curtis. He and his wife, Becca, a counselor at Mountain View Elementary School, have three children, Luke, Will, and Emma. Zimmerman said outside of school he loves spending time with his family. He said, "This job takes a lot of time away from my family and puts a lot of extra responsibilities on my wife. So my biggest hobby is spending time with them. We like to get together with my parents and my in-laws and grill out or put together a big meal on the weekends and play with the kids. Becca has been unbelievably supportive, and I could not take on this job without her. She knows how much Freedom basketball means to me and she is proud to be a part of the Freedom family. Luke, Will, and Emma love coming to the games and they, along with my parents are my biggest supporters."

Rogers said, "Coach Zimmerman is a natural choice to lead the men's basketball team here at Freedom and to continue on with the great tradition that is Freedom basketball. I am excited about him taking the helm. He has a great vision for the program and a passion for students to succeed on and off the court."

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



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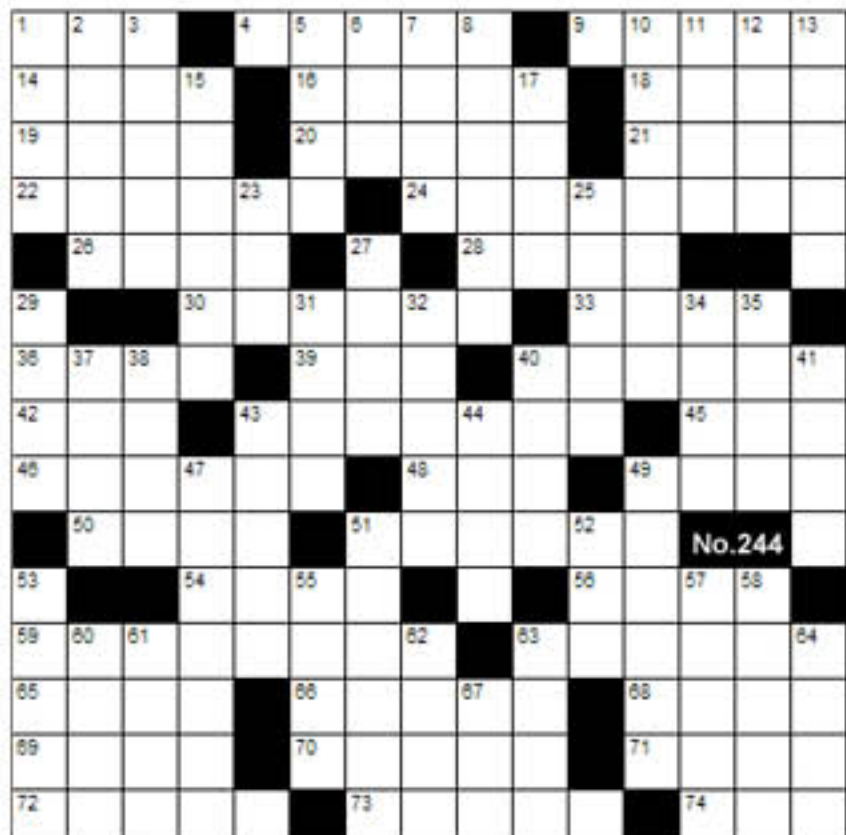
ACROSS

1 the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the ____ (Deut 18:3) KJV
 4 the mirth of the wicked is ____ (Job 20:5)
 9 a ruin and a desolate waste from Migdol to ____ (Ezek 29:10)
 14 son of Seth (Gen 4:26) KJV
 16 You will increase my honor and comfort me once ____ (Ps 71:21)
 18 the tongue can no man ____; it is an unruly evil (James 3:8)
 19 projectile (Job 41:26)
 20 who drink too much wine or ____ themselves on meat (Prov 23:20)
 21 said to David, "Am I ____ that you come at me (1,3) (1 Sam 17:43)
 22 not leave your post; calmness can lay great ____ to rest (Eccl 10:4)
 24 Let death take my enemies by ____ (Ps 55:15)
 26 we landed at ____ in Lycia (Acts 27:5)
 28 my ears have heard the ____ of my wicked foes (Ps 92:11)
 30 the cedar and the acacia, the ____ and the olive (Isa 41:19)
 33 I will give him ____ from all his enemies (1 Chr 22:9)
 36 they are not plagued by human ____ (Ps 73:5)
 39 hail like pebbles. Who can withstand his ____ blast? (Ps 147:17)
 40 chariots and their drivers; horses and their ____ will fall (Hag 2:22)
 42 Come and ____ the works of the LORD (Ps 46:8)
 43 Joseph's second son was ____ (Gen 41:51)
 45 opposite to windward side (naut.) (Acts 27:16)
 46 consider their threats and ____ your servants to speak (Acts 4:29)
 48 he that endureth to the ____ shall be saved (Matt 10:22) KJV
 49 Saul ____ his thousands, and David his ten thousands (1 Sam 29:5)
 50 Master, we know that ____ art true (Matt 22:16) KJV
 51 This is the one I ____; he who is humble and contrite in spirit (Isa 66:2)
 54 The fear of the LORD ____ length to life (Prov 10:27)
 56 this is the ____ of David's mighty men: Jashobeam (1 Chr 11:11)
 59 a lion, mighty among beasts, who ____ before nothing (Prov 30:30)
 63 whoever breaks through a

wall may be ____ by a snake (Eccl 10:8)
 65 ____ saw them, and told Absalom (1,3) (2 Sam 17:18) (KJV)
 66 a servant girl named ____ came to answer the door (Acts 12:13)
 68 David became a ____ after killing Goliath
 69 was in the ____ that is called Patmos (Rev 1:9)
 70 The second son of Ishmael (1 Chron 1:29)
 71 He ____ on the ground, and made clay of the spittle (John 9:6) KJV
 72 Each one is to gather as much as he ____ (Exodus 16:16)
 73 fighting men who volunteered to serve in the ____ (1 Chron 12:38)
 74 as soon as ____ heard that Jesus was coming (John 11:20)

DOWN

1 Darius the ____ took over the kingdom (Dan 5:31)
 2 Do you have ____ like God's, and can your voice (2,3) (Job 40:9)
 3 I tell you, do not ____ about your life, what you will eat (Luke 12:22)
 5 all our righteous acts are like filthy ____ (Isa 64:6)
 6 Sit ye here, while ____ and pray yonder (1,2) (Matt 26:36) KJV
 7 They will turn their ____ away from the truth (2 Tim 4:4)
 8 Jesus used this ____ of speech, but they did not understand (John 10:6)
 10 Jesus bent down and ____ to write on the ground (John 8:6)
 11 from the ____ of Egypt to the Euphrates River (2 Kings 24:7)
 12 one of the minor Old Testament prophets
 13 Then Abram set out and continued toward the ____ (Gen 12:9)
 15 O afflicted city, lashed by ____ and not comforted (Isa 54:11)
 17 Roman emperor (54-68 A.D.)
 23 pitch dark, without a ____ of brightness (Amos 5:20)
 25 Therefore these days were called ____, from the word pur (Est 9:26)
 27 boils of Egypt and with tumors, festering sores and the ____ (Deut 28:27)
 29 Whoso is ____, and will observe these things (Ps 107:43)
 31 As soon as the grain is ____, he puts the sickle to it (Mark 4:29)
 32 dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and ____ (2 Chron 5:12)
 34 Go, ____ everything you have and give to the poor (Mark 10:21)



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35 the woman saw that the fruit of the ____ was good for food (Gen 3:6)
 37 I have neither ____ on usury, nor men have lent to me (Jer 15:10)
 38 Laban's oldest daughter (Gen 29:16-17)
 40 In your majesty ____ forth victoriously in behalf of truth (Ps 45:4)
 41 patch from a new garment and ____ it on an old one (Luke 5:36)
 43 they will long to die, but death will ____ them (Rev 9:6)
 44 The ____ are a people not strong (Prov 30:25)
 47 We ____ a ship from Adramyttium about to sail (Acts 27:2)
 49 the carpenters, and the ____, were departed from Jerusalem (Jer 29:2) KJV
 51 the king was attracted to ____ more than to any of the other (Est 2:17)
 52 the two sons of ____, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests (1

Sam 1:3)
 53 that may be eaten must ____ out the blood (Lev 17:13)
 55 a light shining in a ____ place, until the day dawns (2 Peter 1:19)
 57 a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his ____ (Prov 16:9)
 58 the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran (Gen 11:26)
 60 Salvation is found in no one ____, for there is no other name (Acts 4:12)
 61 we spend our years as a ____ that is told (Ps 90:9)
 62 with soap and my hands with washing ____ (Job 9:30)
 63 they are all mute dogs, they cannot ____ (Isa 56:10)
 64 write it before them in a table, and ____ it in a book (Isaiah 30:8)
 67 one of the twelve tribes of Israel (Ex 1:3-4)

Solution on page 14



Don't Ignore God. There is a Hell!

By Dr. Mark Creech

There is a matter that somewhat afflicts my spirit every day. It is the observation that so many of the people with whom I associate hardly ever give God a thought. When it comes to the way they live, God is not a part of the equation. Not only do they never think of him, (unless thrown into some trouble from which their abilities can't rescue them) but they don't fear him.

There is a final destination for people like this: hell.

Samuel Gordon once wrote: "Philosophically there must be a hell. That is the name for the place where God is not; for the place where they will gather together who insist on leaving God out. God out! There can be no worse hell than that!"

The beloved Christian writer, Max Lucado, summarized the greatest horror of hell. He wrote, "God isn't there."

Certainly, hell is the just deserts of those who owe God for every good thing in life but want nothing to do with him or his ways.

Hell is real. It's not simply a state of being, the Bible describes it as a place of consciousness (Lk. 16:23, 24), a place of eternal torment (Lk. 16:23, 28), a place of darkness, (Mt. 8:12), a place of eternal separation from loved ones who believed (Lk. 13:28), a place without the slightest hope of relief or release (Mt. 25:46, Heb. 6:2), and a place of regret and torturous memory (Lk. 16:27, 28).

A few months ago, I spoke with a woman who told me her husband had a realistic and terrifying dream about crossing a river in a valley. She said he wept for a half hour afterward. In the dream, there were demon spirits that blinded and transformed people into wicked beings themselves, who consequently blinded others, all of whom were enslaved forever.

I felt the dream had spiritual significance and explained that it matched much of what the Bible says about dreams with divine messages, the devil, demonic influences, spiritual blindness, sin, and judgment. I urged both of them to act on the dream's biblical message and be sure of a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ. However, I don't think either of them has decided anything on the matter.

Their situation reminded me of a story from the Eighteenth Century about a resident from Glasgow, Scotland, whose name was Archibald Boyle.

Boyle was a leading member of an organization called "The Hell Club." The club was well-known in its day for its immoral excesses.

One night after much debauchery at their annual meeting, Boyle dreamed that he was riding home on his black horse, when an unknown figure appeared from nowhere, seized the reins from him, shouting, "You must go with me."

In an attempt to wrest back the reins, the horse reared, and Boyle fell, down, down, with ever-increasing velocity. He looked and next to him was the fearful attendant who had commandeered his horse away from him. Boyle cried out, "Where are you taking me?" To which the unrelenting entity replied, "To hell."

When they reached hell's floor, Boyle said he immediately heard echoes from the groans and yelling of frantic revelry. He entered through a grand archway, where he saw hell's inhabitants chasing the same sinful pleasures they had pursued in life, but were now like phantoms.

Boyle soon perceived he was surrounded by people he had known on earth. There was a woman, an acquaintance, who was absorbed in a card game of gambling. When he saw this, he relaxed and said, "If this is hell, what a devilish pleasant place it must be." When he proceeded to ask the woman if she might provide a tour of hell's pleasures, she shrieked: "THERE IS NO REST IN HELL!!!"

The woman then unclasped the vest of her expensive robe and displayed to Boyle's shuddering gaze a coil of living snakes, writhing, darting, and stinging her bosom - the very seat of her emotions and affections.

Others whom he knew in hell also revealed similar pangs of the soul, but worse still, he witnessed a hopeless agony of regret in everyone. They laughed, sang and spoke irreverently, just as

continued on page 47



Something To Think About
Real JOY

By Dennis Love
McDowell County



Where does a person find real joy? Listen to what the Bible says in the following verses.

"Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious JOY" (1 Peter 1:8)

"Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the JOY of the Lord is your strength." (Nehemiah 8:10)

"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace, and JOY in the Holy Spirit." (Romans 14:17)

"May the God of hope fill you with all JOY and peace as you trust in Him. So that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13)

"Shout aloud and sing for JOY, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you." (Isaiah 12:6)

Most of us would say that the best explanation of JOY comes from the word itself by using it as an acronym.

The J in JOY represents Jesus.

The O in JOY represents others.

The Y in JOY represents you.

Therefore, if you want to experience real JOY, put Jesus first, others next and then yourself last.

Here's something to think about. Let's use another acronym for real lasting joy.

The J in JOY represents Jesus.

The O in JOY represents zero or nothing.

The Y in JOY represents you.

According to the Bible here is the real formula for JOY. Real JOY is found when "Nothing" comes between "Jesus" and "You."

J-----Jesus

O-----Nothing

Y-----You

If anything is standing between you and Jesus, then your JOY will not be complete. Real JOY is Jesus, Nothing and You! How's your JOY these days?

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



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Dedication to God's Work

By Patricia Jackson
Rutherford County

Psalm 27:4 tells us that David desires of the Lord and that he will seek after, "that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life". The tone of this Psalm is contemplation. The experience of the goodness and greatness of God made David think about how wonderful it is to seek Him and to experience His Presence. "To behold the beauty of the Lord"; David knew there was beauty in the nature and presence of God. When we meditate upon all of God's marvelous ways, His beauty is revealed to us. David wanted to "inquire in His temple". Do we have a desire to spend time with Him in worship, in God's house, and with God's people? When we think about that question, what should have greater value and priority in our lives than that we would dwell forever in the house of the Lord? This life will soon be past, and it is only those things that are done for Christ that are eternal.

From David's Psalms, prayers, and work, we find he is truly dedicated to building the temple and serving God. So what is dedication? The primary factor behind a successful person or completion of a project is his/her level of dedication, which signifies the commitment of a person towards achieving objectives and life goals. What constitutes our personal dedication to serve God?

- 1) A decision to serve God,
- 2) Dedication to serving God,
- 3) Discipline in our personal lives and in our prayer lives, and
- 4) Devotion to God to fulfill His plans and works in our life; works He has led us to do for the benefits of Christianity. We should have this kind of commitment so that His works can be accomplished through us, His servants.

We know David desired to build a temple for God, however, in 2 Samuel Chapter 7:12-13, God assured David He would allow his son Solomon "to build a house for My name". In the fourth year of Solomon's reign, he began to build the house of the Lord. His father David had already begun collecting many items that would be used in the Temple, and after seven years, it was complete. Solomon fulfilled the promise God made to David that his son would build this Temple. Solomon acknowledged God's greatness, using the best materials and items in the temple. Just as Solomon, we need to have the same attitude today as we serve the Lord in our personal lives, giving the Lord our best and working to bring honor to our Lord and Savior. He is worthy of our best efforts!

Patricia Jackson is the Assistant Teacher for the Ladies Class at Redeemed Free Will Baptist Church, Glenwood, NC. She is a grant writer for non-profits, a published author and retired Nursing Home Administrator. She lives in Rutherford County with her husband.



America's Greatness

By Ken & Jan Merop
Avery County

A painted turtle? Can't be, my son thought. Cleaning out his garden, he had tossed aside an unusual object that caused him to turn around and look again. That's when he saw movement. Dusting it off, he discovered a little painted turtle. So he created a small house to protect his newly found treasure.

Norm was tiny without too much color when we met him. But some time later, he had amazingly increased in size and color. Because our son cared, this slow-moving reptile experienced a re-birth, so to speak. Otherwise, away from a water source, his life would have been cut short. Rebirth. We hear about it in Christian circles quite a bit.

It's a mystery, in one sense of the word, because it is a supernatural gift of God to those who believe in Jesus Christ as the way, the truth, and the life. He then gives eternal life to all who put their faith in Him along with abundant life in the here and now.

Once born again (rebirth), transformation takes place from the inside out. Old ways are gone and new ones are formed. As it says in 2 Corinthians 5: 17, NLT, "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun."

On a national level, on July 4, 1776, our Declaration of Independence signaled the birth of a new nation under the banner of dependence on Almighty God. It was a costly birth for many who paid dearly with their lives. We are the recipients of their valor and faith.

Our country has been a world leader, setting the pace with Godly values and encouraging the dreams of many with vision and hope.

But, the anchor of America's faith has become unmoored, and the ties that have made her great have loosened. It is exactly why our founding fathers knew that if this nation was to be great, it needed to be rooted in faith, family and freedom or all our other freedoms were at risk. If we truly want to be a great nation, we must each honor God.

Proverbs 14:34 says "Righteousness exalts a nation." It took time to slide down the slippery slope of decline. And like a turtle's slow, but steady plodding, it will take time to climb back up. But, with faith in Almighty God, it can be done, and our true colors will shine. Selah.



BLOOMING SPARKLERS
By Ken & Jan Merop

There's nothing like Fourth of July celebrations
to get our hearts pounding.
The chorus of 'ooh's and ah's' is like
an unrehearsed choir naturally blending.
But, it doesn't have to happen once a year.
Let your garden colorfully explode with blooms
that nurture that same delight...yet without a sound.
Let your heart explode in the wonder of God's creation.
Let the 'ooh's and ah's' begin!
"In the beginning God created...and God saw that it was good."
Genesis 1: 1 and 12b, NKJV



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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David Burleson
Burke County



Summer is a busy time at the Burke United Christian Ministries (BUCM) since there is an increased need for food and clothing due to children being home and not attending school. BUCM has already seen an increase in the number eating in our soup kitchen, picking up food in the pantry, and receiving clothes in our clothing closet. There are several opportunities for members of our community to be involved at BUCM and provide assistance during the summer months.

One of our greatest needs is food to be distributed in our food pantry. Doing a food drive for BUCM during the summer months would be greatly appreciated. BUCM also needs gently used clothes, shoes, and new underwear to be distributed in the clothing closet, especially as we prepare to provide clothes and shoes for students getting ready to go back to school.

Shop in the BUCM Saved for you Clothing, Thrift, and Craft Store. The store will be having a special Christmas sale in July. This provides those who love decorating for Christmas a head start on decorations for Christmas 2019. Be sure to come by and see all the beautiful crafts our elves have crafted.

Your help is definitely needed as a volunteer! As we all know, volunteers are an essential piece to every organization in our country and this is especially true for BUCM. Year after year, volunteers contribute time and energy to assist our ministry in meeting the needs of others. During the last fiscal year, volunteers at BUCM gave 42,112 hours of their time to help and encourage others. People volunteer for many different reasons, but one of the major reasons is to make a difference in the lives of others. There are many such opportunities at BUCM to assist those who need a hand up.

The Burke United Christian Ministries would like to invite you to partner with our ministry and serve with us. Here are some volunteer opportunities for you to consider:

Food Harvesting – Going to local grocery stores and restaurants to pick up donated food.

Clothing Closet – New opportunity – Assist clients in our clothing closet as they shop with a clothing voucher. The social workers write up a clothing voucher that allows the client to shop. Volunteers assist clients and then tally up their selection. No money is exchanged.

Sorting, Inspecting, and Hanging – Interested in being behind the scenes of the clothing closet or Saved for You Clothing Store? Volunteer to prepare items for the sales floor or clothing closet.

Warehouse – Unload, sort and organize perishable and non-perishable food items. Assist in stocking the Food Pantry. Help keep the warehouse, freezers, and refrigerators organized.

Clerical Support– Assist with production of newsletters, bulk mailings, flyers and more.

Front Window – Check clients into the ministry and greet those who need assistance.

Life Enrichment Center Volunteer – Assist students as they work on their GED, take ESL Lessons, navigate the WEB, work on their financial budget, or develop their financial budget.

Willing to do whatever or being on-call – Is your volunteer time flexible? Are you interested in just being called on in a time of need? Volunteer to be called on when the donations are plenty or support is needed in the food pantry, clothing closet, dining room, front office, or anywhere in the ministry. We are especially in need of an on-call soup kitchen team for times when something comes up for the scheduled team or in times of bad weather.

Wanting to volunteer or find out more about BUCM, just give me a call at (828) 433-8075, email me at bucmdirector@gmail.com, or come by for a visit and let's talk about how you can make a difference with BUCM.

As we have stated many times, our ministry is stronger because of the support and participation of our volunteers, board, and staff. A special thank you to the following retiring board members:

- Mr. Mark Rostan
- Mr. Brad Arrowood

Your continued support and encouragement have been greatly appreciated.

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

David Burleson is Director of Burke United Christian Ministries



- 4th of July Webquest - ANSWERS from page 18
1. Some people think that we should celebrate on July 2nd because that was the day that the delegates actually voted on the Declaration of Independence.
 2. The Liberty Bell was rung on July 8th, 1776. It was rung on this day to honor the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence.
 3. John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Monroe, all presidents and founding fathers, died on July 4th.
 4. Artillery salutes were a key feature of the earliest independence day celebrations. This event stopped happening as cannons fell out of use in the late 19th century.
 5. On July 4th, 1777, Congress authorized fireworks for 4th of July celebrations.
 6. The largest firework display on the 4th of July can be found in New York City.
 7. True - when the Revolutionary War broke out in 1775, not all colonists desired independence.
 8. The Virginia delegate, Richard Henry Lee, introduced the motion calling for independence.
 9. Thomas Jefferson wrote the majority of the Declaration of Independence.
 10. Massachusetts became the first state to make July 4th an official state holiday.



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choose to simply follow the law, or we can provide more than being the shell of a being living in a world of flesh; we can choose to be the light.

So it is, with this journey upon which I trod, answering His call to march onward, seeking that new shore. Yes, this may be the last dragon, but the story doesn't end. When this path began nearly five years ago, those fateful words continue to ring in my ears today, "Wherever you say to go, Lord, I will follow."

When it is your time to answer the call, choose your words carefully, for God will surely lead you to places you never dreamed and because of Him working through you, you will achieve things you never imagine. It will not be easy. There will be moments of incomprehensible pain, just as there will be times of unspeakable joy.

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, evidence of things unseen," and in that, we will always find comfort. Let us not dwell on things of the past any more than with which to inspire us toward a better path in the future. Keep all those in prayer who have had their journey's door close and now are awaiting the next one to open; for in the waiting, there will be learning and hope. Thanks be to God.

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



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BCPS Leaders to Take on New Assignments

By Cheryl Shuffler
Burke County



Burke County Public Schools is pleased to announce school leaders who will assume new roles within the district for the upcoming 2019-20 school year.

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam said, "We are excited about the opportunities these talented educators have to advance their careers and take on new positions. The need to fill these openings arose from retirements, resignations, and advancements, and since Burke County Public Schools attempts to promote qualified candidates from within, it created a domino effect. Change can be difficult, but it also is exciting. I am confident each of these moves will help our school system continue to grow and achieve academically."

This most recent round of announcements stems from openings created when Director of Advanced Learning and Innovation, Kathy Amos, was named the superintendent of Yancey County Schools; Angie Hensley, who was over child nutrition, took a position in the private sector; and the duties of Debbie Jennings, who is currently taking on a dual role with Secondary Education and Career and Technical Education, were divided.

As previously announced, Christie Abernathy is the new Director of Advanced Learning and Innovation; Daniel Wall is the new Director of Child Nutrition, and Felicia Simmons is the new Director of Secondary Education. By Simmons taking over one of the dual roles Jennings has, Jennings now will be able to focus her role solely on Career and Technical Education and working with Dr. Putnam and Burke County Public Schools' partners in education, such as Western Piedmont Community College and Burke Development, Inc., to develop a more educated workforce in Burke County. Simmons will be able to focus solely on overseeing Curriculum and Instruction of the district's middle and high schools.

Abernathy, Wall and Simmons' replacements are as follows:

- Abernathy's replacement at Liberty Middle School is Brett Wilson, current principal at Walter Johnson Middle School.
- Wall's replacement at Valdese Elementary School is Charles Williams, current principal at Mountain View Elementary School.
- Simmons' replacement at Freedom High School is Casey Rogers, current assistant principal and head basketball coach at Freedom. Rogers will step down as basketball coach and name his replacement at a later date.

The following individuals also have new assignments for the 2019-20 school year:

- Lora Austin has been named Principal of Walter Johnson Middle School. She is Principal at East Burke Middle School.
- Keith Recker has been named Principal of East Burke Middle School. He is Principal at Drexel Elementary School.
- Jessie Gravel has been named Principal of Drexel Elementary School. She is Assistant Principal at Drexel and Glen Alpine elementary schools.
- Christie McMahon has been named Principal of Mountain View Elementary School. She is Principal at W.A. Young Elementary School.
- Jeannie Jandrew has been named Principal of W.A. Young Elementary School. She is Principal at George Hildebrand Elementary School.
- Erin Wall has been named Principal of George Hildebrand Elementary School. She is Assistant Principal at Walter Johnson Middle School.
- Ginger Stinson has been named Principal of Salem Elementary School. She is Assistant Principal at Patton High School.
- Bob Acord has been named Director of Transportation; Acord is the Assistant Auxiliary Services Director and is replacing John Cansler, who is retiring.
- Kevin Heron has been named Assistant Auxiliary Services Director. Heron is the current maintenance supervisor.
- Jonelle Bobak is the new Marketing and Communications Specialist for Burke County Public Schools. Bobak comes to the school system after having spent the last four years as a multimedia journalist at The News Herald.

The new principal assignments take effect on July 1, 2019.

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

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Have You Really Given Your
Heart To God?

By Rev. Mark H. Creech

Many years ago, the late Dr. Billy Graham was on an airplane. He was sitting behind a drunken man who was flirting with the flight attendants, using profanity and making a fool of himself. When someone pointed out to him that Billy Graham was seated directly behind him, the man got up, turned around, stuck out his hand, and said: "Put her there, Dr. Graham. I'm so glad to meet you. I'm one of your converts."

As a minister, I've had similar experiences. Recently, however, I had something happen that was just the opposite.

I pulled my car up to an old country store to get some gasoline on my way to work in Raleigh. This man, who was at the same pump as me, warmly and enthusiastically greeted me. He asked how I was doing these days. It was obvious that he knew me, but I didn't recognize him.

Then, with excitement in his voice, he started talking (almost non-stop) about all the marvelous things God was doing in his life. His face was radiant with joy. He told me that he never knew life could be so good. I still didn't recognize him. He wasn't anyone that I knew, I thought. But there was something about his voice that sounded familiar. As I continued to listen intensely to his story – a story about him coming to himself – turning away from his former life while also turning to God – it came to me. This was Gregg.

Gregg was someone I had introduced to Christ many years ago. At that time, he had been deep into drugs and alcohol. His life was a wreck. He made a profession of faith, was baptized and joined the church where I was the pastor during those days. Sadly, sometime after that, his marriage fell apart, and Gregg got tripped up and started looking for solace in the wrong places. He suffered serious addiction issues for several years. He was almost killed in a terrible automobile accident. He would also end up in prison for a while. He was in a very dark place for a long time. That was the Gregg I knew.

But the person talking to me today was not the same man. Gregg had really met Christ, fully surrendered his life to him, and experienced victory over his addictions. Someone has since told me that he has gone back to the church and attends regularly.

Nowadays, Gregg looks robust and healthy and has a countenance I can't explain outside of experiencing something totally life changing. He's a new man inside, and it's showing on the outside. I could tell just by our short conversation that he had a completely different outlook on life, and it was demonstrated in his life's choices.

The Scriptures say, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Cor. 5:17).

In his book, "Peace with God," Dr. Graham clarified the difference between someone who professes the faith and someone who actually possesses the faith. "There is a vast difference between intellectual belief and the total conversion that saves the soul," wrote Dr. Graham.

Seventeenth-century writers Francois Fenelon and Jeanne Guyon said it this way, "O when the heart is gained, how easily is all the rest corrected! This is why God, above all things, requires the heart."

Have you truly given your heart to God? Have you turned away from your sins and turned to Christ for forgiveness? Salvation isn't just applying for fire insurance from hell. That's what some people do when they pray a certain little prayer, get baptized and join the church. They think they are covered. It's not that any of these things are bad; it's just that there is so much more to it.

Genuine salvation of the soul recognizes that before God, you are a wretched sinner who desperately needs to be transformed by the power of Christ. If you want heaven without opening your life to God for change, if you want heaven without conversion, if you want heaven while hanging onto your sins, you'll never enter the kingdom of God.

This is not to say that people are saved by their good works. Nevertheless, if you genuinely come to Christ in repentance and experience the grace of God through faith, good works will follow. You will be changed and never be the same again. You will leave the way of darkness and characteristically walk in the light. It will show on your face. People will hear it in the way you talk. It will be seen in your whole life's direction. You will be different. Maybe it won't be so evident all at once, but it will surely surface that you are brand new.

Have you indeed given your heart to God? Does it show? Has the power of Christ to save from sin been revealed in you?

If not, perhaps it's prudent to reassess your profession of faith and do what Gregg did: really give your heart to God.

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



Dave Says

Questions

By Dave Ramsey

Dear Dave,

I was recently offered an opportunity to participate in a hands-on stock trading class. The problem is we don't have the \$6,500 registration fee just lying around. My husband and I are on Baby Step 4 of your plan, so what would you think about us borrowing that amount from our emergency fund? We would still have three months of expenses set aside after paying for the class.
Camille



Dear Camille,

I don't know the exact course you're talking about, but I do know something about the concept of buying and selling stocks, or day trading, if you want to call it that. I can tell you all the research shows 78 to 84 percent of day traders lose money. And one hundred percent think they won't be the ones losing out. That includes people who take courses like the one you mentioned.

I have found no data points which show, on a consistent level across a broad population, that people who take a course like that become wealthy as a result. Buying and selling single stocks is an ultra-high-risk proposition. That's why I don't buy any single stocks. Now, I know some people who buy and sell single stocks as a very small percentage of their financial world. It's almost like a hobby for them. A couple might actually make a little money from time to time, but it's not the main focus of their investment strategy. To hear them, it's like listening to fishing stories. They're always talking about the one that got away.

I wouldn't waste my money on the course, Camille—especially my emergency fund money. Your emergency fund is for, say it with me, emergencies only!
—Dave

Dear Dave,

I've got a couple of friends who were advised by their financial planners not to open college savings accounts for their kids. Their planners told them this would count against their children's ability to receive financial aid and assistance when it's time for college. Apparently, these planners told them to put the money into their own retirement accounts. It's my understanding, however, that both the child's and the parent's financial situations are looked into when determining financial aid. Can you please shed some light on this?
Jeanette

Dear Jeanette,

So, if a financial planner told you not to get a job because then you can apply for welfare, are you going to listen to that person? What kind of moron gives financial advice like this? You don't tell people not to save money for something, just so they can pretend they're poor!

Save whatever money you can and send your kid to school. Why is that such a difficult concept to grasp? People need to stop looking for tricks and shortcuts because there aren't any that will be beneficial in the long run. I'm not going to pose as broke—fraudulently—to get financial aid for my kid. That's ridiculous! I hope I wasn't unclear.—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.

Sudoku

Solution on page 14

	6	3				8	9	2
				7	9			
		4	3		8	7	5	1
		7	9	8				
9		2	1		4	6		8
				2	3	9		
1	7	6	5		2	3		
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Christmas in July

By Preacher Chris Rathborne
Mitchell County



Yeah, Yeah, I know you didn't want to hear that! The fact of the matter is, you'll be hearing it from retailers this month more than likely. Trust me, it'll be here before you know it, just like July came so quickly. One of the things that happens as we get older is time goes by so much faster. Days seem long but the years go fast! Let me tell you how Christmas got on my mind.

Last night, my wife Michelle and I were talking about some memories from when we were kids. One of the things she remembered was how she could see the Christmas tree lights from the bedroom. She would lie in bed and look at all the beautiful colors radiating from the tree till she fell asleep or her parents would turn them off. As a child, it all seemed so magical and exciting.

Very seldom did my family have what you called a "store-bought" tree. Most of the time we went to woods and found a small white pine for our tree. We had the "Charlie Brown" Christmas tree for sure. But it made no difference to us, we were just as excited. We decorated with what we had, and once the tree went up, the anticipation and hope for a gift under the tree made those last couple of weeks before Christmas seem like they lasted forever.

One of the fondest memories I have is lying under the tree with my head close to the trunk. I would lie there on my back looking up through the branches as the lights flashed and twinkled. For some reason, this was so peaceful and magical to me. As Christmas day grew closer, so grew the anticipation and excitement of what gift might be under the tree on Christmas morning. To say my family wasn't wealthy is putting it lightly. Don't get me wrong, we made it, but we never had the finer things in life if you know what I mean. However, even as poor as I thought we were, there were other families who had less than us. The anticipation of possibly receiving a special present on Christmas meant a lot more in those days. When your family doesn't have a whole lot, the hope of being given something extra that you normally didn't get, made Christmas a big deal. Don't get me wrong, our family celebrated the birth of Christ. We attended church, had parts in the Christmas play, went caroling, etc. But as a kid who didn't have much, hoping and praying for that one thing you want so bad is a big deal! Some of y'all know what I'm talking about.

In those days, cartoons were only on Saturday morning. During the commercials, the retailers would advertise the newest and latest toys for that year. Around 1980, there was a hot toy for boys being advertised consistently. It was called the "Evel Knievel Stunt Cycle Gyro Launcher". The set featured Evel Knievel sitting on a motorcycle. You placed the motorcycle on a stand which had a winding handle on the side. You would turn the handle faster and faster which "wound up" the motorcycle. When it reached a certain speed, the motorcycle would launch and speed across the floor to jump whatever ramp you had set up. Trust me, as an eight-year-old boy, it was one of the most awesome things I had ever seen! Decked out in red, white, and blue with stars on his outfit, Evel Knievel was a superhero! I would literally lie awake at night and dream of what it would be like if that were to be under the Christmas tree. What joy and jubilation would ensue if that's what Dad and Mom got. The toy was a little pricey, so the chances were slim. However, it didn't stop me from showing it to Dad and Mom every time we went into Sky City store. It didn't stop me from dreaming, praying, begging, and losing sleep, with the hope that I might get that one gift that seemed so far out of reach.

You're probably wondering, "Why in the world is he writing about things like this in the summertime?" Well, as we were sharing these memories Michelle made a statement that seemed to stick with me. She said, "People have so much nowadays that we don't even get too excited when we receive a gift. The excitement that we had when we were kids is almost gone."

It doesn't have to be a Christmas gift. We are blessed with so much that any time we receive a gift it seems we give the usual "thank you" and move on. Kids get so much throughout the year that they don't even blink an eye after opening a gift and then quickly move on to the next one. Some even get mad and pitch a "hissy fit" if they don't get what they want. Let me say that we are spoiled.

We have been given so much in this life that we have lost the excitement, joy, and appreciation that we should have when we receive a gift. Matter of fact, it seems many Christians have lost their appreciation for the greatest gift God ever gave, His Son Jesus Christ. The excitement of being saved and forgiven doesn't seem to excite too many people. Many give barely a nod of thanks if any, to the Lord for all He has done for us. Every day we enjoy these blessings in life and don't even think of the One who gave them to us. We have become so accustomed to having so much, we have forgotten what it was like without them. Each day is a gift from God. Each necessity we are given comes from God. Life and breath come from our Heavenly Father. Jesus died to give us the free gift of salvation. If that's not enough to cause us joy and excitement, nothing else will!

Let us receive each day as a gift for which we have been longing. May we realize how much we have given in this life and show our appreciation and excitement to the Lord and to others. May every day be a day in which we have joy and show joy for all we have received. Perhaps this article should be called "Thanksgiving in July" instead of "Christmas in July".

Help us, Lord Jesus, to realize how much we have been given! May the joy and excitement of all these gifts cause us to worship and give you thanks daily! Amen. Oh, and guess what was under the tree that year.

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

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

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Happy 4th of July

Parkway Playhouse Presents:
A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder

By Hunter Taylor, Education Coordinator
Yancey County

This delightful musical is a thrilling murderous romp filled with unforgettable music, non-stop laughs, and a very impressive cast that over the course of a single evening, portrays over 70 different characters! Written by Robert L. Freedman and Steven Lutvak, this four-time Tony Award winning musical is sure to delight audiences young and old!

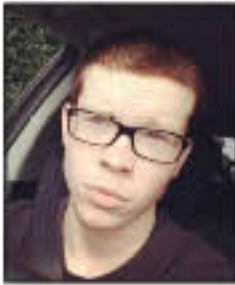
When Monty Navarro discovers he is the not-so-distant heir to the D'Ysquith family fortune, he decides to jump the line of succession using a good bit of charm...and a little bit of murder. Along the journey of knocking off his eight unsuspecting relatives, Monty must juggle both matters of the heart and not landing behind bars.

Performances will be held on June 29th, July 5th, 6th, 12th, and 13th at 7:30pm, with matinee performances on June 30th and July 7th 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 parkway-playhouse.com.

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

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

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



Back Row Left to Right (Natalie Calkins, David Leader, Matthew Harper), Front Row Left to Right (Kaitlin Jencks, Sarah Rasey, Aaron Neighbors, Tasha Pepi)

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.

NOTES



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The Orchard at Altapass

Fourth Of July Picnic At The Orchard

By Kate Groff
Mitchell County

On Thursday, July 4th, the Orchard at Altapass will throw open the doors of the red barn, light up the grill, sweeten the iced tea, unfold the tables on the pavilion, and "dust" the dance floor in order to celebrate Independence Day—Orchard style—with their annual picnic from 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Independence Day, a national holiday, commemorates the Declaration of Independence that was proclaimed on July 4, 1776. The Continental Congress declared that the 13 American colonies were no longer subject to the monarch of Britain and were now united, free, and independent states. Congress voted to declare independence on the second, but it took two more days of much debate and revision to be officially announced.

Independence Day is commonly associated with fireworks, parades, barbecues, fairs, picnics, concerts, family reunions, and political speeches and ceremonies. The Orchard at Altapass steers clear of political speeches, doesn't stand on ceremony, and leaves the fireworks to the towns, but offers up a day of family and friends, food and fun, and music—lots of music. Three bands will take to the stage to entertain and provide a background for dancing. Add bit o' clogging and you have one exciting day of celebration.

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, which includes all the music and dancing you can stand. Orchard provides 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, on Facebook, or call 828-765-9531.

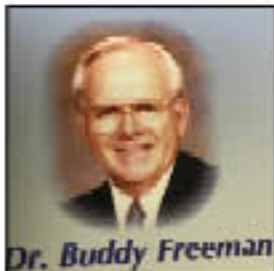
Kate Groff is the Programs Coordinator for the Toe River Arts Council.



First Baptist of Marshall

Humor

By Buddy Freeman
Madison County



Dr. Buddy Freeman

A man said, "I don't go to church while on vacation. I can't sleep in a stranger pew."

There is an earthquake. One couple sent their little boy to stay with an uncle. A day later the parents received a telegram that said, "I am returning the boy. Send the earthquake here."

"What am I supposed to do with this," grumbled the motorist as the Patrolman handed him his ticket. The Patrolman said, "When you get four of them, you get a bicycle."

A six-year-old girl praying, "Dear God, thank you for my baby brother, but what I have been praying for is a little puppy."

"Some people are kind, polite, and sweet spirited until you try to sit in their pew."

Doctor said, to a patient's wife, "I really don't like the looks of your husband." The wife said, "I don't either, but he is sure good to the grandchildren."

People ask when they learned Jesus had fed the 5,000, whether the two fish were bass or catfish and what bait did He use.

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

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they had on earth, but they could never rest from it – not the slightest moment of reprieve was granted. They could never do right. They could never change and experience the sweetness and the blessedness of a godly life. They could never know the tenderness of God's grace and mercy. They could never know forgiveness nor give it. They were forever bound to each sinful way to which they had tenaciously held onto in life. Except in hell, their libertinism had turned into bitter chains of constant anguish.

"These are the pleasures of hell," an earthly voice mockingly boomed. Terrified at what he was seeing, Boyle begged his companion, "Please take me from this place. By the living God whose name I have so often outraged, I beg you, let me go!" His guide replied, "Go then; but, in a year and a day, we meet to part no more."

Despite his resolution to never again attend the Hell Club, Boyle was drawn back. His friends intensely pressed him, and though his conscience weighed heavily on him, he feared their sneers more than he feared God.

At the next annual meeting of Hell Club, which Boyle attended, every nerve in his body seemed to thrash him at the first sentence of the president's opening address: "My friends, this is leap year; therefore it is a year and a day since our last meeting."

After the meeting, Boyle mounted his horse to ride home. The following morning, however, his horse was found quietly grazing by the roadside. Just a few yards in the distance lay the stiffened corpse of Archibald Boyle.

The Scriptures solemnly warn:
"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

The list above is not meant to be an exhaustive catalog of people who will find themselves in hell one day. Revelation 21:8 includes something similar, adding:

"But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 21:8).

I've included both of these texts because much of what's listed is celebrated and lauded today, not repudiated as it should be. Don't be fooled! Even though some churches have hailed these behaviors in recent years, the end for those who characteristically live this way is one of eternal damnation.

Still, let me make it abundantly clear. You don't have to be grossly wicked to go to hell. All that's necessary is to ignore God's claim on your life. Don't make him a part of the equation, rarely think of him, leave him out, don't surrender control to him as the Lord, your God, don't fear him, and to your surprise and dismay, although you thought of yourself as a pretty good person, at the end of life, you'll find yourself in that terrible place.

There are two lives that you can live – life your way or life God's way. There are two leaders that you can follow – yourself or God. There are two decisions that you can make – to receive God's salvation through Christ or to reject him.

Every person must make a choice. Even choosing not to make a choice is a choice made against God. There is no neutrality. Either we acknowledge God's sovereignty over us, trust his means of redemption from the penalty and power of sin, which he provides in Jesus Christ and by his Holy Spirit, or we are eternally left to our own devices and land in hell.

Admittedly, as the Great Reformer, Martin Luther said, it's very difficult to know and understand all of what hell is; "Only this we know, there is such a sure and certain place."

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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