



BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS



Bear Creek Baptist Church

Fall Colors

By Bruce Cannon
Mitchell County

Job 12:7-10 *"But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind."*



Once again, the Lord is getting ready to make western North Carolina a very color-filled, beautiful place. Already the fall colors are beginning in the higher elevations. How amazing! What a palette of colors the Lord uses to decorate the trees! How amazing are His eyes and heart for beauty!

And if He will do that for Himself and for us to enjoy, what more will He do for those who love Him? Paul wrote in Romans 8:32, *"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"*

As we look at the beauty of the trees let us remember there is a divine being, the Lord, who loves us so much and watches over us just as He does the trees. Jesus Himself taught, *"Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothes the grass, which is today in the field, and tomorrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."* (Luke 12:27-32)

Are we not much more important in the Lord's eyes than the grasses of the field, the colors of the trees and the sparrows? Absolutely! So, as we see the fall colors, or the beauty of a sunrise or sunset, or the beauty of a starry night or the moon that is so beautiful to gaze upon remembering that there is a God who loves us more than words can say. He wants to walk with us through life! He wants to encourage us, give us peace, make our lives full of joy and let us sense His pres-

ence in our lives fully. He gave His only begotten Son for our salvation!

As I write this article, I am enjoying the Lord and want badly for you to enjoy Him as well. Tell Him you love Him right now. Tell Him how thankful you are to know that He is with you and will always be with you. Walk with Him. Pray to Him. Read His Word. And, as you do these things feel His amazing love for you. And, whenever you see the fall colors do not take them for granted. Remember there is a God who does all of this for us every year as a demonstration of His love for us.

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.



Neighbors Feeding Neighbors

By Amy Hoilman
Mitchell County

We are Neighbors Feeding Neighbors Food Ministry. We serve Mitchell, Yancey, & Avery Counties. This Ministry is doing God's work in our local area. There are ministries all over the world, but God has given us the burden of just serving our local people, yes, our neighbors in need. Mitchell County is the county with the most people that we serve, but we do reach out to Yancey and Avery counties.

God has opened our eyes to meet this need in our area. A lot of people said there is no one going Hungry here in our country, but that is not a true statement. In the month of August, the Ministry gave out food to 911 people in Mitchell, Yancey, & Avery counties. We gave out 17,535 pounds of food in August.

Why do we keep suppressing the truth that hunger and homelessness are not here in our area? Well, it is here, and we are reaching out to them. Jesus started reaching out to others right where His feet were. 1 Peter 2:21 says "For even here- unto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." Jesus sought out the ones that were in need of help. The Bible tells us to love, and not to judge. This is God's word, not man's word. How can God put something in our hearts and it never manifests in our actions? This Ministry does all things in God's honor and Glory.

Folks, God's word tells us what to do in our lives. Let's work together to end hunger, homelessness in our area, and to help those in their time of need. The need is real, and the people are real, and most important God is real, alive, and true in His word and works.

Luke 16:25 "but Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good thing, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented"

Mathew 25:40 "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

To find out more about the Ministry or if you need food assistance please call Amy 828-385-3975, Allen 828-385-9446, or Josh Robinson 828-385-1325. Thanks, and God Bless.



The Demand of the Gospel

By Dr. Tom Walker
McDowell County



Rom 1:1 says: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God." The Apostle Paul introduces his epistle to the Romans with the text we are using for this article.

We are going to consider the demand of the Gospel that is issued in this verse, but before we go there, I see three important things given in Romans 1:1. When we see these three truths, we will move on to consider the heart of this study.

First, he calls himself a "servant." It is also translated in our King James Bibles as "bond." It is the word for a bond slave. It can have the idea of being brought into bondage. We were bound to Satan to serve Him, but now that we have been redeemed, we are prisoners of love, slaves to the Master. Dottie Rambo wrote a song years ago whose lyrics say the following: "I'm a prisoner of love, a slave to the master, I willing toil through the heat and the cold, I seek no reward, in this world below, but payday will come, when the pearly gates unfold."

Paul the Apostle felt bound in servitude to the Lord as an instrument of labor. In Biblical times a bond slave was one who has lost his liberty and had no rights. Believers are no longer slaves in bondage to Satan, rather he or she is in bondage to the Master.

The Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible makes the following observations:

1. The slave was owned by his master; he was totally possessed by his master. This is what Paul meant. Paul was purchased and possessed by Christ. Christ had looked upon him and had seen his degraded and needful condition. And when Christ looked, the most wonderful thing happened: Christ loved him and bought him; therefore, he was now the possession of Christ.
2. The slave existed for his master and he had no other reason for existence. He had no personal rights whatsoever. The same was true with Paul: he existed only for Christ. His rights were the rights of Christ only.
3. The slave served his master and he existed only for the purpose of service. He was at the master's disposal any hour of the day or night. So, it was with Paul: he lived only to serve Christ—hour by hour, day by day, and night by night.
4. The slaves will belong to his master. He was allowed no will and no ambition other than the will and ambition of the master. He was completely subservient to the Master and owed total obedience to the will of the master. Paul belonged to Christ. In fact, he said that he fought and struggled to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Cor. 10:5).

Secondly, he calls himself an apostle or a "sent one." He was sent by the Lord, and as well by the church. The Holy Ghost separated Paul and Barnabas for the mission work God had called them to do (Acts 13:2). Romans 10:15 says, "How

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BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

Publisher/Co-editor - Brian Barrier
828-413-0506
brianb@brcnews.com
Office Manager/Co-editor - Cathy Pritchard
828-765-6800
cathyp@brcnews.com
Sales:
Brian Barrier
828-413-0506
brianb@brcnews.com
Church Directory:
Brian Barrier
828-765-6800
brianb@brcnews.com

Distribution:
Deborah Slagle
Doug Braswell
Amanda Silver
Sherri Hutchins
Sid Houk
Graphic Design / Layout
Lynn Yaccarino
lynn@brcnews.com
Blue Ridge Christian News
261 Oak Ave.
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Office - 828-765-6800
Fax - 828-766-9157

"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

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Spruce Pine, NC 28777
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www.berrychapelbaptist.com

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Service 7:00 PM

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Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church

2187 Jamestown Road
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828-584-8212

Pastor Rick Mercer

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Bible Study - 9:30 am
Sabbath Worship - 10:45 am
Vegetarian Buffet after church
Wednesday
Prayer Meeting - 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
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www.grassycreekbc.org

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J.A.M. (Jesus and Me) 7:00pm
Seekers (young adults) 7:00pm
Mid-week worship 7:00pm
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West Burnsville Baptist Church

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

Pastor: Terry Long

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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

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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

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Worship Service • 10:45am
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First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine

125 Tappan Street
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828-765-9411
www.sprucepinefbc.com
www.spfbc.blogspot.com

**Dr. Rocky Branch
Senior Pastor**

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Sunday Evening - 6:00 pm
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11090 Hwy. 226 South
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www.sprucepineumc.org
spumc3@bellsouth.net
828-765-7446

Pastor Rev. Jeremy Troxler

Sunday School - 10:00am
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Newland Christian Church

2800 Millers Gap Highway
Newland, NC 28657
Phone (828) 260-1404
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The Inspiring Word

The Parable of a Valuable Pearl

Dr. Terry Cheek
McDowell County



Each of us has things of value in our lives. Examples could be, our families, homes, careers, investments and even our friends. Then we have possessions of great value and these are usually items we have searched for patiently and persistently for a long time. Jesus reminds us that He too has possessions of great value. Notice with me Matthew Chapter 13 verses 45 and 46. *"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."*

Many, if not most of us, have heard this parable preached with emphasis on the pearl is an illustration of the Church and or the Christian. I too have preached this parable as such and believe it correctly applies. As I prayerfully considered Christ's parables this month, I kept returning to this one. I believe the Holy Spirit was directing me to write a reminder to the Church. Why do we need a reminder? And, what do we need reminding of? Well keep reading!

In postmodern America, the Church has been labeled everything from a bigot to a fake by the media, academic institutions, political leaders and social media influencers. This attack has been carried on for so long and to such a demoralizing degree even the church itself has become affected by it. You may want to disagree with me on that point but take a serious look around, paying attention to the lack boldness coming from many churches today.

The aforementioned problem seems to answer the why and what question given previously. We have been silenced by the enemy and those under his influence. I'm not suggesting we have turned away from the Lord Jesus Christ. I am suggesting our boldness has been toned down. Let's consider this as we investigate the verses shared above.

The Lord is looking for something of great value and He compares it to the very best pearls. The very best pearls are the most valuable too. When we consider how a pearl is created, I believe we will rediscover a level boldness that has been squelched for at least some of us. First pearls are created by friction. That's right there is a continuous grinding within an oyster. A grinding that required time and patience. We are reminded in Rom 5:3-5 KJV *"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; (4) And patience, experience; and experience, hope: (5) And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."* The friction or grinding experienced by the oyster is akin to the tribulations that Paul speaks of in the life of the believer. Too often we allow tribulation to be a stumbling block instead of a building block. Tribulation is our stepping-stone to hope and we learn that hope makes us bold and through that boldness, we share by the Holy Ghost the love of God, which is the hope of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Second, the oyster is immersed in the ocean while it engages in the works of producing a pearl. Likewise, Christians should find themselves immersed in the Lord Jesus Christ. The act of Baptism has us immersed in water rising from it as Christ was buried and resurrected so are, we to new life. Should immersion stop at Baptism? I suggest to you no. We should immerse ourselves daily in the Lord Jesus Christ prayer we petition Him through the power of the Holy Ghost. By praise we engage Him in worship. By His word, our Bible, we hear from Him. Just as the oyster is immersed in the ocean to accomplish the task of creating a pearl, we should be immersed in the Lord Jesus Christ to become His pearl of great price. The Church He died for and will be returning for.

So, our boldness comes from the very things we suffer because we have believed in Jesus Christ and called on Him to be our Lord and Savior. Let's not allow the enemy to come sit beside us and subtly convince us to be silent when the Lord's work calls us to stand up and stand out, sharing the Love of God abroad to those who need the good news of Jesus Christ. The Christian is the body of Christ, the Church. As His Church we are very valuable to the Lord. After all He did die on Calvary's cross to redeem us from our sin. Such a great price was paid for us and we should let that empower us to live for Him boldly all day, every day. Embrace the boldness that comes from being a pearl of great price. Until we meet again, either in print or in person, may God richly bless you.

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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God's Children: NOT Exempt from Suffering

By Shawn Thomas
Burke County



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

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

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

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

— So, suffering doesn't mean you aren't God's child.

— Suffering does not mean you aren't in His will.

— It just means that God has chosen to use what you are going through to teach you something very important. So, walk with God through that difficult time in your life, and be sure to learn the important spiritual lesson(s) your Heavenly Father intends to teach you through it!

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



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Perfect Timing

By Christy Lowman
Burke County

As summer is coming to an end, I wanted to tell you about my very favorite animal that visits me only in the summer. Can you guess what it is? If not, that's okay. Let me give you a couple of clues. This animal is the teeniest of the tiniest of migrating birds. It can only be found in North, Central, and South America, nowhere else in the whole wide world. This animal visits about 100 flowers a day drinking more nectar than her body size. Have you guessed my favorite summer visitor yet? If you guessed a hummingbird then you are correct.

The most common hummingbird that visits North Carolina is the Ruby-throated Hummingbird. The male has a ruby-red throat, while the female is mostly green with a white throat. They can only be found East of the Mississippi. This bird likes red and orange flowers the best. That is why you will see red or orange on most hummingbird feeders.

There are over 330 different hummingbird species found in the Americas. They only live an average of 3 years. Most hummingbirds weigh as much as a nickel and grow to a maximum of 3- 5 inches long. However, the smallest, the bee hummingbird, is only 2 inches long while the largest, the giant hummingbird, is up to 8 inches in length. Hummingbirds lay only 2 jellybeans sized eggs in an incredibly small nest that is about the size of a half-dollar. They take up to 250 breaths a minute while their hearts beat around 1250 beats a minute.

Hummingbirds are terrific flyers. They do not flap their wings but rotate their wings in a figure-eight pattern. They beat their wings fast, between 50-200 times per second and can fly up to 34 mph. When the wind is blowing in their favor however, they can reach speeds of 50mph! These flyers are the only birds that can fly backward. They can also fly forward, upside down, and they can even hover, but they can not walk. Their tiny legs are only used for perching or for moving sideways while sitting. The humming sound of their wings beating is where they get their name.

Hummingbirds leave 10 times more pollen when visiting flowers than bumblebees do, making them a prolific pollinator. Their favorite flowers include bee balm, foxglove, and the hummingbird vine. They can not smell the sweet tantalizing perfume of the flowers, (or anything else for that matter) but can see and hear very well, even ultraviolet colors, especially the color red.

Male hummingbirds are very territorial. However, if you do get to see a flock of hummingbirds, they are called many different words such as a bouquet, a glittering, a hover, a shimmer, a tune or a charm.

Hummingbirds have the highest metabolism of all the animals except for insects. This is from the need to beat their wings so rapidly. At night they will fall sleep in a hibernation-like sleep called a torpor to conserve their energy.

Hummingbirds can be found as far as Alaska in the summer but in the fall when the daylight starts being less, they will travel up to 1864 miles to Mexico and Central America to spend the winter. Before this long migration hummingbirds will store up to half their body weight to use for energy on their long journey.

Hummingbirds mostly consume nectar but will occasionally eat insects for a source of protein. You can set out a feeder if you would like to feed them. For their food, all you have to do is mix 1 cup of cold water with a ¼ cup of sugar. Stir it several times over a course of time to let the sugar dissolve. Change out your water every 3 days to keep it fresh. When the hummer comes to eat, he will drink the nectar by moving his tongue in and out of the holes as fast as 13 times a second! It has been said that hummingbirds are very smart (even though their brain is the size of a piece of rice), and will remember you specifically and that you fed them. What I mean by this is that they will come back next year to visit you and drink from your feeder!

Hummingbirds do have predators: blue jays, fast-moving raptors, fish and praying mantis. So, check your feeders regularly to make sure there are not any praying mantises lurking around.

You are probably wondering why I decided to talk about this amazing little bird. Well, every year that we have lived at our new house, (almost 5 years now) I have vowed that as soon as spring rolls around I would hang out a hummingbird feeder because I love to watch them. Every year I get so busy and time gets away from me and I never get that feeder hung.

About two weeks ago, every morning when I would take our dog out to use the bathroom, I would have a hummingbird buzz around my head. I guess it was attracted to my red hair. I had already been a little bummed that I had missed another spring and summer without a feeder. I felt like this was God's sign to hang it even though it is almost time for them to migrate south. SO, I did. I was very impatient. I sat on the couch and eyed the feeder almost nonstop. I couldn't get anything done; I wanted an affirmation that it wasn't too late, that I would still get to feed them before they left. I only had to wait about an hour before I had my first visitor. A week



later we had 5 different ones that would stop by and drink. This got me to thinking. Has there ever been a time where you had to be patient and wait on God for something? Maybe you have been praying a specific prayer over and over waiting for God to answer it. Patience is a very hard thing to have when you are passionately wanting something to happen. Sometimes I am not very patient. I have been there, waiting, pleading, begging for God to answer prayers. One of those prayers I waited for over 15 years to be answered and there are some that I am still waiting to be answered today. My message to you is this, God will answer your prayers in His own timing. His timing is perfect and there is a specific time for your prayer to be answered. He may not answer them exactly how you want them to be answered either, but He will answer them. Do not give up, or get discouraged. Know that when that perfect time comes God will answer your prayer and you will understand why He had you wait until that time and why He answered it His way. Just like I had to patiently wait on the hummingbird to find my feeder, the hummingbird also had been waiting every spring and summer for 5 years for me to finally hang a feeder out for them!

Patience wait on God, He knows best and only wants the best for you! Never give up on Him! Trust me, you will be glad you waited!

Dear Lord, please help us wait upon You to answer our prayers instead of trying to answer them ourselves. Help us not get discouraged while we wait and most importantly when You answer those prayers let us recognize they were answered and the reasoning for the timing. I pray we will always thank You for, however, You decide to answer our prayers! In Jesus's name I pray-AMEN.

Still, I am certain to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. 14 "Wait patiently for the LORD; be strong and courageous. Wait patiently for the LORD." Psalms 27:13-14

"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew [their] strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; [and] they shall walk, and not faint." Isaiah 40:31

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Christy Lowman is a Christian author and illustrator that lives in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains with her husband and two children. She enjoys writing and illustrating books for all ages. Some of her short stories are published with Guideposts and 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.

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How Should You Feel About Bible Apps?

By Kevin Purcell
Burke County

In many churches today, when the pastor says, "Turn to Matthew 22:1" a lot of the attendees will pull out their phones and start tapping on the screens. Others in the congregation get angry seeing those crazy kids with their smartphones. Here's my question: why?

The number of people using a Bible app instead of a printed Bible increased in recent years. That's because the phone conveniently fits in a pocket or purse. Most owners of smartphones take them everywhere they go. So, it's just more convenient to use than a printed Bible. These same people might keep their favorite copy of God's word in book form on their desk or nightstand at home and read out of it when they do personal Bible study. However, taking the phone feels easier because it's so easy to bring and never forget due to habit.

Despite the convenience, a digital copy of God's word in a phone app comes with a few problems. Let's take a look at them...



Distractions

Distractions cut two ways. First, the phone doesn't only store the phone app. It has games, text messaging, email and the Internet. It also includes notifications that pop up on screen during the sermon distracting the user from the content of the preacher's sermon. Second, the phone distracts the people near the user. That's because it's different. We're used to people carrying a leather-bound or hardcover Bible with pages. It's not unusual, so it doesn't distract people.

The first distraction is real. That's why I recommend using the phone's Do Not Disturb mode. You can find this usually by swiping down from the top of the screen or up from the bottom, depending on the phone and its software. Other than that, the user will need to control their impulses. If you get easily distracted do one of two things. Either keep the phone in your pocket or purse or use the phone to take notes so you focus on the sermon content instead of feeling distracted by the temptation to play Tetris or Candy Crush (a couple of games you can play on a phone). Most Bible apps include a note feature that lets you put notes on each verse or even on each word. Parents keep an eye on your kids and keep them on task or take away the phone.

People who get distracted by others using their phones usually do so because of their emotional reaction to the idea of using a Bible app on a phone. People look down on Bible app users. Should they?

Should People Use Apps

Some of the reasons I've heard stem from prejudice against new things. "I just don't like it" usually means that it's different than what we're used to. So, we feel like it's a bad thing. Others say the book is better because it's a "real Bible". If that's true, then it's a shame that Jesus and His disciples never used a real Bible. They didn't have books.

Someone might respond by saying, "No. The scrolls were real Bibles too." What makes a scroll or a printed book a real Bible while a digital Bible is not? The change from scrolls to books often was met with anger too. New technology leads people to feel threatened. It's different and therefore inferior. However, today we can't imagine not having printed paper books.

Now we're entering a new era where the digital book is replacing the printed book for some people. Will they completely replace books? Not any time soon. But because of the benefits we find with digital books, I think that a Bible app can really help Bible students. Some of those benefits include...

- Bible references, commentaries and multiple translations in one place. I can carry a library of over 5,000 books in my phone with Logos Bible App on my iPhone.
- Note-taking. It's hard to fit much in the margin of many Bibles, but my Bible app can fit a ton of notes since they don't take up physical space. I have long notes with the equivalent of many pages of content on a single verse.
- Young People See the Bible as Cool. A lot of kids will enjoy using an app and it gets them into the Word.
- Share the Bible with Others. Thanks to Social Networks like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat to name a few, people can share the Bible with their friends right inside the app. What a great witness and what a wonderful way to extend the reach of the pastor's sermon.

The next time someone next to you opens their phone during the sermon, give them some kind patience. They very likely might be reading the Bible and studying it carefully, looking Greek and Hebrew definitions or searching for the words of one Bible verse in the rest of the Bible extending their understanding of the pastor's sermon further.

Phone users, enjoy using a Bible app. But turn off the notifications. Keep it in your pocket or purse if you can't keep yourself from playing games or checking email during church.

Dr. Kevin Purcell is the pastor of High Peak Baptist Church off Exit 107 on I-40. He's also written about church and Bible technology for www.ChurchTechToday.com and other publications. He covers Bibles software and tech at www.Kevin-Purcell.org and on his YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/c/KevinPurcellBehindThePulpit.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our LORD Jesus Christ; Ephesians 5:20

By Jody Griffin
Avery and Mitchell Counties



"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10)

There have been many excellent events happening at Avery Mitchell Correctional this summer!

First, the contemporary Christian band, Bldg. 429, performed and gave inspiring testimony of the work God has done in their lives. The men who attended were challenged by the words of the leader who spoke of two decades of waiting for God to answer his prayers about his calling to spread the Hope that he had found in Jesus Christ. His message of how God had blessed the band after they had waited so long for a sign brought the reminder of how we must trust God every day to lead us and provide for us.

Then, there were two Revivals held with thirteen men total making public professions of their faith in God through Jesus Christ! There were many rededications and the Lord worked in mighty ways to reach the hearts of the men who attended. As Chaplain, I am honored to assist them as they now seek to live in accordance with what God has done for them. I received numerous words of appreciation from the men for these opportunities and passed along their gratitude for such blessings.

Special thanks are due to the ministry teams from Harmony Baptist Church in Hampton, TN and the Rock of Ages Ministry in Cleveland, TN who so faithfully brought the very powerful Word of God with them! Your seed planting labor is producing a spiritual harvest!

Such events require extra effort from the staff. In keeping with their consistent professionalism, they coordinated and kept watch thus ensuring the opportunity for spiritual blessing was provided. And I know I have written previously about the privilege of witnessing men be baptized while incarcerated, but please allow me to tell you again what an amazing experience it is to see men dipped into the water and raised up to a new hope that shows on their faces!

As Chaplain, I am honored to assist them as they now seek to live in accordance with what God has done for them. But you can believe that I warned them of what they might face now that they have committed themselves to the Lord...which reminded me of an experience from long ago.

A pastor friend of mine invited me late one night to climb into his old pickup so he could show off his church's fall harvest display that included a GIANT pumpkin. As we approached the front of the church, we noticed a car parked on the side of the road. We got out of the truck to offer our support and the car sped off in front of us. "Get in!", my friend yelled. "They've stolen the pumpkin!"

Squealing tires and roaring engines raced off into the night as we pursued them at speeds that to this day make me wonder what my friend was thinking! Secretly I prayed that we would lose them so that I might live to see another day. Shortly after, my prayer was answered, and the old truck started sputtering. They had gotten away with the grand centerpiece of my friend's labors.

Furious, my friend and I rode back to the display. We marveled at the nerve of someone to steal something in the bright glow of a spotlight and in front of a church. Then we saw the saddest thing of all. Our approach had so startled the would-be thieves that they had thrown the precious pumpkin out of their car door as they sped away. Now, no one would enjoy seeing the great pumpkin.

As pumpkins pop up all over this month, I am reminded of that dark night. And I wonder why anyone would be so selfish as to steal something that was designed to be a Blessing to others.

Did this caper bring them some sort of twisted delight? My friend grieved for his beloved display that he had invested great time and energy in creating, now was nothing really special.

And I wonder...is that the way it is with God? We are given a life to show forth God's Glory but there is always an adversary looking for an opportunity to steal it away. And if the adversary can't have us, then he will settle for destroying our joy, our peace and our hope-leading us to believe that we are nothing special. Nothing could be further from the Truth. Thank God.

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



By Doug Harrell
Mitchell County

Life for all of us can get complicated at times. Quite often we bring it on ourselves because of our inner feelings of anger and frustration. The feeling that the world is not fair to us, and in reality, life is not always fair. There are times in our lives that things happen that are hard on our tranquility with what is going on at the moment.

Sometimes we let the weight on our shoulders burden us down. I am talking about the grudges we tend to carry when we are upset with people, when we have been disappointed and hurt, either intentionally or unintentionally. The anger we feel is like a cloud over us, a fog in our minds.

Forgiving is easier than forgetting, we can say that we forgive but continue to remember the hurt and pain we felt or feel. Learning to put it behind us and moving on lightens our load and changes our entire outlook on the day, it removes the clouds from the horizon.

Jesus Christ came into this world as a sacrifice for our sins. His promise was to wash us white as snow, to erase the sin from our past, to be remembered no more. We need to pray constantly to do the same for those that we feel wronged us in any way, to forgive and forget.

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."
Matthew 6:14-15 KJV

To be forgiven, Jesus says we must also forgive, a pretty strong statement from our Lord and Savior. He also says that if we get ready to pray and have anger in our hearts, to go seek the one that we are angry with and make peace before we come to the altar to give and ask for forgiveness.

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



WHEW!
By Chris Rathbone
Mitchell County

Not sure if that's the proper spelling of that word or not, but that's the way I've felt the last 3 months. It's been one of those seasons in my family where it seems as though everything has hit at once. Dad and Mom's health has been declining, Gabe had to have emergency surgery, I've been sick twice, one lasted for a week, the other hit a couple of days ago and caused me to miss a revival service at my own church! Pretty bad when the pastor doesn't show up to revival at his own church! It appears all I've done is run back and forth to hospitals, doctor's offices, pharmacies, nursing facilities, etc. On top of all that, we're in the middle of a small addition to our house. Our house was built in 1953 and only has one bathroom. It gets pretty interesting around here having two teenagers with only one bathroom if you know what I mean. So, we're trying to add another bathroom. Every time I think I'm going to get some work done, one of the other things has happened and put a lot of work on the back burner.

My main concern has been trying to care for my parents. I have to say it has been one of the most emotionally trying times that we've been through. When we see other families going through this same process, we really don't understand how hard it can be. When we see other people go through things and we try to sympathize with them, we really can't unless we have gone through it ourselves. To say the least, the Lord and this experience have taught me a lot about what others have gone through that I did not really understand. Many times, I've prayed for folks when they were going through tough times but only when I have experienced what they have, do I really know how to pray for them. Experience, for the most part, is the best teacher.

In the back of our minds, we know that one day our parents will be at that point where they are going to need our help. Somehow time goes by so fast that even though we knew it was coming, it's like all of sudden we're in the middle of it and wonder how it happened so fast. For the most part, Dad and Mom have been fairly independent. Dad has actually been pretty physically strong and has taken care of Mom the best he could. Over the last couple years that has changed. With Mom's health continuing to decline and Dad's age catching up with him, circumstances have been rough, to say the least. Seeing my Dad do all he can and it not being enough, is hard. After being so independent all his life, I know it must be hard for him to admit that it's at the point where he needs help. Mom has a hard time understanding that Dad can't do things like he once did. She is so accustomed to Dad being the one to always help her, maybe she is having issues coming to grips with his declining health. You see, I don't understand what they are going through because I've not experienced it.....yet.

While they are desperately holding on to the way things have always been, we kids have been trying to convince them that things cannot stay the same. There have been so many nights that I've begged God for wisdom. Tears for my parent's condition have been numerous. Sometimes it's as if there is an overwhelming burden laid upon my shoulders that some days cannot be carried. I've got down on my knees to pray and did not have the words. There have been moments when it felt as if Jesus was right there beside us and other times it felt as if He was a million miles away. Even though we know He never leaves us.

We're hanging on the promises of God. Those promises that tell us that these circumstances will work out. Even though it's hard to see how God will work them out. In the meantime, we are doing our best to trust Jesus, to care for Dad and Mom, and praying that the decisions we have to make will honor them and our Heavenly Father in the process. If you are where we are, pray for us, and we will pray for you. And even if it's one of the times when we just feel like saying, "Whew!", may we keep on believing in God's faithfulness and love.

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



Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth. Isaiah 40:26



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Humor

By Buddy Freeman
Madison County

“LAUGHTER IS HEALTHY FOR YOU”

Every year the teacher sent a note home with each child that read: “Dear Parents if you promise not to believe everything your child says happened at school, I’ll promise not to believe everything he or she says happens at home.”

A veterinarian, who was also a taxidermist, had a sign in his office that said, “No matter what happens, you will still get your dog back.”

When another veterinarian takes his staff out to lunch, he puts a sign on the door that says, “SIT – STAY.”

A man noticed a young boy trying to reach the doorbell of a house. Thinking he might be able to help the boy, the man rang it for him. “Okay, what now?” he asked the boy. “Run like crazy! That’s what I am going to do!” replied the boy.

Son: “Great news, Dad!” Dad: “What’s the great news?” Son: “You don’t have to buy me new books for school next year. I’m taking all of the same classes again.”

A restaurant owner asked one of his employees to put a sign on the door because they were closing early. The employee wrote on the sign, “We are closing because we have run out of MEET.”

Some church members are kind, polite, and sweet-spirited until you try to sit in their pew.

Don’t let your worries get the best of you; remember, Moses started out as a basket case.

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



Standing on the Truth

By Christy Young
Mitchell County



As we travel throughout this life, we are faced with daily choices. How we respond to these choices allows us to either shine the light of Jesus in the situation or be defeated by the world. We have allowed ourselves to be caught up in the devotion of what the world expects from us. We live our lives with the expectation of fitting in, belonging. Our energy, time, and money are devoted to the unfulfilled effort of appearance. We fall prey to the materialistic thought that by achieving rank, status, and material items that we, somehow at last, we will become fulfilled. Often after receiving some of or all of these things, we’re exhausted, unhappy, and miserable. Through our exhaustion we realize that we are chasing a life of defeat. Happiness only comes from total surrender to God. God has a solution to our problems that leads to satisfaction. That satisfaction comes from a daily walk with Him. Allowing yourself to be “set apart” from the world. 1 Peter 2:9 says, “*But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light*”. We are chosen by God, how special is that! When we allow ourselves to commit and surrender to the calling that God has placed upon our lives we will be empowered to live our lives with boldness, patience, and grace. We will have a craving for the “divine light” that defeats the darkness of life. We become “peculiar people”. The world may refer to us as strange, odd, unusual, and “the ones who don’t fit in”. That’s perfectly fine! Our purpose for this life is to stand on the truth and the teaching of Jesus. Don’t get caught up in the way the world defines you. Remember that you are a project of the Master, you’re chosen by God, and have been called to do His work. Don’t ever judge yourself by the world’s standards, remind yourself that you are a unique possession of God. Live your life consistent with who you serve and always stand on the truth.

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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Social Drinking and the Christian Right or Wrong?

By Dean Honeycutt
Mitchell County



I want to write about the abuse of alcohol among Christians. And the reason I write about this is, first, my dad was an alcoholic, and second, the drinking of alcohol has no place in the Christians life. The abuse of alcohol destroyed our family and eventually took my dad's life. Alcohol caused cardiomyopathy (heart disease) and colon cancer in my dad. One of the quickest ways to ruin your testimony is to damage your witness for Christ. Social drinking at receptions, parties, tail gates, and bar-b-ques is not the way to win your friends to Christ.

First let's explore the obvious, and that which cannot be denied, the danger of alcohol and health risks. Alcohol is a drug. Let's not fool ourselves. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report among users of alcohol:

- Drinking will harm your health. Excessive alcohol use led to approximately 88,000 deaths and 2.5 million years of potential life lost (YPLL) each year in the United States from 2006 – 2010, shortening the lives of those who died by an average of 30 years.1
- Further, excessive drinking was responsible for 1 in 10 deaths among working-age adults aged 20-64 years. The economic costs of excessive alcohol consumption in 2010 were estimated at \$249 billion, or \$2.05 a drink.2
- Every day, 29 people in the United States die in motor vehicle crashes that involve an alcohol-impaired driver. This is one death every 50 minutes. The annual cost of in 2016, 10,497 people died in alcohol-impaired driving crashes, accounting for 28% of all traffic-related deaths in the United States. 3
- Of the 1,233 traffic deaths among children ages 0 to 14 years in 2016, 214 (17%) involved an alcohol-impaired driver.3In 2016, more than 1 million drivers were arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. That's one percent of the 111 million self-reported episodes of alcohol-impaired driving among U.S. adults each year alcohol-related crashes totals more than \$44 billion. 4
- About one in three traffic deaths in the United States involve a driver with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.08% or higher. Drivers with a BAC of 0.08% or higher (i.e., drunk drivers) are considered alcohol-impaired by law. 1
- The lower our weight, the fewer beers we may drink before becoming intoxicated. A person who weighs 100 pounds will reach a Blood Alcohol Level (BAC) of .08 within 2 drinks. A BAC of .08 is the level at which driving becomes illegal in most states, while a BAC of just .02 leads to an impairment that can range in significance from person to person. Judgment begins to suffer however at just .02 BAC, and thus it is not recommended that individuals drive after having consumed any alcohol.5

We could go on and on with these facts. According to the Drug Enforcement Administration, Mitchell county is the third leading county in the state for opioid drug abuse. Why do I mention this? Because we have a serious problem and alcohol is a gateway drug to other drugs. Listen to the testimonies of drug users, almost all of them started with alcohol. Alcohol was also a gateway drug for my dad to abuse prescription drugs.

The Bible says "be not drunk with wine (alcohol)", i.e, do not drink alcohol. We know the implication here is alcohol causes drunkenness so do not drink. This cannot be any simpler stated beside all the other scripture that deal with the subject.

We have a serious problem because so many professing Christians drink alcohol. We cannot turn a blind eye to our sin. We cannot use the Bible, as many try to do to justify social drinking. It is plain and simple that the use of strong drink is a sin. And that new wine talked about in the Bible has no comparison to the alcoholic content in beverages people buy to drink today. So please do not make a fool of yourself to try and use the Bible to justify your sin. Consumption of anything that alters your mind or judgment is not sobriety. And all Christians are always to be sober. This is plain and simple and uncontested in scripture.

So why do Christians drink alcohol? Well for many people they want to be socially accepted. They want to fit in and do what everyone else is doing. That is why these brewery companies are so popular. It is a popular thing to do among many people. But should we not be different from the world?

Others like to feel the buzz or drunkenness of alcohol. To speak honestly, they would say "I like to feel drunk or I love the taste." To speak truthfully about the matter, they drink because they want to. I have heard so many say, "we drink a glass of wine in the privacy of our home." Give me a break it is not in privacy because you have told me what you are doing in the privacy of your home and you have told others. You have found others that agree with you and you will share your wine with them and they with you. And you will feel justified because some other professing Christian now shares your privacy. But it is not private - your children know, friends know, and soon pictures show up on Facebook of your private social drinking events. It is bad enough that we ruin our own testimony for Christ, but also become a stumbling block to others watching and observing what we do.

Would anyone want to stand before God and be responsible for leading a young child to drink alcohol and possibly die because mom or dad, pastor, deacon, a friend was a social drinker? Folks I know because that was my reasoning "If dad can do it so can I." Thank God Jesus spared me from that sin.

In conclusion, my dad after a lifetime of alcohol abuse gave his life to Jesus Christ. Dad lived three more years, and he lived them sober. Thank the Lord for the power of prayer and the Gospel. Christ can help you as well.

A desire of every Christian moved by the Holy Ghost is to glorify Christ in all they do. Live life with "No Regrets."

Endnotes:
1. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Alcohol-Related Disease Impact (ARDI). Atlanta, GA: CDC.)
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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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Be Intentional About Impacting Your Community For Christ

By Rev. John B. Sorensen



Is your church intentional about sharing the Gospel in your community? Generic outreaches like fall festivals and community clean-up events are great, but if we aren't intentional about sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ as part of our service, our actions can be nothing more than good deeds.

So, how might we be more intentional about sharing Christ in the community? I'm glad you asked. Make it a goal to share the Gospel in some way as part of every outreach. You don't need a divinity degree or experience as a preacher to do this. Let me share with you some examples.

One church set up a prayer booth at a local farmers market. As they spoke with individuals who needed prayer, church members had the opportunity to share the Gospel. Another church engages college students on a local campus with a dartboard game and questionnaire during the school's fall festival. The questionnaire includes questions about the student's spiritual beliefs and opens the door for them to find out more about God. Some churches hold barbecues and various community festivals but train their volunteers to steer conversations with visitors towards the Gospel. Regardless of the event, you can easily offer prayer anywhere at any time.

Making an impact in your community doesn't have to be a church-wide event. Small groups within churches can join to take laundry baskets full of supplies at a local Laundromat, pass out plants with prayer cards in your church's neighborhood, or pass out bags of food and supplies to the homeless in your community. The key is to include sharing the Gospel. Talk to people one-on-one about how to build a relationship with Christ. Include tracts or a personal invitation to your church. Share your story.

You can reach out and make an impact, even when you are alone. Betty learned a simple Gospel presentation while listening to our radio program. She began sharing it with those in her community – a nursing home – and had the opportunity to lead one man to Christ. Greg and Brittany began developing a relationship and talked about God with the woman who loaded groceries into their car each week at a local supermarket. She gave her life to Christ! Abby posted the question, "On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being great and 1 poor, how fulfilling would you say your life is?" on her Facebook page. She was amazed at the doors that question opened for her to share her testimony as she began to talk with her online friends.

The opportunities are endless. Just remember, impacting your community happens one life at a time. So, get creative! Be intentional. Share the Gospel. And watch the Holy Spirit as He moves in the lives of the people around you.

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.

Revive Us Again

By Caron Cline
Burke County



Psalm 85:4-9 is a key passage concerning revival.

How do you know if you need reviving?

Revive means to restore to life or consciousness or bring back to life. Physically, if you need to be revived, you don't know it. Someone else must recognize your needs and do something about it. You are unconscious—unresponsive. Spiritually, revive in the Hebrew is 'Chayah' and means to keep or make alive, quicken, restore or be whole. Often, Christians do not even realize that they need reviving, yet Psalm 85 shows what is lacking in our lives when we need reviving.

1. Joy—"Will You not revive us again that Your people may rejoice in You?" (Again—Once more) The root word of rejoice is joy. We have heard hundreds of sermons on joy. We know that joy is not the same as happiness because it is based on something more solid than mere emotion. Joy is the steadfast belief that even in the worst of circumstances, there is a future of hope and prosperity. Joy comes from believing the promises of God and Nehemiah tells us that the joy of the Lord is our strength. The key is that we are to find joy or rejoice in the Lord; not our possessions or our family or ourselves, but in the Lord.

God wants us to celebrate the truth that we are His. If there is no spirit of rejoicing in our hearts, there is a problem. Are we fully conscious? If we are revived, we are fully conscious of God's blessings to us.

What has our Father done for us?

We can count our blessings, as the song says, one by one, and if we are honest, there will hardly be time to do so.

If we are lacking joy, we need reviving!

2. Peace—"Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for He will speak peace to His people, to His saints".

Peace-The Biblical definition is 'to be whole' or 'to be sound'. This can be wholeness of physical or mental health or wholeness between people. God is the source of peace; Jehovah Shalom. (Judges 6:24)

Notice, that the Psalmist is asking God to revive them and now he says he will hear what the Lord will answer. God will speak and it will bring peace, for God is always for us and He has a good future in mind; a future of peace.

At the moment of salvation, we receive peace with God. Jesus' sacrificial death and shed blood reconciled us to the Father. However, we must maintain the peace of God in our hearts and minds.

Colossians 3:15 says 'Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body, you have been called to peace. And be thankful...'

When we allow Jesus to rule our lives, we will experience a deep sense of peace regardless of our circumstances. If He is not ruling our lives, there is no peace and we need reviving.

3. Glory—"Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him that glory may dwell in our land".

The Hebrew word for glory is 'Kabod' and means weight or splendor; majesty, honorable.

In Exodus 24:16-17 God's glory appeared as a devouring fire to the eyes of the Israelites. Exodus 29:43 says that God would meet with His people and the Tabernacle would be sanctified by His glory. Moses begged God to show him His glory in Exodus 33:18.

2 Chronicles 7:2-3 says: "The priests could not enter into the house of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house. All the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of the Lord upon the house, bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshipped and gave praise to the Lord saying, 'Truly He is good. Truly His lovingkindness is everlasting'".

The glory of God is raw power. When God's glory dwells in the land, in the home, and in our hearts, there is a supernatural power that changes everything. Sometimes it appears God's glory is covered by a cloud and sometimes we see it as a fire. The bottom line is there must be passion in our lives for the glory of God. Do we have the fire of the Holy Spirit within? If there is no power and no passion in our lives for the things of God, we need reviving.

Today is the day to seek the Lord. Now is the time. We need a breakthrough individually and collectively as the body of Christ. God is sitting on the edge of His throne waiting for us to ask Him to invade our space.

Isaiah 64:1-4 challenges us to call out to the Lord: "Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at Your Presence—As fire kindles the brushwood, as fire causes water to boil—to make Your Name known to Your adversaries, that the nations may tremble at Your Presence! When You did awesome things which we did not expect, You came down, the mountains quaked at Your Presence. For from days of old they have not heard or perceived by ear, nor has the eye seen a God besides You, Who acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him".

Let's ask God to rend the heavens and come down and revive us once more that we may rejoice in His Presence!!

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.

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The Purpose Of Salvation

By David Valls
Mitchell County

For the next few months, we are going to be looking at some of the reasons why God saved us. My prayer is, that through these series of articles, it will help us to have a greater appreciation for God's overall plan and purpose for salvation. In this month's article, we will be covering the doctrine of imputation. The meaning of the word imputation simply means to have something placed on our account. Imputation affects every single person on the face of the earth. In regards, to sin, Adam was the first one to experience this in the Garden of Eden. Although we are not held personally responsible for his sin, the results of his sin were not only placed upon him but upon all of humanity. At first glance, this may seem a bit unfair. This question often arises "Why should the actions of one person affect all of humanity?" Well, let's think about this for a minute. If the state of North Carolina decided that there was going to be a 10 percent tax on bread, then that would have an effect on every resident in the state that walked in the store to buy bread. We would have no choice but to pay that price or else we wouldn't get our bread! Something like this can happen without us having any say in the matter. That is exactly what happened in the garden of Eden. When the fall took place the curse that came upon Adam as a result of his disobedience not only affected him but all of humanity. The Bible tells us that by one man sin entered into the world and death, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for all have sinned. (Romans 5:12) This means that the sinful nature brought upon Adam as a result of his sin against God, is not only brought upon him but upon every man, woman, and child upon the face of the earth... no exceptions! Romans 3: 23, tells us all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is nothing anyone of us can do. As long as we are in the flesh, we cannot please God. There is no way, within ourselves, we could fulfill God's requirement for righteousness. The wages of sin are death. That means if we received what we could earn on our own, we would only receive death... not only physically but spiritually. We will all experience physical death. As Adam and Eve began to die physically the day they disobeyed God, so do we from the time we are born. Our bodies are on a collision course with death.

So what is the remedy for all this you may ask? It may sound hopeless... so one may ask the question: "If it's possible for all to be made sinners by the actions of one man, is it also possible that by the actions of one man we all can be made righteous?" The answer my friends is a resounding yes!!! The wages of sin may be death, but the gift of God is Eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord! This is the other side of imputation. Just as the curse of sin was imputed upon all mankind through Adam, so also can the righteousness of God be imputed upon man through Christ. I was condemned by the actions of one man... but the day I came to know Jesus, I was also made righteous by the actions one man. When you are saved, God wipes the slate clean of ALL of your sins. He pays the debt you owe as a result of sin and places righteousness on your account. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Romans 10 9-10.

There is no way we can ever be deserving of having Christ's righteousness placed on our account. Let us be thankful that we serve a God that gives us what we don't deserve!

David Valls attends Middle District Freewill Baptist Church in Buladean. I am from Mitchell County. I have been the adult class Sunday school teacher for the past 13 years.



Ag Awareness 2019

By Kimberly Slotnick
Mitchell County

Cooperative Extension's annual Agriculture Awareness Day was held at Harrell Hill Farm on Thursday, September 19. Doug and Barbara Harrell have graciously hosted this event for nearly 15 years on their Heritage farm located in the Red Hill community. Each year Cooperative Extension coordinates a fun-filled day for 4th graders to learn about farm production and other interesting agricultural topics.

This year, 132 4th graders visited 7 different stations at the farm to learn about sheep and their purpose on the farm, how chickens and rabbits are raised on the farm, butterfly migration, bees and their contribution as pollinators, making molasses, how plants are started from seed, and farm equipment safety. The kids had a great day learning from the presentations. All students were challenged to share their new knowledge with others to promote the importance of farming. Each participant has the opportunity to write an essay on a topic discussed during their visit to the farm and the best essay is eligible to win a cash prize provided by Cooperative Extension.

A special thanks to all the presenters that made this a special day filled with fun and facts: Harrell Hill Farm, Soil and Water Conservation Service, Toe Cane Beekeepers Association, Silver Bunch Farm, Caorach Farm, Jill Sidebottom, Cooperative Extension Specialist, and the Mitchell County Cooperative Extension staff (Gary Hyatt, Agriculture Extension Agent, Eve Kindley, Extension Director, Kaley Brown, Extension 4-H Agent, Kim Slotnick, 4-H Program Assistant). A special thanks to Harding Landscape of Spruce Pine for the beautiful mums that were given to the presenters.



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

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Sudoku Solution

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

Redeemed Free Will Baptist Church

The Eyes Of The Lord

By Patricia Jackson
McDowell County



There are a number of scriptures in the Holy Bible that tell us we are always under the watchful eye of the Lord. 2 Chronicles 16:9 *"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him"*. What an amazing thought; that not a sorrow, trial, or temptation visits us without his notice and loving sympathy. When I think of being under a watchful eye, I think of the first moment a baby enters this world; his parents are concerned for his needs, safety, and care.

A Descendant of David, King Asa of the Southern Kingdom of Israel (Judah) sought God with a perfect heart. A perfect heart is one that is surrendered, humble, obedient and faithful. I Kings 14:2 tells us he *"did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God"*. He removed altars of the strange gods, and broke down the images. He deposed his grandmother from her position as queen mother because of her worship of Asherah (female Idol). King Asa commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers and to obey the law and the commandments. As a result, they entered into a covenant with God and all of Judah rejoiced at the oath.

When the million-man army from Ethiopia attempted an invasion, Asa cried out to God for help and deliverance. God responded with a mighty victory. Judah carried away the spoils of cattle, sheep, and camels in abundance. *"God was his refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble"*. Psalm 46:1.

Asa continued to strengthen the nation spiritually, economically and militarily, as he served God. Unfortunately, as the nation grew, Asa's sense of dependence upon God waned. In the thirty-sixth year of his reign, King Baasha of the Northern Kingdom of Israel came up against Asa and Judah and closed off the cities. Instead of praying and depending on God for deliverance, he sought an alliance with the King of Syria. While the nation rejoiced at his political move, God was not pleased and sent Hanani, the seer to rebuke him. Asa had missed the opportunity to seek God's help and to trust in him for deliverance. King Asa put the seer in prison because he came with the truth. Since Asa's heart was not perfect for God, Judah faced ongoing wars during the remainder of his reign. His complacency and backsliding caused undue hardship and loss upon the great nation God gave him to reign over.

God is looking for a perfect heart to show Himself strong on their behalf. God is not watching us because He wants to judge us, but because He wants to help us, lest we fall. God is not an ancient God, He is a God of today, tomorrow and always. As long as we serve him, He will be strong on our behalf. His eyes continually run to and fro helping those who serve and seek Him.

As King Asa sadly learned, it's not enough to have a perfect heart yesterday and receive God's blessings and protection always, we must keep our heart perfect towards Him daily.

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.



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Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

The Rest of the Story:

This was the second Funny Farm Story that Clint wrote back in 2010. He was just getting his sea legs, so to speak, on writing these articles. As I read back through them, I see the supper table, a big home cooked meal that Barbara had prepared, and usually a cake of some kind to finish off the meal. This is where we had the pleasure of listening to Clint's tale of the day and the adventures he had been subjected to, in reality, had created for himself. One of his endearing qualities was his ability to poke fun at himself without reservation, and to revel in telling the story. I have often thought he would have been a winner at the story telling contest over in Jonesboro, Tennessee. I would have loved to have seen him participate in something like this. He was such a competitor in every walk of his life that I have no doubt that he would have been a winner here as well. It was always a laugh-a-thon around the supper table just listening to the events unfold. His description in real life was just as full of life, if not more so, than his written stories are. I hope you enjoy this one as much as I did when I reread it today. Have a blessed day.

Farmer Doug

Dear Friends,

As late as March of this year I believed I was a country boy. My home is Hendersonville, NC, a nice town of 20,000+ only 1 1/2 hours away. But my perspective changed dramatically in late March when I came to spend a few months with my friends Doug and Barbara Harrell at Harrell Hill Farm near Bakersville.

Doug and I go back more than twenty years, I was executive vice president for GTE Corporation (now Verizon) and Doug was a technology marketer. A "country boy" who done good is the way I often thought of me.

Well let me tell you, I have learned some valuable and unforgettable lessons since arriving in the real 'country'... I've worked on the farm now for nearly six months and experienced things which could only happen in a Chevy Chase film – or to me.

Anyway, if y'all will tolerate me I want to share some of my hair raising farm stories. We'll call them "Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm" – names will be changed to protect the innocent, and chances are I may exaggerate the facts a wee bit. It will go something like this:

Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

A Beast In The Beans!

'Twas a beautiful day at Harrell Hill Farms, crystal clear sky, a torrid 93 degrees as I headed for the garden to harvest a couple bushels of blue lake bush beans. I had been nearly devoured by ticks and yellow jackets the day before – the most aggressive microscopic critters on earth. So I donned my overalls, long-sleeve shirt and high boots for an adventure in the bean patch.

Now what I found growing there I thought was a string bean but have since learned that there is no longer a string, just a snap. That was a pretty big disappointment to me, although I'm not sure why. Just so many new farm facts in my head these days I can hardly catalog them all!

Doug told me this was backbreaking work – that I might want to take a three-legged stool along for more comfortable picking. Well I did that but we'd had an inch of rain overnight and the three legs kept getting mired in the dirt so it was breaking my back moving the stool around; I tossed it aside. Besides, I've been on the farm 3 months now, have lost 63 pounds of chubby and ten inches in the waistline. I am fit like a fiddle, strong like a bull, poised and ready to again demonstrate my agricultural prowess.

I was hunched over piles and piles of bush beans, enjoying solitude with the Lord, the land, and the garden. A gentle breeze cooled my sweat soaked clothes, and I was humming praise songs and talking to Jesus. What a wonderful day He was giving me.

It is important, mind you, that I remain vigilant while harvesting these succulent little pods. For I know that bees, spiders, snakes and other killer vermin can attack without warning. It's simply one of the hazards of being Farmer Clint, yet one I gladly embrace. I chuckled to myself as I thought of the Scripture, "Be self controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." 1Peter 5:8. Not that I expected a lion, although a hungry bear was not out of the realm of possibility. Regardless, a farmer cannot be too careful.



Somewhere, about mid-bean-row, I heard a soft rustling in the sorghum cane field. I figured it must be a deer since they had been eating virtually every other crop we'd planted at Harrell Hill Farms. I never knew deer are such destructive beasts and was praying that he wouldn't come over and eat all the beans. It was such a glorious day, I continued to pick and pray, to pick and hum, to pick and thank God for the joy of being one with the farm.

Then, from nowhere and from everywhere a HUGE monster burst from the perimeter of the cane field...I heard it coming, running, stomping, growling, moaning – inhuman groans akin to those portrayed in Steven King novels. I stood my ground, poised for war, girded for battle, prepared to lose my life for the blue lake bush bean patch...then I FELT IT, it was on me!

My head dropped quickly, so quickly in fact that my straw hat fell to the ground. And there, I mean right there, moving across my steel-toed boots was the ugliest monster I've ever met. It was BIG...it was BROWN...it had teeth like a SHARK...I screamed like a girl...it looked at me, made some guttural sound and darted away. My friends, in the midst of picking beans and praising God I stood shoulder to shoulder with my very first KILLER GROUNDHOG. (Okay, maybe not shoulder to shoulder but he was a whopper!)

I always thought groundhogs were like prairie dogs, or tiny and cute like Chip and Dale. Well, now I know...they resemble Simba, or Aslan, or King Kong, or any number of other prehistoric beasts. (You laugh yet you are reading this from the comfort of your easy chair, not staring Godzilla in the face).

I had spilled beans from one end of the garden to the other, lost my three-legged stool, tripping over and destroying many tomato plants, stumbling through young broccoli spears and squishing most of the tender beet sprigs... I jumped into my farm truck – an 1801 vintage Jeep but that's a story for another day – and slammed the door.

My heart was pounding like a sack full of angry opossums, my blood pressure sky high, I'm not sure I had taken a breath during the battle for the blue lake bush bean patch. Yet after a half hour or so, I again sensed the peace of the Lord; all was well with my soul; the monster had slithered into the woods.

I dismounted my jeep and resumed the harvest of blue lake bush beans – confident that I had survived yet another test on the Funny Farm.

Humbled in the Hills,

Farmer Clint



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My Spiritual Birthday and Chick-fil-A: The joy of Living Biblically

By Jim Denison



My spiritual birthday was yesterday. On September 9, 1973, I asked Jesus Christ to forgive my sins and become my Savior and Lord.

Think with me about all that has changed in the last forty-six years.

I remember when people called each other on a device called a rotary telephone. The first house Janet and I owned had a shelf built into a wall in the entryway where such a phone was meant to reside. You could get an extra-long cord that enabled you to walk into the kitchen while talking on it.

Then came push-button phones. Then came phones with wireless handsets (and very long antennas). I remember the first bag phone I ever saw—it was “mobile” so long as you carried around a backpack-sized battery. The day I got a phone built into my car was a game-changer.

Now Apple is set later this morning to unveil its latest technology. Analysts expect iPhones with a three-lens camera array on the back and improvements to their facial recognition system. The company may also announce innovations to their watches, AirPods, apps, credit cards, and subscription music, games, and TV. Drones and suburbs.

Technology is revolutionizing every dimension of the human experience. Advances in genetics are helping doctors diagnose, treat, and prevent disease on an unprecedented scale. Retailers are developing ways to deliver their products to our homes via drones.

Mobile devices allow people to work remotely more easily than ever. Autonomous vehicles will enable them to commute to the office while working in their cars. As a result, suburbs will extend farther from city centers than ever before. It’s hard to identify a dimension of our daily lives unaffected by the amazing advances of technology. Those with the skill and discipline to create and market such remarkable inventions deserve the gratitude of those of us who benefit from their expertise daily.

And yet, despite all our astounding scientific progress, our perennial problems are still problems.

As of today, seventy thousand people have been left homeless in the Bahamas by Hurricane Dorian. The Centers for Disease Control is investigating more than 450 possible cases of lung disease linked to vaping. North Korea fired two projectiles into the East Sea this morning, its eighth weapons test since late July.

“Our most basic common link”

I remember well the day I encountered this theological fact in a seminary textbook: God’s word is always relevant because human nature doesn’t change. You and I still face the same fears and embrace the same hopes as our first ancestors. President John F. Kennedy spoke for all humans across all time when he said, “In the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children’s future. And we are all mortal.”

Because God’s word is as relevant today as when it was first inspired, living by biblical truth and sharing it with others is as relevant as ever. In our secular, post-Christian culture, this is an important fact to remember.

You’re not trusting an old, outdated book when you choose to live by biblical morality—you’re aligning your life with the Creator of the universe and living a life he can bless. You’re not “proselytizing” when you share the gospel—you’re offering other people the only pathway to eternal life.

You’re not “imposing your values on others” when you speak on cultural issues—you’re sharing life-changing truth with people. The more they reject God’s word, the more they need it.

“The most joyful hearts and a lot of love”

Chick-fil-A is back in the news. Not because opponents of biblical morality are organizing more boycotts against the restaurant, but because the company’s employees have once again embodied their founder’s biblical values.

When a man opened fire in West Texas on August 31, a local Chick-fil-A closed early so workers could be with their loved ones. A Facebook post explains what happened next: As restaurant employees were leaving, “an opportunity to feed local law enforcement presented itself and they were given the option to help . . . not one person said no.”

Partnered with another local Chick-fil-A, they cooked five hundred sandwiches “and packaged them with the most joyful hearts and a lot of love,” the post continued. “Sometimes the light in a dark world looks as simple as a hot chicken sandwich.”

“It shall accomplish that which I purpose”

The next time you wonder if living by God’s word is worth the cost of personal obedience and public opposition, remember your Father’s promise: his word “shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11).

It may seem dangerous to live by biblical truth, but it’s more dangerous not to.

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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GRAHAM LAUNCHES DECISION AMERICA TAR HEEL STATE TOUR

Eight-city tour will bring prayer, live music and life-changing message of hope to Asheville, North Carolina, on October 13

CHARLOTTE, N.C., Sept. 12, 2019 — Franklin Graham has preached in all 50 states over the past three years for the Decision America Tour. The next stops will be especially meaningful to him as he goes to eight cities in his home state of North Carolina.

Graham will be sharing a powerful message of hope with people in the Tar Heel state. He will also invite them to join him in praying for their communities and local, state, and national leaders.

"I've watched Asheville become one of the top destinations for tourism and relocation. However, many people here are faced with feelings of emptiness, loneliness, and distress. Alcoholism and drug abuse seem to be more and more prevalent," said Michael Brown, pastor of Crossroads Church in Asheville. "Like most of America, Asheville is in need of spiritual renewal that can only come about through prayer, repentance, and turning to Jesus."

On Oct. 13, Graham will bring the Decision America Tar Heel State Tour to Asheville. The festive, family-friendly event begins at 4 p.m. at U.S. Cellular Center.

In addition to the stop in Asheville, the tour is also visiting Fayetteville, Greenville, Wilmington, Raleigh, Greensboro, Hickory, and Charlotte.

"We need an awakening in North Carolina—a spiritual revival," said Franklin Graham, president and CEO of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. "People across this state and the nation are searching. It is my prayer that during the Tar Heel State Tour thousands of North Carolinians will find the peace and security that comes through faith in Jesus Christ."

Graham will bring a message from the Bible at each stop on the Tar Heel State Tour.

"We all face moments when we come to a crossroads in our lives and we need to make important decisions," said Graham. "Through this event, people will have the opportunity to make a decision that can impact their lives not only now but for eternity."

Popular Grammy-nominated music artist Jeremy Camp and award-winning guitarist Dennis Agajanian are also traveling with Graham on the Tar Heel State Tour. They will perform live at each event. Camp joined Graham for the Decision America Tour in 2018 when an estimated 120,000 people attended events in California, Oregon and Washington. Agajanian started traveling the world with Billy Graham more than 40 years ago and he has participated in more than 200 events with Franklin Graham.

The Decision America Tar Heel State Tour is free and everyone is invited to attend.

Graham started Decision America in 2016 when he held events in all 50 state capitals. He continued to tour in 2017 by traveling to 11 cities across Tennessee and Texas. Then in 2018, he toured the West Coast, visiting 17 cities in California, Oregon and Washington. In May of this year, he visited eight cities in the Northeast.

To learn more about the Decision America Tar Heel State Tour, visit DecisionAmerica.com.

DATES AND LOCATIONS FOR DECISION AMERICA TAR HEEL STATE TOUR

- Fayetteville (Oct. 1)
- Greenville (Oct. 2)
- Wilmington (Oct. 5)
- Raleigh (Oct. 6)
- Greensboro (Oct. 9)
- Hickory (Oct. 10)
- Charlotte (Oct. 12)
- Asheville (Oct. 13)

MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES

- Interviews with Franklin Graham
- Interviews with people attending events
- Video of event (audio connections available)

ON-SITE MEDIA CONTACT: Mark Barber, 828-386-5803

Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness; 12 To the end that [my] glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever. Psalms 30:11-12



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- Friday, October 25-Cherokee & Lunch @ Lunch at Granny's Kitchen- Cherokee NC

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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

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Colossians 3:17

By Dave Ramsey

Live like your income hasn't changed

Dear Dave,

I'll be graduating from college in December, and I'll have a job waiting for me that pays \$50,000 a year. This will bring our household income up to about \$95,000. The problem is we've got \$18,000 in student loan debt, \$2,500 in credit card debt, and \$4,000 to pay in medical bills. We're living in an apartment right now, so how should we handle this income increase regarding our debt situation?

Mikayla

Dear Mikayla,

Congratulations on your decision to get control of your finances and your degree! If you two just keep living the way you have been, minus the debt, and put the rest toward the debt you've incurred, you could be debt-free in a year or so.

Remember, just because you've got a lot more money coming in doesn't mean you should double your entertainment budget, take an expensive vacation, or run out and buy a new car. The first thing I'd recommend is sitting down together, and working out a written, monthly budget. Give every dollar a name and a job to do before the coming month begins.

Don't forget the debt snowball, either! List all your debts from smallest to largest, and attack the smallest—that credit card debt—first with a vengeance, while making minimum payments on the medical bills and student loan debt. Once you've paid off the credit card debt, roll the money from that payment over and apply it, plus any other cash you can scrape together, toward the medical bills. Once the medical bills are out of the way, repeat the process and roll the payments over again targeting the student loan debt. At this point, you should have a bunch of cash to throw at those student loans each month until all that debt is off your backs once and for all.

I'm really proud of you two, Mikayla. If you'll follow my plan from here on out, you'll gain control of your money and be set to start saving and building real wealth!-Dave

The partnership, not the family, is the problem

Dear Dave,

My two brothers-in-law and I have been thinking about going into business together as a side project in the real estate world. One of them is an architect and licensed general contractor, one has a successful painting business, and I'm a chief financial officer with a CPA background. Plus, I had a lot of construction experience as a young man. I know you're not a big fan of business partnerships, but how do you feel about a family business like this?

Dan

Dear Dan,

Going into business with family isn't my big concern here. I've said many times that partnerships are the only ships that won't sail, and I'm a firm believer in that philosophy. I would encourage you guys to set up a situation where one of you is the owner, then figure out a plan where the other guys get paid off the bottom line—as if they were owners. Trust me, anything with three heads is going to end up being a monster at some point.

Here's the thing about family businesses. When everyone understands their role and has the best interest of the company in mind, family businesses can be a lot more fun and more successful than non-family businesses. Statistics show the average family business lasts 60 years, while the average publicly traded company lasts about 15 years.

So, there's nothing inherently wrong with the family part of the equation. It's the partnership aspect I'd stay away from.-Dave

Renter's insurance?

Dear Dave,

We just helped move our son into a cheap, off-campus apartment a few blocks from where he is attending college. We signed the agreement and are paying the rent because he makes very good grades. Do you think renter's insurance is a smart buy? It's less than \$12 a month, but the minimum coverage I can get is \$15,000, and he probably has less than \$1,000 worth of belongings there.

Kevin

Dear Kevin,

I'd get renter's insurance. My guess is it also comes with five or six figures in personal liability coverage, as well. That's in case he's out on the patio with his buddies, someone slips and falls, and they decide to sue because daddy's on the lease.

In a case like this, because there's so little to start with, it's not theft or fire taking the contents of the apartment that you're worried about. It's the liability portion of the coverage that makes it worth every penny of what you'd be paying. That alone makes it worth \$10 to \$12 a month just to make sure a slip-and-fall doesn't mess with your life!-Dave

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



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Marlene's Meditations

Fire Drills for My Soul

By Marlene Houk
Burke County

How Firm a Foundation, Verse 3, Lutheran Book of Worship
*"My grace, all-sufficient, shall be your supply;
The flames shall not hurt you; I only design
Your dross to consume and your gold to refine."*

Alarms blare and piercing lights stab through the morning quiet of the elementary school. Startled out of their routines, the children snap their heads up and stare at the teacher. She speaks firmly and calmly, authoritatively dispensing instructions. "Quiet." She says, "Let's line up and let's go. Stop talking. Johnny, don't run."

As the students emerge from the building, the crisp chilly wind bites their cheeks and turns them rosy. During a recent drill, musical rhythm sticks remained in chubby first-grader hands as they exit the hallways, and a video conference immediately changes the background from cinder block to colorful bushes.

My friend, who teaches elementary, recently described a fire drill with her young students. I realized that school fire drills formed a pungent analogy to the spiritual equivalent of practicing for the fiery trials of life. As I recall my own memories of school fire drills, I discovered that they are quite relevant for my own spiritual fire drills.

A kindergarten child's innocent question prompted this spiritual analogy. He said, "What would happen if we really had a fire?" My quick-thinking friend answered, "That's why we have a fire drill - to practice for the real emergency."

The same is true in the Christian life. We need to be practicing our spiritual fire drills so that when the fiery trials of life roar through our souls, we know the exit routes described in the Bible. We've posted them on the walls of our hearts. We equip ourselves to remain calm when the smoke of life threatens to overwhelm us.

I asked my friend about the rules for a fire drill. She instantly quoted the guidelines which were posted in the employee handbook, reviewed at the beginning of the school year, and practiced once a month as required by the state.

The teachers are trained. The fire exit routes are posted. For a teacher with thirty years of experience at ten months for each school year, she would have participated in 300 fire drills and been extremely familiar with the procedure. Here they are:

1. We line up.
2. We are quiet and orderly.
3. We walk quickly but we do not run.
4. We follow and obey the teacher.
5. Our goal is to get out of the building safely and quickly.
6. We can reenter when we are told it is safe to do so.

Do you see the spiritual analogy? - The fire drill is the spiritual preparation for the fiery trials of life.

Our spiritual Authority requires that we practice scriptural principles to prepare for the flames of adversity.

Here are the spiritual rules for a fiery trial:

1. We line up with God's Word. Psalm 16:6 *"The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."*
 2. As much as possible, we are quiet and orderly in the way we approach the fiery trials of life. Isaiah 30:15 *"For thus saith the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not."*
 - 1 Corinthians 14:33 *"For God is not the author of confusion."*
 3. We walk quickly, but we do not run. We don't panic for faith is a refusal to panic. Galatians 5:17 *"Walk in the Spirit."*
 - Psalm 119:60 *"I made haste and delayed not to keep thy commandments."*
 4. We follow and obey our teacher, Jesus Christ. Matthew 16:24 *"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and follow me."*
- continued on page 47



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New Dimensions School

By David Burleson
Burke County



It's hard to believe that summer is over, and fall has arrived, even if the temperatures feel more like summer. The end of the first grading period at New Dimensions will be Wednesday, October 30, signaling the time that the first report cards will be distributed. With the distribution of report cards, it's also time for New Dimensions to provide parents and teachers the opportunity to discuss the educational progress of the students we serve. This is a wonderful chance for parents to talk with their child's teacher and share any ideas or concerns they may have. It is also the occasion for a student's teacher to update parents on how their child is doing in school and how they can work together to provide the best education possible. The parent/teacher conference day is designated as Thursday, October 31. I would encourage all parents to make every effort to attend a conference with your child's teacher.

In order for our students to be successful, there must be communication between the home and the school. These conferences are one way to establish that line of communication. It's very important for parents and teachers to get to know each other and to feel comfortable communicating with each other. One of the best tools a teacher possesses is the ability to call parents when students are not meeting their potential, are having a special recognition, or when there are special events/concerns at school. It's also important that parents know that they can pick up the phone and call the teacher if they sense a problem or have a compliment regarding their child's classroom. To continue to improve our school system and make it one in which we are all very proud, we must work together. One way to do that is to take advantage of the Parent/Teacher Conference Day.

When preparing for a parent/teacher conference, I would make the following recommendations to the parents:

- Talk to your child.
ASK WHICH subjects your child likes best and least.
FIND OUT why.
ASK WHAT your child would like to discuss.
- Think about your own questions or concerns.
MAKE A LIST of the questions or concerns before the conference.
LIST INFORMATION you want the teacher to know about your child.
INCLUDE QUESTIONS about school programs or policies.
- Some good questions to ask are:
How well does my child get along with others?
Is my child working up to his or her ability?
Does my child participate in class discussions and activities?
Has my child missed any classes other than the ones I contacted the school about?
Has my child been tardy to school?
Have I noticed any sudden changes in the way my child acts? For example, have you noticed any squinting, tiredness, or moodiness that might be a sign of physical or other problems?
- It's a good idea to ask your most important questions first, just in case time runs out before you and the teacher have a chance to discuss them all.
- Be sure to ask the teacher for specific suggestions on ways to help your child do better. This is the most important part of the meeting. It will become your action plan.
- If the teacher says something you don't quite understand, don't be shy about asking for an explanation.
- It's a good idea to end the conference by summing up the decisions you've made together. If needed, ask to meet again.

An additional way our school is communicating with parents is through PowerSchool. Not only can teachers share assignments and feedback with their students but parents can also get instantaneous information on their child's progress.

It is the desire of New Dimensions to work with our parents and community to make our school a place where all students can be successful. By working together, we can achieve this goal.

David Burleson is the Director of the New Dimensions Charter School in Burke County.

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Why Does God Answer Some Prayers and Not Others?

By Dr. James Dobson

Question: Dr. Dobson, the Lord answered prayer miraculously for my son when he was eight years old. He had open-heart surgery and survived without any permanent problems. But my husband was diagnosed with cancer three years ago, and we prayed for him night and day. Nevertheless, he died last January. I just can't understand why God heard my prayer for our son but allowed my husband to die. Is He there—or isn't He?

Answer: I assure you that He is there and that your prayers for your husband received no less attention or compassion than those for your endangered son. What you've experienced is evidence of the sovereignty of God. He will always be the determiner of what is best for those who serve Him.

One of the most dramatic illustrations of this divine nature occurred in the lives of my good friends, Von and Joann Letherer. When Von was just one year old, his parents noticed that he bruised badly whenever he bumped into furniture or even tumbled in his crib. They took him to their doctor, who diagnosed Von with hemophilia—the hereditary "bleeder's disease." His blood lacked the substance necessary to coagulate, actually threatening his life each time he suffered the most minor injury. There was very little treatment for hemophilia in those days, and Von was not expected to live beyond childhood. Indeed, he survived because of prayer, and because of nearly four hundred pints of blood transfused by the time he reached the end of adolescence.

During those teen years, when Von's life repeatedly hung in the balance, there was a young lady standing by his side. Her name was Joann, and she was his childhood sweetheart. Joann understood very well that Von's future was uncertain, but she loved him dearly. Hemophilia, they decided, was not going to determine the course of their lives. The couple was married when he was twenty-two and she was nineteen years old.

A new crisis occurred several years later when Joann was carrying their second child. She became seriously ill and was diagnosed with Hodgkin's disease, a type of cancer that attacks the lymph glands. It was usually fatal in that era. Although a treatment program had been developed, Joann's pregnancy prevented the doctors from prescribing it for her. She and Von could have aborted their baby, of course, but chose instead to place themselves in the hands of the Lord.

They began asking for a miracle—and promptly received one. Several weeks after the initial diagnosis, the hospital repeated the laboratory and clinical tests. Doctors concluded that there was no sign of Hodgkin's disease in Joann. She has been cancer-free from that day to this.

Now, notice what occurred in this instance. As we have seen, Von was born with a painful, debilitating illness about which his father, a minister, and his mother prayed diligently. They asked repeatedly for God to heal their son. When Von got older, he began praying on his own behalf. Then Joann came along and joined the chorus. Despite these and many other petitions, the Lord did not heal Von's hemophilia. At sixty-three years of age, he is still afflicted with the disorder and suffers daily from immobile joints and related physical difficulties. Von has taken medication every day for many years, just to cope with the pain. Yet his indomitable spirit has been a witness to me and thousands of others through the years.

Why has the Lord been unwilling to heal this good man? I don't know. Some might say that his prayer team lacked faith, except for the fact that Joann was healed in response to their petitions. The same people who asked for intervention in her life were also praying for Von. In one instance the answer was yes, and in the other, it was no. And life goes on. The Lord has offered no explanation or interpretation of His response, except, by inference, "This is My will for you."

In this and countless other circumstances that occur within the human family, only one conclusion can be drawn: God will do what is best and we must continue to trust Him regardless of the outcome.

To the woman whose husband recently succumbed to cancer, let me offer this word of encouragement: The Father has not lost track of your circumstances, even though they seem to be swirling out of control. He is there. Hold on to your faith in the midst of these unanswered questions. Someday His purposes will be known, and you will have an eternity to talk it over. In the meantime, I pray that the Lord will help you cope with this tragic loss of, or should I say temporary separation from, your partner and friend.

From Dr. Dobson's book, Complete Marriage and Family Home Reference Guide.

James Dobson, Jr. is an American evangelical Christian author, psychologist, and founder in 1977 of Focus on the Family



Annuities. Do they deserve their bad rap?

By Steve Gaito
McDowell County

As a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNERTM, I frequently get asked my opinion of annuities. Since I do not sell them, I believe that I can be objective about their use or misuse. Like most financial products, annuities have their place in a financial plan. Given the fact that the traditional pensions from companies are few and far between, for most people annuities can replace the guaranteed income. The challenge is that the term "annuity" is used to describe several options of this insurance product.

As someone that has in the past been security licensed, which is necessary to sell variable annuities, I believe that for people that have a need for safety nets these may be a good option. They allow the owner to participate in a diversified mix of choices and have some income guarantees. These always come at a cost. For those that purchased these products in the early 2000s, they protected their retirement income. Today although the guarantees are lower, they still provide protection. As a word of caution make sure you understand the difference between cash surrender value and income value. If income is what you want this is a good option. If you are looking for just growth of your money it is probably best to look at other options.

Fixed Annuities are the second option and as the variable option, these are best for providing income. These are frequently used as an alternative to CDs. The interest credited in most is similar to CD's, but in some cases come with a steep surrender charge. There are many variables with these products to make them look better than they really are. These are usually described as bonus annuities. While they sound good, they seldom provide more income over the long haul.

Equity Index Annuities are probably the hottest product and are frequently marketed as "safe money" alternatives to the market. The value proposition to these products is that you participate in the upside of the market with no downside risk. It sounds good until you dive into the details. Understanding the tax code may be easier than reading these contracts. They have point to point and spreads that make the annuity look great, but while I think they may do better than fixed annuities they do not provide returns like the stock market in general. With these products make sure you understand how the interest crediting works and when it is credited.

So why do annuities get such a bad rap? I think it is because they are oversold. Annuities should be used for income and all the smoke of these products makes them appear they are like stock market vehicles without the risk. This is not true. Depending on your risk tolerance any of these would be a great option for retirement income. If your goal is to cover your fixed expenses in retirement and there is a shortfall from Social Security benefits, I would use any of these. If you are in good health and have time before you will need the income, I would also suggest looking at Indexed Universal Life as a 4th option. I hope this has helped you feel more comfortable about annuities. They are an essential part of retirement planning and one that often gets criticized because they are misused. If used properly they provide the security that most are looking for in retirement.

If you have questions about finances, please feel free to either email me with questions or come to my office. I do not charge for initial meeting so there is no reason to not get your questions answered.

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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3 Ways You Can 'Bless Every Home' In Your Neighborhood

By Josh Reed



The biblical narrative puts forth God's vision to have a people for Himself that functions as priests to neighborhoods and nations to help bring about the reality that *"the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea"* (Habakkuk 2:14).

Bless Every Home (BEH) is a web-based resource portal that offers tools to help believers be salt and light in their communities by praying for, caring for, sharing the gospel with and disciplining their neighbors. BEH utilizes a pray, care and share approach that helps you pray for your neighbors by name, build relationships with them and track interactions such as acts of service and gospel conversations.

In essence, BEH can help you see the work of the Spirit in and through each person in your neighborhood. It is an effective tool for at least three reasons:

1. Helps to recapture the priesthood of believers

God called all of Israel to ascend Mount Sinai in order to hear all that the Lord commanded so that they might be to Him *"a kingdom of priests"* (Exodus 19:6). However, after the Lord showed up in thunder and lightning, the people trembled, shrank back and sent Moses up as a representative. Instead of becoming the kingdom of priests to the nations, they became a kingdom with priests like the nations. Through the person and work of Jesus, He has made a way for His people to be a kingdom of priests again, but this time, as people consisting of every tribe, tongue, and nation. And we still have a priest, the Great High Priest, Jesus Himself. Through faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit comes and takes up residence in the hearts of those of us who follow Jesus, repurposing us to be the royal priesthood to our neighborhoods and the nations (1 Peter 2:9-10), just as God intended.

2. Confronts our fractured society

In *"America's Crisis of Disconnection Runs Deeper than Politics,"* research professor Brene Brown reported that in 1980, 20 percent of Americans felt lonely. By 2010, that figure had doubled, according to AARP researchers. Bless Every Home helps neighbors have empathy for the people who live close to them. And the more informed you are about their lives, the more effective prayer can be. If Jesus rescues sinners and then repurposes them to be priests in their neighborhoods, BEH helps Christians be at the forefront of ministering to the large percentage of people who feel lonely.

3. Helps us obey both the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. In Matthew 22:36-40, Jesus said the greatest commandment is *"to love the Lord your God with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength"* and *"to love your neighbor as yourself."* BEH begins with the most loving thing you can do for your actual neighbors — prayer — and then encourages you to show acts of love as you pray. But it doesn't stop there. BEH also allows you to see your own progress as you pray, care for, share the gospel with and disciple your neighbors.

Twentieth-century pastor A.W. Tozer once said, *"No man has any right to speak to men about God who has not first spoken to God about men."* With the help of Bless Every Home, followers of Jesus can recapture a core piece of their identity — representing men before God and, in turn, representing God before men. This, coupled with acts of love and good deeds, are the kind of things God envisions when He calls people to be His *"royal priesthood,"* having called them *"out of darkness, and into his marvelous light"* (1 Peter 2:9-10).

Next steps

Bless Every Home is helping Jesus followers across North America to reach their neighbors with the love and gospel of Christ, with a vision of reaching every home in America. Here are some steps you can take to join the movement.

Be a light

As a light in your community, you will be given access to a dashboard that lists your nearest neighbors. This platform will help you to pray for your neighbors by name, lovingly care for them, share the hope of the gospel with them and make disciples of those who choose to follow Jesus. You will also be able to connect what you are doing with your church to share your progress. It is free for any believer to sign up to become a light.

Be a bless partner church

As a bless partner church, you will have access to a real-time dashboard that allows you to see the progress your members are making as lights with their neighbors in praying, caring, sharing and discipline. There is a minimal cost to become a bless partner church (\$15 monthly or \$180 yearly) or bless partner association (\$25 monthly or \$300 yearly).

Be trained for gospel conversations

Ever wanted to have a gospel conversation with someone but had no idea where to begin? Gospel Conversations Training explains why and how to have these conversations so that you can share the good news of the gospel competently and confidently. Each training includes time for practice and follow-up processes for strategy development and accountability.

Josh Reed serves as the senior consultant for the Adult Evangelism and Discipleship Team.



Morganton Seven Day Adventist Church

When Pigs Fly

By Steve Beitz
Burke County

Historians tell us that the very first time a person received the "red carpet" treatment in America, was in 1821. It happened on April 21st, in Georgetown, South Carolina, and the recipient was President James Monroe. President Monroe was on a southern tour of the country, and he took a barge up the river into the Georgetown harbor. As he and his staff came onto the docks, the city had rolled out a red carpet from the boat dock all the way to a carriage waiting for President Monroe. A red carpet has lost much of the honor that it at one time carried. Ever since the 1961 Oscars, anyone can just about walk on the red carpet.

Of course, I've never been given the red-carpet treatment. I am greeted with a welcome when I go to Walmart. That might be as close to a red-carpet welcome I will ever get. And in our churches, we station greeters to welcome our visitors as they come into our facility. I think a church greeter is very important. A church greeter is a very first-person people see when visiting a church. The church greeter is the face of any ministry, which makes it a very important job in our church.

I want to see if two men mentioned in scripture, would qualify as good greeters in our church foyers.

Matthew described them as demon possessed. Mark described them as screaming and cutting themselves. Luke tells us that they were naked and uncontrollable even in chains and handcuffs.

Is that a good description of greeters at Walmart or at our church? Well, if you don't think so, you had 12 men who were in complete agreement with you. The 12 disciples of Christ didn't know why Jesus wanted to spend time in ministry on the other side of the Galilee in the first place. Bunch of sinners lived there, and these two men greeting them on the beach were proof enough that they should run for the boat and get back on the western side of the Lake of Galilee just as soon as possible. These two men are not ready to be greeters at Walmart.

Matthew tells us it happened like this: *When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him, two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass by that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"* Matthew 8:28,29.

Nope, not ready to be greeters in our church foyer. But these demons that possess these men, they recognize the Son of God. And they speak to Jesus. Why are you here? Have you come to destroy us? Equally astonishing is Jesus talks back to the demons.

Then He asked him, *"What is your name?"* And he answered saying, *"I am legion for we are many."* And he begged him earnestly that he would not send them out of the country. Mark 5:8,9.

What a remarkable conversation. And now we are told about an offer the demons make. Jesus, we have such a deal to offer you today.

Now a good way off from them was a herd of many swine feeding. So, the demons begged Him, saying, *"If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine."* Matthew 8:30,31

Don't destroy us. Please, Jesus, let us occupy some creatures. See, up there on the hill, a herd of pigs. In Mark's gospel we're told it is a herd of 2000 pigs. This is a phenomenal request. And the response from Jesus is equally fantastic. Jesus said GO. And what happens next is incredible. 2000 pigs minding their own business on the hill, suddenly go nuts and stampede down the slope and jump off the cliff. And for a moment, it looked like Pigs Could Fly. Well, only a moment. And all 2000 pigs fall headfirst into the Galilee and drown.

The pig herdsman runs to town and tells what happened to the pigs. And the entire community comes to the beach to see for themselves. And they now turn on Jesus with their complaints and demand that Jesus get out and never return.

Did Jesus get fooled? Did Christ get sucker-punched by the devil? After all, Christ had come to the other side of the Galilee to spread the same good news that He had been sharing from town to town on the western side of the Galilee. Jesus wanted to tell everyone about the good news of love and salvation. But now the whole territory wants Jesus gone! You know Satan does not like to lose ground. And these people on the east of Galilee, they were his and Satan did not want Jesus to come ashore and mess things up. Satan devises a plan. He knows Jesus, and he knows that Christ will heal these demon-possessed men. But, if he Satan, could convince the Lord to let the demons possess the 2000 pigs, then he Satan could drown the pigs and the people will tar and feather Jesus and run Him out of town on a rail. Now that is a nifty little plan, don't you think? And it looks like it works to perfection.

I would like to go on record and say, that I believe that Jesus knew what Satan was up to the entire time. Now yes, everybody wants Jesus to just go away. Well, all except the two men whom Jesus healed. In Mark 5, we are shown that these two-former demon-possessed men request to go with Christ. But Jesus says No. He tells the two men that He cannot stay. They are forcing Him to go. And Jesus tells the men He had healed, you two stay here in my place and tell the story about what happened to you and those 2000 pigs.

These people living on the eastern side of the Lake of Galilee, they had heard of Jesus. But they liked their way of living just fine. They didn't want Jesus to come and change their lives. People are still the same today.

You want us to go to church on the Sabbath day? Oh no, we couldn't go to church and worship. That just would not fit our schedule. You want us to eat a Biblical diet? Are you nuts? How are we going to survive by eating a biblical diet? We will starve to death! Return a tithe to the Lord? Oh no, we couldn't do that. Have you seen my checkbook? No, it just would not fit my financial situation. What, spend time in prayer and Bible study each day, no no no, I just couldn't do that, I mean where would I find the time. ARE YOU CRAZY? IF I MADE THOSE KIND OF CHANGES IN MY LIFE, MY WHOLE WORLD WOULD BE TURNED UPSIDE DOWN! Noth-





ing greater, there is nothing greater than having Jesus turn our world upside down... nothing greater.

Those 2-former demon-possessed men, they stay and tell their story as Christ asked. You know, Jesus returned to that same area some 10 months later. And I tell you that crazy pig story, it had backfired on the devil. For now, 1000s of people came to listen to Jesus and have Him turn their world upside down.

Jesus, He could not stay on planet earth. But He has requested that as we live here on planet earth, that we share our stories of how Jesus turned our lives upside down. I appreciate so much, the staff of Blue Ridge Christian News, as they share the story of salvation that comes from our loving God. May we each share our story as we tell how Jesus has turned our world upside down.

Steve Beitz, Pastor, Morganton Seventh day Adventist Church.

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Is Fasting Healthy?

By Miguel Cruz
Yancey County



First, let me say that the Bible often talks about fasting for different reasons. We won't go into all the circumstances for fasting discussed in the Bible, perhaps that's a discussion for another time, but one observation I have made is that Jesus, when he discusses fasting, usually makes the statement, "when" you fast....not if you fast. As if to say it should be part of our regular routine.

Intermittent fasting instead of 3 meals a day can do wonders for our health according to a considerable amount of research that has been done. The research is pointing out that eating at appointed times, usually during an 8-hour period or less, can boost your health and save you from insulin resistance, weight gain, and diabetes according to an article published in the November 2018 issue of Science.

You can do intermittent fasting by eating all your meals for example between 8 am and 4 pm. The rest of the time I recommend you drink water or herbal teas. If you sustain yourself on soda, you are defeating the purpose and most likely doing harm. And please don't think the sugar free ones are a healthy choice because the artificial sweeteners have a negative effect. What this does is to allow your body to convert from burning sugar all day long from constantly eating to burning the fat you have in reserve. It will take a few days to get used to this, but within around 3-5 days you will feel the results in more energy clearer thinking and sleeping better. Some people do feel sluggish for those first few days.

What should I eat?

The average American diet consists of too many carbohydrates consisting of sweets, bread, and other grains, too many unhealthy fats usually coming from fast foods and processed foods and not enough water. If this sounds like you, I suggest you start off by substituting your sodas with flavored water, just add a squeeze of lemon to your tap water or you can buy many of the flavored water drinks available (unsweetened, including no artificial sweeteners). Next start packing your own lunches instead of the drive-through. Choose healthier fats such as butter, eggs, avocado, coconut and olive oil, raw nuts and proteins instead of high carbohydrate items that are mostly bread and other grains. There is no need to count calories when you do this, just choose healthy foods.

A growing number of research studies have shown the following health benefits:

- Improves blood sugar management, especially for type 2 diabetics.
- It lowers triglyceride levels.
- Increase human growth hormone, HGH
- Suppresses inflammation in your body.
- Improved immune function
- Lower blood pressure
- Reduce your risk of heart disease.
- Reduce your risk of cancer
- Improve pancreatic function
- Improve cognitive function, Protecting you against such diseases as dementia, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's.
- Eliminate sugar cravings.

The above list should convince you that, yes indeed, periodic fasting is healthy.

Dr. Miguel Cruz is in practice along with his wife of 35 years, Lesia Cruz who is a certified Integrative Nutritionist. They own Cruz Life Center in Burnsville NC. Dr. Cruz is a licensed Chiropractor since 1981. When asked what he does for a living he explains that he helps people get out of pain and improve their overall health without the use of drugs or surgery. Something everyone seems to want but nobody seems to know how to get there. Dr. Cruz accepted Jesus Christ in the summer of 1979 while in chiropractic school. He has since dedicated his life towards helping people grow in physical health and spiritual health.

By Rev. John Rice
Mitchell County



A Prayer Ministry Conference, "Healing Our Family Legacy", will be held this coming November 1-3 at High Pastures Retreat Center, located just a few miles east of Burnsville, North Carolina. The Blessing Place, an interdenominational healing ministry begun in 2018, is presenting this conference with the purpose of bringing family members into the loving presence of God, to set their families free from generational struggles and strengthen (even increasing) the blessings passing down through the generations.

Many would ask, "What is healing our family legacy?" Most families recognize that physical characteristics, talents, and skills can pass from generation to generation within a family. Scripture refers to these as blessings. For example, just last week I talked with a landscaper who proudly told me that he was a 6th generation farmer. Some years ago, I attended a family reunion where four generations were present. During their family talent show, members of each generation either sang, played a musical instrument, or recited poetry they had written. Music and creativity were a generational blessing in this family.

However, families usually do not recognize that harmful and life diminishing traits and behaviors frequently appear as a repeating pattern in the generations of their family ancestry. Scripture refers to these repeating struggles as curses. Some examples are depression, fear, addictions, physical illness, anger, divorce, premature death, abuse, and unforgiveness.

We are not powerless in the face of such struggles. God uses wise and caring medical and psychotherapy interventions. God also provides us with powerful, life-changing spiritual tools. Prayers focused on "Healing Our Family Legacy" is one of those tools!

Teachings presented at the conference include: "God's Desire to Heal our Family Legacy", "Representational Confession", "A Family Story of Generational Healing", and "Preparing our Family Tree History". The conference moves to its most powerful moment, where everyone is invited to bring their Family Tree form and place it on the altar as their offering during the Generational Healing Service. This simple yet powerful act has been deeply healing and transformative for thousands of individuals and families.

Scripture instructs us to "choose life, so that you and your descendants may live." (Deut. 30: 19) Participating in the "Healing Our Family Legacy" conference is a practical way of "choosing life, choosing God's blessings, so that we and our descendants [our children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren!] may live" life fully as God's beloved daughters and sons!

To register or learn more about "Healing Our Family Legacy" conference, go to our website at www.theblessingplacenc.com

Rev. John Rice left parish ministry in 2012 in response to God's call to Jesus' healing ministry. He has shared his gifts of teaching and praying in hundreds of churches throughout the U.S. and northeast India. In 2017, John completed a three year project, "Equipping the Saints for Jesus' Healing Ministry". This DVD teaching series includes five workshops intended to encourage, equip, and empower God's people for healing prayer ministry. John and his wife, Debra, moved to the Burnsville area in 2016.



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Do You Doubt God At Times?

By Kurt Bomar
Avery County

Text: Luke 7:18-28

John was prophesied as the messenger who would announce the coming of the Messiah. Even before birth, he leapt in the womb at the approach of Jesus. He trained for this job. He announced that he wasn't worthy to untie the shoes of Jesus. He baptized Jesus. And then a strange thing happened, he doubted who Jesus was.

18 John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, 19 he sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?" 20 When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?'" 21

Why did he doubt? Probably because like all the other Jews, he was expecting Jesus to do at his first coming what he will do at his second coming, by power and might sit on the throne in Jerusalem and judge the world. But for whatever reason, he didn't have the full picture and he doubted.

At that very time, Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses, and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. 22 So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. 23 Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."

Why didn't Jesus just say "yes"? Then his answer would only have been as good as his word. Jesus knew that John knew the scriptures, so remove all doubt he pointed John to the scriptures so he could ground his faith in them. (Isaiah 29:18-21 and 35:5-6). By saying this, John didn't even have to take Jesus' word for it. He would have known that it would be a fulfillment of Scripture.

Notice in his response, Jesus doesn't condemn John for doubting. In fact, he lifts him up.

24 After John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? ... A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 27 This is the one about whom it is written: 'I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' 28 I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John..."

There is a huge lesson for us to learn here. In all likelihood, we will have times of doubting. If the greatest man ever born of a woman did, we probably will too. And Jesus will tell us the same thing he told John. He won't jump on us and scold us. Rather he will communicate to us what we need to know to ground our faith on a rock. (Billy Graham had such a moment as did many of the greatest Christian leaders in Church history).

The second lesson is, if it's not you doubting, rather a loved one, don't despair. Jesus knows how to respond to him. It is better to have doubts and voice them and let God deal with them than to pretend they don't exist and compound the problem.

Selah, (think about it)

Kurt Bomar is pastor of Walnut Grove Church.



Make Joy Your First Choice

By Kailyn Eskridge



The world around us is dark. It is so easy for our joy to seep slowly out of us as we observe the sin that surrounds us. Five minutes scrolling through a news site or reading the local paper shows us more than enough to make us stick our heads in the sand just to make it through the day. We can go through life in an apathetic daze, but we are called to more.

Philippians 4:4 reads, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice." Paul considered joy so important, he reminded us to rejoice twice in one verse! How many songs do we teach our children about the joy in our heart that nothing can destroy? We proclaim every year at Christmas that, because of the arrival of our Savior, the world should be full of joy. In a song of praise to the Lord after hearing about some difficult times to come, Habakkuk 3:18 says, "Yet I will rejoice in the Lord; I will take joy in the God of my salvation."

So how do we make joy our first choice each day? Here are a few things I try to do continually to help me remember my joy, which comes from the Lord:

1. Keep your eyes in the Word — I recently started a year-long Bible reading plan that has radically changed my perspective. Keeping our minds focused on the blessings and words of our Lord each day reframes our outlook.
2. Breathe through your nose — It's hard to breathe through your nose with your mouth open. Oftentimes, we rob ourselves of joy by spending our time voicing our hurt, our complaints or our frustrations without first taking it to our Great Counselor.
3. Lift up your voice in song — One of the best things I've done is create a Spotify playlist called "To Remind Me Whose I Am." When I feel the chaos of my own life starting to steal my joy, I turn on this playlist and listen to songs that remind me.
4. Lean on fellow believers — I cannot describe the blessing that my accountability group brings to me on a weekly basis. We meet once a week to share prayer requests, encourage each other, and maintain our focus on the glory of God rather than our circumstances. Regardless of situations that arise, my sisters remind me to consider it all joy!
5. Serve on bent knees — Some of the moments of greatest joy come from serving others, even in the midst of personal turmoil. When you set aside the pressure of your own life for your neighbor, there is a special kind of blessing that comes from humbling yourself in service.
6. Remember your salvation — The source of our joy comes from knowing the inheritance we have in the Lord. By continually reminding ourselves of the grace that our Lord gave us when we were so undeserving, we can remember the precious source of our unending joy.

Kailyn Eskridge joined the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's Strategic Focus Team in October 2018. Previously, Kailyn served as the events assistant for Baptists on Mission. She also served as a college staff member for Deep Impact Missions.

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The Orchard at Altapass

Book Signing At The Orchard At Altapass

By Kate Groff
Mitchell County

On Sunday, October 6, the Orchard at Altapass will host its last book signing of the season—Thomas Goldsmith's newly published "Earl Scruggs and Foggy Mountain Breakdown: The Making of an American Classic"—the story of a song that crossed the bluegrass/country barrier and into American mainstream music. "I heard 'Foggy Mountain Breakdown' for the first time around 1965 when I started listening to Flatt & Scruggs, Bill Monroe, and the Stanley Brothers in earnest," Goldsmith said during a recent interview with Bluegrass Today. "Along with the rest of America, I became captivated by its energy and drive in the 1967 movie, 'Bonnie and Clyde'."

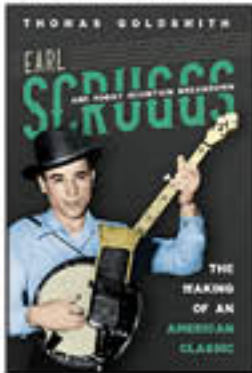
"Foggy Mountain Breakdown" brought bluegrass, the banjo, and Earl Scruggs out of the shadows of 1940's country music and into the spotlight. Goldsmith shines that light in his new book. He says the "spark" came from banjo player, Jim Mills, known for the 3-finger technique named the Scruggs style after its innovator. He said that the 1949 recording ignited his interest in the banjo as a child. As a closet banjo player himself, Jim's words lit a fire in Goldsmith to learn more about the man and the song. This led to interviews, not only with Earl Scruggs, and banjoists Bela Fleck, Sonny Osborne, Steve Martin, Mills, and many others, but with Scruggs' wife, Louise, and sidemen Curly Seckler, Mac Wiseman, and Jerry Douglas. Although it took 12 years of research, interviews, writing, and music, a book was born.

Thomas Goldsmith is a music journalist. For over thirty years, he has worked both in daily newspapers in North Carolina and Tennessee and as a freelance writer. He is the editor of The Bluegrass Reader and winner of the International Bluegrass Music Association's Best Journalist award. And some will recognize him from his performance in the Parkway Playhouse production of "Along About Sundown" this past spring.

For those few who aren't familiar with the song, visit YouTube and type in Earl Scruggs and Friends. Take a listen, then come meet the man who wrote the book—at the Orchard's red barn porch in a special fall event, Sunday, October 6 from 1 until 4 PM. It's free and open to the public.

The Orchard, 1025 Orchard Road, Spruce Pine at mm 328.3, Blue Ridge Parkway, is a non-profit working orchard, music, and educational venue. Open 10 to 5, Wednesday-Sunday through October. For more information about all the Orchard programs, visit www.altapassorchard.org.

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



Morganton Baptist Church

He Is Worthy!

By Dan Quorollo
Burke County

My favorite time of year is upon us: football season! I was recently outside a well-known football stadium as thousands of fans gathered to cheer their favorite team to victory. Many of these fans went to extensive work to proudly show off their teams. They all wore their team's colors, and some even had vehicles that were the color of their team. Tailgaters gathered around various tents to show their support. Hours were undoubtedly spent in preparation for this game. When the game began, you could hear the roar of the crowd a great distance away. Throughout the whole game, they were there to let their voices be heard.

As I watched them, I could not help but be struck with the futility of their pursuits. They had spent hours preparing food, decorating vehicles, and packing just for one football game. I could not help but wonder to what end? Where would all this excitement lead? They were heavily involved in a game whose outcome they could not control. But they were present, and they were excited to be there.

One of my burdens over the last several months is to create a mindset of always giving God our best. Undoubtedly, He alone is worthy of such praise and exaltation. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 1:17, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." The various psalms are full of praise to God for who He is, not merely for what He has done. When Solomon built the temple, every detail was important, including those places that nobody would ever be able to see (cf. 2 Chronicles 4:12). Why did they go to such extensive work? Why is the psalm filled with constant praise? The answer is simple: they understood that God alone is worthy.

Many people are tragically more eager to give their all to their favorite team. They sit in the stadium and cheer their team loudly, yet the outcome cannot be controlled. Meanwhile, many Christians give God half-hearted service and church attendance. When we consider the greatness of who God is, we will devote ourselves to Him and will strive to glorify Him with our lives. Why? Because He alone is worthy! Ponder the greatness of the God we serve and resolve to glorify Him every day.

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







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Enjoying Everyday Life

The Strategy That Wins the Battle Every Time

By Joyce Meyer



The Strategy That Wins the Battle Every Time

Years ago, when I was just learning how to develop a personal relationship with God, I had a lot of problems. Because of the abuse I had experienced growing up, I was insecure, unstable, unhappy most of the time, and I got angry whenever things didn't go my way. It was a miserable way to live.

I eventually reached a point where I was willing to do whatever I had to do to have peace and to really enjoy my life. So, I got serious about my relationship with God and started studying His Word and spending time with Him in prayer.

As I did this, I discovered that God wanted me to have abundant life and to live with His righteousness, peace, and joy. But getting there was a battle!

John 10:10 says Jesus "came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows]" (AMP). And Romans 14:17 says, "The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking [what one likes], but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit."

We can experience abundant life and have peace and joy in the Holy Spirit when we develop an intimate, personal relationship with God. And two main keys to having intimacy with God are truth and time.

You've probably heard the saying, "The truth will set you free!" This is not just a wise proverb someone came up with; it's actually taken from Scripture. Jesus says in John 8:31-32 that "if you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (NKJV).

If we're going to be set free from sin – wrong mindsets, attitudes, and behavior that are not like Christ – then we must face the truth about ourselves and choose to believe what God says in His Word more than what we think or feel or what others say. We must be completely truthful with God and let Him into every part of our lives.

This means when we have thoughts like, "I'm no good. I never do anything right. I'll never amount to anything. Nothing ever works out right for me!" we talk back to ourselves and say what God's Word says. For example:

• *God is love, He loves me, and nothing can separate me from His love!* (1 John 4:16; John 3:16; Romans 8:38-39)

• *I am a new creation in Christ, and I am made right with God because of what Jesus has done for me!* (2 Corinthians 5:17, 21)

• *I can do whatever I need to do through Christ who gives me strength!* (Philippians 4:13)

• *I trust God and put my faith in Him to cause everything in my life to work together for my good as I walk out His plans for my life!* (Romans 8:28)

These declarations are based on a few verses you can use to come against old mindsets that don't line up with the truth of God's Word. Look up the scriptures in your Bible, and study them so you can get them rooted in your heart. I also recommend you write them on note cards or in a journal and read them frequently.

As you meditate on God's Word, you'll renew your mind with the truth. This is the key to experiencing freedom from anything that's holding you back in your walk with Him.

The second thing we must do to cultivate intimacy with God is to spend quality time with Him each day. Christianity isn't about a weekly trip to church or fulfilling a checklist of religious rituals that you feel obligated to do to stay on God's good side.

Jesus died for us so we can have a personal relationship with Him, not a religion. You don't just need to know about God...it's more important for you to know HIM.

If God doesn't have first place in your life, you will never be fulfilled...you'll never have real, lasting peace and joy in anything you do or any circumstance you experience. But if you will abide in Christ, continually seeking Him and obeying His teachings, then you will be empowered to live with victory over sin. You'll have true intimacy with God!

If you've been struggling to grow in your relationship with God or you're discouraged because of battles you can't seem to get through, I want to encourage you to make a determined decision to spend time alone with God each day. Even if you can only spend a few minutes with Him in the morning or during your lunch break at work, make this your number one priority.

God loves you so much! He wants you to succeed in being everything He created you to be and having the life Jesus came to give you. Make your relationship with Him the foundation of everything in your life and you will win the battles you face because He will fight for you!

For more on this topic, order Joyce's four-CD series Let God Fight Your Battles. 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.

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: 2 Thessalonians 2:13

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Sun. 10am-3pm

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Regional News

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

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

Fall Events at the Billy Graham Library - Oct. 3, 1-2:30 p.m.: Meet & Greet with Anne Graham Lotz - Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of the late Billy and Ruth Graham, will greet guests at the Billy Graham Library during a limited engagement event. Her new book, *Jesus in Me*, will be for sale in Ruth's Attic bookstore with a small number of signed copies available beginning at 12 p.m. The New York Times named Anne one of the five most influential evangelists of her generation. She's been profiled on 60 Minutes and has appeared on TV programs such as Larry King Live, the TODAY Show, and Hannity Live. No items will be signed during the meet and greet. This is a free event and no registration is required.

Oct. 19, 9:30 a.m.-2 p.m.: Bikers with Boxes - The 12th annual Bikers with Boxes charity event brings together thousands of motorcyclists from across the region. In 2018, bikers brought over 5,800 gift-filled shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. Attendees will enjoy music, fellowship, giveaways, and complimentary lunch offered from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Pre-register for the event at <http://bit.ly/BGLibrary-Bikers2019>.

Ombudsman Program - Volunteers needed to advocate, protect the rights of long-term care residents Boone, NC (June 26, 2019) - The High-Country Area Agency on Aging Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is calling for volunteers in Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey Counties. Volunteer ombudsmen, also known as Community Advisory Committee's (CAC) serve as advocates for residents living in nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

CAC members are trained, certified volunteers who are assigned to a local long-term care facility to advocate for residents' rights.

To learn more about becoming a volunteer ombudsman or to request an application, call Stevie John at (828) 265-5434 Ext. 126 or visit the High-Country Area Agency on Aging website at www.highcountryaging.org.

Bible Study Fellowship - Acts and Letters of the Apostles

In The Acts and Letters of the Apostles study, we see evidence of God's Unstoppable Spirit, the growth of His Unstoppable Church, and the Unstoppable witness of His people. Join us for this incredible study. Women Begin Thursday September 12 - May 7, 2020

Women's Day group meet @ First Presbyterian Church, Spruce Pine 10 am-11:30 am Mitchell County

Women's Evening group meet @ Grassy Creek Baptist Church, Spruce Pine 5:45 pm-7:15 pm Mitchell County

Men's Begin Tuesday, September 10

Men meet @ Higgins Methodist Church, Burnsville 6:55pm-8:25pm - Yancey County

Contact: Nancy Ball (843)597-1196 (Day Women) - Angie Woody (828)467-3830 (Evening Women)

Burke County

Brown Mountain Baptist Church - Fall Festival Saturday, October 19th 4 Pm Until Dark.

We will have devotions, food, games, a pumpkin contest, trunk-n-treat, and a hayride. We will be eating promptly at 4 pm.

Everyone is invited. If you need more info, please call 828-260-5917. The address is 2046 Brown Mountain Beach Rd., Morganton, NC 28655

Catawba River Baptist Association - Fall-Ing Into Missions

Women's Ministry Fall Session Mt. View # 2 Baptist Church, 5510 Watson Price Rd., Morganton October 29, 2019, 6:15 pm

Paul Longston, a Missions Mobilization Consultant for the Baptist State Convention will be speaking about local and state mission opportunities.

We will be collecting donations for the Red Box Ministry.

A meal will be provided. Please call the CRBA office at 828-437-0137 if you plan to attend.

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, The Giving Heart Thrift Shop is a ministry of the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Calvin Taylor in Concert Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton, NC 28655

Enjoy this uplifting musical experience brought to you by world-renowned pianist and composer, Dr. Calvin Taylor! This free concert will warm your hearts

and lift your spirit. A love offering will be received and CD's will be available for purchase after the evening concert. When: Saturday, October 12 10:45 am & 5:30 pm. For more information, call 828-584-8212.

Fly-Away Ministries and In Ya Faith Gospel Promotions

Saturday, October 26, 2019 - Starting at 10:00 am till 5:00 pm

Historic Morganton Courthouse, 102 E. Union Street, Morganton, NC

Presents: The Fall

Faith, Hope & Love Gospel Festival Concert

Featuring the talents of Heavenly Hearts, Lynn Newman, Soul Creed, Minister Copeland

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Vendors welcome, For more information call 704-441-7595

High Peak Baptist Church

3073 High Peak Road, Valdese, NC 28690

Pastor Kevin Purcell - cell 828-448-2109

Homecoming - October 6, 2019, Speaker: Brad Harmon

Meal after the morning service

Trunk or Treat - Thursday, October 31, 2019

6-7 pm in the church parking lot

Valdese Events

Draughn High School Homecoming Parade October 1st | 6:30 pm | Downtown Valdese

Concerts at the Rock - Old Rock School Auditorium - 7:30 pm October 12: The True Grass Band opening for SIDELINE Tickets \$20 per person | Tickets - Call 828-879-2129 or online at concertsattherock.com

Movies at the Rock presents Scooby Doo (2002)

Old Rock School Auditorium October 18th | 7 pm | \$2 per person | Concessions available for purchase

Old Colony Players: Ward of Sleepy Hollow - RATED R

Performed at the Fred B. Cranford Amphitheatre | October 11-12, 18-19, 25-26, 30-31 Tickets available by calling 828-522-1150 or online at oldcolonyplayers.com

Valdese Treats in the Street - October 31 Candy provided by local merchants from 4-6 pm | Main Street Closed

Performance by Silver Sneakers at 4:45 pm | Come in your best costume for a chance to win special PRIZES!! Over 10 prizes will be awarded by our special judge - Mother Gothel!

Zion Baptist Church - 3396 Pea Ridge Rd., Morganton, NC 28655

Trunk or Treat/Fall Festival, October 30, 2019, 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Food, games, prizes, dunking booth and a petting zoo.

Henderson County

Homegrown Hope - A Backyard Shindig Benefitting Crossnore School & Children's Home in Henderson County

October 19, 2019 | 6:00 p.m. Cocktails | 7:00 p.m. Dinner

Embrook Estate | 93 Embrook Lake Drive | Flat Rock, NC

Join us for a casual outdoor evening with dinner and live music as we raise funds to expand clinical services and foster care programs for children in Henderson County and surrounding areas.

For more information, contact: Wesley Boggs Advancement Office (828)301-6518 wboggs@crossnore.org

McDowell County

Cross Mill United Methodist Church - in Marion is now accepting donations of NEW items for an upcoming fundraising auction. Proceeds from the auction will go toward much-needed church building repairs and our 24/7 Sharing Food Pantry Ministries. Any business and/or individual donations would be greatly appreciated. Call 828-460-9257, 828-442-8098 or 828-803-8790.

New Community Outreach Benefits McDowell Families with Children Teens for Christ B.E.A.R. Closet

(Baby Equipment and Resource Closet)

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

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

Upcoming Events

October 7th-11th - Fall Beach Retreat, October 16th - Saints Alive Luncheon,

October 24th - Dinner on the Town-Friday Friends, 5:15 p.m. Departure, Nov

20th - Saints Alive 90+ Recognition Luncheon

Wed. Night Small Groups

Surprised by Hope October 2nd - November 20th A Study Based on the Book by

N.T. Wright: Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church. Join Scott Hagaman as we explore new ways to approach the Bible and our faith.

36th Annual Mountain Glory Festival - Marion - Where Main Street Meets the Mountains Saturday, October 12, 2019, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

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 the festival information visit www.mtngloryfestival.com or call 828-652-2215.

Mitchell County

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.

Liberty Hill Baptist Church - The Kingsmen Quartet will be at Liberty Hill Baptist Church on November 2nd at 6 pm. The address is 241 Hoot Owl Rd. Spruce Pine, NC 28777. Phone 828-467-2745.

Mayland Small Business Center

Etsy for Artists (2 Hours)
Sell your artwork, jewelry, crafts, and vintage items via Etsy. Learn how to register and start selling on Etsy. Taught by top-rated online seller Nick Hawks, this class will provide an in-depth look at Etsy's tools and provide insider tips that will help you succeed in Etsy's online marketplace. 10/2, W, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Hawks TRA Spruce Pine Gallery 828.766.1295

How to Start and Grow a Local Business in the NC Mountains (2 Hours)
Learn how to properly start a small business in the western NC Mountain region. The seminar will cover how to properly register your business, small business best management practices, and tips for growth. 10/8, T, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Cook Yancey 828.766.1295

Is Your Business Ready for the Holiday Sales Season? Business Builders Breakfast (1.5 Hours)
October is a prime time to make preparations for seasonal sales. At this final breakfast workshop of 2019, we will discuss free resources available for Small Business Saturday and marketing strategies for local businesses that will appeal to buying customers. 10/8, T, 8:00-9:30 a.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Cook Burnsville Town Center 828.766.1295

Bookkeeping and Tax Tips for Local Artists (2 Hours)
CPA, Kenneth Beam, will provide artist-focused tax tips and bookkeeping strategies to help keep your business audit-proof. Topics covered in this workshop will include sales tax guidance, business structure advice, bookkeeping strategies, and best practices for art-related businesses. Bring your questions! 10/16, W, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Beam TRA Spruce Pine Gallery 828.766.1295

Marketing Strategies for Studio Tours (2 Hours) If you participate in the TRA studio tour, this is a must! TRA marketing specialist, Mea Johnson, will discuss proven visual and digital marketing strategies to help you have your best tour ever. Topics will include using video and photo footage on social media to connect with visitors, studio access/visibility checklist, best practices for visitor communication, and a marketing timeline. 10/23, W, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Johnson TRA Spruce Pine Gallery 828.766.1295

Mitchell Yancey Substance Abuse Task Force - Saturday, October 12: The 2019 Mitchell County State of the Child is coming up on Saturday, Oct. 12 from 9 am-3 pm at Bear Creek Baptist Church, 327 Bear Creek Church Road, Bakersville, NC 28705. Keynote Speaker: Resources for Resilience – Asheville NC. Lunch and Child Care will be provided. Register by October 1.

Spruce Pine Downtown Events

Zombiefest Fundraiser	October 26, Riverside 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
* Farmer's Market every Wednesday at Bank of America beginning in April	
For more information about any of these events, contact SPMS 765-3008	

The Orchard at Altapass Music Events - The Orchard at Altapass closes for the 2019 season in only five more weeks. We have made it a great ending with great talent, great afternoon music and all free.*

OCTOBER
3-Thursday, 1:45~Home Grown 4-Friday, 1:45~Terry McKinney 5-Saturday, 1:00~Dollar Brothers/3:00~Tom Sparks 6-Sunday, 1:00~Slight Departure/3:00~Tru Blu 10-Thursday, 1:45~Jack Vaughn 11-Friday, 1:45~Debbie Young 12-Saturday, 1:00~Jonah Riddle/3:00~Crossfire 13-Sunday, 1:00~Harlan County Grass/3:00~Typical Mountain Boys 17-Thursday, 1:45~Reel Time Lucy 18-Friday, 1:45~Tom Sparks 19-Saturday, 1:00~Town & Country/3:00~Bearwallow 20-Sunday, 1:00~Jerry Pearce/3:00~Rewind 24-Thursday, 1:45~Randy Flack 25-Friday, 1:45~Sam McKinney 26-Saturday, 1:00~Grass Catchers/3:00~Typical Mountain Boys 27-Sunday, 1:00~Terry McKinney/3:00~Amantha Mill

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.

Toe River Arts

December 6-8, 2019 10:00 – 5:00 Tour Time
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, December 6 from 5:30 – 7:30 pm 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

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

Yancey County

Burnsville Towne Center – Upcoming Events
10/4 Dig In! Empty Bowls Dinner 4:30 pm
10/11 Parkway Playhouse Gala 6:30 pm
10/12 Burnsville Vintage Market 9 am – 2 pm
10/12 Family Violence Coalition Concert 7 pm
10/17 TRACTOR Annual Membership Meeting 6 pm
10/26-27 Burnsville Women's Show
10/31 Halloween Party 3-7 pm
6 South Main Street, Burnsville. Call 682-7209 or visit WEBSITE

Farmer's Market - The Yancey County Farmers' Market is open every Saturday through October from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm just off the Town Square. Seasonal produce, meats, cheeses, dairy, crafts, and entertainment. Check our WEBSITE

Feed-A-Child Yancey County - Higgins fills bags on 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.

NOTES

Obedient Heart Fellowship

Rejoice Before Me

By Jim Huskins
McDowell County



Many call this the "holiday season." Most Christians will observe the customs culminating just after the winter solstice. Many will participate in the strange rituals at the end of October. When I suggest to faithful friends and acquaintances that they should consider celebrating the holidays given to God's people in the Bible, I typically meet a chorus of protests ranging from disinterest to hostility to ridicule. Those objections fall into predictable categories:

Some argue that Halloween and Christmas and Easter are "traditional." True, but whose tradition? They are found nowhere in scripture or the practices of the early Church. Believers who research the origins of these "traditions" are typically shocked by what they discover.

Others claim that the feasts outlined in scripture are "just for the Jews." The Bible claims otherwise. For one thing, the "Jews" represent only one of the twelve tribes of God's people. More importantly, Leviticus 23:2—and numerous other passages—refer to "the appointed feasts of the LORD." The "appointed times," including the seventh-day Sabbath, are near to our Father's heart. They were observed by Jesus, the Apostles, and the early Church. They were never revoked or altered in the Bible.

An argument against God's appointed times which is similar to "just for the Jews" is that the "Church" has somehow replaced the nation of Israel in God's heart and purpose. Messiah did not come to earth to start a new religion. He lived and died and rose again to fulfill the promises God began making to Adam and expanded through the ages. Jeremiah 31:35-37 is one of many passages that state that the Nation of Israel will always be God's chosen people. Through the grace and sacrifice of Jesus, everyone who believes has the privilege of being grafted into that family. Numbers 15:15-16 makes it clear that God's instructions for living—Torah—apply to everyone. The last book of the Bible states that heaven—New Jerusalem—has a gate for each of the twelve tribes of Israel but no separate gate for gentiles. Those who wish to spend eternity in God's presence must become part of His family.

The modern Church has lost sight of the fact that the "appointed feasts of the LORD"—the Hebrew term is *mo'edim*—were given to teach us about Jesus. Colossians 2:16-17 is often incorrectly cited by those who claim that Christians should not keep the *mo'edim*. The actual context is that some residents of Colossae were criticizing Christians for keeping the dietary instructions and the *mo'edim*. Paul told them not to let the criticism bother them. They should keep the *mo'edim* because they are shadow pictures of what Messiah would accomplish during His first and second comings. "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ." When we understand and observe the *mo'edim*, we better understand the work and call of our Savior. Luke 24:44 says that the books of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms are all about Him. We've been taught that they have no significance.

Including the weekly Sabbath, we have eight *mo'edim*. I will mention one: Sukkot. Most English translations render the event as "Feast of Tabernacles" or "Feast of Booths." The last *mo'ed* on the Biblical calendar is one of three annual *mo'edim* specifically called "feasts." The instructions for Sukkot are found in Leviticus 23:33-43.

Our Father commands His people to live for a week in temporary shelters to remind us that we lived in temporary shelters—sukkah—from the time we left Egyptian slavery until we settled in Canaan forty years later. During this week we are to celebrate the feast by rejoicing "before the Lord." Part of that rejoicing involves presenting food and other offerings and helping the poor. Jesus celebrated Sukkot, and He chose that time to offer us rivers of living water.

For those who understand that God wants all His children to live according to His Torah, Sukkot is the most joyous season of the year. Christian and Messianic and Jewish communities around the world are filled with temporary shelters. This is especially true in Israel.

Our fellowship has been blessed with a marvelous location to celebrate Sukkot 2019. We will spend the week of October 13-20 at Camp Barnes on Airport Road in Marion, NC. Each day will include worship with singing and dancing. Several Bible teachers will share insight into the Torah and the structure and mission of the early Church. Each evening will find us holding group discussions around a campfire. Part of that time will be used to prepare supplies for our ministry to the homeless of McDowell County. We will also make herbal salves and tinctures for ourselves and to share. In obedience to scripture, we will spend the week feasting.

We invite you to join us for all or part of the celebration. Our schedule is being finalized, but each day will include most of the mentioned events. Call for details. You may attend any worship or teaching without notice. Those who wish to camp or share meals should give as much notice as you can. We will charge no fee for camping or meals, but all who attend should bring offerings and food to share with each other and with the poor.

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. See Revelation 14:12. We meet each Sabbath—Seventh Day—in Marion. 10:00 A.M.

Abba's House is closing at the end of September. At the time of this writing, we do not know where we will be meeting in October. Please call for information. 828-460-7913

Jim & Beverly Huskins are members of Obedient Heart Fellowship.

Breakfast • Lunch



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Is This Normal?

By Carolyn Dotts
Mitchell County

"Grief is pervasive. You never get over it, but you do learn to recognize and live with it." Zig Ziglar, well known motivational speaker and author is well acquainted with grief. He penned these enlightening, but comforting words in his book, Confession of a Grieving Christian. He is one of the featured speakers in the GriefShare videos, where he shares with viewers wisdom gained through experiencing the loss of his oldest daughter, Suzan.

His words accurately describe grief. It is not an event that you get over, it is an experience you walk through. For that reason, grief is often described as a journey. The length of that journey, as well as the details surrounding the journey, are unique to each individual. There is NO one way to grieve, but there are some commonalities among journeys. It is my hope that recognizing these will reassure those in grief that the emotions you are experiencing are both normal and appropriate.

Grief erases any sense of normalcy. It is intensely chaotic and can leave you feeling as if you are losing your mind. Those in grief find it difficult to concentrate and can experience memory loss. Disorganized and unfocused thinking patterns are also a result of grief. Your mind is struggling to process the loss and make sense of the event. Often the grieving person will try to hide their grief, especially when in public, for a variety of reasons. They may not want to appear out of control and embarrass themselves, or they do not want to bother others around them. Another reason can be they feel that spiritually mature Christians don't grieve, or they want to appear strong around others who esteem them. Denial is another reason grief is not expressed. None of these are a proper response to grief and can actually hinder healing. Grief is a celebration of a good gift from God in the loss of our loved one through tears. We loved the one who is now gone-without love, there is no grief. Jesus offered Himself as an example of this in the death of Lazarus. He wept over the loss of a dear friend, even though He knew momentarily He would raise him from the dead. Expressing pain is appropriate.

Give yourself permission to grieve. Allow yourself to be human by honestly expressing your emotions. This is not the time to be brave. God values transparency and authenticity, especially when we are in pain. Don't be ashamed to admit you are hurting; this makes you more open to receiving help from others. If you insist you are fine, people may not offer help that you need. As emotions are released, you will become more relaxed as tension drains from your body with the flow of tears. King David expressed his emotions over loss in Psalm 61:1-2 and throughout other psalms he wrote. Consequences that can result in suppressing grief are that it can hinder or lengthen the healing process or can also cause irritability and intolerance of others around you, creating even more difficulties.

Grief is intense. It can be overwhelming and disorderly and has been compared to a tangled ball of emotions. Emotions will fluctuate rapidly, often changing within minutes, and thoughts will appear irrational. This, too, is normal. This pain will not last forever, but you will be hurting intensely for a long time. Over time the emotions will become less intense and less frequent, but time itself will not heal. Only turning to Jesus will begin the process of healing.

So how do you deal with grief on a daily basis? GriefShare offers the best advice I have found on my own journey of grief:

*Lean into it, embrace it, be present in all the moments. Take it like waves of the ocean, don't try to run from it or numb it. Let it take you where it will. You don't have to like it, but you have to go through it in order to heal.

*Try to postpone big decisions. You are too emotional, and thinking processes are clearly disrupted. You think you will always feel the way you do at present, but you will not. If you must make a major decision, find someone you trust who is competent to help or offer advice. Ask God to put the right people in your path.

*Do the next right thing. Grief can immobilize you so that you feel like you'll never be able to start anything again. What is the next right thing? It can be something ordinary, like getting a glass of water or performing a small household chore.

One last piece of advice is to attend the 13-week GriefShare cycle. It can give you valuable insight into what lies ahead. It may keep you from making unwise decisions that could make your life even more difficult. You need the support of others. Participation in GriefShare will help you to see yourself in others' stories. It takes courage to step out and seek help, to make a commitment to connecting with others who understand your pain and to open your heart to talk freely about that pain. It's not easy, but it is worthwhile.

GriefShare is being offered on Thursday nights at Western Carolina Church at 6:00 pm in the Wing. There is no charge to attend, and a light meal is prepared for attendees. It's never too late to start, even if you are able to attend only a few sessions. Many participants repeat the cycle the next time it is offered. If you are interested in attending or need more information, please call Carolyn Dotts at 828-467-1433 or Western Carolina Church at 828-765-4633 and leave a message.

Carolyn Dotts makes her home in Ledger and is a retired Special Education teacher. She is a widow with two sons and five grandchildren. She is a member of Western Carolina Church in Spruce Pine.

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the LORD Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Colossians 3:17



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YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

US House of Representatives NC District 11

Representative Meadows, Senator Cotton Introduce "Nationwide Injunction Abuse Prevention Act"

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Mark Meadows (R-North Carolina) and Senator Tom Cotton (R-Arkansas) today introduced the Nationwide Injunction Abuse Prevention Act, a bill to put an end to nationwide injunctions and prevent lawful policy changes from being blocked based on the activist agendas of individual, unaccountable district court judges.

The bill follows a decision earlier this week by the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California that reinstated a nationwide ban on enforcement of the Trump administration's new asylum rules, defying a ruling from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals that the district court's nationwide injunction was overly broad. It should not require an often-lengthy appeals process to correct unlawful injunctions that should never have been issued in the first place. This legislation would restore the appropriate role of district court judges by prohibiting them from issuing nationwide injunctions broader than the parties to the case or the geographic boundaries of the federal district in which the judge presides. With the new change, lawful administration policy changes would no longer hinge on the opinion of one unelected judge.

Rep. Meadows released the following statement:

"Our laws need to be vigorously vetted through the courts, but it makes zero sense for the legality of a nationwide law to rest entirely on the opinion of one judge, or one district court. A district court in California should not be given sweeping authority to issue a ruling—let alone on dubious legal reasoning—striking down policy from a duly elected President. Current law inadvertently empowers detrimental judicial activism, and it needs to change. This is a common-sense reform that returns our system of checks and balances where it was intended to be. I want to thank Senator Cotton for joining me in the effort."

Senator Cotton added the following:

"Policy decisions ought to be made by elected representatives accountable to the American people, not activist judges with lifetime appointments. In the past few years, we've seen an explosion of activist forum shopping and nationwide injunctions to thwart the administration's priorities and grind government to a halt. This bill will restore respect for the system of government outlined in the Constitution by limiting the use of nationwide injunctions by district court judges."



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

NC House District 118



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

We paused to honor those courageous defenders and lost lives impacted by the horrific act of 9-11-01
8:46 North Tower Struck - 9:03 South Tower Struck - 9:37 Pentagon Struck - 9:59 South Tower Collapses - 10:03 Flight 93 Crashes (PA) - 10:28 North Tower Collapses

THIS HAS BEEN A WEEK AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, TO SAY THE LEAST

"Today the North Carolina House voted to override the Governor's budget veto and put us one step closer to delivering historic investments and pay raises to citizens in all 100 counties of this state," said David Lewis, Chairman of the Rules Committee on Wednesday.

HB 966 now goes to the Senate.

Please take a look at the press conference below with Speaker Moore after the House of Representatives voted to override the Governor's veto. This will provide you with factual information as to how the override vote was taken.

Speaker defends House budget veto override vote.

Yes, the House of Representatives has voted to end the contentious budget impasse by overriding the Governor's veto. Do not be surprised when you hear the negative comments about our vote. The truth is, whether we have a "voting session" or a "non-voting" session, you have to show up. As elected Representatives, we have the responsibility to the people we represent and to the entire state to do our duty. And our duty is to be present during session. I SHOW UP!

To sum it up, I am profoundly disappointed that the Governor would wager it all just for the Teachers and Medicaid Expansion. He picked the wrong horses and cherry-picked the budget for his own gain. You don't pick favorites when you have the entire State to think about and protect. The Democrats had 9 members to show up to work yesterday, the Republicans had 55. I knew nothing of the override until I was in my seat in the Chamber. What I did know is that HB966 has been on our calendar since June, in plain sight, and that any reasonable person would understand that it was subject to be heard.

Congressional elections: Rep. Greg Murphy, MD defeated former mayor of Greenville Allen Thomas 61-37% in a special election in District 3. This is the District represented by the late Congressman Walter Jones. Dan Bishop, NC Senator defeated Dan McCready 50-48% in District 9.

The House Redistricting Committee continues their work to comply with a court order to redraw some of our districts. They have a very compressed time schedule of September 18 to complete their work. We will remain in Session to vote on the maps as well as await the Senate's decision on the veto override.

NC Senate District 46

Over the past couple of years, I have been working hard with several of my colleagues to address the serious issue of declining membership in our volunteer fire departments. Earlier this year I filed the 2019 Volunteer Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Act (SB 416) with Sen. Danny Britt (Robeson) and Sen. Ted Alexander (Cleveland). The key components of the bill included a new scholarship program, local property tax incentives, as well as free hunting and fishing licenses for qualifying volunteer firefighters. While the bill was discussed earlier this session in committee, unfortunately it has not yet moved forward for a vote. Sometimes in the legislature it is beneficial to just be patient and wait for an opportune moment to get something done, and that opportunity arose last month with House Bill 597, Wildlife Resources Commission Amendments. Essentially the bill included a number of wildlife license fee increases aimed at shoring up the budget and operations of the Wildlife Commission. And while I admire and appreciate all the good work that the Wildlife Commission does around the state, I told their director flat out that there was no way I could support raising any wildlife fees unless we did something for the volunteer firefighters who protect tens of thousands of acres of public lands. That conversation resulted in a historic compromise that I hope will be just the beginning of a more comprehensive approach to recruiting and retaining the volunteer firefighters that our communities so desperately need. On August 27th, HB597 was signed into law containing a key provision that will allow ANY volunteer firefighter who has been an eligible member of a volunteer fire department for five consecutive fiscal years, including the prior fiscal year, to purchase ANY adult resident lifetime hunting or fishing license for fifty percent (50%) of the full cost. This benefit will become effective on October 1, 2019. I hope that many volunteers will take advantage of this new opportunity and that it will become a successful recruiting tool in the future.

The NC Senate recently passed new district voting maps, as instructed by court order in *Common Cause v. Lewis*, in a broadly bipartisan vote. Both Democrats and Republicans praised the process as "most transparent in history." Here are some fast facts on the process: The map used as a starting point in the process was created by Dr. Jowei Chen, who was hired by the Democratic Party to produce nonpartisan districts and testify as an expert witness in *Common Cause v. Lewis*. Dr. Chen created 2,000 nonpartisan maps. The Senate identified the maps that scored highest on three criteria the court identified as important and then chose a "winner" by random lottery draw. In its decision, the court used Dr. Chen's maps as a model of nonpartisanship. The only changes made to Dr. Chen's map were at the request of Democratic legislators. The final product, then, is a nonpartisan base map chosen at random among a set created by the Democratic Party's own expert mapmaker, and then amended by Democratic legislators. Senate Leader Phil Berger (R-Rockingham) said, "The process to create new districts has been the most transparent in history, and it could be used as a national model. Every effort has been made to create fair, nonpartisan, and court-compliant districts. We urge the court to accept these districts so we can finally put this long battle behind us."



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

YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

NC Senate District 47



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

The state budget stalemate has been dragging on since Gov. Cooper vetoed the budget legislators presented to him in June, due to his ultimatum for an expansion of Medicaid beyond the program's current beneficiaries. The NC House overrode the Governor's veto on September 11, but, as of this writing, the NC Senate has not calendared a vote to also override the veto. Through a continuing resolution, our state is operating under last year's budget.

However, the new budget, vetoed by Gov. Cooper, contains a number of new expenditures that the previous one did not. Because the Governor will not negotiate with legislators on the budget, we have been sending over separate budget items that we believe are important for our state's citizens. Gov. Cooper stated his dislike, in the News & Observer, for the piecemeal approach of sending individual budget items over for his signature, "They don't work well in Washington, and they won't work well in North Carolina." However, because of Gov. Cooper's veto of the budget, passing these mini-budget items is the only way to get money where it needs to go. Following are four mini-budget bills that the Governor signed more than two months following his veto of the budget that provided this funding. All four bills also include a one-time supplement of five annual leave days for these permanent employees.

- House Bill 609 – Salary Increases/Adult Correctional Employees appropriates more than \$92 million over the biennium for raises and bonuses to correctional officers and permanent employees of adult correctional facilities with the Department of Public Safety (DPS). Also provided is a base supplemental bonus of \$2500 to employees serving in a high-need correctional facility.

- House Bill 126 – Pay Increases/State Highway Patrol appropriates more than \$10.5 million to provide a pay raise for State Highway Patrol officers of 5% over the next 2 years and also funds the year-over-year annual step increases for officers.

- House Bill 777 – Pay Increases/SBI & ALE appropriates more than \$5 million to provide SBI and ALE officers at least a 5% raise over the biennium. The bill also ties SBI and ALE officers pay to the same salary schedule as State Highway Patrol officers which was increased by the General Assembly in last year's budget. This will raise their starting pay to a minimum of \$45,000 and speed the timeframe to 6 years for officers to get to top pay. For officers who will be tied to this new salary schedule, the average pay increase is 14%.

- House Bill 226 – Pay Increases/State Employees appropriates more than \$800 million to provide a 5% across the board raise to state agency employees over the next 2 years which is the largest increase in more than a decade. The bill also funds the retirement system and the state health plan.

As a follow-up to my column in the September issue of this publication, Gov. Cooper, unfortunately, did veto Senate Bill 438 – Excellent Public Schools Act of 2019, important legislation focusing on early childhood literacy which his own administration was involved in writing.

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.

NC House District 86

Is the State Holding Money for You that You Don't Know About?

The Department of State Treasurer has launched a recent program entitled "NC Cash" that you as a North Carolina resident may want to consider. Under the program, state residents can verify whether money belonging to them may be included in approximately \$711 million in an unclaimed property fund. The Treasurer's initiative assists property owners in the recovery of their unclaimed property. According to the NC Treasurer, this unclaimed property involves any bank accounts, wages, utility deposits, insurance policy proceeds, stocks, bonds, and contents of safe deposit boxes that have been abandoned or gone unclaimed for one to five years. For example, if a company does not have correct information or is missing information for a customer, funds may go unclaimed. The law dictates that such unclaimed funds be transferred to and held by the North Carolina Department of the Treasurer until they are claimed. Technically, the funds are said to "escheat" to the state.

The Department of State Treasurer's website has a link where residents in North Carolina can provide their name or business name, as well as their city and zip code, to see if they are entitled to unclaimed property. If so, a person can officially file a claim to recover the property in question. Some claimants are able to submit an electronic claim where the claimant information is electronically matched with the owner's information on file. If not eligible for filing an electronic claim, you will be notified and asked to print out a claim with the relevant information for mail submission. More information is located online at www.nccash.com or by contacting the North Carolina Department of State Treasurer at 866-622-2741.



Rep. Hugh Blackwell
919-733-5805
Hugh.Blackwell@ncleg.net



Sens. Burr, Bennet Working to Bring Financial Stability to Americans Battling Terminal Diseases

Today, Senators Richard Burr (R-NC) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) introduced the Kathryn Manginelli Act, or the Compassionate Retirement Act, which will help provide more financial stability to families battling devastating diagnoses, such as Lou Gehrig's Disease or ALS. This legislation will allow families in these circumstances to use retirement savings without incurring an additional 10 percent penalty if withdrawing before the age of 59 ½.

"Each year, I meet with North Carolinians who have been diagnosed with or affected by ALS, who share the unexpected challenges that come with a devastating disease," said Senator Burr. "It's through these visits I had the honor of meeting Kathryn Manginelli and her husband Joe. They brought my attention to the unintended impact penalties from early retirement withdrawals have on families like theirs who are struggling with terminal or debilitating illnesses. This is a problem we can fix. Americans who responsibly contribute to their retirement accounts, and who are later diagnosed with a degenerative, terminal illness, shouldn't be penalized for using retirement funds to help cover unplanned living expenses that are a direct result of their diagnosis. This is especially true for those who will not live to the retirement age. Inspired by Kathryn's story and others, I am proud to introduce this legislation with my colleague Senator Bennet."

"Patients and families battling terminal illnesses face immense physical, emotional, and financial tolls," said Senator Bennet. "The financial impact of managing a terminal illness can be overwhelming as incomes are restricted and health care bills can drain savings, leaving patients to shoulder the burden of not only their immediate care but their family's financial future. Our legislation will give Americans diagnosed with terminal illnesses the ability to access their retirement accounts without penalty, helping to ease the financial hardship facing many families. I'm proud to join my colleague Senator Burr in this effort."

Background: Under current law, the disability exception requires that person be unable to carry out Substantial Gainful Activity. However, Americans diagnosed with degenerative, terminal illnesses, such as ALS, are still subject to the 10 percent penalty if they continue working in the months prior to becoming disabled to help cover their medical or disability-related expenses.

Named in honor of Kathryn Manginelli of Durham, North Carolina, who passed away from ALS on November 11, 2018, this legislation will provide families battling terminal illnesses with the ability to use their retirement savings without incurring this additional 10 percent penalty.

God Bless America

Judgement House
By Janice Brewington
Burke County

Burkemont Baptist Presents Judgement House Script "Why?"

Over the past three decades, Burkemont Baptist Church has employed its drama ministry as an evangelical outreach to bring souls to Christ. Judgement House, a key element of that evangelical outreach since 2002, is presented annually at the church in Morganton, NC during the last week of October. This year's presentation is scheduled for October 26th, 27th, 29th, and 30th, 2019.

Judgement House is a walk-through drama that teaches the truth about the choices we make in life regarding belief in Jesus Christ. Although the storyline is different each year, each presentation demonstrates the earthly and eternal consequences of each person's choice to either accept or reject salvation through Jesus Christ. Watching the characters' dilemmas as they face a myriad of real-life situations often enables the audience participants to see themselves in the storyline. The truths presented through scripture focus on God's own words. The realities of Heaven and of Hell are portrayed in each script, but contrary to the "turn or burn" approach, Judgement House scripts focus on the promise of God's saving grace and forgiveness of sin when we accept and believe in Jesus Christ. Audience participants find hope and assurance in the gospel message they witness as they watch the drama.

The script scheduled for presentation at Burkemont Baptist this year is titled "WHY?" Finding Purpose When Life Doesn't Make Sense. A family is in crisis stemming from the death of a loved one. While one chooses Christ resulting in a life filled with purpose and promise, the other rejects salvation and suffers pain, isolation, and devastating disappointment both in this life and throughout eternity.



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The Vital Role of Encouragement
By Rev. Mark Creech



There is a story (supposedly true) concerning a preacher who read about a character in the Gospels called, "Simon the Leper." He imagined all sorts of things that this leper character might have done – leaping from mountain to mountain, hill to hill. And he preached a sermon on it. Then someone brought it to his attention that the man's name was "Simon the Leper." To which the preacher replied, "I don't see the need to throw away a good sermon just because of a difference in pronunciation."

If you that sounds preposterous, allow me to tell you a similar story that is unquestionably true. The first two sermons I ever preached were during an evangelistic event in my hometown. Most of the people who came to the meeting, however, were fellow church members and supporters. I was only 15 years old with God's call on my life, still a babe in the Lord, but on fire for Christ.

In my second sermon, I preached about Christ's Passion, and I told the audience that night about the "scorching" of Jesus. Uh-huh, that's right. Never mind the fact that the Scriptures say that Jesus was "scourged" and not "scorched." I imagined all sorts of things and explained the way I thought the Romans might have done it. They burned him with a hot iron. They put heat to him in some way. They "scorched" him, I vehemently proclaimed.

I never once knew my error until I discovered it on my own while having my private devotions two years later.

When I learned of my grievous gaffe, it brought me to tears. It wasn't so much my embarrassment that produced my emotional response (although I was mortified); instead, it was the loving way people reacted to my blathering blunder. None of them ever said a word to me about it. They knew what I had done, but they didn't want me to become discouraged. That evening everyone was too busy telling me that I was going to be the next great Billy Graham.

If people had scoffed at my ignorance, I was so tender at the time it might have overwhelmed me to the point of quitting. The Lord, however, knew my nature and graciously hid the lapse from me until I was mature enough to handle it. Moreover, if my church family and Christian friends hadn't been committed to encouraging me...well???? I certainly wouldn't be able to laugh at myself about it today. Nor would I be writing about it.

Although I most certainly didn't turn out to be the next Billy Graham, I rejoice in the place God assigned to me and the victories gained therein for the Kingdom, none of which would have occurred, were it not for those who believed in me and thought that God could use someone as weak and unknowing as myself.

I Thessalonians 5:11 admonishes: "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up..."

I'm not arguing against ever correcting or rebuking someone. There is a time and a place for speaking harshly. Nevertheless, let's not forget the vital role of encouragement.

Garret Kell, the lead pastor of Del Ray Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia, has eloquently said that encouragement is like oxygen. "It keeps hearts beating, minds clear, and hands inspired to serve."

Have you made a big mistake lately? Did you do something really stupid? Perhaps you committed a gross sin, and the guilt is weighing heavily on you.

Be encouraged. You are precious to God. God's grace is much greater than all our sins. We need only to turn away from our transgressions, turn in faith to Christ, and trust him for forgiveness. If amends are needed, then we should recompense where possible.

Be encouraged. Whatever error made, whatever the wrong committed, God's kindness and mercy can make it work for good. He can use the flames of failure so what is dross in our lives can be purged and what is gold can be refined.

One more thing, commit to being an encourager to others! There are few things as encouraging as being an encourager to someone who needs to be encouraged.

Be an encourager!



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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A Butterfly Cloud of Faith

By Timothy Tron
Burke County

We awoke this morning to a blissful 64 degrees here in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. It was indeed a long-awaited respite from the summer's toils. Although the sky was overcast, the soothing temperatures allowed for a more leisurely feel to the walk to church. Along the way, the bountiful colors of the wildflowers began to catch my attention. "Had they been there all summer and I just missed them amid the turmoil of heat and fatigue," I pondered as my walking stick continued to make the rhythmic knock upon the trail? At first, the red of the Cardinal flower caught my eye, but the farther I walked and became aware, the more colors that began to reveal themselves until the full spectrum of the rainbow was pulsating within view; the Vincas, Violas, Orchids, and Lilies of all shapes, sizes, and varieties. Pausing to catch my mental breath, my mind began to drift back to another hike in a far distant land. The place where the 23rd Psalm seemed to come alive; the Germanesca Valley in Italy.

My heart began to race as my thoughts returned to the life-changing scenery we had experienced on our Alpine journey.

Like a wounded warrior returning from battle, my body fought to keep the path of descent. In our unencumbered ascent up the mountain, we had seen with beholding eyes unspeakable beauty, flowers of every color of the visible spectrum. We had just scaled up the Germanesca Valley in the Cottien Alps to a point not far from the summit of Col-du-Pis. The altitude was challenging alone, reaching slightly above 9,000 feet in elevation. The thin air caused us to breathe while we walked as if we were running at full speed. Each new turn in the trail unfolded another revelation of God's creation, one that we had heretofore never witnessed. But in our haste and unimagined divine adventure, we had not accounted for the human element which so often detains us, shackling us to man's law; time. From unimaginable heights we now scurried, our bodies weakened by the lack of oxygen battled to keep pace with the spirit within. In our haste, we pressed the pace around another massive boulder only to find a spectacle beyond comprehension. Looking back, had we not been suffering from the consequences of poor planning, or rather, spontaneously inspired destinations, we might have taken the moment we were about to encounter more slowly, more diligently. We are often reminded in those fleeting few seconds before death that events you thought could never be captured return in one glorious review. What was thought lost returns with a voracious message of what was most important?

How many times had the disciples asked themselves the same thing? Had they only taken more time to appreciate the precious little time they were allotted to spend with the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, how much more would they have understood? Jesus had tried to make them realize again and again.

"Jesus replied, 'You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.... I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am.' - John 13:7,19.

How many more questions they could have asked? How much more faith they might have found had they only known?

"Why weren't they warned," you ask?

Jesus foretold his death and resurrection on more than one occasion. "Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the Twelve aside and said to them, 'We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!'" - Matthew 20:17-19

Yet, they too were so pressed for time of this world, trying to make it day-to-day in circumstances under which they had little to no control. Albeit they were in the presence of Jesus, they too found it difficult, seeing so many miracles and hearing so much, that there was little time to take it all in and absorb it fully. After a while, their human bodies began to tire. The weariness of the journey was more than many could physically take; the emotional and spiritual strain alone of having one's mind stretched beyond belief each day would be enough to cause a mental breakdown. Yet, Christ afforded them through his divine power the ability to understand, as he opened their minds as only God could do. "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. And the disciples came, and said unto him, 'Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, 'Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.' -Matthew 13:9-11

Enthralling scenes that no human could imagine took the disciples breaths away; again, and again. They could never dream of what was just around the bend.

Just beyond the shadows of the granite edifice from around the curve in the path lay a patch of grasses covered with wildflowers, colors as vivid as the cloudless azure blue sky above. Yet, unlike anything we had yet to discover this day of miraculous discovery on the mountain, there was something unreal; something that pulsated from this patch of living color. As we neared, our shadows ran before us, touching the breathing spectrum of life. Without warning, the colors began to rise in place, as one. Our mere mortal eyes couldn't understand what we were seeing; yet, we saw something beyond explanation. We inched closer and soon realized the cloud of flowers were hundreds of tiny butterflies, each matching the fauna of their selected petals below. As if their spirit could sense our breathlessness, before we could capture the image for all to see, the cloud of cuspid elegance dispersed into nothingness in a cloudburst of flight. Pausing, my traveling companion and I simply looked at one another in awe of God's unending magnificence.

Numb from our weakened physical condition, we shook our heads and pressed on. Had we been less hurried, less concerned about our fear of missing the bus, would we have been able to capture the magnificent event? Would we have found the moment more impressive at that instant than we had otherwise seemed to feel considering our weariness and exhausted conditions? Each of us had witnessed something that would forever be part of something special, something that would allow us to forever change our perspective of life.

It would take many months for the scene to return to our minds as an epiphany of



revelation.
How do you describe the indescribable to someone?
How do you share a vision or testimony to someone that hasn't shared the same path as yourself or has walked in a field of wildflowers?


More than likely, your answer is that it is nearly impossible. If the person you are sharing with has never had a similar experience in life or has never found themselves able to question their own spirituality, then they probably will not understand how to relate to what you are describing. Just as Jesus fought to make his disciples aware, against even the most obvious, in-your-face statements, they continued to be confused. Up until the very day of his capture and eventual crucifixion, they had yet to understand of all that he had said. It was until after his death and resurrection did, they finally begin to fathom the trail of clues their Master had provided during their earthly time together.

Likewise, we must be aware of those around us that are either knew in faith are or those who have yet to accept Christ at all. They will look at you with ears unable to hear, with eyes unable to see, and with hearts often hardened from years of hearing the very words you might say to them. It isn't until they have walked the trail of wildflowers and seen the cloud of flowers burst open into a prolific spectrum of colorful butterflies will they finally be able to comprehend your words. In the end, it isn't us that can come into their hearts and minds, but Christ who must be the one. Alone we are only mouthpieces. It isn't until Christ speaks through us in spite of us can we reach the lost souls of our world.

Yes, we can never do it alone, nor are we ever alone.
Open that back door and take a walk down the nearest trail and search for God in all that you do.
You will never be disappointed, and most importantly, you may find a miraculous beauty made by our Lord that will forever change who you are.
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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How Your Family Can Protect Songbirds Around Your House and Garden

By State Point Media

(StatePoint) Songbirds are not only beautiful, but they are also a vital component of the ecosystems they inhabit. If you have a garden, you may have observed this in action.

Unfortunately, millions of wild birds are killed annually colliding with windows in the U.S. alone.

But your family can take action to prevent it from happening on your own property. Here's how:



- **Make windows visible to birds:** Special decals that reflect ultraviolet sunlight to your home's windows, particularly those windows that are highly reflective of open sky, have been proven to substantially reduce the likelihood of bird strikes. Those from WindowAlert feature patterns that give the appearance of slightly frosted translucent glass, but glow like a stoplight for birds, and the brand also makes a high-tech liquid called WindowAlert UV Liquid, which can be applied between decals for greater protection. More information can be found at window-alert.com.

- **Be mindful of birdfeeder placement:** Birdfeeders are a lovely way to attract beautiful birds to your yard while giving them a place to rest and refuel. Remember though, bird strikes tend to occur near bird feeders, as feeding birds are easily frightened and are apt to take wild, evasive flight. To avoid this from happening, be sure to use window decals, as well as to position feeders closer than three feet or farther than 30 feet from windows. Surprisingly, the safest placement is attached to the window itself. Assess the birdfeeders in your yard and make changes as needed.

- **Consider other hazards:** Other ways you can protect birds on your property include gardening organically, keeping pet cats indoors or in an enclosure and growing native plant and flower species suited to pollinating birds.

"With a few small home updates this season, your family can save the lives of wild birds and be better stewards of the environment," says Spencer Schock, founder of WindowAlert.

Something To Think About Why YOU Should Be Part of the Church!

By Dennis Love
McDowell County



I read about a one-hundred-year-old man who was celebrating his birthday at the church where he had attended since he was a boy. The church threw him a big party with cake, ice cream, and lots of birthday cards. People were also taking the time to walk up to a microphone and share some fond memories and say a few words of thanks and kindness to the elderly man. Then, his great-grandson walked up to the microphone to say a few words. Turning to his grandfather he said, "Great-Grandpa, we know you can barely hear or see, so tell us why you still go to church every Sunday?"

The elderly man replied, "Because I love Jesus with all my heart, and He commanded me to be here." Then, he paused for a moment and added, "And I just want to show everybody whose side I'm on."

I'm sure you recall that after Jesus rose from the dead, one of His own disciples named Thomas wasn't with the group when Jesus appeared unto them. When they told Thomas what had happened, he said, "I will not believe it until I put my hand in the wound on His side and until I touch the holes in His hands." Later on, the Bible says that the next time they all met, Thomas was there. And guess who shows up once again? It was Jesus! When Thomas saw the resurrected Jesus, he suddenly believed. He didn't have to put his hands in His wounds. Thomas simply responded by saying, "My Lord and my God."

Now don't miss this great truth. Thomas missed out on seeing Jesus when he separated himself from the group of other believers. But when he was with them, he saw the resurrected Jesus in all of His power and glory. In the same way, when we isolate ourselves from other believers, we can easily miss out on seeing our resurrected Lord in His great power and glory. In Psalm 73, the writer Asaph was wrestling with an age-old question: "Why do the wicked prosper?" But he tells us plainly in Psalm 73:17 that it wasn't until he went into the house of the Lord and worshipped with God's people that he gained a better understanding of it all. Listen to what he says; "It wasn't until I went into the sanctuary of the Lord that I had a better understanding of their end."

So why should we be a part of the church? (1) It is where we hear the word of God. (2) It is where we worship the Lord. (3) It is where we receive a better understanding of spiritual truths. (4) It is where we encounter God.

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

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Berry Chapel Baptist Church

Someday
By Steve Williams
Mitchell County



The Bible tells us that someday the Lord is coming back. 2 Peter 3:10 says. *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which, the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."* Someday, this is going to take place. But you know what I have found out. Many people don't believe or act like they don't believe that this is going to happen. The reason I say that is because we live in a day of procrastination. We are always saying someday or one day I'm going to do this or that. This has even crept into our Christians Lives. Why not put off today what you can do tomorrow. It's like starting a diet the best day to always start a diet is tomorrow. We best start worrying about today because we are not guaranteed tomorrow. Every day we live is bringing us that much closer to the Day our Lord is coming back. This passage says He will come back as a thief in the night. What if He were to come back today, what would you do? If you are living under the assumption that someday you're going to do something, you most likely are never going to do that something. You say because someday never comes in most of our lives. Let me share something with you folks, someday, is going to be too late, I'm afraid for many a Christians.

This is our Typical Baptist in our Churches today. I can talk about Baptists because I am one. Someday I'm Going to Start Being More Faithful to God. Why not today start. Someday I'm Going to Start Coming to Sunday School. But every Sunday morning something comes up and most of the time its laziness. Someday I'm Going to Start Coming To Wednesday Night Services. But you always are too tired, or you have something more important. Someday I'm Going to Start Singing in the Choir. Someday I'm Going Out to Visit & Ask Some People to Church. Someday I'm Going to Stand Up & Give My Testimony. Someday has come and gone for many of you. While we are talking about Testimonies, I want to address this about testimonies. We will get up lot of times and give our testimony of what God has done for us in the past and that is well and good but we should not stop there. We need to let people know what God is doing know. I pray He has not stopped doing things for you. Many people will get up and tell people how they had to break the ice on the pond or there was ice on the side of the river when they got baptized, and a lot of time that is where their testimonies stop. To me it sounds like most of them froze up in the pond or the river we got baptized in or have become members of the frozen chosen church.

Folks, God has not stopped blessing us and we need to let people know what He's doing for us know. Tell them how He has comforted you. Tell them how He has talked with you, and you talk with Him. Tell them how He has spoken to you through song or by something is taking place in your life right now. Tell them what He means to you now. Folks, it doesn't hurt to share how He has convicted you that something's going on in your life. I know this is not good English but folks He is Realer to me today than ever. I believe God will give us a new story to add to our testimony every day if we would just allow Him to. One Day Dear Friends He's coming back and I'm going to have to give an account, and you are going to have to give an account of all the somedays we never got around to.

Words of Wisdom:

- Someday, folks, I'm going to leave all this behind me. Someday I won't walk this way anymore. Someday I'll step onto the shores of Heaven. The McKameys Song "Someday"
- Someday there be no more Heavy Heart Aches. Someday there be no more Pain, Someday there be no more Pressures, Someday there be no more Dying, Someday there be no more Broken Heart or Homes. Preacher's preaching God's Word.
- Someday I'm going to meet Him Face to Face, Someday I'm going to Get to Walk the Streets of Glory, Someday I will be with Him forevermore. Hallelujah Steve Williams
- Be sure Someday is coming and it is closer than ever before. Steve Williams

A Little Humor

- Things You Will Never Hear in Church
- Hey! It's MY turn to sit on the front pew!
 - I was so captivated; I never noticed your sermon went over time 25 minutes.
 - Personally, I find witnessing much more enjoyable than golf.
 - I've decided to give our church the \$500.00 a month I used to send to TV evangelists.
 - I volunteer to be the permanent teacher for the Junior High Sunday School class.
 - I love it when we sing hymns I've never heard before!
 - Pastor, we'd like to send you to this Bible seminar in the Bahamas.

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



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Crossword

ACROSS

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

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

DOWN

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

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13				14				15			
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toward outsiders (Col 4:5)
36 thrust him into a net and he
wanders into its _____ (Job 18:8)
38 consciences have been
seared
as with _____ iron (1,3)
(1 Tim 4:2)
39 Sir, your _____ has earned ten
more (Luke 19:16)
42 Abraham's son (Matt 1:2)
43 His name was _____ and his
wife's name was Abigail
(1 Sam 25:3)
46 they decided to _____ the
money
to buy the potter's field
(Matt 27:6-7)
49 who proclaim peace, who
bring
good _____ (Isa 52:7)
51 The last _____ that shall be
destroyed is death
(1 Cor 15:26)
53 whosoever shall exalt him-
self
shall be _____ (Matt 23:12) KJV
54 What _____ thee, O thou sea,
that thou fleddest? (Ps 114:5)
KJV
55 and keep some _____ between

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

Solution on page 14



Counting the Cost

By Tracy Jessup

"For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'" --- Luke 14:28-30



Many people know what it is like to face a building project, whether it is a minor home improvement, a larger renovation, or major construction. And most experts would agree that as one sits down to determine the cost, there are three main categories of expenses to be considered: hard costs (construction labor and material), soft costs (professional services, fees, permits, etc.), and FFE costs (furniture, fixtures, and equipment).

In an article entitled, "10 Construction Projects that Broke the Bank," Jacob Silberman and Patrick Kiger share the accounts of ambitious building ventures that turned into money pits. One of the most interesting stories is that of the Sagrada Familia Cathedral in Barcelona.

"Legendary Catalan architect Antoni Gaudi dreamed of building a fantastic cathedral in downtown Barcelona, one with towers topped with sculptures of local fruit and a central nave that resembled a forest, capable of holding 14,000 worshippers. The Sagrada Familia began construction in 1883 but was only 15 percent completed when Gaudi was struck and killed by a streetcar in 1926.

"The work on his masterpiece was subsequently disrupted by the Spanish Civil War, in which shelling destroyed the room containing his notes and designs. Eventually, in 1952, the project was restarted [sources: Gladstone]. But it's proceeded at a glacial pace ever since, due to its mind-numbing complexity and inconsistent funding. Unlike most of the behemoths in this article, this one is funded solely by donations and ticket sales. The cathedral has become a popular tourist attraction, generating \$40 million (30 million euros) in ticket sales in 2011.

"That year, Joan Rigol, president of the building committee, announced that it might be completed by 2026, in time to honor the centenary of Gaudi's death -- or maybe two years later. At this point, nobody seems to even try to calculate the 560-foot (170-meter)-tall structure's total cost" (<https://science.howstuffworks.com/engineering/structural/10-construction-projects.htm>).

In today's passage, Jesus reminds us that discipleship requires absolute allegiance. He makes it clear that he is not looking for a blind, naïve commitment, but one defined by denying self-interests and competing loyalties. We must count the cost. Discipleship is not an extra-curricular activity or a weekend hobby. It is total surrender to Jesus. However, discipleship also is not a human undertaking. Jesus is the one who calls us, offering the gift of salvation and hope for the journey. He is the "author and finisher of our faith" (Hebrews 12:2) and we can be confident that "the one who began a good work...will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

Prayer: Lord, I have decided to follow you, no turning back.

Dr. Tracy Jessup serves as vice president for Christian Life and Service and senior minister to the University. He is a graduate of Gardner-Webb with a B.A. in Music and earned his M. Div. degree at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He also teaches in the undergraduate department of religious studies and enjoys the opportunity to serve the local church through interim pastorates, pulpit supply, and preaching revival services. He and his wife, Teresa, have two children, Christian and Anna.



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CREATOR OF YOUR SOUL

By Joy Baldwin
Madison County

*God Created vast new heavens
He made the deep blue sea
The lovely mountains, hills, and trees
Sun's light and the heavenly breeze.*

*There was nothing everywhere
Then God had a plan
Forming creatures great and small
He then created man.*

*The spoken word had power
From God's throne above
All creation obeyed His voice
To us, He gave great love.*

*So if you are discouraged
In the Bible, we are told
The words you speak have power
From the Creator of your soul.*

Amen



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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shall they preach except they be sent?" The Apostle Paul did not sit down one day and decide to go into preaching as a method to earn money or gain status. It was a calling from God. That is why Paul was in the ministry; the Lord put him there. One of the tragedies of our day is that many men are choosing the ministry without a divine calling from the Lord. Without a divine calling to preach, a person is weak and ineffective in the work of God.

Thirdly, Paul tells us he was separated unto the Gospel of God. The Gospel is to have a definite priority in our lives. That little word "unto" is an interesting word. It is not a very lengthy word, but it is an important one. It can figuratively speak of a purpose. His life, after his conversion, was lived with the Gospel of Christ in view. In Acts 9, Paul met Jesus on the Damascus Road. It was there his life turned around. His life was drastically changed through the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our main thoughts will revolve around Paul's concept of being separated unto the Gospel of Christ.

The Importance of Separation unto the Gospel

There is separation unto sin. Some people are contented to live their lives following sinful pleasures and living for themselves rather than for God and His glory. Most of the time we think of separation from something, but separation is far broader than that line of thinking.

There is a separation from evil influences and evil people. The Bible speaks of separation from evil itself and from the evil system the Scriptures call the "world." The Bible says in 2 Cor 6:17-18, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." True separation is not isolation, neither is it conglomeration. What do we separate ourselves from in our Christian life? We are wise to disconnect with all that will dull our sensitivity to God, all that will bring displeasure to our Heavenly Father, and from all that will mar our testimony for the Lord. One can separate to the point he or she can be like the Pharisees of old, who thought they were better than everyone else. We should beware of an attitude of superiority that can overtake us and hinder our fellowship with God and with others. A spirit of humility should characterize the saints of God.

Too many today are separated unto money, power, food, fame, sex, alcohol, drugs, pornography, or some even to work. When you become a slave unto one thing, you give up your rights to another. If you are a slave to food, you sacrifice your health and your weight. If you are a slave to drugs, you give up control of your mind and body. If you are enslaved to fame, you lose your privacy and humility.

There is a separation from and a separation unto. Paul claimed to be and proved himself to be separated unto the Gospel of God. When he was a Jewish Rabbi, Paul was separated as a Pharisee to the laws and traditions of the Jews. But when he yielded to Christ, he was separated to the Gospel and its ministry. Gospel means "the Good News." It is the message that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again, and now is able to save all who trust Him (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

Dr. Rod Mattoon makes the following observation: "This word 'separated' is the Greek word *aphorizo* which forms our English word 'horizon.' It comes from the word *horizo* which means 'to define, mark off by boundaries, or mark out by an unmistakable sign.' The idea behind this word is the boundaries of Paul's life were marked out by the Gospel. He was set apart and devoted to a special purpose of preaching the Gospel. The Gospel of Jesus Christ determined his path. Paul's horizon or path was determined by the message of Jesus Christ. What influences the path of your life? Is it a boy or girlfriend, the opinions of the crowd, money, things, your job, or your family?"

What is the governing factor of your life? Paul was separated unto Christ. A Christian ought to be separated in his lifestyle. We are not to live wickedly like the heathen who are without Christ. A Christian who is separated from something, but not separated unto Christ will have an empty life. Standards and convictions without devotion and love for Jesus Christ will leave you in the same boat as the Pharisees who were very separated, but not devoted to Christ. If you remove or separate yourself from something that is harmful, you must fill that void in your life with something else that is good. Fill your voids with the Lord and be set apart to Him. It is not enough to separate yourself from devil deeds and evil people, you need to separate yourself unto God.

The Invitation for Separation unto the Gospel

Since Paul had separated himself unto the Gospel and was so successful in living for the Lord and influencing others to Christ, to me it is like sending an invitation of separation to the Lord for my own life. If we are separated unto the Gospel what will be true of us? We will follow the Lord, be faithful to the Lord, and spread the Gospel if we are separated unto the Gospel. If it worked for the Apostle Paul, then I can assure you that it will work to the glory of God and your benefit if you do take Paul up on his invitation and challenge for us to live godly, righteous lives.

The Indication of Separation unto the Gospel

What does this separation unto the Gospel indicate? It points us to the following realities in our lives: God's will is being done, God's work is foremost in our lives and the Gospel message is being spread as God intends it to be.

Be separated unto the Gospel and God will richly bless you.

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

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Pause...and Consider

My Specific "Happy"

By Jan Merop
Avery County



One of my favorite places is Grandfather Mountain in North Carolina. It is such a happy place and so it was to be the destination for my birthday.

We started with an early lunch...actually dessert first...of chocolate meringue pie! That is definitely not typical of me...so absolutely celebratory. Too full for lunch, we headed to the animal habitats...

my favorite, the bears. Several were out intriguing the guests. From behind boulders they sauntered up surprising visitors. Plopping into the pond for a drink and bath brings smiles of wonder on the faces of spectators.

But the best was yet to be.

In a birthday note to me, a dear friend said she was asking the Lord to give me a specific "happy" that I could remember took place on this particular birthday. I trusted God it would be so.

There are two viewing areas for the bears. I was at the larger and happened to turn and see a Dad and his two young sons coming my way. Had they seen the bears or was the crowd too thick, I wondered. Just as I noticed them, I happened to look into the habitat and saw one of the females coming around a large boulder.

Quickly I spun around and said, "Do you want to see the bear? She's coming now." These two little freckle-faced boys opened their eyes wide and said, "Yes, thank you." With Dad's nod of approval, they stepped up to the fence.

My heart beat a merry tune in helping them experience this extraordinary moment. But, I was in for one of my own.

"Thank you," they kept saying. I responded by letting them know that this is all about them having a wonderful time. Then the older of the two reached out and hugged me and asked me my name. The little one joined in the hugs.

"I'm Jan," I said. And then it was "Thank you, Miss Jan, thank you."

Wow! "Thank you," I said. "You have made my day." And, I whispered, "It's my birthday today." A chorus of happy birthdays and hugs ensued.

As they turned to leave, I felt the joy that my specific "happy" had been granted.

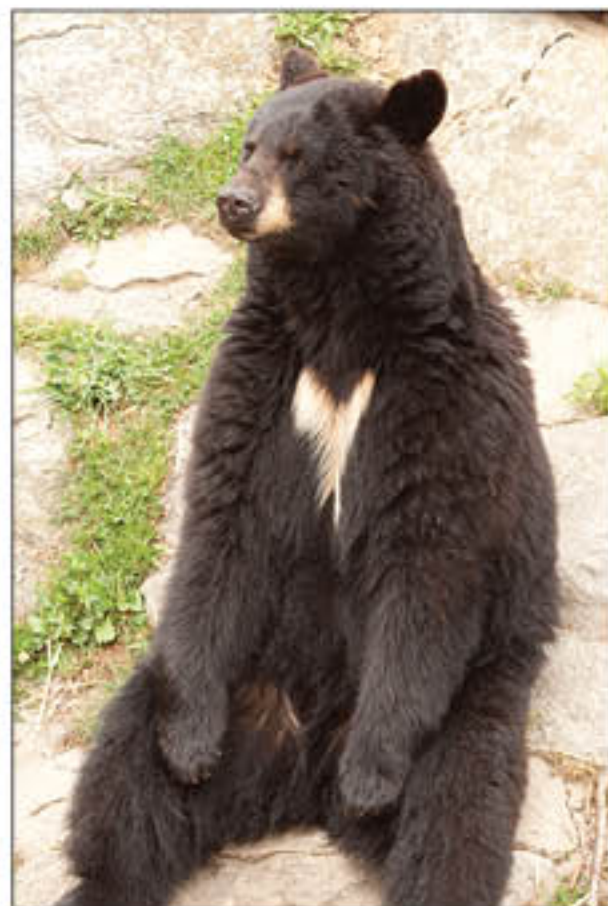
Just then, the older of the two turned and called over his shoulder, "How old are you, Miss Jan?" Dad moved them forward saying not to ask that question. We laughed and I let him know that I celebrate the second time of half my age!

Proverbs 16: 20 says, "Whoever trusts in the Lord, happy is he."

I couldn't agree more. Selah

Bear joys

*Simple things bring the greatest blessings.
And though seeing a bear up close and personal
may not always invoke tender thoughts,
in the right setting, they do.
This female bear is wearing her heart
for all to see.
Let's bear our hearts to bring joy
and a blessing to others.
"Love...bears all things..."
1 Corinthians 13: 7*



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.

Billy Graham Evangelism Association

Men's Dinner with Darryl Strawberry

An eight-time Major League Baseball All-Star and four-time World Series Champion, Darryl Strawberry spoke to a sold-out crowd Friday evening at the Billy Graham Library's Men's Dinner, telling the crowd of 300 about his path to redemption through his relationship with Jesus Christ.

After battling addiction for much of his life and baseball career, Strawberry gave his life to Christ more than a decade ago and now serves as a pastor and speaker. He cited Billy Graham's influence on his ministry, saying, "I learned how to preach the Gospel because of Billy Graham. [When I was called to the ministry] I started studying his books and listening to him as an evangelist who was called to win the lost. Billy Graham left such a great legacy, his legacy was Jesus Christ."

Before accepting Christ as his savior, Strawberry admitted that he had given many excuses for ignoring God, but finally came to the point of surrender. "I didn't want to be me anymore. I wanted to be in Christ," he said. "I didn't want to be Darryl Strawberry: great baseball player, who had troubles. No, I wanted to be redeemed and restored."

About 300 people attended a sold-out Men's Dinner, hosted by the Billy Graham Library, on Friday. They gathered in the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) headquarters, located just behind the Library, to hear from famed outfielder Darryl Strawberry.

In 1980, Darryl Strawberry was a first-round draft pick out of Los Angeles. He went on to help the New York Mets (1986) and New York Yankees (1996, 1998, 1999) win World Series championships.

Darryl Strawberry became a Christian nearly a decade ago after battling a cocaine addiction. Friday, he said he had given so many excuses for ignoring God, but finally came to the point of surrender. "I didn't want to be me anymore. I wanted to be in Christ," he said. "I didn't want to be Darryl Strawberry, a great baseball player, who had troubles. No, I wanted to be redeemed and restored."

Lots of "amens" and head nods from the audience accompanied Strawberry's time onstage during the Men's Dinner. Many in the audience expressed an understanding of the kind of supernatural work God can do in a man's life.

Standing in the BGEA headquarters in Billy Graham's hometown of Charlotte, North Carolina, Strawberry said Mr. Graham taught us about winning souls to Christ and growing the kingdom of God. Now 57, the All-Star runs Strawberry Ministries alongside his wife, Tracy. The couple has opened several rehabilitation centers for young adults, with a desire to help others find freedom in Christ.

The dinner wasn't just a time to eat and talk around the table, but in true baseball fashion, a time for games.

Strawberry has seen his fair share of trials, from run-ins with law enforcement to surviving cancer. He quoted 1 John 4:4 to the room full of men: "...he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." There are many things in life that will test your faith, he told the crowd, but "don't give up." Jesus has overcome them all, he added. Here, he prays with chaplains from the Billy Graham Rapid Response Team.

There was prayer, opening God's Word and also a little baseball trivia.

As someone who once struggled with addictions, Strawberry put a personal spin on the Bible story about the woman at the well and Christ's reference to Himself as the Living Water (John 4:1-45). "Since I've been drinking this Living Water, guys, I have never been thirsty again."

What's a baseball game without peanuts? Even the centerpieces were themed in preparation for Friday's speaker.

Strawberry wrapped up his talk giving glory to God for putting the broken pieces of his life back together. "You're looking at the masterpiece of what God has done in my life," he shared. Many of those who attended also took the time to browse a table full of items from Billy Graham's collection related to baseball. The evangelist was a big fan of the sport and as a young man thought that he, too, might become a baseball player.



Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.
Psalms 150:6



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Desiring God
No, I Shall Not Want

An Anthem for Everyday Anxieties

By Scott Hubbard

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. (Psalm 23:1)

Every one of us wakes up each morning as a bundle of desires. Beneath even the most outwardly apathetic demeanor are loves, needs, and fears — each of them demanding our attention and obedience. Many of us move through our days largely unconscious of these basic emotions, even though they sit at the control panel of our hearts, pulling the levers that decide what we say and do.

A husband and father, for example, leaves work filled with a love for comfort. He obeys that love by coming home, not to his wife and kids, but to his couch and sports.

An employee walks into the office feeling a need for his peers' approval. So, he performs on the stage from nine to five, always listening for applause. "We shall not want. Even in discomfort. Even in rejection. Even in the valley of the shadow of death."

A young man, wounded from past relationships, fears the prospect of future pain. So, he withdraws socially, insulating himself from anyone who might harm him.

Such loves, needs, and fears present themselves so persuasively, so forcefully, that we often fail to ask if they are feelings worth following. They can keep us from hearing another voice that has been speaking to us all the while, bidding us to walk a better path.

That Other Voice

God, in His mercy, makes us stop and listen. Behind the clamor of our desires, we hear the voice of a shepherd who invites us to green pastures and still waters. The trouble, however, is that his voice often leads in the opposite direction of our feelings. Our loves, needs, and fears push us toward one path; he calls us to another. To follow him, we must deny them.

In moments such as these, we encounter what C.S. Lewis calls "the real problem of the Christian life." The decisions that define us as Christians often do not come with a flash and a bang. They come softly, almost noiselessly. They come, Lewis tells us, the very moment you wake up each morning. All your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists simply in shoving them all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in. And so on, all day. (Mere Christianity, 198)

And what does that other voice — that larger, stronger, quieter life — teach us to say to our rebel feelings? Four words: "I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1).

'I Shall Not Want'

Imagine you wake up with an instinctive love for comfort. You just want to move from bed to office to couch to bed without interruptions. You can't be bothered by other people today, especially the needy ones. You need more rest, more me time. That hard conversation can wait until tomorrow. But then you stop and listen to that other voice, which teaches you to say, "When I walk into discomfort, I shall not want."

Or perhaps you wake up feeling a deep need for approval. You just want others to appreciate you, listen to you, love you. You wish you were better looking, less awkward. You're ready to laugh at jokes that aren't funny and say things you don't believe. But then that other point of view wraps its arm around your shoulder and helps you say, "I have one Master to please today. When others reject or ignore me, I shall not want."

Or maybe you wake up with a vague fear of coming trials. You just want to hold what's precious in your life out of God's reach. A crowd of what-ifs runs through your mind, and you answer by searching for something to distract you. But then that larger, stronger, quieter life comes flowing in, and you find yourself saying, "When trouble comes, I shall not want."

"Jesus spilled his blood in Golgotha's dust so we could lie down in green pastures."

The wild pack of loves, needs, and fears has rushed at you, but you have beaten them back with this four-word shove: I shall not want. You are ready to follow your shepherd wherever he leads. They may come back in the afternoon, or even ten minutes from now, but you know what to do. You plug your ears to their persuasions and remember, again and again, I shall not want.

And so on, all day.

'The Lord Is My Shepherd'

Of course, the four words I shall not want possess any magical qualities. We cannot charm away temptation simply by saying them. Rather, they are powerful only insofar as we believe the words that come before them: "The Lord is my shepherd" (Psalm 23:1). How do we know with confidence that we shall not want, even when our loves, needs, and fears say just the opposite? Because the Lord Jesus Christ is our shepherd.

Jesus spilled his blood in Golgotha's dust so we could lie down in green pastures (Psalm 23:2). He laid his soul in the grave so ours could be restored (Psalm 23:3). He allowed the valley of the shadow of death to swallow him so that it might become for us the highway to heaven (Psalm 23:4). Every morning, he sets a table for us, filled with rich food (Psalm 23:5). Every day, he sends his goodness and mercy to chase us, surround us, and keep us safe till we reach home (Psalm 23:6).

As we entrust ourselves to this shepherd, he takes his rod and his staff and trains our feelings to follow him: to love him, to need him, to fear him. He teaches us, day by day, that as long as we are near him, we shall not want. Even in discomfort. Even in rejection. Even in the valley of the shadow of death.

Scott Hubbard is a graduate of Bethlehem College & Seminary and an editor for desiringGod.org. He and his wife, Bethany, live in Minneapolis, Minnesota



Volunteer Impact Day

By Amy Ellis
Mitchell County

As part of The Quartz Corp annual Volunteer Impact Day, more than 160 employees representing the USA, Norway, France, and China volunteered throughout the community on September 5th. Employees served neighbors, schools, and non-profit organizations within Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey counties.



- Projects were chosen to align with The Quartz Corp mission of making the world a better place and included:
- Deyton Elementary - led by Andrew Staton
 - Gouge Elementary - led by Casey Peterson
 - Genesis Academy - led by Bart Garland
 - Greenlee Elementary - led by Manuel Reyes, John Stewart
 - Hospice of the Blue Ridge - led by Jim Garofalo, Norris Davis, John Silver, Joe Buchanan
 - Hospice of the Blue Ridge - led by Eben Concepts
 - Headstart Bakersville - led by Anthony Penland
 - Intermountain Children's Center - led by Chris Gentry, Blake Glenn, Blake Peterson
 - Mitchell County Safeplace - led by Hogan Burleson, Andy Glenn
 - Micaville Elementary - led by Rolf Pippert, Josh Condrey
 - Mitchell High School - led by Mark Hollifield, Bobby Burleson
 - Riverside Elementary - led by Micki Ledford
 - The Brian Center for Health and Rehabilitation - led by Bud Young, Bryan Burleson
 - The Mitchell House - led by Manuel Reyes, John Stewart

Community partners also donated time and materials to make this event the success it was. Vulcan generously donated a significant amount of rock to support the project at Micaville Elementary. Green Mountain fence donated the installation/materials of new fencing at the Intermountain Children's Center in Ledger. Eben Concepts closed its doors and empowered employees to volunteer for the day. Staton Trucking, Hobson's Grading, Boone's Woodlawn Quarry, Hardings Landscaping, and McGee Brothers participated on the day of or supplied materials.

The positive impact of the annual volunteer impact day was evident by employees of The Quartz Corp on September 5th and will be felt by the entire community for years to come.



But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: 8 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. 9 Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this? Job 12:7 - 12:9

Sudoku

Solution on page 14

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NC Baptist Aging Ministry

Celebrates 10-Year Anniversary

By Carol Layton

It isn't often one is asked to create something from nothing. But, that's exactly how North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) began in 2009.

Rev. Milton Hollifield Jr., executive director-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, "laid it on the heart" of Dr. Michael C. Blackwell, to create a non-residential ministry to older adults. Hollifield called Blackwell "the trusted source" in North Carolina Baptist life and said if anyone could create such a new and creative ministry—with broad-based support—it would be the long-time President of the Baptist Children's Homes (BCH).

Blackwell accepted the challenge and assembled a blue-ribbon committee of experts in all matters relating to aging adults—legal, medical, religious, psychological, social, and other challenges associated with the frail elderly.

Then, as now, BCH was a leader in developing family-focused Christian ministries. In addition to residential care for children, the ministry has established Christian-focused daycare, wilderness programs for boy and girls, a ministry for developmentally disabled adults, a family care ministry for single moms and their children, college campus ministries, and an orphanage in Guatemala. In further fulfillment of BCH's calling to serve all of God's children, NCBAM was born.

Blackwell chose Dr. Sandy C. Gregory to serve as director for the new ministry. At that time, Gregory was serving as the south-central director of development for BCH and had education and experience working in senior adult ministry. Blackwell connected Gregory with Bobby Boyd, then president of the BCH Board of Trustees and a retired director of Catawba County Social Services with 35 years' experience.

Gregory and Boyd spent the first year in research – traveling the state speaking to social service directors, older adults, and pastors, – asking "what can Baptists do to help older adults?" Gregory remembers two key lessons from Boyd that profoundly impacted the growth of the ministry: "Relationships are key" and "Don't promise more than you can deliver."

With a mission statement in place ("to help individuals 65+ maintain their independence"), NCBAM began a three-month pilot program with the Liberty Baptist Association. Working with Rev. Mike Ester, director of missions, NCBAM identified resources, established partnerships with existing services, and met individuals with needs. Gregory recalls, "The pilot program helped us determine the needs that were out there and ways that we could begin to address them."



With the pilot program rolling, a building on the Mills Hope campus of Baptist Children's Homes was fitted for the NCBAM Call Center. Older adults called in with needs for transportation, home-delivered meals, or respite care. NCBAM staff provided callers with local numbers for existing services. It was usually only a few days before the caller would phone back to report they had been put on a one-to-two year waiting list. Gregory remembers, "Giving out those numbers was easy. But God had another plan—for NCBAM to call on the churches of North Carolina to step up and do ministry."

By embracing that divine plan, the foundation of NCBAM was laid – partnerships with churches and Baptist organizations ministering to the needs of the frail-aging while encouraging and empowering well-aging adults to continue God's call on their lives. Gregory had seen the focus of senior adult ministries changing in the years before NCBAM was born. "Senior adult ministry used to be about a monthly luncheon and a trip to see the leaves. Now, seniors want more. They want to stay involved in ways that are meaningful to them and to continue to make a difference in the world."

Known affectionately throughout the state as "BAM!," the ministry has stayed true to its name to dream big and to act boldly with explosive energy. Gregory has seen to that by developing innovative partnerships with public and private sector entities. Today, those partnerships include North Carolina's Office of State Fire Marshal which has led to more than \$100,000 in smoke alarms being installed in seniors' homes and the National Fire Protection Association that has brought fall-prevention education to thousands. Other vital partnerships are those with North Carolina's Area Agencies on Aging and North Carolina's Department of Insurance SHIP program.

Numbers tell only part of NCBAM's story, but each number represents a life impacted by God's love. Since 2009, NCBAM's Call Center has received more than 25,000 calls, served 4,000 individuals, met needs in all 100 counties, facilitated 33,000 volunteer hours, and set the world's record for the most wheelchair ramps built in one day (321).

NCBAM currently has six regional directors who work throughout the state developing partnerships with churches and within the aging services network. They have developed ten Priority #1 Prevention programs, distributed 20,000 Red Bags for medication management, developed more than 40 educational workshops, and trained 27,000 individuals. Workshop topics include caregiving, healthy aging, and disaster preparedness. They are taught free of charge to senior adult groups in churches and senior centers. Since 2009, NCBAM has received 17 state and national awards for programming and communications.

Through its AAIM outreach (Aging Adults Innovating Ministry), NCBAM provides leadership conferences for those involved in ministry to senior adults. Since 2014, a statewide event has been held each May followed by regional events in the fall.

As gratifying as it is to look back on the first ten years, Gregory spends more time looking forward. "Each day brings opportunities to explore new partnerships, build new programs, and impact more lives. As a ministry working with churches, government groups and the private sector, we explore uncharted territory every day."

As the first steps of NCBAM, the ministry's latest venture into uncharted territory is also beginning as a pilot program – once again within the Liberty Baptist Association. Volunteers from LBA churches are trained to receive calls from older adults experiencing loneliness. This NCBAM Hope Line is part of a broader "One Hope" outreach which offers spiritual response to the epidemic of social isolation and loneliness.

Founder Dr. Michael Blackwell sees the growth of NCBAM as a divine blessing. "The Lord has provided excellent staff and has consistently opened doors for new programs and partnerships at just the right moment. In the next ten years, as Baby Boomers continue to retire and need help to maintain their independence, NCBAM and North Carolina Baptists will be ready!"

Carol Layton is Office and Support Manager for North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM)

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jamie@highcountrycpa.com
www.highcountrycpa.com

News from The Shire

By Nancy Malik
Avery County

It is the middle of September in the high country. Fall is starting to put on the colors that bring visitors anticipating the joy, again and again. Beauty and awe are a part of God's beautiful creation of the seasons and Autumn. Avery County is one colorful view after another as well as our neighboring counties and nearby state, Tennessee. Thank you, God, for autumn in the High Country!

God opened a door for me to be able to share creation science with children on AM 1130, WECR, M-F at 8:10 am and 12:50 pm, being sponsored by Blue Ridge Christian News. The show is called Adventures in Creation.

I have had another opportunity that keeps my eyes on the heavens as I am a part of a group on Grandfather Mountain who has the wonderful opportunity to scan the skies for migrating raptors. Many raptors like coming over the Blue Ridge instead of following the coastal migration pattern, and it is a gift from our Lord to watch His birds fly overhead or catch a updraft above us. Watching bald eagles and hawks catch updrafts between Grandfather Mountain and Sugar Mountain can be thrilling. The verse in Isaiah 40: 31 "those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on eagles' wings". This verse comes alive watching these mighty birds. The last week of September and the first week of October we will be catching them and tagging them and any children who would like to help are welcome to come to the garden by the fudge shop on Grandfather Mountain.

It is a blessing that Avery County and surrounding counties in the High Country have many people who love and honor the Lord. It is a blessing living here in "God's Country".

Nancy Malik and her husband moved to Avery County in 2017. Her husband passed in 2018. She is a member of Heaton Christian Church. Nancy taught preschool, elementary school and middle school over many years. She is the grandmother of eight!



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Jesus Calms the Storm

By Mike Stroud
Burke County

What a season we have had, unbearable summer temperatures and devastating hurricanes. It seems that times like these are hard to deal with. We realize how frail and fragile life is. So many people affected, and lives are lost. All we can do is pray. I believe that keeps us close to our trust in the Lord when opposing circumstances and conditions uncontrollable to us, show up in our face. It is true survival and belief in God that can save us. We tend to get spoiled to how well we have it and how safe we are until a storm comes along. I think about the disciples in this passage of scripture.

Mark 4:35-41 New International Version (NIV)
35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37 A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38 Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" 39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. 40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" 41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

I love this story because sometimes as Christians, we forget who we are in Christ and who He is in our lives. He said they were going over to the other side, but when the storm arose (and these were avid fishermen) they were terrified for their life. What was Jesus doing? Sleeping. They woke him up, He rebuked the storm and rebuked them for their unbelief. I have learned to trust in the Lord completely, no matter what. If we are going down, we are going down trusting the Lord and praising God. Our life is in Christ eternally. We tend to hold onto this life, and that is natural, but when we lose it in him, no matter what happens, Good, Bad, or Ugly. We Win. The Lord always makes things right, not only in this life but the one to come. It is hard for people to believe like this, easy to say, but hard to do. He is always there to rescue us, even in our hurt and despair. Put all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you and will never let you down.

Try not to wake the Lord when he is sleeping, just take a nap yourself and believe it will all be alright regardless, and see the Miracles of God

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



Giving

By John McCoury
Roan Mountain Tennessee



In 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, the Apostle Paul develops ten principles of Christian giving.

1. Christian giving is an expression of the grace of God (8:1-6). Paul begins by referring to the generosity of God, to "the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches" (v. 1). In other words, behind the generosity of Macedonia, Paul saw the generosity of God. Grace is another word for generosity. Our gracious God is a generous God, and He is at work within his people to make them generous, too. Christian generosity is fundamentally an outflow of the generosity of God.

2. Christian giving can be a gift of the Spirit (8:7). As the believers excel in the spiritual gifts of faith, speech, knowledge, earnestness, and love, the apostle urges them to excel also "in this grace of giving." Why is it important to draw attention to this? It is because many of God's endowments are both a generous gift given to all believers and a gift given to some. All Christians are called to be generous, but some are given the gift of giving. Because they have been entrusted with significant financial resources, they have a special responsibility to be good stewards for the common good.

3. Christian giving is inspired by the cross of Christ (8:8-9). The Corinthians were not being commanded, much less browbeaten, to give generously. Rather, the sincerity of their love was being put to the test by comparison with others and especially it is implied by comparison with Christ. For they knew the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ—not only is the grace of God at work in them (v. 1), but the grace of Christ challenges their imitation (v. 9). The poverty of Christ is seen in his incarnation and especially his cross, while the "wealth" he gives us is salvation with all its rich blessings.

4. Christian giving is proportionate giving (8:10-12). During the previous year the Corinthian Christians had been the first not only in giving but in desiring to give (v. 10). Now Paul urges them to finish the task they had begun so that their doing would keep pace with their desiring. And this must be according to their means (v. 11). Thus, Christian giving is proportionate giving. The eager willingness comes first. So long as that is there, the gift is acceptable according to what the giver has, not according to what he has not (v. 12).

5. Christian giving contributes to equality (8:13-15). Paul's desire is not that others may be relieved while the Corinthians are hard-pressed, for that would merely reverse the situation, solving one problem by creating another. Rather, he desires that there might learn that there might be equality (v. 13). He goes on to repeat his argument illustrating the principle from the supply of manna in the desert. God provided enough for everybody. Larger families gathered a lot, but not too much, for nothing was leftover. Smaller families gathered little, but not too little, for they had no lack (v. 15). Thus, Paul put the affluence of some alongside the want of others, and then called for an adjustment—that is, an easing of want by affluence. Twice he concluded that this was with a view to justice.

6. Christian giving must be carefully supervised (6:16-24). The handling of money is a risky business, so Paul writes both that "we want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer liberal gift" (v. 20) and that we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of man (v. 21). That is, he was determined not only to do right, but also to be seen doing right. (Notice the steps Paul took determined not only to do right but also to be seen to do right. (Notice the steps Paul took in verses 16-23.) Thus, the people who earned the offering to Jerusalem had been elected by the churches because they had confidence in them.

7. Christian giving can be stimulated by competition (v. 9:1-5). It is rather delightful to see how Paul plays the north and the south against each other. He boasts of each to the other, in order to stimulate the generosity of both. True, competition is a dangerous game to play, especially if it involves the publication of the names of donors and the amount they have donated. But at least these verses provide a biblical base for the concept of matching grants. We can all be stimulated to greater generosity by the known generosity of others.

8. Christian giving resembles a harvest (9:6-11a). Two harvest principles are here applied to Christian giving. First, we reap what we sow (v. 6) • Each donor should give "what he has decided in his heart to give." Neither reluctantly, nor under compulsion, nor for that matter calculating what he will receive in return (Luke 6:34, 35), but not grudgingly, because "God loves a cheerful giver" (v. 7). The second harvest principle is that what we reap serves a double purpose. It is both for eating and for further sowing. The God of the harvest is concerned not only with alleviating our present hunger, but also making provision for the future. In the same way God will "supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness" (v. 10).

9. Christian giving has symbolic significance. There is more to Christian giving than meets the eye. Paul is quite clear about this. In the case of the Greek churches, their giving symbolized their "confession of the gospel of Christ" (v. 13). It was a deliberate, self-conscious symbol of Jewish-Gentile stable in the body of Christ. In similar ways, Christian giving can express teaching because our gift symbolizes our support of the cause to which we are giving. For example, when we contribute to evangelistic enterprises, we are expressing our confidence that the gospel is God's power for salvation and that everybody has a right to hear it. When we contribute to economic development, we express our belief that every man, woman, and child bear God's image and should not be obliged to live in dehumanizing circumstances.

10. Christian giving promotes Thanksgiving 9:11b-15 Four times in the concluding paragraph of these two chapters, Paul states his confidence that the ultimate result of his collection will be the increase of thanksgiving and praise to God (V 11-14.) Christian giving leads people not only to thank the donors but also to thank God and to see their gifts in the light of his—the indescribable gift of his Son.

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

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Psalm 100:1-5 1A Psalm of praise. Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. 2Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. 3Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. 4Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. 5For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.

5. Our goal as Christians is to protect our health, safety, and loved ones so that we can continue to serve the Lord after the blaze of the affliction diminishes. Isaiah 43:2-3 "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." 6. Our return to normalcy depends upon guidance from the Lord. Colossians 1:9 "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;"

The alarm's screech fades away. The blinding lights disappear. And the children file back into the school to resume their normal schedule. When your children mention a fire drill or you see it in the safety section of your school information, remember that we, too, can practice our spiritual fire drills and teach them to our children.

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



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