



BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS



Walnut Grove Baptist

Giving Thanks vs. Being Thankful

By Kurt Bomar
Avery County

Have you ever thought about the difference between being thankful—and giving thanks? I believe there is a big difference.

First, let's look at it practically. Being thankful usually is an emotional response to good times. Giving thanks, on the other hand, is an action we take regardless of the circumstances.

Next, let us look at it Biblically. Did you know that only twice the Bible says to be thankful? But hundreds of times it says to give thanks. Let me point out just a few.

In all circumstances. 1Th 5:18 "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

When starting out for battle. 2Ch 20:21 "After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise Him for the splendor of holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: 'Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever.'"

As part of Temple worship. 2Ch 31:2 "Hezekiah assigned the priests and Levites to divisions—each of them according to their duties as priests or Levites—to offer burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, to minister, to give thanks and to sing praises at the gates of the LORD's dwelling."

While they were rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. Nehemiah 12:31 "I had the leaders of Judah go up on top off the wall. I also assigned two large choirs to give thanks. One was to proceed on top off the wall to the right, toward the Dung Gate."

As part of the worship service. Psalms 9:1 For the director of music. To the tune of "The Death of the Son." A psalm of David. "I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds."

When you're surrounded by your enemies and in trouble. Psalms 106:47 "Save us, LORD, our God, and gather us from the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise."

When we partake of the Lord's Supper. 1Corinthians 10:16 "Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?"



For our salvation. Psalms 118:21 "I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation."

When you can't sleep at night. Psalms 119:62 "At midnight I rise to give you thanks for your righteous laws."

When you're depressed. [Psalms 43:5 NIV] 5 "Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God."

Paul tells us in Philippians to give thanks. Did you know he wrote that while in prison after many whippings and beatings? Do you see how very few of these situations where we are told to give thanks is to having to do with how we feel at the time? Don't just be thankful during the good times, give thanks all the time! An attitude of gratitude is good, but the act of giving thanks is much better.

Selah, (think about it)

Kurt Bomar is pastor of Walnut Grove Church.



The Power of a Simple "Thank You"

By Rev. John B. Sorensen

Every year on November 8th, Randall picks up the phone and calls his pastor back home in Ohio to tell him "thank you." He has done the same thing for more than 30 years. Why? On that day in 1986, he watched his pastor share the Gospel with his son. Then, he witnessed his son pray to accept Jesus Christ into his life.

Are you thankful for the person or people who introduced you to Jesus? Who prayed for you to find salvation? Who shared their faith with you when you were searching? Of course, we are always thankful to God first and foremost for our salvation, but have you ever thought to tell the people He used, "thank you"?

Faith and Thanksgiving naturally go hand-in-hand. At Thanksgiving, we often pause to think about how much God has blessed our lives and us. When we have an attitude of gratitude, God opens our eyes and helps us understand His grace.

Dr. D. James Kennedy once said, "As soon as we begin to give thanks, we realize, suddenly, that God is there, wherever we are . . . Our spiritual eyes are opened, and our hearts are filled because in the hour of thankfulness, faith is full, and everything is changed."

When we are thankful, God's presence shines through us, and others take notice. That opens the door for the Gospel to be shared. 1 Peter 3:15 says to "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (NIV). We can do this in a number of ways.

1. Truthfully share who (and what) you are thankful for. As believers, we are most thankful for the Gospel! Our testimony has incredible power when it is shared with others.
2. Read a Bible verse about being thankful or how God uses a thankful person. The Bible contains hundreds of verses about thanksgiving. Choose one or two and memorize it.
3. Extend an invitation. Open your home to a friend or neighbor who doesn't have family close by for the holidays. Then pray for an open door to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with them as someone once did with you.

Do you need to say "thank you" to someone this holiday season? Do it. Then pay it forward and give someone else the same gift – the opportunity to know and accept the free gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

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.



"I Wait For The LORD"

By Shawn Thomas

"I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope . . ." (Psalm 130:5)

I just told Cheryl this morning, "The biggest thing we have on our list right now, we can't do anything about" — selling our house. It is totally, out of our hands. We can pack, we can clean, we can list, we can line up things in Texas, and so on — but we can't make anyone buy our house. It is THE biggest thing we have on our list — and there is pretty much, virtually nothing we can really do about it — but "wait for the LORD." But that is exactly what He wants us to do, as this Psalm indicates.

I woke up this morning, after a long and emotional day of farewells yesterday, with this first thought: "People see 'events,' but God sees the shaping of character." That is so true. We see this as "are we going to sell the house?" God sees it is, "Are they going to trust Me?" His goal isn't just "selling a house," but building trust in us; faith; faithfulness; holiness; Christ-like character. So, we need to see this — and everything else that happens in our lives — from God's perspective. Learn what He wants us to during it. And from what I can see (especially here in Psalm 130) it is to TRUST HIM. "Wait for the LORD more than the watchman for the morning." We can do nothing; so, we need to just look to Him, and wait. He has done so much for us already; surely, we can trust Him for this! So: "I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope."

Shawn Thomas is a Southern Baptist pastor for almost 35 years. I currently serve as Senior Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Angleton, Texas.



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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
lynnny@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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The Bridge Church of WNC

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

Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin

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

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Berry Chapel Baptist Church

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

Pastor - Steve Williams

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

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Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church

2187 Jamestown Road
Morganton, NC
828-584-8212

Pastor Steve Beltz

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

Faith Fellowship Church

Champ Ray Rd.
Micaville, NC 28755
(828)-675-9284
www.ffcn.org
www.ffcnradio.org

Pastor: David Gillespie

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

Altapass Baptist Church

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

Dr. Marcus R. Benfield

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

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Grassy Creek Baptist Church

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

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

West Burnsville Baptist Church

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

Pastor: Terry Long

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

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

Burkemont Baptist Church

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

For more information,
please visit
www.burkemontbaptist.org

Dr. Luke A. Lane

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

Plumtree Presbyterian Church

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

Pastor Ryan Bridgeo
pastor@plumtreepresbyterian.org

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

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

Bear Creek Baptist Church

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

Reverend Bruce Cannon

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

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

Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church

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

Pastor Barry Mahorney

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

Pine Branch Baptist Church

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

Reverend Bobby Joe Greene

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

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St. Lucien's Catholic Church

695 Summit Street
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
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Sunday Mass 9:00 am
Wednesday Faith Formation
6:00 pm
Food Pantry Wed. 1:00-
4:00pm

First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine

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

**Dr. Rocky Branch
Senior Pastor**

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

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

Spruce Pine United Methodist Church

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

Pastor Rev. Jeremy Troxler

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

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

Newland Christian Church

2800 Millers Gap Highway
Newland, NC 28657
Phone (828) 260-1404
www.newlandchristianchurch.com

Pastor - Phillip Greene

Sunday School: 9:45 am
Sunday Worship: 11 am
Sunday Evening Bible Study: 6 pm
Wednesday Evening Prayer Meeting: 7 pm

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Being Thankful...A Thing of the Past?

By Chris Rathbone
Mitchell County



It doesn't take one long to realize after watching the news a couple of minutes or reading the front page of a major newspaper that this nation is in trouble. Every day there is a new headline, new scandal or supposed new scandal, another demonstration, another protest, etc. Violence in our streets is a common news story every day. People are attacked verbally and physically, property is destroyed, and law enforcement is vilified if they try to do anything to stop all of it. This group or that group is filing a lawsuit daily or being interviewed by a major news outlet about how they don't have this or that. People are crying out for free healthcare, free college, free money, free, free, free.....shall I go on?

It seems as though no matter how much one has or how blessed we are in this nation as a whole; we are never satisfied. There is an attitude of entitlement that runs rampant in the hearts of many. It's the belief that they deserve everything they want or desire just simply because they were born. Debt is out of control. College students borrow thousands upon thousands of dollars in student loans knowing they either won't be able to pay it back or that it will take years and years to settle the debt. Many of them now believe they shouldn't have to, but that the American taxpayer should pay it for them. Young families who want what their parents worked 40 years to have, will borrow till they are so far in debt they end up losing everything, often even their marriage and family. No matter how much we have, many continue to want more and more. Enough is never enough. Advertisers continually cater to people's discontentment to sell them things that they do not need nor can really afford. So many keep looking for fulfillment from those things and never find it, thus the never-ending cycle continues, all the while ignoring what they have already.

Discontentment is where much of the problem lies. The human flesh is never satisfied. Unbelievers are fooled into thinking that one day they will find the perfect object, possession, person, etc. to fill that void inside that will bring the contentment for which they are so desperately longing. Many Christians are fooled into thinking they need more than Jesus in this life and will waste precious time, money, and resources pursuing that which will never satisfy them. All the while Satan keeps on lying and laughing because he has fooled most of this world into believing that they will find contentment and satisfaction in anything but Jesus. In all this pursuit of fulfillment, man completely ignores and refuses to recognize what he has already been given.

We can have a beautiful home or maybe a home that is just what we need, yet we keep wanting a larger one. We can have a dependable car with nothing wrong with it and we'll go trade for another one and get a monthly payment to boot. Our closets are filled with clothing, some still have tags on them because we've never worn them, and we'll go to the mall and buy more. Many will have plenty of money in the bank and will continue to work their fingers to the bone and sacrifice time and family just to make a buck more. Appliances are working fine but we'll have to update anyway. The rich man keeps wanting to get richer and the poor man often spends all his time trying to get to the place of the rich man and so the cycle of discontentment continues.... on and on.

Paul wrote in Philippians 4:11-13 *"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."* Verse 13 of this text is often taken out of context. It is often quoted to state to others as if we can accomplish anything with Christ strengthening us. While I agree that we can accomplish more than we can imagine through Christ, I don't think Paul was talking about being a better athlete or becoming a millionaire! Those things may not be God's will for us. In this context, Paul is talking about being content in whatever circumstance he finds himself. Paul was saying he has contentment, not because of what he had but because of Who he had!!!! He was content in Christ whether he had a lot or a little. Regardless of where he found himself in life, his circumstances nor his financial status mattered little, for he was content and fulfilled in Jesus and he had the strength to face all things with Jesus.

Christian, has discontentment caused you to miss out on what you have already? Have you been neglecting your worship and thanksgiving that God so richly deserves? Have you been so busy seeking more and more that you've forgotten the blessings that you have all around you? Stop wasting precious time and resources on things that will never fulfill you nor bring you the contentment. Look around and realize how richly we have been blessed. Find your contentment in Jesus, regardless of what you may or may not have in this life. Every day we should be thankful, but this month of November, we will have an opportunity to focus our hearts even more on the blessings we have in this life. Don't let discontentment and the devil still your joy and thankfulness. Focus your heart, look around and see what you already have, and give God glory, honor, praise, and thanksgiving! He is worthy just because He is God! But how much more we should worship Him because of all He does for us! Don't let thanksgiving be a thing of the past.

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

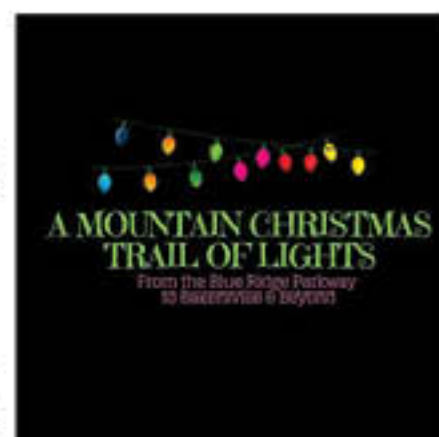
A Mountain Christmas Trail of Lights

October 28, 2019 (Spruce Pine, NC) A new holiday event for the 2019 Holiday season, A Mountain Christmas Trail of Lights has been announced and is expected to be a huge addition to the holiday season in WNC. The Trail of Lights will go from the Blue Ridge Parkway in Spruce Pine to Bakersville and beyond, beginning November 30th and ending on New Year's Eve.

A Mountain Christmas Trail of Lights will include both homes and businesses along over 15 miles of roads in Spruce Pine, Bakersville and beyond, all lit up for the holidays as a gift to the community and to the visitors who come to experience it. "Visitors will be able to travel from the Blue Ridge Parkway in Spruce Pine through our downtown and then on to Bakersville, well known as an artists' haven, and then on to Loafer's Glory and into other communities and neighborhoods," said Patti Jensen, Director of the Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce and host of the event. "Our communities are also filling the holiday calendar with things to do throughout the season," said Jensen.

A full calendar of events for the holidays is located on the Trail website at www.amountainchristmastraillights.com. From Christmas parades and tree lightings, holiday concerts, ice skating, breakfast and photos with Santa as well as area church events and where to choose and cut the perfect Christmas tree, the holiday calendar will be filled with so many amazing things for families to enjoy. Visitors are encouraged to visit the website and look over the calendar of events before traveling to see the lights and making a full day out of their trip. The Trail of Lights will begin on November 30th with several events taking place in both Spruce Pine and Bakersville on the kickoff day.

"The Trail of Lights is a way for our community to come together to celebrate the holiday season and to offer it as a gift to our citizens and visitors," said Jensen. "We hope that this is the start of something special for our county that will continue to grow for years to come."



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Happy Thanksgiving

Summit Community Church

Upcoming Holidays

By Mike Stroud
Burke County



I have noticed how unsettling some Christians get during the upcoming holidays. First, out of the gate is Halloween....scary for most Christians. I never have understood this. Yes, the devil tries to still God's glory, but he always fails. Every day is the day the Lord has made, and I will rejoice and be glad in it. So many Christians get caught up in all the evils of sorcery, witches, and werewolves, they forget to take their mask off that they wear weekly to church. I'm sorry, was that a low blow, of course it was. I'm guilty as the next person. This is the only time that the world comes to our doors. What a perfect time to show God's love and give out a few treats in the process. I look at it as the day the Lord brings people to us because we are too lazy to fulfill the Great Commission and go to the whole world proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. We always put on an event with the City of Morganton to have bouncy houses and all sorts of things for the kids of our community in the downtown square. It always amazes me; how many kids and parents show up. Thousands of people who never attend church. It is our opportunity to show the Love of Christ and have some fun. I have never been the one to look at the negative or the bad. There is enough out there for people to preach against. Forget that I like to reach not preach. People will come around once they know you care about them, instead of staring at them with condescending eyes. It's the goodness of God that draws men to repentance. So, celebrate this Halloween with evangelism, and give those ghosts a taste of the Holy Ghost.

That leads right into a wonderful Thanksgiving Season, where we get to eat our Scooby Snacks and thank the Lord for what all He is doing in the earth. Be the Light in a dark world and be thankful in a thankless world. *"In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."* I Thessalonians 5:18

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

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Snow Hill Baptist Church

"No Regrets Family"

By Dean Honeycutt
Mitchell County

Happy Thanksgiving

I am very grateful for all the things the Lord has done for me and my family. And at Thanksgiving, we want to give God all glory and praise. Sometimes it is difficult to recognize the blessings of God during difficult times of our lives. But rest assured God is helping us during times of adversity. I believe it is human nature to focus on adversity rather than the good things God is doing in our lives.

As a child of God, the Father never leaves us or forsakes us in our time of need, but often we wonder where God is. Rest assured dear child of God the Father is "a very present help in time of trouble." Pam and I have gone through trying times and we can look back over a difficult time and see the hand of God. I wonder why God allows us to have trouble. I realize that the Father is "no respecter of persons" and "it rains on the just and the unjust." If God never allowed difficulty in my life, then I would not need God and I would never learn to trust God.

Our children learn to trust Pam and I even though we cannot prevent sorrow in their lives. We walk with our children during those times and do everything we can to comfort and help the situation. Our Father in heaven acts much the same way. He walks with us during those times in life comforting us and often doing things we may not even be aware of to bring us through our most difficult times of life. God always performs in our lives what is best for us in perfect love for us. We may not understand it, but in our suffering, we identify with Christ who suffered and died for us.

The Father takes no pleasure in seeing us suffer. We often think of Job and all that he went through, and Job could not understand why he was suffering. The Lord said to Job. Job 38:2 (KJV 1900)

2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel By words without knowledge?
And Job said to the Lord. Job 42:2-3 (KJV 1900)

2 I know that thou canst do everything And that no thought can be withholden from thee.

3 Who is he that hideth counsel Without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

At the end of the book of Job, we see God in all His power and wisdom challenging Job to answer Him. And Job cannot answer the Lord. Instead Job humbles himself under the mighty hand of God and proclaims... Job 40:4-5 (KJV 1900)

4 Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

5 Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: Yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.

Job 42:6 (KJV 1900)

6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent In dust and ashes.

Like Job, we must understand that God's way is far above our way, and at the end of the day it will be God who is honored and is in control. I am grateful that my Father "puts my tears into His bottle" and "knows the number of hairs on my head." I am grateful for my family and I am so grateful for my salvation and the salvation of my family. We have gone through some difficult times, and God has been good to us. We proclaim as the Psalmist Psalm 56:13 (KJV 1900)

13 For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling.

That I may walk before God in the light of the living?

No matter what you may be going through or how bad things may be, God loves you and He cares for you. We may not understand all that is going on in our lives, but God will bring to completion the good work He has begun in you.

God bless you; we hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

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.



NC Baptist Aging

The First Ten Years: "It's a God Thing!"

By Dr. Sandy Gregory

When I think back to NCBAM beginning as an idea 10 years ago and exploding into an internationally recognized and award-winning ministry, I realize there is no other explanation than that the ministry is "a God thing." Yes, we researched, consulted experts, planned and prayed, but God has surrounded NCBAM every step of the way!

In our first year of research, we learned that the chief desire of older adults was to maintain their independence in their own homes. That became our mission – to provide "help for the journey" to individuals 65+ in ways that help them to maintain independence and enjoy a quality of life in their own homes.

The growth of the ministry has felt explosive at times (BAM!), but God has always provided partners and resources just when needed. He's also been faithful to bring in team members with a variety of talents, skills, and experiences that "join and knit together" the ministry like Paul wrote to the Ephesians. ("From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." Ephesians 4:16)

When NCBAM began in 2009, there were waiting lists for services for older adults in North Carolina for things such as home-delivered meals, respite care, and transportation help. Those waiting lists are still growing as state budgets are cut and stretched to the limit. But NCBAM, Baptist churches, partners, and volunteers are bridging the gap to help our state's aging.

We began our most ambitious outreach this year—One Hope: a spiritual response to isolation and loneliness. Like NCBAM, One Hope began as a pilot program in Davidson County within the Liberty Baptist Association. The NCBAM Hope Line is active in the county and will eventually cover the state. We've seen favor and resources appear to support One Hope at just the right time—one "God thing" after another!

My goal for NCBAM is that people will see Jesus in its ministries. As outreaches grow, the good that comes will be because of God's hand on the ministry and the churches who honor the aged. I agree with our founder, Dr. Michael Blackwell, as he said in our anniversary video – "You ain't seen nothin' yet!"

Sandy Gregory is the Director of the North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry.



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High Country Prison Ministry

Prison Saved My Life

By Jody Griffin

Avery and Mitchell Counties



"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." (Ephesians 5:15-17)

I admit that it still catches me off guard. The unexpected testimony of a man incarcerated for whatever offense led to his current circumstances is a surprise indeed. I'm referring specifically to that moment that I am an oft honored guest to share. It's the truthful admission that for some...

"Prison saved my life."

A younger offender reminded me recently of numerous other men I have been privileged to serve when he said those very words to me. His eyes brimming with tears he explained how 1. "Out of control" his life had become and how 2. "Drugs and alcohol had become his means to surviving each day". These realities led to decisions that would alter the trajectory of his life.

But since he found himself removed from his environment and confined to the narrow parameters of incarceration, he has had time to think through the path he has traveled and realizes the opportunity that this sentence offers him. That is true wisdom.

Some who are contained within the walls will experience a spiritual awakening! Some will take advantage of educational opportunities and vocational classes that help them develop skills for employment when they are released. Some will do the hard work of recovery from addiction and some will invest time and energy in developing their relationships with their children (Father Accountability). Some will learn basic skills for living (Life Skills) such as personal finance, job interview training, and time management.

While this four-word declaration is not made by every person in prison, they are a repeated refrain of a percentage of the population. For these, who have chosen to accept the consequences of their criminal activity as an opportunity for personal growth, the boundaries of their sentence take on new meaning! For them time seems different. No longer are they focused on the length of their sentence as a burden! That same sentence has now become an opportunity! It's not 'how long I have to be here' but 'how little time I have to make the changes that will allow me to become a productive member of society who can make a positive impact on my family, my community and contribute to the good of all.'

That's what the apostle Paul is referring to in these verses.

"Redeeming the time" is the choice one makes to take advantage of the opportunities to become positive, productive citizens. It's such an important Truth to grasp: For just as Paul described the nature of the season in which he lived, served and would ultimately die, the days are evil.

It's something like the former advertising slogan for the vegetable juice V8... "Redeeming the time" is realizing what one has missed and thus making the conscious decision to miss it NO MORE! "Wow, I could have had a V8!" (Smack in the forehead!)

"Wow! I could have had peace in my heart and joy in my soul! If I had only understood that such was God's Will for me!" (Smack in the heart!) Even in evil times, those who choose to live in God's Will can know that as life challenges them, they can be restored!

Thanks, Be to God!

**The ministry of the Community Funded Chaplain is completely built upon the generous giving of churches, individuals and groups who take on the opportunity to minister to the incarcerated through the Chaplain's presence within the institution. High Country Prison Ministry operates by faith that there are such people willing to give to sustain the Chaplain's position and ministry activities throughout the year. Please prayerfully consider keeping this ministry going through a regular gift or a one-time donation. There are men and their families depending upon your faithful support. God Bless you for your faithfulness in serving and in giving!

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

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Life Lessons

By Doug Harrell
Mitchell County

Each day is a new day, yesterday is gone and tomorrow may never come, so make the very best possible of this day in your life! I was just looking at a picture posted of classmates from Tipton Hill School that was taken two years ago, several changes in the group! We need to embrace each day of our lives with all the joy and gladness that God allows us, share your love with others like there will be no tomorrow. There may not be!

We tend to let life's little situations cloud our minds and get distracted from the things that really matter in life. Don't let your anger about something real or imagined mess with your mind. In a hundred years from now will it make a difference? Remember, a soft answer turns away wrath, a warm embrace can erase the hurt, a smile tends to bring forth a smile. Let the mess of life roll off your back like water off a ducks back as the saying goes.

Decide to smell a few roses today by touching the life of someone you love in a special way, do something a little out of the ordinary, hug a friend, pray a prayer with someone that is hurting, shine the light a little brighter.

"For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
Romans 8:38-39 KJV

Let God reign in your life today, seek His will and manifest His love for all to see, as the song goes, *"Let others see Jesus in You."*

*"While passing through this world of sin,
and others your life shall view.
Be clean and pure without, within;
Let others see Jesus in you.
Let others see Jesus in you,
Let others see Jesus in you.
Keep telling the story, be faithful and true;
Let others see Jesus in you.
Your life's a book before their eyes,
They're reading it through and through
Say, does it point them to the skies,
Do others see Jesus in you?"*

We walk this path of life but one time here on this earth, but the paths that we take here hopefully will be blazed with markers that will lead our family and friends toward the most important thing in their lives, a reunion on the other side of Jordan! Be true to the teachings of our Lord to the best of your ability each day. Let others see Jesus in you! God Bless!

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



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Commanded to Spread the Gospel

By Dr. Tom Walker
McDowell County



The greatest message that has ever been proclaimed is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the truth about the death, burial, and resurrection of our Savior.

It is tragic that so many who claim to know Christ as a personal Savior do not show great concern and interest in spreading the Gospel message. If you had a cure for cancer and did not share it with others, what kind of person would you be? It would not speak very well of your character. So many individuals and families have suffered due to that terrible disease we call cancer. If there were a cure for it why would a person not share it? If there is a cure for man's sin, and there is, why do we not spend more time seeking to let others know about it?

Some have estimated that the Apostle Paul traveled over 10,000 miles in spreading the Gospel of Christ. On his first missionary journey alone, it has been estimated that Paul traveled over 1400 miles. He did not have modern modes of transportation and yet he traveled all those miles because of what Jesus did for him on the Damascus Road.

There are four definite commands regarding the spread of the good news about Jesus and his love. We are going to spend a little time looking at those four mentions in each of the first four books of the New Testament.

Matthew's Account- Matthew 28:18-20
"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Who is the Lord talking to in verses 18-20? He is talking to His disciples or His followers. The lost are not interested in spreading the truth about Jesus, but His born-again people are. Saved people have an interest in seeing others receive salvation in Christ.

What does the Lord give us to help as we carry this commission out? His power is given to us that enables us to tell others about Him. It is because of that power given to the saints that we can spread the message of salvation to the lost. God's power is "almighty" power. All power is almighty power. It has no limits nor restraints.

Look at the verbs in this version of the Great Commission. They are to go, teach, and baptize. Going has the idea of reaching out to others; going where they are. Teaching has the idea of instructing people in righteousness, whether it be in the pulpit or in the classroom. Baptizing is making an open confession of two main things. It signifies that we believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. In addition, it testifies that we are dying out to the old way of life and rising to walk in newness of life because the Lord has saved us.

What encourages us as we tell others about Christ? He says, "Lo, I am with you alway." Our spiritual stimuli in getting out the Gospel comes from the knowledge that we are obeying the Lord and that His divine presence is with us in all our endeavors for Him. There is never a moment as we serve Him that he is not with us.

Mark's Account- Mark 16:15,16
"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Again, as in Mark 16, we are told how we should go:

- We should go obediently because the Lord has commanded, we do so.
- We should go confidently because the message we have is the right one.
- We should go expectantly, believing as we proclaim God's Word, He will bless it.
- We should go compassionately, revealing a loving concern for the lost person.
- We should go knowledgeably having put the Word of God into our hearts.

Observe first we are told where to go, "into all the world." Wherever there are human beings, from the largest cities in the world to the darkest jungles of Africa, the message must be given. If you were in the place where the Gospel had not been, knowing what you know as a believer, would you not appreciate someone coming to you with the truth about Jesus' death, burial and resurrection.

In addition, we are told what to do, that being to preach the Gospel of Christ. We have a powerful message that can turn people from the wrong to the right. Paul put it this way: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom.1:16). Since it is the power of God unto salvation, we dare not miss our opportunities to spread the Gospel of Christ since it has such a tremendous power to bring about salvation.

In your first look at verse 16, it may look like both believing and being baptized are part of coming to know the Lord in salvation. The last part of verse 16 clarifies why the lost person will go to hell if they are not born again. The reason for being damned and condemned is due to the fact a person has not believed. No one is lost because they have not been baptized, rather because he or she has not believed in Christ as Savior and Lord. Baptism is not a part of being saved, it is a practice that follows salvation.

Luke's Account- Luke 24:46-49
"And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."

So many today do not include the message of repentance in the good news we preach. One must be willing to turn away from sin before they can turn to Christ to be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor.5:21). Jesus said if people do not repent, they will perish (Luke 13:3-5).

God has chosen us to be His witnesses. A fellow said to me one time, "Why did God not choose to send out his message through angels?" My response to him was: "The angels have never been lost and redeemed, but us human beings who are saved have been. Who better to tell the story than those who have been lost and found?"

John's Account- John 20:21
"Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

It is unmistakable why the Lord saves us. We do not experience redeeming grace just that we might one day go to Heaven, but that we might have a mission like that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

As the Father sent Jesus to "seek and save that which was lost"—we are saved in order that we might do the same thing. We cannot provide salvation. Jesus did that through the shedding of His blood on Calvary's cross. However, we can teach and preach the good news that the Lord Jesus has taken care of the sin problem. If the Gospel of Christ is the solution for man's sin, let's not hesitate to proclaim this saving message.

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

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The Inspiring Word

The Parable of the Blind Leading the Blind

By Terry Cheek
McDowell County

Luke 6:39-42

It's easy to point a finger at the lives of others. Turn on the television, radio, or log into the internet and you will find finger-pointing. But this problem has easily found its way into the church family. We all know that no one is beyond fault, sin or failure. Yet, we too often are much more understanding of it occurring in our personal lives than we are in the lives of others. Let's go to God's word and let it speak to our hearts as we continue our look into Jesus' parables. From Luke 6:39-43 we read *"And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch? 40 The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. 41 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye. 43 For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."*

This parable comes from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. From it, Jesus challenges us to come face to face with who we are. Jesus doesn't stop there; he challenges how we deal with it and the effect our lives have on others. Notice with me... First, the Lord asks a question. Remember this is the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus has in front of Him not only His disciples but a multitude of people who have followed Him for days. Watching Jesus work miracles and heal all types of disease. Jesus asks them "... can the blind lead the blind?" So, is it possible for a blind person to lead a blind person? Sure, but the outcome will not be good. They will both wind up in the ditch. If two people having the same problem try to help each other, neither one of them will make any progress. That's what happens when we have unconfessed sin in our lives. Any and all unconfessed sin in our lives will hinder our ability to influence others because we will be just as blind as the person we are trying to help. Would you be willing to listen to someone who currently has problems as bad or worse than yours? Being religious, moral, kind, polite or even giving are great attributes to have, but they do nothing to properly influence others. So, how do we gain influence in other people's lives? Nothing short of the forgiveness of our sins will allow us to see the light which is Christ. By knowing we have been forgiven of our sin and that it is covered in Jesus' blood we will know any influence we have comes from and through the Lord Himself. We don't have the ability to influence anyone, but we can submit ourselves to the Lord as a vessel He can work through.

Second, the Lord compares the disciple to his master. Jesus reminds us that we even in our forgiven state are never above or even equal to our Lord and Master Jesus Christ. When we become emotional, we tend to point a finger, find fault in others or even make a judgment. We do have the liberty to call out sin when we see it. But we must be careful not to judge the sinner. That's a very fine line to walk. Where is our burden to win that sinner to Christ, see them saved and watch them repent of sin, just as we did? Isn't that what we are called to do? Jesus called, empowered and taught His disciples to spread the gospel so others would believe in Him and call upon Him for forgiveness of sin. I realize this is a message we have all heard many times. But it benefits us to have our hearts refreshed, especially during the day and times we live in. Christian, let's find our place as disciples for the gospel and the Great Commission. We are disciples, not Lords. It is our place to follow the instructions of Jesus and serve Him as the body of Christ. We are His hands and feet to the world we live in. Are we extending the hands of Jesus to those needing it most? Are we carrying His gospel to those needing it most? Those I am referring to will be those suffering the most, those who have hit bottom and are looking for a hand up. Do we really want to see them?

Third, the Lord calls us out. How easy it is for us to spot small sin in the lives of others and neglect larger sin in our personal lives! Wow, this really hits home. You may want to stop reading right here and move on, but please don't. There is a reason Jesus grabbed our attention. Let's be honest, we all are prone to say look at him or her to justify sin, fault or failure in our own life. We will even go far enough to seek out those who will agree with us and support our position. But here is the problem Jesus points out. How can we justify pointing out sin in someone else's life if we refuse to deal with our own? This is the definition of a hypocrite! Jesus was constantly calling out the Pharisees and Temple's leadership for hypocrisy. He doesn't want His disciples falling into the same trap. He doesn't want you and I to fall into the same trap. Our priority should be our own life. Daily we should be conscious about what we say, how we present ourselves or what we participate in. Living a life that identifies our personal sin first gives us credibility with others and boosts their confidence in the Lord to help them through the situation they are in. Also, we can't cover up our sins by spotlighting the sins of others. Sooner or later our sins will come to light. Sooner or later we must face what we currently may be hiding from. This is tough to hear and even tougher to admit too. We must if we're going to be the influence we are called to be.

Fourth and my final point is the spiritual affect our attitude about sin has on our lives. We are to bear fruit for the Lord. That is what we are told to do, right? I have fruit trees on my small property and if I want to harvest from them, I must do a few things every year. First, I must feed them to make sure they have what is necessary to be strong and healthy. Second, I must prune them, cutting away dead growth allows the tree to reproduce living and healthy branches for the coming year. Third, I must make sure the old dead fruit is taken away so that bugs, disease, and animals will not damage my tree.

Our spiritual life is just like those fruit trees. If we don't feed ourselves with the word of God, our Bible, on a regular basis we cannot become strong and healthy. It



is God's word that strengthens us for the battles we face from our enemy the devil. The Lord wants to take away the parts of our life that do not honor Him. Is there unforgiven sin that we still hold onto? God wants to prune that away but if we keep grafting it back in our life there is no room for new and fruitful opportunities. Let God remove what doesn't produce fruit in our lives. Finally, the work of the old man, the person you were before being saved needs to be a thing of the past. Don't hang on to that old person, they will only infest your new life with disease and damage.

This is how we influence others, by allowing our lives to be changed from the inside out. Until we meet again, in print or in person, may God bless you daily. You can contact Terry by email at theinspiringword@gmail.com Or by visiting www.theinspiringword.org

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



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Greetings from the Shire!

By Nancy Malik
Avery County

As Avery County has moved into autumn and showing it beautifully, it is a lovely expression from God and Day 4 of Creation when He made seasons. Having lived where it is winter 9 months of the year (high country of Colorado) or summer 12 months of the year (SW Florida), His seasons are still there. There are so many expressions of the love of God here. People reaching out to those in addictions like Celebrate Recovery at Heaton Christian Church. Only Jesus! For true release Jesus is the way and Celebrate shares it lovingly on Monday nights at 6 pm. Another expression is the many Christian business owners here. One businessman had the honor of leading a young man to the Lord in his hardware store, 3 Nails. His store is a holy place! God bless the body of Christ who reaches out to those who need the truth no matter where they are or what they do. An antique store, Back Alley Pickers, who has many Christians involved with her as a Christian herself, has a store full of memories from long ago, and the peace of the Lord is there.

It is exciting to see the Avery High School Fellowship of Christian Athletes group as it magnifies the Lord on campus. Also, Lees-McRae College students meet with Campus Life to grow and intensify their walk with Jesus! There are over 100 churches here in Avery County. The majority are small and very family oriented. Others have larger congregations, and all have a symphony of ways to honor and worship the Lord! One church, in particular, has a vibrant college group! Truly a unique place in God's kingdom on earth, Avery County has a rich Christian heritage. Many families have lived here for decades or more. And many families are interwoven in marriage. Avery County and the southern Appalachians are one of the last strongholds, by region, for a Christian impact on their communities. We are seeing signs of Jesus' words to us about the End Times, the Last Days. Are you and yours ready for changes coming? Is your relationship with Him solid and fast? Is He your guide and comfort in and out of hard times and good times? If not, please reach out to someone you know who shows Christ love themselves, because He is in them. Jesus warns us in the New Testament of what the end times would be like. This time, now, seems to fit that description. He loves you so much and wants to give you an eternity to live with Him! Blessings, dear ones of The Shire! He is coming soon! Be ready!

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!



The Best Bible Program or App

By Kevin Purcell
Burke County

People often ask me, "What's the best Bible app or program?"

That's not a simple question to answer, but it can be if you tell me what you want to do with it? For example, I won't recommend some apps for preachers, while I wouldn't recommend others for someone who just wants to read the Bible on their phone or tablet. So, let's look at what is the best Bible program or app for each use case.



Bible Apps for Reading and Searching the Bible

Do you simply want to access different Bibles on a phone or tablet? Maybe all you want to do is the following:

- Search for verses using keywords as you do with the concordance in the back of your printed Bible.
- Open your favorite translation of the Bible in English and read it.
- Set up a Bible reading plan through the entire Bible, a book or portions of the Bible.
- Notify you with a sound or popup notification to remind you to read the device.
- Post-Bible verses to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or other social media in simple text form or pretty images.

These kinds of apps will usually work on your iPhone, iPad, Android phone or Android tablet. I call them Bible Reader Apps. These apps don't have advanced features which makes them easy to learn to use. However, they don't usually include complex tools like commentaries, Greek or Hebrew dictionaries or even an atlas. I write for a site called ChurchTechToday and there's a list of the ten best apps like this. Find it here: churchtechtoday.com/2018/10/22/10-best-simple-bible-study-apps/

For most people, the best app to use is called Bible. Some call it the YouVersion Bible or Life.church Bible app. If you search for YouVersion in your app store on iPhone, iPad, Android or Kindle, you'll find the app. It's free and works great. Go to www.Bible.org and you can use the same account on your computer too.

Bible Apps for Preparing for Bible Studies

The above focuses on those who need a simple Bible app for reading, searching and maybe sharing encouraging verses on social media. This second group adds more features focusing on reading, searching and sharing Bible verses like you can with the above kinds of apps. However, you may want a program that also runs on your computer and lets you see what a commentary has to say about your passage. You might also want Bible dictionaries to learn the meaning of terms like atonement, repentance or Passover.

To do that, you need a slightly more advanced program like Olive Tree Bible Reader. Go to www.olivetree.com and you'll find all about it. It's free, but you'll have to buy books that you can add to the program. It comes with a group of free books and you can add others.

The program works on mobile devices like Android, Kindle, and iOS (Apple), but it also has a Windows and MacOS version.

The Resource Guide in the Olive Tree Bible Reader takes all your reference books (commentaries, dictionaries, Greek or Hebrew dictionaries, cross-references, maps and more) and finds content from the verse you open the program to display. So, if you're reading John 3:16 it will almost instantly search for content about that verse in all of your books and show them on the right side of the screen with the Bible on the left.

Advanced Bible Study for Pastors or Advanced Bible Students

If you preach or teach the Bible, then you need a professional-level tool. Fortunately, we have two amazing tools that you can use. The first comes from Accordance Bible Software. The second is made by a company called Faithlife called Logos Bible Software.

We don't have room to describe all that these advanced tools can do. Think of it this way. Someone who occasionally cooks might have a microwave and a hot-plate. People who cook all the time will have a midrange stove that costs hundreds of dollars. A pro will buy every cooking gadget and appliance they can find and spend tens of thousands.

You don't have to spend tens of thousands on Accordance or Logos, but you should plan to spend more than a hundred to five hundred to get a professional level library. To learn more about what Logos can do for you in your sermon prep, see my YouTube channel. I'm in the middle of doing a video series on how to prepare sermons using Logos Bible Software - bit.ly/logos_youtube.

Conclusion

Regardless of which kind of Bible student you are, the digital world can help you get into God's word in wonderful ways. I carry a seminary level library everywhere I go on my phone or iPad. Just ten years ago, that wasn't possible.

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.

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President Trump, Religious Liberty, and International Climate Policy

By Rev. Mark Creech

A couple of weeks ago, President Trump hosted the first meeting on religious freedom at the United Nations, calling on nations from across the globe to end persecution against people of faith.

"To stop the crimes against people of faith, release prisoners of conscience, repeal laws restricting freedom of religion and belief, protect the vulnerable, the defenseless, and the oppressed, America stands with believers in every country who ask only for the freedom to live according to the faith that is within their hearts," said the President.

There was little media coverage of this unprecedented meeting by the President, except to levy criticism for his unwillingness to make climate change, the centerpiece of this year's U.N. schedule, a priority for the United States. The meeting on religious liberty was marginalized as nothing more than a political ploy to satisfy the President's conservative evangelical supporters.

That prompted Pastor Robert Jeffress to rightly call out the snub, telling "Fox and Friends" host Ainsley Earhardt: "This is the first time any leader of a nation has addressed the UN on religious persecution. A third of the world is living under religious persecution...and it is a remarkable thing that this President would skip a UN climate change summit on an imaginary problem to address the very real problem of global persecution of believers."

Jeffress was so right! The problem of global warming, with its coming "end of the world" narrative, has been grossly overestimated. In fact, David Webb, host of Fox Nation's "Reality Check," got it right when he referred to it as the "religion of the Left." Dr. Michael Brown also called it "the new religion of manmade global warming." Brown said: "It has its unique gods (like Mother Earth). It defies the created world (with seminarians confessing to plants in a chapel service). It has its high priests and religious leaders (the climate change gurus and radical environmentalists). It has its patron saints (like Sweden's Greta Thunberg). And it has its own doomsday scenario: The end of the world is near. Very near."

Webb also said, "After all it's the big New Green Deal [which is about climate change], which isn't the real deal, and America the prosperous is the Satan. Hey, every religion needs a Satan." So, the religion of climate change even has a Devil. I am not a scientist, but I don't think it's necessary to be one to recognize a few simple facts about the issue of climate change. Regardless of claims to the contrary, every attempt to prove a scientific consensus that greenhouse gases are causing global warming and precipitating an impending climate disaster has failed. One thing about science is exact: its analysis of data is always changing. This is particularly true regarding predictions of future environmental disasters.

Myron Ebell and Steven J. Milloy of the Competitive Enterprise Institute have recently provided an impressive list of apocalyptic predictions made through the decades from notable people in government and science that have miserably failed. "Such predictions have been and continue to be enthusiastically reported by a media eager for sensational headlines," say the authors, but "the failures are not typically revisited." Indeed, the claims of science, the assertions of the experts, are ever being amended, but the Word of God stands forever. And the teachings of the Bible are at cross-purposes with the declarations of climate change advocates. God didn't create a fragile Earth but a strong and resilient one. Genesis 1:31 says, "God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good."

God indeed gave man dominion over the planet, and he's to be a good steward of its resources (Gen. 1:26-28). Still, are we to believe that God made the world so delicate that if man's use of any fossil fuels raises carbon dioxide levels from 27 to 54 thousandths of one percent of the atmosphere, it will cause worldwide destruction? The contention is absurd. God made a better world, one that's able to adapt, and self-regulate to serve his eternal purposes for humankind.

After the universal deluge of Noah's day, the Lord promised: "While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22). In other words, God solemnly declared always to sustain the earth's cycles on which humanity depends for survival, and this will remain the situation until the final judgment. Does that sound like humanity is about to careen off into annihilation because of the effects of global warming? Someone says, "Yes, but what about all the extraordinary weather events which have occurred in recent years, deadly storms, strong winds, droughts, unprecedented flooding, and other natural disasters? Surely, it's the effects of global warming." It shouldn't be forgotten that God controls the weather. The passages of Scripture that affirm this truth are numerous in both the Old and New Testaments.

In Jeremiah 5:23-25, the Lord rebuked Israel, saying that he was using the weather as a means of rebuking them for their sins: "But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; they have turned aside and gone away. They do not say in their hearts, 'Let us fear the Lord our God, who gives the rain in its season, the autumn rain and the spring rain, and keeps for us the weeks appointed for harvest.' Your iniquities have turned these away, and your sins have kept good from you."

Could the alleged effects of global warming be God's global warning for the sinful masses? Is God drawing attention to his sovereignty and urging the nations to repent? There's one other factor that's not spiritual but political, which should be considered. Other nations from around the world, who by the way care nothing about religious liberty, are envious of America's prosperity. Climate policy, as dictated by the United Nations, would require America to give up its sovereignty and redistribute its wealth.

As John Edison, a free-lance writer from Atlanta, eloquently argues: "[T]



continued on page 43

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Sudoku Solution

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

West Burnsville Baptist Church

Christmas Unwrapped

By Wanda Harding
Yancey County



We invite you to join us as we celebrate Christmas with Christmas Unwrapped, the Nineteenth Annual West Burnsville Baptist Church Christmas Pageant. This year's performances will be Saturday, December 7 at 7 pm, Sunday, December 8 at 10:30 am and 3 pm, and Monday, December 9 at 7 pm at West Burnsville Baptist Church, 222 West Burnsville Church Road in Burnsville, North Carolina. All performances are free.

About twenty years ago, Jan Moore came to West Burnsville Baptist Church from Fort Lauderdale where she helped direct the Emmy award-winning Fort Lauderdale Christmas Pageant and the West Burnsville Christmas Pageant was born. This year, Jan is back as our guest director and we are celebrating two decades of memories, hard work, but most importantly, changed lives. The pageant started with a Christmas music concert and a simple presentation of the birth of Christ through drama and music. Over the next twenty years, it expanded to include the life of Christ and the promise He brings. This year will include favorite musical selections from previous years, but also some new music, and several changes in the presentation. Our whole purpose always being to unwrap the true meaning of Christmas, hence the name of this year's pageant - Christmas Unwrapped.



For the 150+ who make the pageant a reality, presenting the pageant has been a time of getting to know each other better and has created a great sense of unity and excitement as we spend hours together planning, learning the music and staging, making the costumes and props, building the stage, and feeding the cast. For those on the stage, it is like being there with Christ as he journeys from the manger to the cross and back to heaven. For those who have attended over the years, the pageant has become a tradition that marks the beginning of the Christmas season. Many have left with a fresh vision of the true meaning of Christmas and some have come to accept the risen Christ as their Savior and Lord.

Bring your family and friends and expect to receive a blessing! Reservations for large groups can be made by calling the church at (828) 682-3990.

Wanda Harding lives in Burnsville with her husband of 51 years. She has been pianist at West Burnsville Baptist for many years and has been part of the Creative Team for the pageant since its inception.

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



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Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

The Rest of the Story

I have no idea how many of you have ever worked in corn field beans, but if you have, I am sure you have probably walked out of the field itching. I know I have done that many times. Clint was extremely worried, as he should have been, about the using any kind of chemicals, and I was always conscious of warning him when there was a danger. He did have red welks around his arms and neck the day he can in from the bean field. I can still see him before he went to the field with his chemical suit on, respirator and gloves, I had put a little fear in him because I did not want him to get hurt or exposed to anything that might hurt him. When I looked at his neck it was instantly apparent what had taken place. The look in his eyes said, am I going to live? He did look much better after the shower and piece of Barbara's delicious cake.

Betsy, Barbara and I had a belly laugh about the watermelon situation, Clint was beginning to get the hang of farm life about the time we took over the paper, and he moved to Spruce Pine. Those were the days my friend!

Farmer Doug

Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

Dear friends,

As I reminisce about my past agricultural prowess, I am still amazed to have survived so many near-misses with death at Harrell Hill Farms. There are nights I awaken, terrified of "what might have been," always thankful for God's protective covering @.

This month I want to share two short stories, more evidence of how easily things can go awry!

Hazmat Suit...

It was a sweltering summer day as Doug dispatched me to spray insecticide on rows of beans and tomato plants. While I don't recall the exact name of the chemical, I believe it was first cousin to Agent Orange. Despite temperatures in the 90's, my buddy insisted that I wear a ridiculous crepe suit, gloves and hat. "Pollard, this is a dangerous chemical and you need to be careful not to let it get on your skin," Farmer Doug warned. Always compliant, I slithered my then fat self into the hunter's green material, donned my farmer's gloves and set out to eradicate the veggie cannibals.

I had the presence of mind to stand down-wind of the fine chemical mist so as not to drink too many of the tiny droplets. And spray I did...up and down...all around...bugs gasping for their last precious breath as I bobbed and weaved among the rows. Dodging pig weed, swarms of hornets and all manner of creepy crawly things I maneuvered throughout the vast garden. Mission accomplished. Returning home that evening the skin on my neck was burning, tingling, and feeling as though a gazillion fireants were feasting on my blood. As I looked in the mirror I noted what appeared to be a vast blister, better said leprosy! Alas, my life flashed before my eyes as I envisioned the end...surely the dastardly chemical mixture was expediting my trip to heaven. I scurried to the farmhouse kitchen, hoping only to bid farewell to Doug and Barbara.

Running headlong into my mountain-man friend, my eyes telegraphing terror and distress, he asked, "Pollard, what's wrong with you?" I explain how I followed his instruction, "Doug, I wore the suit and gloves even though the heat was nearly exhausting. I even thought to stand upwind of the spray. But, as you see, my skin is being eaten from the outside in."

That crooked smile and mischievous look, the one he always displays just before saying "Pollard, I don't know what I'm gonna do with you," that one...and he asked, "Uh, did you get tangled up in the beans?" Thinking back I recounted how a couple times the corn row beans had wrapped their stringy vines around my neck, once nearly taking me to my knees. "You are allergic to the bean vine, lots of folks are," Doug said. "Take a shower, dry it off and you'll be okay in a couple days." Snickering, having a bit too much fun in my opinion, my friend offered me a piece of cake. And I devoured it, thankful that God spared me death from the nuclear material.

Waving Watermelon...

I had been plowing, hoeing, raking and otherwise eating dust all day long. An extended dry spell plagued our mountain farm as Doug lovingly and painstakingly taught me the process of harvesting hay. I had recently learned to lift and transport the round bales (a story for another day) and was returning to the barn with a fresh load.

As you know from previous musings, I love driving the tractor @. Tooling along down Harrell Hill Road I "was one" with the land...content in my role as farm hand extraordinaire...privileged to captain the Kioti along our rural roads.

I'm telling ya, this was a hot day and I'd had no water in a few hours (Doug didn't give me breaks @). As I rounded the bend I saw a lovely lady standing at the intersection of Harrell Hill Road and Byrd Road. Drawing near I recognized Betsy, Doug's cousin and my friend. Her arm was extended as though flying a kite but I quickly noticed that instead she was waving a piece of watermelon.

As I passed by I could almost taste the succulent, dripping, cool red melon. And I wondered aloud, "Why is Betsy standing there waving a slice of watermelon? Such unusual customs in these mountains." Nevertheless, I smiled, tipped my Farmer Clint hat as a gentlemanly gesture, and went to deposit the hay. All the while wishing I could figure out a way to finagle that watermelon from Betsy.



A week or so later Doug remarked, "You hurt Betsy's feelings and I think you might want to talk to her about it." I searched the cobwebs of my mind to comprehend what I possibly could have done to offend this wonderful woman. "What did I do now?" I whined. Once again, his eyes two mischievous marbles, my friend explained, "Betsy tried to flag you down for some watermelon last week and you just drove by and waved."

I immediately I went on the attack, defensive to the extreme I proclaimed, "Now look, I don't know the rules of etiquette here. What was I supposed to do? You know I like Betsy, and you know I like watermelon. What you don't know is that I WANTED Betsy's watermelon! But how was I to know she wanted to share with me? It just didn't seem right to stop and say, 'Hi Betsy, may I please have your watermelon?' Or what if I had leaped from the tractor and said, 'Gimme that watermelon Betsy!'" Bursting into laughter my friends Doug and Barbara nearly died at the hilarity of that vision.

That was an important day, though, in my education at Harrell Hill Farms. What I learned is that on the farm virtually every gesture has meaning and every movement has purpose beyond what is apparent.

A few days later I apologized to Betsy for my faux pas. "That's okay," she said. "There's always another day and another watermelon." So, if you're new here and don't know what to do, remember...never fly by a lovely lady waving watermelon in your direction @!

As always, I thank God for the memories and experiences at Harrell Hill Farms...growing more distant now as the years roll along. Your old pal Farmer Clint enjoyed a special time of healing and restoration in the corn rows, sorghum cane fields, at the river, at the farmhouse table...among true friends. Thank you, Jesus @.

Still humbled in these hills,

Farmer Clint





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Humor

By Buddy Freeman
Madison County

"Laughter is Healthy for You"

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

Many folks want to serve God, but only as advisors.

The good Lord didn't create anything without a purpose. But mosquitoes come close.

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

I don't know why some people change churches. What difference does it make which one you stay home from?

Teacher: "Do you know where little boys go who don't put their Sunday School money into the offering plate?" The little boy replied: "To the movies."

A neighbor looked out the front window and saw her small son coming up the walk carrying a little spotted puppy. She met him at the door and commanded, "You take him back and bring your baby sister home."

If it's true that we are here to help others, then what exactly are the others here for?

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



Surviving the Holidays

By Carolyn Dotts
Mitchell County



On Thursday, November 21 at 6:00 pm Western Carolina Church will be hosting the Surviving the Holidays event. This single evening presentation is part of the GriefShare seminars and addresses how to handle grief during the holiday season. The holidays bring a variety of emotions—excitement, anticipation, and joy. However, the holidays can be especially difficult for those who are in grief. This seminar is designed to provide hope and healing, as well as practical suggestions for those who are grieving the loss of a loved one.

From Thanksgiving to Christmas bittersweet memories can surface of previous holidays when the lost loved one was present. These memories can be overwhelming. First, realize that the pain is unavoidable. Seeing the joy of others around you can also increase the pain. Don't pretend that you are not hurting because disguising your pain can prevent people from helping you. Be honest with those around you but be selective about when and with whom you share. Don't try to numb your pain. Instead, try to find healthy ways to deal with it. The intense pain of grief can bring about thoughts of suicide. This is the time to seek help, not isolate yourself.

Next, those in grief need to have a plan to handle the many responsibilities of the holidays. Making a list of all activities and events associated with a particular holiday is a good place to start. Review the list to see what possibly could be eliminated or postponed for this year. Then prioritize the remaining items on the list. It is possible that some items are traditions that may be more than you can handle this year, or new traditions can be created. The idea is to take it slow. However, you may want to keep things exactly as they usually are for the holidays, because discarding traditions can be even more painful. Changing traditions can also cause guilt in thinking the lost loved one is being forgotten. However, there is a difference in moving on and moving forward. Moving on implies something is being left behind while moving forward indicates you are taking something with you. There is no right or wrong in examining how you will handle the holidays—it can a process of trial and error. Don't be afraid to try something new, but if you didn't enjoy it, don't do it again.

Invitations can present other difficulties. Visiting family members and friends is often part of holiday plans. One suggestion is to schedule your visit before or after the actual holiday to allow for a calmer visit. Parties and other events can be challenging for those in grief. Trying to decide whether to attend can create stress. You don't want to attend just to please others. An option can be to discuss with the host if you could give a tentative yes until you see how you feel on the day of the event. You could also attend for just a part of the event or take a break during the event to rest. If you decide to attend, prepare responses to questions you may be asked, and decide how much you want to share with others. It is also possible that others around you may be afraid to talk about your lost loved one. In this case you may want to prompt them by acknowledging the missing loved one, which can put others at ease. Most of those in grief want to talk about the person they have lost. Hearing other's memories of that person can be especially comforting to them.

Dealing with pain can be overwhelming and exhausting. Here are some suggestions that may be helpful. Realize that healing takes time. The first holiday season after the loss is difficult, but the 2nd or 3rd year can be worse because the grieving person is numb, or there are other factors that shield them from fully feeling the pain of the loss. Reach out to help others. Loss can make us self-centered, but helping others takes the focus off ourselves. We want bless others the way we have been blessed. Turn to God to deal with the pain. Talk to Him, take refuge in Him. Painful experiences are best dealt with vertically through prayer. Be thankful, focus on what we do have, rather than the loss.

Finally, remember the meaning of Christmas. Yes, we are joyfully celebrating the birth of our Savior, but remember on the reason and the result of His coming. Christmas has been called the sufferer's holiday because Jesus came to end all suffering and sorrow.

If you would like more information or would like to register to attend this event, please contact Carolyn Dotts at 828-467-1433 or the Western Carolina Church office at 828-765-4633. There is no charge to attend, and a covered dish meal will precede the event. Each person attending will receive a handbook of articles and devotions to use during the holiday season.

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.



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Abiding Hope, Inc.

God Working Through Abiding Hope, Inc

By Sylvia Murphey
Madison County

Abiding Hope, Inc. located at 105 Chestnut Street in Mars Hill reaches out as a pregnancy medical clinic to serve women and their families with hope, love, and life. The need for this ministry is great since 50% of all pregnancies are unplanned and 95% of all women who have an ultrasound and see their baby choose life.

Beginning in 2013 meetings were held in Madison and North Buncombe to address a need for services that could be provided by a pregnancy center in the immediate area to reflect God's hope and value for life. A need was determined through the meetings and a search was made to find a location. In August of 2014, a place for the services was found at 105 Chestnut Street in Mars Hill and on August 5, the doors were opened as a satellite pregnancy center of the Asheville Area Pregnancy Support Services to serve Madison and Northern Buncombe Counties.

Abiding Hope, Inc. operated as a satellite center of Asheville Area Support Services (now Mountain Area Pregnancy Services) until May 1, 2019. Because of its growth in recent years, in both the number of clients and services, its name was changed to Abiding Hope, Inc. Serving Women and Families and operates as a 501(c)(3) organization. Although operating as two organizations, Abiding Hope, Inc. will remain medical partners with Mountain Area Pregnancy Services in Asheville. This means Abiding Hope clients will continue to access early prenatal care via our Mountain Area Pregnancy Services Clinic Director and Medical Director.

Abiding Hope, Inc. operates with the support of volunteers, churches, and individuals. A "Walk for Life" is held each year to raise funds for its support and celebrate what God has been doing through its services. The latest "Walk for Life" was held on September 7, 2019 and raised over \$40,000.

Have you been surprised by an unplanned pregnancy and don't know how you are going to manage? Do you have small children and the money runs out before the month and you need diapers or clothes for the children? Are you currently pregnant and without funds to purchase maternity clothes? Are you new parents and have no experience in caring for a baby? Have you lost a baby to miscarriage and need some help in dealing with this? Abiding Hope could be your answer. Our services include pregnancy testing, limited OB Ultrasounds, counseling, maternity/baby closet, prenatal and parenting classes, miscarriage and abortion support groups, support throughout the pregnancy and referrals to medical services and community resources.

Abiding Hope is devoted to loving and serving all its clients before, during and after their pregnancy. Services are for anyone regardless of age, race, religion or sexual orientation. If you or someone you know needs these services, please call to set up an appointment. Walk-ins are welcome! All services are free and 100% confidential. Abiding Hope strives to offer judgment-free support and evidence-based education to empower individuals to make healthy choices for emotional, physical and spiritual well-being regarding a pregnancy. Operating hours are Mondays 2-6 p.m., and Tuesdays and Thursdays 10-4 p.m. If Abiding Hope sounds like a place that could be of help to you or someone you know, please call (828) 680-1230 for an appointment or just drop by our office at 105 Chestnut Street in Mars Hill to get further information, a tour of our facility or to schedule an appointment. Find us on the web at www.abidinghopeinc.org. Melissa Lewis is Executive Director (mlewis@abidinghopeinc.org) and Angel Hilemon (ahilemon@abidinghopeinc.org) is the Client Services Director there.

Sylvia Murphey is a member of Gabriels Creek Baptist Church in Mars Hill. She retired from Mars Hill University in 2012 with 45 years of service as an administrative assistant. Sylvia lives in Bald Creek Community of Yancey County. She is deeply involved with the mission's outreach of her church and has been a volunteer since 2014 with Abiding Hope, Inc. in Mars Hill.



O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.
Psalms 107:1



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Tim's Treasures

Blown by the Hand of God

By Timothy W. Tron
Burke County

"Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words." -Dan. 10:12

The leaf clings to the branch, its life source, not seeking to search beyond what is now; what is real. Time passes and the seasons begin to change. Forsaken of looking past the immediate, soon, the grip of that being begins to loosen. The chill of the mornings drops farther with each passing day. Soon, the white mist of icy crystals will cover the sleeping ground, bringing with it the killing frost; the weather of the coming winter.

As the season folds into the next, the lone amber leaf is released from its grasp upon the place for which it had known, the place to which it felt a belonging. The cold winds lift the airborne vessel into the overcast sky, its destination is unknown. Where it will land is not as important as what it does before it ends up in its final resting place. The story that will unfold is the true source of purpose; the color and light that it will shed upon those who watch will become its true mission. For once, it held tightly to the thing from which it drew its breath of life, the source of its inspiration. Now, with what is left of that culmination of a summer's growth, it has been set free to inspire the world around it. The energy it had received must now be used to give hope to the world in which it will land. For once it was the receiver, it will now become the giver.

Each season of change has a purpose. Where God leads, when we walk in His way, we must realize that for each minuscule movement of our physical being, we are carried, like the fair winds of change, to the place for which He has intended all along. No matter how the path had twisted and turned, we must be mindful that it has been the Master's hand upon our entire journey. No faltering of our own existence could have taken us from the steps for which each had an intended meaning, each having a character-building, a faith empowering moment from which we became stronger, more resilient in our faith. For such a time is now that we have been prepared. Like the soil, for that which the farmer had worked, to ready it for the next planting, the next harvest, and then to turn the soil in preparation for the winter's cycle to begin the process all over again. Each action has an intended reaction. Every touch of God's hand upon our lives reveals another bend in our road of life.

The leaf flutters in the wind tipped and turned, being blown about without knowing where it will land. If it lights upon one spot, it may be but there for a short time before another blustery gust will lift it once again, not quite as high as before, but enough so that it will carry it to another resting place; potentially



where it will remain for all time, or perhaps, to be lifted yet again, blown unto another point of God's intended destination. Forever taken by His meaningful purpose upon our being to where we are needed most.

All around us are other leaves, whether they have fallen or whether they remain clinging to the very branch from whence we came, each one a story a journey of their own. Some will join us, while others will be blown to places that we may never know. Each has a purpose for which they, too, have been intended.

Grown to maturity in His loving presence, until the time is right for them to be set free and to be taken where His guiding hand places them. Each of us, in our own minds only see our singular existence, but from His eternal point of view, we are just one of a multitude for which he hath created. Some may be with us while others are simply watching, waiting to be inspired, so that they too someday may join us on that tree of life.

This morning's scripture not only spoke to me but rather, screamed at me. Not only did the meaning hit me full fold, but the actual scripture number stood out as more than a coincidence; 10/12 (October 12th), the date of my birthday. Daniel, speaking to God, receives his answer, telling him that his prayers had been heard and that from there very start, not only was he heard, but that God had come for his words. Once Daniel had chosen to control his decisions in life and submit himself before God, he procured God's attention. In so doing, garnering the grace of God, he sought to understand God and what his life meant with regard to God's intended purpose. Seeking to understand God allows us to better walk in the way in which he hath intended. In that manner, we then become stewards of His word, sharing, expounding, and giving voice to the Spirit that dwelleth within us through the Comforter, which he has promised and provided.

Searching for God, wanting to have a personal relationship with him, allows us to lift our voices to the great Almighty, from our tiny, infinitely small voice, to the One who reigns over all; the creator of Heaven and Earth, the God who spoke life into existence and breathed into the nostrils of Adam, after he had been formed from the clay of the very earth from which He hath created out of nothing; it is that God, to whom we, the created by his hand, seek to understand a wisdom so vast, so unimaginable, that we can forever hope to comprehend, but will never acquire but the most infinitesimally small portion to which He has to offer.

So, it is not the actual ability to understand for which we hope to seek, the wisdom for which He will grant if only we ask, but that our actions to procure that knowledge is as important as the wisdom itself. When we show we are acknowledging our humility, when we submit ourselves to His will, and not our own, it is then we are ever more allowed to come close and to learn from all that He can provide.

As the sap rises in the tree, giving energy and life to the leaf from whence, in like manner, the sunlight passeth through the very fibers of the leaf's being, giving untold strength and energy, allowing the tree to draw life from the light, so too are we; a complexity of a life given to a mind that is often incapable of grasping the sheer unseen complexities that allow us to function on a daily basis, from the invisible DNA molecules, knitted together to form the being of who we are, to the interaction with the whole of the earth around us, each formed in their own manner too, existing of the very building blocks from which we are also created, to become a singular existence; one solitary leaf, that will drift, like when we are answered by God's presence and the path for which He will send us out upon to do His will.

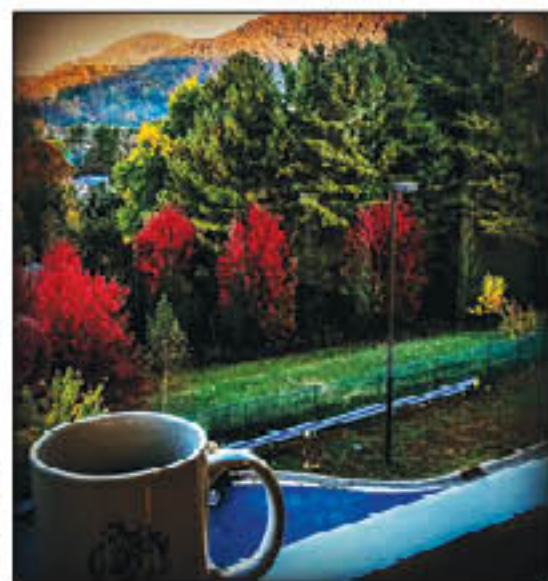
Our personal chastisement provides the boundaries, both to keep us mindful of our walk, but it also keeps the world around us at bay. The exterior protection from the elements, both physical and spiritual, are equally as important as that with which we seek to fill the void within. Without the firm outer shell, the soul within cannot be protected and can fall victim to the death and decay of the dark forces of this world.

Coming close to God, seeking to understand, we then are giving what we need to go forth and provide light and hope to the world around us, not only from the perspective as physical sustenance, but also from the spirit of our own, giving light to the soul within of others; being the colorful, light for which we have been changed. Our evolving from what we once were into the being that is capable of becoming what God had always intended, is the answer to our prayers.

Our walk now not yet complete; our sanctification a never-ending process; we are sent to go where we can provide the next season of hope to those in a dark world.

Without knowing, in our seeking to understand Him, we are giving the very life and tools with which to go forth and bring others to Him; and in the end, coming full circle as He speaks through us despite ourselves. With each word that we share, we walk one step closer to His side. 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



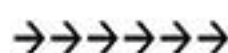
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The Thanksgiving Bird

By Christy Lowman
Burke County

Did you know that the wild turkey was almost the national bird of the United States? Benjamin Franklin thought the wild turkey should have this title instead of the bald eagle because the bald eagle can be a scavenger, stealing other birds and animals for prey. He considered the bald eagle less honorable because of this act and called the wild turkey a "bird of courage".

The wild turkey is one of the most famous birds in North America and gets its popularity because it was eaten at the first Thanksgiving. However, today most people eat domestic turkey for the holidays.

The wild turkey is the largest game bird in North America and can be found in wooded areas. Although, Alaska and Hawaii are the two states that don't have an extensive population.

Wild turkeys are the most hunted bird of North America and almost became extinct in the 1900s, with only 200,000 birds left. Through conservation, there are now over 6.5 million in North America.

Turkeys don't just gobble, they also cluck and purr. Their gobble, however, can be heard up to a mile away. Their lifespan in the wild is normally 3-5 years, but one turkey did live over 13 years in the wild.

Adult turkeys have between 5,000-6,000 feathers and can weigh anywhere between 5-20 pounds. Their dark feathers help them blend into their surroundings. The skin on their throat is bare and changes color from gray, to shades of red, white and blue, depending on how the turkey is feeling.

They can run anywhere from 12-25mph on the ground, in-flight they can reach 55mph. Turkeys roost in low tree branches at night. Their food consists of acorns, seeds, wild berries, and small insects. Turkeys have three times better eyesight than people, are able to see colors, and have a 270-degree view range. As the sun goes down their eyesight dwindles and is not optimum like it is during the day. The wild turkey is one of two native birds that have been regularly domesticated. Young turkeys called poults are born with feathers and leave the nest after 24 hours to search for food with their mother. Up to four weeks old, poults mainly eat insects, and then gradually switch over to vegetation. A young female is called a jenny, a young male is called a jake. Female adults are known as hens while adult males are toms. A group of turkeys is called a flock or rafter.

While researching the first Thanksgiving meal, it was neat to find what the other foods were that the Native Americans and pilgrims shared together. The Native Americans brought 5 deer with them when they came to the meal. Around 90 Native Americans and 50 pilgrims attended. There was a wild turkey, probably duck, geese, and swans. They had mussels, eel, lobster, clams, bass, and probably oysters. Vegetables from their harvest included onions, beans, lettuce, peas, spinach, cabbage, carrots and lots of corn. The corn was made into cornmeal, then boiled and pounded into thick porridge or mush sweetened with molasses. They had wild blueberries, cranberries, plums, grapes, gooseberries, and raspberries. As well as pumpkins that were hollowed out and filled with custard made of milk, spices, and honey, then roasted. Curds (like cottage cheese) were served with the mussels.

That was one great feast and celebration! It makes my mouth water and my stomach growl just thinking about it!

Have you ever thought back to the first Thanksgiving? How things were back then, how God was there? It amazes me at how God used the Native Americans to friend the pilgrims and show them how to survive in North America. The crops the pilgrims learned to plant were plentiful that year because God had blessed them beyond measure which resulted in the first Thanksgiving meal. It was a time to reflect on the past year and to give God the praise and glory He deserved, to thank Him for all their many blessings. Don't get me wrong, there were very hard times that the pilgrims had to endure as well. Many had died the winter before, as many as 78 percent of women had died, leaving only 50 pilgrims left: 22 men, 25 children/teens, and only four women to participate in the first Thanksgiving. In fact, if it hadn't been for the Native Americans, the pilgrims would have all died from starvation. Is it not amazing how God provided and saved them?

This day in time, Thanksgiving is not as emphasized as the other holidays. Many people must work Thanksgiving as stores now stay open, promoting sales for Christmas gifts. It saddens me that people have forgotten how important it is to take this day off and spend it in time of praise and thanksgiving to our great and mighty God. While you are eating Thanksgiving don't forget to think about your blessings and thank God (good and bad) for what he has done in your life. Usually after we pray, my family spends time going around the room while each of us tells what we are thankful for. This has proved to be a great significant tradition with my family because each person seems to bring something new out to be thankful for that maybe the rest of us didn't think about. We have also written down something we are thankful for each day of November and then went over them at Thanksgiving. It is amazing how many blessings God has blessed you with and this is a good way to reflect on them. You can always come up with your own creative way to thank God on Thanksgiving. Maybe you would like to start a new tradition on how to thank God on Thanksgiving. Maybe you can spend some time outside looking for wild turkey in your own backyard while spending time with God. I can tell you that the best time for us to see them is around dusk.

"Enter His gates with thanksgiving, And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him; bless His name." Psalms 100:4

"And you will say in that day: 'Give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted.' 'Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth.' Isaiah 12:4-5

Dear Lord, we praise You and thank You for all Your many blessings. Help us to reflect on these during the Thanksgiving holiday as well as every other day. We

continued on page 25



Thanksgiving, What A Wonderful Holiday!

By Bruce Cannon
Mitchell County



I love everything about Thanksgiving! My mind goes back to my childhood when my Mom would cook so much food and we would have so many guests over to eat. She would fix several types of meat and side dishes along with a great number of pies and cakes. It would literally take her several days to prepare all the food. As guests arrived there would be the traditional hugs and greetings. Before the meal there would be a time of sharing of thanks followed by the giving of thanks for all the Lord's blessings. Then we would all dig in and enjoy the sumptuous feast that had been so lovingly prepared by Mom.

An older hymn sung for so many generations was entitled, "Precious Memories." These are precious memories to me. They hug me as I remember them. Things have

changed over the years, but Wendy and I still hold on to these traditions. She now is the wonderful cook, the meals are amazingly delicious, the fellowship shared is sweet and the Lord is thanked for His abundant mercy and grace. I want to leave the same type of legacy to my children and grandchildren as my family did for me.



Wendy and I pray each of you has a wonderful Thanksgiving! We pray you can remember the many blessings that come down daily from the Lord. Life is so hard at times! Loved one's pass, trials come; but if we can focus on those things the Lord has given us, and done for us, our lives will be so much better.

Our choir and soloists regularly sing songs dealing with the goodness of God, the grace of God and such. I want to affirm that to you. He is a good, good God. His mercies are new and fresh every day. During those times when life is hard, He will carry us. Think on these things.

Look to Him. Look for Him. He will be found when we seek Him. He is with us. He is in us. He promised He would never leave us or forsake us. Enjoy Him this Thanksgiving. Though there may have been tough trials over the past year, God is faithful. He has and is seeing us through. Trust Him. Be loved by Him. He loves us more than we could ever possibly imagine!

Claim the promises of His Word. Draw near to Him. Hear His voice in your heart. Be strengthened by Him. He will never leave you nor forsake you. He is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. All His promises are true. Thank Him over and over for being so good to all of us.

As you think on these things, let your heart be encouraged, your mind renewed, your spirit refreshed. And as you do these things, have a Happy Thanksgiving.

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.

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Waldensian Trail of Faith

By Tim Tron
Burke County

The Waldensian Trail of Faith in Valdese will light up again this year in shining holiday splendor. The 20th annual Lighting of The Trail ceremony will take place the Tuesday before Thanksgiving at 6 p.m. inside of our church at the Trail of Faith.

With more than 100,000 LED bulbs fashioned into favorite Christmas scenes, the Trail of Lights is a Christmas lights display at the Waldensian Trail of Faith. Founded in 1993, the Trail is an outdoor museum consisting of 11 acres that portray the history of the Waldensian people back to the time of the Biblical Apostles, according to the Trail of Faith's website, www.waldensiantrail-offaith.org. Scattered among the property are 15 buildings and monuments that detail the history of each phase in the Waldenses' journey.

The Trail of Faith tour brings to life the struggles faced by the Waldensian people, pays tribute to their sacrifices and celebrates their success and triumphs, the website reads. The Waldensian people were considered to be people who lived by the scripture and were "tortured, exiled, and martyred, and still the faith that drove them from the Alpine Valleys of Italy to the foothills of North Carolina survived." The Trail of Faith is the story of the Waldensian people.

Visitors can look forward to students from Drexel Elementary playing music and singing for a short time before Trail of Faith founder and president, former North Carolina Sen. Jim Jacumin, reads the Christmas Story.

"It's important for us to share the Christmas story with the kids, because the kids are what this event is really about," Jacumin said. "Children play an important role in Christmas and it is important for us to pass on what we know."

As done in years past, three students will be chosen to turn on the lights at the end of the ceremony, marking the traditional lighting of the trail. This year students from Drexel Elementary will be guided by their teacher Margaret Smith, in their performance of all your Christmas favorites!

The Christmas lights display uses more than 100,000 LED bulbs that are fashioned into favorite Christmas-time scenes that keep a steady flow of traffic, generally averaging 30 to 40 vehicles a night to enjoy the lights display, Jacumin said.

"We have visitors that come all the way from Charlotte for our lighting ceremony and to see the Trail of Lights," said Jacumin. "Each year we have between 7,000 and 8,000 visitors."

Volunteers at the Trail of Faith, also known as "trail friends," begin preparation work for the lighting ceremony a month in advance in order to test the lights and set up the Christmas-time scenes. According to Trail of Faith office assistant Sheryl Tron, the event relies entirely on volunteer help and Tron said the ceremony would not be possible without the help of "trail friends." Everything at the Trail of Lights relates to the history of the Waldensian people but the most important thing is that the displays are focused on Jesus, Jacumin said.

"We love having families bring their children and we want folks to just come and enjoy themselves," Jacumin said. "The whole event really reminds us what Christmas is about, and that is doing for others and doing something for someone else. It enriches the building blocks of society and it's a joy to be able to give back — and that's a big part of the community."

Visitors of the Christmas lights display are encouraged to stop by the Visitor's Center where hot chocolate and hot apple cider will be served alongside refreshments.

The Trail of Faith, Inc. is a nonprofit 501(c)3 funded by donations from guests each year. There is no admission fee to the Christmas lights display but the Trail of Faith will gladly accept donations to help fund December's utility bill.

The Trail of Lights will be open Nov. 26 through Dec. 24 from 6-9 p.m. every night. The Visitor Center will be closed on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. There will be no lights on Christmas Day but the lights will be on Christmas Eve.



For more information on the Christmas lights display lighting ceremony or the Waldensian Trail of Faith, call the Waldensian Trail of Faith Office at 828-874-1893, visit www.trailoffaith.com, or email trailoffaith1893@gmail.com.

The Waldensian Trail of Faith is located at 401 Church St., NW in Valdese.



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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Lyme's Disease

My Journey with Lyme's Disease

By Dr. Miguel Cruz
Yancey County

Back in the summer, I went for my regular massage and the therapist commented on the small rash on my back. I had no idea it was there, it did not itch or feel different in any way, so I just shrugged my shoulders and did not pay any further attention to it. I just assumed it must have been a bug bite as I spend a lot of time in the woods and garden.

A few days later my wife noticed it was getting bigger and I had a fever that night along with severe neck pain that felt like someone had put the base of my skull in a vice, now it got my attention. My mind was thinking Lyme's but not really sure yet, I did pull a tick off of me several months earlier in the spring in that same area. Time to get another opinion.

I saw our primary care doctor, Dr. John Wilson at Great Smokies Medical in Asheville. He is an integrative medical doctor who uses mostly alternative type treatments along with traditional medical care when needed. He felt we were looking at Lyme's, so he prescribed a round of antibiotics along with an ozone treatment and lab work to confirm if I had Lyme.

The ozone treatment consists of taking a vial of blood and treating it with ozone which is a gas consisting of 3 oxygen molecules instead of 2 which is the normal oxygen that we breathe. The ozone has known antimicrobial properties. The ozonated blood is then put back into the body via an IV drip. On my way home I was able to feel the tension releasing from my neck. I went back for 3 more ozone treatments and by the end of the week I was feeling great. At this point I had not felt bad enough to miss any work. I felt good for the next 3 weeks thinking "that was easy". In the meantime, the lab work came back positive, Dr Wilson congratulated me for having the most positive labs he had ever seen for Lyme in his 40 years of practice. This can be an issue as the labs do not always catch it causing a lot of the controversy around Lyme's diagnosis.

On a follow-up visit since I had done great for several weeks, we felt that we had caught it in time and did not schedule any further treatment. Boy were we wrong!

The following week, after a 50-mile bike ride the fever and neck pain came back strong and worse, along with weakness and wanting to sleep all weekend long, I had to put a chair in the shower because I could not stand the whole time. (Lyme's can lie dormant then be triggered by any kind of stress to the body). Another trip to see Dr. Wilson and he convinced my wife first, then me, to go to the hospital for IV antibiotics and further testing for meningitis. We went to Park Ridge Emergency room in Hendersonville. Dr. Wilson forwarded his lab results and recommendations. More on why we chose Park Ridge later.

The ER doctor was reluctant at first about the possibility of Lyme's and meningitis, quoting me all the statistics according to the CDC. Then upon looking at my labs and examining me, they ordered a spinal tap, MRI and CAT scan of the spine and brain. I was put in a room with an antibiotic IV drip and told I better plan on staying a while with a diagnosis of Lyme's spinal meningitis.

By day 2 on the IV I was feeling much better except for I now had double vision most likely from the inflammation migrating into my brain. and by day 4 I was mostly symptom-free except for the double vision, and my labs indicated the acute infection was better. I was sent home with a 30-day prescription of antibiotics. I rested the rest of the week and was back to work the following Monday as my vision returned to normal by then. I also had a thorough eye exam at Dr. Aldridge's office, and they found no damage to the nerves in my eye.

Along with my antibiotics, I continued with ozone treatments twice weekly for the next month to be sure I was doing all I can to help my body recover. After I finished the antibiotics and the ozone treatments I continued with a homeopathic antibiotic specific for Lyme's bacteria and will continue to stay on the homeopathic for several more months. Lyme's is not to be taken lightly and as I said earlier, it can lay dormant for a while then show back up under stress. I also had regular low-level laser treatments to my neck, brain, and eyes as the laser reduces inflammation and helps damaged tissue heal faster.

Going back to why I chose Park Ridge Hospital, first when I told them I was a cash patient they informed me that I immediately qualified for a 62% discount of all hospital services. I was also able to get 20%-50% discounts on all other related fees by just letting them know I was a cash patient. We used the hospital several years earlier when I had appendicitis and they were great to work with. We belong



to a Health Share Ministry called "Samaritan Ministries", not related to Samaritan's Purse. They reimbursed me for ALL my bills and we only pay 1% of what standard insurance policy would have cost. With no co-pay and had no deductible since we negotiated a discount. I highly recommend them or a similar plan instead of regular insurance. On top of that Samaritan's Ministries pays for and encourages alternative treatments over standard medical care because of the cost savings.

Realizing I have had several patients with Lyme's disease and not having the tools to offer them much more than symptom relief I researched and found there are quite a few options for treatments other than just taking antibiotics, which does not always work for someone with chronic Lyme's. Having learned that our challenges often become our ministries, I have decided to learn all I can about the natural treatment of Lyme's and found Dr. Klinghardt, a Swiss medical doctor who has clientele from around the world. www.klinghardtacademy.com

In October I took their introductory course and got treatment myself which was quite impressive. It will be a journey as there is quite a lot to learn before I can effectively treat others. If anyone reading this has been suffering from chronic Lyme's, don't give up, there is definitely hope, but you may have to get out of the pharmaceutical box to find it. Pharmaceuticals may be necessary as they were with me, but they are not the only answer. Also taking long term antibiotics kills the good bacteria which causes many other health problems and is one of the reasons people never recover fully. While on my antibiotics I made sure to take probiotics and ate lots of good live culture yogurts and fermented foods and had no other problems.

I would be negligent if I were to leave off the prayers that have been lifted up for my healing. My wife immediately contacted her prayer partners and prayer on my behalf went out from our church and many others. I run into people often who commented they had prayed for me. We are indeed blessed to live in such a community.

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.



Miguel, Lesia and Dr. Mark Schwartz, instructor for the Klinghardt Academy



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'More Christian Than Baseball Player': How Anthony Rendon Balances Faith And Fame

By Jim Denison



Note from Dr. Jim Denison: I am grateful to my son, Ryan Denison, for writing The Daily Article this week while I am traveling. Ryan is a graduate of Baylor University and Truett Seminary and is completing his doctoral dissertation in church history at BH Carroll Theological Institute. He serves as Senior Fellow for Theology with our ministry and writes often in my absence. I am certain you will find his insights to be both biblical and practical.

The 2019 World Series starts tonight, pitting the Houston Astros against the Washington Nationals. While there are many storylines worth following with the series, the play of Nationals third baseman Anthony Rendon is among the most interesting.

Rendon is coming off the best season of his career and is one of the leading candidates for MVP. Despite his play, though, his team had one of the toughest paths to get to this point.

They began the playoffs with a one-game, winner-take-all match against the Brewers in which they were three runs behind heading into the final two innings. Rendon scored what became the deciding run. From there, they went on to beat the heavily favored Dodgers before sweeping the Cardinals to earn their ticket to play for a championship.

Through it all, Rendon has been one of the Nationals' best players. But, in hearing him discuss his career, you get the clear sense that what's most important to him is that he plays in a way that glorifies the Lord.

As he told the Washington Post, "You want to plan for the future. But I've come to learn your plans don't always come to fruition. Obviously, with my faith, too, I don't want to seem like it's all about me, me, me. It takes away from what I do for Him, for the Lord."

Because of those priorities, Rendon stresses that "I want to be known as a Christian baseball player and I'm still trying to grow into that. But in the end, I want to be more Christian than baseball player. Keeping your focus on Who rather than what."

Imagine what the church would look like if we all embraced that perspective.

What if we all understood our identity to revolve less around what we do than Who has called us to do it?

What difference could it make in our schools if Christian teachers saw each of their students as a divinely appointed mission field?

How different would our hospitals be if Christian doctors and nurses took the same approach to their patients?

What would it look like in your place of business if your coworkers understood that you showed up each day, not because attendance was mandatory or to earn a paycheck, but because you genuinely believed it was God's will for you to do so?

What if each of us learned to see our home as the most important place to live this out?

Think of the difference it would make if we saw ourselves as Christian parents and Christian spouses, Christian brothers and Christian sisters, never separating the identity established by the first from the responsibilities borne by the second.

And, lest we think that sounds too idealized or utopian, Scripture clearly teaches that those who made the biggest impact for the kingdom of God were those who, more often than not, embraced this perspective.

Joshua, for example, was God's general. David was God's king. Elijah was God's prophet. Paul was God's Apostle. And while none of them did the job perfectly, at their best each had an outsized influence on the development of God's kingdom because they kept their focus on Who called them more than what they were called to do.

The same can and should be true of us as well.

Nothing is common when it's done for Christ

While it would be easy to sit back and think of all the great things we might accomplish for the kingdom if we had a platform as large as that of Anthony Rendon, never underestimate what God can do through you in whatever capacity he has called you to serve.

As A. W. Tozer once wrote, "It is not what a man does that determines whether his work is sacred or secular, it is why he does it. The motive is everything. Let a man sanctify the Lord God in his heart and he can thereafter do no common act." Nothing is common when it's done for Christ.

How common will your life be today?

Jim Denison Ph.D speaks and writes on cultural and contemporary issues. His daily column is distributed to more than 113,000 subscribers in 208 countries. See more on the website www.denisonforum.org. Copyrighted and printed by permission from Denison Forum.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. Psalms 100:4



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How to Raise a Christian Teenager
By Alan Griffin

No one is born a Christian. Christian parents do not always equal a Christian teen. The greatest detriment to your endeavor is the public-school system. Your child spends more time at school than they do at home. Private Christian schools can really make a good kid, but there is no guarantee of how your teenager will turn out. Unlike many religions where you are born into a family of followers. Christians are called by God and there are several directions a teenager can go with the knowledge you provide them. This article offers a few suggestions that may help your son or daughter follow Christ. In all cases you should start as early as possible.



1.) Practice What You Preach - The example you set as your child ages is more than likely the example they will follow until they reach their teens. There will come a time in each of their lives when they will choose their path in life. They will take newly formed ideas on life and compare them to the lifestyles of their parents. Then embark on a course that ultimately leads to their destiny. They make choices regarding relationships, family, work, and personal entertainment. Some plan meticulously every step of their journey while others just let it happen. Each of us carves out a road to hopeful happiness. In this entangled world we live in today there are traps, snares all along life's path. Many are placed in front of the young and naive, ensnaring them into a lifetime of misery. The road to destruction is wide, and the gate is narrow through which we reach our ultimate goals. If we travel through life without wise, loving parents, and church members to guide us through life's perils we may be easily snared by life's attractions.

2.) Daily Family Devotions - Nothing can take the place of your spending time with your heavenly Father. Atteensnchrist.com we like to use the 15-minute method. We read our Bible for 15 minutes a day, spend 15 minutes a day in prayer with our heavenly Father, and we spend 15 minutes a day sharing what we have read with others. Through our relationship with the Father and Son Jesus, the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins and guides us as to how we should live. Through your family's relationship with God, you develop a ministry, a testimony, and a service for God. Through your ministry your family grows in faith by sharing what you have learned through the time you spent with our heavenly Father. Blessings begin to flow, for you, and those around you.

3.) Family Prayer Time - A family that prays together stays together. When you take your praise, problems, and intercessions to your heavenly Father as a family you create an avenue of trust with your children. In turn, when they have problems, they will bring them to you for advice. When they see other kids at school doing things, they know is wrong they will confide in you, and in turn, together you confide in God. Teach them at an early age to pray from their hearts. It is fine to say prayers that are memorized but praying from the heart brings you closer together as a family and brings you closer to God.

4.) Love Your Children - We should consistently remind our kids that we love them. Teenagers at times tend to draw away from their parents and friends. They may be struggling with puberty or questioning themselves on how to react with others. They may be reflecting on something you did or said a year ago. It's hard to tell. I have countless "God kids" I have adopted over the years, and at one time or another all have distanced themselves from me, for a while. I would always tell them I love them so much I just can't stand it, and no matter what happens Jesus and I still love them. My greatest interest has always been what my kid is doing when they are not around me. I want to know what happens at school, or if I miss some event, I want them to know I care. The middle schoolers must be coaxed, but I just keep pestering them until they tell me.

5.) Spend Quality Time with Your Teens - The most exciting time of the week for me was spending time with my son. As he grew up, I started "adopting" kids I would take to church with me. Some of the kids now are adults, and I am helping with their kids. You are a child's hero and everything you do they look up to. Controlling your temper and setting a good example for them to follow is very important. I took inner-city kids to church for 18 years, and I was amazed at how detached they were from their parents. Through Medicaid the kids were entitled to free doctor and dental care but rarely did their parents take them. I had 15-year-old girls going to the dentist for the first time. I really believe it when the Bible says, "the love of many has waxed cold."

6.) Encourage Your Teens to Take a Stand for Christ - From early teens, to young adults it is important to recognize they are different from other people. We have a King and Savior, a heavenly Father, and a Counselor, (the Holy Spirit), who guides us through this world. God paid a tremendous price for us. It is important for kids to know that God will stand for us as we will confess Him to others. It is part of the basic oath of being a Christian. It gives us the right to profess Christ as our Savior. It is also important for our kids to realize that not only are they accountable to you, but they are also accountable to God for their actions. Everything we say and do is written down by God. Nothing goes unnoticed so take a stand for Christ, and He will be there for you.

In Conclusion

I don't care how hard you try to have the "perfect kid" it isn't going to happen. Many young adults wander away from the church. Teenagers will rebel against you. At times they will even rebel against themselves. It's going to happen sooner or later, so prepare your heart for the inevitable. Don't argue or fight with them when they rebel. Be there for them when they need you. It can be a rough couple of years to go through, but if you have planted the Word of God in their hearts and mind, be patient they will come back. I have had "God kids" in jail, on drugs, experimenting with homosexuality, and getting pregnant at a very early age. It hurts, and it is easy to get discouraged, but as they are finding their way back home

your greatest weapon is prayer. You may wear the knees on several pairs of pants before it's finally over, but the prodigal son or daughter always returns home.

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



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3 Hurdles in Sharing the Gospel

By Josh Reed

In the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Rio, Brazil, Haitian hurdler Jeffrey Julmis shot out of the blocks quickly, only to hit the first hurdle and fall to the ground. While certainly embarrassed, Julmis could have easily walked off without completing the race. Instead, he got up and finished, successfully jumping over the remaining hurdles. That hurdle did not stop him from finishing the race — that's what he was there to do.

Many people do not engage in gospel conversations with others. When seeking to train and mobilize people with the gospel, there are often hurdles that stand in the way. Let's examine three common hurdles that seem to emerge frequently when examining why believers do not share the gospel.

Compelled

One large hurdle for evangelism is that someone's heart simply hasn't been captivated by the grace of God displayed in Jesus. This is a heart issue. Paul says, *"For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised"* (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). If the love of Christ does not control or compel you to persuade others about the coming judgment and the gracious gift of salvation, then repent. Let the gospel melt your heart until a deep sense of God's love fills it.

Conscious

Perhaps you have been captivated by the love of Christ, but you view salvation as an individualistic package. Another big hurdle that impedes personal evangelism is that opportunities to share the gospel with others often aren't at the forefront of believers' minds. This is an awareness issue. A mentor once taught me to pray every day for at least two things: to preach the gospel to myself each morning and to pray for opportunities to share the gospel. The first puts you in a posture of humility while the second puts you in a posture of readiness. Both are necessary to recognize opportunities where the gospel is needed. Paul says, *"From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh," and that part of being a "new creation" in Christ, is to be an "ambassador for Christ,"* which means that *"God (is) making his appeal through us"* to others (2 Corinthians 5:16-20). One helpful tool for becoming more conscious of evangelism opportunities is drawing out a "sphere of influence map." This is a tool that DiscipleNC uses to train believers in order to help them become more conscious of gospel opportunities.

Confident

A third hurdle that hinders people from sharing the gospel is the low level of confidence they feel about their ability to communicate the gospel clearly. Perhaps you are compelled by the love of Christ and you are conscious of opportunities, but you have no idea what to say or do in those situations. One of the keyways confidence is gained is through simple, reproducible training that involves practice. One helpful tool that DiscipleNC trains believers to use is the 3 Circles evangelism method, which is a simple framework of understanding the gospel in order to be able to communicate it more confidently as opportunities arise. These hurdles are real, but they are not insurmountable. With deep confidence in the Spirit's leading, we can overcome these hurdles. We are ambassadors for Christ and ministers of reconciliation — that's what we are here for!

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was adapted from an evangelism and discipleship workshop by Robbie Christmas of Family Church, West Palm Beach, Fla.

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



Laser Therapy – A New Healing Paradigm

By Dr. Miguel Cruz
Yancey County



Laser therapy is the application of light-emitting diodes across the body causing a biochemical reaction within the cells which aids the body's ability to heal and recover from a host of different conditions and injuries.

Laser therapy, in most cases, is non-invasive, does not hurt, and has no known side effects in over 30 years of application with the exception of class IV lasers which we will discuss later in this article.

How the laser works is similar to photo synthesis. Light energy reacts within the cells of the leaves of plants to produce the oxygen we breathe. Within our body, it has been found that a specific frequency of light interacts with our cells to produce cellular energy which enables the cells to do a lot of remarkable things.

Clinical research has shown that laser therapy (LT) will reduce inflammation which makes it a great treatment for any acute injury, most professional and college sports teams have their own laser units. It's also effective in reducing the pain and swelling of arthritis for long periods of time reducing the need for medications. LT can relieve the pain of back and neck problems including degenerative discs and spinal stenosis. In our office, we have multiple cases of people who were told they needed surgery and had complete recovery with LT.

The list of conditions that respond to LT is too long to list here but to give you an idea, we have successfully treated cases of gout, shingles, herniated discs, spinal stenosis, degenerative discs, arthritis including juvenile rheumatoid, multiple sports injuries including stress fractures, injuries to the ligaments of knees and other joints including frozen shoulder, burns, diabetic ulcers and many skin conditions which were resistant to other therapies. All with quicker recoveries than would be expected with conventional therapies and medications. Current research is extensively looking at the benefits of laser therapy in treatment of brain disorders and trauma including dementia which is showing excellent results. Harvard medical school has opened a research department exclusively for this.

There are two main types of Laser therapies being used today, usually referred to as low-level laser or cold laser and class IV high power lasers. They both are effective and have their benefits. The low-level laser is my favorite because it is virtually impossible to cause any harm with it and is totally comfortable to be treated. The class IV laser has higher power, so it is possible to be burned if it is not kept moving, the advantage is quicker treatment times.

A laser is currently not well accepted in the insurance world although we have found some insurances have paid for it. For that reason, the medical profession is slow to accept laser treatments as an option because medicine is primarily driven by what insurance pays for in spite of the cost savings which would come about from the broad use of laser therapy. Laser therapy is making inroads within the veterinary profession, podiatry, and as I said within the physical therapy departments of professional sports teams.

Laser therapy is becoming more and more popular, 15 years ago we were one of the few clinics utilizing it, now it is much more widespread but still being underutilized. If you are contemplating any type of joint surgery or having any of the conditions we have mentioned, I would recommend having a consultation with one of many clinics now utilizing laser therapy, you will be glad you did, and likely save thousands of \$\$\$.

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.

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Tenacious Thankfulness

By Steve Bietz
Burke County



Her name was Mary. And from the perspective of those people who knew her, she was considered broken beyond repair. She was one of those individuals who would be suggested that all the king's horses and all the king's men could not fix her broken character. Actually, those folks who knew Mary and condemned her as unfixable were just as broken, they just didn't get it. But I see three things in Mary that are very worthy of our consideration. First, her great love. Second, her deep devotion. And third, which is the focus of my thoughts in this article, her tenacious thankfulness.

The fall season of the year has long been a traditional time of mentioning the feelings of thankfulness. As the harvest time was closing, past generations saw fit to establish even a holiday called, Thanksgiving. It is a tradition well worth our time, but more and more the tradition is gobbled up in football and shopping. It seems pitiful to consider our thankfulness has been so poorly replaced.

In the woman Mary, nothing seemed to distract her attention away from her tenacious thankfulness. Although shopping was included in her tenacious thanksgiving. Her trip to a very pricy perfume store gives us a glimpse into the unbelievable level of thankfulness she was willing to show. The price tag is shared by the disciple Judas in John's Gospel as he gets a whiff of the perfumed ointment that Mary has gotten all over the place as she anoints the feet of Christ at Simon's feast. Judas reveals that this perfume came with a price tag in the amount of one's full earnings for an entire year. In John 12:5, Judas would add "Why this waste." That is what Judas thought about the tenacious thankfulness of Mary. Just one big waste. And indeed, the level of thankfulness that Mary approaches, is off the map. Mary purchases an expensive gift and goes to a feast that it appears she had not been invited to attend. Possibly she helped as a server for the meal. At any rate, I suspect she had not anticipated the aroma of her gift-giving away her tenacious thankfulness. I suppose she had counted on only Jesus knowing what she was up to at the feast. Yet, Mary ends up being the main attraction at the feast, and the incident is found in all four gospels.

Mary had purchased a perfumed lotion that could not be applied at a few squirts at a time. No, this product came with a onetime use only label. She used the entire container on the feet of Jesus. Oh yes, tenacious thankfulness is what I would call it. For some reason, not only did she not count on the aroma giving her actions away, but she also forgot to bring a towel. Mary ends up using her hair as her towel to wipe in the lotion she has put on the Lord's feet. Tenacious thankfulness will look like that at times. It will have a look of complete unpreparedness. All the planning is out the window because all the person envisions is how thankful they are for Jesus.

Christ would share a story with his host, Simon, as the entire guest list has wrinkled up their noses at the actions of this broken woman, Mary. The Lord would tell the story of the two debtors and how they each had their loan forgiven by the lender. Simon is his own worst enemy as he names the one who had been forgiven the higher amount, as the one who would be the most thankful. We can hope Simon realizes that his level of thankfulness was pitiful in comparison to Mary's thankfulness. What do you know, the woman everyone thought was beyond repair, had been repaired by the Lord. While the guests and the host himself at the feast had been blind to their own need of having their brokenness repaired.

When we estimate that our need for fixing is not worth mentioning, then we will be less thankful for the marvelous gift Jesus offers humans. We may even chime in with Judas and see Mary's thankfulness as a bit excessive, just a waste. But, when we see our huge need for repair and come to the understanding of how broken we are, then like Mary, we will display a tenacious thankfulness.

Yes, it is that time of the year when thankfulness gets a lot of print. Somehow, I don't think Mary concerned herself with which date on the calendar she should focus on her thanksgiving. This was a woman, who evidently had a level of tenacious thankfulness that could not be contained by just the month of November. No, the thankfulness of Mary for her Lord, spilled out all over the calendar, just like that bottle of perfumed ointment she applied to the feet of Christ at Simon's feast.

I hope the tenacious thankfulness of Mary is contagious. I hope I see my own brokenness, so I too will spill my thankfulness for my Jesus, all over the calendar during the entirety of every season, and every year.

Steve Bietz, Pastor, Morganton Seventh day Adventist Church.

thank You for the very first Thanksgiving, the new friendships that were made, and the many blessings that You blessed them with. Without You, the pilgrims would not have survived. We thank You so very much for all that You have done for us each day. Amen.

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



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Rapid Response Team Ministering
in Dallas After EF3 Tornado

By Lizzy Long

The Billy Graham Rapid Response Team (RRT) is offering emotional and spiritual care in Dallas, Texas after a twister with 140 mph winds touched down Sunday night. While numerous people narrowly escaped roof collapses, several were injured from the EF3 tornado that created a 15-mile path of destruction.

Many homes and businesses were significantly damaged or destroyed, along with three schools in the northern part of the major metropolitan area.

"Although we thank God that there was no loss of life from this tornado, we are saddened that many people's lives have been significantly impacted by the destruction left in its wake," RRT Assistant Director Josh Holland said.

"We are praying for each family affected, and our chaplains are blessed to be able to share the comfort and love of Jesus Christ to those who have lost so much."

The news was worse in Arkansas and Oklahoma, where four people were killed in the late-night series of storms.

Deploying in Dallas alongside Samaritan's Purse, eight crisis-trained chaplains are offering a listening ear and prayers to first responders and homeowners.

No stranger to the Lone Star State, this marks the Rapid Response Team's fifth Texas deployment in 2019. While Billy Graham chaplains are continuing to serve migrants alongside churches in Laredo, they also ministered in the towns of Vidor and Winnie last month after Tropical Storm Imelda. In addition, the team offered a listening ear and prayer to residents in El Paso and Odessa after shootings earlier this year.

Please remember Dallas in your prayers.
Have you received the love of Jesus Christ? Start a relationship.

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. Philippians 4:6



Billy Graham chaplains are ministering in Dallas, Texas after a twister devastated a 15-mile stretch of the community Sunday. Here, women stand outside a damaged home in the Preston Hollow section of Dallas. (AP Photo/LM Otero)

LORD THANK YOU

By Joy Baldwin
Madison County

*Lord Thank You for this brand-new day
With stillness in the air
For quiet solitude with You
As I send up a prayer.*

*Thank You for refreshing
Of the air, You give to breathe
The pureness of a raindrop
Sent from heaven as you please.*

*Thank You for the beauty
Of the welcome morning sky
The warming sun that shines by day
The lovely moon that glows by night.*

*Thank You for the flowers
With fragrance new each day
Sweet birds to sing so cheerfully
As little butterflies happily play.*

*For all of these things, we're thankful
Lord, You talk to us it is true
We're grateful that You made a way
That we could talk to You.
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 "Home-coming" will soon be heard by many.

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Give Thanks

By Caron Cline
Burke County

The leaves have fallen, the temperatures have dropped, and the anticipation of the coming holidays is in the air. Thanksgiving is next on the calendar, yet many Americans are oblivious to the numerous blessings in their lives. Are we thankful people as a nation? We seem to generally be an entitled people these days. It hasn't always been this way. Thanksgiving began as a harvest festival in America and has been celebrated on and off since 1789. Obviously, this began even earlier with the Pilgrims with a meal of thanks to God for bringing them to this new land. But in 1863, right in the middle of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln declared Thanksgiving to be a federal holiday to be celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November each year. He said it was to be a day of "Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens". Can you imagine the reaction of some of the people? Many had lost sons, brothers, and fathers and the President was declaring a celebration to thank God for all His blessings. It certainly didn't seem to be a time for thanksgiving. Why would Lincoln focus on Thanksgiving at such a time?

The book of Leviticus focuses on worship. God gave instructions to Moses for the Levitical priests. These men had to understand God's requirements for sacrifices, worship, the priesthood, feasts and holy days, the Day of Atonement, the Year of Jubilee, etc. The focus of Leviticus is that only the shedding of blood could atone for sin; the death of the innocent was required to pardon the guilty. There are 6 different offerings mentioned in Leviticus chapter 7, but let's look at one of them.

Leviticus 7:11-15 speaks of the peace offering and it is the only offering linked to thanksgiving in which someone would give a gift to the Lord in gratitude for a specific blessing He had bestowed. The leavened bread mentioned was used for times of celebration. I wonder if Abraham Lincoln felt that focusing on thanksgiving as a nation could also bring about peace and an end to the Civil War?

There are several passages of Scripture that link peace with the giving of thanks: Colossians 3:15-17 reminds us that we have peace with God through Christ and the blessings that accompany this new relationship as His child will fill our hearts with gratitude.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-23 commands us to give thanks in all circumstances and the God of peace Himself will sanctify us completely, spirit, soul, and body.

Ephesians 5:18-20 also challenges us to be filled with the Spirit which will result in addressing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs and in giving thanks to the Lord for everything always.

In 1 Peter 2:9-10 we read that all believers in Christ are now a chosen race, a royal priesthood; a holy nation, a people for God's own possession for the express purpose of proclaiming the excellencies of the One who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. Our peace with God has been secured by the blood of Jesus. We have been saved to praise, glorify and give thanks to God forever and ever.

The peace offering was sprinkled with thanksgiving. But prayer was also sprinkled with thanksgiving.

Colossians 4:2 reminds us to 'Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving'.

In Philippians 1:3, Paul wrote the following, 'I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy...'

And in 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 we read, 'Pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you'.

Thanksgiving is the natural or maybe the supernatural response from those who understand the sacrifice that God made to purchase salvation and reconciliation in order that peace could be made between a holy God and a sinful man. It is also the response from those who understand the awesome privilege of coming before the God of the Universe and receiving from Him the desires of their heart.

Can we see behind the visible to the invisible? Can we see behind the temporal to the eternal? If we will give thanks in all things, not for all things, we will experience a peace that passes all understanding and we will experience answers to prayers we never dreamed possible.

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.



What's Happening with Extension

Mitchell County

What's Happening with Extension? Mitchell County Cooperative Extension is sporting some new, and not so new, faces! Joining the staff is Eve Kindley, County Extension Director, and Gary Hyatt, Agricultural Extension Agent.

Eve has spent the last twenty-eight years with Extension as a 4-H Youth Development Agent in both Madison and Moore counties. Eve is a graduate of Elon, University of North Carolina, and NC State University. She enjoys hiking and camping and is an avid traveler - always seeking out her next adventure. Eve provides leadership to the overall Extension program with administrative duties and programming responsibilities in the areas of Community Development and Family and Consumer Sciences. She looks forward to working with individuals and organizational partners to build assets that increase community capacity. Eve has a special interest in local foods and continuing to build local food systems that are linked to positive economic and health-related outcomes.

Many are familiar with Gary Hyatt, part-time Agricultural Extension Agent, as he retired from Extension as the Mitchell County Extension Director in 2002. Gary returned to Extension work on September 1. Gary is a graduate of Berea College and NC State University. He enjoys spending time with his grandchildren and restoring antique tractors. Gary is responsible for agricultural programs especially in the area of Christmas tree production, ornamental horticulture, field crops, and pesticide safety.



Eve Kindley



Gary Hyatt

NC

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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>

Events at the Billy Graham Library - Nov. 16, 1-2:30 p.m.: Book Signing with Tammie Jo Shults - The Billy Graham Library will host Tammie Jo Shults, Southwest Airlines captain and formal naval aviator, for a book signing on Saturday, Nov. 16. Shults received wide acclaim when, on April 17, 2018, she and her crew successfully landed a Boeing 737 after catastrophic engine failure and rapid decompression, saving the lives of 148 people. She will be signing copies of her book, *Nerves of Steel*. Books will be available for purchase in Ruth's Attic bookstore, or you may bring your own. Limit of two signed items per person (one item must be *Nerves of Steel*). This is a free event and no pre-registration is required.

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.highbcountryaging.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

Catawba River Baptist Association - Coats for the City shares the love of Jesus by providing warm coats and the gospel to residents of New York City each December. N.C. Baptists have partnered with the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association (MNYBA) in this effort for eight years. Working with churches across New York City, we desire to distribute coats along with a Bible or Jesus film in the language of every recipient. You can drop off gently used coats at the CRBA office until October 28th. If you have any questions call the office at 828-437-0137.

Men's Ministry - We are excited to be hosting our first Men's Ministry Leadership Training Preview event on Monday, November 4th at our CRBA office for leaders of Men's Ministries and/or Brotherhoods in our CRBA churches. This will be a great opportunity to discover practical tools and resources to develop men to be disciples who make disciples. Join us at 7 p.m. for a great time of training and discussion.

Toy Store - We are excited about this year's Toy Store ministry as we will be celebrating 25 years of ministry to families using toys at Christmas to share the Good News of Jesus. This year we are already collecting toys to be distributed to families during Toy Store in December. If you would like a collection box delivered to your church (or business) please give us a call at 828-437-0137. Collection boxes are also available for pickup at our CRBA office in Morganton.

Great Hope Seventh-Day Adventist Church - CREATION WEEKEND November 1-2 celebrated at Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2907 US Hwy 70 in Drexel (across from Foothills Thrift Store). Friday, 7:00 pm, movie "Flight, the Genius of Birds" and Saturday presentations at 11:30 am and 2:00 pm by science teacher and pastor, Tim Cove of Statesville. All will be focused on our Creator God!

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.

God's Closet - Morganton FREE Shop Day! Just in time for the Christmas shopping season! Sunday, November 3, 2019, from 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., at the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C.

\$1.00 Entrance Fee and then all the clothing is FREE! There will be clothing for children ages 0 - 18 years old! Also, FREE childcare while you shop or they may shop with you, your choice!

Journey Through Bethlehem takes place Thursday, December 5th. through Sunday, December 8th, from 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., each night. Please join us for this interactive Nativity experience! There will be live farm animals, music, hot chocolate and cookies! This event is completely FREE! Journey Through Bethlehem will take place at the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2187 Jamestown Road, Morganton, N.C. Golf cart rides will be available for handicap visitors.

Valdese Events

Concerts at the Rock - Old Rock School Auditorium 7:30pm
November 2: IIIRD TYME OUT | Tickets \$20 per person at concertsattherock.com | 828.879.2129

November 8 & 9: Christmas in November Craft & Gift Show
New Larger Layout means MORE vendors and 2 Days to SHOP!
Old Rock School Waldensian Room | Handmade Crafts & Gifts | Door prizes!
The first 100 shoppers will receive a complimentary shopping tote

November 26: Trail of Lights at the Trail of Faith Lighting Ceremony 6pm
November 26 through December 24 | Lights are on nightly from 6pm to 9pm
Apple Cider & Hot Chocolate will be on sale for \$1.00 in the visitor's center

November 30th: Shop Small! Shop Local! Shop Small Business Saturday!
Check out the local shops in Downtown Valdese and support our local merchants!

McDowell County

Cross Mill United Methodist Church - 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!!!

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.

Mitchell County

Appalachian Christmas Outreach - Backpack Collection on November 2, 2019 at Berry Chapel Baptist Church. This is a ministry of the North Carolina Baptist Men. Contact Arnold Winters, 467-8119 or the associational office, 765-9412, for more information and a list of items to be included in the backpacks.

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

Instagram for YOUR Business (2 hours)

Bring your smart phone! Instagram for business is a great way to reach customers! Attendees will receive instruction on set-up, downloading the Instagram app, and the basics of an Instagram for business account. The class will also cover customer building strategies for posting photos, hash tagging, and how to link Instagram to Facebook for increased visibility.

11/5, T, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Jones Yancey 828.766.1295

Facebook for YOUR Business (2 Hours)

Facebook for business is a great way to engage existing and potential custom-

ers. This class will cover the basics of Facebook for YOUR business such as account set-up, downloading the Facebook app, and best practices. Attendees will also learn how to build effective posts, strategies to engage new customers, and how to link Facebook to other popular social media management platforms.
11/5, T, 3:30-5:30 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Jones Yancey 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. Seminar will cover how to properly register your business, small business best management practices, and tips for growth.
11/11, M, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Cook Avery 828.766.1295

TRACTOR Food and Farms Agribusiness Summit (7 Hours) New!
Join us for a fun filled and informative day of workshops geared towards local farming. Sessions will include workshops on NC Department of Agriculture regulations, food and farm marketing, agritourism, retailing natural foods, emerging/profitable markets, and strategies to sell more. Sponsored by TRACTOR Food and Farms, attendees will tour the TRACTOR facility and enjoy a free lunch. Agribusiness sessions will be held at the Yancey Mayland Campus.
11/19, T, 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Various Yancey 828.766.1295

Introduction to QuickBooks: Class One (3 Hours)
Class one of this four class series will discuss the features of QuickBooks Online and compare it to QuickBooks desktop. Determine if QuickBooks is a right for you by "test driving" the software on a sample business. Computers with QuickBooks installed will be available to use at this class.
11/12, T, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Sisk-Morris Yancey 828.766.1295

Building QuickBooks to Fit YOUR Business: Class Two (3 Hours)
QuickBooks taught by a CPA! Class two will focus on setting up QuickBooks in a manner that will work best for your business. Explore feature while learning how to launch QuickBooks the right way. Class will work with a sample business downloaded on the Mayland computers.
11/14, TH, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Sisk-Morris Yancey 828.766.1295

QuickBooks – How to Key Common Transactions: Class Three (3 Hours)
This class will focus on recording income and expenses in Quickbooks as well as balancing transactions. We will also look at various scenarios that your business may face when keying transactions into QuickBooks. This a great class to get answers to QuickBooks questions.
11/19, T, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Sisk-Morris Yancey 828.766.1295

QuickBooks Payroll: Class Four (3 Hours)
The final class of this series will explore the use of QuickBooks for payroll. Learn how to set up payroll and cut checks using QuickBooks payroll features. Cut checks and make deposits on a sample business in this test drive of the most popular small business accounting platform in use.
11/21, TH, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Sisk-Morris Yancey 828.766.1295

Mitchell County Chamber - Trail of Lights Coming to Mitchell County!
Calling all businesses, homeowners, churches and beyond!
Be a part of the 2019 Mountain Christmas Trail of Lights!
Decorate your home, business, and trees, fences everything that doesn't move, or for that matter moves slowly...
Be a part of this wonderful event that will be a gift to our community and a wonderful event for visitors to come and enjoy!
The Mountain Christmas Trail of Lights will run from the Blue Ridge Parkway to Bakersville and points beyond along NC 226.
Special emphasis will be placed on Downtown Bakersville, Spruce Pine and the communities along the trail to let folks know the side roads and hollers that are decorated and available to be seen.
The Trail begins on November 24th and continues through January 1st, 2020! There will be more details to come but for now help share the word!
Call 828-765-9033 and register your location for the Trail Map and in our best decoration \$250.00 Prize.
Spruce Pine Downtown Events
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

Spruce Pine First Baptist Church - November 7, 2019 at 6:30
Community Churches will host Dr Bill Kim and the Korean Children's Choir.

Operation Christmas Child - 2019 National Collection Week, Nov. 18-25, 2019, Spruce Pine First Baptist Church, 125 Tappan St., Spruce Pine, NC 28777, 828-765-9411 Times: Nov. 18 – 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, Nov. 19 – 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, Nov. 20 – 2:00 pm to 8:00 pm, Nov. 21 – 8:00 am – 12:00 pm, Nov. 22 – 12:00 pm – 6:00 pm, Nov. 23 – 10:00 am – 6:00 pm, Nov. 24 – 8:00 am – 6:00 pm, Nov. 25 – 8:00 am – 11:00 am

The National Day of Prayer - The National Day of Prayer for 2020 will be held on the first Thursday of May, the 7th, 2020. Please watch for updates through the upcoming months. Call 239-248-2139 if you are interested in praying for this National Day of Prayer, "for such a time a this".

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

Farmer's Market - Yancey County Farmers Market, Sat, Nov 2, 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM ,
Yancey County Farmers' Market, 8 Town Square, Burnsville, NC,
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

Something to Think About

By Dennis Love
McDowell County



Being Filled with the Holy Spirit!
We are commanded in the Bible as the believer's to "Be filled with the Holy Spirit." (Eph. 5:18) What does that mean and what does that look like? We know what Paul says in Ephesians 5:18, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." What does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? If you will look at Ephesians 5:19-21 it tells us what it means. In verse 19 we are told if we are filled with the Holy Spirit that He will put a song in our heart. Verse 20 says if we are filled with the Holy Spirit that He will empower us to give God thanks in ALL things. If you're worried, He will empower you to still give thanks. If you are discouraged or depressed, He will empower you to still give thanks to God. Then verse 21 says if we are filled with the Holy Spirit that He will empower us to humble ourselves to be more like Jesus. It's really cool to be filled with the Holy Spirit! Read Ephesians 5:18-21 and see how cool it really is. Then turn and read Acts 1:8. We have always used this verse as a command to be witnesses for our Lord and it is, but it also shows us what it means to be filled with the Holy Spirit. This verse tells us that we will receive power after the Holy Spirit comes upon us. In other words, when you are filled with the Holy Spirit, He will empower you to share Jesus with others.

Dr. Jerry Vines tells about a man he knew in Jacksonville, Florida who was a very wonderful Christian, but he placed a strong emphasis on speaking in tongues as being evidence that you are filled with the Holy Spirit. His name was Pank and Dr. Vines would run into him all the time at the Post Office. Each time he would see him he would say, "Preacher, have you been filled with the Holy Spirit?" Dr. Vines would reply, "Yes, Pank, I have." Pank would then ask, "Did you speak in tongues?" Dr. Vines replied, "No Pank, I did not." Then Pank would say, "You haven't been filled with the Holy Spirit." This went on for months. Finally, one day after Pank's questions, Dr. Vines asked a few questions of his own. He said, "Pank, have you led anyone to Jesus this week?" Pank said, "No, but Sunday night we prayed until midnight for people to be filled with the Holy Spirit." "Well, Pank, did you lead anyone to Jesus last month?" "No," he replied. Dr. Vines then said, "Well, Pank, if what you have makes you speak in tongues and if what I have helps me to tell others about Jesus, I would rather have what I have than what you have!" Pank never asked his questions to Dr. Vines again. The greatest evidence that a believer is filled with the Holy Spirit is the power that He gives you to share Jesus with others. In other words, if you are not sharing Jesus with others, it's time you asked Him to fill you with His Spirit. And that my friend is something for us all to think about!

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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Burke Education Foundation Holds Annual Golf Tournament, Awards First Gift

By Cheryl Shuffler
Burke County



The Burke Education Foundation Inc. held its fourth annual golf tournament on Friday, Oct. 11 at Mimosa Hills Golf Club. Twenty-seven teams participated and the players and sponsors helped make the event a success.

The Burke Education Foundation was formed in July of 2016 by a group of Burke County Public Schools stakeholders who wanted to find a way to further support the students and staff of the school system. The foundation officially received its 501C3 status in April 2017 and went to work carrying out its mission, which is, "To support powerful, innovative learning for all Burke County Public Schools students."

Earlier in this school year, the foundation gifted \$2,688 to East Burke Middle School for a mindful room. In addition to the foundation's monetary gift, Kellex donated furniture for the classroom. The purpose of the room is to help students learn to manage their emotions, decrease stress and anxiety and redirect their energy in a positive way so they can be in a better state to focus on their education. Statistics show that anxiety, depression, and suicide are on the rise among youth and so is the number of youth who will experience at least one traumatic event in their life.

East Burke Middle School counselors Heather Smart and Elicia Carter are designing the mindful room. They have taken a classroom at the school and plan to give it a fresh coat of paint, have students design artwork for the walls and make the overall space relaxing and enjoyable. They have started a yoga class and will be implementing techniques in small group settings.

Smart said, "We are so excited that our mindful room is coming together. The yoga course has been extremely beneficial and will help us with our daily interactions with students on a variety of levels. Many of our students that have been in the room so far have enjoyed the space, feel relaxed and excited as well. We want to serve our students to the best of our ability and words can't describe how grateful we are for the opportunity the Burke Education Foundation has provided. We are also thankful to Kellex for the furniture donation."

The foundation's largest fundraiser each year is the annual golf tournament. The monies raised from the tournament are helping to build the foundation's coffers. Foundation Board Chair Chasity Poteat Rice said, "While we look forward to the future and being able to make a greater impact on Burke County Public Schools students and staff, we decided to start with a small gift to one of the middle schools to help support the mental health needs of students. Our middle school students are facing many great challenges, and many do not have a safe place to be open, share and find support as they deal with life challenges."

In addition to Rice, foundation board members are Vice-Chair David Bridges, Treasurer Rhonda Ensley, Secretary Cheryl Shuffler, and members Johnnie Carswell, Sara Lou Succop, Richard Avery, and Leslie McKesson. Burke County Board of Education representatives serving on the foundation are Randy Burns, Buddy Armour, and Don Hemstreet.

The winners of the golf tournament were a team representing Morganton Honda and Randy's Golf and RV Park. Second place went to the Freedom High School student team and third place went to the Patton High School teachers' team. The tournament's main sponsors were Pierce Group Benefits, Pepsi, Chartwells, John Greene and Wendy B's.

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam said, "We would like to thank the Burke Education Foundation Inc. for its support of Burke County Public Schools and for all of those who helped make the golf tournament a success. It continues to grow every year. We would like to thank all of our sponsors, from our main sponsors to our hole sponsors and to the individual teams. It was a beautiful day on the golf course, and it all went for a great cause."

East Burke Middle School Principal Keith Recker, East Burke Middle School counselor Heather Smart, Walter Johnson Middle School Principal, and former East Burke Middle School Principal Lora Austin and East Burke Middle School counselor Elicia Carter receive a \$2,688 check from David Bridges, vice-chair of the Burke Education Foundation, for a mindful classroom at the school.



Seating in the mindful classroom at East Burke Middle School, sponsored by the Burke Education Foundation, Inc.

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



Rest
By Phillip Greene
Avery County



Rest is a key factor in our everyday lives, and it seems to be a common theme throughout the scriptures. As I have printed before, being busy can really hamper our Christian growth as we move forward in our lives.

One of the central themes of many of the Psalms is rest. Psalm 23 states that "He makes me lie down in green pastures; He restores my soul." Psalm 95 paints the picture of a rest that is provided by God to His people: "Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work. For forty years I loathed that generation and said, 'They are a people who go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways.' Therefore I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.'" — Psalm 95:6-11 (ESV).

The rest that the Psalmist is speaking to is the rest that God promises us...a rest that can only be found in all-out devotion to Him.

The Sabbath was set aside for rest under the law to give the people a day to reflect, relax, and renew themselves, but too many of us today run ourselves into the ground by letting ourselves over-commit our schedules. The fast pace of today's world has caused many to lose sight of the Lord in their lives. We become too wrapped up in our plans to stop and see the plans that God has for us.

If we would take the time to rest, we would find a renewal of strength that only the Lord can provide. We must humble ourselves to receive the blessings that God intends for us, but we must make sure that we are not too busy to see when they come our way.

I would like to encourage each of you to look deep into your heart and see where your priorities lie...

The only way for us to fully rest is to take the time to get to know our God, and the only way to do that is to read His word. We must fully immerse ourselves in the Word of God to really get to know Him. For that reason, we need to get to know His Word so that we can make sure we are living the way we should, as well as making sure that we can discern the lies that the world will throw our way.

The importance of this rest is seen in Hebrews 3 and 4 where the writer explores the words of Psalm 95 and then details the importance of this rest. As we look deeper into this topic, we see that we must find the time to relax and separate ourselves from the world to fully clear our minds. Today, too many times, we find ourselves fully wrapped up in the hustle and bustle of life, filling our schedule with so much that we barely have time to sleep.

Rest is valued by God. We see this in Genesis in the story of the Creation. God worked for six days and rested on the seventh to sit back and reflect on all He had done, seeing that it was good. God felt that rest was important, and it gave Him time to look over His work. We should take this same approach to our lives. If we never rest, we never have time to reflect on where we stand.

We see in Hebrews that those who do not rest will not find rest. God places this rest as a way for us to renew and refresh, but if we do not help ourselves find this rest, we will never find the rest that God gives.

The writer of Hebrews reflects on the Psalmist's words, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts..." He then recounts the story of Joshua and states that there is a Sabbath rest for the people of God because anyone entering God's rest has also rested from his works as God did.

The final plea comes in encouraging the Hebrews to enter that rest so that none will fall into disobedience. The writer then proceeds to discuss the change in the old law, stating that Jesus is now our high priest.

"14 Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:14-16 ESV)

Find your rest today, draw near to the throne of grace in full confidence and receive the blessings you need in your time of trouble. We have everything we need in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Phillip Greene is the Station Manager/Program Director for WECR-AM Radio/Glory 1130.



**Operation Christmas Child
Beyond the Box - The Greatest Journey**

After receiving shoebox gifts, many children are invited back to participate in our discipleship program, The Greatest Journey. Through this 12-lesson course, which includes Bible stories and Scripture memorization, they learn how to follow Christ in their daily lives as they share Him with friends and family. More than 18.9 million children have enrolled in this program since 2009.

A Graduation Celebration - After completing The Greatest Journey, children attend a graduation celebration and receive a certificate. Most importantly, they are given a Bible that includes the New Testament and selected Old Testament stories along with a dictionary of Biblical terms and a map of Bible lands. Complete with illustrations, it is often the first copy of God's Word the child, or their family, will own.

Family and friends who attend the ceremony hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Hearing the Good News and testimonies during their loved one's graduation reinforces the changes they have seen in the students' lives, and their families often come to faith in Christ.

New Testament in the Student's Language. In addition to receiving a certificate, The Greatest Journey graduates receive a New Testament in their own language. This may be the first copy of the Scriptures they or their family have ever owned.

Believers Multiply- Since 2009, more than 8.9 million children have reported decisions for Christ while taking The Greatest Journey. These children as well as those who hear the Gospel at shoebox outreach events share their faith with friends and family—who in turn disciple others.

Prayer - From the shoebox packers who pray for the boys and girls who will receive their gifts to the local teachers who pray for the children who attend The Greatest Journey discipleship classes, prayer is key to the work of Operation Christmas Child.

It all starts with a simple Gift Love. John 3:16 quotes "God so loved the World Jesus loved us to experience all the sin this world offers to die for us." We, as his disciples, love the lost in this world to offer ourselves to His service. We have an opportunity to reach many through this extension of the shoebox Gifts.



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YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

Meadows Praises President Trump's Executive Order on Regulation Rollback

US House of Representatives NC District 11

Washington, D.C. – Today, Rep. Mark Meadows (R-NC) applauded President Donald J. Trump's announcement on executive orders related to regulatory guidance documents, bringing transparency and fairness to the regulation process.

Under previous administrations, federal agencies frequently used "guidance documents" as an off-the-books method for government regulations to be imposed with minimal pushback or delay. Essentially, businesses would receive guidance on new, unexpected regulations they had to comply with, even though they had not been adequately vetted through public input. While these guidance documents are not regulations of their own, they are considered as such when an agency communicates with regulated entities—so in effect, they carry the weight of regulation without being subject to the rules and processes of regulatory accountability. This practice allowed agencies to bypass important practices such as cost-benefit analyses or public comment periods when implementing new regulations.

Simply put in the regulatory world, guidance documents represent the swamp at its worst.

The new policy announced today by President Trump will protect Americans against secret, unaccountable interpretations of regulations and from unexpected penalties. Guidance documents will no longer be permissible as a workaround tool to bully Americans into complying with new regulations not subject to normal procedures. Agencies will now be required to proactively educate the public, so businesses are not blindsided by the threat of costly lawsuits. Furthermore, it will ensure American citizens an opportunity to be heard as regulations are considered, rather than being punished by rogue agencies who use fear and the threat of costly court cases to force Americans into following their directives.

The executive orders from President Trump came after Rep. Meadows sent a letter to the President in October of 2018 recommending changes be made to the system on guidance documents. Rep. Meadows released the following statement on the President's decision:

"The President's determination to purge wasteful and outdated regulations from the federal registry has helped jump-start and grow our economy and reform the government's approach to regulating. Perhaps just as important, though, is bringing common-sense reform to how federal agencies go about issuing new regulatory guidance. It's quite clear that past administrations used techniques to circumvent regulatory transparency and accountability to expedite new regulations in ways that were harmful to American businesses and families. Today, President Trump is putting a stop to it. I applaud the President for these executive orders and for his continued willingness to take on the federal government's overreach. Once again, he's showing why the American people trusted him in 2016: because he's willing to step up and keep the promises he made to the voters."

With Thanksgiving approaching, it is important to stop and reflect on the many blessings that God has given to us and to give thanks for the opportunity to live in such a great country. Remembering great American leaders draws my mind to President Washington's insightful words contained in his National Thanksgiving Proclamation: "It is in an especial manner our duty as a people...to acknowledge our many and great obligations to Almighty God, and to implore Him to continue and confirm the blessings we experienced...to diffuse and establish habits of sobriety, order, and morality and piety, ...to impart all the blessings we possess or ask for ourselves to the whole family of mankind."

President Washington was correct when he proclaimed a day for all people to give God thanks for his blessings. Washington also wanted us to "diffuse", or "spread," habits of order and morality. He believed that we are to share with others the blessings we receive.

As I look back on the past year, I am thankful for so many blessings that God has given me: a faithful wife of 26 years, our three daughters and extended family, and many of you who have become dear friends. This year, I have also been blessed with the opportunity to serve the great people of two counties that are new to my district, Avery and Caldwell. As your representative in the North Carolina Senate, I will continue to fight for the family values that have always made our state a great place to live, work and raise a family. We must continue to defend and protect unborn life, religious freedom, and the Second Amendment right to bear arms. Together we can work to keep taxes low, control wasteful spending, and above all, keep North Carolina a family-friendly and business-friendly state for our children and grandchildren.

Blessings to you and your family during this Thanksgiving season.



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

NC Senate District 46



Sen. Warren Daniel
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YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

NC Senate District 47



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

An important piece of legislation aimed at keeping North Carolinians safe in their homes and communities passed the House and Senate in August and was sent to Gov. Roy Cooper. Instead of adding his signature to House Bill 370 – Require Cooperation with ICE Detainers, the governor immediately vetoed the bill which would have done the following:

- Require confinement facilities to comply with detainers and administrative warrants issued by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).
- Authorize the removal of a sheriff or officer from office for failing to comply with ICE detainers.
- Require confinement facilities to submit annual reports to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety (JPS Oversight) regarding compliance with ICE detainers.

The N.C. Sheriffs' Association supported the bill as "high priority." However, some sheriffs in counties with large urban populations, including Mecklenburg, Durham, and Wake, announced that they would no longer work with federal immigration authorities to uphold ICE detainer requests for criminal illegal aliens already in jail for committing other crimes. According to the Department of Homeland Security, these "sanctuary sheriffs" have released over 500 illegal aliens so far this year, charged with serious crimes that include homicide, manslaughter, arson, indecent liberties with a child, assault on a female, rape, and kidnapping.

In Mecklenburg County, Sheriff Gary McFadden would not honor an ICE detainer on Oscar Pacheco-Leonardo, a 33-year-old Honduran national, and released him on June 16, also without notifying ICE, after arresting him for first-degree rape and indecent liberties with a child. After being released by the Mecklenburg County sheriff, despite a request by ICE to hold him, Pacheco-Leonardo was finally arrested by ICE, loose in the community, nearly two months after being released by Sheriff McFadden. In 2006, Pacheco-Leonardo had been deported to Honduras, but re-entered the U.S. illegally, constituting a federal crime.

In Wake County, another sanctuary for criminal illegal aliens, Fumencio Miranda-Cortazar was convicted in June of this year of a first-degree sex offense against a child and felony indecent liberties with a child less than 13 years of age, which began with a 5-year-old girl and lasted 8 years. However, the 45-year-old Mexican national, in the U.S. illegally, was released by Wake County sheriff, Gerald Baker, back into the community the same day of his conviction, due to time already served while awaiting trial. He was released despite an ICE detainer, which Sheriff Baker would not honor. Three months later, on September 21, federal agents arrested Miranda-Cortazar at his home.

I find it unconscionable that these sheriffs, whose job it is to promote law and order and protect our citizens, would be comfortable turning loose illegal aliens who are convicted felons back into communities, where ICE must then track them down and take them into custody. I am thankful that sheriffs in my district, and almost everywhere else in the state, cooperate with ICE and are not releasing illegal aliens who have committed crimes back into the local communities. I don't think there is any question that a U.S. citizen being held in a county jail for violation of federal law would be turned over to federal authorities when requested. It is equally disturbing that Gov. Roy Cooper would place pandering to his far-left base above his responsibility as governor to promote the safety and security of all North Carolinians.

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



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

North Carolina has a new law requiring telephone solicitors to use the information of their actual identity when making phone calls or sending text messages. In an effort to prevent misleading consumers who use Caller ID, any solicitor who falsifies their true location on Caller ID to make it appear to be from an area more local to the consumer can be subject to penalties, including \$500 for the first violation, \$1,000 for a second violation, and \$5,000 for a third. NC House Speaker Tim Moore, a sponsor of the bill, explained the bill's intent: "I hear about this issue all the time from ... constituents ... These spoofed phone calls and texts are a big problem for our people. The constant use of misleading phone numbers by telemarketers and text message solicitors disrupts the daily lives of North Carolinians."

North Carolina Higher Ed Offers a Tuition Bargain

A recent study compiled by the North Carolina General Assembly's Program Evaluation Division found that North Carolina ranks sixth among all states in the country for lowest in-state tuition. The study was based on the 2018-2019 academic year. North Carolina's average annual tuition was \$7,220 compared to a national average of \$10,202. Two major factors keeping tuition costs low for North Carolina students are the N.C. General Assembly's Promise Program and the Fixed Tuition Guaranty. The N.C. Promise Program sets tuition at just \$500 per semester at three universities in North Carolina: Elizabeth City State, UNC Pembroke, and Western Carolina. The Fixed Tuition program guarantees that tuition will not go up for North Carolina residents through four years of continuous enrollment. These efforts reflect the commitment of the General Assembly in lowering costs for students so they can better afford a quality education that enhances their opportunities for future career success.



Protecting North Carolina's Motorsports from Devastating Regulations

American racing runs on traditions. For more than 50 years, motorsports enthusiasts have purchased cars and modified them to race. However, in 2015, this tradition was threatened when the Obama Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) attempted to make these modifications illegal. This proposed rule ran counter to nearly half a century of Congressional intent under the Clean Air Act. While the EPA eventually removed this problematic language from its final rulemaking, the agency still maintains that vehicle modification for motorsports is unlawful.

This week, I introduced bipartisan legislation, the Recognizing the Protection of Motorsports (RPM) Act, which preserves American motorsports by stopping regulatory overreach by the EPA. By upholding Congress' intent under the Clean Air Act, we can protect North Carolina's motorsports, for professionals and amateurs alike, for years to come.

These traditions are worth preserving. I'm proud this legislation has strong bipartisan support with 25 of my colleagues already joining me in this effort, and I look forward to seeing it move through the Senate.



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A Prophet Is Not Without Honor

By Jim Huskins
McDowell County



What do you know about Moses other than that he floated in a basket and led the children of Israel through the wilderness? Observant Jews will tell you that he is the greatest human figure in history. They recognize that Moses literally spoke on God's behalf. He was a genuine prophet.

According to Deuteronomy 13:1-4, a genuine prophet must give a sign or wonder which comes to pass and then encourage God's people to: *"Walk after the LORD your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice."* If a person who gives a sign or wonder which comes true then encourages God's people to follow other gods, then the prophet is false and must be rejected. Verse 3 explains how a false prophet could produce a legitimate sign or wonder: *"For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."*

The implications of this passage are profound. Our nature is to follow signs and wonders without bothering to determine where they are leading. God's instructions for living found in the first five books of the Bible tell us that we must not follow miracles that lead away from Him. Prophecy throughout Scripture teaches that prominent figures will lead many astray through signs and wonders at the end of days. Students of the early books of the Bible will less likely be misled since they will be armed with critical instruction such as that found in Deuteronomy 13.

Jews revere Moses because he proved time and again to be the truest of prophets. God used him to present many signs and wonders, and they always proved true. More importantly, Moses led everyone who was willing toward God and His divine will. The modern Church should also revere and follow Moses. Instead, we have denigrated his role in God's plan of salvation to that of some barely relevant wilderness tour guide. We are convinced that his contributions to the saga of God Almighty drawing out and consecrating a people to be His holy possession were canceled by Jesus and Paul. And there lies the rub.

Neither Jesus nor Paul nor Peter nor any other New Testament writer could have led people away from God's instructions for living—Torah is the Hebrew word—without being immediately recognized as a false prophet. The ministry of Jesus and the early Church was filled with miraculous signs and wonders. For the first fifteen to twenty years of the Church, almost all its converts were Jews who were familiar with Scripture. If Paul or the other Apostles had performed miracles and then used their notoriety to lead people away from God's way of living, they would have been condemned.

Next to Jesus, Moses is the greatest prophet who ever lived. He told us in Deuteronomy 15 that God would raise up a prophet like himself whom those who want to serve God must "Shema." Shema is Hebrew for "hear and obey." Jesus is that prophet. Throughout His ministry, He taught that His followers must obey Torah. In Matthew 5:17-19, He states plainly that He did not come to destroy Torah or the Prophets, and that they would be in full effect for, *"As long as heaven and earth remain."* Nowhere in scripture are we taught that Jesus kept Torah so that we would not have to. On the contrary, 1 John 2:6 is one of many places that say that we should imitate Him. He lived in full obedience to Torah, and He expects us to do the same. As the Living Word of God, it was Jesus who gave Torah in the first place. He says in John 14:15, *"If you love me, keep my commandments."* Widespread misunderstanding of Paul's teaching has confused this matter.

Even during his lifetime, some claimed that Paul led people away from Torah. He insisted otherwise. In Acts 25:8 he says: *"Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I committed any offense."* In Acts 21:17-24, James asked Paul to assist and join several men who were fulfilling a vow so that all would know that: *"There is nothing in what they have been told about you, but that you yourself also live in observance of the law."* In Acts 28:17 he insists: *"I had done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers."* Paul was a true prophet. He performed miraculous signs, and he led people to—not away from—God's instructions for living.

Amos was also a true prophet. Amos 3:7 says: *"The Lord GOD does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets."* No true prophet ever claimed that God would do away with Torah. Jesus and John and Peter and James all affirm that those who love God are expected to follow His commandments. Paul does the same thing. Those who say otherwise are claiming that Paul is a false prophet.

Torah teaches the difference between sin and righteousness. No one is saved by keeping Torah, but everyone who is saved must live by Godly standards. Paul says in Colossians 3:5 that we should *"Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry."* Sin is serving other gods. Those who believe Paul taught that "grace" gives us excuse to ignore Torah should read the next verse: *"On account of these the wrath of God is coming."*

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. 11:00 A.M. Our meeting place is in transition. Please call for specifics.

Jim & Beverly Huskins are members of Obedient Heart Fellowship.

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



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November is National Hospice Month
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Retirement Resource Management

Understanding State and Local Government Employee Benefits

By Steve Gaito
McDowell County



I have heard it said that working for the State of NC is both a blessing and a curse. I'm not sure that is an accurate statement, but it does come with nice benefits and some unique challenges. I have worked with State and Local Government employees for over 26 years and there are some themes that run through all of the planning I have done.

The first is that government employees have really good benefits. The state does a great job of resourcing health and retirement benefits and they provide a thick benefits booklet detailing all the options available to employees. This booklet has 41 pages of scenarios that you need to understand in order to make the best decision for your future. And while the state does a good job of listing and describing available benefits, they fall short in taking the next step of helping employees utilize and coordinate these benefits with their other resources which may include secondary accounts and a spouses' retirement account.

The second theme is your date of hire is important in determining retirement benefits. For example, if you were hired on or after January 1, 2015, you may be subject to an income cap on your salary for retirement calculations. If you have five or more years of creditable service prior to August 12, 1989, your retirement income is not subject to State Income Tax and contributions you made prior to July 1, 1982, are not subject to Federal Income Tax. Obviously, this gets complicated quickly. In reality every person should have a personal analysis of their benefits to make sure they receive all they can base on when they were hired.

There are three main areas that cause the most confusion.

- **Pension benefits** There are 6 different options for your pension benefits. One of these is a trap. Social Security Leveling is very beneficial to the state, but not for you. Because the pension is based on 30 years for full retirement and many state employees start to work for the state between the ages of 18 – 22 it is not uncommon for employees to be eligible for retirement as early as age 48. The choices for those that retire early can lead to financial hardships later in life. I help people that retire early evaluate options and create a plan for the future.

- **Health Benefits** There are similar benefits based on when you were hired for your health benefits in retirement. These are great to understand as they can become a backup plan for Medicare.

- **Sick Leave Benefits** Your sick leave matters. One often-overlooked benefit is your sick leave. Unused sick and excess vacation can be converted to additional retirement service credits at the time of retirement. This may allow you to retire earlier or get a greater benefit by increasing your years of service in the retirement formula.

Employment after retirement has some restrictions. When you retire you need to know there is a mandatory six-month break from the state before you can be hired for any state position. If you return to a non-TSERS position you will have a cap on the amount of income you can receive.

Finally, there are several similar plans that are funded by the state. The Legislative Retirement System, Consolidated Judicial Retirement System, and Local Governmental Employees Retirement System. All of these have reciprocity with each other and while there are small differences between them they work in similar ways. Law Enforcement Officers also have special rules and benefits that need to be considered before filing for retirement benefits.

The reality is as a teacher, law enforcement officer, county employee, city employee, community college staff or general state employee, you have some of the best benefits available. I have over 26 years of experience helping state and local employees with coordinating their state benefits with their retirement plan and am available to help you make the most out of all of your benefits.

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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Berry Chapel Baptist Church

Veterans

By Steve Williams
Mitchell County

I would like to thank all our great veterans for their service to our country. I would like to thank them for their bravery, their commitment and the sacrifice they made while serving this Great United States of America. When I see a vet wearing a coat or a cap representing time they served in our armed forces I let them know by saying "Thank you for your service." I am very thankful to enjoy and experience the freedom we all have today. As all of us know that the cost of freedom is not cheap. Many of the men and women who have and are serving in our military have made great sacrifices physically and mentally, and even giving their all, their very lives for the freedom we enjoy.

I have several friends who have served in the military who have shared with me some of the terrible things that happen in war. One was a Navy Seal; I'll call him Jim. He shared the nightmare of having to go into a village in Vietnam where their orders were to wipe it out and leave nothing. Another service veteran I call Stegall, also was in Vietnam. He told how they were surrounded and were being fired upon and it looked hopeless to survive. The fear he experienced and how he reached into his shirt and pulled out a Gideon New Testament and began to pray. He shared that many of his friends lost their lives that night and that few of them made it back to their homes and families. He admits in his testimony it was only by God's Grace and prayers of faithful saints that he survived. When he came home, he became a great Gideon and started serving in God's Army. Another I call Daniel, also served in Vietnam. He shares many different battles that he and his fellow soldiers found themselves in. He also shares during those times of attack, the fears you would experience in battle. He has shared his testimony all over. He goes to the VA and shares with other soldiers, that there is hope even when times feel hopeless. He has spoken in many churches and even had the opportunity to speak in Washington DC to many veterans. God gave him the vision to write his life's testimony. He leaves his book at the VA Hospitals and shares his testimony personally with many vet's who feel captive and with no hope. By doing this there are many veterans who felt no hope, no freedom, have now experienced Jesus Christ as their Savior and now are experiencing both hope and freedom. Thanks again to all the veterans who have, are and will serve our great country. I can't thank you enough for what you have done, the sacrifices you have made so that we can experience the freedom we do today. John F Kennedy said, "The cost of freedom is always high, but Americans have always paid it. And one path we shall never choose, and that is the path of surrender or submission. God bless America."

Words of Wisdom

- It is time to remember that old wisdom our soldiers will never forget: that whether we are black or brown or white, we all bleed the same red blood of patriots, we all enjoy the same glorious freedoms, and we all salute the same great American Flag. Donald Trump
- The only thing that makes battle psychologically tolerable is brotherhood among soldiers. You need each other to get by. N/A
- The Lord gets his best soldiers out of the highlands of affliction. Charles Spurgeon

Words of Humor

The new soldiers were standing in formation and the drill instructor said all right "all you dummies fall out." As the rest of the squad wandered away, one soldier remained at attention. The instructor walked over until he was eye to eye with the soldier, and then just raised one eyebrow. The soldier smiled and said, "Sure was a lot of dummies, huh."

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



Redeemed Free Will Baptist Church

Where He Leads

By Patricia Jackson
McDowell County

During my childhood, my parents and I regularly attended church. One of the memories I most associate with the services and revivals was the invitational hymn. "Where He Leads Me" was my favorite. In 1890, a Salvation Army Officer, Ernest W. Blandy, wrote this song while assigned to the New York City Waterfront slum area called "Hell's Kitchen". Nothing else is known of this writer. Later a pastor and evangelist, John S. Norris, wrote the music.

While preparing the Ladies Sunday School lesson on Elijah, a common theme appeared throughout 1 Kings, Chapter 17. Lead or Direct. Webster's Merriam Dictionary states: Lead - To direct on a course or in a direction. Proverbs 3:6 tells us "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths". Just as God directed the life of Elijah, he has plans for our life, if we will seek His face and follow him.

Verse 1 is the first time we hear of Elijah. Elijah means "The Lord is my God" and that was the essence of his message. The First Directive of God was for Elijah to deliver the message to King Ahab of the impending drought. The Second Directive was for Elijah to "hide thyself by the brook Cherith". The Third Directive was "for the ravens to feed thee there". Because God controls all the animals and fowls of the air, he can choose the despised things to confound the mighty. God, not Elijah, decided where Elijah should go and how he would be fed and nourished. God's plan for us is rarely revealed in advance.

Elijah does not question God about his command. He goes, simply as an obedient servant. Could we follow God's leading when all our basic instincts are telling us "this is not going to work?"

In V 8-9 "The word of the Lord came unto him", the Fourth Directive. He was to leave the security at the Brook Cherith and seek a widow woman to sustain him. God had "commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee". She was not a wealthy woman, with plenty to share. She was gathering a few sticks to cook the last meal for her son and herself.

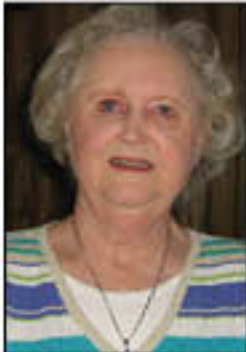
In verses 10-15 we find the Fifth Directive, this time from Elijah to the woman, as he commands her "To fetch a little water". Due to the prolonged drought, we know there was precious little water, as well as food. As the widow woman protested, Elijah directed her to make a little cake for him first, and she did as requested. While Elijah sojourned there, she and he and her house did eat many days, the barrel of meal, nor the cruse of oil wasted not.

Later the son of the woman fell sick and died. We do not know how old he was, but regardless the mother held him close to her bosom. We now have the Sixth Directive, where Elijah tells the mother to give him the son, stretches himself over him three times, and cries out to God to let the child's soul come into him again. Through these passages, Elijah has been listening to and directed by God. Now God hears his prayer and restores life again to the child.

Why did he stretch himself over the child three times? The number three in the bible carries an extreme significance, meaning harmony, new life, and completeness. The use of the number three is abundant in the Bible. Noah had three sons, three visitors appeared to Abraham. There were three patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob). Jonah was inside the belly of the fish three days and nights. The magi presented three gifts; gold frankincense and myrrh. Jesus' ministry lasted three years, and Peter denied Jesus three times. Jesus' resurrection was on the third day. Most importantly, the triune nature of God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We should seek to be like Elijah and trust in the Lord with all our hearts, and not lean on our understanding, in order to do God's will in our heart and life.

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.



In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. 1 Thessalonians 5:18



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Dave Says

By Dave Ramsey

Here's Why

Dear Dave,
I've heard lots of different theories and recommendations when it comes to paying off debt. Why do you advise paying off debts from smallest to largest? Marlee

Dear Marlee,

A lot of people wonder the same thing when I bring up the debt snowball. Some think paying off the debt with the highest interest rate first is the best approach. This may seem to make sense mathematically, but I realized a long time ago debt is not a mathematics problem—it's a behavior problem. Personal finance is 80 percent behavior and only 20 percent head knowledge. Besides, if all those people were so great at math, they wouldn't be up to their eyeballs in debt in the first place!

The reason the debt snowball pays off debt from smallest to largest is that modifying your behavior and providing inspiration to get out of debt is more important than the math. Your probability of becoming wealthy is more closely connected to your behavior than your financial "sophistication" or academic pedigree.

When you pay off a small debt you experience success, and that gives you hope. Then, you move on to the next debt. When you pay that one off, and you've wiped out two debts, it really energizes you. At that point you start to get excited, and you begin to believe in yourself and in the fact you're on the road to becoming debt-free! —Dave

It's not easy money

Dear Dave,

I'm 35, and I've always wanted to own rental property. I think I've found a deal that would work for me. I want to take \$20,000 out of my thrift savings account to use as a down payment on the property. I could rent the place for \$1,400 a month, and my loan payment would be \$1,100 a month. What do you think about this idea? Nathan

Dear Nathan,

I love real estate, so I understand the allure. But what you're telling me is you want to cash out part of your retirement, get hit with a penalty and take on debt, to buy an investment property. I wouldn't do it.

I've got a feeling you've never been a landlord before. Bringing in \$1,400 and paying out \$1,100 may seem like a good place to be, but you haven't figured all the risk into your equation. Rental properties just sit there empty sometimes. Other times you have renters who don't pay, repairs, and people who just tear up things. In other words, you won't be able to count on an easy \$300 in your pocket every month.

As I said, I totally get your fascination with real estate. But my advice is to save up and pay cash for one decent rental property to see if this game is really for you.

—Dave

Dear Dave,

My husband lost his job last week. The good news is we're completely debt-free, and we have a six-month emergency fund saved up. I work part-time, since we have young children, and I've been bringing home about \$800 a month. Should we cut our budget down to bare bones now, or do you think we could continue living as usual for the time being since we have so much money saved? Jayme

Dear Jayme,

I'm sorry to hear about your husband losing his job. At the same time, I'm really proud of you two for saving and preparing yourselves financially for this kind of scenario. Eight hundred dollars a month isn't bad for a part-time job, but it's not nearly enough to run a household—even one that's debt-free—when there are kids in the picture.

You should already be living on a little as possible in order to make the money in your emergency fund last as long as it can. It's beans and rice time in your house. That means no restaurants, no vacations, and no movies. In other words, no spending on anything but bare necessities until your husband finds another good job, and you guys are back on your financial feet again. Right now, your priorities are keeping the lights on, the water running, and making sure there's food in the pantry.

This is a textbook definition of an emergency, Jayme. Use your emergency fund. It's there for times just like these. But be wise, and spend as little as humanly possible. God bless you all! —Dave

A good emergency fund?

Dear Dave,

I have about \$12,000 in company stock. Could I use this as my emergency fund? Jeff

Dear Jeff,

If you want to call that \$12,000 an emergency fund, that's okay. But if that's the case, I'd strongly advise cashing out the stock and putting the money in a good, easily accessible money market account—one with check-writing privileges. Stocks are long-term investments. The only purpose of an emergency fund is to have cash on hand immediately in the event of an emergency.

Specifically, an emergency fund is there to cover the unexpected expenses life throws at you from time to time. It's not an investment, and it's not designed to replace income. That's why I believe it's essential to keep your emergency fund liquid and easy to reach! —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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Crossword

Crossword 248 and Solution

ACROSS

1 charge like warriors; they _____ walls like soldiers (Joel 2:7)

5 projectile (Job 41:26)

9 the sons of Esau, who is _____ (Gen 36:19)

13 Do not set up any wooden Asherah _____ beside the altar you (Deut 16:21)

14 Send me also _____, pine and algum logs (2 Chron 2:8)

15 he burned the bones of the king of Edom into _____ (Amos 2:1) KJV

16 first month of Hebrew calendar (Ex 23:15)

17 Xerxes who ruled over 127 provinces stretching from _____ to Cush (Esth 1:1)

18 _____ and Dumah, and Eshean (Joshua 15:52)

19 She _____ her young harshly, as if they were not hers (Job 39:16)

21 Therefore their path will become _____ (Jer 23:12)

23 a prophetess, _____, the daughter of Phaniel, of the tribe of Asher (Luke 2:36)

25 son of Seth (Gen 4:26) KJV

27 who struck down six hundred Philistines with an _____ (Judg 3:31)

30 She makes linen garments and _____ them (Prov 31:24)

34 It had large _____ teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims (Dan 7:7)

37 I was given a reed like a measuring _____ and was told (Rev 11:1)

38 To _____ them that were under the law (Gal 4:5)

39 two stones the way a _____ cutter engraves a seal (Exod 28:11)

40 The _____ broken the rod of the wicked (4,3) (Isa 14:5)

42 just as _____ was deceived by the serpent's cunning (2 Cor 11:3)

43 with his band in the furrow? or will he _____ the valleys (Job 39:10) KJV

45 Ye shall not _____ of it, neither shall ye touch it (Gen 3:3)

46 John to the seven churches which are in _____ (Rev 1:4)

47 Joseph called his brothers _____ when they came to buy grain (Gen 42:8-9)

48 blessed is the man who _____ in the LORD (Jer 17:7)

50 Third son of Adam (Gen 4:25)

52 For everyone who _____ receives; he who seeks finds (Matt 7:8)

55 They will secretly introduce destructive _____ (2 Peter 2:1)

59 I will make it a wasteland, neither _____ nor cultivated (Isa 5:6)

61 They are all adulterers, as an _____ heated by the baker (Hosea 7:4)

62 Prepare for war _____ the

warriors (Joel 3:9)

64 the inscription that was written: _____, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN (Dan 5:25)

65 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me _____ (Matt 25:35) (KJV)

66 You are in _____ because you do not know the Scriptures (Matt 22:29)

67 now therefore _____ thou somewhat the grievous servitude (2 Chr 10:4) KJV

68 He makes clouds rise from the _____ of the earth (Ps 135:7)

69 for the tent a covering of ram skins _____ red (Ex 36:19)

70 three thousand were _____ to their number that day (Acts 2:41)

DOWN

1 He _____ on the ground, and made clay of the spittle (John 9:6) KJV

2 Their venom is like the venom of a snake, like that of a _____ (Ps 58:4)

3 The _____ who lives among you will rise above you (Deut 28:43)

4 the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of _____ (Ps 29:5)

5 cave-like dwelling (Dan 6:24)

6 If anyone _____ anything to them, God will add to him (Rev 22:18)

7 they that passed by _____ on him, wagging their heads (Mark 15:29) KJV

8 they can _____ the younger women to love their husbands (Titus 2:4)

9 So before the allotted time _____, David and his men went out (1 Sam 18:26-27)

10 in nakedness and _____ poverty, you will serve the enemies (Deut 28:48)

11 the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, _____, Zepho (Gen 36:11)

12 Yet I am always with you; you hold _____ my right hand (2,2) (Ps 73:23)

14 Saul the son of _____, a man of the tribe (Acts 13:21)

20 Take it and give it to them for my _____ and yours (Matt 17:27)

22 Jeremiah from Anathoth, who _____ as a prophet among you (Jer 29:27)

24 I stand at the _____ and knock (Rev 3:20)

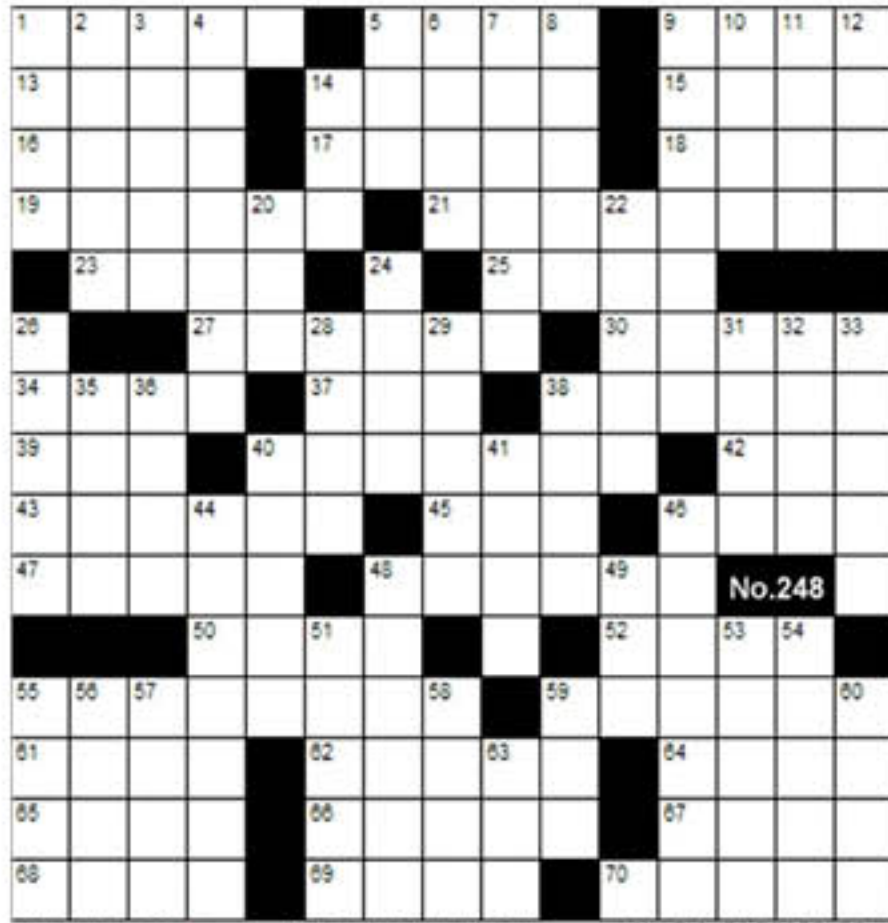
26 For my _____ are many, and my heart is faint (Lam 1:22) KJV

28 But _____ in the grace and knowledge of our Lord (2 Peter 3:18)

29 snake (Isa 30:6)

31 a feast of wines on the _____ (Isa 25:6) KJV

32 Reuben, Jacob's firstborn,



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and Simeon, and _____, and Judah (Gen 35:23)

33 You, however, _____ me with lies (Job 13:4)

35 gather, collect (Gal 6:9)

36 Ahab son of _____ became king of Israel (1 Kings 16:29)

38 Five gold tumors and five gold _____ (1 Sam 6:4)

40 if the salt _____ its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? (Matt 5:13)

41 they were unable to _____ the net in (John 21:6)

44 A mocker _____ correction; he will not consult the wise (Prov 15:12)

46 After Saul had _____ rule over Israel, he fought against (1 Sam 14:47)

48 The _____ of evolution

49 she got a papyrus basket for him and coated it with _____ and pitch (Exod 2:3)

51 The people have become hungry and _____ and thirsty (2 Sam 17:29)

53 get three seahs of fine flour

and _____ it and bake some bread (Gen 18:6)

54 endow her with wisdom or give her a share of good _____ (Job 39:17)

55 Then he said unto him, Come _____ with me, and eat bread (1 King 13:15)

56 the LORD commanded the blessing, _____ life for evermore (Ps 133:3)

57 They _____ from the Book of the Law of God (Neh 8:8)

58 we have as an anchor of the soul, both _____ and steadfast (Heb 6:19)

59 one beka _____ person, that is, half a shekel (Ex 38:26)

60 a prophet mighty in _____ and word before God (Luke 24:19)

63 Jacob _____ pottage: and Esau came from the field (Gen 25:29) KJV

Solution on page 14



Being Thankful

By John McCoury
Roan Mountain, Tennessee

As we come to this time of the year and the Lord has blessed us with a wonderful harvest, let us be thankful and not fall into a trap of complaining. We read in Philippians 4:6 "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL have received blessing after blessing after blessing and favor after favor. God has rescued them from slavery, had given them His law, and is guiding them to the promised Land. They have every reason to be dancing and celebrating, but they just keep on complaining. Time after time, they whine and complain instead of proceeding on their journey with joy.

There are at least five reasons the people are complaining. Each of these is a trap we also can fall into today: They have formed the habit of fussing, in Exodus 15, they complained about the bitter water. Now, they have journeyed for three days, and they have gotten uncomfortable. They start to murmur. They fall back on their already-established pattern of voicing their opinion when they don't like what is happening. Do you have a habit of complaining when circumstances are difficult? They would rather complain than trust God. During their discomfort, they forget about God's goodness. Has this ever happened to you? It is easy to take our eyes off God when we are focusing on whatever it is we don't have, but think we need. They listen to others who are complaining. There were those among them who longed for meat, and they weren't quiet about it (Num. 11:4). They didn't know or have faith in the God of Israel. Their attitudes and desires weren't tempered by their relationship with God. Nevertheless, the people of Israel took on the attitudes of those who were not walking by faith. Are you in the company of those who complain? Are people who don't know God influencing you? They focus on what they don't have.

Look at their detailed list of the things they lack (Num. 11:6). They know a lot more about what they don't have than about what they do have. Do you have this tendency as well? It is easy to spend a lot of time dreaming about what might have been, or what could be. We can get so caught up in our imaginations, that we miss God's provision right in front of us. They are not grateful for what God has given them. They are so busy complaining that they fail to thank God for the manna. They whine like spoiled kids with a sour attitude. They minimize the value of the manna, treating it as worthless (Num. 11:6). Instead of cultivating an appetite for what God has provided, they are ungrateful and disrespectful. Have you ever chosen to look down on one of God's blessings rather than appreciate it? The effects of complaining can be wide-ranging. In this passage, we see that the complainers themselves are affected, as is their leader. Complaining can spread through any group, a church, a nation, an office, or a team before we even recognize it. No matter how great the blessings and regardless of how many favors of grace are laid at our feet, there will always be someone who will complain. We must guard ourselves against the habit of complaining.

We need to trust God even when the going is tough. We must take care not to associate with those who love to complain. We have to stop focusing on what we don't have and start focusing on what we do have: A God who provides for our every need.

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



Experiencing God Through Our Suffering

By Christy Young
Mitchell County



Ongoing pain and suffering are hard, whether it be physical, mental, or emotional. We struggle, feel broken, defeated, and sometimes alone. As a Christian, I have often questioned why I should be facing these battles, hurts, and hardships that come my way? It's hard to live in a world of brokenness and continue to persevere without strength that comes from God. If you are like me, I have often prayed to make my problems disappear, find a solution, and please God do it quickly! I find myself feeling as if I can't deal with the struggles another day. Trying to make God do the things we are asking of Him, not realizing that our circumstances are present for a reason. Each trial and tribulation that we face gives us the opportunity to experience God. Releasing our problems to God helps us to reveal ultimate dependence and hope in Him. God is willing to give us a great gift during our suffering, more of Him!

Through our suffering it gives us an opportunity to prove our commitment to God. 1 Peter 1:6, 7 says, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Suffering causes spiritual growth. Romans 5:3-5, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience, hope: 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." Trials can defeat us, or strengthen us. It depends on how we deal with them. Most importantly, suffering keeps us humble and dependent on God. Satan puts trials in our lives to harm us, shake our faith. Yet, God has the power to take our problems and accomplish great things. When we are facing hardships we often think "I just can't hold out, I'll never make it through". We view our circumstances as impossible, but the Bible teaches that we can endure. Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me." God is bigger than any mountain, bigger than any sea, God is bigger than any problem that I can or cannot see! Use your suffering, your struggles to edify your belief, your commitment, and strength in God. He will never leave you or forsake you. He is with you to the uttermost parts of the world. Our problems tend to result in the blessing of experiencing God to a new level. Count it a joy when we face trials because we can rest in the hands of Jesus!

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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By David Burleson
Burke County

The current school year has been very rewarding at New Dimensions. Our students have been able to experience an inviting educational environment where outstanding teachers are providing first-class instruction day in and day out. Our students have also been given the opportunity to experience hands-on learning through several beneficial field trips.

As we move forward with a new school year, we need to look back at last year's state test results. One of the benefits North Carolina public schools offer parents and community is transparency. Public school accountability is a standard practice for North Carolina going back to the early 1990s, and the North Carolina School Report Cards provide parents and community with information on such key issues as student performance, teacher experience, and school safety. Data are provided at the school and state levels to enable parents to compare the performance of their student's schools with others across the district and state.

Legislation (G.S. §115C-83.15) passed during the 2013 long session of the North Carolina General Assembly provides an additional measure of school performance in the form of School Performance Grades. Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, the annual North Carolina School Report Cards display a letter grade of A, B, C, D or F for each school in the state.

The School Performance Grades are based 80 percent on our school's achievement score (student proficiency) and 20 percent on students' academic growth. Scores across the state varied with this year's release of school performance grades. Among public schools, approximately 8% of schools graded as A's, while almost 22% were rated as D's or F's. We are very proud to announce that the performance composite for New Dimensions for the 2018-2019 school year is a "B". This is the highest score ever for the school and an indication of great things to come.

I want to personally thank our entire staff for their hard work along with our parents and especially our students for all they did to achieve this status. We are very pleased with our progress, but not satisfied.

One of our top priorities for 2019-2020 is to improve our School Performance Grade. There are a number of key elements that we will put in place to help improve student performance. These include:

- A possible Pre-K Class
- A Reading Specialist to Provide Training in Reading Strategies
- The Warrior Before and After-School Program
- A Daily Intervention Program called Warrior Time
- Academic Clubs and Activities
- Tutoring Through the Burke Augustine Literacy Project
- Reduced Class Size (1 to 16) in Grades K-5

We encourage our community to closely follow our students' academic progress and work with our teachers to help ensure that all our students stay on track academically. Working together as a team, we can improve not only how well our students are performing individually, but how our school is performing as a whole.

Helping us obtain this success have been many community supporters who have donated food, door prizes and other items for our students and staff. A special thanks to all our community sponsors for their tremendous help this year:

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11. The Grind
12. The Purple Pig
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15. Thomas Dentistry
16. All our Parents Who Provided the School with So Many Things We Need

There is nothing more important to our faculty and staff than ensuring that our students are ready for the next step in their academic careers. We look forward to working with our entire community to make sure our students are on track for success.

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



Heroes Center Stage

By Jan Merop
Avery County

We have met many military men and women and said, "Thank you for your service." Their usual reply is, "You're welcome. Just doing my job."

Such humility warms one's heart and gives our estimation even higher regard for this service member. And we can't forget the wives and children who are at home. They are serving as well with hearts on their sleeves and hope in their hearts.

Our son, an active Marine for 16 years and now retired, regarded his service to his country as an honor. But, he always credits his wife for keeping the home fires burning and raising their two children with him absent for many months at a time.

We witnessed first-hand the faith in God, courage, strength and forward-looking hope our daughter-by-love displayed. Because she did, it made a great difference in the lives of our grandchildren.

They missed Daddy terribly and prayed for him each day. Visits by computer at least let them hear his voice and laughter, see his face and hear him say, "I love you and miss you," far different than previous wars before computers where soldiers wrote letters that were censored before delivery.

In my estimation, one of the most heartening developments over the years has been Operation Heal Our Patriots established by Samaritan's Purse. As I receive their PrayerPoint booklet each month, I am blessed by the stories of military couples being able to experience physical rest and spiritual renewal.

These wounded heroes and their wives connect with other couples and receive Biblically based marriage enrichment classes and Godly wisdom from retired military chaplains. This all takes place at Samaritan Lodge Alaska.

God wants us to bring refreshment to others. And at this unique lodge surrounded by the beauty that takes one's breath away, restoration in Christ opens new hope for their futures.

It is a time and place where Jesus' words as seen in Matthew 11: 28 and 29, NLT take root in ready hearts. "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

As the Mom of a Marine who served during this war on terror, I am extremely grateful to God for his safe return to us. To all our vets, active and retired, you are our heroes...center stage. Selah.



AN IMPOSING PICTURE OF LIBERTY

How grand that such a superb figure
symbolizes our nation...
which is humbly, yet mightily
represented and defended by our military warriors.
God has blessed our nation
and given us many heroes.
Thanksgiving to Almighty God
for this nation and our military
should be on all our lips this Veterans Day.

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord."
Psalm 33:12



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



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Freedom Through Christ Prison Ministry

Prison Pen Pal Program

By Harrietta Turner

For years Joy Perry of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, founder of the national Freedom Through Christ prison ministry, and her family had a summer home here in Deer Park Lake in Spruce Pine, NC. Prisoners write to her ministry when they desire Christian pen-friends and she makes lists and sends them to churches and individuals who want to write to prisoners or just send them Christmas greetings. Before Christmastime she compiles long lists of many pages of those prisoners who have written to her during the year. ... individuals may request any number of lists, of their own choosing... men or women.

She lists many of the prisoners from our local prisons also who are seeking someone to write to them and she suggests that names be chosen from her lists of men and/or women prisoners and just sends Christmas greetings initially, and any decision about continued correspondence can be made after sending a Christmas card. I personally have met and corresponded very successfully with quite a few prisoners over the years who are on her list.

Below is the contact information for anyone wanting to get in touch with her for this purpose and I can also give further information about her program to anyone wanting to phone or e-mail me at Harrietta Turner 828-765-7171 or fiyinh707@gmail.com.



FREEDOM THROUGH CHRIST PRISON MINISTRY

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." - John 8:36
P. O. Box 120997, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33312 Email: Joy@Perry.net

Dear Christian Friends,

We have for a number of years been involved with a nation-wide Prison Pen Pal Program, listing the several thousand prisoners who write in to us every year and forwarding those lists to other associates of our program who seek to find pen pals for these prisoners.

In recent years we have had an emphasis on sending Christmas cards to the prisoners. We started with our own home church but have added other churches as they have expressed an interest. We are hopeful that you might like to join them. This is an inter-denominational effort.

The Bible admonishes us to "Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoner." (Hebrews 13:3). Also, our Lord said, "...I was in prison and you came to visit me." (Matthew 25:36). Most of us cannot literally "visit" in prisons, but we can "visit" by way of a card or letter. You can have a missionary outreach without leaving your home. The cost and time are minimal, and yet the card you send might be the only one that prisoner would receive, and you could be the means for making his or her Christmas brighter. Christmas is the loneliest time of all for these prisoners.

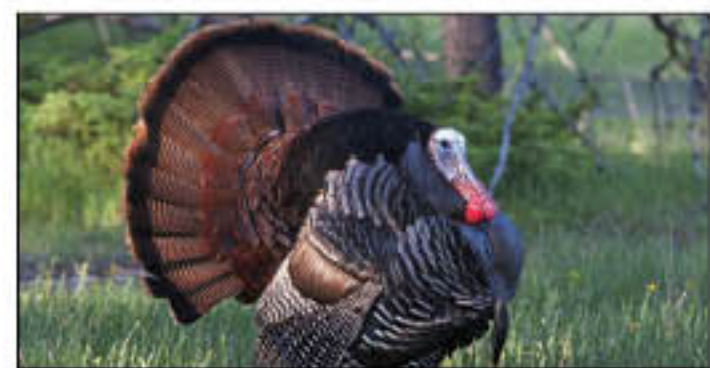
If you decide to take part in this, please let us know, and we will be glad to send you a list of names and addresses of prisoners, along with some suggestions and guidelines. There are 29 names on a page, so please let us know how many pages you would like. This makes an excellent project for a Sunday School class, Women's group or other groups, or just various individuals.

It is a widely known fact that prisons cannot rehabilitate inmates. Statistics show that 4 out of 5 crimes are committed by ex-convicts. In the words of Prison Fellowship, "Government agencies cannot rehabilitate lives - only God can change a heart. Committed Christians can accomplish what billions in federal spending cannot. They can be God's instrument for introducing an inmate to the life-changing love of Jesus."

Thank you for your prayerful consideration of this project. We will look forward to hearing from you. We may be reached by the e-mail or the regular mail address -- at the top, or 954-583-6958.

Sincerely in Christ's Service,
Joy Perry

Harrietta Turner lives in Spruce Pine. She graduated from Tulane University School of Social Work.



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Press On to Better Things

By Joyce Meyer



Many years ago, when God gave me a revelation of His promise for my life in John 10:10, it was literally life changing. The truth that Jesus came “that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance [to the full, till it overflows]” (AMP) gave me a determination to no longer settle for just barely getting by in my everyday life.

As I became more serious about my relationship with God and discovered how to really “do life” with Him, the more I experienced the peace and joy that only Jesus can give. And it made me passionate about helping others take hold of everything God has for their lives, too.

So many people are hurting, struggling to find joy, peace, and fulfillment. They’re missing out on the good plan God has for them because they don’t know that He wants them to have life in Christ “to the full, till it overflows” now, in this life. Sadly, many who get this realization often settle for less than God’s best because it requires determination and diligence to get there.

Hard Things Can Bring Good Results

These days, with all the modern technology we have, it’s easy to be lazy and expect to just glide through life. Some people don’t have the tenacity to press through challenges because so much of life is automated and convenient.

I remember when simply making a phone call required some effort. And when I first started studying the Bible and teaching, it was quite a job to put even one message together because we didn’t have the Internet to get all of our information from.

We like things to be easy, but when things are too easy, it isn’t necessarily good for us because we lack perseverance and determination to press through them. When hard times and challenges come (and they will come), we will need to do some pressing or we’ll give up.

Never Give Up!

When I talk about “pressing,” what I mean is we must press against the pressure that’s coming against us, holding us back from doing what God is leading us to do. For example, maybe you’ve experienced rejection, betrayal, abandonment, injustices, discouragement or disappointment. You need to forgive someone, but it feels impossible to do it and move on.

In His Word, God says, “If you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:15 NIV). And in John 13:34, Jesus says, “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” Romans 12:21 clearly says, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

You may be thinking, “Joyce, it’s too hard. You don’t know what they did to me!” I understand. And I know it’s not easy to press through your pain and fear to do what God is showing you to do. It took time and determination for me to forgive my father for abusing me and my mother for knowing about it but not having the courage to get me out of that situation. But God helped me to do it, and ultimately, it set me free to move forward in His call on my life to minister to people all over the world.

Press Past Feelings and Put Your Trust in God

The key to getting your breakthrough is making a determined decision to press past the pain of feelings and do what you know you should do even while you’re hurting. In other words, you can’t wait until you feel like doing what is right.

God wants you to move forward in His plan for your life. But the only way you are going to do that is by starting now to do what you need to do, the things you’ve been putting off because you don’t feel like doing them. Choose to believe that by God’s grace and with His help, you can do what you know in your heart you should do, not just what feels good.

If you’re struggling with this, let me encourage you. Philippians 4:13 says, “I can do all things [which He has called me to do] through Him who strengthens and empowers me [to fulfill His purpose...]” (AMP). And 2 Peter 1:3 (NIV) says that God’s “divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.”

Whatever your challenge may be—getting out of debt, strengthening your marriage, pursuing a new job, getting in better physical health, etc.—God’s grace can empower you to do it. Ask Him to help you. Trust Him to be with you, and start taking steps of faith, doing what you know you can do today. Press on to the great things Jesus came to give you!

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

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

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

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axes would be used, not for environmental healing, but to fund the most massive redistribution of wealth in history, literally trillions of dollars extracted under false pretenses from hardworking U.S. taxpayers and given to corrupt governments of every underdeveloped nation on Earth, all in the guise of “climate aid.”

President Trump seems to have a keen sense of discerning a ruse when he sees one and recognizing a real problem, such as the lack of religious liberty around the world. The President hasn’t bowed the knee to the idolatrous image of global warming. As he said at the religious freedom meeting, our rights come from God. He’s correct. And those inalienable rights would indeed be threatened by some stealth agenda behind climate hysteria, which pressures this nation to surrender to a form of global governance.

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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Sudoku

Solution on page 14

5	4	7			9		3	8
6				3	7	5	2	
	3							6
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Amy Wellness Foundation Award

Amy Wellness Foundation Awards \$2.5 Million In Its First Grant Cycle

By Caitlin Johnson

Avery, Mitchell and Yancey Counties

The AMY Wellness Foundation is pleased to announce that \$2.5 million has been awarded to nonprofits serving Avery, Mitchell and Yancey county residents. The programs and work funded during this cycle support a wide range of social determinants of health (SDOH) issues including Transportation, Food Insecurity, Housing, Education, Interpersonal Violence, Toxic Stress, Social Cohesion and Access to Health.

"The grant applications from 39 non-profits in the 3-county area were reviewed by each of the 8 members of the Board of Trustees, who spent over 130 hours in their assessments. After intensive review and discussion, organizations submitting grants that were most relevant to the priorities, highlighted by our listening sessions, were awarded funds from our grant monies." Dr. Randy S. Ellis, Board Chair, AMY Wellness Foundation.

Over the next few months, the Foundation staff invites organizations that applied and were not funded this cycle to discuss programs and initiatives that might be better aligned during the next grant cycle in 2020. More information will be provided including cycle dates and SDOH areas of interest in the new year on the Foundation's website.

"The work non-profits are doing in our three counties is not only exciting but extremely vital for our region. I am pleased to be a part of helping continue their great work and look forward to seeing the impact we can all make together." John Blackburn, Vice-Chair, AMY Wellness Foundation. "My hope for the 2020 Grant Cycle, is that more organizations work in collaboration to solve upstream issues our communities face," Blackburn said.



Starting from the left and going around the table: Lisa Schultz, John Miller, John Blackburn, Vice-Chair, Barbara Middleton, Starli McDowell, Maureen Thornton, Dr. Randy Ellis, Board Chair, Luke Howe, Executive Director, Caitlin Trew-Johnson, Marketing and Communications Director, Nora Frank, Associate Director, Missing from the image is our board member: Brenda Howell Sparks

AMY Wellness Foundation is poised to partner with organizations that are working in innovative, collaborative and transformative ways to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals in our mountain communities. The staff is actively working on a plan to bring together organizations both public and nonprofit to form discussions around SDOH issues affecting residents in hopes to break systematic cycles that cause barriers to health and wellness.

"We look forward to our second grant cycle, in the spring of next year, to further hone our priorities and further the collaborative efforts of the hard-working non-profits in our counties." Said Ellis.

AMY Wellness Foundation will be working closely with Grantees awarded funds to share stories of success and the impact these funds will provide to Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey counties.

The AMY Wellness Foundation is dedicated to improving the health and wellness of Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey counties. We serve to give back to our community by partnering with local nonprofits, fostering connections among services, and supporting programs that make our community a healthier place. For more information please visit <https://amywellnessfoundation.org/>

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

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Sara LeCroy Named BCPS
Principal of the Year

By Jonelle Bobak
Burke County

Patton High School Principal Sara LeCroy is the 2019 Burke County Public Schools Principal of the year. LeCroy's fellow Burke County Public Schools principals nominated her for the honor and she was chosen following an interview panel.

LeCroy said, "I am humbled and honored to be chosen as this year's Burke County Public Schools Principal of the Year. There are so many amazing administrators in our county who also are deserving of this award. We have a wonderful school system that serves students well and provides great opportunities for staff to grow and serve. It is such a joy for me to serve the Patton community each day as I am surrounded by an amazing staff, supportive parents and fantastic students."

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam, Assistant Superintendent David Fonseca and Director of Secondary Education Felicia Simmons surprised LeCroy with the announcement at her school Sept. 26. Putnam said, "Congratulations to Mrs. LeCroy on this honor. She has done a fantastic job in leadership roles in the Patton feeder pattern and now as Patton's principal. She is well respected in the Patton community and obviously by her peers and is well-deserving of this honor." LeCroy advances to the regional round of principal of the year representing Burke County Public Schools in Region 7.

LeCroy started her career in education in Catawba County Schools in 1998 working with Exceptional Children. She came to work for Burke County Public Schools in 2000, serving in various roles in the Exceptional Children's Department, on the Safe Schools Healthy Students Grant, and in administration. She spent three years as an assistant principal at Liberty Middle School and two years as principal at Forest Hill Elementary before being named Patton High School principal in 2018.

LeCroy completed her undergraduate degree at Appalachian State University and has a master's in special education from Western Carolina University. She also received her licensure for school administration add on at Western Carolina. LeCroy lives in Morganton with her husband, Alan, and they have two daughters, both graduates of Patton High School. LeCroy enjoys traveling, being outdoors, watching sports and reading.

Jonelle Bobak is the Marketing and Communications Specialist for Burke County Public Schools. She is a graduate of Gardner-Webb University and Draughn High School and lives in Drexel. She has a background in journalism and enjoys traveling, crocheting and spending time with friends and family.



Ministry Through Hardship

By Dan Qurollo
Burke County

The work of God is conducted on a scale that is impossible to comprehend. We represent a very small dot on an incredibly large scale. Despite the vastness of the scale on which we exist, the role we play is an extremely important role that demands we commit ourselves to it. Part of that role is embracing the opportunities we possess to minister to those whom the Lord directs in our paths.

Paul described a unique perspective on this in 2 Corinthians 1. It is there that he rejoiced in "the God of all comfort" (1:4). God's comfort is not limited to only certain believers or even certain trials; instead, God comforts all believers "in all our tribulation." Praise God for the comfort that is available to us as believers!

The purpose for which we are comforted goes far beyond that which most people consider. Most people view the goal as being that of feeling better. Such a view misses the point. God comforts us in order "that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (1:4). In other words, God expects us to take that which we experience and use it to help others whom God directs into our lives.

Perhaps you are going through a difficulty today. Prayerfully evaluate how you can take your difficulty and use it to minister to others in need. Demonstrate by your actions how a godly person responds to difficulties. I assure you that you will be noticed!

Perhaps you know someone going through a difficulty. Prayerfully consider if there are ways you can take your experiences to help lighten the load. Be careful to avoid comparing "war stories"; focus instead on how you came to know God more personally and allow your circumstances to create greater compassion for others.

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



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Marlene's Meditations

Personal Space

By Marlene Houk
Burke County



"Johnny, please stop wallerin' all over AJ."
"And Suzie, you don't need to put your leg in Amber's lap; move away a little and give her some space."
"Benjamin, don't crowd Elijah. Give him some breathing room."

And on and on through the day, my daughter, an elementary school teacher, reminds children of their social etiquette. The technical word is proprioception, and the definition in the Oxford dictionary (Lexico) is the perception or awareness of the position and movement of the body. But we just say, "She was all up in my grill," implying that our personal space has been invaded. ScienceDirect, a platform of peer-reviewed literature, provides more insight into this concept: "Proprioception encompasses three aspects, known as the 'ABC of proprioception'.

Agility: the ability to control the body's direction during rapid movement
Balance: the ability to be consistent in equilibrium by keeping the line of gravity of the body within the body's base of support.

Coordination: is the smoothness of an activity."

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/neuroscience/proprioception>

The spiritual value of proprioception, especially in a crisis, nudges me with its parallels to daily life. Sometimes, circumstances throw our emotions, our Christianity, and even our body systems out of their normal functions. We may feel unbalanced. Our sense of outrage and injustice may obscure our normal biblically balanced outlook on life. When life hits hard, and I'm desperate for relief, where are my boundaries? Like the children in an elementary classroom, I stumble and lose my sense of how I fit with God's view of me.

Proprioception, spiritually speaking, asks these questions.

- Where is my position within God's space for me?
- How do I follow the Bible verse that says, "in him, we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28) when I'm stumbling in the darkness of sin or despair?
- Has my position in Christ and the movement of God's plan for me been changed by this situation?
- Am I walking outside the Light, or walking the yellow line disobedience, or am I in the emergency lane of desperation?
- How do I regain my agility, balance, and coordination in living the Christian life?

Spiritually speaking, how do we enhance and restore proprioception: our sense of self-image and purpose in Christ?

Agility: How do I control and guide my soul and my spirit's direction in tandem with the Bible?

Balance: How can I stay balanced (emotionally and spiritually) by tethering myself to the body of Christ in all its wisdom and support?

Coordination: How can I revert to biblical thinking so smoothly that my body follows willingly with normal blood pressure; my spirit focusing on the Lord, and emotions remaining calm.

The answers, by God's design, incorporate the spiritual equivalent of teaching children about personal space.

Sing-Appropriately enough, music helps children understand proprioception with its characteristics of balance and rhythm. The Bible reminds me that praising him with music balances me in a spiritual sense, restoring my agility to move in a godly direction during the rapid changes in life. Praising God with music also aids in balancing the current trouble with the bigger picture of eternity and helps me to coordinate Bible verses with my life.

Psalm 16:8-9 "I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope."

Stimulate-In the case of physical injury, a holistic method is to provide tactile stimulation. "Mechanico Receptors in the bottom of the foot provide continuous input to the brain where global postural adjustments are made. Through this stimulation, a message is sent to the cerebellum (the balance center of the brain)." <https://medicineworld.org/alternative/proprioceptive/proprioceptive-stimulation.html>

Similarly, Christians need stimulation from the body of Christ to restore harmony and balance to their lives during terrible times. A warm hug, great listening skills by empathetic fellow Christians, and gentle advice from teachers and Bible study leaders reduce stress and encourage healing to a defeated Christian. The Bible brims with rich treasures that stimulate healing of the soul and shed the warm light of Jesus' presence into the darkest parts of our sorrow-filled hearts. Hebrews 10:24-25 "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

Seek a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. A variety of injuries and conditions ranging from autism to diabetes and joint injuries to peripheral neuropathy cause symptoms of proprioception. Then, the person or parent seeks help from professionals. Similarly, when we lose the agility to respond spiritually to our trials, the balance of God's perspective, and the coordination that comes from restoration, we need to respond by seeking solutions from the Great Physician through His Scripture. Ask Jesus about your proprioception. Get to know Him and seek wisdom from the Lover of your soul.

Psalm 143:8 "Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning: for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee."

Sometimes, when crises force us to amputate a limb, spiritually or emotionally speaking (such as in divorce or the death of a loved one), we struggle through the process of using a prosthesis that will enable us to enjoy life again. This prosthesis may be counseling, moving, starting a new life venture or supporting others as we have been undergirded. But the unusual characteristic of proprioception is that people with prosthetic limbs can still "sense the angle and movement of their artificial joint reasonably well". (Ibid-ScienceDirect)

Regardless of your season of life, whether you are single, married, widowed, or unemployed and desperate, God will take your amputated expectations and still give you a sense that you are firmly tucked into His love and can enjoy His guidance for your life.

Proprioception, a physical and social ability and challenge to some, mirrors the Scriptural equivalent of understanding and restoring our agility, balance, and coordination when life assails us. Carry on!

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. Learn more about women in the Bible at Marlene's website: www.MarleneHouk.com

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Seeking Welfare

By Tracey Jessup

"But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." --- Jeremiah 29:7

The eyes of our nation have been following the trial of the former Dallas police officer who shot and killed her unarmed neighbor in his home last year. The jury sentenced Amber Guyger to ten years in prison in the death of Botham Jean. While the sentence was met with mixed reactions, Jean's younger brother, Brandt, said these words in a victim's impact statement:

"If you truly are sorry, I know I can speak for myself, I forgive and I know if you go to God and ask him, He will forgive you. And I don't think anyone can say it, again I'm speaking for myself... but I love you just like anyone else... And I wasn't going to ever say this in front of my family or anyone, but I don't even want you to go to jail. I want the best for you, because I know that's exactly what Botham would want you to do. And the best would be to give your life to Christ. I'm not going to say anything else. I think giving your life to Christ would be the best thing that Botham would want you to do. Again, I love you as a person and I don't wish anything bad on you. I don't know if this is possible, but can I give her a hug, please? Please?"

Judge Tammy Kemp granted permission, and Brandt Jean and Amber Guyger hugged for almost a full minute. Shortly after they embraced, Judge Kemp came off the bench to speak to Botham Jean's family, sharing hugs and quiet words on the side of the courtroom. The judge then approached Guyger and gave her the gift of a Bible.

On Monday, September 30, Gardner-Webb University hosted former professional athlete Chris Singleton, whose mother, Sharonda Coleman Singleton, was murdered in a racially motivated shooting along with eight other victims at Mother Emanuel AME church in Downtown Charleston, South Carolina on June 17, 2015. Singleton inspired his city and the nation by forgiving the man who murdered his mother and stating, "Love is stronger than hate." As he shared with our community of faith and learning about his personal experiences of adversity, he testified to the truth that God can guide us through any storm we will ever pass. The context of today's passage finds the people of God uprooted from the familiarity of home and exiled in a land whose language and customs they do not know. Jeremiah speaks words of wisdom and hope to the brokenhearted, devastated community, but his words were not what they might have expected. They are not told to seek revenge on their captors; instead, they are told to seek their welfare, which inextricably was tied to the welfare of the people of God.

When someone has wronged us, do we wish them evil and harm? Or do we follow the wisdom of Jeremiah, and the example of Brandt Jean and Chris Singleton, praying to the Lord for the welfare of our enemies?

Prayer: Lord, thank you for redeeming our lives in such a way that places of hurt are transformed into places of mission and blessing as we seek the welfare of those who have done us harm.

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.

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Colossians 4:2



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