Walnut Grove Baptist

Giving Thanks vs. Being Thankful
By Kurt Borum
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. 1 Thess 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 his 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, a 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 91. 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 are 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 end glory in your praise.”

When we partake of the Lord’s Supper. 1 Corinthians 10:16 “It 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 110:8 “At midnight I rise to give you thanks for your righteous laws.”

When you are depressed. Psalms 43:5 NJV “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 whipings 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 Borum 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 1966, he watched his pastor share the Gospel with his son. Then, his witness to his son to accept Jesus Christ into his life.

Are you thankful for the person or people who introduced you to Jesus? Who served you? Who gave you what you needed? Who is there for you when you need them? Do you remember those who have helped you? We should be thankful – and we are! But, how do we show our gratitude?

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 10 years. For more tips and resources, visit evangelismexpansion.org

“A Pastor’s View

“I Wait For The LORD”
By Shawa Thomas

“I wait for the LORD, my soul doth 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 any move by 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 as “Are they going to trust Me?” His goal isn’t just “selling a house,” but building trust in us, 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 learn. 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 do not wait, and in His word do I hope.”

Shawa 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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"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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www.bridgewnc.org
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Sunday Service: 10:30 AM
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Wednesday Evening Service - 7:00 PM
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Pastor Steve Boltz
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Vegetarian Buffet after church
Wednesday Praise, Prayer & Proclaim - 7:00 pm
www.morgansda.org

Faith Fellowship Church
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(828) 475-9294
www.fnn.org
www.floraudio.org
Pastor: David Gillispie
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Worship Service - 10:45 am
Wednesday Bible Study - 7:00 pm
"The spirit of a good man is whatever the Lord prays.
And the delight of his ways." Psalm 37:23

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www.burmontbaptist.org
Dr. Luke A. Lane
9:30am - Early Worship
9:45am - Sunday School
11:00am - Worship
6:00pm - Evening Worship

Pine Branch Baptist Church
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First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine
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Spruce Pine United Methodist Church
11080 Hwy 321 South
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
www.sprucepineumc.org
spumc@blue.net
Pastor Rev. Jeremy Troxler
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Sunday Worship: 11:00am
Choir Wednesdays - 7:00pm
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Newland Christian Church
200 Sagers Gap Highway
Newland, NC 28657
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www.newlandchristianchurch.com
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Being Thankful... A Thing of the Past?
By Chris Rathbun
Mitchell County

It doesn’t take one 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 headline, new scandal or supposed new scandal, murder, 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 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...I shall go on.

It seems at 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 them back or will take years and years to settle the debt. Many of them now believe they shouldn’t have to, but the American taxpayer should pay for them. You young folks who want what your 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 they have, they continue to want more and more. Enough is never enough. Advertisers continue to pander to the American consumer 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 heart 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 so desperately long. Many Christians are fooled into thinking they need more than Jesus in this life and will waste precious time, money, and resources pursuing which they will never satisfy them. All the while Satan keeps on lying and deceiving 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 out at the end of the month to get the 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 will continue to upgrade 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 becontent. Whether I shall stay in bonds, or be dead, are even your affairs are my affairs. And whatsoever I do, this I do all for the gospel’s sake, and for the preaching of the gospel. Now I beseech you, brethren, wot ye the things which be before. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be enriched.”

The New Holiday Event is Announced in WNC

A Mountain Christmas Trail of Lights

October 21, 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 20th 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 artist’s haven, and then on to Linville’s glory and into other communities and neighborhoods,” said Pam 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.amountainchristmastrailoflights.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 20th with several events taking place as 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 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.”

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

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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.” Psa 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 “in 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 Psa 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 is 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 so 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 darkens 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 know not.

At the end of the book of Job, we see God in all His power and wisdom challenge 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 my hand upon my mouth.
5 Once have I spoken: but I will not answer. Two: twice: but I will proceed no further.

Job 42:6 (KJV 1900)

6 Wherefore I abstain 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 in control. I am grateful that my Father “puts my ears 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 55:11 (KJV 1900)

11 For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver me 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.

Pastor Dean Honeycutt shepherds Snow Hill Baptist Church in Siler City, NC. He may be reached at 910-385-0213, snowhillbaptist@gmail.com , or visit their website at www.snowhillbaptist.com.

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, so that one part does not overrule another’ 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. These 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 One 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 outreach grows, the good that comes will be because of God’s hand on the ministry and the churches who know 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.
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. Therefore 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 off-homeroom 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 these very words to me. His eyes brimming with tears he explained how the “Out of control” his life had become and how the “Drugs and alcohol had become his means of 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 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 money 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.

“Renewing the mind” 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… “Renewing the mind” is realizing what one has missed and thus making the conscious decision to miss it NO MORE! “Wow, I could have had a V8!” (Snack 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!” (Snack 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. These 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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**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 off-homeroom 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 these very words to me. His eyes brimming with tears he explained how the “Out of control” his life had become and how the “Drugs and alcohol had become his means of 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 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 money 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.

“Renewing the mind” 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… “Renewing the mind” is realizing what one has missed and thus making the conscious decision to miss it NO MORE! “Wow, I could have had a V8!” (Snack 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!” (Snack 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. These 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 used 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 duck’s 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.”

“We’re 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 marks that will lead our family and friends toward the most important thing in their lives, a reunion on the other side of Jordan! We’re true to the teachings of our Lord to the best of our 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 1,400 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 nations in each of the first four books of the New Testament.

Matthew’s Account—Matthew 28:18-20

“And Jesus came and spoke 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 us 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 or 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 in righteousness, whether it be in the pulpit or in the classroom. Baptizing is taking 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 always.” Our spiritual stimulus in getting out the Gospel comes from the knowledge that we are being used by 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 baptised 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 us, we do so.

We should go confidently because the message we have is the right one.

We should go expectantly, 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, hurring the Word of God from our hearts.

Observe first we are told 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 known, 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 15 clarifies the way 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.


“And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it believed 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 understandable why the Lord saves us. We do not experience redeeming grace just that we might one day go to glory, 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.
is God’s word that strengthens us for the battles we face from our enemy the devil. The Lord wants to take away the pain of our life that do not honor Him. If there were any of our pain, God wants to know that we have a grace of strength to be strong and healthy. 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.com

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Notes 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 there in winter 9 months of the year (high country of Colorado) or summer 12 months of the year (SW Florida), His reasons are still there. There are so many expressions of the love of God here. People reaching out to those in addiction like Celebrate Recovery at Hesston 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 businesswoman 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 Sickers, who has many Christians involved with her as a Christian herself, has a store full of memorabilia 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, Lee McRae College students meet at Campus Life to grow and to intern and the peace of the Lord is there. There are over 100 churches here in Avery County. The majority are small and very family oriented. Others have large 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 your family ready for changes coming? Is your relationship with Him solid and real? Is your home safe and in order for 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 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 Hesston Christian Church. Nancy taught elementary school and middle school over many years. She is the grandmother of eight.

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High Peak Baptist Church
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 wouldn’t recommend apps for preschoolers, while I wouldn’t recommend ones 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 is 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 pop-up notification to remind you to read the device.

We don’t have versions 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 do 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 best apps like this. Find it here: churchtechtoday.com/2018/10/22/10-best-simple-bible-reader-apps.

For most people, the best app to use is called Bible. Some call it the YouVersion Bible or LifeChurch 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 many 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 stoicism, 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 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 1:16 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 large 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 software 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 where at or how much you know the Bible, the digital world can help you get inside God’s word in wonderful ways. I carry a small paper Bible 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 writes about church and Bible technology for www.ChurchTechToday.com and other publications. He covers Bible software and tech at www.KevinPurcell.org and his YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/c/KevinPurcellBe-Informed.

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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.

“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 for some for criticism for his unwillingness to make climate change, the central piece of this year’s UN schedule, a priority for the United States. The linking of 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 smug, telling “For an Antioch church, how is the Lord providing...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 right! The problem of global warming, with its coming “end of the world” narrative, has been grossly overemphasized. 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 nanomed global warming.” Brown said: “It has its own gods (like Mother Earth). It defines the created world (with seminarians converting to plants in a chapel service). It has its high priests and religious leaders (like the climate change gurus and radical environmentalists). It has its patron saints (like Sweden’s Greta Thunberg). And it has its own apocalyptic 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. No one thing about science is exact. Its analysis of data is always changing. The particularity true regarding predictions of future environmental disasters.

Myron Ebell and Steve 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 made to continue to exaggerate the impact of climate change and to advance a political agenda. The failures are not exactly 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. 1:28-30). Still, are we to believe that God made the world so sensitive that if man’s use of any fossil fuel carbon dioxide levels from 270 to 54,000,000 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.

The universal deluge of Noah’s day, the Great Flood, the Flood of Noah’s day, “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 be slammed off the rails 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 elements. The passages of Scripture that afflict this myth are numerous in both the Old and New Testaments.

In Jeremiah 5:23-25, the Lord rebuked Israel, saying that he was using the world as a means of rebuking them for their sins. “If 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 mantle? 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 added to the list. Other nations from around the world, who by the way care nothing about religious liberty, are views 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 Elders, a free-lance writer from Atlanta, eloquently argues: “[T]
Christmas Unwrapped

By Wanda Harding

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 159 + who make the pageant a reality, preparing 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 come 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) 692-3996.

Wanda Harding lives in Burnsville with her husband of 31 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 18:7

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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

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The Rest of the Story

I have no idea how many of you have ever worked in corn field dust, but if you have, I am sure you have probably walked out of the field crying, because 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 wheat in around his arm and neck the day he can in from the bean field. I can still see him before he went to the field getting his comfort zone from the air respirator and gloves, I had put a little paint in him because I did not want him to get hurt or exposed to anything that might hurt him. When I looked at it a week 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 cranky suit, gloves and hat. “Pollard, this is a dangerous chemical and you need to be careful to get it on your skin,” Farmer Doug warned. Air gets complicated. I listened to my then fat self into the hazard green material, donned my farmer’s gloves and set out to eradicate the veggie can bead.

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...twice even. I could feel the hot breath in my face and the heat 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, tugging, and I couldn’t think through my vision was tearing my skin. As I looked in the mirror I noted what appeared to be a vast blister, better said legrosy! Alas, my life flashed before my eyes as I envisioned the end...certainly the distantly chemical mixture was expediting my trip to heaven. I scurried to the farmhouse kitchen, hoping only to better things 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 explained how I followed his instruction. “Doug, it wore the suit and gloves even the heat was nearly exhausting. I even thought to stand upwind of the spray. But, is you see, my skin is being eaten from the outside in.”

That crooked smiles and misconceptions, 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, “Okay, did you get tingled up in the beans?” Thinking back I recollected. Twice times the cow row beans had wrapped second legs 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 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, thanking God spared me death from the nuclear material.

Waving Watermelon...

I had been plowing, hoeing, taking and otherwise eating dust all day long. An extended dry spell plunged our mountain farm at Dovely 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 missives, I love driving the tractor. Tooting along down Harrell Road I was “one” with the land...content in my role as farm hand extraordinaire...privileged to captain the kite along our rural roads. I’m telling ya, this was a hot day and I’d had no water at a few hours (Doug didn’t have in the truck at the time). I spied the bend I saw a lovely lady standing at the intersection of Harrell 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, drooping, 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. Our Farmer Clint has a gentlemanly gesture, and went to deposit the hay. All the while I wished I could figure out a way to imagine 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 whimmed. 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 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? I just didn’t seem right to stop and say, ‘Hi Betsy, may I please have your watermelon?’ Or what if I had leaned from the racor and said, ‘Grains of that watermelon Betsy!’

Bursting into laughter my friend 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 everything 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 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 shared 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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Clint’s Chronicles on the Funny Farm, November 2019

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Annual Enrollment Period starts October 15 and ends December 7.
**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-spiited 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 exact are the others here for?

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

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**Grief Share**

**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 Grief Share 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: bitter 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 disavowing 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 immediate 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 that year. Each person is different, so removing 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 must keep things exciting as they usually are for holidays, because downing traditions can be even more painful. Changing traditions can also cause guilt in the grieving person. It 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 mean no travel or no 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. An invitation is to schedule your visit before or after the actual holiday to allow for a longer 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 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 lost loved one, which can put others at ease. Most of those in grief want to talk about the person they have lost. Hearing others’ 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 stress 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 others to laugh 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 savior’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 at 828-763-4633. There is no charge to attend, and a covered dish will precede the event. Each person attending will receive a handbook of articles and devotionals 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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WISHING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A VERY HAPPY THANKSGIVING!
God Working Through Abiding Hope, Inc.

By Sylvia Marpley
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, 2016. 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) 689-1230 for an appointment or just drop by our office at 105 Chestnut Street in Mars Hill to get further information, or call 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 Filemon (ablemon@abidinghopeinc.org) is the Client Services Director there.

Sylvia Marpley is a member of Gabries Creek Baptist Church in Mars Hill. She retired from Mars Hill University in 2012 with 45 years of service in administration. Sylvia lives in Braid Creek Community of Buncombe County. She is deeply involved with the mission outreach of her church and has been a volunteer since 2014 with Abiding Hope, Inc. in Mars Hill.

BEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

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Blown by the Hand of God
By Timothy W. Iron
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 days are shorter and the nights grow longer. 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 aspen leaf is released from its grasp upon the place for which it had found a place, the place to which it felt a belonging. The cold winds lift the vessel into the overflow, its destination is unknown. Where it will land is not as important as what it loses 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 message. 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 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 microcosm 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 has twisted and turned, we must be mindful that it has not more than anything that is not His hand upon our lives. No failing 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 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 reason. Every touch of God’s hand upon our lives reveals another bend in our road of life.

The leaves in the wind tipped and turned, being blown away without knowing where they would land. If it lights upon one spot, it may be there for a short time before another blast of wind 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 place of God’s intended destination. Forever taken by His meaningful purpose upon our being to where we are intended most.

All around us are other leaves, whether they have fallen or whether they remain clinging to the very branch from which they came as they take one 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, the path in 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 has 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 it hit me full force, 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 him from the very start. One of the most lasting things that God taught us about 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 had intended. In that manner, we then become stewards of His word, the hearing, the seeing, and the voice to the Spirit that dwells 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, infinitesimally small voice, to the One who reigns over all; the One whom we are created in the image of, whom we are His earthly vessel to clothe the image of God and thereby reflect His glory, to us. 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 had cast 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 contemplate, comprehensively never acquire but the most intumescence 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 contemplate, 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 cousin, is supplied unto us. It is that vitality that makes us alive. It is the constant untold strength and energy, allowing the tree to draw life from the light, too often are we; a complexity of 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 invisible action of the wind, the dance of the earth around us, each, focused 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 upon our day.

Our personal charismata 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 which we seek to fulfill the void within. Without the firm outer shell, the soul within cannot be protected and can fall victim to the distraction and decay of the dark forces of this world.

Coming close to God, seeking to understand, then we are giving what we need to go forth and provide light and hope to the world around us, not only from the personal relationship we are with whom we are with our physical, but more so by being a light of hope, a 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 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 hope and tools with which to go forth and bring others to Him, and in the end, coming closer to the One who we admire. He speaks through every word that we share, we walk one step closer to His side. Thanks be to God.

Timothy W. Iron lives in Collettsville, NC, with his family. He is the former Director of the Trail of Faith in Vidersa, 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, "Bruchke to Heaven," and his next book, being the second, "The Light in the Darkness." He is an active blogger, artist, and musician. Timothy also has a B.S.M.E. from UNCG and is a Lay Speaker. He can be reached at twironfire@gmail.com.

November 2019 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 18
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 alone 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 seemingly 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 tug at me as I remember them. Things have changed over the years, but Wendy and I still hold on to those traditions. She is the wonderful cook, the meals are amazingly delicious, the fellowship shared is sweet and the Lord is thanked for His abundant grace and mercy. 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 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 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. Bear His voice in your heart and amazed 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.

Annual Enrollment Form

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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 light display at the Waldensian Trail of Faith. Founded in 1985, 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.org. Scattered among the property are 15 buildings and monuments that detail the history of each phase in the Waldensians’ 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 “treated, 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 doses in years past, students will be chosen to run 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 light 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 light 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.”

Visitors at the Trail of Faith, also known as “trail friends,” began preparations for the lighting ceremony smooth in advance in order to test the lights and setup the Christmas-time scenes. According to Trail of Faith office assistant Cheryl Trout, the event relies heavily on volunteer help and Trout 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’s going for others and doing something for someone else. It surcrases the building blocks of society and it is a joy to be able to give back — and that’s a big part of the community.”

Visitors of the Christmas light display are encouraged to stop by the Visitor’s Center where hot chocolate and hot apple cider are served alongside refreshments. The Trail of Faith, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)3 funded by donations from guests each year. There is an admission fee to the Christmas light display but the Trail of Lights will only accept donations to help fund December’s utility bills.

The Trail of Lights will be open Nov. 24 through Dec. 24 from 6-9 p.m. every night. The Visitor Center will be open on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. There will be no lights on Christmas Day but the light 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.trailofffaith.org, or email trailofffaith1893@gmail.com. The Waldensian Trail of Faith is located at 401 Church St., NW in Valdese.
Lyme’s Disease

My Journey with Lyme’s Disease
By Dr. Miguel Cruz
Henderson County

Back in the summer, I felt very regular tachicardia and the therapist commented on the small rashes on my back. I had no idea it was there, it did not hurt or feel different in any way, so I just disfigured my shoulders and did not pay any further attention to it. I assumed it must have been a bug bite as I spent a lot of time in the woods and gardens.

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 had put the rash a few 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, to be prescribed a round of antibiotics along with an ozone treatment and lat work to confirm if I had Lyme.

The ozone treatment consists of taking a drip 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 counted blood is then put back into the body via an IV drip. On my 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 this good in months. 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 as high as 5% of the labs do not always catch it causing a lot of the controversy around Lyme’s disease.

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. I had to pull a chair in the shower because I could not stand the whole time. Lyme’s can be dormant then triggered by my own stress or the body. Another trip to see Dr. Wilson and as convinced my first visit, then go to the hospital for IV antibiotics and further testing for Lyme. 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 EE doctor was reluctant at first about the possibility of Lyme’s 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 likely from the inflammation moving 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 10-day prescription of antibiotics. I rested the rest of the week and was back to work on the following Monday as my vision returned to normal by then. I also had a thorough eye exam at Dr. Albert’s office, and they did not find damage to the nerves in my eye.

Along with my antibiotics, I continued with ozone treatments twice weekly for the next month to make 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 homopathic remedy specific for Lyme’s because I want to stay on the homopathic 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 up back 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 vs. Hendersonville. The first time I went to the hospital, I was a cash patient and informed me that I immediately qualified for a 62% discount of all hospital services. I was also able to get 20-25% 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 “Sanamar Ministries,” not related to Sanamar’s Perpetual. They reimbursed me for ALL my bills and we only pay 1/4 of what standard insurance policies would have cost. With no co-pay and had to deductible since we negotiated a discount. I highly recommend them or a similar plan instead of regular insurance. On top of that Sanamar Ministries pays for and encourages alternative treatments over standard medical care because of the cost savings.

Rashking has had several patients with Lyme’s disease and not having the tools to offer them much more 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 opportunities, I have decided to learn all I can about the natural treatment of Lyme’s and found Dr. Klipphahn, a Swiss medical doctor who has clients from around the world. www.klipphahnacademy.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 are 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 why we 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 out the prayer that has been lifted up for my healing. My wife immediately connected her prayer partners and prayer on my behalf went out from our church and many others. I talk to 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, Leala Cruz who is a certified Integrative Nutritionist. The own Cross Life Center in Buncombe 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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Denison Forum

'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 BB Carroll Theological Institute. He serves as Senior Fellow for Theology with our ministry and travels 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 storyline worthwhile 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 that 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 known as a Christian 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 divinity 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 rather 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 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 therefloat do no common act."

Nothing is common when it's done for Christ.

How common will your life be today?

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

Jim Denison Ph.D. speaks 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.denisnonforum.org. Copyrighted and printed by permission from Denison Forum.
No one is born a Christian. Christian parents do not always equal a Christian teen. The greatest deterrent to your endeavor is the public-school system. Your child spends more time at school than he or she does 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 lifestyle of their peers. They 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. Is it entangled world we live in today are traps, snares along life's path. Many are placed in front of your young child and naive enquiring into them in a life and may. The road to deception 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 peril we may be easily snared by life's attractions.

2) Daily Family Devotions - Nothing can take the place of spending time with your heavenly Father. Aimenschrist.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 in Jesus, the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sins and guides us in how we should live. When you spend time with God, He will teach you the things you need to know. He will also guide you in your daily life. 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 who are in wrong they will fight to do the same thing. If you are consistently the one that provides the kids with the love, you can guide them. To God, they teach us that prayer is the key to forgiveness. They will always talk to you; they will always talk to each other; they will always talk to their children. 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" that 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 that I love them so much I can't stand it, and no matter what happens Jesus and I still love them. My greatest interest has always been what my kids are doing when they are not around me. I want to know what happens at school, or if I miss an event, I want them to know I care. The mistake scholar be covered, but I just keep pestering them until they tell me.

5) Spend Quality Time With Your Teen - One of the most exciting times of the week is spending time with your son. As he grew up, I started "adopting" kids I didn't have in the church. I was teaching in church and I was teaching at home and I was teaching with their kids. You are a child's hero and everything you do they look up to. Controlling your temper and getting a good example for the kids 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 some free and dental care but rarely did they practice it. We 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 that adults and youth can now be a voice for God. We have a King and Savior, a heavenly Father, and a Companions, (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 to Him. It is part of the basic faith of being a Christian. It gives us the right to protest our Savior. It is also important for 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 to 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 minds, 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.
3 Hurdles in Sharing the Gospel
By Josh Reed

In the 2014 Summer Olympic Games in Rio, Brazil, Haitian hurlard Jeffrey Julious shot out of the blocks quickly, only to hit the first hurdle and fall to the ground. While certainly embarrassed, Julious could have easily walked away 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 not 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 reader once said, “I 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” is Christ, to be an “ambassador for Christ,” which means “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 Disciple NC 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 Disciple NC believes believers should be 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 immovable. 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 Carusone 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

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 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 affects 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 medicaments. 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, 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 recovery times than would be expected with conventional therapies and medicaments. Current research is extensively looking at the benefits of laser therapy is treatment of brain disorders and trauma including dementia which is showing exciting 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 moved, 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, pediatrics, 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 dollars.

Dr. Miguel Cruz is in practice along with his wife of 15 years, Leisa Cruz who is a certified Integrative Nutritionist. They own Cruz Life Center in Bunnville 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 Biesz
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 couldn't fix her broken character. Actually, those folks who knew Mary and condemned her as unforgivable 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 thought for her 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 bogged up in football and shopping. It seems pitiful to consider our thankfulness has so poorly replaced.

In the woman Mary, nothing seemed to distract her attention from her tenacious thankfulness. Although shopping was included in her tenacious thanksgiving. Her trip to a very pricey perfume store gives it 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 was 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 purchased 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 once-in-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 people present is how thankful they are to 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 a 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 examine our need for forgiveness 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, just like Mary, we will display a tenacious thankfulness.

Yes, it is that time of the year when thanksgiving 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 was like the 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 courageous. I hope I see my own brokenness, so I too will spill my thankfulness for my Jesus, all over the calendar, enjoying in the entirety of every season, and every year.

Steve Biesz, 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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Chrisy 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 Guidespost and HCI. Chrisy 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/ dp/dk_blume_zr_book_176?ie=UTF8&field-author=Chrisy-Lowman&search-aa=books&text=Chrisy-Lowman&sort=relevance rankyou can reach her at facebook.com/christyLowman or chrissy40zaps@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 immigrants 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 request be made known unto God. Philippians 4:6

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 presence of a rainbow
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 in 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 was Forks of Ivy Missionary Baptist Church in Waverlyville, “home away from home”. She is currently singing with the Gospel Group “Jonah’s Palace” out of Mars Hill, NC. Her latest song “Homecoming” will soon be heard by many.

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Give Thanks
By Corrin Cline
Barker 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 for what we have? We seem to generally be an entitled people these days. It hasn’t always been this way. Thanksgiving itself is a harvest festival, and the Pilgrims celebrated it on this day in 1621. The Wampanoag tribe helped the Pilgrims, and the first Thanksgiving was a time of celebration and gratitude.

What’s Happening with Extension
Mitchell County Cooperative Extension is playing some new, and not so new, face cards. 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 looking for 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 continues 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.

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, and the Day of Atonement. The Day of Atonement, known as Yom Kippur, was a time of sacrifice and intercession for the sins of the people. The focus of Leviticus is that God alone is worthy of worship.

The Lord’s Supper is a symbol of Christ’s sacrifice and the church’s continued need for God’s grace and mercy. This is a time of remembrance and thanksgiving. The Lord’s Supper is a communion of believers who have been called to participate in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. It is a time to remember God’s love and sacrifice for us. This is a time of celebration and thanksgiving.

There are several passages of Scripture that highlight the giving of thanks:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18: As we give thanks in all circumstances and the God of peace will sanctify us completely, spiritually, and in every way. He will provide for our needs 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 for all of your remembrance of me, always in every prayer of mine for you.”

Thanksgiving is the natural or the supernatural response from those who understand the sacrifice 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 beyond 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 prayer; we will never dreamed possible.

Eve Kindley
Gary Hyatt

Happy Thanksgiving

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www.brcnews.com
November 2019 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 27
Regional News

Baptist 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 these communities for Christ. Visit our website for full list of projects at https://baptistonmission.org/Mission-Projects/United-States/New-England or contact NC Baptist on Mission at 919-467-5007 or matthewh@cbaptist.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 local church projects designed for 1st-6th grade children. Sign up for 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 Nosa at dollie@cbaptist.org Website http://baptistonmission.org/camps/dk/kids

Events at the Billy Graham Library - Nov. 10, 1-2:30 p.m.: Book Signing with Tamme Jo Shults – The Billy Graham Library will host Tamme Jo Shults, Southwest Airlines captain and formal naval aviator, for a book signing on Saturday, Nov. 16. Shults received word she could sign on April 17, 2018, 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.

Ombudsmen 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 Ombudsmen Program is calling for volunteers in Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey Counties. Volunteer ombudsmen, also known as Community Advisory Groups, are individuals who serve as advocates for residents living in 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.

Cross Mill United Methodist Church - Cross Mill United Methodist Church is now accepting donations of NIE items for an upcoming fundraising auction. Proceeds from the auction will go toward maintenance needed church building repairs and our 24/7 Sharing Food Pantries Ministry. Any business and/or individual donations would be greatly appreciated. Call 828-460-9277, 828-442-5098 or 828-861-8700.

New Community Outreach Benefits - McDowell County Families with Children for Teens B.E.A.R. Closet - Beginning Wednesday, August 1st, 2018, the youth group at Cross Mill 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 from 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 828-303-7909 or email TeensForCrossMillBEARcloset@yahoo.com.

First Baptist of Marion - The Children’s Committee is creating a library for the children and families with the help of Cullowhee. 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 books currently on hand. Please leave donations in the main office. Thank you!!!

Appalachian Christmas Outreach - Backpack Collection on November 2, 2019 at Berry Chapel Baptist Church. This is a ministry of the North Carolina Baptist General Convention and Appalachian Outreach Alliance. They accept new and gently used items for children and families. There will be a collection on Wednesday in the following churches and locations:

Liberty Hill Baptist Church - The Knaussmann Quarter will be at Liberty Hill Baptist Church on November 2nd at 6 p.m. The address is 413 1st Ave. NW, 28777. Phone 828-467-2745.

Mayhew Small Business Center - Instagram for YOUR Business (2 hours)

Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church - CREATION WEEKEND November 1-2 - Celebrated at Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church, 2007 US Hwy 70 in Deep Gap (across from Foothills Thrift Store), Friday, 7:00 p.m. movie "Flight, the Genius of Birds" and Saturday presentations at 11:30 a.m and 2:00 p.m. by science teacher and pastor, Tim Cove of Statesville. If interested, we will be on our Creature God!

Morganton Seventh Day Adventist Church - Giving Heart Thrift Shop is OPEN every Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Like us on Facebook at @baptistmorgantonnc. The Giving Heart Thrift Shop is a

maspin of the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church.

God's Closet - Morganton FREE Shop Day! Join us 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, 2147 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!

Travel Through Bethlehem takes place place Thursday, December 5th, through Sunday, December 8th, from 6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. each night. Please join us for a unique Christmas 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, 2019 TTYME OUT! Tickets $20 per person at concertticketsrock.com (828) 887-2129

November 8 & 9: Christmas in November Craft & Gift Show New Larger Layout features MORE vendors and 2 Days to SHOP! Old Rock School Wildwasser Room | Handmade Crafts & Gifts | Door prizes! The first 100 shoppers will receive a free sapling of a Christmas tree.

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 Downtowns Valdese and support our local merchants!!

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Mayhew Small Business Center - Instagram for YOUR Business (2 hours)

Bring your smartphone! 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 creative ideas for Instagram accounts, such as posting photos, hashtagging, and how to link Instagram to Facebook for increased visibility.

11/5, T, 1:00-3:00 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Jon Yancey 828-706-1299

Facebook for YOUR Business (2 Hours)

Facebook for business is a great way to engage existing and potential customers.
Bits 'n Pieces

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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, jelly, juice, and coffee. Eat-in or take-out, all funds support the Tipton Hill Community Foundation.

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Tea River Arts
December 6-3, 2019 10:00 - 5:00 Tour Time
The Tea 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-participant artists. 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 hills, and experience breathtaking mountain vistas as they make their journey through the Tea River Arts region. Meet the artists, see where they create and where they live.

Tea River Arts will sponsor a Meet-The-Artist reception at their Spruce Pine location on Friday evening, December 5 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

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YiYa Village - We are announcing the Opening of YiYa 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 YiYa 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 if that 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 828-675-5387.

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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 it 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 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 humbly 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 His, 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 Vinson tells 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 Paul and Dr. Vinson 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. Vinson would reply, “Yes, Paul, I have.” Paul would then ask, “Did you speak in tongues?” Dr. Vinson replied, “No Paul, I did not.” Then Paul would say, “You haven’t been filled with the Holy Spirit.” This went on for months. Finally, one day after Paul’s questions, Dr. Vinson asked a few questions of his own. He said, “Paul, have you led anyone to Jesus this week?” Paul said, “No, but Sunday night we prayed until midnight for people to be filled with the Holy Spirit.” “Well, Paul, did you lead anyone to Jesus last month?” “No,” he replied. Dr. Vinson then said, “Well, Paul, if you have made people speak in tongues and if what I have helped me to tell others about Jesus, I would rather have what I have than what you have!” Paul never asked his questions to Dr. Vinson 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 ask 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 29 years and they have been in Marion for five years. They have two sons and three grandchildren.

Burke Education Foundation Inc.

Burke Education Foundation Holds Annual Golf Tournament, Awards First Gift
By Cheryl Shuffer
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 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 501(c)(3) 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 $2,685 to East Burke Middle School for a mindful room. In addition to the foundation’s monetary gift, Kellen furniture 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 Smarr and Elicia Carter are designing the mindful room. They have taken a classroom at the school and plan to gut it except for the walls. They will rip out the carpet, paint the walls, build a mural out of wood, and build the actual room in the back of the classroom to create a special space. They plan to install a meditation area, a yoga area, and a music area.

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 our students. 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 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 Kellen for the furniture donation.”

The foundation’s largest fundraiser each year is the annual golf tournament. The money raised from the tournament are helping to build the foundation’s coffers. Foundation Board Chair Chasity Forest 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 Esley, Secretary Cheryl Shuffer, and members Jocelyn Carraway, Sara Lou Sapp, Richard Avery and Leslie McKason. Burke County Board of Education representatives serving on the foundation are Randy Burns, Buddy Amour, and Doc Harrell.

The winners of the golf tournament were a team representing MorganWood Honda and Randy’s Golf and EU 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’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 each 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 Principals Keith Reeser, East Burke Middle counselor Heather Smarr, Walter Johnson Middle School Principal, and former East Burke Middle Principal Paula L. Austin were on hand. Middle counselor Elicia Carter receives a $2,685 check from David Bridges, vice-chair of the Burke Education Foundation, for a mindful classroom at the school.

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

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

www.brcnews.com

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Rest
By Phillip Greene
Avon County

Rest is a key factor in our everyday lives, and it seems to be a common theme throughout the Scriptures. As I have pondered 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 promised by God to His people. “O 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 labored 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 95:1-11 (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, rest and renew themselves, but too many of us today run ourselves into the ground by letting ourselves over-commit our schedules. The first pace of today’s world has caused many to lose our rest and rest 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. We 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 He 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 3:1-4 where the writer explores the idea of the people of Israel and their rest before entering the Promised Land. 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 the same approach to our lives. If we never rest, we never have time to reflect on where we stand. We can 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 our new 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 God, 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/Christian 1150.
Meadow: Praise President Trump’s Executive Order on Regulation Rollback


Under previous administrations, federal agencies frequently used “guidance documents” as an off-the-books method for government regulations to be imposed with minimal public back 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 themselves, they are considered as such whenever 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 unappraised penalties. Guidance documents will no longer be permissible as a backdoor 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 register has helped jump-start and grow our economy and return 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 his 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 propriety...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.

NC Senate District 46

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

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NC Senate District 47

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 - Requiring 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 agent from office if failing to comply with ICE detainers.
• Require confinement facilities to submit annual reports to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety (JSPOSI) regarding compliance with ICE detainers.

The N.C. Sheriff’s 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 McDowell 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 McDowell. 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, Purnencio 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 unconceivable 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 left-of-center 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.

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 Bargaia

A recent study compiled by the North Carolina General Assembly’s Program Evaluation Division found that North Carolina ranks sixteenth 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 Guarantee. 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, a reintroduced 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. 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
Adairsville County

What do you know about Moses other than that he flouted 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 revered Moses because he proved true and again to be the trust 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 demeaned 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 "Hebraize." Hebraize is Hebrew for "hear and obey." Jesus is that prophet. Through His Ministry, He taught that His followers must obey Torah. In Matthew 5:17-19, He stated 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. At 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 23:8 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 are also living 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, 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 God's 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 argue 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.

November is National Hospice Month
Serving our Community for over 25 years
For Love Not Profit
Understanding State and Local Government Employee Benefits
By Steve Gazio
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 the next step of helping employees utilize and coordinate these benefits with their other resources which may include secondary accounts and a spouse’s 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 based 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 uncommon for employees to be eligible for retirement as early as age 46. 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 be 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.

Steve W Gatto 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 Report 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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I would like to thank all my 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 veteran wearing a cap or a cap representing the time they served in our armed forces let me just 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 serve 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 Segall, also was in Vietnam. He told how they were surrounded and were being fired upon and 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 fear you would experience is battle. He has shared his testimony all over. He goes to the VA and shares with other veterans, 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 so hope. By doing this there are many veterans who feel 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 price we shall never choose, and that is the path of surrender or submission. God bless America.”

Worship 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 highways of affliction. Charles Spurgeon

Worship 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 dummes, huh.”

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

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 Afton 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
Dave Says

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

Dear Marylee,
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 that it isn't 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 the 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 small debts, you really energize yourself. At that point, you start to recurse, and 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 15, 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 $29,000 out of my trust 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 tax on debt to buy an investment property. I wouldn't do it.

I 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. Sometimes 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 $500 a month. Should we cut our budget down to bare bones now, or do you think we should continue living as usual for the time being since we have so much money saved? Jayne

Dear Jayne,
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 start paying down your financial debt—again. Think of it as keeping the lights on, the water running, and making sure there's food in the pantry.

This is a textbook definition of an emergency. Jayne, 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 it $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

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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 need in Philippians 4:4 “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL have received blessing after blessing after favor after favor. God has rescued them from slavery, had grown 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 trip we also can fall into today: They have formed the habit of grumbling. 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 opinions when they don’t like what is happening. Do you have a habit of complaining when circumstances are difficult? They were also possessed by a spirit that left them true God. During their discontent, 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. We 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 God. Their attitudes and desires weren’t tempered by their relationship with God. Nevertheless, the people of Israel talk 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. 11:9). 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, treat it as worthless (Num. 11:5). Instead of cultivating an appetite for what God has provided, they are ungrateful and disrespectful. Have you ever dressed 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 afflicted, 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.
**New Dimensions School**

By David Burleson

Burke County

The current school year has been very rewarding at New Dimensions. Our students have been able to experience an exciting educational environment where outstanding teachers are providing first-rate instruction. Each day is filled with opportunities for students to learn and grow. This year, we 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 of NC public schools is that parents and community are transparent. 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 how our students are performing. Data are provided at the state and school levels to enable parents to compare the performance of their students 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 additional measures 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 on percent on our school’s achievement score (student proficiency) and percent on students’ academic growth. Schools across the state varied with this year’s release of school performance grades. Among public schools, approximately 18% of schools graded as A, while almost 22% were rated as B’s or C’s. We are very proud to announce that the performance composite for New Dimensions for the 2018-19 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 their efforts 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 will put us 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 Academic Literacy Project
- Reduced Class Size (1 to 10) 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 funds, door prizes and other items for our students and staff. Special thanks to all our community sponsors for their tremendous help this year.

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

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**Heroes Center Stage**

By Jan Merrop

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 15 years and now retired, regarded his service to his country as an honor. But, he always credited 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’s love and dedication. 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 allowed them hear his voice and laughter, see his face and know he was alight, “I love you and miss you,” far different than precious words before computers when soldiers wrote letters that were censored before delivery.

In my estimation, one of the most heartening developments over the years has been Operation Reel Out Pets established by Samantha’s Purse. As I receive their PrayerPoint booklet each month, I am blessed by the stories of military couples being able to experience physical, spiritual, and emotional renewal. These wounded heroes and their spouses connect with other couples and receive Biblical-based marriage enrichment classes and Godly wisdom from retired military chaplains. This all takes place at Samantha’s 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, ‘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…even sage. Salute.

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**AN IMPOSING PICTURE OF LIBERTY**

How grand that such a superb figure symbolizes our nation… which is humble, 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

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Happy Thanksgiving

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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 Christmas time 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 has many of the prisoners from our local prison 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 828-785-1771 or dymah70@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 10997, 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 each year and forwarding those lists to other associates of our program who seek to find pen pals for those 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 exhorts us to "Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow-prisoners" (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" a prisoner, 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 the card you send might be the only one that prisoner would receive, and you could be a source for making his or her Christmas brighter.

Christ 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 as to how you might write. There are 20 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 individuals.

It is a widely known fact that prisoners cannot rehabilitate inmates. Statistics show that 4 out of 5 crimes are committed by ex-criminals. 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 954-582-6958.

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 "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 Thing: 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 necessity 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's not 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 do the things you think are hard. And you never will do these things by just sitting back and waiting for them to happen. Even when you feel as if you should do them, don't just let them happen; you should do them.

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 me." 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 moving forward in the things 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) 727-9073 or visiting www.joycemeyer.org.

Please note: The views and opinions expressed throughout this publication and/or websites are the sole responsibility 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 Off Switch of Stress (Rocketchat). 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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Amy Wellness Foundation Awards
$2.5 Million In Its First Grant Cycle

By Cattina 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, Intimate Personal Violence, Toxic Stress, Social Cohesion and Access to Health.

“The grant applications from 39 nonprofits in the 3-county area were reviewed by each of the 5 members of the Board of Trustees, who spent over 150 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 nonprofits 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 will take a forward step in collaboration to solve upstream issues our communities face.” Blackburn said.

AMY Wellness Foundation is poised to partner with organizations that are working in innovative, collaborative and creative 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 is hopes to break systemic 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/

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

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. Psalm 28:7
Sara LeCroy Named BCPSS 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 1987 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 2016.

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 at the Western Carolina University. 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 Querello
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 path.

Paul described a unique perspective on this in 2 Corinthians 1. It is there that he repudiated “the God of all comfort” (1:3). 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 Querello is pastor Morganton Baptist Church. Check us out on our website www.morgantonbaptist.org or find us on Facebook and YouTube.
Marlene's Meditations

Personal Space
By Marlene Hook
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 etiquettes. The technical term is pronoception, 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. ScienDirect, a platform of peer-reviewed literature, provides more insight into this concept: "Pronoception encompasses three aspects, known as the "ABC of pronoception."

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: the smoothness of action.

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

The spiritual value of proprioception, especially in a crisis, unifies me with its parallels to daily life. Sometimes, circumstances throw off 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.

Properception, spirituality 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 properception? 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 return 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 properception with its characteristics of balance and rhythm. The Bible reminds me that praising God 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 the current troubles with the bigger picture of eternity and helps me to coordinate Bible verses with my life.

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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:

“Why you true 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 lie. I 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?”

Judge Tammy Kemp granted permission, and Brandt and 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, Sharonia 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 sister. “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 inevitably 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. Tracey 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 Sanford University’s Beacon Divinity School. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He also teaches in the undergraduate department of religious studies and enjoys the opportunity to serve the local church through interim pastorates, pulpit supply, and preaching revival services. He and his wife, Teresa, have two children, Christian and Jonas.

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

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