Evergreen Church

A Meditation on Love
By John McCoury
Room Mountain, Tennessee

Hosea 11 presents the idea of God’s steadfast love in high definition through the story of a man’s unfailing love for a failing wife. Sixteen times this sustained revelation, God uses it to show that He is the One who loved and sustained His people through every step of their lives. He demonstrates the all-encompassing characteristics of His love by employing three illustrative analogies: He loves us as a father (helping his son learn to walk), as a husband (wrapping his beloved with bands of love), and as a shepherd (removing the yoke from their neck and stooping to provide food). In these tender images, we see how great the Father’s love for His children is (Jer 31:2,3,20).

I regard [this passage] as one of the jewels in the Bible, for in it we see ... what the love of God means to God Himself. Astonishingly, in this passage the prophet tells us that what we find ... is a broken heart, the broken heart of a desired parent.

Hosea insists that there is one very fundamental and important way in which God is like us, He loves and loves in a way that we human beings can understand and experience. And because He loves, He feels. He can be hurt. He can suffer. Does God feel pain? Does God suffer when we sin and show contempt for His love? Verse 8 seems to indicate He does. Some say this is simply God’s way of helping us understand the deity in the language of humanity—the only language we understand. Certainly, at some level, we must concede that Jesus’ life—a life filled with emotions, pain, and suffering—helps us understand who God is. You and I are created in God’s image. That means if we feel hurt when someone abuses our love, it is because we are made in the image of God, who is also hurt when His love is abused.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE - Ps. 103:10-12 God doesn’t gauge His love based on conditions. With God it is not “If you perform, I will love you” or “If you fail, I will reject you, hardly! His love is unconditional. You can turn to God, warts and all, and bring Him your crushing experiences of failure. You will never hear Him chide you for coming to Him. He is ready to hear from you because He is overflowing with a compassionate love that never fails.

LOVE - 1 Cor. 13:1-3 Relationships need love. Congregations do too. What pastors need with their flocks is love, and flocks need it with their pastors. Love is what couples and parents and children need—warriors and employees and business relations need. It’s the essential ingredient in all relationships. It isn’t optional. Remove love, and you reduce life to a grinding, boring, labor-filled series of demands, requirements, and unfruitful assignments. Let me be clear. Love is not just an emotion, or a thought. Love must be demonstrated. Love does (or does not). Love means more than good manners and niceties. Love is a demonstration, not an attitude. Love is action. John 1:12-18: IT IS HARD to think of a more tangible expression of hatred than murder. It’s no surprise that Cain, the first murderer, is John’s example of hate (1 Jn. 3:12). In contrast to hate stands love, and is contrast to those who would take life are those who would give their lives, Christ’s self-sacrificial death, on our behalf—while even when we rejected Him—he proved His love for us. Why on earth would He go to that cross and die? Why on earth would a good man die for sinful people? Love is why From the example of Christ, we see how real love is. After establishing this, John sets the hook. If we really love, what will we do? “We also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters—If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother in need and shuts him out of the companion—how can God’s love be in that person?” (1 Jn. 3:16-17). Our compassion for others proves our love for God. How do others know we love God? Because we are there for them in their need. We’re moved by it. We’re touched by it. Do you notice the change from the plural to the singular in these verse? John begins with what “we” ought to do, but then turns to an individual: “someone.” When we focus our attention on the purpose of action, we focus on an individual. Loving everybody can be an excuse for loving nobody. That’s how we get out of it. That’s how we handle our guilt. You might say, “Oh, I love the world! I just love everybody.” But if I asked you to name one person whom you have proved it to, that will be a different story. That’s John’s point. And his exhortation is simple: Show the truth by love in action (1 Jn. 3:18). John is writing to believers in this passage. He is writing to you and to me about the battle between love and hate in our lives. Our names are all over this section. So where are you in the real expression of God’s love in your life? I can only answer for me—and that’s a full-time job! You must answer to you. I want to you to want to do a project. This week ask God to help you focus on just one person. Not everybody in your office or on your team—just one person. Maybe one of your children, or one parent, or one neighbor. All week long, ask God to open your eyes to some need in that individual’s life. You won’t see people’s needs if you try to look at the plural instead of the singular. So, pray about just that one person. Lord, give me eyes to see a need in that person’s life. I open myself to be used by You.” Then, once God reveals that need, do something unexpected to help meet it. We all know many people with needs. The necessary part is doing something about it—putting love into action.

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

www.bronews.com February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 1
Because Valentine’s Day occurs in February, it seems that much of the month of February focuses on love and relationships. As part of relationships, it is inevitable that we will experience hurt at some point. The Bible has a tremendous amount of material devoted to establishing godly relationships. Proverbs is filled with warnings regarding associating with ungodly and foolish individuals, including those who are given to anger (Proverbs 22:24), drunkards and gluttons (Proverbs 21:20-21), and the inmanual (Proverbs 5:8, 7:25). The Bible also teaches certain principles that are to govern our relationships.

Matthew 18 clearly establishes the biblical principle of how we are to respond when we are wronged. Unfortunately, few people actively take the steps necessary to restore relationships. Beginning in Matthew 18:15, we find the instruction that an individual who has wronged us is to be approached privately. The issue is not to be ignored nor openly discussed. Instead, the matter is a private matter that is to be resolved between the two individuals exclusively. Many Christians fail at this point. Matthew 18:16-17 outlines additional steps if the issue is unable to be resolved privately.

An additional message that establishes godly relationships is contained in Ephesians 4. According to Ephesians 4:25-32, our relationships are to be characterized by the truth (4:25). Furthermore, anger must not be allowed to continue but must be restored lest an opportunity be given to Satan (4:26-27). Unresolved anger opens the door for Satan; therefore, anger must not be tolerated. Furthermore, relationships are to be characterized by honesty and sacrificial giving (4:28). Corrupt communication should never characterize relationships; rather, the only communication should be that which seeks to edify and minister grace to those who hear (4:29). We must avoid grieving the Holy Spirit of God (4:30). Rather than allowing our relationships to be characterized by the works of the flesh, we must instead exercise kindness and forgiveness (4:31-33). Godly relationships are such that bring honor and glory to Him.

God places a premium on being sure that our relationships are what they should be. Matthew 5:23-24 teach, “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath a grievance against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” We must seek to establish relationships that honor and glorify God.
Church Directory

Bear Creek Baptist Church
327 Bear Creek Road
Bakersville, NC 28706
www.bearcreekbaptist.com
Reverend Bruce Cannon
Sunday School 9:45 AM
Worship Service 10:05 AM
Discipleship 6:00 PM
Evening Worship 6:45 PM
Wednesday Worship 7:30 PM
"For God so loved the world, he gave his only Son..."

The Bridge Church of WNC
207 Pinebridge Avenue
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
www.bridgecon.org
Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin
Sunday Service 10:30 AM
Wednesday Service 7:00 PM
Church Office M-F
9:30AM-3:30PM
"Home of TiCounty Christian School"
Our passion is to help spread the Body of Christ in this area in order to see the Firm of God transform our community, state, nation and world! (See John 17:21)

Berry Chapel Baptist Church
281 Chapel Dr.
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
828-765-6596
www.berrychapelbaptist.com
Pastor - Steve Williams
Sunday School 9:45 AM
Worship Service 11:00 AM
Sunday School Committees Meeting - 9:30 AM
Church Office M-F
9:30AM-3:30PM
"Where Everybody is Somebody And Jesus is Lord!"

Faith Fellowship Church
Champ Ray Rd.
Morganton, NC 28655
(850)-747-4545
www.fbc.org
Pastor: David Willems
Sunday School - 10:00 AM
Worship Service - 11:00 AM
Wednesday Bible Study - 7:00 PM
"All that's good in a world where love is lost. And who's delight is his way." Psalms 37:23

Grassy Creek Baptist Church
793 Old NC 226 Hwy
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
www.grassycreekbc.org
Pastor: Steve Beltz
Sabbath (Saturday)
Sunday Worship 11:00 am
Vegetarian Buffet after church
Wednesday Evening Worship 7:00 pm
Praise, Prayer & Proclamation - 7:00 pm
www.morgantonsda.org

Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church
217 Jamestown Road
Morganton, NC 28655
(828)-984-3021
Pastor: Steve Beltz
Sabbath (Saturday)
Bible Study - 9:30 am
Sabbath Worship - 11:00 am
Vegetarian Buffet after church
Wednesday Praise, Prayer & Proclamation - 7:00 pm

Plumtree Presbyterian Church
207 W/10E
Plumtree, NC 28764
828-765-8191
www.plumtreepc.org
Pastor: Ryan Bridge
Sunday School 9:45 am
Senior Pastor - Dr. Jack Hodges
Sunday School: 9:30 am
Sabbath Worship 10:00 am
Mid-week worship 7:00 pm
"That Mitchell County may know Christ"

Pleasant Hill Baptist Church
2968 Enda Road
Morganton, NC 28655
(828)-437-4545
www.peasanthillbc.org
Senior Pastor
Dr. Jack Hodges
Sunday School: 9:30 am
Sabbath Worship 10:30 am
Evening Service 6:30 pm
Wednesday Evening Worship 6:30 pm
"Love All, Reach All, Teach All, Send All"

West Burnsville Baptist Church
222 West Burnsville Church Rd.
Burnsville, NC 28714
(828)-822-3999
Pastor: Terry Long
Sunday Service: 9:45 am
Morning Service: 11:00 am
Evening Service: 8:00 p.m.
Wednesday Service: 6:30 p.m.
Church Visits: GLorifying God through knowing, growing, going, to build the church and spread the world.

BurkeMont Baptist Church
4666 BurkeMont Rd.
Morganton, NC 28655
828-437-2357
For more information, please visit
www.burkemontbaptist.org
Pastor: Dr. Luke A. Lane
8:30 am - Early Worship
9:45 am - Sunday School
11:00 am - Worship
6:00 pm - Evening Worship

Marion Seventh-day Adventist Church
189 Ward Dr.
Marion, NC 28752
(828)-898-4018
Pastor: Tim Sheridan
Sabbath (Saturday)
Bible Study - 5:15 am
Sabbath Worship - 10:50 am
Reaching the World with the Everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ!
www.marionnc.seventhdayadventist.org

First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine
125 Tappan Street
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
828-765-6451
www.sprucemin.org
www.spruceminchurch.com
Pastor: Dr. Rocky Branch
Senior Pastor
Sunday School: 9:45 am
Sabbath Worship - 11:00 am
Evening Service: 6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening: 6:30 pm
Knowing God, Seeing God, Serving God, Submitting to God

BurkeMont Baptist Church
4666 BurkeMont Rd.
Morganton, NC 28655
828-437-2357
For more information, please visit
www.burkemontbaptist.org
Pastor: Dr. Luke A. Lane
8:30 am - Early Worship
9:45 am - Sunday School
11:00 am - Worship
6:00 pm - Evening Worship

Pine Branch Baptist Church
48 Church Road
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
Phone: (828) 765-9101
www.pinebranchbaptist.net
Reverend Bobby Joe Greene
Sunday School 9:45-10:45 a.m.
Worship Service - 11:00 a.m.
Sunday Evening Service - 6:30 p.m.
A Bible-believing Fellowship Loving God and Loving People

Newland Christian Church
2800 Millaus Gap Highway
Newland, NC 28657
Phone: 828-263-1404
www.newlandchristianchurch.com
Pastor: Phillip Greene
Sunday School: 9:45 am
Sunday Worship: 11:00 am
Sunday Evening Bible Study: 6:00 p.m.
Evening Wednesday Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m
"A Local Congregation of Christ's Church"

Call us at 828-765-6800 to enroll in this important outreach effort.

You can let tourists, visitors and even neighbors know where your church is and when you meet by listing in the BRCN Church Directory. This visible and effective advertising is specially priced at $300.00 per year for our churches - approximately $5.75 a week!
What’s the Deepest Desire of My Heart?

John Piper

The created universe is all about glory. The deepest longing of the human heart and the deepest meaning of Heaven and Earth are summed up in this: the glory of God. The universe was made to show it, and we were made to see it and savor it. Nothing less will do. Which is why the world is disenchanted even as it is. We have exchanged the glory of God for other things (Romans 1:23).

“The heavens declare the glory of God” (Psalm 19:1). It’s a fact, but the actual meaning is all about glory. The Hubble Space Telescope sends back infrared images of far galaxies perhaps twenty light-years away (twelve billion times six million miles). Even within our Milky Way, there are stars so great as to defy description, like Eta Carinae, which is five million times brighter than our sun. We are amazed people stumble over this vastness in relation to the apparent insignificance of man. It does seem to us insignificantly small. But the meaning of this magnitude is not mostly about us. It’s about God. “The heavens declare the glory of God,” says the Scripture. The reason for “wasting” so much space on a minor phase of a speck of humanity is to make a point about our Maker, not us. “Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these stars? He who brings out their host by number, calleth them all by name; by the greatness of his might and because he is strong in power, not one is missing” (Isaiah 40:12).

God is the Center

The deepest longing of the human heart is to know and enjoy the glory of God. We were made for this. “Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, whom I created for my glory, says the Lord” (Isaiah 45:7). To see it, to savor it, and to show it—that is why we exist. The unacknowledged stretches of the created universe are parables about the inexhaustible “riches of his glory” (Romans 9:23). The physical eye is meant to see the spiritual eye, “not this, but the Maker of this is the Desire of your soul.” Saint Paul said, “We have been given a hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:2). Or, as he else said, “we were prepared beforehand for glory” (Romans 9:23). This is why we were created—that He might “make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy” (Romans 9:23).

The ache in every human heart is an ache for this. But we suppress it and do not see it, for we do not know God in our knowledge (Romans 1:25). Therefore, the entire creation has fallen into disorder. The most prominent example of this in the Bible is the disordering of our sexual lives. Paul says that the exchange of the glory of God for other things is the root cause of the homosexual (and heterosexual) disorder of our relationships.

“Their women exchanged natural relations for that are contrary to nature... the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another” (Romans 1:26–27). If we exchange God’s glory for lesser things, He gives us up to lived-out parables of depravity—the other exchanges that mirror, in our misery, the ultimate sellout.

The point is this: We were made to know and measure the glory of God above all things, and when we trade that treasure for images, everything is disordered.

What is the glory of God? It is the solar system of our soul. And when it does, all the planets of our life are held in their proper orbit. But when the sun is dispensed, everything flies apart. The healing of the soul begins by restoring the glory of God to its flaming, all-attracting place at the center.

Starved for Glory

We are all starved for the glory of God, not-self. No one goes to the Grand Canyon to increase self-esteem. Why do we go? Because there is greater healing for the soul is beholding splendor than there is in beholding self. Indeed, what could be more ludicrous in a vast and glorious universe like this than a human beholding the solar system of Earth? "The Lord God made the man of dust from the ground, and he blew into his nostrils the breath of life: and the man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). The Christian Gospel is about the gaze of Christ, not about me. And when it is—in some measure—about me, it is not about my being made much of by God, but about God mercifully enabling me to enjoy making much of Him forever.

Greater Good of the Gospel

What was the most loving thing Jesus could do for us? What was the endpoint, the highest good, of the Gospel? Redemption? Forgiveness? Justification? Reconciliation? Salvation? Adoption? Are not all these great wonders simply means to something greater? Something final? Something that Jesus asked His Father to give Him? "Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me” (John 17:24).

"It’s not about my being made much of by God, but about God mercifully enabling me to enjoy making much of Him forever.”

The Christian Gospel is “the gospel of the glory of God” because its final aim is that we would see and savor and show the glory of Christ. For this is none other than the glory of God. “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature” (Hebrews 1:3). “He is the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15). When the light of the Gospel shines in our hearts, it is “the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:4). The Christian Gospel is about the glory of God, not about me. And when we rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Romans 5:2), that hope is “our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). The glory of Christ is the glory of God.
The Brian Center team wants to be a resource to the community.

It is our goal to get community members back home as quickly as possible.

24 Hour Licensed Nursing Care
Joint Replacement Care
Cardiac Care
Stroke Recovery
Respiratory Care
Wound Care
Physical Therapy
Occupational Therapy
Speech Therapy

ADVANCED THERAPY MODALITIES

- Ultra Sound
- TENS
- Diathermy
- Heat & Cold Therapy
- Electrical Stimulation
- Mobile Swallow Studies

Come take a tour and reserve your private room today!

What’s in It For Me?
By Kurt Bonner
Avery County

The Bible has several messages that at first glance seem to be contradictory. For instance, Proverbs tells us to consider the ant and work hard to prepare for an unknown future. At the same time, Jesus tells us in the sermon on the mount not to worry about what we are to eat or drink, that our heavenly Father knows what we need and will provide for us. Paul tells us that “I have become all things to all men so that I might win some to the Lord”. Yet James says that “anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world, becomes an enemy of God”.

Why the apparent contradictions? I believe it because there is more than one personality type that God is trying to reach. Are you by nature a lazy person? Then you need to focus on the ants. Are you just the opposite, a workaholic? Then you need to stop trying to do it all yourself and rest in the Lord.

Most importantly, when it comes to salvation, those of us who take it too cavalierly need to read the verses that give us a kick in the seat of the pants (Jas. 1:21, 2:24), Others who are always worrying that God is mad at them or that they have committed the unpardonable sin need to focus on the scriptures that show God’s unconditional love for his children regardless of our failures (Rom. 5:15-17 and the Psalms).

Remember it is God’s desire to comfort the afflicted as well as to afflict the comfortable. Know who you are and look for God’s message to you! Selah, (think about it)

Kurt Bonner is pastor of Walnut Grove Church

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. John 15:34-35

Parts City AUTO PARTS
John Briggs & Benny Briggs • Owner
B & J Auto Parts
140 Hwy 220 N. • Bakersville, NC 28705
(828)889-2137 or (828)688-2138
Store Hours: Mon - Sat: 7 AM - 5:30 AM, Sun: 7 AM - 12 PM, Closed

Beam FUNERAL SERVICE & CREMATORY
2170 Rutherford Rd. • Marion, NC 28752
828-559-8111 • Fax 828-559-8112
www.beamfuneralservice.com
beamfuneralservice@gmail.com

Benjamin Franklin PLUMBING
Servicing the Morganton Area
828-544-1776
www.benfranklinplumbingmorganton.com

100% Satisfaction Guaranteed
- Straightforward Pricing • Same Day Service
- Fully Licensed and Insured. Drug Tested. Background Checked Employees

CHECK OUT THESE GREAT OFFERS!

$75 OFF
New Water Heater Installation

$50 OFF
ANY Drain Cleared

$25 OFF
ANY Repair

If there’s a delay, it’s on us to pay!
Listening to Ruth’s Wisdom
About the Daily Grind
By Marlene Houk
Burke County

The hands of older women tell stories of countless days putting babies and changing diapers. Reddened spots and tiny white scars speak of surprise and panic while cooking. I remember my mom’s chapped hands fingers tightened in a death-grip, wringing water out of freshly washed clothes before nudging the cold garments between the wringers of our old machine. The clothesline bore their heaviness on icy-cold days, hanging lifeless and stiff or drooping lethargically on her merry days. Her hands testified to the roughness of her work, veins, and age-spots confessing to days spent heaving weeds out of the corn and tomatoes and scrubbing forty dirty little bodies.

Today, we may not show the toll due to excellent skincare and time-saving machines, and the work may solve technology problems and create paper trails, but the daily grind goes on.

Yet somehow, in the mundane, God builds His children of grace. They emerge, strong, beautiful, and willing to focus on the Lord. The Bible demonstrates the power of these mundane ordinary daily tasks in the story of Ruth, a simple account but filled with complex and relevant truths.

Ruth accepted the God of the Israelites after meeting Naomi. She married her son and lived for ten years in Moab until they moved back to Bethlehem. Naomi’s hometown. In four short chapters of this Old Testament book, the Lord displays many layers of ruth, including weaving our inconsequential duties into His plan for us, creating a tapestry of His glory.

Ruth’s labor differed from her companions only in the sense that it was part of a much larger and more majestic plan than the field that stretched endlessly before the seven-day workweek nudged forward, broken only by the Sabbath rest. But, as a baby grew by bit by bit, so she grew in grace and knowledge, step by step, not only toward a bountiful harvest but toward her God, yielding rich sheaves of grace and truth in her soul. Isaiah 26:10 declares, when explaining spiritual growth, that God leads us to Himself in small incremental steps. The verse says, “For the Lord will lead you gently; He will never let you be tempted too much; He will help you with his strong right hand.” These small steps also include the daily grind, and they build an astonishingly solid foundation that empowers us to prove God’s promises.

Daily activities enable us to be a part of God’s plan. As Ruth worked her way around Boaz’s field, picking up stray stalks of barley that the reapers ignored, the back-breaking toil underscored His plan for her. As the ripened barley and wheat proved the benefit of the right environment, so God placed Ruth in the field to grow a daughter of faith who would become King David’s legacy. (Ruth 4:21) As Ruth ate the stalks to separate the grain so that she could make bread, the Lord positioned her with people who could help her to glean knowledge about Naomi’s God. Then, she could absorb the truths that would make her a mighty woman who held a place in Jesus’ earthly pedigree. (Matthew 1:5)

When we produce spiritual fruit by walking in the daily grind of our lives, we can see the cumulative effect on the kingdom of God and His use of our gifts. The daily grind that Boaz observed in Ruth formed the foundation of his statement that she was virtuous. (Ruth 3:11)

A daily grind enables us to track God for He dwells in the minute everyday repetitions as well as the magnificence of our lives. As Ruth walked to and from the field, she had time to think about the Lord. Washing the clothes by the creek, perhaps she reflected on this strange greeting that Boaz’s reapers offered. “The LORD bless thee.”’ The barley and wheat harvest may have lasted up to three months, which provided Ruth with many daily pieces of evidence of God’s presence in the lives of the Bethlehem citizens.

We admire people who have long marriages, care for special needs or fragile parents for years, or perhaps those who serve their country with multiple tours. We are impressed with unwavering oaths and being cheerful to those who can’t respond likewise slowly builds patience, understanding, and clarity. We give it names and call it having character: dependability, perseverance, and inner strength and beauty. Ruth displayed this nobleness of character with every day that she appeared in the field. We chafe at mundane tasks, but when we focus on the Lord during the daily grind of life, we, like Ruth, move toward God Himself. As 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, we are changed into his image.

Focus on the Lord in your daily grind, and others will want to see Who you are seeing.

Marlene Houk is a regular contributor to Blue Ridge Christian News. Her passion is to delve deeply into the truths of Bible women and to discuss those in Bible Studies called Beztachy Pass to Bible Women. She and her husband discover joy, a challenge in their church. Her contact is marlenehouk@charlou.com. Learn more about women in the Bible at Marlene’s website: www.MarleneHouk.com

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 1 John 4:8

Jamie Miller, CPA
Jamie M. Miller, CPA, PLLC
1356 Greenwood Road
Spruce Pine, NC 28777
phone: 828.765.4400
fax: 828.765.4800
jamie@highcountrycpa.com
www.highcountrycpa.com

149 Roan St., Spruce Pine, NC 828-766-9005 • (Cell) 828-766-9399

Cash It, Don’t Trash It! We buy your used appliances!
Washers • Dryers • Stoves • Refrigerators

Our Family Serving Yours Since 1949
1011 South Sterling Street • Morganton, NC 28655
(828) 437-3211 • www.SossamanInc.com

Sossaman Insurance Services, Inc.
Premier
275 North Main Street • Marion, NC 28752
828.652.1553 local • 888.562.1553 toll free

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

Happy Valentine’s Day

www.brcnews.com February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 7
**Poem**

**BLANKET OF LOVE**

By Joy Baldwin
Madison County

When Jesus had finished His mission
The Father wrapped Him in a blanket of love
And rolled it up like an ancient scroll
Into Heaven He was taken above.

Then God sent the gift of His Son back to us
In the form of a scroll penned by man
The word of God from beginning to end
First in flesh, now in print by God’s hand.

The heart of God revealed in the Bible
Through Christ Jesus the Living Word
Perfect love andnama from heaven
Of this bread, friend have you heard?

Joyce (Joy) Harwood Baldwin

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

---

**High Country Prison Ministry**

**February- Month of Thanksgiving??**

By Jody Griffin
Avery and Mitchell County

“Give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever.” (Psalm 136:1 KJV)

February: That wonderful month of the year known for... Thanksgiving?? (The Chaplain is really confused!) Those who know me understand that confusion is my home state! But this month truly IS the month for Thanksgiving! I should have some turkey and dressing, a little cranberry sauce, and some pumpkin pie as a commemoration of the faithfulness of God, much like we remember the pilgrims and the “community meal” shared with their “neighbors”!

And when I do, I will bow my head in humble thanksgiving to God Almighty Who has blessed me with the privilege of walking beside the incarcerated and the professionals who oversee, protect, encourage and assist them. This work is not always easy; it is not always fun. But when God reveals the reason for this ministry of a chaplain, many blessings are found.

This month of “Thanksgiving” is made possible through the prayers and the financial support of churches and individuals who generously give that this position is funded. Last year this chaplain made numerous appeals for sad support from the readers of this column. I prayed that God would grant this ministry the stability provided by ample resources to sustain this position for as long as God desires. Some months we’re down to the wire for High Country Prison Ministry. The future of the ministry looked to be completely depleted of its finances needed to sustain the Chaplain and the ministries the Chaplain leads in supporting.

Now, please allow the privilege of proclaiming the faithfulness of God! The Lord has provided through many of your financial blessings that will provide another six months of support by your Community Funded Chaplain!

For 2020 the answer is that as long as people remain faithful to the leading of the Holy Spirit to support this effort, the work will go on! “To God be the Glory! Great Things He Hath Done!” And through this Provision incarcerated men and their families, staff members and volunteers will continue to be reminded that the Lord is the Source of every good and perfect gift.

Your faithfulness is living proof that you are willing to minister in places many could/would never go. But by helping keep a Chaplain in place you help to ensure that religious activities continue and that special events like One Day with God Camps, Kairos Prison Ministry and much more can continue to operate. You ensure a Pastor (Chaplain) is available in times of crisis for offenders and staff. You provide a trained professional Chaplain who is present to provide counseling and comfort for the grieving, hope for the hopeless and challenge for each person to grow beyond where they are into the person, they have potential to become.

See what I mean? God IS Good! His mercy does, in fact, endure forever! And for as long as God desires, Community Funded Chaplains will be available to serve in Correctional facilities through the resources of those who desire to share in order to provide this opportunity and privilege. Thank you all for helping fund this ministry continue and thank God for the privilege of shining the Light of Love in Jesus Christ to the incarcerated.

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

---

**Check out our new Website—www.brnews.com**

**And find us on Facebook**

**Buff’s Tire & Service**

**Your One-Stop TOTAL CAR CARE Expert**

**FOR ALL THINGS AUTO, TAKE IT TO BUFF’S**

Check Engine Diagnosis • Alignments • Brakes • Oil Changes • Inspections

1211 BURKEMONT AVE., MORGANTON, NC

Located in Magnolia Plaza • 828-438-3800

“We’ve Moved Across the Street to Rural King, Come See Us!”

---

**Carolina Flooring**

**A Christian Owned Business**

WE ARE COMMITTED TO HELPING OUR CUSTOMERS ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS BY PROVIDING HIGH-QUALITY FLOORING SERVICES

906 W Union St
Morganton, NC 28655
Telephone: (828) 475-1192

---

www.brnews.com

February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 8
GIFTS OF LOVE

By Patricia Jackson

McDowell County

Valentine Day is a special time for many, as we show our love for our family, friends, husband/wife, and Christ and the Church. Many homes will have a special meal, perhaps a beautiful card, flower, box of chocolates and the list could go on and on. But there is a love that transcends all other love—the gift of love from God and our special, personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Matthew 11:21 tells us the wise men (Magi) from the East came to worship the baby Jesus, bringing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. All three gifts are ordinary offerings and gifts given to a king. However, these three gifts had a spiritual meaning: gold as a symbol of kingship on earth, frankincense (as incense) as a symbol of deity, and myrrh (as embalming oil) as a symbol of death. Jesus purpose was not to be a receiver of gifts but to give to all those who believe a special everlasting gift—salvation, the greatest gift we could ever receive.

Daily He bestows His love on us, dwells in our hearts by faith, comforts and leads us. “He is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Prov. 18:24). Where does our ability to love our self and others come from? As followers of God, we are to “walk in love as Christ also hath loved us” (Ephesians 5:2). Valentine’s Day will soon come and go, flowers and memories will fade and be forgotten. But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord!” (Romans 5:8). Let us use our daily strive to love one another with a pure heart, so that others may see Christ’s love in us.

PATRICIA JACKSON is the Assistant Teacher for the Ladies Class at Redeemed Free Will Baptist Church, Glenwood, NC. She is a grant writer for non-profits, a published author and retired Nursing Home Administrator. She lives in Rutherford County with her husband. Contact information: email address:ঔ৫ে৪৬@gmail.com

ALLEN’S OFFERINGS

Faith and Giving Your Life to Jesus

By Allen Buchanan

Mitchell County

“The rich man was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores. The time came when the beggar died, and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham standing far away, with Lazarus by his side. So, he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue because I am in agony in this fire. ‘But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received the good things, while Lazarus received the bad things, but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm is set in place so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.”

Luke 16:19-26

Pain and death are terrible subjects to think about. You can escape these for eternity if you simply accept Jesus as your Savior. Otherwise, you are destined to spend eternity in Hell. Nothing to laugh or joke about.

Nothing here on earth today can keep you out of Hell except faith and giving your life to Jesus.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16

Allen Buchanan is a freelance Christian writer. Allen attends Bear Creek Baptist Church.

GLORY 30

The HEARTBEAT of the High Country

AM1110 * WERC * NEWLAND

Breckenridge County

February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 9

www.brcnews.com
Creation Answers

Genesis is History! By Jonathan Sarfati

Our ministry supports the authority of the Bible from the very first verse. However, some opponents of biblical (‘young-earth’) creation also claim to believe as the authority of Scripture but claim that Genesis 1–11 is poetry or allegory and not historical literature (‘the mythic approach’). In a playful mood, I’ll reply, “Thank goodness, because scientific textbooks become outdated in a few years”. Otherwise, I reply that we claim it’s really a book about history—events that really happened in the past.

To justify this, it’s important to show what type of book Genesis is. To do this, we should compare Scripture’s handbook.

Other biblical writers treat Genesis as history

Hebrew scholar Dr. Steven Boyd has shown that different types of the verb (perfect and imperfect) are frequent in Hebrew poetry, but not in historical books. So from his verb analysis, he found that the probability that Genesis 1:2–3 is narrative (not poetry) is 0.99997.

As we have shown in a number of articles, the rest of the Bible treats Genesis as real history. The other writers of the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments, treat the people, events, time frames and even the order of events, as real and not merely literary or theological devices. And the reality of history is foundational to crucial teachings about faith and morality. Furthermore, it’s clear that the New Testament authors presupposed that their readers, as new converts in the first church, received detailed instruction in Genesis 1–2.

What does biblical history look like?

Let’s ask opponents the question: just suppose, for the purposes of argument, Genesis is history, how would you expect it to look? We can answer from the style of the undoubted historical books such as most of Exodus, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel.

Hebrew grammar experts have shown that historical narratives in the Old Testament have a very distinctive verb pattern. They start with a type of verb called a qatal (perfect) and continues with another type of verb called the waw (vav’i) consecutive, or wawqatal. This verb type is frequent in the historical books of the Old Testament.

Apply this to Genesis 1, the first verse, 1:1 (create), is qatal, while the subsequent verbs that move the narrative forward are wawqatal (1:2 waw qui yôwû dramatic (and said), 1:6 waw qui yôwû (and there was), 1:8 waw qui yôwû (and saw). This has just the pattern one would expect from a historical narrative.

Furthermore, the narrative has sometimes gone on, with no change in style, to Genesis 12–50. No one doubts that the latter is intended to be read as history. Therefore, any doubts with the former don’t stem from the grammar and style of the text itself. Rather, they come from considerations outside the text, such as long-age uniformitarian geology and evolutionary biology.

What would poetic literature look like?

So, what would Genesis look like if it were poetry? Hebrew poetry, such as the Psalms, has a different style. The defining characteristic of Hebrew poetry is not rhyme or meter, but parallelism. That is, the statements in two or more consecutive lines are very similar to one another. In fact, there is a parallelism in Genesis 1–2. As a matter of fact, there is one statement, then it is immediately followed by another statement saying the same thing in different words. Psalms 15:1–2 nicely illustrates this:

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the day above proclaims his work.

Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.

In innumerable parallelism, the first statement is followed by a statement of the opposite, as in Proverbs 28:1 and 7:

The wicked fear when no pursuer, but the righteous are bold as a lion.

The one who keeps the law is a son with understanding, but a companion of glutones shares his father.

In synthetic or series parallelism, the first statement is extended by the next one, e.g. Psalm 34:1–4:

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false, and does not swear deceitfully.

However, parallelism is absent from Genesis, except where people are quoted, e.g. Genesis 5:23–24. However, they stand out from the rest of Genesis. In fact, the Bible has a poetic celebration of God’s creative work of Genesis 104—so if we want to see what a poetic account of creation looks like, that’s where to look. For example, Psalm 104:1–16, illustrates parallelism perfectly:

As I estimate your works, at the sound of your thunders they took flight. They give drink to every beast of the field, the wild donkeys quench their thirst.

Also, Hebrew scholars Dr. Steven Boyd has shown that different types of the verbs (perfect and imperfect) are frequent in Hebrew poetry, but not in historical books. So from his verb analysis, he found that the probability that Genesis 1:2–3 is narrative (not poetry) is 0.99997.

Structural similarities of Genesis and other passages

One of the passages most similar to Genesis 1 in structure is Numbers 7. Both are structured accounts, both containing the Hebrew word for day (yôm) with a numeric—indeed both are numbered sequences of days. In Numbers 7, there are 12 consecutive numbered days, whereas each representative of each of the 12 tribes of Israel brought an offering for the altar.

The one who brought his offering on the first day was Nehunah, son of Amminadab of the tribe of Judah.

On the second day Nathaniel son of Zuar, the leader of Issachar brought his offering, ...

On the third day, Elasar son of Mahanaim, the leader of the people of Zebulun, brought his offering ...

On the twelfth day Ahira son of Enan, the leader of the people of Naphthali, brought his offering ...

The day’s poetic parallel is even stronger as Numbers 7 notes only two days each but also has a poetic parallelism.全天数 are days that are consecutive and add up to the entire sequence, which no one doubts are ordinary-length days. This refutes the false claim that “in the day that” (yôm hayamim) is Genesis 2:4, summarizing Creation Week, shows that the Genesis 1 days are not normal length, as this is a Hebrew poetic parallelism (or messianic English translation under it).

Further, no one claims that Numbers 7 merely is a poetic framework for teaching something theological and that it is not history. There simply is no grammatical basis for denying the same for the Genesis 1 days. Both are straightforward history.

Numbered days are ordinary length days

It is at least said it 24 hours measure the space of a day, or that, in reality, a day is the heavens starting from one point take to return there. —Basil, 4th century, on Creation Day

The number for the days of 5–6 in the creation Week account in Genesis is in the Hebrew form of an ordinal number, 15 as it is with all of the numbered days in the Numbers passage—i.e. the days are numbered second (second) third, fourth (fourth), fifth (fifth), sixth (sixth) and seventh (seventh). But there’s a key difference with Day 1 of Creation Week. That is because Genesis 1:15 uses the perfect number of people, which is seven (seven), i.e. day with an ordinal number—but instead ‘one day’, 1 (yôm yôm echad) i.e. day with a cardinal number. 16 This is the first moment in recorded history that anyone has spoken the word ‘day’ with a numeric—and so the cardinal number is apt. A day could be the length of a very full day. The length of a day for Creation Week, there was only that one day. Also, God himself in Genesis 5:1 defines what a day is: darkness (light) and light (darkness) cycle; ‘there was evening and there was morning’, 1 day. One rotation of the earth equals one day. The whole creation was completed in the time it took for the earth to rotate just six times. Six ordinary days marked by the Scriptures does not less than three minutes.

The great theologian Basil (AD 329–379) joined this long ago in a homily on Creation Week:

Why does Scripture say ‘one day’ not ‘the first day’? Before speaking to us of the second, the third, and the fourth days, would it not have been more natural to call that one which the first which began the series? If we do, therefore, says ‘one day’, it is a wish to determine the measure of day and night to calculate the time that contain. Now 24 hours fill up the space of one day—we mean a day and a night; and if at the time of the solstices, they have not both in equal length, so much more at the equinoxes. So that the beginning of Creation Week, there was only that one day. Also, God himself in Genesis 5:1 defines what a day is: darkness (light) and light (darkness) cycle; ‘there was evening and there was morning’, 1 day. One rotation of the earth equals one day. The whole creation was completed in the time it took for the earth to rotate just six times. Six ordinary days marked by the Scriptures does not less than three minutes.

The great theologian Basil (AD 329–379) joined this long ago in a homily on Creation Week:

References and notes:
1. Sarfati, J., “But Genesis is not a science textbook”, Creation 24(4)6, 2004; creation.com/textbook. Return to text.
3. See also Boyd, S., Observing Creation Week; ch. 2, Creation Book Publishers, Atlanta, 2004, 2011; as well as the articles under creation.com/g genesis. Return to text
4. A note on the meaning of this is Genesis Verse-syn-Verses.com; creation.com/verse-gen Return to text.
8. All scientific books do not say, creation.com/verse-gen/doesn’t-say. Return to text.
10. In modern Hebrew, the letter, “vav”, functioning as a consonant, is pronounced like our “v”, but in biblical times, it was pronounced like our “w”. The same sound was used in Latin: when Julius Caesar said “veni, vidi, vici” (I came, I saw, I conquered), it means “veni, vidi, victor.” Much like Latinic Eucharistic (Church) Latin pronounces it “Veni, vidi, vici.” Return to text.
12. And a number of those articles argue against, but not primarily on the logical (polemical) and thus not history? creation.com/b. Return to text.

*continued on page 10*
Bear Creek Baptist Church

The Visit Behind the Curtain

By Steve Biesz
Burke County

Sometimes back, I was visiting a church member who was a resident of a nursing home. Edith and I had been friends for many years. Several times I felt like we may have been too loud or that our conversation was the wrong thing to do. There was a curtain that divided the room in half. Edith's half was nearest to the door, and with the curtain pulled, I had not seen the room. The other side of the curtain did not seem to have a light on, although there was light coming in from the window that had let her see the end of the bed. My visit with Edith was coming to an end and I stood up from the chair and took Edith's hand as I prayed. As I ended the prayer and we were saying our goodbyes, a voice from the other side of the curtain spoke up. "Pastor, could you visit me too?" I walked to the edge of the curtain so that I could get my first look at Edith's neighbor on the other side of the room.

As our eyes met, she said, "my name is Beverly and I sure would like you to visit with me." After introducing myself and walking to her bedside to take her hand in mine, I said, "Beverly, I would be very happy to visit with you." For the next 15 minutes, Beverly and I had a wonderful time as we became acquainted.

She thanked me, and thanked me, and thanked me still more for my visit. By the time I had prayed with Beverly, I was thanking God for the visit behind the curtain and how I had been greatly blessed. I suspect that many pastors have found themselves in similar circumstances.

That is how it is when we take up the question that we find in scripture. Who is our neighbor? The Lord said, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:30-31). I discovered, with the visit behind the curtain, that my heart was blessed as I was neighborly with Beverly. Remarkable how that works, isn't it?

There was a farmer who raised seed corn. His seed corn won the blue ribbon every year. It was the best. It seemed unusual that each year he shared with his neighbors seed from his blue ribbons corn for them to plant their fields. A newspaper reporter interviewing the farmer asked, "If you want to have the best seed corn anywhere, why do you share with your neighbors the seed from your best corn?"

Shall I keep the best for yourself? The farmer replied that the reporter must not understand how to raise corn. He went on to explain that when the rain came, the crops were pollinated from corn growing around it. The farmer said that for him to have the best seed corn, his neighbors must also have the best. If they had inferior corn, that would lower the quality of his own corn crop.

How about that. Being neighborly blesses the one being neighborly. 15:8-38 expresses that sentiment. "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, for with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

The lawyer asked Jesus, "who is my neighbor?" That is to say, who counts, who am I responsible for, who should I give my care? Jesus responded by telling a story that redeems the word neighbor as He shares the story of the Good Samaritan. Yes, going to visit my church member Edith in the nursing home was neighborly. But visiting Beverly on the other side of the curtain, blessed my own heart with the realization that we are all vulnerable and need in a neighbor. Being neighborly involves not only giving help but also being willing to receive it. The neighbor behind the curtain isn't the only one in need, but rather the one who provides a neighbor's care for another, their need for a neighbor is equally supplied.

What a fantastic blessing awaits us all when we are neighborly.

Steve Biesz, Pastor, Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church.

---

Morganton Seventh Day Adventist

---

WE ARE COMMITTED TO DOING OUR BEST FOR YOU!
And Our Community

"INSURANCE is the most IMPORTANT thing a person has because it protects him against the loss of everything he has in the world."

-H.O. Hirt, ERIE Founder

Check out our Website - www.brcnews.com
And find us on Facebook

Miller Insurance Group, Inc.
AUTO • HOME • BUSINESS • LIFE
(828) 765-1711

Erie Insurance
7548A Hwy 19E, Spruce Pine, NC • www.miller-insurance-group.com

February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 11
KidsnChrist

God Loves Variety
By Alan Griffin
County

There are enough bits of information in a single cell to fill 31,000 books. A single cell contains approximately 1 million atoms, of which, not one has ever been seen by man. Inside its fully enclosed nucleus is all the DNA necessary to create a duplicate body. Then we have proteins, such as histones, to form chromosomes.

The genes within these chromosomes are the cell’s nuclear genome and with a lot of patience, we can take that down to the string theory ending we think with Higgs boson which is a particle that is in all matter. To say that God loves variety is an understatement. Every single person on earth is different, every animal, fish, and plant are different.

There are two issues with the church today that turn off so many believers. The first is conformity. We just seem to get stuck in our way of doing things and refuse to give in to new ideas. I struggle with that myself. A good example is a church here where I live has a plastic, throw away container for the Lord’s supper. The top of it is a water and then you peel off another layer of plastic and you have the fruit juice. The way we do it in my church is very structured and formal. What is so amazing is the new church with the plastic throw away container his thousands of people showing up for their multiple services. Where we, on the other hand, can barely get enough people in the door to keep the church open. So, you have one group of people who think one way and another who thinks the other way. Who is to say this is wrong? Some will conform to the existing standards of a church while others, who don’t like the standards, go and start another church.

This, in turn, attracts more people to Christ.

God loves variety. Our universe is made up of billions of galaxies which consist of billions and billions of stars. Each star and each galaxy are different. Now imagine the cells in a planet or a star and the infinite number of cells that are in the universe. Oh, by the way, the universe is not necessarily the proper term any more. They’ve changed the word to “multiverse,” or more than one universe.

Can you possibly imagine that I call it a universe, and some of the atoms in a cell are planets with living beings, animals, and plants? Or, what if each universe is a God and He is out walking another planet somewhere. The concept staggered my mind.

The Body of Christ has perhaps twenty-two spiritual gifts. Combine those with the diversity of mankind and you have untold billions of spiritual combinations, each person with Christ in their own special way. We have Christians who walk differently, dress differently, and read different Bibles. Many of us who try to shape the world into our own formula miss out on some of the greatest blessings that God has to offer. Human beings are creatures of habit, so we tend to judge people based on our perspective on life. Too many times I have received emails from people throughout the world who have become discouraged with going to church. Someone has judged them because of the way they dress, the kind of car, or the type of Bible they read. I have gone to some churches where people are speaking in tongues, others where there are plenty of robust “AMENS,” and others that are as quiet as a mouse. None of these things are wrong. We all worship God in a slightly different way, and I think this is wonderful because God loves variety. If we could read the same Bible verse and you will read it completely different sermons every time. Read a Bible verse one time and we will get one meaning. Read it again and we will get another meaning. God is infinite.

Let us please try to give others the benefit of the doubt. So, let us please put a Christ-like foot forward and set an example for others to follow. We are followers of Christ and leaders of others. Just like Jesus. I use this three-letter guideline to help me deal with other human beings. It is “FIL.”

Forgive lest we not be forgiven - The Bible says, “Forgive us our sins as we forgive others who sin against us.”

Judge not lest we be judged - God judges us, we judge others.

Love always, because love never fails - There are many people in this world, who aren’t Christians, and yet love their families. We must do more. We must love these people. It is hard, but we must do it. I have realized that God’s love is the only way.

And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. 1 Kings 19:11-12. I have been very torn through Bible study and prayer to be able to recognize the still, small voice of God. It has been a tremendous blessing to me to receive the comfort and counsel of the Holy Spirit during some of the darkest times when we hear inside of our mind that brings our thoughts to light as to whether we are in or out of the will of God. It is always there with us wherever we go, and whatever kind of decision we may have to endure in the future. It is God’s blessing upon those who love Him and spend time with Him. Do you talk to yourself? Well, so do I, and I have found that when I say something to myself I will just pause for a moment and God will respond. It’s usually a time when HE IS PUTTING ME IN PLACE, reminding me who I am and who I am not. Now, most of the time, I am not necessarily talking to Him. I will be going over some subject in my mind, either trying to solve a problem at work, or talking to myself about the project at hand, and He will join in my conversation, instructing me in the way I should go.

Many times, I have complained about someone else’s behavior, and the Holy Spirit immediately responds, “You’ve done the same thing yourself.” I am very fortunate to have a great collection of my past including my past behavior. Many of us say God is so great just because He is our God. Look at that! We need to be thankful to God and not just because He is our God. We need to be thankful to God and not just because He is our God. We need to be thankful to God and not just because He is our God. We need to be thankful to God and not just because He is our God.

I have never had a homosexual relationship and every time I complain about their pronunciants, He reminds me of my own. The Bible tells us to refrain from homosexual behavior, to refrain from sexual behavior out of wedlock, and to refrain from adultery. All these sins are against us and are very damaging to our souls. A sin is a sin, and we can’t be talking about someone else’s behavior without looking at our own. We all are human and have sexual desires that we need to keep in check. It is the human man who judges others, and it is the grace of God when we forgive. Too often we let our own personal desires and desires of our own souls pursue their own agenda. We need to be on guard against such individuals and toughen up our skin so as not to let them rent space in our minds. Instead of responding defensively, we need to hold our tongues and set a Christian example for others to follow. I assure you that God doesn’t care if you think that these things are right, but he cares most of the time their thoughts don’t have any bearing on my life. I do care what God thinks of me because He holds my soul between His fingertips, and I fear His power over me.

Alan Griffin started the kidsnchrist ministries in November 1997. He has worked with inner city kids for 21 years. He found a need for specialization in Biblical literature for those who live on the streets. The ministry has expanded their websites to reach around the world. Kidsnchrist.com, millenialchristian.com, teenschristian.com, seniorschristian.com, picture-verse.com, and Sprucepine-tire.com. We had an outreach of over 13,000,000 people last year with 36,000,000 impressions. If you have any questions for Alan you can reach him at alan@kidnschrist.com

---

**Make Tracks to Us for Safer Winter Driving!**

**Snow Tires!**

**All Season Tires!**

**All Major Brands!**

COOPER MICHELIN SPRUCE PINE TIRE SERVICE 977 Oak Avenue Spruce Pine, NC 828-765-2186

---

February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 12
7 Tips for Studying the Bible on Your Phone

By Kevin Purcell

Most believers carry around a smartphone today. If you do, you don’t miss the opportunity to use this powerful little computer for personal Bible study. You can get a library of great Bible study tools without carrying a huge backpack or briefcase full of heavy reference books like you did 20-30 years ago.

Let’s look at 7 Tips for studying the Bible on your phone. I know that some of you read that and think, way would I ever do that? Maybe it’s not the best option for everyone, but don’t dismiss it. Even if you prefer to carry a copy of a paper Bible and record what you learn with a physical pen and notebook, a good Bible study app can still help you. Get the Right Bible App.

A lot of great Bible apps exist, but if you want to do more than read the Bible, highlight passages, add digital notes and share the verses with friends or family via text message, email, or social media, then you need a good app. Let me mention the three best Bible study options in order of my personal preference.

1. Olive Tree Bible App – a great smartphone or tablet app with a lot of excellent reference books in a simple to use interface.
2. Logos Bible Study – one of the most powerful Bible apps on a phone or tablet that you can use to do in-depth, advanced Bible study.
3. Accordance Bible Software – not as advanced as Logos or as mobile-friendly as Olive Tree, but it’s simple with enough room to grow for advanced Bible students.

Search your device’s App Store. These are all work on iOS, Android, and Kindle Fire tablets. You can also get versions to run on your Windows or Mac computer. If you own a Chromebook, you can use the Android app or go online and use the Logos Web App.

Note: The Olive Tree and Accordance offers a web app.

If you don’t care about dictionaries, commentaries, or other tools, then the YouVersion Bible app is the best option. It doesn’t offer these advanced study options, however, so I don’t include it above.

Use Strong’s Dictionary-Based Bibles

Even if you don’t read a bit of Greek or Hebrew, you can do advanced language Bible study using tools with Strong’s number tagging. You will find a good Bible with important words tagged with Strong’s numbers. This will help Hebrew and Greek dictionaries to show the range of meanings in every word in the original languages of the Bible.

Using the programs above you can tap or press and hold a word and see the entry for that word in either Hebrew (or Old Testament passages) or Greek (or New Testament passages).

Get Good Commentaries

Each of the above Bible study apps will let you add a good commentary set. Commentaries come in one of three flavors:

1. One-volume commentary – covers the entire Bible in one book. The Matthew Henry Commentary is an example of this. It’s not the best one available, however. We also think of these as devotional commentaries.
2. Study Bible – a good study Bible is a commentary of sorts. Consider something like the ESV Study Bible, the Apologetics Study Bible or Faithlife Study Bible. The last one is a sort of Bibles with Logos. You can find dozens of decent study Bibles for Bible apps.
3. Multi-volume commentary – when a commentary has one book for each book of the Bible, it has more space to go in-depth in the context the author makes about each verse. You will cover or a section for each verse or maybe a range of verses. The one-volume commentary listed above only has one comment for a section or chapter of a book. You get more in these. That also results in higher prices. My personal favorites include the New American Commentary, the NIV Application Commentary or Expositor’s Bible Commentary.

Which of the above should you get? Start with a good Study Bible. If that’s not advanced enough try a one-volume commentary or devotional commentary to save money. If you regularly teach or preach, then get a multi-volume commentary. The latter can cost anywhere from $50 to $200.

Learn to Use Advanced Features

Bible apps offer some advanced features. Learn how to use them. Read over to the app developer’s website and read their tutorials and watch their help videos. Go to YouTube and find good how-to videos. I create videos at my channel - www.youtube.com/users/heypurcell and I write about using Bible apps at my website. www.kevinpurcell.org.

Set Reminders

Most Bible apps offer a feature to remind you to read the Bible. Set them for a good time each day. If you’re a morning person then set aside a time each morning to study the Bible. Some prefer to do this during a lunch hour or before bed at night. Find out how to set the reminder and set it. Then don’t ignore it.

Share What You Learn

Even if you don’t teach or preach the Bible tell others about what you learned. You’ll learn more when you talk about it with other people. Talk to your spouse, your kids, your parents, a good friend or coworker. Don’t ignore talking to non-believers. Ask them what they think of what you learned. It could turn into a great witnessing opportunity then or at a later point.

Read with Others

Find someone to read the Bible with you outside of Sunday school or an organized Bible study class. Pick a friend, your spouse or family member. If you’re married, then never pick someone of the opposite sex. You can set the Bible with 3 other people to great effect. Find someone more advanced in their faith than you so you learn.

Read someone at the same level so you can rely on each other to keep one another accountable. And find someone that you can help grow stronger. You can be their more advanced Bible learned.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me through any website (www.kevinpurcell.org) any Twitter account @kpurcell or email (kevin@kevinpurcell.org).

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

Out of town? You can still check out our new Website www.brcnews.com

And find us on Facebook

---

YANCEY SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER

COME JOIN US FOR LUNCH
SERVED MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY
11:30-12:00
60 AND OVER EAT FREE

828-682-6011
503 MEDICAL CAMPUS DRIVE
BURLINGTON, NC

The hospice you choose makes a difference.
Choose the one with:

- local staff
- two hospice inpatient units
- palliative care in all settings
- grievance counseling for any adult

Kids Path
Camp Erin

Hospice Carolina foothills
Serving Polk, Henderson, Rutherford, and McDowell in NC and
Cherokee, Greenville and Spartanburg in SC
(828) 245-1095 NC (864) 457-9100 SC (800) 28-1095 CARE (2273)

---

www.brcnews.com

February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 13
For God So Loved
By Phillip Greene
Avery County

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” - John 3:16-21, ESV

These words speak volumes to each of us who follow Christ. One of the things that I find many doing is stopping at 3:16 but never going any farther. Many stop at simple belief, but Jesus continued on to tell us that there is more than just believing. Scripture tells us that even the demons believe.

Jesus, in these words to Nicodemus, tells us all that He did not come to the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He elaborates on this by continuing the conversation and explaining that those who believe are not condemned. He then says some of the keywords to our Christian faith in verse 19, saying, “And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.” What does this mean?

It means, when someone is living in sin, they love the darkness, they love to be around others who live as they do, those who are also in the darkness, those who will not condemn them. Light has a way of exposing that which is hidden in the dark, and when the light is revealed all sins are made known.

Today, we must examine what we are doing. We must realize that we are not being what God has called us to be when we live outside of the light. Christ is the light, and He has called us to be in the light.

James 1:15 tells us to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger. James continues by telling us that we must be ears and doers of the word, not hearers only. There are many who hear and believe the word, but there are few who do and truly believe the word. So many stop at believing that Jesus is the Christ, but they forget that being a believer of the Word means that they are putting faith into action each day.

Are you putting your faith into action today? Can others see Christ in you? Are you living in the light or the dark today?

Examine your heart today. I encourage you to be more than just a simple hearer of the word but to embrace what Christ is offering today through our ‘doing’ the word. Be more than a hearer today. Let God expose you today so that you can be all he needs you to be.

Phillip Greene is the Station Manager/Program Director for WECAAM Radio/Glory 1130.

---

**Valentine Specials**

Choose 2:

- 6oz Sirloin, Shrimp, or Chicken
- Choice of 2 sides, and your appetizer or dessert

**Dinner for 2**

**$30.00**

Valentine Special good February 10th-13th

---

**Bubba’s**

**Good Eats!**

394 East Main St.
Burnsville, NC

828-678-3388

---

**Brockland Company & Associates**

Insurance & Financial Services

**Securing Nature’s Playground for Over 75 Years**

---

**Give Us a Call Today**

866-437-0881

---

February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 14
Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

The Rest of the Story

Clint and I worked several months together here on the farm and I do believe that this was one of the most hilarious events we had happen during that six-month period of time. My great-uncle, Hal Byrd, built a cattle shed on the side of an old chicken house that Aunt Mae Byrd had leased. The shed roof did not have much pitch and was prone to leak quite badly. I had been working on it and built a feed lot around the barn so we would have an additional place to work the cattle when they were up on this farm. We were putting in a chute and head gate on the inside but we wanted to check it out so it was really muddy, it is wet, wet, wet cow manure. We had just had a really hard rain and it had laid bad right where we were putting the head gate. I decided to use a big 2-inch pump and just pump out the water and manure and in the process of doing so I accidentally caught Clint square in the face with a full 2-inch wide open with liquid cow manure. I swear, really, I don't swear but I do affirm, that I did not intend to do this. The force of the hose almost knocked Clint down and I will never forget the look he gave me as he asked, did you mean to do that? I honestly told him, so I did not mean to do that, but I had to admit I was laughing my head off. A good shower down with clay mud alarms made us stop down to our underwear outside and spray ourselves, and our clothes, off before we could bring them or ourselves in the house.

Farmer Doug

Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

By Clint Pollard

Many of you have written or called about Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm. It seems that you take great pleasure in my many hobbies and near–misses with danger. Also, some of you question my veracity — that would be truth telling — regarding these tales. A couple things you should know clearly: the Lord is protecting me from myself and the myriad muzzlers and events that seek to mess me up; and these stories are absolutely true (not so they say I exaggerate a teensy tiny bit). Now get a load of this.

Ancient Cow Manure!

My friend Doug, along with yours truly (Farmer Clint), set out one balmy morning to construct a new critter chute, or cow tunnel, or cow funnel, or whatever it is you call the slender little space where cows unknowingly go before they hit the head gate. To my great-uncle’s surprise, this farming business gets pretty tricky if you don’t know what you’re doing so, try to stand back a wee bit when we tackle a new challenge.

Now one would imagine that constructing a narrow cow tunnel would be fairly simple, maybe 2x4’s, 2x5’s, 4x4’s, 2x3’s, 3x3’s, 3x4’s, 2x2’s, electrified screwdriver, and a 20 ton headgates. Simple enough, right? Wrong answer!

Ye se the choice location for our construction project is the Aunt Mae Barn, so called after Aunt Mae Byrd (Doug’s Aunt). As a side, I’ve learned over the last month that Doug and Barbara are related to everyone in Mitchell County and beyond. So, if you’re local please feel free to drop by after dark and bang on your distant relatives, anyone? Ready, tell Barbara that Farmer Clint sent you.

Anyway, the floor of the Aunt Mae Barn is really not a floor, of course. Even I know you don’t put doors in a barn, what do you think I’m simple? So, the floor is really the ground, but in this barn, it’s not really the ground because GROUND IS DIRTY! Oh no, we can’t have dirt ground on Harrell Hill Farms — this GROUND is 100% cow patties, about 6 feet deep and at least 100 years old.

Now you are likely saying, “So, what is your problem, Farmer Clint?” Hundred-year-old cow pats must be firm and packed down! True enough...unless the tin roof of the barn has holes in it the size of Haley’s Comet and we’ve just had torrential rains. Another question I have for the Lord some day, how come it doesn’t rain when you need it on the crops but pours when you have to dig in cow manure?

As we walk — actually slop — into the barn it is clear this will be a story for the ages. I’m taking knee deep in ancient cow manure, so thick and gooey I can barely lift one foot in front of the other. And, naturally, when I take a step the bedding feet under me all over me and the surrounding area. Doug has another brilliant idea, we will submerge a small horse pump in the liquid dung and pipe it right out the window. I am constantly amazed at the ingenuity required to be a farmer...but I’m learning so very much!

Naturally it is MTJS, to hold the pump under the water, prehistoric questing machine dung while Doug props the hose on the window sill. That was working just fine until I allowed the pump to rise slightly losing its vacuum. With a look of frustration and disdain Doug turned to me to hold the pump deeper in the muck and mire.

As he addressed me (a bit too hamishly in my opinion) the hose pipe dislodged from the window and took dead aim at ME. I dropped the pump into the sludge, causing it to sink even harder, and was blasted with the full force of a cow manure firehose...I was immediately blinded, I ingested heaven only knows how much grainy, purulent cow droppings, my ears filled to overflowing...I was totally deluged by an E-COLL shower! I dared not scream lest I swallow a terminal dose, I could not run in my submerged boomer seemed forever vacuumed a foot below the surface dung. My shirt was bursting button, my pants heaped high, permitted manure dripping from my hair...I thought Doug was going to pass out! Once he finally regained consciousness he FABULLY aimed the stream back out the window.

“Guessing for air I looked at my friend, “Ya know,” I said, “if any other human on planet earth did that to me they would die right now!” With that crooked smile and a twinkle in his eye, Doug replied, “Yeah, but it’s me, huh?” And we are friends...”

How anyone think about much more that? Hammie, sounded like a good idea to me.

Returning to the farmhouse I began losing myself down, close my eyes, down my pants legs, head to toe, when Barbara peeked out the door, “What are y’all doing?” she asked. “Oh, just got in a bit of mess,” I explained, “and don’t want to drag it into the house.” Doug chuckled, “Polard, you are a trip!” Indeed I am.

Comic relief on Harrell Hill Farms, since again I dodged a bullet — death by e-coll emission. Thank you, Lord!

Humbled in the Hills,

Farmer Clint
Standing Up for What Is Pure

By Cody Penland
McDowell County

“Fast yourself, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings, from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, redeem the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow.” — Isaiah 1:16-17

You’re on break at work. You’re sitting there eating your lunch with your work buddies—probably both of those that are believers and those that are non-believers—when one of them shares a dirty, sexually-fueled rambling that passes as humor. Your friend chuckles, and for some reason, you feel ill in your stomach and blush at it too. Sound familiar?

It seems to be the easiest and most popular thing to fall in with the world, enjoying things that the Bible says are not pure. We say dirty things, we cuss, watch dirty movies, and listen to dirty music. We read our Bibles and we go through the motions of church, then we live no different than the rest of the world for the rest of the week. Haslehurst if you have sought and achieved a more Biblical sense of purity in your actions out in our ministry field is that it is. You’re not alone if you struggle with this from time to time.

I frequently encounter all these things at work, in conversation in the grocery store, while turning the dial on the radio; you name it, it’s there. Whether they are in the world or identity is Christian, many people constantly engage in filth and half-truths. There is a great issue in the world in us in understanding what is pure and right. I know what you’re thinking; “Well Cody, as long as I live the best that I can and look the part it does not affect me, right.” The Bible would disagree with you.

Other than the Isaiah passage that stands above this article (clearly telling us to cease to do evil, do good), Paul told the church in Philippi that “...whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.” (Phil 4:8). The stress placed upon the phrases “truth” and “noble” are quite telling. To know what is pure, ask yourself, “Does the Bible agree that what I am thinking or doing is pure? Praiseworthy?”

We know there is an issue. We know there is a problem. What is there to do about it? Isaiah, Philippians, and Proverbs say it clear as crystal: Confront it at the source in our own lives, and in the world around us. What does Proverbs say? “As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend” (Prov 27:17). The passage does not say “Christian friend,” “Christian brother,” nor “other church member.” In fact, when one investigates a Hebrew lexicon, they will find words like “brother,” “friend,” and even words like “citizen and another person.” Do not get it twisted, nor attempt to cheat yourself in the refusal of responsibility that is the statement, “this is between them and Christ.” We are called to confront all that is not pure in the church AND in the world. Paul rebuked Peter because Peter was wrong (Galatians 2). Jesus did the same (Mark 8), so we are definitely to do this in our churches just as much.

How do we confront such issues in the world? First, I encourage you to live it in your own lives. Do as the prophet Isaiah said to the Jews in Isaiah one, and learn to do good, turning away from the evil you learned and inhabited from the world. Secondly, keep the impurities out of your home. This is not to say that you should not have non-believers in your home—quite the contrary—but instead to keep the dirty movies and movies out of your home. I am seeing the response that many Christians have to an additional considering Nehemiah’s release of “Messiah.” We must refuse to partake in things that are not Christ-like. Stop buying these songs off iTunes, stop buying these movies, and stop watching these shows. Lastly, should be ready to confront these dirty things, doing this is truth and love. In all connections and confrontations, the Christian is commanded to do this in gentleness and love (Galatians 6:1, Ephesians 4:2). Amended: I find it educational to view or listen to certain things that are integral pieces of the world around us—however, if your intention is to listen to it in enjoyment, or if you find yourself becoming enamored with things of the world, we must cast that out of our lives. Matthew 5:29a reminds us that “...And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee.” Later, we read that “No man can serve two masters...” (Matt 6:24). We must equip ourselves but know that we are still foreign ambassadors for Christ that live on this planet. The Christian should already know quite well what is going on around them, just from experience.

If we engage with the things of this world that are blatantly unclean, then how can we be free from the rest of the earth? How can we expect to win souls for Christ if you’re displaying that He has made no real change in your life? I close in the spirit of Brach Rickey in the movie “42” when I say that. One day, God will watch the entirety of your life with you standing in judgment, and He will ask why you denied the standard that He has for us as the Christians. I am quite confident that “I wanted to fit in,” or “I did not want to lose my friends” will not be adequate answers.

I am a Youth Leader at First Baptist Church of Nebo. I have my Bachelor of Science in History from Montreat College (’17), and currently attend Fruitland Baptist Bible College in pursuing a call to Pastoral Ministry. I coach boys’ basketball for the McDowell County Recreation Department.

And above all things have fervent charity amongst yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8

L&B FURNITURE

Sofa & Loveseat

$999

7 Piece Set

$999

FREE

King up grade

$150

OFF of $1,000 purchase

Thankful/Grateful

Visit our new website - landbfurniturestore.com

Exit 81 1-40 • 136 Worley Road • Marion, NC
(828) 652-7667

February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 16

www.brcnews.com
An Act of Love

By Christy Lowman
Burke County

For the month of February, this animal was chosen for its act of love during the latest Australian bushfires. This small animal lives in a series of underground tunnels and chambers. It can only be found in Australia and the islands surrounding it. During the recent fires, they allowed their animals to stay in their homes until the fire was put out and it was safe for them to come out. They have saved the lives of wallabies, echidnas, rabbits, snakes, and lizards.

Any guess at what animal this might be?

It’s a Wombat! Wombats are marsupials, (pouched animals), that are mammals. They are herbivores that can weigh up to 80 lbs. Most of them live like being surrounded by the bushland but some do like living in colonies or mobs with up to a dozen members sharing the underground air.

Wombats look like small bears and can be greyish-black or sandy brown in color. They have very strong jaws and continual growing teeth like rodents. Their legs are so powerful that they can run up to 25mph. Their hindquarters have extra thick skin that protects them. When a predator chases them, they will run into their tunnels, blocking the only entrance with their rear. A bite on the rear-end is not very threatening to them thanks to their thick skin. They also have a tiny tail and bad eyesight.

Wombats are known as master diggers thanks to their wide strong feet and huge claws. They are nocturnal animals that can move up to 3 feet of dirt each night, making their living complex as much as 650 feet long.

Wombats, when not digging, spend most of their nights grazing on food such as grass, bark, and roots. They have a special gland in their stomach that helps them digest these tough foods. They do not need much water because they get most of the moisture, they need from what they eat. It takes wombats a week to digest their food. Their poop is square-shaped and is the dried fur of all the mammals. They poop as much as 80-100 squares an evening.

Baby wombats, called joey’s, are the size of a jellybean when they are born.

They live solitary in their mom’s pouch for up to 5 months before coming out. The pouch, unlike a kangaroo’s, opens towards the rear. This allows the pouch to stay free from dirt when the moon is busy digging.

Wombats get used easily if they feel threatened. They have been known to crush uninvited animals that intrude in their homes by pushing them against the walls and ceilings of the tunnels. That is why it is so amazing that these animals that like to live alone, and who don’t like intruders in their home, willingly let other animals live with them to escape the harsh Australian fires. This is a perfect example of how God wants us to show love and be Christ-like. These wombats have saved countless other animals by just opening their homes up to them even though they more than likely didn’t want to. How can we show God’s love to others around us? Especially to the people that you really don’t like or want to hang out with? Let God use you to pour out His love to others!

Dear Lord, please let us be open to letting You use us to show Your love to others. Let us look past our hurts to help others in need and most of all help us to love and be nice to the people we don’t like. Help us love one another as you love us. In Jesus’ name Amen.

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” John 13:34

Bibliography:
https://www.lternational.com/a/animals/chalvingan-animals-burrows-austra-

lial-fires?fbclid=IwAR0gFSDy0Eg4F7Wx8Rr7GTV/3yBDOI9rHLQbWiSnb
ZeKGgo9CtwLX
https://www.antsianaian.com/animals/wombats/common-wombat/
https://www.posidogoff.org/wombat-poo-really-is-square/
https://www.facebook.com/authorChristyLowman/ or christysoap@yahoo.com

Happy Valentine’s Day

GRiffith’s General Store

“A Little Out Of The Way, But ALOT Less To Pay”

S canvE up to $250.00 off the purchase price

WOOD STOVES & ACCESSORIES

200lb cattle block on sale for $49.95 each $47.95 each per pallet of 8

Ph: (828) 688-2369
Fax: (828) 688-5479

Tipton Hill, NC 4301 NC 197 North
Green Mountain, NC 28710

RedMax

www.bonecommit.com  February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 17
Snow Hill Baptist Church

Love for a Lifetime
By Dean Honeycutt
Mitchell County

As I have thought about how to have a successful marriage, I have come up with a reasonable solution. Husbands do everything your wife tells you to do. As one man was asked, “who is in charge in your home?” The man replied, “that is easy I wear the pants in my family, but my wife tells me what to do.” We joke about this all the time and it is funny. Most of the time when you ask a man about something he will say you will have to ask my wife. A lot of times in my family, what is going on with our children and the agenda for the week. And most of the time our children will convey information to Pam before they tell me anything. I do not know how many times I have heard “dad I told you, you just forget!” And to be honest that is true. It goes in one ear and out the other. Most of the time, we have been accused of selective hearing, and at times I knew this to be true. Pam is a much more detail person than I am.

We have been married 28 years and have faced a lot of challenges. We have faced everyday adversity with God. In 28 years, there has never been a time that God has not been in the center of our relationship and problems. It is God that has brought us through financial strain, miscarriage, death, dealing with alcohol abuse, health problems, and caring for our aging parents. The Lord is our strength and the Cuse we lean on and trust. One thing I would tell every couple is to make prayer a priority in your relationship. Prayer place: God at the center and the source of help in every situation.

The Bible says “21: Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” Ephesians 5:25. Christ sacrificed His life for the church because He loved the church. So, my love for my wife is expressed in sacrifice. As the extreme expression of this love, I would die for my wife, for her to live. Jesus died for us, could I? I benefitted eventually from the death of Jesus. In comparison, my wife will benefit from saying myself to my wife. This is an act of selfish living or living for the sole purpose of benefiting someone else.

Paul expressed this type of selfish living in Romans. Romans 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

Wow, a living sacrifice that places the needs and concerns of my wife and family above my own. This is difficult at times: our wives need this type of love. A love that is deeper and stronger; a love that Paul described as “a great mystery.” At times it is difficult to sacrifice our time, hobbies, desires, goals to fulfill the needs of our wife. A father giving his daughter away in marriage makes a note to his son in law that reads “fragile handle with care.”

I can remember my dad when problems came along. He would say “I have got both shoulders I can handle it.” Well instead of trying to handle it, he should have given it away. What I mean by this is instead of holding onto our sin and problems we need to crucify our flesh for the benefit of the family. This is part of the problem today in marriages and families. Men and women are not willing to sacrifice our life for the life of our wife and family.

When men we love our wife the way the Bible says we will see our wives living in submission to us and our children respecting us. The Christian family is a model of the Christian Church. Jesus is the head of the church, and the husband is the head of his family. I have a lot of work to do and by God’s grace, I will do it, and to the husband Pam has taught me to have.

Happy Valentine’s Day
Live life with “No Regrets”

Pastor Dean Honeycutt shepards Snow Hill Baptist Church in Bakersville, NC. He may be reached at 828-383-0213, snowhillbaptist@gmail.com or visit their website at www.snowhillbaptist.com.

Berry Chapel Baptist Church

Words of Wisdom - Love
By Steve Williams
Akb Dwelley County

Here we are coming into the second month of 2020. Most of us when we think of the month of February we think of Valentine’s day and Love. It’s a time to show you love your Wife, Husband, boyfriend, girlfriend or maybe your closest friend with a card or a box of candy. I hate to say it but many times I believe the word love is used without really thinking about its true meaning. Now when you hear the word love what comes to your mind? When you are young you think of Musky stuff, Kissy, Kissy, Hugges, Huges. But then as you get older love starts taking on a different meaning. When I think about what true love is now, I think of my wife who I’ve been married to for 41 years. I think of my kids and my grandchildren, and I think of my other family members.

This goes along with what God shares with us in His precious word. God’s word describes us as Children of God. God’s word also describes the Church as a Family of God. But in God’s Word. Love means Sacrifice. What are you saying? Well in a Marriage there are Sacrifices and without Sacrifice there are problems. I’m saying in Raising a Child there are Sacrifices. Without making these Sacrifices there are problems. And in being a part of a Family there are Sacrifices and without these Sacrifices the family will fail.

1 Cor 13:4-8 “Charity suffereth long, loveeth kindness, batheth, batheth, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth with the truth, 8loveth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. These verses tell me that love is Victorian, and that Love does not come without Sacrifice.

John 3:16 tells us how Jesus sacrificed His life for us because He Loved us. “For God so loved the world that He sacrificed His only begotten Son, that whatsoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

John 15:13, “This is my commandment that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Again, we see the sacrifice. If God’s Love is ever going to be seen in our lives, we must learn to Sacrifice.

Words of Wisdom

- Love is the only force capable of transforming as enmity into a friend. Martin Luther King Jr.
- Love is when the other person’s happiness is more important than your own. H. Jackson Brown Jr.
- Friends show their love in times of trouble, not in happiness. N/A
- What we love usually manages to get into our conversation. What is down in the well of the heart will usually come up in the bucket of life. Vance Havner
- Keep love in your heart. A life without it is like a sunless garden when the flowers are dead. Oscar Wilde
- “It is not a lack of love, but a lack of friendship that makes unhappy marriages.” Friedrich Nietzsche

Something To Think About:

“Though we are incomplete, God loves us completely. Though we are imperfect, He loves us perfectly. Though we may feel lost and without a compass, God’s love encompasses us completely… He loves every one of us, even those who are firewed, rajaced, awkward, sorrowful, or broken.” Dieter F. Uchtdorf

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

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:18
The Neighbors Feeding Neighbors Food Ministry experienced a lot of growth and production in 2019, and we have hit the ground running in 2020. In 2019 we served 3,455 families, which breaks down to 9,020 individuals. We hosted 21 Community Meals and distributed a total of 192,130 pounds of food last year! We have been so busy at the ministry, we haven’t had time to reflect on how much we have grown since January 2010. We went from serving 360 people and 1,913 pounds of food last January, to 1,400 people and 31,925 pounds of food in December.

God has really blessed the ministry and we want to thank everyone who has had a part in helping this ministry grow, whether it is through volunteering or donations, we thank you very much and may God Bless You!

With the growth we have experienced, the need for funding and volunteers has never been greater. People can deny it all they want, but food insecurity is a problem in Western North Carolina. We see new faces every week coming to the ministry for help. I believe that the main reason that we have so many people coming to us for help is that we treat everybody with love and respect, and without judgment. What a lot of people do not realize is that it’s not just low-income families that have food insecurity. Some families may have a decent income; however, the amount of debt they have acquired could be draining them financially where they are having trouble putting food on the table. We treat all of our families the same way we would like to be treated. We hear disbelief all the time from various people in the community who say things like “well some of those people can help their self”. Or I have also heard it said, “some of those people have brought trouble on their self”. To that I say – So What? Did God look down on your sins and say “you got yourself in that mess, so you can find your own savior”. Certainly not, He loved us so much that He was willing to send and sacrifice His own son to pay the sida debt we owed! God expects us to do the same for others. How can we expect God to forgive us if we are unwilling to forgive others?

It is very simple, He won’t. (Matthew 6:15)

If you look at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:3-5, Jesus was speaking about pointing out the splinter in another man’s eye while disregarding the beam that was in your own eye. He didn’t say remove the beam from your own eye so that you can be self-righteous and point out the splinter in the other man’s eye. What Jesus was saying is that we need to examine ourselves first. It’s all about looking in the mirror and seeing your own faults and then, instead of judging others, reach out to help them. So as we go throughout 2020, let it remind us to look clearly (20/20) in the mirror at ourselves first. Then we must “drop the stones” and reach out and help a neighbor who may be carrying a heavy burden.

If you would like to donate or volunteer with the Neighbors Feeding Neighbors Food Ministry, you can visit us online at www.nfnfoodministry.org or email us at nfnfoodministry@gmail.com. You can also visit us on Facebook for the latest news and events. The Neighbors Feeding Neighbors Food Ministry is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit corporation with EIN# 81-092898.

Thank You and God Bless!
I’m running for one of the three open seats on the Burke County Board of Commissioners.

I believe in being an advocate for the people.
I believe in government transparency.
I believe in maximizing the county’s investments.
I believe in nurturing tomorrow’s leaders.

let’s connect

facebook.com/votecristy
votecristy.com

Cristy Gupton
828-413-3581
info@votecristy.com

I need your support!
Let’s talk about the issues facing our county!

Paid for by the Committee to Elect Cristy Gupton.
There was Jesus
By Chris Rathbone
Mitchell County

There’s a struggle sometimes when writing these articles. Struggling to decide whether to share our own lives. In this life, we tend to avoid bearing our hearts for others to see. In the interest of making our way we often even avoid talking about other’s, even our own family. For some reason, we fall into the belief that these struggles should be covered and hidden in the background or simply ignored by others sharing what we think people want to hear. It’s not like we don’t care. We do care and struggle to find those positive places in our lives and then we end up not dealing with our inner emotions and spiritual struggles. There is even pressure put on pastors and preachers to only share “positive truth”. We bury our hurts and struggles deep inside us until they reach a point where they overwhelm us all at once.

Over the years, Jesus has taught me many lessons in life. One of the lessons that I personally don’t always like to term is this: We grow more in our walk with Him during hardships. There’s not one of us that want to admit that truth. Everyone’s experiences in life when all is well, and life seems to be rolling along smoothly. While all are very thankful for those times, we often take them for granted and will come to a place spiritually and emotionally where we tend to put ourselves on cruise control. Our focus will become blurred and our commitment to the things in life that should be of the utmost importance will begin to fade into the background of our lives. We then may realize that we are made of during these good times. How truth it wasn’t true! The facts is hardships and struggles these good times we are capable of... Our focus on interior”

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 5:3-5 when speaking of tribulation: “And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” In the trials, tribulations, and hardships of life is where we grow. These are the times when we find more intimately the faithfulness and grace of our loving Heavenly Father. For it is in these trials of life that we find the strength to go on. I believe it is in these “tribulations worketh patience”. According to Vine’s Bible Dictionary, the word is the original language for “patience” almost always means “an enduring under”. In tribulation, we abide in Christ. “Experience” means “the process of growing”. Tribulation “worketh” or produces patience where we abide while God is the process of growing up spiritually. Then when we are proved or tested through these times, we find hope! I hope that God and me and have been the mature time. He has used these trials to reveal His love in our hearts through His Holy Spirit which is given to us.

In 2 Corinthians chapter 12, Paul wrote about praying for God to remove his “thorn in the flesh”. Whatever it was, Paul did not want to experience it. He prayed and asked God to remove it from his life. Do you realize that God said no? “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” God said, God would in my weakness. God’s greatness would be made known in my weakness. This is the only way I could help you understand. Sometimes we get angry, we intentionally blame God and even stop praying because we somehow believe if we ignore Him things will become better. They don’t. We have been plunged deep into things that we don’t want to experience. We have been washed so deep and we do not have to admit that we will need it without Jesus and His strength.

Over the years in ministry, I’ve watched people, good people, go through experiences that have brought even the most committed and strong Christians to their knees, both physically and spiritually. I have instead to cries that have described the same need. I have heard, “I need to see the Lord in this, I need to hear from the Lord, I need to know what He wants me to do.” I have heard these cries for which I have no answer. My own heart has been broken for others knowing that I have no idea how they are feeling because I’ve not experienced myself what they are going through in their life. There have been times when words, even prayers, could not be. Times when only silence and tears were all that could be expressed. Times when the burden was so great you could physically see people bowing under the load.

And right there in the middle of all this seems to be Jesus.

---

Employee Contact: (825) 514-1981

www.smallorthod.com

---

Retirement Resources Management

Don't Get Trapped in an
Affordable Health Plan
By Steve Gaydo
Adairsville County

For many lower-income people, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has been a welcome relief for higher health care costs. They provide excellent benefits and cover pre-existing conditions. What is often lost is that these plans are actually very expensive plans. They have to be because of all that they cover. The way ACA plans work is that they subsidize the plans based on your income. To qualify for a subsidy your income has to fit in a range and is based on how many people are in your household. Generally, for 2020 the income level to qualify is for a single person between $12,490 to $49,960 for a family of 3 the range is between $21,330 to $83,220 according to KFF the Kaiser health foundation. If you qualify and are in the lower or middle range of these incomes I believe that you should consider these plans as they do have a great value. If you are near the top of the range or you have variable income that may push you over the limit these plans can be a trap. As I mentioned earlier these are subsidized plans, which means that the government is actually in effect loaning you the money until you file your taxes and the income is verified. If you exceed the limit you no longer qualify for the subsidy and have to pay it back when you file your taxes. I have heard horror stories of people that exceeded the limit by just a few dollars and received tax bills for $15,000 to $25,000 for repayment of the subsidy. This is, in my opinion, a risk that they should not have taken, but people often do not know and sometimes it is difficult to estimate accurately income and something as small as a withdrawal from your retirement account for an unexpected expense can move your income over the limit. This is why it is critical to understand how these plans work.

There are options to ACA plans and many of them provide excellent benefits. I like to use the Health Sharing Ministries. In my experience, some of these plans provide networks like ACA and others do not. It is important to know that these plans are not insurance but provide similar benefits. When looking at these plans they can cover everything from routine physicals and lab work to major surgeries. There are also other plans that are for more catastrophic situations and provide only bare-bones coverage and payments are sent from other members to cover the cost of any procedures. This can create a problem if you do not have the money to pay upfront and wait to be reimbursed. There are also minimal essential coverage plans that while they do not provide hospital care do provide urgent care and doctor visits for a co-pay. These plans, while not ideal are better than no coverage.

A nice feature that is becoming available in most plans is telemedicine. This allows the patient to call and talk to a doctor live on the phone and some issues can be dealt with immediately. If more testing or doctors care is needed a recommendation to an in-network physician can be made. Like insurance plans, you need to read the fine print and understand how each plan works. I am available to help you evaluate the different options and make an educated decision.

If you have already signed up for an ACA plan and you feel that you may be impacted by the income limit and may have to repay the subsidy then there is good news. You can cancel your existing plan and sign up for one of these Health Sharing Plans.

I hope this helps people understand their healthcare options.

---

David C. Small, D.D.S., M.S., P.A.
Christian G. Piers, D.D.S., M.S., M.F.A
Orthodontics for ALL ages!

110 Juniper St. Suite 300
Morganton, NC 28655
(825) 453-1242
382 10th Ave Dr. NE
Hickory, NC 28695
(825) 322-1250
The Gospel Makes Things Better

Dr. Tom Walker
McDowell County

Our consideration in this study is how the Gospel makes things better. We are going to consider verses in the Book of Hebrews to find the golden nuggets we are going to reflect upon. “Better” is the keyword in Hebrews and comes 13 times in our King James Version of the Bible. The Greek New Testament word for “better” means far more advantageous or useful. It is because of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that we enter into a knowledge and experience of the “better things” brought to our attention by the writer of the Book of Hebrews. We are going to ponder seven different “better things” found within the pages of God’s Word in this one book.

It Produces a Better Hope
Hebrews 7:9-10 says, “For if a law made anything perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we draw nigh unto God.” There was nothing wrong with the law God gave to man. The problem is with a man being prone to wander from and obeying the law of God. Man has sought throughout his history, by being as good as he could, to make himself acceptable unto God. Since man cannot fully keep the law, it cannot make him perfect and acceptable unto God. At his very best, mankind comes short of keeping the laws of God. The Bible says in Ephesians Chapter 2 that we were without hope when we were without God (Eph. 2:12). That is partly because of our inability to perfectly and completely meet the standard God requires for full acceptance.

Our hope in the church age is the Lord Jesus Christ. We have a confident, good expectation for the future. According to 1 Cor. 19:19, our hope is in Christ. Our Lord met all the demands of the law and fulfilled all of it.

We do not have to produce our own righteous, He is put on our account when we believe on Christ. Believers are made righteous in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21). That is why our hope is better than the one under the law.

It Produces a Better Testament
Hebrews 7:22 “By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.” In the Old Testament, the high priest died and had to be replaced from time to time. The priesthood would have to change every few years. The priesthood of Jesus is so much different. It is unchangeable because Christ ever lives to make intercession for the people of God. There must be a priest who is acceptable to God and who can stand as a Mediator between God and man. There must be a priest who can make God accept sinful mankind. His name is Jesus.

Sins of God’s people are forgiven through our Great High Priest Christ (John 1:16).

It Produces a Better Covenant
A covenant is an agreement between two parties. But note a significant fact: the new covenant of God is not of man. Man has absolutely nothing to do with the terms of this covenant. It is a covenant between God and man, but the terms are set exclusively by God. In life, there are two kinds of covenants: 1. There is a covenant where both parties set the terms and agree to them. 2. There is a covenant where one party sets the terms, but both parties agree to them. This kind of covenant is usually called a will or testament. The covenant of God is the latter covenant, a covenant of God’s will and testament. God sets the terms and conditions, and man accepts the covenant or else rejects it.

The new covenant of God has now been established with man. It has been established and given to man by the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Master of the new covenant, and it is far, far superior to the old covenant. The new covenant, a “better covenant. established on better promises” (Heb 8:6), was directly on the sacrificial work of Christ, according to Hebrews. The new covenant accomplished what the old could not, that being the removal of sin and cleansing of the conscience (Heb 10:22).

It Produces a Better Sacrifice
Heb 9:23 says, “It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.”

In the Old Testament sacrifices were offered year after year. If you look in verse 25-26, you will discover there is no demand for another sacrifice because Jesus paid it all. Because Jesus bore the penalty of judgment for man’s sin, no other sacrifice is necessary. It is one time for all sacrifice, and it is all that is needed.

It Produces a Better Substance
Heb 10:34 “For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.”

The word “substance” speaks of wealth, possessions, goods, and property. What we have in Heaven cannot be taken away from us. It endures and will not disappear like wealth in this world may do so. Your inheritance and enjoyment of it will forever because you are a genuine, born again, transformed child of God. What we have in the glory world will endure it will last forever.

It Points to a Better City
Heb 11:16 states, “But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”

Heaven is described in Revelation Chapters 21 and 22. Whatever it is, the glory world yet to come is far better than anything we know here on the earth. The Apostle Paul spoke of departing to be with Christ and said of that departure it is “far better” (Phil 1:23).

Socialism is certainly not a acceptable form of government, capitalism has flaws, but the society of the world to come will be far better than any system we have known in this present life.

It Produces a Better Resurrection
Heb. 11:35, “Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.” Many believers suffered according to Hebrews 11. Oliver Greene wrote when they were seen another following happened: “a person was put in a hollow log then someone sawed through the log and through the person.” Life became so difficult for them that it moved them to anticipate their death, resurrection and a world that is eternal, never-ending, and is with God and Christ forever.

All these better things are true because of the Good News that the Lord Jesus Christ became incarnate, lived a sinless life, died a vicarious death, and arose in a glorious resurrection. Thank God for the Gospel of Christ!

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

Check out our Website- www.brnews.com
And find us on Facebook

Bantam Chef
Drive-Thru

1116 Rutherford Road • Marion, NC 28752
(828) 652-7023

Open Monday - Saturday 6:30 - 11 am Breakfast
11 am - 9 pm Lunch & Dinner
(Winter Hours - Close at 8:30 pm)
Since 1971, Serving Marion and the Surrounding Communities.
Thank you for the opportunity to serve you!

Bantam Chef proudly practices and promotes recycling for a cleaner community and a greener environment.
Ask about our ongoing recycling program and how you can participate in our contributions to Hospice of McDowell County.

We serve
SOFT ICE CREAM
Cones • Shakes • Sundaeas
Floats & Boats

ASHEVILLE ELDERLY AND DISABLED VAN GOES TO ASHEVILLE
CALL: 828-682-6144

“Serving the Community”
Habits of the Heart: A Study of the Spiritual Disciplines
"Prayer"
By Dr. Jack E. Hodges, Jr.
Burke County

God’s call to salvation in Christ Jesus invites each one of us to respond to him by faith, receive Jesus as Lord of our lives, and as we enter into an eternal relationship with Him in and through Him we commit ourselves to live for Him honor and glory. But there’s just the starting point; if we are to grow into the likeness of Christ as new creations of God, our journey requires a commitment to grow spiritually and practice spiritual disciplines. Last month, I drew attention to the discipline of “meditation.” The spiritual discipline of meditation calls us to enter into the living presence of God for ourselves. It is the “from porch,” so to speak. God invites us into His presence, and we have some preparation. We cleanse our thoughts, stretch from the noise and demands of our surroundings, lay down our burdens, and open our hearts and minds to receive the presence of the King.

I invite you to look at a second internal “habit of the heart”—prayer. Once we have committed ourselves to come into His presence and have begun to practice the discipline of meditation, we will find ourselves in the presence of Almighty God. Prayer is that moment and that place where we find ourselves face to face with our God, connecting and conversing with our Maker on a deep, intimate level. Our Savior, calling us and invites us into a deep, intimate, ongoing conversation with Him. We are able to have that conversation because we are His children.

The Psalmist wrote (Psalm 55:1, 16-17), “Give ear to my prayer, O God; And do not hide Thine ear from my supplication. Give heed to me; and answer me: I am restless in my complaint and am sore distressed. As for me, I shall call upon God; and the Lord will save me. Evening and morning and at noon, I will complain and murmur. And He will hear my voice.”

Eternal God wants us to have and to experience a deep, ongoing, and eternal fellowship with Him. And in that relationship, He invites us to both speak to Him and listen to Him as He converses, reads, and guides us. The spiritual discipline of prayer, like a conversation, consists of both listening and speaking. Prayer brings us into the deepest work of the human spirit—our loving communion with God, His Son Jesus Christ. Prayer is life creating and life-changing. To pray is to change—for it is through our conversations with God that He seeks to transform us. Foster argues that the “closer we come to the heart-beat of God, the more we see our need and the more we desire to be conformed to Christ.” The whole discipline of prayer, the whole conversation with God is about changing our hearts, minds, and souls to look like, sound like, and act like Christ. In prayer, we begin to think God’s thoughts after Him, to desire the things He desires, to love the things He loves, to be passionate about the things that He is passionate about, and to be aware of His wonderful plans and purposes.

Jesus prayed. Mark wrote (1:35), “In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.” He went to a secluded place and prayed that all-important conversation with the Father by detaching from the world—and then He attached to the Father. Not only did Jesus pray for Himself and ask for God’s presence and power, but He also prayed for others. The Incarnate Lord, the God-man, entered a deeply intimate moment with the Father. He heard the Father’s heart. He spoke His heart to the Father. He understood clearly through each and every conversation what the Father’s will and purposes of the Father were—and then He conformed Himself to obediently follow God’s desires. Jesus never concluded any of His prayers with “if it be Thy will.” Neither did any of the apostles nor the Old Testament prophets repeat that phrase when they prayed for others. Clearly, they believed that they knew what the will of God was before they prayed a “prayer of faith.” Indeed, a prayer offered on behalf of another is a prayer of faith. We are believing that God is Sovereign, and He is willing and able to do all that He wants and desires. We are trusting that He will act completely and fully out of His character. What is His character? He is love! He is faithful! He is just! He is good! He will work for His good and will and pleasure.

A “prayer of faith” is more than just a conversation. Fueled by Christian compassion, our faith and prayers motivate us to move. Our heart moves us to get personally involved and commit ourselves to personally invest in the object or person of the prayer. And that is exactly what we long to do with our lives. —He is mobilizing, marshaling, mustering, and calling His people to action and arms. Again, our hearts, minds, and souls are moved to look like, sound like, and act like our wonderful Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Chip Ingram, in a recent teaching episode, described prayer as “communion with God.” As believers follow the example of Jesus, hearts and souls most long after such daily communion. As to, “Let us pray...”

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

Humor
By Buddy Freeman
Madison County

“LAUGHER IS HEALTHY FOR YOU”
A school teacher asked her class to write an article on the subject of baseball. “You have 30 minutes to complete it,” she told the class, Sara landed in her lap after writing for less than a minute. The teacher asked, “You can’t be finished already?” “Yes, I am,” said Sara. The teacher looked at her paper and read, “Game called off on account of rain.”

A wise man said, “There are two times in a man’s life that he cannot understand women—before marriage and after marriage.”

A teacher told her class, “You have my assurance that if you repeat a word eight or ten times, it will be yours for life.” In the back row, an attractive young girl sighed and closed her eyes, whispering softly to herself, “Tom, Tom, Tom.”

A Sunday School teacher asked, “Now, Harold, what can you tell me about God?” Harold said, “He was the man David rocked to sleep.”

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

What’s easier than the easy button?

The GREENE button!

NEW 2020 Jeep Grand Cherokee Altitude 4X4 3.6L V6, 4WD, TOUCHSCREEN NAVIGATION, SKYDEC, HARDTOP, 20" WHEELS, 30-RGB LOW-FUEL MESSENGER, 6-SPEED AUTOMATIC, 43,425 MSRP, $43,425

BUY FOR AS LOW AS $30,177

NEW 2019 Jeep Cherokee Latitude Plus 4X4 3.2L V6, HEATED SEATS & STEERING WHEEL, DUAL-ZONE POWER SUNROOF POWER GLASS ROOF, TOUCHSCREEN DISPLAY, 52,378 MSRP, $52,378

MASSIVE DISCOUNT... NOW JUST $30,177!

NEW 2015 Jeep Compass Upland 4X4 PUSH BUTTON START, 17" ALUMINUM WHEELS, HIGH PERFORMANCE SUSPENSION, TECHNOLOGY GROUP, APPLE CAR PLAY, ANDROID AUTO, 76,564 MSRP, $76,564

BUY FOR AS LOW AS $24,398!
February in Avery County is a time of special beauty and love. "For God so loved the world. He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him, shall not perish, but have eternal life. When Valentine's Day in the middle of a cold, winter month, what joy to share His love with others. Valentine's have a Christian history of a Roman politician who became a believer, was thrown into the Colosseum with other believers for their faith where lions awaited them. He left notes of Christ's love before he died for Jesus. That's love! Showing love to others when we have the light is so fun at this time. Children, parents, grandparents and other family and friends love to share their love notes. Schools, Sunday Schools, businesses and other groups will also be sending out love notes. Flowers, candy and other gifts are also a part of this special day.

A fun day in the middle of winter, Feb 2nd involves a cute groundhog and his prediction of how long until spring. February also celebrates the birthdays of two amazing US Presidents; President Lincoln who was born on February 12, 1809, and President Washington who was born on February 22, 1732. What a blessing from God of these two great men for our nation; one in the middle of a terrible war between the states and one for his nation in a battle against England. God's hand was upon both these men; the men who wrote the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and the one who wanted to bring a broken nation back together.

With two amazing ski areas in the county, there are always fun things to do. Besides skiing, ice skating, and sledding, there are cross country ski trails, snowshoeing and hikes on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Sugar Mountain has long slopes, Beech Mountain has high altitude and there are so many ways to enjoy them.

National Day of Prayer will be May 7th this year and the theme is Pray God's Glory Across the Earth and the verses used are from Habakkuk 2:14, "For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters of the sea." This year children will be praying as well.

Two business ventures are on Beech Mountain. White Wolf Lodge, owned by the Watters Family, has a beautiful view of the Blue Ridge Mountains, fine gift shop and restaurant, ski shop and room for many people. Larry and his family have a deep concern for troubled children. Larry's heart is truly geared for helping kids who need help! This is a very special family in a beautiful place! They are taking to youth group leaders about bringing up their groups for fun and great experiences in the area in the summer. God's nature is healing and bringing up children that might not have experienced the beautiful outdoors will truly thrive from the experience.

Another great business is Brick Oven Pizza across from the sledding hill on Beech. The brothers, Jimmy and Dave, make the biggest, tastiest pizzas ever and great desserts are there as well.

As I write about Beech Mountain, I want to thank the Beech Mountain Police Department for their service, as well as our Sheriff's Deputies and police officers throughout Avery County!

Next month we will step into spring and for many of us, it is welcome! I do love winter, but welcome spring and all its beauty as we slide into our next season! And please listen to WECR 1100 AM, in Avery County M-F, 8:50 am and 12:50 pm for Adventures in Creation with Mrs. Nancy!
Health

Toxic World
By Monica Kurr-Henley
Mitchell County

Our world is toxic. I believe everyone would agree with that. Even now as I write this, tears fill my eyes. People have so little idea how much Isaoa suffers because he was overexposed as a child to fragrance and chemicals. As a result, he is so cautious to go anywhere. He gets so sick physically when he encounters fragrance or chemicals. His head hurts so bad that I have seen him hit it against a wall many times, just to get relief. It is heart-wrenching to watch. He wants to feel good. He wants to go places. And even if he was able to hide how bad he feels, I know and can see it. He gets really pale, and I know he’s sick, many times before he even tells me. Can you imagine not being able to go to the store, because of so many fragrances and chemicals? Let’s face it our world is toxic! If you walk down the aisle where laundry detergents and dryer sheets are found, the stench is almost overwhelming! He would love to go to local revivals and camp meetings, but he can’t because of the vast array of fragrances.

We almost feel guilty, when we ask family and friends, students and customers to please not wear any fragrance. But we shouldn’t feel guilty. It is not our fault. It is not Isaoa’s fault. He wants to be well. Can you imagine what his life—our life—is like? He gets exposed, feels bad for days, then begins to feel better. He gets exposed again, feels bad for days or weeks, then feels better. It is a cycle, and he gets very discouraged. We are currently going to a nutritionist/homeopathic doctor, who treats with homeopathic supplements and herbal remedies. This is the only relief he has had, and it is a true blessing! But it can get expensive when he must keep returning after exposures.

The whole truth is fragrances and chemicals are affecting all of us, even if we are not to the point that Isaoa experiences. This is the reason for this article. Fragrances and chemicals are hazardous to our health, even deadly. We are slowly poisoning ourselves. All you have to do is research the word “fragrance” or “fragrance-free”, and you can read about all of the ingredients found in products (from cosmetics, hair products and body products to cleaning chemicals and laundry products, scented candles, air fresheners, as well as pesticides). It is very eye-opening! And very scary!

I write this out of a broken heart and with a heart full of concern for all of you. We want to raise awareness of this very serious danger and share it with all our loved ones.

-It is like sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. It is “rough” and even, “intimidating” sometimes to share it but ultimately, it is so good!

*Please, please do some research for yourself. EWG is a website that will rate products according to how hazardous they are (cancer-causing, allergic reactions, etc.). Also, look at the “invisible disabilities” website, which has a lot of helpful information.

This is showing up more and more in many people’s lives. Jason’s aunt, who works for a major insurance company in Florida, told us of the company’s decision to make the whole office building fragrance-free! Also, I have heard of more businesses learning to clean with cleaning agent, which can be purchased at local grocery stores for only $2!

***I cannot imagine how it breaks The Lords heart to watch as His creation slowly destroys themselves.***

If you have any questions, please test Jason at 828-385-0897 or me at 828-765-6785. Also, check out Women’s Nutritional Health Center in Johnson City, Tennessee. Their website is womenmnutritionhealthcenter.com. Their number is 423-302-6218. The first visit is free. This is for men and women and children.

Mrs. Monica Henley-Kritz County Coordinator for the National Day of Prayer Association. Prayer Coordinator Monica is a member of Crabtree Chapel Baptist Church, where Jason is the pastor.

---

BEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH
WELCOMES YOU TO
CELEBRATE RECOVERY
THURSDAY’S AT 7:00PM
HOPE & HELP FROM
ADDICTION THROUGH CHRIST

---

Retirement Resource Management
Education, Evaluation and Consulting

Steven W. Gaito, CFP
Will the SECURE ACT impact your retirement savings. I can help!

As McDowell County’s only CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™
I help people pay less taxes on these plans.

Mention this ad for a free analysis of your qualified plans. (IRA, 401(k) or 403(b)).

68 South Main Street, Suite 200
Marion, NC 28752
(828) 559-0299
Steve@RetireRm.com / www.RetireRm.com

---

www.bronews.com
February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 25
NC Baptist Aging

NCDAM Senior Adult Ministry State Leadership Conference
By Carol Layton

NCDAM’s 2020 Senior Adult Ministry State Leadership Conference will focus on the challenges and rewards of waiting on the Lord during difficult seasons of life. The conference will take place on May 5, 2020, at Bay Leaf Baptist Church in Raleigh.

The 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. event features a keynote address by Rev. Michael Barnett (“The Waiting Room Experience”) and 12 breakout options focusing on holistic strategies for gaining peace, wisdom, and renewal during waiting.


He attended Gardner-Webb University and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has served as a Trustee with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Participants will be able to choose four breakout sessions to attend. Topics will cover issues such as legacy, faith, bearing fruit while aging, fall prevention, Hospice care, long term care options, social isolation and loneliness, estate planning, and downsizing.

NCDAM is accepting a limited number of sponsorship opportunities for the event. The State Leadership Conference provides an excellent opportunity to connect with senior adults, senior adult ministers, and professionals within North Carolina’s aging network. With the mission to help adults 65+ maintain their independence, NCDAM develops innovative programs and services and boosts a wide range of partners to help meet the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of aging adults. Learn more at ncdam.org/saam or by calling 877.506.2226

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

A Grateful Girl

Being Grateful is Tough Some Days
By Pam Jensen
Mitchell County

Sometimes being grateful is just tough to do. I have to be honest; I actually forget sometimes to be grateful. So many days I get up out of my warm bed, get into my hot shower, put on my clean clothes, eat a hearty breakfast, and drive to work in a car to a job that I enjoy. All of that in one hour or less and many mornings I have gone without even thinking about how grateful I should be.

I am trying to do better though. Now, before I even get out of bed, I say “Thank you Lord for this day and all that you have planned for me.” Some days I go on to continually thank Him throughout the day for all the big and little things He does for me. Some days I may be the only breath of gratitude I give until I go to bed at night. But He knows my heart (something else to be grateful for) so He knows I am trying.

It should come easy though, right? I mean, aren’t we really the most blessed people we know? We... Christians. He gave us the greatest, most unsinful gift... His Son... and all that came with that gift... salvation, mercy, grace, healing, and forgiveness. How many times a day do we truly kneel our hearts and thank God for THAT gift much less our material gifts and blessings? I’d guess not many.

I am ashamed of my lack of gratitude. I am ashamed that I just get so busy enjoying all my blessings that I forget to be grateful. I have seen and been given so many blessings in my life... my children, my grandchild, my husband’s miraculous recovery from leukemia, my children’s health, a praying mother and so many, many, many other things.

I saw a quote some time ago that said... “What if you woke up today with only the things you thanked God for yesterday?”

Roy wouldn’t that wake us up to gratitude?
And our lack of it?
“Oft, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! For He softens the rugged soul and fills the hungry soul with goodness.” Psalm 107:8,9.

Could I even list the many blessings that God has given me in my life? In one day? In one month? In a lifetime? I think I might start a daily gratitude list just to ensure myself daily of His goodness. Do you have a daily gratitude journal? I would love to hear about it! Reach out to me on Instagram @agnathfulgirl or Facebook @AGracefulGirl.

Patti Jensen is the writer and creator of the lifestyle blog “A Grateful Girl” which features encouragement, a focus on gratitude with some lifestyle tips and recipes thrown in for good measure! Patti is married to Jack and has two daughters, two great grandchildren, and a new granddaughter, Georgia Grace. You can find her posts on Instagram and Facebook and on her blog at http://www.agrathfulgirl.com.
Grand View Baptist Church

Christian Justification
By Genda Ward
McDowell County

Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Romans 5:1

We through the Spirit gain the hope of righteousness by faith. But faith works by love – the Law of Christ. 1- The Spirit gives victory over sin. 2- The Spirit is against the flesh. These two are contrary one to the other. If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. You are no longer subject to the law's condemnation that your character is displayed in life. Christian character is the possession and proving of God's grace produced by the Holy Spirit together. They present a moral portrait of Christ. This character is possible because of the believer's vital union with Christ (John 15:5, 1 Corinthians 12:12-13) and is wholly the fruit of the Spirit. In a Christian's life, the Spirit is united in purpose and direction; which, in contrast with the flesh, we find in inner conflicts and frustrations. We are in Christ have crucified our affections and lusts of the flesh to the Cross. If we live in the Spirit, we will also walk in the Spirit, not having a desire for anything, and enmity of God's glory, provoking one another. If we are even sinning in sin, those which are spiritual in Christ are to restore such a one in the spirit of being submissive to God, giving correction, leadership, and guidance. Everyone is to prove his own work and rejoice in himself alone, and not in another sin.

Characteristics displayed in the life of a Christian should be justified by our faith, not by the flesh. Christian justification is to vindicate or to set right; a judicial act of God based upon Christ's completed work. It is God's divine declaration of, not guilty' in that of a sinner. The requirements of justification are all fulfilled in Christ. It is important to know the act of justification by God does not make one righteous, but he who is righteous based upon the complete righteousness of Christ. Justification is credited upon the completed work of Jesus. "For he hath made us the sin of us, he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Reference Psalm 21:1-2, Romans 5:1-4. By the one sacrifice of Himself, the Lord has made us righteous. "Nothing can be put to it, nor anything was taken from it" (Hebrews 3:14). Belief and faith in Jesus is the intervening thing through which justification is founded. God sent forth His Son Jesus as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood. (Romans 3:25) Faith is not something wholly dependent upon us, but our faith also comes from God. It is a gift from God. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

The immediate benefit of justification is the remission of sin, with the sinner being declared righteous. This is a declaration for God that the believing sinner is now justified, a legal decree of "not guilty." God sees us all through the perfect righteousness of Christ. We appear to Him as if we had never sinned. Being justified, we have peace with God and with our own conscience. Romans 5:1. Not only in God's eyes are we justified and free from condemnation but we are ushered into God's eternal Kingdom, as righteous people. The Lord in the word in Romans 5, 8-16, justifies the ungodly. Faith in the gospel brings eternal life for all who believe. It marks the beginning of the fullness of life spoken of in Scripture. A life is unshackled with guilt, condemnation, fear, or dread. It's a life in which we can enjoy God's blessings and His presence forever.

Justification by faith is what separates Biblical Christianity from any other belief system. Only in true, Biblical Christianity is a person saved as a result of grace through faith. Justification is apart from self-righteousness. Justification is a complete work of God and is instantaneous. Knowledge of justification and of grace motivates good works and spiritual growth in the believer. Justification leads to sanctification – a growing process of growth in which we become more Christlike (as the "being justified"). Sanctification occurs after justification and justification being a finished work of God means that Christians have an assurance of their salvation. Without an understanding of justification by faith alone, we cannot maintain the glorious gift of God's grace. Our justification does not mean we maintain pure devotion to Christ. Holding to the promise of justification by faith; it is only by God's grace, in response to our faith, that God has credited to us the Holiness of His Son. "The just shall live by faith" (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38). Justification is the legal standing that results from the process of "being justified." Being justified from sin is not to say that one is innocent of the sin, but rather the offender has been exempted from the penalty that one justly deserves. So, the death passed upon all men has been ascribed to those who have been justly condemned and consistent with the righteous Judge's system of justice (Romans 5:12). "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). The sinless "Lamb of God" takes the penalty for the sinful individual who submits to the conditions imposed by the Judge, God, toward those individuals who earnestly seek forgiveness for their sin. Justification is equivalent to forgiveness as well as the "in Christ" relationship.

Out of a genuine faith flows submission to God in response to His sacred leadership and guidance. To sinner's "faith" is essential to God's justification. Valid faith yields obedience and obedience is gained from faith. Faith apart from submission to God is simply non-existent. He who is 100% devoted to God is the equivalent of obeying the gospel. Faith obeys! Faith is the guiding principle of obedience. But faith does not justify without that submission to Jesus Christ and God's Will.

The goal of justification is "peace with God." And that justification and peace with God are only available through the Lord Jesus Christ. Peace comes from God but comes by means of the sacrificial mission of Jesus Christ.

Lord Jesus Christ (a) He is the "Lord", the one who exercises authority. (b) He is the "Savior", His mission was to seek and to save the lost. (c) He is the promised "Messiah", the one who fulfills hundreds of Old Testament prophecies.

Let's rejoice in the "glory of God" and the eventual joy of being in the very presence of the Lord God Himself.

Genda Ward is a member of Grand View Baptist Church in McDowell County. Genda is a Christian writer/author of "Something to Think About" – weekly Christian articles. She writes Church Programs & Bulletins, TTR Material, Christmas and Easter Programs; all material based on the KJV of the Bible. Also teaching the first degree, individual memo.

Carolina Home Care Specialists, INC
Excellence In Personalized Care

Medicaid Covered Services
- In Home Care for Children & Adults
- CAP for Disabled Adults & Children
- CAP Choice
- Pediatric Nurse Aids

Other Services
- Private Pay
- Insurance
- VA Homeowner Service
- Companion/Sitter
- Respite

Our In-Home Aides are supervised by a registered nurse who is available during all hours worked by the aide.

Phone (828) 765-4343 • (866) 765-4340

Jackson Hewitt
TAX SERVICE

Don’t Compromise on Accuracy.
Ask a Tax Pro.

911 Union Street
Morganton, NC
(828) 433-4455

February 2020 - 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 reaching these coastal communities. Visit our website for full list of projects at https://baptistmission.org/Mission-Projects/United-States/New-England or contact NC Baptist on Mission at 919-467-5607 or mabernathy@acbcs.org. Deep Impact Kids, Are you looking for a mission opportunity for the children in your church? Deep Impact Kids will be serving in many communities across the state with hands-on mission projects designed for 1st-6th-grade children. Sign up your church 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 Della Nos at dnos@acbcs.org. Website http://baptistmission.org/camps/d-kids

Outburden Program - Volunteers needed to advocate, protect the rights of long-term care residents Boulder, NC (June 26, 2019) - The High-Country Area Agency on Aging Long-Term Care Outburden Program is calling for volunteers in Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey Counties. Volunteer outburden, also known as Community Advisory Committee’s (CAC) serve as advocates for residents living in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. CAC members are trained, certified volunteers who are assigned to a local long-term care facility to advocate for residents’ rights.

To learn more about becoming a volunteer outburden or to request an application, call Steve John at (328) 205-5434 Ext. 125 or visit the High-Country Area Agency on Aging website at www.highcountrycaring.org.

Bible Study Fellowship - Acts and Letters of the Apostles In The Acts and Letters of the Apostles study, we see evidence of God’s Unstop-\pilable Spirit, the growth of His Unstoppable Church, and the Unstoppable witness of His people. Join us for this incredible study. Women Begin Thursday, September 12, 6:30 pm at Mitchell County Women’s Evening group meet at Grassy Creek Baptist Church. Women’s study meet at Grassy Creek Baptist Church, Spruce Pine 5:45 pm-7:15 pm Mitchell County Women’s study meet at Higgins Methodist Church, Burnsville 6:30 pm-8:25 pm – Yancey County Contact: Nancy Bailey (828)977-1196 (Dey Women) – Angie Woody (828)467-3810 (Evening Women)

Avery County

Celebrate Recovery at Heaton Christian Church, Elk River Road, 6 pm, every Monday; all welcome.

Bible Study Fellowship - Banner Elk Christian Fellowship Thursday at 9:30 am, contact Isabel Petersen 828-904-1462 for an in-depth Bible Class for women.

National Day of Prayer - on May 7th, 2020 at Newland Gazebo at noon.

Burke County

Catwah River Baptist Association - Children’s and Youth Bible Drill - One of the greatest tools used in our Association is the tool of teaching children God’s Word through the use of Bible Drills. We all know of the power of God’s Word in a per- son’s life and especially how powerful it can be in the lives of children. That being said, this year’s Associational Bible Drill is scheduled for March 11th, at Wilkes Grove @ 3 pm. If your church plans to participate in this wonderful ministry, please let us know by calling our CBBA office.

Children’s and youth group opportunity for folks in our Association. There are many people in the eastern part of our state who are still recovering from hurricane devastation and we are planning to take a team of men and women February 24-27 to do clean-up and some construction in Rose Hill, NC. The cost is $10 per person per week which covers all supplies, lodging and food. If interested, please call our CBBA office at 828-417-0173 for more information and to register.

Medical Patient Modesty is doing a Pie Bake-Off / Silent Auction - http://unloadedshirt.com/pie-bakeoff/) in Morganton on Saturday, March 7th from 10:30 am to 2:30 PM in the basement of Collin Street Recreation Center to benefit Medical Patient Modesty (http://www.patientmodesty.org/) and we will need a number of volunteers (some must be teenagers under the age of 18). Medical Patient Modesty is a non-profit organization that works to help educate patients and their families about their insurance modesty for procedures; how to stand up for their rights requesting a same-gender medical team for inte- mate procedures; and how to prevent sexual abuse by medical professionals. We also work to educate medical professionals on how to be more sensitive to patient modesty.

The proceeds from this event will help with our patient education/advocacy eff- orts. We are looking for people from different churches in Burke County who enjoy baking to participate in our pie baking contest. The entry fee for one pie is $10. You can find more information on the pie baking contest at http://unloadedshirt.com/ pie-bakeoff/bake- registration.asp.

Great Hope Seventh-Day Adventist Church – Reversing Diabetes seminar is about to begin again for those who want to reverse the disease and for those who want to prevent diabetes. Proven scientific methods are shared in a group setting.

The seminar begins Monday, January 27 and continues on Monday evenings, 6:00 pm through March 2. Free admission, but seating is limited so please pre-register to secure your seat by calling Sharryn at 828-334-0084. Great Hope Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 2907 US Hwy 70 E, Morganton (Drexel, across from Foottills Tire Store). You will love feeling healthier!

Morganton Seventh-Day Adventist Church Event - The Giving Heart Thrift Shop is OPEN on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Like us on Facebook at @daviecountythriftshop. The Giving Heart Thrift Shop is a ministry of the Morganton Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

God’s Closet - Morganton Free Shop Day Sunday, February 23, 2020, from 2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m., at the Morganton Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 2187 Janesetaw Road, Morganton, N.C. There will be clothes for children ages 0 - 18 years old. $1.00 Entrance Fee and then all the clothing is FREE and FREE children while you shop. More information please like us on Facebook @MorgantonSeventhDayAdventistChurch and @GodsClosetMorganton

Diabetes / Heart Informational Seminar with Dr. Paul Collins - Learn ways to improve your health and prevent or manage diabetes. This 3-part series will take place Friday, February 28th. - Saturday, February 29th. - at the Morganton Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 2187 Janesetaw Road, Morganton, N.C. First Session - Friday, February 28th., at 7:00 p.m.; Second Session - Saturday, February 29th., at 10:45 a.m.; Fellowship Lunch, Third Session - Saturday, February 29th., at 3:00 pm.

Mount Home Baptist Church - We are having the Collinsworth Family in our church for a concert on Sunday evening, February 23 at 6:00 pm. Mt. Home Baptist Church, 2778 Mt. Home Road, Morganton, 28655, Tel: (828)447-1010.

Valdese Events

Concerts at the Rock presents: Ni Bha with Mere Moueuse - Feb. 15, 2020, 7:30 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Old Rock School Auditorium 400 Main Street West Valdese, NC 28690. Tickets $20 per person.

Concerts at the Rock presents: Carolina Blue - March 7, 2020, 7:30 p.m. - 10 p.m. Tickets $20 in advance & $25 at the door.

The Old Rock School in Valdese, North Carolina has become well-known throughout the nation for its outstanding bluegrass concerts. The 50-seat auditor- ium is the perfect place near your favorite all of us at the Old Rock School are very excited about the 2019-2020 season and are happy to bring it to you. The handicap entrance is located at the side of the building (elevator). Phone: 288-879-2729.

McDowell County

Cross Mill United Methodist Church - Cross Mill United Methodist Church in Marion is now accepting donations of NEW items for their upcoming fundraising auction. Proceeds from the auction will go toward much-needed church building repairs and our 24/7 Sharing Food pantry Ministries. Any business and/or indi- vidual donations would be greatly appreciated. Call 288-406-5227, 288-422-8096 or 288-803-8790.

New Community Outreach Benefits: McDowell Family with Children: Tens for Christ B.F. A.R. Closet (Baby Equipment and Resource Closet) - Beginning Wednesday, August 1st, 2018 the church office at Cross Mill United Methodist Church located at 5 West Cross Street in Marion will have a new outreach ministry benefiting families with children.

The outreach will be open the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. and the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. For more information or if you are interested in volunteer opportunities call (828) 303-8790 or email TeensForChristBRACloset@yahoo.com

Mitchell County

Give Kids A Smile Event - February 7

Ever have a toothache so painful it was hard to sleep? Many North Carolina children face this reality every day and can’t smile, pay attention in school or even sleep because of tooth decay. February is the kickoff of the national ADA Foundation’s Give Kids A Smile® program.

ECU School of Dental Medicine in Spruce Pine will be hosting a Give Kids a Smile event on February 7, 2020 at their office in Spruce Pine for children ages 1-2nd grade. Services provided include an exam, cleaning, X-rays and a treatment plan. All services are free on this day.

Children do not need to be pre-registered for our Give Kids A Smile event. Please contact the ECU School of Dental Medicine at 828-765-0110 to pre-register or for more info. A parent/guardian will have to be present. Together, we can give kids a smile!

Celebrate Recovery - This is a Christ and Biblical Based Program, giving hope and help for men, women, and families suffering from addiction. Any questions contact Josh Wise @ 855-0061

Mayland Small Business Center

28705 Business Breakfast: 2020 Business Growth Planning (1.5 Hours) NEW! The 28705 Business Breakfast is a great place to gain valuable local information, build networking, discuss entrepreneurship, and grab a light breakfast. Sponsored by the Mitchell County EDC, the Town of Easleyville, the Mitchell Chamber of Commerce, and the Mayland Small Business Center, the free breakfast workshops

www.bwcnews.com
place a focus on providing applicable information and business networking that will support entrepreneurs and spur local growth. Starting January 9, meetings will be on the second Thursday of each month through October. In this first meeting of 2020, Allen Cook, Director of the Mayland Small Business Center will discuss key areas that affect local business growth. Allen will also be asking for input from attendees on where local businesses need help in 2020. 2020 breakfast workshop topics will be built from your input. Networking and the light breakfast will start at 7:30 am with the workshop beginning promptly at 8:30 am. The meetings are always finished up by 9:30 am. Everyone is welcome at the breakfast sessions so make plans to attend.

1/9, TH, 1:00-9:30 a.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Cook [C flavorful County, Mitchell Administration Building, Baker Eva 828.766.1295
Top 25 FREE Apps for Small Businesses (2 Hours)!! Save time, increase mobility and grow productivity with these 25 business-related apps for your tablet or cellphone. SBC Director, Allen Cook will provide insight and features of each app it relates to specific businesses. This is a great workshop for anyone who like to conduct business via their smartphone. 1/16, TH, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Cook [C flavorful County, Mitchell Administration Building, Baker Eva 828.766.1295

Mayland SBC Entrepreneurship Certificate: Attend one class or all six! In this series, learn how to be a successful entrepreneur. SBC business professionals and guest presenters will increase your business success by providing current and applicable information. Upon completion of all six classes, participants will receive a certificate from the Mayland Small Business Center which is a great document to include in a business plan. Completion of the Mayland Small Business Center Entrepreneurship Certificate is a requirement to apply for Downtown Entrepreneurial Assistance Grants in Spruce Pine and Burnsville.
CLASS THREE: Basics of Bookkeeping (2.5 Hours) - This class will discuss the use of bookkeeping methods used for small businesses as well as popular online bookkeeping platforms. Attendees will gain a workable knowledge of bookkeeping principles and record and archive transactions. The seminar will also discuss how financial statements factor into small business bookkeeping.
2/4, T, 1:30-4:00 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Grandma Hammering (Yancey County, Mitchell Administration Building, Baker Eva 828.766.1295
CLASS FOUR: Your Small Business Taxes (2.5 Hours) - Attendees will become familiar with the common local, state, and Federal tax requirements typical to local small businesses. The seminar will also discuss tax planning and strategy for entrepreneurs. The class will be taught by a CPA.
2/16, TH, 1:30-4:00 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Drums-Dickson (Yancey County, Mitchell Administration Building, Baker Eva 828.766.1295
CLASS FIVE: Finding Your Customers (2.5 Hours) - This class will focus on growing and retaining customers. The presentation will discuss the tips for attracting the correct customers in your business. We will also explore a variety of market research tools that provide critical information about the competition, industry, and customers.
2/21, T, 1:30-4:00 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Drums-Dickson (Yancey County, Mitchell Administration Building, Baker Eva 828.766.1295
CLASS SIX: Marketing your Business (2.5 Hours) - This class will discuss commonly used marketing practices for local entrepreneurs. Discover how to most effectively and efficiently use the many marketing tools available. Gain insights to understand and reach your customer, analyze your industry and business environment and differentiate between brand advertising and grassroots marketing techniques. Explore the components of an effective marketing plan in this comprehensive seminar.
2/26, T, 1:30-4:00 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Broman (Yancey County, Mitchell Administration Building, Baker Eva 828.766.1295

Mitchell County Chamber - Candidate Forum, Mitchell County 2020 March 10th 2020, Mitchell County Community Foundation Center, February 10, 2020, 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm, Facilitator: Brandi Roberts. Hosted by the Mitchell County Community Foundation Board.

The National Day of Prayer - The National Day of Prayer for 2020 will be held on the first Thursday of May, the 7th, 2020. Please watch for updates through the upcoming months. Call 310-241-2100 if you are interested in praying for this National Day of Prayer, "for such a time as this".

Tipson Hill Community Foundation (Tipson 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 Tipson Hill Community Foundation.

Western Carolina Church GriefShare Ministry - meets on Thursday's at 6:30 pm at 31 Cross Street Suite 289, Spruce Pine, NC in Mitchell County Facilitator: Carolyn Dott. For more information call church office 828-765-4833 or call 828-647-1433. The 2020 Spring cycle will begin in March, dates to be announced.

YaYa Village - We are announcing the Opening of YaYa Village Commercial-Share Kitchen.
We've realized there's a gap that needs to be filled between the production of local food and their consumption. That's why we started YaYa Village Commercial-Shared 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 imagine, we hope our Shared Use Kitchen can provide you with a solution.
Come visit our space, get an application and let us talk to see what is that you have in mind! We are also serving lunch on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30 pm to 2:30 pm.

Yancey County

Feed-A-Child Yancey County - Higgin's this 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 828-675-5347.

Burnsville Wedding Expo. - February 15 @ 11:00 am - 3:00 pm $5 The Burnsville Wedding Expo invites brides-to-be, and their fiancé, family and friends, to meet local vendors and explore area options for WNC weddings. A favorite expo tradition returns with brides digging through a tiered cake to find a wedding band hidden inside. The lucky participant who uncovers the ring gets to keep it. The expo showcases approximately 15 vendors including venues, planners, dress shops, menswear retailers, florists, stationers, caterers, jewelers, photographers, videographers, DJs, transportation companies and more.
Although many aspects of the wedding planning process are carried out through emails and phone calls, the expo provides face-to-face interaction. With an event as highly personalized as a wedding, matching personalities can be as important as comparing budgets and calendars. Attendees can talk with vendors, sample their products and ask questions.
Burnsville and the surrounding Blue Ridge Mountains are a popular spot for wedding ceremonies and receptions for local residents and those planning destination weddings. Downtown Burnsville offers a couple of venue options right on Town Square, including Nu Way Inn and Burnsville Town Center.

Framing Workshop
by N.C. Cooperative Extension, Yancey County
Date And Time - Sat, February 22, 2020 - 1:00 PM - 3:30 PM EST
311 Arbuck Road, Burnsville, NC 28714

Vegetable Fermentation Workshop
Thursday, February 6, 2020 at 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM
41 Charlie Brown Rd, Burnsville, NC 28714
Thursday, Feb 6 5:30-7:30 PM.
Fermenting vegetables is a fun and delicious way to increase digestibility and nutrition of vegetables while preserving the garden’s harvest for later enjoyment!
Join Olivia Sanders of Soil Share Farm & Farmers to learn the ins and outs of fermenting your own vegetables. The class will be hands-on and you’ll get to take home a quart of saurkraut to be. The price includes materials for a quart of organic sauerkraut, and there will be additional equipment and books for sale.
This class makes a great gift or a way to commit to your New Year’s resolution of eating healthier!

Olivia Sanders has been a fan of fermentation in various forms since college, when she had access to endless vegetables from her college farm and couldn’t eat any more salads. For her, fermentation and gardening have always gone hand in hand as ways to improve your health and that of the land. She and her partner founded Soil Share Farm & Farmers, a small farm and fermenting business located in Celo, NC, in the spring of 2019. They sell a wide variety of homestead, organic fermented products at the Yancey County Farmers Market and many small stores in Yancey and Mitchell County. Follow them on Facebook and Instagram for updates from the garden and kitchen. Soil Share Farm & Farmers
Cost is $20. Register online here: http://www.localgoodfood.com/events/vegetable-fermentation-with-olivia-sanders-of-soil-share-farm

NOTES
Justification
By David Valls
Mitchell County

This month, we will be continuing our series of articles about the purposes of salvation. This article will focus on justification. Justification is the act of being declared righteous in the sight of God, or to be made acceptable in His sight. Christ places His righteousness on our account the moment we are saved. Many people have been persuaded that when we stand before God, the good works we do will make us acceptable in His sight. While this may be a convenient theology, nothing could be further from the truth. The right view is that you are good enough and our bad is worse than we think. The Bible says there is none righteous, no one.

Our righteousness amounts to nothing when compared with the righteousness of God. If Adam could not save himself, don’t think that we can be saved from the curse of sin apart from justification. The only way we will be made acceptable, if the blood has been applied to our soul, without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Jesus paid a debt He didn’t owe. He took God’s wrath for our sins upon Himself and is not guilty. He bore our sins in His own body and He died in our place. It does not make us not guilty; it simply means His death was not held against our account. He paid the balance for our sins. He put it on His account and it is paid in full. We read in the Bible the parable of the sower who owed a great debt to his master. He begged forgiveness and his master had compassion on him and forgave his debt. That any friends is a justification. That’s the love and compassion our Savior has for us. If we could achieve this on our own, Jesus would have never had to die...but we can’t save ourselves. The Bible says for by grace you are saved and through faith in and of yourselves, it is the gift of God. No works of men at any man should boast. We can take nothing from nor could we add anything to it. We are saved not by our own works but by the redemptive work of Christ. If we could justify ourselves that would take the emphasis of our justification out of Christ and place it on us. It was God’s design that the emphasis always is on Christ. As the old song says, “On Christ the solid rock I stand all other ground is sinking sand.” Let us remember it if we cannot forgive others, we will not be forgiven. The servant that had his debt forgiven had someone who owed him a debt and yet he failed to demonstrate the same forgiveness he had received. In the end, he himself was not forgiven because he knew that his master saw that he had no compassion. God commanded His love toward us by sending His only begotten son to take our place and forgive our transgressions. What a wonderful Savior we serve! May we ever praise His HOLY name!

David Velz attends Midland District Firewell Baptist Church in Buldooam. I am from Mitchell County. I have been the adult class Sunday school teacher for the past 13 years.

---

Christian Action League

NC General Assembly Must Do More to Protect Churches from Mass Shooters
By Rev. Mark Creech

After a gunman opened fire at the West Freeway Church of Christ during a worship service last month, the Associated Press noted that 2019 was “one of the worst years in recent history for attacks on religious groups or places of worship.”

According to the Violent Project Database, which is funded by the National Institute of Justice, “mass shootings in places of worship are becoming more frequent, starting in the mid-2000s, and the number of shootings motivated by religious hate has increased most dramatically in the last five years.”

The shooting that took place at the West Freeway Church of Christ in White Settlement, Texas, shows parishioners’ understanding of Jesus’ command to “turn the other cheek,” doesn’t mean they should give up their right to self-defense. The church in White Settlement had a security team that swiftly took down the assailant.

The gunman killed two, but it could have been a much deadlier scenario.

Like West Freeway Church of Christ in the Lone Star State, many churches across the Tar Heel state have also developed voluntary security teams that have cancelled carry permits and are “packing heat.” By the time the parishioners of these houses of worship start with the opening prayer, the policies and plans of their security teams are already working.

North Carolina law allows firearms in churches unless the church prohibits them. Nevertheless, the state forbids guns in schools. So, what happens, in this day of escalating church shootings, if your church is meeting in a school building as many churches in the state currently do? An armed parishioner would have authorized persons with a concealed handgun permit to carry a concealed handgun under certain conditions, on education property that doubles as a school and a place of worship.

The gun, however, could only be taken on educational property outside of school operating hours.

The legislation was more than reasonable. It passed the North Carolina House, but when it got to the Senate Rules Committee, it was never taken up and died a quiet death. Thus, churches or church groups in North Carolina meeting in schools today are left defenseless as shooting fires break out.

In the same year when there was a mass stabbing or five people at a Rabbi’s house in New York state, a mass shooting at a Kohser grocery store in New Jersey which killed three, and four people shot with one fatality at the Cladab of Poway synagogue in Poway, and now a church in White Settlement, all in 2019, it seems nothing less than despicable for North Carolina lawmakers to have ignored Turner’s legislation.

Unfortunately, Turner is no longer around to champion the measure. She decided to retire in June and allow Rep. Jeffrey C. McNeely, who was appointed to fill her seat to get some experience before deciding to run for it. Moreover, the bill is no longer eligible and can’t be considered in its current form. It would have to be filed again, and that’s precisely what needs to happen as quickly as possible.

Turner says such legislation wouldn’t have any problems getting through the state House. She even believes there is more than enough support for it by state Senate members. The problem seems to be that it perished in the Senate Rules Committee.

Turner said she believes public sentiment about guns and gun control also makes the matter more urgent. “I think now might be the best time with all this stuff going on in Virginia,” she told the Christian Action League of North Carolina, “People are very aware of their Second Amendment rights.”

Few people are likely to remember that in December of 2007, a gunman killed one person and wounded four others when he started shooting the good people of New Life Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Like the situation at West Freeway Church of Christ in White Settlement, Texas, a church security officer shot the gunman and kept him from killing others. He was rightly hailed as a courageous hero who saved many lives that day.

The circumstances in both of these situations prove that whenever a lone gun-wielding psychopath walks into the church of God with an intent to kill, as many people as are likely to happen if people in the congregation are also carrying weapons and prepared to act.

These are wicked and dark times. Churches without security teams need to take steps to protect their members.

The North Carolina General Assembly seems to take steps to allow churches that meet in schools to protect themselves.

The primary purpose of any church should be to lead people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. But if someone insists on coming into a worship service flogging a gang pasty about the seeming intent to kill indiscriminately, to take the life of innocent people, women, children, and the elderly, then there is no sin in immediately sending that person to meet their Maker.

Reverend Dr. Mark Creech is Executive Director of the NC Christian Action League. You may contact him at rev.markcreech@christianactionleague.org or 919-737-6900.

Check out our Website:- www.brcnews.com
And find us on Facebook
Wayne King for Congress

Western North Carolina Republican Sheriffs Endorse Wayne King for Congress

Hendersonville, NC: Wayne King, Republican candidate for North Carolina’s 11th Congressional District announced this morning that he has received the endorsements of eight Western North Carolina Republican Sheriffs:
- Avery County Sheriff Kevin Frye
- Graham County Sheriff Joseph Jones
- Henderson County Sheriff Lowell Griffin
- McDowell County Sheriff Ricky Buchanan
- Mitchell County Sheriff Donald Street
- Rutherford County Sheriff Chris Francis
- Transylvania County Sheriff David Hacle
- Yancey County Sheriff Gary Banks

“I am honored and humbled that some of the first people to offer their support and endorsement of my campaign are these eight sheriffs,” Wayne King said. “I have had the privilege of working closely with each of them and admire their dedication and hard work on behalf of the people of Western North Carolina. I value their friendship and share their concern for keeping our citizens safe. I will always stand with our sheriffs and all law enforcement agencies across the 11th Congressional District.”

Statement from Avery County Sheriff Kevin Frye:

We need a strong Republican with courage and dedication to fill the vacancy of Mark Meadows. If you want someone who will continue to fight against the liberal socialist movement, the way Representative Mark Meadows has, we need Representative Wayne King to continue that fight. If you want someone who will support our President in continuing economic growth, high wages, low unemployment, and a booming stock market, we need Wayne King! If you want someone who will stand with our President against liberal attacks, in securing our border and standing up for America first and foremost, we need Wayne King. Please let Wayne know that he has your support and your prayers.

Statement from Henderson County Sheriff Lowell Griffin.

Wayne King is a supporter of law enforcement, as a matter of fact, Wayne has public service experience and is a supporter of all the men and women providing emergency services to us. Wayne King has worked in the 11th District continually meeting and listening to the people. Wayne is familiar with the issues and concerns of the district which will allow him to hit the ground running. Wayne will work hard in representing the people of our district with the conservative values that make our area one of the greatest places to live and work in the world.

Statement from McDowell County Sheriff Ricky Buchanan:

I am proud to support my friend Wayne King. I have had the privilege to work with him for a number of years while he was Deputy Chief of Staff for Congressman Mark Meadows. Wayne is a man of faith, a true public servant and a true supporter of law enforcement and public safety! We have had many conversations over the years, and I know this is a good man, an honest man and one that will give his best to Western North Carolina and this great country. Honored to stand with you Wayne King.

Microscopes and Telescopes
By Tracey Jessup

“Arise to the Lord, O heavenly beings, arise to the Lord! Sing praises to the Lord, all the hosts of heaven. Arise to the Lord, all the earth; serve the Lord with gladness, come before him with singing.” — Psalm 96:1-9

Although I am fascinated by physics, geology, chemistry, biology, ecology, astronomy and other scientific disciplines, the truth remains that science never was my best subject. However, I did enjoy labs in which my classmates and I utilized microscopes. It was mesmerizing to be able to observe very small objects that appear larger than they really are.

In the summer of 2017, I traveled with my son to Santa Monica, California, to help him get settled in before he began a six-week internship with award-winning composer Hans Zimmer and Remote Control Productions. While there, we visited the Griffith Observatory, "one of the premier public observatories in the world. One of the principal reasons is the presence and regular availability of high-quality public telescopes. Griffith J. Griffith wanted the public to have the opportunity to look through a telescope, which he felt might broaden the human perspective. Mounted in the copper-clad domes on either end of the building, the Zeiss and solar telescopes are free to the public every day and night, the sky is clear," (griffithobservatory.org).

Unlike microscopes, which are used to examine very small objects such as unicellular organisms, telescopes are used to observe large objects in space. When the Psalmist writes, "Arise to the Lord, O heavenly beings, arise to the Lord! Sing praises to the Lord, all the hosts of heaven. Arise to the Lord, all the earth; serve the Lord with gladness, come before him with singing." — Psalm 96:1-9.

Dr. Tracy Jessup serves as vice president for Christian Life and Service and senior minister at 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 Beeson Divinity School. He completed his Ph.D. at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He also teaches in the undergraduate department of religious studies and enjoys the opportunity to serve the local church through interim pastorate, pulpits supply, and providing revivals services. He and his wife, Teresa, have two children, Christian and Anna.
US House of Representatives NC District 11

WASHINGTON, D.C. - This week, Rep. Mark Meadows (R-NC) and Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA) introduced the bipartisan Construction Consensus Procurement Improvement Act - a bill to promote competition and quality in federally-funded construction projects. The bill would prohibit federal agencies from using a reverse auction in which bidders continuously lower their prices until a certain point, where the lowest bidder is most cases awarded the construction contract in question. While this procedure generally results in a lower price for the item up front, the quality of the product, delivery terms, and other important features may be lacking, and promised cost savings are not typically to the detriment of the federal government. The bill would require federal agencies to use a reverse auction for construction contracts that meet certain criteria, including a bill to promote competition and quality in federally-funded construction projects. This is to ensure that the lowest bidder is not always the winner and that the quality of the product is not sacrificed. The bill would also require federal agencies to use a reverse auction for construction contracts that meet certain criteria, including a requirement for the contractor to be able to provide the product at a lower cost than the lowest bidder.

Rep. Meadows released the following statement:

"I am proud to help introduce this bill to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of federal government construction contracts. This is a critical approach, at no cost to the federal government, which will protect taxpayer dollars and improve the quality of construction. The bill would require federal agencies to use a reverse auction for construction contracts that meet certain criteria, including a requirement for the contractor to be able to provide the product at a lower cost than the lowest bidder. The bill would also require federal agencies to use a reverse auction for construction contracts that meet certain criteria, including a requirement for the contractor to be able to provide the product at a lower cost than the lowest bidder. The bill would also require federal agencies to use a reverse auction for construction contracts that meet certain criteria, including a requirement for the contractor to be able to provide the product at a lower cost than the lowest bidder. The bill would also require federal agencies to use a reverse auction for construction contracts that meet certain criteria, including a requirement for the contractor to be able to provide the product at a lower cost than the lowest bidder.

NC Senate District 47

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

Senate Republicans returned to Raleigh on January 14th in hopes of overriding Gov. Roy Cooper's June 28th veto of the state budget. However, Senate Democrats, who had voted for this budget in June, lowered their threshold and did not join their Republican colleagues in overriding the veto, essentially blocking billions of dollars for teacher raises, school capital needs, health care for people with developmental disabilities, and priority local projects across the state.

The governor has said in his veto that he does not agree with any budget that did not include Medicaid expansion. The state is in the red for Medicaid expansion and Medicaid is being awarded to other states that ask for it if there is a scenario that they would choose for North Carolina.

Bloomberg News reported in an article published January 21, 2020, on the multi-billion-dollar budget gap created after New York expanded its Medicaid program. Following are excerpts from the article, titled "New York’s Medicaid Budget is Bleeding, Some Want Cash Injection."

"New York is looking to overhaul its Medicaid program, which could mean cuts to hospitals, doctors, nursing homes, and other providers as the state aims to fill a projected $61 billion budget gap."

"The cost of the safety net health-care program is a large portion of the deficit... Remuneration cuts have the potential to jeopardize the stability of the marketplace," said Linder, president and CEO of the New York Health Planning Association. The state’s group represents states operating on thin margins for the past few years, he said.

"To help fill the current hole, the state plans to delay $2 billion in Medicaid payments into the fiscal year 2021 and make the delays permanent, effectively pushing debt into the future in perpetuity, according to the state’s mid-year budget report."

"The state has yet to release details on how it plans to close the remaining approximately $1.1 billion gap before the current fiscal year ends, other than saying it will enact cost-saving measures. Savings may include reductions to rates paid to providers and health plans, as well as disincentive payments, according to the budget office."

There are multiple reasons why the Medicaid expansion is not being expanded, but one glaring irony in Gov. Cooper's ultimatum for Medicaid expansion is the veto of the Medicaid transformation funding bill which would have provided more than $438 million for the transition to a managed care model for the state's Medicaid program. Medicaid transformation was a multi-year, bipartisan effort to lay the groundwork and develop the plans for a new system that would control the growth and costs of Medicaid and improve the quality of care. The governor hasn't really explained how or why he would expand Medicaid in our state when he is not willing to fix the existing broken system currently at place - one that is bad for doctors and bad for patients. It is my hope that the governor and Democrats in the legislature will give serious thought to what is best for our state and not continue the scheme for a policy that is known to be detrimental when implemented elsewhere. North Carolina does not need Medicaid expansion.

As always, please share your thoughts with me on these and other issues related to the state government by emailing me at ralph.hise@ncleg.net or calling me at 919-733-3460.

NC House District 118

Rep. Michele D. Presnell
Michele.Presnell@ncleg.net
919-733-5770

Session has adjourned to return on April 28 for the Short Session. Joint Interim Committees are now being appointed and a few will begin to meet next week or the coming weeks. Rep. Presnell was appointed to the JT Legislative Economic and Global Engagement Oversight Committee and as Vice-Chair on the JT Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee. These two committees are working on their schedules for upcoming meetings.
Legislation Addressing DOT Overspending

You may have heard that the North Carolina Department of Transportation projects slowed down or were delayed because of the department’s overspending by hundreds of millions of dollars. A report released by McKinsey & Company, as an international consulting firm, confirmed the overspending. Overspending on construction was one of two main problems found. In connection with construction overspending, the largest source of overspending was found by the consultants to be a result of poor control and performance by the department. Regarding maintenance overspending, which was found by the report to be the second significant cause, the report concluded that maintenance overspending came from the department’s poor management of its operations.

Due to the problems found by the report, the legislature passed a bill, signed by the Governor, providing additional funding so that the Department of Transportation could continue with halted and planned projects. However, included with the legislation were new accountability measures that will hopefully prevent similar DOT overspending in the future. Some of those provisions include:

- Requires DOT to deduct proportionately from any highway fund accounts where DOT’s storm expenses are higher than their budgeted projection (DOT has under-budgeted for disasters all decade)
- Requires DOT to ask federal disaster reimbursements as quickly as possible
- Requires more cash balance reporting, including a weekly cash worksheet similar to what the State Controller produces for all other state funds
- Requires the State Auditor to audit DOT

Hopefully, this legislation and the new accountability features will help DOT avoid continued overspending so that poor management and operations will not continue to negatively impact read work by DOT in North Carolina.

Senator Burr Applauds Department of Transportation’s Proposed Rulemaking of Service Animals on Flights

Yesterday, the Department of Transportation announced its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to amend the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) regulation of service animals and emotional support animals on aircraft.

Senator Richard Burr (R-NC), who led efforts to strengthen the standards for service animals on aircraft, welcomed the Department of Transportation’s announcement.

“When individuals are trying to bring any variety of animals on flights by fraudulently claiming disability needs, we have a problem,” said Senator Burr. “It isn’t fair to passengers, airlines, or those who do require properly trained service animals. It’s time we enact commonsense protections that regulate the use of these animals and streamline travel with such animals for everyone.”

Background:

On April 24, 2018, Senator Burr introduced legislation to better align the definition of a “service animal” under the Air Carriers Access Act (ACAA) with the definition under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Establishing a criminal penalty for making misrepresentations about service animals, and require federal agencies to establish a standard of service animal behavior training for animals on aircraft.

During consideration of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Act in October 2018, Senator Burr negotiated the inclusion of an amendment to require the FAA to establish rulemaking to define the term “service animal” for air transportation and develop minimum standards for service and emotional support animals carried on aircraft.

As a result of his successful negotiations, the Department of Transportation yesterday announced it is seeking public comment on its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on traveling by air with service animals. Specifically, the proposed rulemaking:

- Aligns the definition of a service animal with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) definition.
- It does not require airlines to recognize “emotional support animals” as “service animals.” Airlines would be permitted to treat “emotional support animals,” which do not have the proper training for qualified individuals with disabilities, as pets.
- It allows airlines to only transport dogs as service animals rather than accommodating miniature horses, peacocks, cats, rabbits, birds, and other service animals that airlines are currently required to transport.

North Carolina Senate District 46

I hope your New Year is off to a great start. I don’t know what your resolutions are this year, but I decided that I need to read the Bible more regularly, so I aim now 26 days into the chronological plan to read the Bible through in a year. And guess what, Lydia and the girls are joining in. I have already learned new insights from the books of Genesis and Job and look forward to many more throughout the year.

In legislative news, last week the General Assembly entered into a single-day session to attempt to get a couple of things accomplished. The first was to pass a bill that would add $2.4 million to a fund that provides college scholarships to the children of military combat veterans. The other items on the agenda involved attempting to override Governor Cooper’s veto of the teacher pay raise bill and the 2019-21 budget. I have written much here and on my Facebook page about the millions of dollars allocated for school renovations, parks and the Western School of Science and Math that are the budget that was vetoed by the Governor. Unfortunately, the Senate could not override the budgets veto, because NOT ONE Democrat Senator would vote across the aisle due to threats by the Governor. So, for now, a few important budget items that were passed by the General Assembly will continue to be unfunded.

In other news, judicial tyranny continues. You have probably heard about the egregious decision by an unbalanced federal judge to halt Voter ID. The Legislature has not been allowed by Judge Sigs to be a party to the case, so we urged Attorney General Stein to seek a stay of Judge Biggs’ order in time for the March primary. AG Stein says he intends to appeal but refuses to do so in time for the primary. It’s a travesty that the votes of two million North Carolinians to add the Voter ID requirement to our state constitution were tossed aside by one unelected judge. 34 other states have voter ID and our law was modeled after other state provisions that have been upheld by the US Supreme Court.

In other important news this week, January 22nd was the anniversary of Roe v Wade. I believe life begins at conception and is sacred from then until natural death. One of the recent issues that still saddens me is how the NC House has not been able to override Gov. Cooper’s veto of the Born Alive Survivors Protection Act. S359. Only three Democrats joined with Republicans to override the Governor’s veto when there were six that originally voted for the bill. Since 2011, the General Assembly has passed several common-sense measures to protect life and to discourage abortions, such as: implementing a 3-day waiting period, banning the sale of fetal body parts and regulating flirty clinics. More should be done but it appears unlikely with a devoted pro-abortion Governor in Raleigh.

It is a privilege to represent away, Burke, and Caldwell.

As always, if I can be of any assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

God Bless America

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

NC Senate District 46

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

www.brcnews.com

February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 33
**Glenwood Baptist Church**

**“Something to Think About”**

**How We Should Come to Jesus**

By Demoh Love

McDowell County

Mark 1:40 says, “And there came a leper to Jesus, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying to him, if you will, you can make me clean.” Notice several things about this man who came to Jesus. First of all, He Came Earnestly—v40a Verse 40 says that this man came beseeching Him. Do you see this man coming to Jesus for cleansing? He’s coming to Jesus beseeching Him. In other words, he comes to Jesus pleading with Him. There was nothing more important in this man’s life than receiving healing from his leprosy. He came to Jesus seeking healing from his physical ailment. He must have known that if he didn’t receive healing from his leprosy, he would face eternal separation from God in a place of torment called Hell. But notice also that; He Came Reversely—v40b in Mark we are told this man came kneeling. He is coming humbly before the Lord of glory. This is what moved Jesus into action. I cannot stress enough in this article the importance of coming to Jesus humbly and reverently. Jesus doesn’t stop this man from kneeling before Him, and He doesn’t stop this man from falling on his face before Him. If you really want to be blessed by Jesus, then show Jesus great honor. But notice also that, He Came to Believers—v40c.

I love what this diseased leper said to Jesus. He said, “If You will, You can make me clean.” This old boy truly believed that Jesus could do what no person could do, and that was to cleanse him from his leprosy. Notice also that; He Came Earnestly—v40a Notice this old boy doesn’t ask Jesus to heal him. He says, “If you will, You can make me clean.” Do you see what he’s confessing to Jesus? He’s confessing that he’s unclean. He’s not trying to hide his condition. He’s simply being honest about his condition. When we come to meet with Jesus in His house, we need to be honest before Him. We need to say, “Lord, I know I have sinned and I know I’m not right with this person or that person, and I know there are some things in my life and in my heart that should be there.” We need to just be honest with ourselves and with God because He already knows it all anyway. Now right here is how each of us should be coming to Jesus on an ongoing basis. We should be coming to Him earnestly—sincerely—believingly—honestly. If we could begin applying these four things in our worship of Almighty God, it would radically change the way we worship, and it would radically change the outcome of our worship services. In my humble opinion, that’s really something to think about!

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

---

**NC Baptist**

**Be Motivated by Joy**

By Josh Reed

In his posthumously published work Lessons to Malcolm, C.S. Lewis wrote, “Joy is the serious business of heaven.”

Joy is experienced in virtually countless ways. A child’s first memorable experience at the ocean. A senior adult’s conversation with a dear friend over tea. Laughing, singing, crying, and shrinking are all ways to express joy.

True joy transcends circumstances. It has a deep anchor and is not dependent upon temporal and fleeting feelings.

There are few things in this world that awaken joy like seeing someone cross from death to life after hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ. The apostle John tells us what it is behind communicating this good news: The joy of communion with the life of God.

In 1 John 1:1-4 the apostle opens by speaking of the life of God. It was “from the beginning,” meaning that it has existed since before the foundations of the earth.

True joy transcends circumstances and it is not dependent upon fleeting feelings.

John goes on to elaborate on this. They had heard of it with their very ears, they had looked upon it with their very eyes, they had handled it with their very hands, and they had known the life of God with their very eyes. How? Because God took on flesh and dwelt among us through the person of His Son, Jesus. This life, this eternal life, was made manifest and revealed to God’s people.

The result of this revelation is stunning. John writes with certainty that they have fellowship with this life through the use of the Greek word koinonia. Koinonia means a “sharing in or a participation with.” John makes the audacious claim that — because of the appearance of the person and works of Jesus — they share and partake in the very life of God that has existed for all eternity.

What does this life consist of? If we take the context seriously, it includes testify about, proclaiming and sharing this very life with one result in mind — that others would also join in this koinonia.

John then tells us that joy is complete when we give this life away. So, putting everything together, the inner life of God and the life revealed in Jesus is a life of self-giving love. Lewis’ claim, if taken into our hearts, should ignite an evangelistic revolution in the 21st-century church, the likes of which has not been seen since the first generation of disciples.

Are you ready to experience complete joy but unsure of how to begin the conversation? Visit scpc.org/adult-evangelism-and-discipleship for 2020 Gospel Conversations Training event dates and locations.

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

---

To the world you may be one person,
But to one person you may be the world.

Dr. Seuss

Become a Hospice Volunteer (828)-765-5677

Hospice and Palliative Care of the Blue Ridge, Inc.

www.brcnews.com
Obedient Heart Fellowship

Context
By Jim Haskins
McDowell County

Every believer should learn to “rigidly divide the Word of truth.” Technical Bible study is known as “hermeneutics.” A foundational concept of hermeneutics is that one must know the context of a scripture passage before they can correctly understand it. In the biblical study of hermeneutics, much of what Moses focused on Jesus’ humanity and servanthood, but I recently discovered that one Upper Room event has a direct antecedent in the 29th chapter of Exodus. That chapter is part of a discourse that leads Moses step by step to Jesus receiving instruction. Part of that instruction includes the process Moses will use to dedicate the Tabernacle and the new priesthood.

Moses is given specific animals to sacrifice in the dedication ceremony. Sacrifices have been part of mankind’s relationship with God since Adam and Eve. Our sin makes fellowship with God impossible except our Holy Creator cannot abide the presence of sin. For us to be in God’s presence, we have to undergo something called regeneration. Blood sacrifice is part of that process. Exodus 29 presents a new winnowing on regeneration. For the first time, God will also require ritual washing. Moses was more than just the highest leader of Israel. He literally stood before the Most High God, Paul says all mankind. And yet, Moses was instructed by God to act as a sort of buffer to his brothers and four nephews. He was to wash them in front of the assembled nation. It is impossible for us to comprehend how shocking this was.

While studying that ancient cultural prohibition against a man washing someone of lesser rank, I realized that I was already familiar with another similar prohibition. I had just done my part of the upper room experience as the consecration ceremony for a new, spiritual priesthood. Followers of Jesus are part of the priesthood of all believers. He is our High Priest in the place of Melchizedek, but our priesthood had a beginning as did the Levitical Priesthood. The Twelve who would become Apostles were last beginning. Jesus washing the legs was part of the cleaning:

1 Peter 2:2 says, “You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” As priests, we have been granted, through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus, direct access to God Almighty. According to Romans 12:1, part of our job is to offer our own bodies as “living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God.” The only way to accomplish that is by obeying God’s instructions for righteous living.

In the upper room, on the eve of Jesus’ sacrifice, I doubt that His bewildered disciples made the connection between what they’d heard and what Moses did 1200 years earlier. Moses consecrated Aaron and his sons as the first priesthood of Israel by washing them with water was a type and shadow of Jesus washing the Apostles’ feet.

We cannot understand the so-called “New Testament” without knowing that part of Jesus’ mission was to offer our own bodies as “living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God.” We need to read all of it. The books of Matthew through Revelation are holy and marvelous, but we will never understand them until we place them in the context of God’s full story. That story starts with, “In the beginning, God created...”

Jim & Beverly Hutchins are members of Obedient Heart Fellowship.

GriefShare

Valentine Banquet
By Carolyn Dott
Mitchell County

It’s that time of year again. Store aisles are filled with pink and red merchandise reminding us of the next celebration right on the heels of Christmas–valentines’ Day. Valentines are filled with chocolates and other delicious candy treats, along with boxes of valentines for children to exchange at school parties, while the greeting card section features everything from 3D pop-up cards to musical cards, all designed to express love.

This holiday is especially difficult for the widowed person because it focuses on a relationship that no longer exists. Too often they are forgotten as others around them enjoy gift-giving, deliveries from florists, cards in the mail and specially prepared dinners. The widow or widower is no longer the giver or the recipient of these tokens of love unless they have entered a new relationship.

Western Carolina Church is preparing for our 2nd Valentine Day Banquet those who have lost a spouse. Morgan Still and Kelly Lewis have a love for the widowed person, especially the women. They nurtured this event last year which was well-received by those who attended. Beautifully designed invitations were mailed to each person. Morgan, Kelly and their husbands invited the tabled with tablecloths, flowers and candles, china, glassware and cutlery-no paper or plastic for the menu. The catered meal was served to everyone rather than buffet style. A meatless banquet will be set for guests to bring a photograph of their deceased spouse. Each guest received a gift, a flower, and chocolate to take home.

More of the same is planned this year. There is no charge for the event. However, registration is required. The banquet is planned for Valentine’s Day, Friday, February 14th at the church. It begins at 5:30 with the meal. Please bring a photograph of the deceased loved one for the memorial table.

The event will also introduce the GriefShare ministry of Western Carolina Church to attendees with a guest speaker. Samples materials will be available to guests for viewing. A GriefShare Loss of a Spouse seminar is planned for Thursday, February 21st at 6:00 at Western Carolina Church. This is a single event designed to help widows and widowers who are finding their way through grief and discovering their new normal. Participants will take home a book}"width="651" height="651" src="https://images.example.com/griefshare-ministry.jpg" alt="GriefShare Ministry Logo" class="alignleft" /&gt;

In addition, the 12-week spring cycle of GriefShare is scheduled to begin Thursday, March 5th at 6:00 pm. This is a weekly meeting that covers many different topics associated with grief and loss in all relationships. The public is invited to attend, and those who have not lost someone to death might consider attending to learn how to minister to those who are in grief. For both Loss of a Spouse and GriefShare meetings, a light meal is provided. Childcare is available with advance notice. Both events meet in the Wing, and there is no charge for either event. For more information or to register for the Valentine Day Banquet or any GriefShare event, please contact Carolyn Dott at 828-467-1333 or 828-765-4633.

Carolyn Dott makes her home in Lincolnton 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 Spencer, NC.
Spiritual Health

Why Do I Feel Lousy?
By Miguel Cruz
Danny County

Why do I feel lousy, and my lab tests are normal? The doctor’s office told me all my lab tests are normal! This is a statement that I hear often, and it usually makes me sad. My next question is, did you review a copy of the test with someone? And of course, the answer is no. When I requested a copy of the lab results, usually I see one of two scenarios, the first and saddest is that there were indeed abnormal lab tests on the report, but the staff or the doctor did not think them important enough to tell the patient about it or it just was not relevant to their current symptoms. The second scenario is that the labs were “normal” according to the laboratory scales, but not necessarily “healthy.” Having lab values just a little high or low can certainly disrupt our health and how we feel. I would like to discuss this at length.

The first thing that is important to understand about most laboratory testing is that “normal” is nothing more than an “average” of everyone who has been to the lab in the past year. There are two problems with this; the first is that when you consider that most of the people having lab tests have some sort of problem going on, then we are being compared to a population of people who are not necessarily healthy.

The second problem is that most labs are graded as pass or fail. Passing means, you fell within the average, failing means you were outside the average, either high or low. Most doctors only look at what was outside the average or the “failing” tests without any regard for the passing tests and if they were close to being high or low.

There is a relatively new category of health care termed “functional medicine or integrative medicine” which can include most branches of health care providers that take a different look at things. When it comes to laboratory values, functional medicine providers use a scale that is more geared to known “healthy” values instead of just an average. The problem arises when people fall into the gray area between the normal lab values and functional healthy values. It may appear as a normal on the lab report but maybe just off enough to be causing problems for the individual.

Another area of concern is that insurance is not allowing doctors to order adequate labs. The average labs ordered on routine yearly exams are hardly enough to catch anything but the most obvious problems. So, if you are relying on your insurance to cover all treatments and tests to keep you healthy, I am afraid you may be disappointed in the end. You may need to be ready to have some additional testing that you will need to pay for yourself.

In our office, most if not all the labs I review from other clinics have either an abnormal that was not discussed with the patient or functionally unhealthy markers that were disregarded. In most cases when these issues were dealt with, the patient was able to tell a great difference in their health.

This information is not meant to be medical advice for any conditions. It is meant to stimulate conversation between you and your health care provider. They may not agree with everything I am saying and that is OK. I would encourage the reader to take responsibility for their health and research as much as possible from reputable sources.

Questions may be addressed to me at danielleperez@gmail.com

Dr. Miguel Cruz is in practice along with his wife of 35 years, Leisa Cruz who is a certified Integrative Nutritionist. They own Cruz Life Center in Bunnsville 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. Sometimes 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.

Dr. Dobson's Solid Answers

Persistent Prayer
By James Dobson

If a commitment to Christ is the foundation for a successful marriage, then daily prayer together is the steady, brick-by-brick construction that provides a safe haven for genuine intimacy.

It was certainly true for my parents. James Dobson Sr. was a pastor and evangelist for most of his life. He often spent hours-long sessions on his knees, talking with God and praying for his ministry and those he loved. He was known in the small Texas town where I spent my preschool years as “the man with no leather on the toes of his shoes.” He spent so much time on his knees that he wore out the toes before he did the soles!

But Dad did not only pray alone. My mother, his beloved wife, whom he called Myrt, regularly joined him to pray in times of crisis, during life’s routine periods, and for occasional help and guidance in dealing with a combination of names called Jim’s. Their prayer times together must have made a deep impression on me from my earliest days, for I was told that at just one year of age I attempted to pray with them. I hadn’t yet learned to talk, so I tried to imitate the sounds they were making as they communed with God.

I have no doubt that my parents’ unwavering love for Jesus Christ, renewed by daily conversation with Him, in turn, centered our deepest affection and respect for each other. Their prayer-life was the glue that preserved a loving forty-three-year union that lasted until the moment my father left this earth in 1977.

I have tried to follow that example in my own home. The countless times that Shirley and I have bowed before God to offer words of assistance, petitions for assistance, and expressions of love have strengthened our relationship, too, in ways that can never be measured. Prayer has been the stabilizing influence for our life together.

Of course, some people use prayer the way they use their horoscopes, attempting to manipulate an untamed “higher power.” One of my friends recently admits that he utters a prayer each morning on the way to work when he passes the doughnut shop. He knows it is useless to eat the prissy pastries, but he loves them dearly. Therefore, he asks the Lord for permission to indulge himself each day. He says, “If it is Your will that I have a doughnut this morning, let there be a parking space available as I circle the block.” I have seen two cars find his space; he circled the block and prays again.

Shirley and I have taken our prayer life a bit more seriously. In good times, in hard times, in moments of joy, and in periods of pain, we have shared this wonderful privilege of talking directly to our heavenly Father. What a concept!

No appointment is needed to enter His presence. We don’t have to go through His subordinates or bribe His secretaries. He is simply there, whenever we bow before Him. Some of the highlights of my life have occurred in these quiet sessions with the Lord.

Do not misunderstand—prayer, when you are alone, with a friend, in a Bible study, or in church, is extremely important and valued just as much by our Father. But there is something special about prayer between husband, wife, and God that can’t be found elsewhere. It creates a spiritual connection, accountability, and a holy bond that brings strength and stability to the relationship. It can even allow you to communicate about sensitive issues that might otherwise never come out—issues that can be discussed and prayed over in a spirit of humility and purity of motive.

There is something special about prayer between husband, wife, and God. Prayer of this kind can revitalize a marriage. In 1981, after years of discouragement and a vague sense of spiritual unrest, Christian recording artist Steve Cropper poured out his heart to the Lord in prayer and experienced a spiritual renewal. Just a few weeks later, his wife, Marijane, did the same thing. For the first time in their marriage, the Crosppers began talking to God, together, on a regular basis.

“I thought we had a good marriage before because we didn’t fight, we were compatible, we enjoyed being together,” Steve says. “But after our renewal, suddenly we were communicating at the deepest level. There was a bond of God’s Spirit holding us together.” Their relationship became a spiritual one, and it just flourished.

For the Greens, the key to unlocking these blessings was a persistent prayer life.

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

3/10 mile North of Walmart

Image of a storage advertisement for DR Mini Storage in Spruce Pine, NC.

www.rrcnews.com
February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 36
January is School Board Appreciation Month, and the New Dimensions Charter School wants to say, “thank you” to all our board members who do so much for our school. New Dimensions is represented by eleven dedicated board members who devote countless hours to make sure our students are served in the best way possible.

Chair Regina Rhodes, Vice-Chair Kristen Rodriguez, Secretary Shannon Will, Treasurer David Martin, Pamela Harrison, Tracey Jones, Doris Evans, Jamie Smith Case, Karen Reid, Chris Roem, and Brad Hargreaves are committed to the students of New Dimensions, developing policies and making decisions that help shape the future of our school. Our school board oversees more than 345 students, 45 employees, and an annual budget of over $3,000,000.

I am proud to work with our board, and I congratulate them on their excellent leadership and vision for the students of New Dimensions.

I also wanted to make our school community aware of the new anonymous tip line, Say Something, that our middle school students and staff currently have available to them. New Dimensions joins schools around the state in the first roll-out of this program. Say Something is a school safety program for students – created by Sandy Hook Promise – that enables students to anonymously report tips about school safety along with a phone call. The tips will be received by school administrators and law enforcement, who will respond appropriately based on the type of tip.

We want to be sure our students have a voice when it comes to feeling safe at school, and that’s why we want to be part of this promise. This app gives students the ability to remain anonymous while reporting instances of bullying or fighting involving themselves or others, or if they’ve seen a weapon at school, with assurances that their tip will be seen and investigated. The Say Something mobile app allows users (who can include students, teachers, and parents) to provide tips in categories that include bullying, illegal drug use, alcohol use, fighting, weapons, and a report category for other types of tips. Students can submit digital photos or videos along with text information from their cell phones directly to the school’s administrative team and school resource officer. The app allows students, if they choose, to bookmark a tip so that they can follow-up on the status of their tip, or anonymously text back and forth with administrators to provide additional information. Additionally, if a student has a suicidal or mental health concern, they can reach out to trained professionals by using the app. The app is available for download from the Android Marketplace and the Apple App Store.

The Center for Safer Schools, created in March 2013 as part of N.C. Department of Public Safety, worked with Sandy Hook Promise in response to a concern noted by students, teachers, administrators and law enforcement during community forums. The need for a standardized method for reporting information about school safety concerns, along with an anonymous reporting tool could help prevent school shootings and other safety concerns on school campuses.

Why it exists
Over 160,000 school children miss school each day in the United States out of fear of being bullied. Being able to report their fears is paramount in reducing these instances. 90 percent of students say they would use an anonymous reporting tool if they had one available. This is also important because over 80 percent of school shooters tell someone before they act. An anonymous reporting tool could help prevent school shootings. This is the safety issue. New Dimensions is pleased to announce its partnership with the City of Morganton to place a school resource officer at our school. Starting on Wednesday, January 1, Office Casey Knaard began the New Dimensions SRO. Our students, staff, parents, and visitors are in very capable hands. New Dimensions is excited to partner with A Caring Alternative to provide School-Based Therapy for our students and families.

New Dimensions is the process of implementing security cameras throughout our buildings and grounds. These cameras will make an already safe school even safer.

Open enrollment at New Dimensions begins on Monday, January 6 and ends on Monday, April 6 at 4 p.m. Applications for the upcoming year will be posted on our website and will be available at the school beginning on January 6. Education Night (including a tour of New Dimensions) will be held on Thursday, March 5 from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. A special open house is planned for rising sixth grades on Thursday, February 27 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. If these dates are not convenient, the staff of New Dimensions is more than happy to provide individual tours. Just give us a call (828-437-5753) or email us at durren@ncschool.org to schedule a tour.

At the end of the enrollment period, it will be determined if there are more applicants for a particular grade than the number of available spaces for that grade level, all students who have applied will be placed on the waitlist. If the number of applicants for a particular grade does not exceed the number of available spaces for that grade level, all students who have applied will have priority placement on the waitlist. The lottery will not carry over into the next school year.

The support of our community and the shared desire to keep our students safe is greatly appreciated.

David Burleson is the Director of the New Dimensions Charter School in Burke County.
February - Ment for Love
By Terry Cheek
McDowell County

February is a month well known for one thing, LOVE. I’m thinking of Valentine’s Day! We set aside February 14th every year to recognize our love and affection for husbands and wives. I realize there is no Valentine’s Day in the Bible, but isn’t it a reminder of God’s word that you know every day should be Valentine’s Day for the husband and wife in Jesus Christ.

I write specifically to husbands and wives because God ordained this relationship from creation. From Adam and Eve and throughout God’s Word we find the relationship of a man and woman at husband and wife equally valued as God’s plan for the family and procession.

It is heartbreaking to see what man has done to marriage and human sexuality. Consider Sodom and Gomorrah, the immoral lifestyle recorded there has taken a dark path concerning love and sexuality. Today man tries to justify many things, same-sex relationships, couples living together outside of marriage, adultery, pornography, bisexuality and even pedophilia as legitimate expressions of love. God calls these the same as sin. For the Christian marriage, Valentine’s Day is not about giving to each other, but it is a celebration of a godly relationship being displayed in many ways through a heart of love. There is no genuine love apart from the love of God’s example. He calls a man and woman into a relationship as husband and wife. For example, in Ephesians 5:22-23 Paul uses marriage as an illustration for the Spirit’s relationship with Jesus Christ.

I want to take this time to honor marriage. I want to not just marry, but marital. There is a difference. In Deuteronomy, God told Israel not to marry the neighboring people. Not because of race, but because of idolatry. The neighboring people did not know the God of Israel, they preferred to worship false gods and images made by their hands. God did not want the relationship of His people. From 2 Corinthians 6:14-16, “Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?…” This passage goes much deeper than marriage, it relates to every aspect of the believer’s life. Yet, it does include marriage. This is written to the believer. We are responsible for how we approach all relationships, including marriage.

Like many pastors, I counsel. Too often this counseling involves marriages. I have heard too many times that marriage and wives tell me if they only knew the other one was not saved. Before I marry anyone, I specifically find if both are saved, as they are torn. This is the foundation of a godly marriage. I will not marry a couple unless both have a testimony of being saved, and both have a home church to reference back too. I counsel singles to know the spiritual condition of the person you are dating. Just claiming they are a Christian isn’t enough. There are too many loose definitions of a Christian roaming around today. Ask pointed questions, where do they go to church, how long have they been going there, what work are they involved in, what is the pastor’s name, visit with them and listen to the conversations with others. If they have a good reputation or not, the conversation will tell you quickly. I’m not trying to break up dating couples. I’m trying to save future marriages.

A man or woman with a hurtful heart will tell you anything you want to hear so they may fulfill their lunacy. It may be sex, money, power, influence or even a quick escape from an unwieldy home life. Whatever the reason, it isn’t what marriage is, it’s not one through the salvation of husband and wife, but it has little chance of surviving. If the devil helps make it, he will destroy it. It is always God’s desire for marriage to be successful. A Christian should never give up on their marriage, the Christians can be the testimony God uses to witness the world of marriage that doesn’t mean a Christian must live in dangerous conditions, separations and divorces are two different things.

A godly marriage is a beautiful marriage. A man and woman both born again by grace and through faith in Christ alone. Christ is the foundation of their lives and the foundation of their marriage. Christian marriages have problems, too, all marriages do. There are faults and failures, even sin from temptation. However, where Christ reigns there is HOPE! Divorce will not be mentioned in the Christian marriage, why? Because God has a foundation that will not crumble and both husband and wife will want to fix it. If you and your spouse are both born again praise God for this, many times today people say that. Enjoy Valentine’s Day as your special day of the year to worship God for His creation of marriage. Remember to cherish each other as Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 “Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence, and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The husband hath not power of his own body, but the husband; and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one another, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.”

Go to Church, commit yourself and your marriage to the Lord. Love one another as Christ has loved the church. Happy Valentine’s Day!!!

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

Check out our Website-www.brnews.com
And find us on Facebook

www.brnews.com
February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 39
Denison Forum

The Death of Qassem Soleimani:
What it means, What comes next, and How Christians Can Respond

By Jan Denison

The commander of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps was killed early Friday in a drone strike at Baghdad International Airport authorized by President Trump. As American MQ-9 Reaper drone fired missiles into a convoy leaving the airport, killing Gen. Qassem Soleimani and several officials from Iran’s militia-backed by Tehran. US Secretary of Defense Mark Esper explained the action: "General Soleimani was actively developing plans to attack American diplomats and service members in Iraq and throughout the region. General Soleimani and his Quds force were responsible for the deaths of hundreds of American and coalition service members and the wounding of dozens more."

"He had orchestrated attacks on coalition bases in Iraq over the last several months— including the attack on December 27th—causing the deaths and wounding of additional American and Iraqi personnel. General Soleimani also approved the attack on the US Embassy in Baghdad that took place this week."

Who was Qassem Soleimani?

Qassem Soleimani was an Iranian Major General in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Since 1995, he commanded the Quds force responsible for extraterritorial military and clandestine operations.

Secretaries of State Mike Pompeo and Rex Tillerson described Soleimani as "the most dangerous terrorist in the world" and US officials have said he was behind attacks on American targets in Iraq and Syria. Soleimani had been on the FBI's list of wanted terrorists since 2011. He was named a "global terrorist" by the US government in 2007.

A BBC analyst notes that Soleimani was seen as "the mastermind behind Iran's military ambitions in the Middle East, and the country's key foreign minister when it came to matters of war and peace."

Soleimani was widely considered a principal architect of President Saeed Khamenei's strategy in Iraq and Syria, using troops, advisors, and support for Shia militias and political groups to advance Iranian interests in the region.

According to CNN, the significance of Soleimani's death "cannot be overstated.

As an analyst for the Mossad, he was the 'person who made the decision'." His death will have far-reaching implications for Middle East politics and international relations.

What happens next?

The New York Times calls Soleimani's death "a startling blow for Iran at a time of sweeping geopolitical conflict" and "a serious blow to Mr. Trump's growing confrontation with Tehran."

The Washington Examiner describes Soleimani's death as "a monumental event and great news for the United States and the countless victims of his actions that have unleashed death and destruction throughout the Middle East."

The Associated Press notes that Soleimani's death marks a significant blow to Iran's military capabilities and will have implications for regional stability and international relations.

The killing of Soleimani could have far-reaching implications for the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and could potentially lead to increased tensions between Iran and the United States and its allies. It remains to be seen how other countries in the region will react to this development and what steps they might take in response.

Pause...and Consider

Tumbling over Myself

By Ken and Jan Meece

Avery County

My entrance was less than graceful. In fact, it was downright clumsy. Tripping while trying to straighten out my rumpled clothes, I pressed on without a second thought. I moved from side to side with ungainly, stumbling footsteps. I may have been bold in my approach, but I was also irreverent and expectant in an entitled sort of way.

These maps flooding through my mind reminded me of a child rushing in where angels fear to tread. I wasn’t unselfish, just partly convinced. So, I picked up and began again.

This time I first recognized who I would be approaching. My stride was not clumsy and prissy, rather it was like an expert—recollect, gust—and yet totally confident.

Here I was welcomed with open arms. Here I belonged always. Here I could be myself.

But my approach revealed my heart, and I wanted it to be genuine—not 나무으로 무기며.

This picture that I have tried to sketch with words actually went through my mind one morning while praying. First, I must say, it was really convicting as our ladies Sunday school class had been considering how important it is to set aside time in God’s presence, but to consider Whom we would be talking.

This is the King of kings. The Lord of lords. This is the Savior who leads me into the presence of God the Father who sees me as a righteous because of my faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

As I traveled in that morning words spilling out of me. I saw the picture above play out in my mind…distracting me from my prayer. There was God seated on His throne eagerly awaiting me…yet, wondering at my pious, disrespectful behavior. And, so, the Holy Spirit took over convincing me by this mental picture.

That’s when I backed up. I asked forgiveness and started over.

As I recouped God’s faithfulness. His goodness, mercy, and grace…my soul realized that I could approach Him as He deserved and yet with quiet confidence at His amenable approachability.

No wonder Jesus taught His disciples to pray in a certain way. Not so much to repeat the prayer by rote, but to realize that His name is to be bountiful on our lips and to acknowledge, as He. As we acknowledge our transgressions, His provocativeness, and sovereignty.

The NLT version of the Lord’s prayer in Matthew 6:9 it says it this way: “Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. Consequently, as I gracefully entered into His presence, joy and assurance filled my soul. Selah

Living Above the Clouds

Observe the ever-moving clouds.

Their formations don’t say the same for long. Clinging to commonplace cloudy days is to ride a non-supportive vapor. But to let God’s joy lift us above the clouds is to look down upon them from His perspective—living above the clouds.

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways; And my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Isaiah 55:8 & 9, NKJV


www.brusenews.com

February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 40
"The Grandfather Challenge"

Avery, Mitchell and Yancey County

The Jason Project's Hiking Program for At-Risk: Youth Needs: Alliance with Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey County Churches!

If your church congregation includes youth members from ages 14 to 17 who are suffering from mental or addiction problems or who are otherwise at-risk because they are facing life struggles through no fault of their own, we would invite you to explore our two free programs, the "Grandfather Challenge" and the "Appalachian Trailblazers." Through these programs, we try to instill in these young people that God loves them and will help them overcome the unique challenges in their lives.

Youth Leadership, Mentoring, & Wilderness Adventures for At-Risk Youth:

A young man who was struggling with mental illness throughout his middle years and young adult life, Jason Matthew Nipper found peace and serenity as he and his parents hiked the beautiful, challenging trails in the mountains of Western North Carolina. Jason passed away in 2014, and his parents, James & Cheryl Nipper, formed a nonprofit entity called The Jason Project, Inc., and launched "The Grandfather Challenge" program in 2015 in honor of their beloved son. They then organized the "Appalachian Trailblazers" program in 2019. James and Cheryl believe that this was a perfect way to fulfill Jason's desire to help others and to create a legacy for their son and provide meaning to his life. Although the Jason Project programs serve at-risk kids suffering from mental problems and/or drug addictions, it also assists middle and high school youth who are struggling with personal adversities, including family, school, or other personal problems or challenges beyond their control. They hope that Jason's intense love for nature and hiking, coupled with his desire to help others, will live on through his students who participate in this unique wilderness hiking, adventure, leadership, and mentoring programs. At no cost to the participants, The Jason Project provides professional hiking leaders, backpacks, hiking boots, raincoats, and all other costs associated with these programs, except for transportation to and from the hike trailheads. At the end of these outdoor adventure programs, the students' accomplishments are recognized at a special Awards Dinner, at which each participant is given a special Certificate of Completion and other recognition.

The "Flagship" Program - The "Grandfather Challenge"

The "Flagship" program - "The Grandfather Challenge," consisting of four major weekly hikes along the scenic trails of the Grandfather Mountain in Linville, NC. The underlying goal of "The Grandfather Challenge" program is to use the adventure of mountain hiking and climbing, coupled with the leadership skills of experienced mentors and hike leaders, to teach at-risk kids that through perseverance and commitment, they can overcome their unique challenges in life. Now in its fourth year, this program is now serving middle and high school students in Avery, Caldwell, Catawba, Gaston, and Lincoln counties, and we now wish to expand into Mitchell and Yancey counties this upcoming summer. During these challenging hikes, our hike leaders guide each student a leadership "role" to play during each hike, and provide opportunities for discussions centered around leadership, teamwork, and overcoming personal challenges.

The "Appalachian Trailblazers"

The "Appalachian Trailblazers" program centers around a two-day, 11-mile hike along the Appalachian Trail, and was recently created as a supplement to "The Grandfather Challenge." This wilderness adventure focuses on teaching at-risk youth how to gain more self-confidence and become more successful by learning the values and methods of personal goal setting and learning to become leaders in their churches and schools. This program centers around casual discussions about personal goal setting and developing the leadership potential of each student. Leadership roles are assigned, and the values of teamwork are taught and demonstrated. Students are taught that there are good people in life who will always "walk" for you if you miss goals. These kids need goals and places to go and places to want to go, and they too can return to their churches and schools and be leaders or "trailblazers" within their own communities.

Impact on At-Risk Students:

Teenagers received from students, teachers, and counselors validated the effectiveness of these exciting programs. A 15-year-old student who suffers from autism and struggles in life told his counselor at the end of the first hike, "It was the best day of my life!"

A teenage girl who suffers from anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem told her counselor, "I have never thought of myself as a leader. I don't want to ever forget this feeling."

A high school student that attends a special school for Exceptional Children told the Nippers a year after he completed the program, "I am not as angry as I used to be. I am a better person."

The above statements are real and reflect the impact that this program has on at-risk kids, who need encouragement, leadership, improved self-esteem, and confidence, and recognition from adults who truly care about them and their futures. Such is the essence of The Jason Project and "The Grandfather Challenge."

Seeking Summer Participation Of Local Area Churches:

Because of the success and popularity of our programs, we have more middle and high schools asking to participate in our programs than we can accommodate. However, we have a ball in our activities during the summer months that the students are out of school. Beginning this coming summer, we hope to sign up with several churches from Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey counties and serve these young, at-risk teenage church members by offering these exciting wilderness leadership programs. Once again, there are no costs to the students, families, or churches, except for transportation to and from the trailheads.

Online Articles and Contact Information:

For additional information on these two programs, please see the article links below. To contact us directly, please call James or Cheryl Nipper at (828) 765-6561 or (304) 354-7178, or email us at james@jamesnipper.com, and we would be happy to send you more details.

www.mynuri.com/AppalachianTrailblazers

YOU CONSIDER FOSTERING A CHILD IN YOUR HOME?

MCPHILLIAN COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES NEEDS QUALITY FOSTER HOMES TO KEEP OUR CHILDREN IN OUR COUNTY.

IF INTERESTED PLEASE ATTEND AN INFORMATION MEETING AT MCHILLS COUNTY DS

MEETINGS TAKE PLACE EVERY SECOND MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH, WITH THE NEXT MEETING BEING ON FEBRUARY 16, 2020

FROM 5:30 pm TO 7:30 pm

www.bronews.com/February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 41
Burke County Public Schools

Student, Teacher Duo Start Adult English Second Language (ESL) Class
By Jonelle Boback
Burke County

Chasity Taylor, an ESL teacher at Hillcrest Elementary School, and Lake Elliott, a janitor at East Burke High School, have started teaching an English-as-a-second-language class for those wanting to learn the English language. On Tuesday and Thursday mornings, approximately a dozen parents of Hillcrest Elementary School students drop off their children for school and become students themselves. In the class, they work through a workbook, create flashcards and start conversations with each other to learn the English language.

Elliott tested out of a Spanish class at Western Piedmont Community College and volunteered to help Taylor out during her free morning period. He has a passion for learning and teaching different languages.

Taylor said, "About a year ago, my mother was talking to me about learning Spanish, and I picked it up quickly. I was conversational in Spanish within one year, and I am now on my third language in Russian. My mother has always had a passion for the Spanish-speaking population and it translated over to me."

Taylor hopes that not only do the parents learn the English language but are able to form a community within the school and feel comfortable with teachers and administrators.

Superintendent Dr. Larry Pumon said, "The effort shown here by Mrs. Taylor and Lake represents how important it is to serve all of our students and form a relationship with all of our parents, even when a language barrier exists. I also applaud these parents for being willing to learn something new that will not only help them but also their children for generations to come. We have a great English as a second language program in our schools. It is important to us at Burke County Public Schools to break down language barriers and create a bridge to positive community interactions. This class is one of many ways we are making that happen."

Get in Touch
Our Team of Professionals Are Standing By to Help

1307 E. Main St.
Vaidese, NC 28690
Phone: (828) 874-0411
Fax: (828) 874-5390
Business Hours
Mon-Sun: 9am – 5pm
24 Hour Availability

36 Chevrolet Boulevard • Spruce Pine, NC
SALES: 828-765-1234
SERVICE: 828-592-2636
www.sprucepinechevy.com
Let Patience Solve Your Problems
By Joyce Meyer

For more than 40 years now, I’ve been studying God’s Word and growing in my faith in Christ. Throughout these years, God has changed me so much! I’ve become peaceful and stable in my emotions most of the time, and I’ve learned how to behave in the same way when things are going well and when they aren’t so good.

The journey hasn’t been easy, and it’s taken time. But developing faith and patience in the process has more than been worth it.

As believers in Christ, we walk by faith, not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). This means we’re not in the face of a world that can feel or how our circumstances appear to be but according to the truth of God’s Word.

2 Corinthians 5:20 (AMP) says we are Christ’s representatives to the world, showing others who God is through the way we live. We need to get out in the world and behave like Jesus, remaining peaceful and stable in good times and bad, patient and walking by faith.

Waiting is Inevitable

The Bible tells us there are times we’re going to have to wait on God. Being patient is not just waiting on God but waiting in faith with a good attitude for God to do what only He can do in you. It’s trusting that God will take care of you in His time and His way because He loves you and He always has your best interest at heart.

In this verse, we see that patience is a fruit of the Spirit that grows under trial (James 1:3-4). People who know this don’t like to pray for patience because they know they’re going to get trouble. But it’s so much better to have patience and patiently wait on God with peace and joy than to be anxious, upset, and confused when life doesn’t make sense or you’re not getting your way.

The Key to Inheritance

Hebrews 6:12 (NIV) says, “We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.” This verse shows us that we do not inherit the promises of God just because we have faith.

We also must have patience.

Another word for patience is longsuffering. Longsuffering means you’re going to have to go through difficult things to grow in your faith. I’ve discovered through my own journey that the sooner you embrace them and let God do the work in you that He wants to do through them, the sooner you’ll get to the other side of them.

I really want to encourage you to do this. Don’t fight the inevitable or you’ll just be miserable.

Be Like the Farmer

James 5:7 (NIV) says, “Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains.” It takes a lot of faith and patience to be a farmer. You have to plant your seed and then you wait... and wait... and wait. You wait for the sun and rain, and for the right season to harvest your crop.

In the same way, we can plant our “seeds” of faith by choosing to trust God and His Word above anything else. We release our faith by believing He will do what He says He will do, waiting with the confident expectation that it will happen at the right time and in the right way.

We are waiting. Patience is being busy being good to others, helping people in need as we have the opportunity to do so. Psalm 37:3 (NIV) says to “trust in the Lord and do good...” Nothing proves our faith in God like waiting for His timing with a good attitude, so let’s focus on letting Him bless others through us.

Complete in Christ

Ecclesiastes 7:8 (NIV) says, “The end of a matter is better than its beginning, and patience is better than pride.” This is basically saying that the patient man waits on God, but the proud man tries to make something happen himself.

When we try to make things happen in our own effort, we just end up frustrat ed. We don’t have the wisdom and the power of God at our disposal. Instead of trying to make life go the way you want it to, entrust yourself to God and wait by faith, trusting Him to work things out.

James 1:4 (NKJV) says to “let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” We must be patient and it didn’t matter to you when God did what needs to be done in your life. Think about how it would free you from the stress of trying to control everything (which you can’t do anyway). And how you can overcome desires that drive you crazy because you can’t get what you want all the time.

Once I learned to pray for God to work in my heart, helping me to grow in faith and patience. Let Him transform your life so you live in peace with joy, and experience God’s promises for you!

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

Carriers of Hope to the Lost
By Rev. John B. Sorensen

Many people live without hope. They’ve been hurt. They feel forgotten, unloved. They feel that the world has failed them and their children. The sad thing is, they truly believe that nothing will ever change.

As Christians, we often face this when we listen to the stories of other Christians who have been hurt. It’s as though we are being reminded of our own experiences.

We are the carriers of the hope that Jesus gives to those who accept it. We are the ones who share the good news and the love of God.

Through Christ, we have life. We have a purpose and a reason for being. That hope anchors our soul, arm and secure (Hebrews 6:19). The circumstances in our lives may not change, but we have the hope of eternity with Jesus in heaven. That changes our outlook on everything.

So, if we have what the world desires so much, then why do we not share it?

Many Christians are afraid, or they don’t want to offend others. But consider this: what if the person who told you about this hope never had the courage to speak? Where would you be today if you never had the chance to receive it? The truth is, every day, people around the world die without ever even hearing or understanding that they could have this hope.

The bottom line is that we, as Christians, have been entrusted to carry hope to the lost. When we share our faith with others, we are not showing our religion down someone’s throat. We are sharing healing, forgiveness, love, and ultimately hope. All these things are found in Jesus Christ.

So, are you a carrier of hope? Isaiah 52:7 says, “How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation...” When we share the Gospel, we bring that good news. We share that peace. And we point the way to salvation.

Our faith is not about religion. It’s about sharing the opportunity to have a relationship with God. Most people don’t realize it’s the God of the universe who seeks us out. He pursues us. He wants that personal relationship. And when many of them grasp that truth, they run to Him.

If you want to be that carrier and take hope into a world that desperately needs some good news—some hope, start where you are. Pray for opportunities to share your story of hope. Then, be brave. Take a leap of faith and share that story. God just may use you to change someone’s life for eternity.

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 30 years. For more info and resources, visit evangelismexplosion.org.
Dave Says

By Dave Ramsey

Keep your dignity, and work your way out

Dear Dave,

My wife and I will both turn 30 next month. We have two young children, and we make a little over $55,000 combined. The problem is we have about $70,000 in debt. Some of it is credit card debt, but nearly $50,000 is in two car loans. Her mom and dad have offered to let us move in with them, so we can save up money and start getting a better handle on our finances, but we’re not sure how we feel about this. What’s your advice? Justin

Dear Justin,

You’ve got a ridiculous amount of money wrapped up in those cars. I’d sell the stupid things, get into a couple of little beaters, and start living on a budget and paying down debt.

In your situation, the only scenario where I’d ever consider taking the in-laws up on their offer is where the stay is for a very short, agreed-upon period of time. They’d have to be absolutely wonderful people, too, and everyone involved would need to know their boundaries.

But you guys can get out of debt pretty fast if you’ll just lose the cars. You could even save a little money on the side while you were paying down debt and buy a better car as soon as the debt was gone. You might lose your car so much that you’re unwilling to make this sacrifice. Not me. I’d rather keep my dignity intact and work my way out of the mess I created!

—Dave

Playing the lottery: you of my future

Dear Dave,

I’ve been struggling financially for the past few months, so I’ve been playing the lottery once a week. To me, the chance to win millions is worth a few dollars a week, even if the odds are tight. Paula

Dear Paula,

You’ve told me you’re having money troubles, and at the same time, you’re throwing money out the window every week? Honestly, the small amount you’re talking about doesn’t make a difference. Even if it’s just two or three bucks a week, that action represents a lot of financially irresponsible behavior in your life. I’m going to be very blunt with you. The lottery is a tax on the poor and people who can’t do math. Your chances of winning are bleak at best. Did you know the odds of winning the Powerball Jackpot are about 1 in 292,000,000? There are plenty of other very unusual things that are much more likely to happen to you than winning the lottery. Your chances of making a hole-in-one on the golf course are about 1 in 12,500. Even your odds of having quadruplets are around 1 in 11 million.

When times are tough and you’re strapped for cash, the last thing you need to do is spend what little you have on gimmicks. My advice is to focus on working hard, living on a tight budget that cuts out all unnecessary expenses, and saving every penny you can. Unlike the lottery, this is a plan that works every time. When you start living on a budget and get out of debt, it provides a little bit of breathing room in your life. You might even feel like you got a raise.

Don’t let your finances—and your dreams—be hijacked by the lottery.

—Dave

Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including The Total Money Makeover. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 14 million listeners each week on 600 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.
When thinking about my life, there are certain moments that come to mind that I know are priceless memories. Some of the memories are of Christmas mornings and apple butter makings, but there is one winter morning that comes to mind. It wasn’t a holiday, it wasn’t a vacation and it wasn’t an event, such as my birthday. It was just a not so typical day that happened a few winters ago.

The night before this morning, my parents, siblings and I decided to take a trip across the mountains in North Carolina, to visit my Mamaw and Papaw. We arrived in the evening and after we got settled in we didn’t find the table in Mamaw’s delicious food, tasty goodness, and Blue Ridge dishes. We had brought pizza from town instead. Poor Mamaw was up on the couch, sick and in pain. We had come to visit, per our usual routine, but we had also come to care for Mamaw. There wasn’t much we could do for her, but we wanted to be there for her and give Papaw some support. We ate our pizza and made fresh chocolate chip cookies (Papaw’s favorite). We watched old movies.

As to which old movie we watched, that I cannot remember, but some of our favorites have always been, ‘Tid Climb the Saginaw Mountain’, ‘A Man Called Peter’, ‘Meet Me in St. Louis’, and I could go on and on.

When the movie was over and the children were asleep, I decided it was time to make the trek back across the mountains, home. But after some discussion and realizing Mamaw’s current condition wasn’t allowing any improvement it was decided that we wouldn’t stay behind and spend the night. But I did send a text to Papaw wishing him a good night. I stayed behind, of which I was glad. Since it was so late on the eastern coast, we went straight to bed. I told Dads’ old room. The only heat in the room was a small ceramic heater and I lowered the bed with a hand, so I was the one who was sleeping an extra blanket.

I awoke early the next morning. I had always awoken at the same time in Mamaw and Papaw’s, even when I was a little girl. The excitement of being there and the worry of missing something fun or a distant train whistle always made slipping difficult.

The morning was cold, but I decided to embrace it and get dressed. I went and checked on Mamaw and Papaw, but she was still sleeping soundly on the couch. However, I did find Papaw George wide awake. In fact, I’m not sure how long Papaw was waking up to the closing of his bedroom door and the sound of his footsteps in the hallway. The coffee was ready. I knew that he would have to make this day special if we only had a few days left together. I bought some flowers and asked Papaw if he would like to go on a beautiful morning walk. He eagerly agreed, so we set out.

As we walked, Papaw stopped and looked back at me. He seemed to be thinking about something. Finally, he spoke, “You want some coffee?” I said, “That’s a wrap. That’s a wrap. That’s a wrap. That’s a wrap.” Then I realized that we had talked for a while. “Before we go, I have one thing to tell you. I love you.”

As the hymn ended Papaw joked and said, “Oh, that will conclude our services for the day. Please join us next Sunday. Same time, same place. Come praying, go praying.” He chuckled and Mamaw and I did too. “I love that song,” he said. “Love it more than any of the old hymns I’ve sung as a boy.”

Mamaw had watched the children and her own family grow. Papaw had switched backs and forth from baby duty to baby duty and together they sang. They played with every word of every song, and they never let any moment pass without singing or dancing. Mamaw was the one who would get up at 5am and read the Bible. She would then read to the children and pass on the love that she had for the Lord. Mamaw looked up from the Bible and smiled, and she walked and sang. She loved the Bible and would read it for hours. She was a woman of God and her love for the Lord was contagious.

As the hymn went on, Papaw joked and said, “Oh, that will conclude our services for the day. Please join us next Sunday. Same time, same place. Come praying, go praying.” He chuckled and Mamaw and I did too. “I love that song,” he said. “Love it more than any of the old hymns I’ve sung as a boy.”

Mamaw had watched the children and her own family grow. Papaw had switched backs and forth from baby duty to baby duty and together they sang. They played with every word of every song, and they never let any moment pass without singing or dancing. Mamaw was the one who would get up at 5am and read the Bible. She would then read to the children and pass on the love that she had for the Lord. Mamaw looked up from the Bible and smiled, and she walked and sang. She loved the Bible and would read it for hours. She was a woman of God and her love for the Lord was contagious.

As the hymn went on, Papaw joked and said, “Oh, that will conclude our services for the day. Please join us next Sunday. Same time, same place. Come praying, go praying.” He chuckled and Mamaw and I did too. “I love that song,” he said. “Love it more than any of the old hymns I’ve sung as a boy.”

Mamaw had watched the children and her own family grow. Papaw had switched backs and forth from baby duty to baby duty and together they sang. They played with every word of every song, and they never let any moment pass without singing or dancing. Mamaw was the one who would get up at 5am and read the Bible. She would then read to the children and pass on the love that she had for the Lord. Mamaw looked up from the Bible and smiled, and she walked and sang. She loved the Bible and would read it for hours. She was a woman of God and her love for the Lord was contagious.

As the hymn went on, Papaw joked and said, “Oh, that will conclude our services for the day. Please join us next Sunday. Same time, same place. Come praying, go praying.” He chuckled and Mamaw and I did too. “I love that song,” he said. “Love it more than any of the old hymns I’ve sung as a boy.”

Mamaw had watched the children and her own family grow. Papaw had switched backs and forth from baby duty to baby duty and together they sang. They played with every word of every song, and they never let any moment pass without singing or dancing. Mamaw was the one who would get up at 5am and read the Bible. She would then read to the children and pass on the love that she had for the Lord. Mamaw looked up from the Bible and smiled, and she walked and sang. She loved the Bible and would read it for hours. She was a woman of God and her love for the Lord was contagious.
A twenty-six year resident of Western North Carolina, Vance Patterson announced his campaign for the U.S. House of Representatives 11th District of North Carolina on December 20th, 2019.

Vance is a father of four, married 45 years to his wife Mary Jo. Vance is an entrepreneur having started 21 companies. Two of those companies make industrial fans - he is an American Manufacturer.

In addition to his family and businesses, he and his wife star at an Education Foundation called Foundation Forward dedicated to preserving America's History and teaching civics, so people know how the government is meant to serve and protect. We The People.

Foundation Forward does this by building and gifting Charters of Freedom, setting to communities across the country. He and his wife have raised 14 of these setting to communities in WNC, permanently displaying the Declaration of Independence, U.S. Constitution, and Bill of Rights in a proper manner. Each setting is built and is 300 - 500 years.

Asking Vance about his stance on the issues he responds, "In Washington, I will work to advance Healthcare Reform, begin lowering the National Debt, Secure Our Borders, Reform Immigration, and Implement Term Limits."

In Congress I will be The Congressional Authority on Business Trump, explaining in committees why he is doing what he is doing, and what will happen for the benefit of all including the Democrats in the committees. This will help move Trump's programs through the Legislative Process.


When asking Vance why he is running for Congress he responds, "I know what to do, I know how to do it, and it would be irresponsible of me not to step up."

---

**Stress Management**

By Carinya Young

Mitchell County

It seems that in the world that we live in today, that everything is so fast-paced and intense that we find ourselves stressed and overwhelmed. But I don’t think that is how God would have us live our lives. When we allow the pressure of this world to overcome us, we lose track of our purpose to follow Christ. John 14:27 says, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

God is telling us to not be our hearts be troubled, worried, stressed, or afraid. He comes to give us peace. We often find ourselves looking for a cure for stress. We will bury ourselves in work, family obligations, and become depressed and de-picted of our self-worth. Stress often leads to health problems and creates conflict in our relationships causing us to become very unhappy and miserable people.

We must come to a place in our lives that we are willing to let go and realize that if we want to live a peaceful life, that it only comes through God’s peace and presence. Numbers 6:24-26 says, “The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.” When we study God’s word meditate upon it, and plant it deep within our hearts, it changes the way we think and act. Our talk, attitude, and behavior change. Therefore, the things of this world (stress, conflict, obstacles, etc.) can’t control us anymore. Being set free from the pressure of stress begins with submerging ourselves in God’s word. That doesn’t mean that things are not going to change and be uncomfortable at times in our lives, it means that we have the ability to seek God’s face and have Him help to cope and overcome. Trust that God can and will fix things in our life. Allow God to lead, and not the culture of this world. Through Christ we all have the ability to manage the stress our lives, don’t let stress manage you. Put your trust in God and live in the peace and presence of your Savior!

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

---

**Visit Buck Stove**

Come on in... From our home to yours

Buck Stove
200 Ethan Allen Drive
Spruce Pine, N.C. 28777

Hours of Operation
Monday-Friday 8:30am-5:00pm

Wood and Gas Stoves
Bob Timberlake Outdoor Living
Buck’s Tiny Houses
Heights Adjustable Desk

www.buckstove.com
The Open Door

By Tim Tron
Beroke County

Once more, my life has returned to the open door, once discovered nearly half a century ago.

It was unexpected, but a welcome visit from one of our deparment’s professors. He had stopped by merely to say hello, a simple and cordial gesture. But for me, it was a warm reminder that life was once a rich tapestry of experiences, many of which contributed to personal growth, and, quite possibly, a new perspective on the world we live in. There are no secrets, no final grades due, just a few staff members and faculty preparing for the coming days. The professor who had dropped in, who for now I will call Dr. Mo, seemed to be as curious about me as I was him. Our conversation traversed from pasts of the recent holidays to that of teaching and life.

After a recent application to Graduate School, I began to talk more in-depth about how classes in the Computer Science Department are structured. Before long, we were comparing various instructional methods, albeit in a more advanced level of teaching than what I had been accustomed to. It was a new and exciting way of learning, and Dr. Mo had asked me after the session, “How do you explain to a student that programming a small piece of code or a project is important?”

The question, in fact, reminded me of something I once heard from one of my former High School students. It could be easily considered the tone of what was being heard by those professionals in the field of education.

Suddenly, in my mind, that ancient door opened, and I stood up.

We had so badly wanted to see what all was given the day before. For a couple decades, machines and men had been working on the demolition of the now deceased widow Mrs. Wolfe’s home. Her husband, the late Dr. Wolfe, had died long before I was born, so we knew a lot about him and his lifestyle. He was a loving and kind elderly neighbor. I knew him well. He was a symbol of the way we used to live, exemplifying the most gentlemanly traits. When the sound of masonry echoed through the neighborhood, we knew the hammer was about to come down.

Grandma was always a bit of a story teller. She simply said, “Maybe you should do it yourself,” and left it at that. It was at that moment she had placed the seed, knowingly or not. Later, the idea took root, and I would vow to consider the idea of using it. Grandma said, “You may do it yourself, and I will let you know when to do it.”

Opening the door, I stepped out of my chair. Grandpa said as I walked out the door, “You’ll be all right, and I’ll be able to take care of you.”

As I stood up from my chair, Dr. Mo watched as I walked over to the bookshelf. My wooden hand reached into the array of books and pulled out a single, sweeter cloth-covered book titled, “Applied Mathematics.”

“See you, Dr. Mo.” I said to my guest as I slowly opened the book, “sometimes the answers take a lifetime to learn.”

There, written inside the front cover in his own hand, were the words, “property of John Wolfe.” I then shared with the professor of teaching the book as a child and how I had taken the vow to someday learn how to read the funny writings inside. Those questions is, “Why would we ever need this,” echoed in my mind as I spoke. Then, to show him the significance of the moment, I turned to the back of the book, the usual place in which to find the author’s name. Instead, it read, “By John Wolfe, my heritage.”

Tying to my new friend, I continued, “When we can show someone the significance of something in context, how it fits into the big picture, we can then appreciate the little steps that it takes to get there.”

Dr. Mo smiled and nodded in confirmation.

I continued, “It is always interesting to reflect on what we do at any given point in time. Sometimes, our experience is beyond what we can describe. But with time, God provides us the wisdom to achieve a new level of comprehension. Like the prophet Zechariah trying to describe the visions of Angels that some say more describes what of Angels, what we see could only by a language which he was capable of understanding.”

I handed Dr. Mo the book so he could look it over closely. He smiled and said, “This book is more than just a book. It has a singular significance beyond all others. It’s a story of a different perspective.”

Yes, I nodded, “indeed, it does.”

And so, once more in life, I returned to that barely standing open door of the Wolfe’s ancient home. Grasping the handle, I opened it wide, without fear, for God was with me. There were no doors to keep us from warming me of the darkness. Only the light of our memories, and the songs that ring in our ears, can give us the strength to move forward.

Timothy W. Tron lives in Collegedale, CT, with his family. He is the former Director of the Children’s Home of North Alabama. He is also a musician, and has been known to sing at various events. He now teaches Mathematics full-time at Watauga High School in Boone. He is the author of the New Westminster series, “Children of the Light,” with the first book being “Bruce Young to Heaven.” Recently, his book, “The Light in the Valley,” has been published and is available on Amazon.

BIEE from UF, and is a Lap Speaker. He can be reached at timothyw@live.com

February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 47
PruittHealth, Committed to Caring since 1969

When you and your loved one need home health care, PruittHealth Home Health is ready with a skilled team that combines expertise, state-of-the-art technologies, and deeply rooted commitment to deliver the best in home health care.

When you return home from the hospital or long-term inpatient care, or just need skilled care at home, our home health team is ready to help you move along the path to optimum health and wellness.

Our team of skilled experts coordinate care, providing:
- Skilled nursing services
- Physical therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Speech therapy
- Medical social services
- Home health aids

We use advanced electronic charting systems to track progress and treatments in real time, resulting in better care in your own home. To ensure the best possible care, we focus on educating both our patients and families on the personalized care pathway that is tailored to their needs.

Serving Avery, Mitchell, Yancey, and surrounding counties.

PruittHealth Home Health (Avery)
828-733-1550

PruittHealth Home Health (Mitchell)
828-688-3421

PruittHealth Home Health (Yancey)
828-682-7825

PruittHealth.com

www.brcnews.com February 2020 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 48