



# BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

## Happy New Year!



### Life Lessons

January 2020

By Doug Harrell  
Mitchell County

As we face a new year my thoughts go back to the scripture about becoming a new person in Christ.

*"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."* Ephesians 4:22-24 KJV

Take a few minutes and think about the New Year and as you do, think about yourself. What are your goals and objectives for the year 2020? We all talk about New Year's Resolutions and that is a good thing, but resolving to do something and then carrying through with accomplishing those things takes more than just making the resolution. You must make concrete plans to accomplish those resolutions. The old adage that if you keep doing what you have always done you will keep receiving what you have always received is so correct. If you plan on making a change, you must make changes in your thoughts and actions. A critical part of change is to change the inputs into your mind and thoughts, changing your environment, maybe your circle of friends, what you are reading or listening to. Again, garbage in garbage out is true of our minds and our bodies. We rarely miss feeding our bodies, but what about our minds and our souls, our entire spirit.

Take some time and really picture yourself as the person you would like to be. Be honest when looking at areas of your life that need to be changed if you are



serious about making a change. I find that spending time in the Bible every day and really reading the instructions for life makes a huge difference. We do have available the instructions, and no, they are not just suggestions, they are instructions for living life to the fullest.

*"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;"* 2 Corinthians 5:17-18 KJV

Life here on earth is full of challenges daily, none of us are immune to the thorns of life, but when we really understand God and His perfect will, we will be able to navigate the hills and ravines that we will be faced with. Getting in lock-step with Jesus makes all the difference in life. Learn to seek the good and perfect will for yourself and your family as you start this new year. Ask for and seek patience to accept things that you don't always understand. Relax and let God be the most important thing we can do to have the peace that passes understanding.

*"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."* Romans 8:28 KJV

Determine to become more like your Savior would have you be as you get ready to tread the road of 2020, turn your eyes upon Jesus and trust His guidance, listen to the still small voice and trust His wisdom. Your life won't necessarily be trouble-free, but your mind will become that way. To God be the glory. Happy New Year!

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



# Neighbors Feeding Neighbors Food Ministry

By Josh Robinson  
Mitchell County

Neighbors Feeding Neighbors Food Ministry is open Monday, from 12:00 – 6:00 pm to give out food. We will be in the office on Tuesday from 12 to 5. Thursday will be by appointments only.

We deliver to shut in and disabled families one time a month. We are in need of financial support to help purchase food for the food boxes and for our community meals. We have grown by leaps and bounds but our financial support has not. This Ministry serves Mitchell, Avery, and Yancey County. **IT STAYS LOCAL!**

If you would like to donate please get in touch with Allen 828-385-9446, Amy 828-385-3975, or the Ministry office phone 828-208-2019. You can mail a check to Neighbors Feeding Neighbors to PO Box 322, Spruce Pine, NC 28777, or by credit card on our website @ [www.nfnfoodministry.org](http://www.nfnfoodministry.org).

## January Upcoming Events

6th: Food Box Pickup- This is open to anyone that is in need of food from 12:00 to 6:00 pm.  
7th: Bible Study- This is open to anyone. It will be at Neighbors Feeding Neighbors Food Ministry from 6:00 to 7:00 pm.  
13th: Open Market- This is free produce and other items. This is open to anyone. Location will be at the Food Ministry from 1:00 to 5:00 pm.  
18th: Community Meal- This is a hot meal that is open to anyone and any age. We try to have activities for the children from 4:00 to 6:00.  
20th: Food Box Pickup- This is open to anyone that is in need of food from 12:00 to 6:00.  
21st: Bible Study- This is open to anyone. It will be at Neighbors Feeding Neighbors Food Ministry from 6:00 to 7:00 pm.  
27th: Open Market- This is free produce and other items. This is open to anyone. Location will be at the Food Ministry from 1:00 to 5:00 pm.  
phone: 828-208-2019—E-mail address: [nfnfoodministry@gmail.com](mailto:nfnfoodministry@gmail.com)— Website: [www.nfnfoodministry.org](http://www.nfnfoodministry.org)

Josh Robinson is the Assistant Director Neighbors Feeding Neighbors Food Ministry.

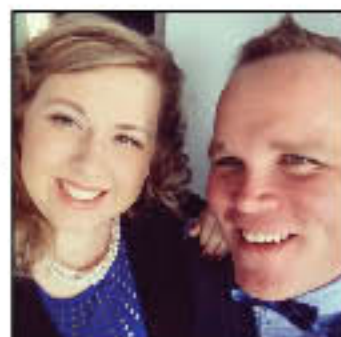


Left to right is Amy Hoilman-Director, Hunter Hoilman, Josh Robinson-Assistant Director, Allen Hoilman-Director.

# McDowell County DSS

## Our Journey to Foster Parenting

By Ryan and Aleigha West  
McDowell County



We wanted to be parents, yet the stork never came! We grieved, we healed, we moved on, but the desire to parent never left. We could wallow in self-pity or take the lemons and make lemonade. We chose lemonade! We investigated foster care and learned that there are children, through no fault of their own, who need a safe, loving home temporarily and that is exactly what we had to offer! So we took the classes and got licensed.

We were worried the process was too long, but it wasn't and our licensing worker walked us through every step!

We were worried we wouldn't know how to parent, but no child comes to any parent with instructions. Each child has different needs. We have leaned on our community of family, friends, our social workers, and the children's biological families when we need parenting support!

We were worried biological families would dislike us, but they don't! Understandingly, they are frustrated with the situation. They deserve our patience, respect, and above all to really love their kids well!

We were worried the children would be destructive or unmanageable, but they aren't. They will be upset with the circumstances and that is when they need us the most!

We were worried we would get too attached and WE DO! We certainly get too attached! However, when you love a child well, you love their biological family too! And we are elated to see a family reunited and thriving!

We became foster parents because we believe that sweet endings can come from bitter beginnings and beauty can come from brokenness! Our biggest regret is not becoming foster parents sooner!

Contact McDowell DSS to learn more about becoming a foster family. 828-652-3355.

*Ryan and Aleigha West have been foster parents since April 2018. Ryan works in finance and Aleigha is stay at home mom. They attend East Marion Baptist Church and are grateful for the support of family, friend, and their church family on their foster care journey.*

*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. John 3:3*



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*"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace: that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation: that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!"*

Isaiah 52:7 KJV



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# Church Directory



## Bear Creek Baptist Church

327 Bear Creek Road  
Bakersville, NC 28705  
[www.bearcreekbaptist.com](http://www.bearcreekbaptist.com)

**Reverend Bruce Cannon**

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

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

## The Bridge Church of WNC

207 Pinebridge Avenue  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
[www.bridgewnc.org](http://www.bridgewnc.org)

**Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin**

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

"Home of Tri County Christian School"  
Our passion is to help connect the Body of Christ in this area in order to see the Fire of God transform our community, state, nation and world! (See John 17:21)

## Berry Chapel Baptist Church

280 Chapel St.  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
828-765-6590  
[www.berrychapelbaptist.com](http://www.berrychapelbaptist.com)

**Pastor - Steve Williams**

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

Where Everybody is Somebody  
And Jesus Christ is Lord!

## Altapass Baptist Church

3631 Altapass Hwy  
Spruce Pine, NC  
828-765-0660  
[altapassbaptistchurch@ccvn.com](mailto:altapassbaptistchurch@ccvn.com)  
[www.altapassbaptistchurch.org](http://www.altapassbaptistchurch.org)

**Dr. Marcus R. Benfield**

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

"A Christ-Centered,  
Bible Believing Church"

## Grassy Creek Baptist Church

793 Old NC 226 Hwy  
Spruce Pine, NC  
828-765-4620  
[www.grassycreekbc.org](http://www.grassycreekbc.org)

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

## Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church

2187 Jamestown Road  
Morganton, NC  
828-584-8212

**Pastor Steve Beltz**

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

## Faith Fellowship Church

Champ Ray Rd.  
Micaville, NC 28755  
(828)-675-9284  
[www.fccn.org](http://www.fccn.org)  
[www.fccradio.org](http://www.fccradio.org)

**Pastor: David Gillespie**

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

## Plumtree Presbyterian Church

4527 Hwy 18E  
Plumtree, NC 28664  
828-765-6919  
[www.plumtreepresbyterian.com](http://www.plumtreepresbyterian.com)

**Pastor Ryan Bridgeo**  
[pastor@plumtreepresbyterian.com](mailto:pastor@plumtreepresbyterian.com)

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

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

## Pleasant Hill Baptist Church

2396 Enola Road  
Morganton, NC 28655  
(828) 437-4082  
[www.pleasanthillbc.church](http://www.pleasanthillbc.church)

**Senior Pastor  
Dr. Jack Hodges**

Sunday School: 9:30 am  
Sunday Worship: 10:30 am  
Sunday Evening: 6:00 pm  
Wednesday Evening 6:30 pm

"Love All, Reach All, Teach All, Send All"

## West Burnsville Baptist Church

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

**Pastor: Terry Long**

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

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

## Burkemont Baptist Church

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

For more information,  
please visit  
[www.burkemontbaptist.org](http://www.burkemontbaptist.org)

**Dr. Luke A. Lane**

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

## Marion Seventh-day Adventist Church

188 Ward Dr.  
Marion, NC 28752  
(828) 668-4018

**Pastor Tim Sheridan**

Sabbath (Saturday)  
Bible Study - 9:15 am  
Sabbath Worship - 10:50 am  
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Gospel of Jesus Christ!  
[www.marionnc.adventistchurch.org](http://www.marionnc.adventistchurch.org)

## First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine

125 Tappan Street  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
828-765-9411  
[www.sprucepinefbc.com](http://www.sprucepinefbc.com)  
[www.sprucepinefbc.blogspot.com](http://www.sprucepinefbc.blogspot.com)

**Dr. Rocky Branch  
Senior Pastor**

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

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God, Submitting to God!

## Great Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church

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

**Pastor Barry Mahorney**

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

## Pine Branch Baptist Church

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

**Reverend Bobby Joe Greene**

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

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## Spruce Pine United Methodist Church

11090 Hwy. 226 South  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
[www.sprucepineumc.org](http://www.sprucepineumc.org)  
[spumc3@bellsouth.net](mailto:spumc3@bellsouth.net)  
828-765-7446

**Pastor Rick Schilling**

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

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

## Newland Christian Church

2800 Millers Gap Highway  
Newland, NC 28657  
Phone (828) 260-1404  
[www.newlandchristianchurch.com](http://www.newlandchristianchurch.com)

**Pastor - Phillip Greene**

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

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"Hear what  
God the Lord  
will speak."

—PSALM 85:8, NKJV



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#TheCove 2020-2024



Be Motivated by Joy

By Josh Reed

In his posthumously published work *Letters to Malcolm*, C.S. Lewis wrote, "Joy is the serious business of heaven."

Joy is experienced in virtually limitless 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 shrieking 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 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 is not dependent upon fleeting feelings.

John goes on to elaborate on this life. They had heard of it with their very ears, they had touched it with their very hands, and they had looked upon it 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 participation with." John makes the audacious claim that — because of the appearing of the person and work of Jesus — they share and participate 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 testifying 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 [ncbaptist.org/adult-evangelism-and-discipleship/](http://ncbaptist.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.



Your Story Counts

By Rev. John B. Sorensen

Do you have a story — the story about what God has done in your life? Do you share it?

Our stories are powerful. In fact, the Bible says our stories help us live victoriously. "And they have defeated him by the blood of the Lamb and by their testimony..." (Revelation 12:11 NLT).

The problem is many Christians simply don't believe it. We think our stories are too simple or ordinary to matter, but they do. Your testimony — the story of how God has changed your life — could be the very thing that God uses to reach someone with the Gospel.

But how does God do this?

God uses simple things. We often feel our own personal stories fall short compared to the testimonies of miracles and great faith. But 1 Corinthians 1:27 says that "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise" (NIV). Sometimes it's the simple stories of child-like faith that someone needs to hear in order to see God.

Our story is tangible. God meets us where we are in our experience and in our personality. Each encounter is unique. When we share that story, we allow others to see with their own eyes the transformation that God has made in our lives. It demonstrates His power, not just 2,000 years ago, but today.

Our story is continual. Our story is simply about the steps of faith we take toward following Christ. Of course, the first step we took was to accept God's free gift of eternal life. But our testimony doesn't end there. Throughout the rest of lives, we continue to take steps of faith, steps that lead us into a deeper, closer relationship with our Heavenly Father. Those stories are just as powerful.

Our story brings life. Our testimony points to the One who provides eternal life. It is not about us; it's about Him. We were once dead and now are alive. We were once blind, but now we see. Our story is powerful because of what Christ has done in us — not because of anything we have done ourselves. We point to Him when we share our testimony.

Our personal story is the most original contribution we bring when we share the Gospel. It's personal, and it's powerful. But to make your story count, it must be shared. If you've never shared your story before, begin by writing it down. Then practice sharing it. Most importantly, allow God to use it to reach others.

If you need help writing your story, visit our free testimony-building tool at [whats-mystory.org](http://whats-mystory.org).

Rev. John B. Sorensen, D.D. is the President/CEO of Evangelism Explosion International, headquartered in Arden, N.C. EE has been a leader in equipping Christians to share their faith for more than 50 years. For more free tips and resources, visit [evangelismexplosion.org](http://evangelismexplosion.org).



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## The Justice of God

By Billy Graham

One of the most colorful figures in American history was Robert G. Ingersoll. He was an agnostic who gave dramatic lectures throughout the nation about his doubts concerning the existence of God. One night when he was addressing an audience in a small town in New York, he proclaimed eloquently his doubts about future judgment and hell.

When he was finished, an old drunk stood up in the rear of the hall and said with a thick tongue, "I sure hope you're right, Brother Bob. I'm counting on that!"

Modern man does not like to think of God in terms of wrath, anger, and judgment. He likes to make God according to his own ideas and give God the characteristics he wants Him to possess. Man tries to remake God to conform to his own wishful thinking so that he can make himself comfortable in his sins.

This modern god has the attributes of love, mercy, and forgiveness, but is without justice. Man doesn't want to be judged and punished for sin. He "reconstructs" God along the lines of tolerance, all-embracing love and universal goodwill.

In this picture of God, there are no laws that demand absolute obedience and no standards to which man must adhere. For example, more than 900 clergymen and students gathered some time ago at Harvard Divinity School to ponder the so-called "new morality" and its significance for the church.

One professor of divinity said that premarital sex between engaged couples was all right, that God would "understand." A professor at another theological school thought that no sexual relationship should be absolutely condemned by the church. Thus, many church leaders continue to reconstruct God according to the secular and humanistic trends of our times.

"Man tries to remake God to conform to his own wishful thinking so that he can make himself comfortable in his sins."

However, this kind of god would make a preposterous world. It would be chaotic, irresponsible, self-destroying. It would be impossible to live with certainty in that kind of world. To have meaning, life must be based upon the law and a lawgiver.

The Psalmist said: *"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes"* (Psalm 19:7-8).

The Bible warns that *"evil men do not understand justice"* (Proverbs 28:5).

Jesus Himself put His stamp of approval on the law when He said, *"It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail"* (Luke 16:17). The Law of Moses and the Sermon on the Mount are standards that can never be changed. No clergyman has a right to lower them in the name of God; to do so is to be in danger of defiling the law, blaspheming God and becoming guilty of heresy.

The Bible declares that God is a God of judgment, wrath, and anger. Time after time Jesus warned of judgment: *"Every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment"* (Matthew 12:36).

*"The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth"* (Matthew 13:41-42).

The apostles taught throughout the New Testament that judgment will come. The Apostle Paul said: *"He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained"* (Acts 17:31).

The author of the Book of Hebrews wrote, *"It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27).

They *"will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead,"* said Peter in 1 Peter 4:5.

The Apostle John expressed it this way: *"The kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?'"* (Revelation 6:15-17).

Hundreds of passages point to a time of judgment for every person who has ever lived—none will escape. If you took all the references to judgment out of the Bible, you would have little Bible left.

*"They will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead."* —1 Peter 4:5

God has offered His love and mercy and forgiveness to men. From the cross, God has said to the whole world, "I love you." However, when that love is deliberately rejected, the only alternative is judgment.

The great judgment of sinners is recorded in Revelation 20:11-13, where the Apostle John says, *"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works."*

Here is the judgment toward which every person outside of Christ is headed. God has already set the date. All people, of all races and nationalities, both past and present, will be there. You may make and break appointments in this life, but this is one appointment you are going to keep.

In "that day" the books will be opened, the Bible says. Those who have not accepted Christ—whether they were rich or poor, titled or common, old or young, healthy or ill, sound of body or crippled, famous or obscure—will be revealed for all to see. What a terrifying moment for millions when the books are opened at the



judgment!

This is the day that Jesus referred to in the Sermon on the Mount: *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"* (Matthew 7:21-23).

Even people who did the work of the Lord will be included. They were busy in the church. They did many wonderful works. But Jesus Himself will say, "I never knew you." What a dreadful thing! They thought their own good works would save them. It should sober us to realize that someday Jesus Christ will be Judge. *"For the Father judges no one but has committed all judgment to the Son"* (John 5:22).

When Warren Candler was a young man practicing law, he defended a man accused of murder. The young lawyer went all out in his effort to clear his client of the charge. There were some extenuating circumstances, and Candler made the most of them in his plea before the jury.

"Today Christ is our lawyer, pleading on our behalf. He is our Savior, willing to forgive and cleanse and forget. However, there is coming a fearful day when He will be the Judge."

Also, the aged father and mother of the defendant were in the court, and the young lawyer moved on the sympathies and emotions of the jury by frequent references to the God-fearing parents.

In due course, the jury reached a verdict: not guilty. The young lawyer, himself a Christian, had a serious talk with his cleared client. He warned him to steer clear of evil ways and to trust God's power to keep him straight.

Years passed. Again, the man was brought into court. Again, the charge was murder. Candler, the lawyer who had defended him at his first trial, was now the judge on the bench. At the conclusion of the trial, the jury rendered its verdict: guilty.

Ordering the condemned man to stand for sentencing, Judge Candler said, "At your first trial I was your lawyer. Today I am your judge. The verdict of the jury makes it mandatory for me to sentence you to be hanged by the neck until you are dead."

Today Christ is our lawyer, pleading on our behalf. He is our Savior, willing to forgive and cleanse and forget. However, there is coming a fearful day when He will be the Judge.

Are you prepared to meet God? The Prophet Amos, in warning the people of judgment in his day, used the expression, *"Prepare to meet your God"* (Amos 4:12). Are you prepared to meet God at the judgment? Because you see, we don't have very much longer to live.

Even a full life of 70 years is just a moment in eternity. Life is passing fast for all of us. It won't be long until we stand before God to give an account of how we have lived in this life. Are you prepared?

You ask, "What do I have to do to prepare?" The Bible says that you must repent of your sins. Jesus said, *"Unless you repent you will... perish"* (Luke 13:3). Second, you must receive Christ as your Lord and Savior.

And you can receive Him right now and trust Him at this moment. The Bible says you are to receive Him now—*"Now is the accepted time"* (2 Corinthians 6:2). Don't put it off. Don't say, "I'll think about it." Don't say, "I'll do it tomorrow." Do it right now. At this moment, say yes to Jesus Christ.



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Mitchell County

History Bee Mitchell County Historical Society's 4th Annual History Bee is coming March 19, 2020. • Cash prizes for First, Second and Third place • Two Divisions - grades 6-8 and 9-12 • Any Mitchell County student in grades 6-12 may participate (private schools, homeschools, Mitchell County Schools, Mayland Early College). The Mitchell County Historical Society History Bee is a big deal for a lot of Mitchell County students. Cash prizes will be \$500 for first place, \$300 for second place and \$200 for third place in each division. All questions in the History Bee will come from Elizabeth Hunter's Voices of the Valley, which was published in 2011, the 150th anniversary of the formation of Mitchell County. This publication is already in public and school libraries and is also available for purchase from the Historical Society office in Bakersville or from other sources. New this year, the High School division will also have questions from The History of the Toe River Valley to 1865 by Jason B. Deyton. A digital copy can be found at [digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/pl6062coll9/id/4068](https://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/pl6062coll9/id/4068) or you may contact the Historical Society for more information at [mitchellchistory@gmail.com](mailto:mitchellchistory@gmail.com) or (828) 688-4371, Tuesday-Friday 10 am-4 pm.

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My Kit

By Jody Griffin  
Avery and Mitchell Counties



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

As a child, I used the phrase so often that it became a part of my "kit" (Like a toolkit, only for demolition). You know what I mean when I say that even if you aren't familiar with the lingo. We have all assembled "kits" to be used to assist us through the more difficult realities of life. Our kits serve us by making someone else the 'bad guy'.

My "kit" included the not so noble reaction to those who would 'make fun' or denigrate me somehow as "less than". My response? "Oh yeah? Well, it TAKES ONE TO KNOW ONE!" (Yes, I was a quick-witted young lad!) And I saw myself that way with every white cat meme shaming two young adult women with sharp-tongued rebukes on Facebook!

The point is that my "kit" was built on a theory of striking back by equating one's value with the equal value they had assigned to me. It was grounded in that oh so human trait of forging equality through destruction.

You tear me down and I will use equal effort (Or greater, if necessary!) in bringing you down to or below the 'place' you put me with your insult(s). Did you call me a dummy? Well, "It takes one to know one!" A lazy bum? Well, "It takes one to know one!" A mouthy little... Oh, you get the point! My kit was convenient until I realized that using it was antithetical to my Christian identity. So, it would be years into my 'adulthood' before I would learn that I needed to update my "kit"...

What if, instead of striking back with lethal force at those have offended me I try a little technique taught by the Master, known as "turning the other cheek"? Or an even more challenging response also advocated by the One I call 'Lord', a revolutionary concept called "forgiveness"?

Having these tools in our kit can provide us with the resources we need to live in this new decade of the 21st century in ways that reflect the very Presence and Power of God! They represent the BEST that we can be as human beings instead of the loudest, or the last voice screaming out condemnation of those who have offended us. These items in our "kit" demonstrate the character of Christ Jesus and they are essential tools for us to live into our God-given identity as believers who bear the very Name of Christ before the rest of the world!

In the correctional setting, the power of forgiveness is multiplied. Offenders (whether or not they can or would ever admit it) often struggle to forgive themselves and long for the forgiveness of those hurt by their actions.

I know, it's a lot to ask. But I also know that the gifts of forgiveness continue to Bless the forgiver AND the forgiven for a very long time...

2020 is the perfect time to 'see clearly' the Truth of the words of the Lord's Prayer. May your New Year be filled with forgiveness!

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



Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17

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# A Grateful Girl

## I Discovered My Favorite Verse in a Bathroom

By Patti Jensen  
Mitchell County



Girlfriends in God, an Instagram account I follow, posted a photo recently that included the verse "My grace is sufficient for you. For my power is made perfect in weakness" 2 Corinthians 12:9 and since it is one of my favorites, I immediately wanted to share it on my blog. This verse became a soft place to land when we were in Seattle for my husband Jack's bone marrow transplant for leukemia. There I was, 2,000 miles away from home, with my sick husband, our two children ages 4 and 7, and my mother and father in law. I felt alone and helpless.

I can vividly remember going into the bathroom in our rented apartment in downtown Seattle and flipping open my Bible. Jack was to enter the hospital the next day (Christmas Day) to begin his radiation and chemo prior to the transplant. He was given a 30% chance of survival. We were trying to keep things "normal" for our kids. I was trying to keep my positive face on for everyone around me. But I was struggling not to fall apart right when we were going into the heat of the battle.

I flipped open my Bible in the bathroom (I know .... it's the bathroom...but it was the only place to be alone) and this is the scripture that the Bible flipped open to. Isn't God amazing how he just meets us wherever we are, even the bathroom in a rented apartment thousands of miles away from home, and gives us what we need? I had just prayed...Lord, I don't know what to do. I don't know what is going to happen. Help me be strong. And then He sends this scripture.

He says...I am sufficient...I am enough...I am all you need. And if that isn't good enough...My awesome power is made PERFECT in weakness. Bible scholars may argue that what I took from this isn't what was intended. But what it meant for me was ....Patti I know you are at your weakest. You have never been in a more scary or vulnerable place. And now I AM AT MY BEST....MY POWER IS MADE PERFECT. Lean into me.

And I did. From that day on I just simply said, Lord, your power is perfect today. We can do today. One Day at A Time became my motto.

On New Year's Eve, we marked 22 years since the bone marrow transplant. 22 years since that moment in the bathroom where I simply flipped open His Word and said Help Me. He is a faithful friend. We lived through that time to be here today to tell you that He is Faithful. We lived through it to tell that when you are at your bottom, He is at the top. He showcases His Perfect Power when you are at your weakest point and cry out and say Help Me. He will be there. I promise.

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 son-in-laws and a new granddaughter, Georgia Grace. You can find her posts on Instagram and Facebook and on her blog at <http://www.agratefulgirl.com>.



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## 2020 MODELS ARE HERE!



## Do I Have To Believe In A Literal Creation To Be A Christian?

by Russell Grigg

By this I mean believe that God created the world in six normal days, that there was then a real rebellion against God by an actual Adam and Eve, followed by the entry of death, suffering, and carnivory into a once-perfect world, and that the first chapters of Genesis are a literal, historical account of all this. So, does one have to believe this to be a Christian?

### Becoming a Christian

In the New Testament, a Christian is seen as someone who does two things:

1. Believes that Jesus Christ (who was fully God and fully man), through His death on the Cross and His Résurrection, has paid the penalty for our sin. Cf. *'If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved'* (Romans 10:9).<sup>1</sup>
2. Obeys the command to repent (literally, changes one's mind—about God and sin), that is, to acknowledge that one has lived and acted in rebellion against God, and to ask God's forgiveness for this.<sup>2</sup> Cf. *'God ... commands all men everywhere to repent'* (Acts 17:31b).<sup>3</sup>

Is it then enough just to believe in Jesus and repent? Well, these two things imply that there exists a Holy God against whom we have rebelled and so incurred the penalty for doing so. But why does our disregard for God and our failure to keep His laws merit any penalty at all, let alone the death penalty?

Answer: When we read the first three chapters of Genesis, we see that our first parents, Adam and Eve, were created with a holy, godly nature and they lived in fellowship with God. However, they chose to rebel against Him and so became corrupt in themselves, hostile to God, and guilty before Him. Their rebellion was an affront to the holiness of God who had created them, and it earned them the death penalty (Genesis 3:17–19), about which they had been warned (Genesis 2:17, 3:3). This corruption, hostility, and guilt involved the whole human race (Romans 5:12–19),<sup>4</sup> and we have inherited their death penalty also (Romans 6:23), which we deserve.<sup>5</sup> It is true that one can go through the steps of becoming a Christian without accepting or even knowing the Genesis account of Creation and the Fall.<sup>6</sup> However, such a minimal belief system misses out on the full measure of what God has provided as the basis for our coming into a right relationship with Him. This includes the totality of His Word to us, incorporating the logical foundation which Genesis supplies to the whole doctrine of Salvation.

"There is a slippery slope into unbelief that accompanies disbelieving any part of the Word of God."

This leads to a shallow faith that has little root in the Word of God and so has a little foundation to resist the attacks and ridicule of skeptics, atheists, liberal religious leaders, fellow students, or workmates, etc. In the parable of the sower, it was because they had no root that the seeds which fell on stony ground withered away when they sprang up and were scorched by the sun (Matthew 13:5–6, 20–21).

Today Genesis is under attack as never before—not only by skeptics who ridicule it but also by 'Christian' teachers who, in their books and sermons, blatantly misrepresent what the text says, to try and make it conform to the conclusions of some of the modern science, with its antitheist presuppositions. So then, how can one tell what any part of God's Word, and in particular Genesis, actually means?

Answer: The key to understanding the meaning of any book of the Bible is to ask, 'What was the intention of the author?' When we do this with Genesis (e.g. by comparing the style of the first chapters with that of the rest of Genesis),<sup>7</sup> it is very evident that Moses' purpose, under God, was to write an authentic, historical and factual account, beginning with the creation of the universe and Earth, and then narrating the history of mankind from the creation of Adam to the death of Joseph (Genesis 50:26).<sup>8,9</sup>

### Living as a Christian

Let us now examine some of the problems faced by a Christian when he or she does not accept what Genesis says about a literal Creation.

1. There is a slippery slope into unbelief that accompanies disbelieving any part of the Word of God. If some part of the Bible is not true because it does not mean what it says, how do we know that other parts, such as the Virginal Conception of Jesus or the forgiveness of sin, are true? In the 1940s and '50s, American evangelist Charles Templeton's preaching helped lead thousands of people to profess faith in Christ, but then he began to compromise with long-age evolutionary concepts. As a result, he had no answer to the spurious claims of evolutionist scientists and their atheistic theories about the origin of the Earth, life, etc., and no answer to the problems of suffering and evil in the world.

In his autobiography, *Farewell to God*, Templeton tells how this compromise led him into total apostasy. He came to deny the accounts of Creation, Noah's Flood, and the supernatural origin of the Ten Commandments.<sup>10</sup>

He also ended up denying the Virginal Conception of Jesus, miracles, the Résurrection, the Ascension, Salvation, the efficacy of prayer, and the existence of the Trinity.<sup>11</sup> He concluded:

'I believe that there is no supreme being with human attributes—no God in the biblical sense—but that all life is the result of timeless evolutionary forces, having reached its present transient state over millions of years.'<sup>12</sup>

It is important to note that some of those who profess faith at mass evangelism rallies are like Templeton and make an emotional decision without a proper foundation. Thus, it is not surprising that many professing converts 'fall away' like Templeton did.

### Evangelism

2. As a Christian, how do you propose to share the Gospel with those who hold the worldview that there is no God because matter formed itself in a 'big bang' billions of years ago, and life began spontaneously from chemicals in some primordial pond where the conditions were 'just right'? How are you going to convince them that there is a Creator God to whom we must give account, without first showing that their worldview is incorrect?

How are you going to do this, if you say that Genesis allows for everything to begin with a 'big bang'?

How will such people be convinced of the relevance to them of the death of a man on a cross 2,000 years ago, and of their need to repent, if they are not first given good reasons to abandon their atheistic worldview and to replace it with one based on the existence and claims of the Creator God of Genesis? An essential part of the Gospel is that there is a coming Day of Judgment. Genesis shows us not only that God has the authority to judge us, but also that He has the power to enforce our attendance!<sup>13</sup>

In fact, chapters 6–8 of Genesis show that God has already judged mankind with the global Flood, and Jesus (Luke 17:26–27) and the Apostle Peter (2 Peter 3:5–7) said that the coming judgment would be just as real. However, if Noah's Flood was just mythical or local, why should we believe in judgment to come? Thus, those who teach that Genesis describes a 'big bang' and a local Flood undermine the urgency of God's coming judgment. "An essential part of the Gospel is that there is a coming Day of Judgment."

3. How do you propose to share the Gospel with those whose worldview says that there is no such thing as sin because there is no absolute difference between right and wrong? [See also Q&A: Morality and Ethics] How are you going to convince them that they are lost and need a Savior? Without the Genesis account of the rebellion against God by our first parents, and the Curse that followed, there is no basis for the origin of sin or the fact that sin needs to be atoned for, or that Christ did this by His death on the Cross and His subsequent Résurrection (1 Corinthians 15:21–22).

4. If you believe only what you choose to believe in God's Word, how will you wield the Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17), when it is blunted or broken by non-acceptance of its total truth?

5. How are you going to share the Gospel with those who see the pain and suffering of people and animals, and say that if God exists He cannot be a God of love as the Bible says (1 John 3:8)? Without the Genesis account that the world God originally made was 'very good' (Genesis 1:31), and the Genesis account of the Curse that fell on the Earth as a result of Adam's sin (resulting in death and suffering), so that the present world is not the way God made things, there is no answer. Long-age compromise views, even if anti-evolution, undermine the Gospel at this very point.

In fact, God made man *'in His own image'* (Genesis 1:27), so that He and man could have communion together. When man turned away from God in disobedience, God was grieved, so much so that in His love He gave His Son to be our Redeemer and win us back to Himself (John 3:16).

### Conclusion

Do you have to believe in a literal Creation to be a Christian? The short answer is 'No'. The long answer is 'No, but ...'.

### References and notes

1. See also John 11:25; Acts 16:31; 1 Corinthians 15:1–4; Ephesians 2:8; etc. Return to text.
2. Not just being sorry that one has been found out for some immoral or criminal act. Return to text./li>
3. See also Mark 1:15; Acts 3:19; 2 Peter 3:9; etc. Not all 'salvation' texts in the Bible contain both instructions, but they are often used synonymously, as each implies the other. Thus, faith in Christ's death for us involves our acknowledging that He died for our sin, and repentance in the Biblical sense involves there is a means whereby we may be justly forgiven, namely that Jesus has paid the penalty for our sin. Return to text.
4. This shows the error of those who teach that sin is a feeling of low self-esteem. Not everybody has low self-esteem, but the Bible says that 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23). Return to text.
5. See Grigg, R., *Why did God impose the death penalty for sin?* Creation 15(1):32–34, 1992. Return to text.
6. Many missionaries begin Bible translation with one of the Gospels and many tribal people have been converted as a result. However, many more genuine (i.e. persevering) conversions usually occur when missionaries begin their evangelism by teaching about Creation and the Fall from Genesis. See McIlwain, T., *Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ*, New Tribes Mission, Sanford, Florida, 1991. Return to text.
7. One of the main themes of Genesis is the sovereignty of God. This is seen in four notable events (Creation, the Fall, the Flood, and Babel), and in God's relationship to eight notable people (Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph). There is thus a unifying theme to the whole of Genesis, which fails if any event is not true history; each event reinforces the historicity of all the other events. Return to text.
8. It is true that the Bible contains poetry (as in the Psalms), parables (as recorded in the Gospels), and metaphors (as when Jesus said, 'I am the bread of life'). However, Genesis is not written in any of these distinctive styles. See Grigg, R., *Should Genesis be taken literally?*, Creation 16(1):38–41, 1993. Return to text.
9. Genesis 1–50 gives the foundational history of the Jewish people; other nations are covered only as far as the end of chapter 10. Return to text.
10. Templeton, C., *Farewell to God*, McClelland & Stewart, Toronto, pp. 37–71, 1996. Return to text.
11. Ref. 10, pp. 89–153. Return to text.
12. Ref. 10, p. 232. See also Ham, K., and Byers, S., *Slippery slide to unbelief*, Creation 22(3):8–13, 2000. Return to text.
13. See Grigg, R., *Curse, and catastrophe: the four great judgments of God on all of sinful humanity*, Creation 16(2):42–44, 1994. Return to text.

<https://creation.com/do-i-have-to-believe-in-a-literal-creation-to-be-a-christian>

# Happy New Year!



Don't Be the Prodigal Son or the Elder Brother

By Rev. Mark Creech

Perhaps the most sublime of Jesus' parables is the one about the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). Wanting to get away from home and spread his wings, a young man seeks his inheritance early and leaves. He wastes his money on an extravagant and dissolute lifestyle and becomes bankrupt both morally and financially. No self-respecting Jew would ever have anything to do with swine if he could help it. They were considered unclean. But this prodigal was reduced to such desperate straits. Then one day, he comes to his senses, goes home in repentance, and his father forgives and fully restores him.

Most of us understand this part of the story - its where most of the emphasis is placed. Still, Jesus also describes in this same parable, the elder brother. He's also a prominent figure. Some scholars even say this parable should be called the parable of the elder brother.

When the elder brother learns of his younger brother's return and the big celebration going on over it, he's not too happy. He's full of resentment and tells his father, "Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!" (Luke 15: 29-30).

J. Wallace Hamilton, in his classic Christian book, "Horns and Halos," has said, "these two sons are illustrations of two different kinds of sin - the sins of passion in the younger and the sins of disposition in the older."

"It is notorious how we see-saw between these two disfigurements and pit them against each other, excusing one or the other according to which happens to be our own particular weakness," writes Hamilton. "It is popular in the movies, for example, to glorify the younger prodigal, glamorize his escapades and make his sins quite attractive and exciting. We have some writers who just love to poke fun at Puritan convictions; they make a point of picturing the broadminded virtues of breezy Bohemians against the narrow meanness of stuffy churchmen and pious parsons; they leave the impression that the most charitable, likable people are irreligious, who have thrown away the Book, and that, after all, the sins of the flesh are really quite harmless and of minor consequence. Drunkenness is such a peccadillo, gambling is not anything, and neither is profanity. As for sex expression, anything goes; marriage is a social convenience. Tolerance - that's the virtue! Just be good to your old grandmother and your kindheartedness will cover all your moral and minor irregularities."

Isn't this where much of the country is today? "Anyone who can defend the moral corruption of our day in the name of tolerance or broadmindedness, who can look without concern on the misery that follows in the wake of lust and liquor and the disintegration of decency, is a lopsided person whose eyes are clouded and whose moral sensitiveness is all but dead. We should never excuse the prodigal," adds Hamilton. "On the other hand, we must deal with the elder brother too, and it should be frankly confessed that the emphasis of the Church has been lopsided in this direction. That is, the Church has attached more guilt to the sins of passion than to the subtler sins of disposition."

"That brings us to the final word, and it is disturbing. Boil down the sins of this bad-tempered elder brother, and you can label him with one word - 'lovelessness,' admonishes Hamilton. "Respectable as he was, he had no love in him; he lacked the one thing without which, Paul said, all other virtues are worthless - 'as sounding brass or tinkling cymbal' ...The elder brother had no love in him."

Here's the rub, and it's a scary thing to think that we are so vulnerable to developing this egregiously sinful temperament. For those of us who stay at home, so to speak, keep the rules, and live an upright life, it's easy to develop a smug stuff-shirt morality. Christians can develop an air of contempt and even hostility towards people who've been living far from God, the Father.

"I came to seek and save the lost," said Jesus (Luke 19:10). He commissioned us to the same. People may never be found unless we genuinely care about them. We must love them as the Father loves them. Although we should be deeply disturbed by the way they live, we still should say, "But for the grace of God there go I."

In the early 90s, some Indian farmers in New Delhi protested the government of India's plans to import three million tons of Dutch dung to be used for farm fertilizer. Indian farmers were incensed, arguing that there surely was no shortage of cows in India. And dung from Indian cows was not tainted by pesticides.

So, in protest, these Indian farmers rolled six ox carts piled high with top-quality, home-grown dung right up to Parliament's door. They told the legislators, "Our dung is better than their dung!"

When we develop the spirit of the elder brother - prideful, self-satisfied, self-righteous, without compassion, legalistic, ungracious and unloving - we are no less sinful than the prodigal. We simply have convinced ourselves that our dung is better than their dung.

Love is not rude; it is not self-seeking; it is not easily angered; it keeps no account of wrongs. Love takes no pleasure in evil but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things... (I Corinthians 13:5-7).

Reverend Dr. Mark Creech is Executive Director of the NC Christian Action League. You may contact him at [rev.markcreech@christianactionleague.org](mailto:rev.markcreech@christianactionleague.org) or 919-787-0606

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. John 14:6



New Technologies Boost Winter Road Safety While Reducing Salt Use

(StatePoint) Last year's long and brutal winter depleted road salt supplies throughout much of the U.S. As a result, several cities have experienced significant price spikes when placing their salt orders this year. At a time when experts are highlighting the environmental and infrastructural damage caused by excessive salt use on roads, new technologies are helping American communities reduce their growing dependence on salt, while keeping roads safe.

The U.S. spreads up to 22 million tons of salt per year, a large portion of which finds its way into rivers, streams, and soil. Numerous environmental groups and universities have documented the tremendous damage that road salt does to soil conditions, water quality and wildlife. What's more, excessive road salt also damages roads and bridges, creating the need for millions of dollars' worth of repairs nationwide every year.

Experts say all this salt is not necessary, pointing to Europe where, thanks to smarter technologies, less salt is spread on roads without comprising safety, even in countries with significant snowfall.

"The U.S. lags Europe by at least a decade in the adoption of smart salt spreading technologies," says Marcus Scherer, senior vice president of research and development for Aebi Schmidt, manufacturer of Swenson smart spreaders. "Heavier, wetter salt sticks where it is put down and jump-starts the melting process. However, we still see some municipalities in the U.S. using dry salt, which is highly inefficient because it bounces or blows off the road before it has a chance to work. Even those U.S. cities that do use wet salt primarily use a mixture that's less efficient than those used in Europe -- as little as a 5% brine mixture in the U.S. as compared with Europe's 70:30 ratio which includes 30% brine."

Scherer goes on to explain that most salt spreaders currently on the road in the U.S. cannot handle the preferred mixture used in Europe, largely because their pumps and tanks aren't large enough to accommodate the additional brine. In addition, they don't offer precision placement technologies that carefully and consistently spread salt on the primary driving surfaces. Instead, they randomly drop excessive amounts of salt.

Experts say that smarter salt spreaders offer a variety of spreading patterns to cover multiple lanes simultaneously, allowing for greater coverage in less time so that salt trucks don't need to make multiple passes to sufficiently clear the roads. As a result, roads can be driven on safely without delay, reducing labor time and related costs, which is attractive to budget-strapped municipalities.



According to Scherer, several cities in the U.S. have already incorporated smart Swenson spreaders into their fleets and have documented salt and labor savings as high as 35%. Such success opens the door to additional testing in other markets, especially given the public's increased focus on the environmental impact of road salt and the growing burden of rising salt prices on city and department of transportation budgets.

For more information on the latest smart salt spreading technologies, visit [spreadsaltsmarter.com](http://spreadsaltsmarter.com).

As road salt takes its annual toll, experts say it's time to stop over-salting U.S. roads. Luckily, new technologies are making it possible to keep roads safe in budget-friendly and environmentally responsible ways.

Happy New Year!



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Winter in the Shire

By Nancy Malik  
Avery County

Welcome to The Shire, a beautiful place my husband and I named Avery County three years ago when we moved here. The four seasons are the most perfect ones of anywhere we have lived in the US and that included seven of the United States as far north, south, east and west as you can go in them! Avery County excels as the perfect one! Now it is winter, and for many, the wintry beauty has quite the special effects! Looking through forests after the leaves have fallen off can hold big surprises of sights not seen for months. The rime frost coating the trees makes a spectacular scene of wintry delight. Many businesses are available to help with all the tools we need to make it through the winter.

Philipp Greene and Jaren Gragg at WECR Glory 1130 work hard to bring news and weather updates to us every day along with swap shop and other community events. It is my privilege to have a radio program on WECR, M-F, at 8:10, am and 12:50 pm, Adventures in Creation, a program to guide children on the creation path the Bible gives us, including what happens specifically in Avery County throughout the years as the seasons change and melt into the next one! Cold, wintry, snugly warm inside are all descriptive words for winter in the High Country of the Blue Ridge Mountains! And friends, families, businesses, churches, communities all help each other at this extreme time of year! God gave us seasons for work and harvest and for rest...Winter with shorter days and longer nights gives us more time for indoor activities and creating. Reading is a wonderful pastime. The Banner Elk Book Exchange in the old Banner Elk School building is a beautiful place to read quietly in a wonderful library setting and then give books and take books as an exchange. It is open 10-4 T-F during the school year!

Winter in this beautiful county has the highest ski area east of the Mississippi River, Beech Mountain, the highest town, Beech Mountain and the highest county seat, Beech Mountain! Newland is the highest county seat east of the Mississippi River. That's a lot of highest, which explains so much about the unique scenery here and the special people, too!

Also, the National Day of Prayer will be May 7th and the title is "Love One Another! See you at the Newland Town Square at noon on May 7th!  
May your winter be full of rest and wonder in a world of cold!

*Nancy Malik has lived 3 years in Avery County. She is a member of Heaton Christian Church. She has taught creation science to children for many years. She has a radio program M - F, 8:10 am and 12:50 pm on Glory 1130 am radio.*

*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Galatians 3:27*



Looking Ahead While Staying Grounded

By Terry Cheek  
McDowell County



Thanksgiving and Christmas have left us once again looking into a New Year. We all will make resolutions and promises to ourselves, and like the previous years, many of them will become a good intention that just didn't get completed. I'm just being truthful. In most of these cases, there are no serious long-term effects for failing to follow through on these resolutions or promises. I want to challenge you this year to look at the New Year a little differently. Let me share with you an experience I had that ended 2019 and may reshape my entire life and with it a perspective for facing the future.

Thanksgiving Day 2019 during our family meal I experienced numbness on my left side, nothing that really concerned me at the time. I explained away the numbness and didn't see a doctor until the next day. I was hospitalized overnight and after an MRI I found out I had a stroke. I was discharged from the hospital with good wishes and the promise of doctor appointments for follow up.

I'm not sharing this for sympathy, I am sharing it as a testimony of God's work in my life during a difficult time. 2020 is the beginning of a new chapter in our lives, how that chapter begins, and ends will depend a great deal on attitude and Faith!

For the New Year let's take time to evaluate our circumstances. They are constantly changing, sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. If we are born again, whether we are on a mountain top or in a valley, we know the Lord is always with us. As you can imagine I am currently in a valley, but I do not feel like I am in this all alone. Actually, I believe 2020 is going to be a tremendous year and you should too. None of us have a crystal ball to see what the future holds in store, instead, we have something much more valuable. We are heirs to the creator of heaven and earth, the one who not only looks back but looks forward into the future. Think about that for a moment. God knows tomorrow before it gets here. Nothing has ever occurred to God! He is never sitting on His throne and then thinks about Terry, I better check on Terry. No, He already knows where I'm at, what I'm doing, what I'm thinking and what I need. He knows the same about you.

When we look ahead, we should do so understanding that God already knows what January 2020 and beyond looks like and He knows every breath we take from beginning to end. Knowing all of this should cause us to ask; how should we go into the New Year? Let's begin with three simple but productive things.

First, let's go into 2020 with joy in our hearts. Right now, there is a lot going on in our personal lives and in our nation, a lot that can depress and discourage. Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 2:20 "For ye are our glory and joy." Paul found joy in the presence and thoughts of fellow saints. Let's lift up each other joyfully this year. Even in the valleys, there is a great deal to be joyful about. Focusing on the goodness of God and His presence in our lives can only bring joy. Likewise, share that joy with others. It will make a difference. The joyful presence of the Lord will show in our faces and it is contagious. Try it!

Second, let's go into 2020 prayerfully. I'm talking about a dedicated prayer life that continues every day. Begin and end your day in conversation with God! Talk about reducing stress, talk over your deepest concerns with the only One who can really do anything about them. We go to many skilled and gifted professionals seeking solutions for our problems. How often do we first turn our trials and troubles over to the One who can provide the total solution?

Third, let's go into 2020 reading our Bible. I'm convinced this is the one thing all of us can do more of. Our prayer life and our attitude will most definitely improve if our reading of God's word improves. Joy is our attitude toward others, prayer is our communication to God, but reading our Bible is God's communication back to us. We talk to God; He talks to us and our joy increases. Get the picture! Reading for personal devotion is the most rewarding time spent during our day. I personally prefer early morning, fresh out of bed and sipping a cup of coffee while digesting text from my Bible. Of course, I know folks who end their day just peacefully as I begin mine. However, it works for you to go into 2020 reading your Bible.

2020 is a New Year and a chapter in all our lives. For some of us, it begins in a valley and for others, it begins on a mountain top. But for all of us reading this 2020 has begun. Now the question remains, how will we move into it and through it? I hope this article has given you some inspiration for the coming year.

Until we meet again, either in print or in person, may God richly bless you in my prayer.

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

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# Redeemed Free Will Baptist Church

## How Do I Love Thee?

By Patricia Jackson  
McDowell County

Verse 17 in Psalms 103 is one of the great promises of God. "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him". God's mercy will last throughout all time, eternal. God's love is infinite and overreaches man's little time. What an awesome thought. We can't help but remember all His benefits; forgiving our iniquities, healing from diseases, and redeemed our life from eternal damnation. Also renewing our strength like an eagle and "satisfieth thy mouth with good things". It is our duty to praise God for His mercies as we frequently remember them.

V 11 "For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him". What an awesome verse!! As sinners, we desired mercy above all else, and He has forgiven us and put away our transgressions as far as the east is from the west, never to be remembered by Him again! Have you often wondered why God is so merciful to us? We are not always merciful to others who harm us or bring tribulation into our lives. But God never forsakes us, He is always there waiting to help us through life's struggles.

As I pondered on this Psalm, I recalled a poem often used in weddings, written by Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The first verse begins "How do I love thee? Let me count the ways. I love thee to the depth and breadth and height my soul can reach". We can only wonder if she was thinking about Psalm 103 when she penned these words.

Sometimes I am ashamed of how quickly I forget what God has done for me; love me, healed me, fed me, protected and supplied my spiritual and material needs. David's recognizing all God's benefits was a reminder to us not to forget His benefits to us.

As we begin a new year, let's make it a personal goal to give God thanks daily for His many blessings, mercies and most of all that it is everlasting.

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.



Lord Jesus Shall Arrive  
By Joy Baldwin  
Madison County

The store was packed and busy  
The tellers had no smile  
The Heavens getting ready  
Angels watching all the while.

Folks shoving through the angry crowd  
Young men fighting on the streets  
Loud music rang, a baby cried  
Where the smoke and hunger meet.

Our Christ is even at the door  
Oh can they not believe  
That all shall have a just reward  
For good or evil, we'll receive.

Oh, friend, you were created  
To live with God for ere  
Jesus gave His life for you  
He'll hear your every prayer.

They live as if forever here  
Though in the twinkling of an eye  
When Heaven splits wide open  
Lord Jesus shall arrive!



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

# Happy New Year!

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R	I	D	E	R		L	O	U	D		A	C	H	E
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A	T	H	I	E	F		M	O	R	E	O	V	E	R
T	O	O	L		E	D	E	N		A	L	I	N	E
E	L	S	E		R	I	N	G		T	E	N	D	S
N	E	E	D	S		M	E	S	O		N	E	S	T

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## Sudoku Solution

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

## Snow Hill Baptist Church

### No Regrets Family - Something Funny Happened to Me

By Dean Honeycutt  
Mitchell County



Something funny happened to me before Christmas. Pam asked me to go by the Post Office and pick up some Christmas stamps. So, I get to the counter and ask the postal worker for some Christmas stamps and she says do you want Santa Clause, Madonna, or Christmas tree. And I said, "well I definitely do not want Madonna," thinking what an old rock singer has to do with Christmas. Well, the postal worker smiled knowing what I was thinking and said, "not a Madonna", pointing to a collection of stamps picturing Mary holding baby Jesus. Well, at that point, I really felt stupid. So, I came back to the house with the Madonna stamps, because who would pick Santa Clause over Madonna?

Well, it is a New Year and I am very grateful to be a part of it; if things go well the next time, I am writing a February Article, I will be a Grandfather. Pam and I will enter a new phase of life as grandparents and we are so excited. However, I do not feel like a grandfather and hope I do not look like one. How does a Grandfather look? Like my grandfather did old, grey-headed, and he could remove his teeth and his hair. My grandmother told me she put my grandfather's teeth in the cabinet of the night so they would not eat up everything in the house. My Grandparent's house had a distinct smell. It was a good smell, a smell that meant comfort, peace, love, happiness, and a good time. My grandparents were wonderful God-fearing people who I loved dearly. If I can just be half the grandfather my grandfather was to me.

I want to be a great grandfather. I want to help my grandchildren know as much as they can about Jesus. I want to help them have wisdom and understanding. I want to help them love the Lord. At times I feel I should have spent more time with my children, I do not believe you can ever spend too much time with them. It seems when they get their driver's licenses, they are gone. At this point Pam and I have done all the training we can do. Now we are fine-tuning all we have poured into our children. They are almost grown. Hopefully, we have done somethings right and these disciplines and instructions can be instilled in our children's children.

Hopefully, as a grandfather, I can take it a little easier and not be as tough and demanding as I was of my children. I can see myself now feeling sorry for the little princess when she gets into trouble and coming to the rescue, only to get the "don't you dare do it stare" from her parents. But I do not think that will stop me. God is good and He has blessed us tremendously. Life comes in full circles. It is said if you live long enough "twice a child once an adult". And this is true for Pam is now taking care of her dad, and I have never seen someone so devoted to her parents. She does a wonderful job. And this is what the Bible says we are supposed to do "repay our parents." Take care of our parents because they took care of us. The Bible says to "honor your father and your mother." When is the last time you spent time with your parents? My Dad is in heaven and Pam's mom is in heaven and we miss them terribly.

Take time this year to do things of value and that make an eternal impact. Always be mindful of telling others about Jesus. Take the time to be with your family. And do not forget your aging parents. If your parents are gone, try investing time in an aging adult. Treat others as you would want them to treat you. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath. And above all have fun and smile life is too short to frown.

Happy New Year, Live life with No Regrets

Pastor Dean Honeycutt shepherds Snow Hill Baptist Church in Bakersville, NC. He may be reached at 828-385-0213, snowhillbaptist@gmail.com, or visit their website at www.snowhillbaptist.com.



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# Clint's Chronicles on the Funny Farm

Dear friends,

When you're me it's hard to decide which story to share next with 50,000 of my closest friends @ . Oftentimes people are perplexed as to why I am willing to relay tales of my incompetence month after month. I tell them that I am a proof-positive that there is a merciful God Who looks after the fools of this world...and I am chief among them @ .

## The Farmer's Apprentice

It was early October 2010, and time for the Family Fun Festival at Harrell Hill Farms. This annual harvest celebration is truly a wonderful event highlighted by Gospel music, face-painting for children, hayrides, excellent BBQ pork and other goodies, and the making of old-timey sorghum molasses. If you've never attended this country festival, you should make plans to come next year. Anyway, back to the story.

When I came to Harrell Hill Farms in the Spring of 2010, A.D. "Daddy D" Harrell kind of adopted me as somewhat of a "project." Day-to-day I was "in the custody" of Farmer Doug, as you know, but Daddy D. occasionally stepped-in when needed to provide me some special lessons. This was to be such a day as he pulled up to the barn and honked the horn of his Chevy pick-up truck. As always, I went running to see what was on his mind.

"Get in, I wanna show you something," he said with a wry smile. I was usually tentative when summoned this way but knew I was not to question his commands. I climbed into the passenger seat having no idea what would come next.

We meandered up Byrd Road, weaving slightly from left to right (Daddy D's eyesight wasn't what it once was!) until we arrived at Farmer Doug and Barbara's farmhouse and parked in the driveway. "Come on," was my only instruction, and I went.

Daddy D. carried an old, oil-stained brown bag that appeared heavy in one hand. As we approached the front porch he began digging in the bag, first tossing me a couple of worm-riddled "sheep's nose" apples (I think that's what he called them), then he handed me some sticks and dried leaves, and finally unveiled a rusty contraption of some sort. I confess, I quickly identified the first three contents but couldn't imagine what we would do with the ancient, rusty, medieval torture device. Soon I would know.

## Setting the Steel Trap

Please understand, Daddy D's hands were pretty gnarly...I don't mind telling you the man didn't have a single straight digit. I can only imagine how his hands had become so - Ummm, weathered would be a nice term but they were a mess. I once remember him threading his boots with a pair of pliers because his fingers couldn't do it! At any rate, he said "I'm going to tell you what to do, but you have to follow my instructions. I would do this myself, but my fingers can't manipulate the trap like they used to. Now, don't do anything until I tell you." Always the eager learner, I agreed to the challenge.

"Now look," he began, "we've got a groundhog under the porch here and it's digging tunnels all the way under the house. We're going to set this trap to try and get rid of it." By this time, I am getting pretty excited, just think - "Farmer Clint The Trapper" @ . It just had a certain ring to it, don't you think?

Another thing you have to know about Daddy D, he was fun and mischievous much of the time I spent with him, BUT...he was VERY SERIOUS when teaching me things which might be considered dangerous..."Clint, don't ever go into the woods with a chainsaw by yourself, be sure you have a partner!" ... or, "Son, you've gotta watch where you're going with that tractor and hay rake, you're running people off the road down there!" ... "Always check to make sure the power is off on the fence before you climb over!" The warnings were endless.

Daddy D was a long-time educator and was about to crank up his teaching voice. I'm not sure exactly what he planned to say but I have intimate recall of his next comment...to paraphrase, "DANG IT, BOY, YOU'RE GOING TO KILL YOURSELF!" (Oops, I think I made him mad) @ .

You see, in my mind, I already had graduated to "Farmer Clint the Trapper" and had the jaws of that steel monster wide open. As I went to put it on the ground it snapped with the force of a 500 lb. gator, narrowly missing my right hand. And I thought to myself, "Oh yeah, Daddy D said, 'you have to follow my instructions.' Guess I failed that test."

I wiped my brow and looked him in the eye as Daddy D "dressed me down" for a little while longer - a verbal whuppin' I'd earned; then we went about the business of resetting the trap. He, with his very bent fingers actually did the "setting"; I was allowed only to sprinkle a few leaves and twigs in the vicinity. Daddy D put those sheep's head apples nearby as bait. "That'll get the job done," he said. And he winked at me - you know, that 'wink' we get from a parent which actually means, "it's okay now, I still love you, let's move on."

## Back at The Barn

While I was learning to be a groundhog trapper, Farmer Doug and Larry were busy boiling the juice from sorghum cane. This is a very tedious process which requires continuous skimming to remove the various impurities and proteins which rise to the surface. It forms greenish foam - similar to the slime used in Ghost Busters - and it must be scooped into buckets for disposal. Anyway, there were a couple of 5-gallon buckets of what I call "molasses scum" beside the pan. "Hey, Farmer Clint, why don't you take some of that up to the pigs? They will be your friends for life," Farmer Doug laughed. Now that was rather funny since you may remember that I had some rather unpleasant encounters with these aggressive piggies earlier in my stay on the farm.



Obediently, dutifully, I grabbed a bucket of scum and walked to my truck. After having nearly chopped off my hand with a groundhog trap-thingamabob, I was "into" following directions to the letter. So, I left a 5-gallon bucket full of molasses drippings just inside the piggy fence. I looked forward to a new, improved relationship with the hogs after this little gift.

## Too Much of a Good Thing?

It has been said that too much of a good thing can be a bad thing. Apparently, that is true of molasses and piggies.

The next morning, as we enjoyed Doug's patented buckwheat pancakes with molasses mixed with butter, it started:

Doug: "Hey, Clint...Ummm, did you give molasses to the pigs?"  
Me: "Yeah, and they REALLY liked 'em."  
Doug: "Well thanks for that. I wonder, how much did you give 'em?"  
Me: "Just one of the 5-gallon buckets full."  
Doug: "Oh, a WHOLE 5-gallon bucket full?"  
Me: "Yeah, but it was a couple of inches from the top 'cause the rest spilled out into the truck bed."

Doug: "Hmmm..." - now that crooked, wily, half-cocked smile overtaking his face.

Me: "Now what? You tell me to give the pigs some molasses, I give the pigs molasses. Didn't you want me to give them molasses?"

Doug: "Yes, I did. I was thinking more like a cupful in their evening feed. But you gave them 5 gallons, right?"

Me: "Yes I did. Are they okay?"

Doug: "Hmmm, not sure yet. When I drove by all 5 of them were lying on their backs with their feet straight up in the air."

Me: "Dead, are the pigs dead?"

Doug: "Naw, they aren't dead. Not sure if they will be or not since I've never given 5 pigs a 5-gallon bucket of molasses."

Me: "Damn it, Doug, I'm so sorry. I thought you meant...oh never mind @ ."

Doug: "Once again, it's my fault, Clint. I forget that you're still new to the farm; I need to communicate better, to let you know exactly what I'm saying."

You must know that by now I'm feeling pretty much like the village idiot. I'd disappointed Daddy D by nearly severing my arm; now I may have killed Doug's pigs. What next?

Doug: "There's one thing about it, Pollard."

Me: "Yeah, what's that?"

Doug: "If they don't die beforehand, that will be some mighty sweet-tasting BBQ next fall!"

I received that message...my second "wink" of the day. (And those pigs lived until the next October @ ).

Still humbled in the hills,  
Farmer Clint

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The Two Fields of Ruth

By Marlene Houk  
Burke County

Matthew 13:44 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

I live in a rural area, but my husband's family considers me a "city girl." I know nothing about nutrient levels of hay growing in the field, how to breed grass-fed cows, or plan sowing, tending, and reaping for the next five years. Studying the book of Ruth is like looking at two fields: humanity and divinity. God uses the very human story of Ruth because a great teacher begins with the student's current level and then connects the new material. We understand the ideas of farming, poverty, and helplessness as told in the story of Ruth. But, somewhere among the sheaves of daily life, the messages of God lie quietly, waiting to be gleaned by our inexperienced hands. When we pick up a few spiritual stalks of truth, we have entered the other field of Ruth: the field of divinity. It is in this field that we are sufficed with the Bread of Life, and we return to our loved ones, sharing, like Ruth, those "six measures" with which the Lord has fed us!



The Field of Human Reasoning versus The Divine Field of Refocusing on the Lord

My mother-in-law used a valuable antique knife as an everyday tool before a family member informed her it was worth quite a sum. Because she only thought of it as a knife, the larger importance of its heirloom quality was lost to her. Naomi's husband and two sons had died, and she reasoned that God had abandoned her. (Ruth 1:21) The fog of grief clouded her desire to refocus on the Lord. But what she could only trust, we can see. Her story blesses and instructs us 4,000 years later. Even our wedding ceremonies consistently quote Ruth's divine answer to Naomi's question. In ageless and exquisite words, Ruth declares, "Your God shall be my God, and your people my people..." Because Naomi traveled through intense grief, her story becomes a textbook for how to help others walk that endless journey of tears and sadness. The fields of humanity and divinity contrast each other in Ruth's story as we observe the difference between our own reasoning and the far better choice of refocusing on the Lord.

The Human Field of Unknowns versus The Divine Field of Understanding how God speaks

The first time the phone rang as I sat at my desk in a new job, I feared I couldn't answer any question from the caller due to a lack of training. Our lives change constantly and catapult us into unfamiliar territory. We experience change on different levels as we learn to drive different roads, overcome inferiority when meeting new people, and learn to trust God in uncertain times. Ruth entered unfamiliar territory as she moved from Moab to Bethlehem-Judah. Was she wearing acceptable clothes? How did people feel about her ethnicity? Would Naomi's God, and now hers, support her?

As we identify with Ruth's experience in unfamiliar territory, it is helpful to understand how God speaks through scripture. He puts Bible stories about women who have experienced similar things in His sixty-six books. Like Ruth, when we grow in grace and knowledge, the Lord provides many life opportunities to test our new-found truths. God uses a change in our lives to help us practice our new spiritual concepts. Have we learned the valuable lesson of trust like Ruth? Then, the Lord arranges life so that we have an opportunity to trust Him in our next decision. Have we determined our Romans 12 spiritual gift? Then the Lord will lead us to a church where our gift is desperately needed. All we need to do is look at life through God's perspective. The women in the Bible richly illustrate growing in grace and knowledge.

The Human Field of Terminal thinking versus the Divine Field of Tracking Him in our lives

Naomi had terminal thinking when she saw God as a vengeful and distant king. As she moved through her story, we can track God's gracious guidance of her life and His abundant blessings despite her despair.

Naomi looked at her life as a stone wall, not as a pointer to greater spiritual treasures that she could unearth in the field of her circumstances. Her stone wall had huge rocks labeled widow, barren, and penniless. Instead of seeing them as stepping stones to a richer relationship with the LORD, she saw them as piled high and blocking her path to happiness.

However, we can track God in our lives by seeking His perspective. His viewpoint comes from realizing our blessings, growing spiritually through the treasures found in our trials, and the promises in His Word. The two fields of Terminal Thinking and Tracking God become obvious in the book of Ruth when we realize that we can, through Naomi's story, see beyond her circumstances. She encourages me to rise from my pit of despair and look up to the field of divinity where I can reap peace, the purpose for my pain, and eternal riches. Good!!

The Human Field of Holding patterns versus The Divine Field of Habits that are Christlike

Naomi, the reapers, and the nearer kinsman all had very human thoughts that became holding patterns, limiting their faith. Naomi, despite her cultural legacy of having been reared as a Jewess, struggled with her outlook on life. She sank into a holding pattern of complaint and bitterness. She indeed needed Ruth to pull her out, and Ruth excelled. The reapers only considered Ruth as a Moabitish damsel, certainly not God-sent. God saw her as a valuable part of His creation, but this idea never occurred to them. They stood astonished at Boaz's treatment of her because it trampled their preconceived ideas of ethnic prejudice. What an about-face they surely demonstrated when Ruth produced the next heir to his vast wealth! In contrast to these characters' holding patterns of human reasoning, Ruth broke through those dreary habits that often chain us to life's daily grind. She developed Christ-like habits that encouraged her to develop a habit of godly thinking. She is immortalized as an example to us in the 21st century of God's rewards to those who discipline themselves to be holy.

The next time you read the book of Ruth, think beyond the story to the two fields presented in this tiny book: the field of humanity, and the field of divinity. Your eyes will be opened as Naomi and Ruth encourage you to look beyond your circumstances to the divine hand of God in your life.

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Marlene Houk is a regular contributor to Blue Ridge Christian News. Her passion is to delve deeply into the truths of Bible women and to discuss those in Bible Studies called Backstage Pass to Bible Women. She and her husband discover joy, nurture, and challenge in their church. Her contact is marlenehouk@bellsouth.net. Learn more about women in the Bible at Marlene's website: [www.MarleneHouk.com](http://www.MarleneHouk.com)



# Obedient Heart Fellowship

## Alice in Kingdom Land?

By Jim Huskins  
McDowell County

In the classic Lewis Carroll tale, Alice follows a white rabbit down a hole and finds herself in Wonderland. Everything about the place is surreal. At some point, Alice asks the Cheshire Cat to give her directions. The Cat answers, "That depends a great deal on where you want to go."

Alice responds, "Oh, I don't much care."  
The Cat replies, "Then it does not matter which way you go."  
Alice insists, "But I want to get somewhere."

"Oh," answers the cat, "You are sure to do that."  
The month of January is named for Janus, the Roman god of doorways. He is depicted with two faces, one looking forward, and one looking back. In pagan Rome, he was the god of beginnings. The dead of winter may be a good time to ask ourselves where we are and where we are headed. If the congregation with which you associate gets and where you are going, where will you be? Modern churches face a range of possible destinations.

One of the most popular involves terms like "mega" or "friendly" or "seeker driven." This destination has many adherents because it has many attractions. These groups usually worship in huge, up-to-date facilities with the technical capabilities of the best concert venues. They feature young and beautiful people providing professional music, dance, and drama. Bright, articulate, entertaining speakers are the main focus. Comfortable seats tend to be filled with the wealthy, the famous, the powerful...and those who want to be. Success is expressed in numbers.

Another destination is weekly group therapy. These assemblies are only a half-step removed from meetings that begin: "Hi, I'm Jim, and I'm a recovering... whatever." Many come for empowerment to confront the monkey on their back. Some seek indulgence as they let the beast ride.

Some congregations focus on "contemporary" values. This might include prosperity gospel, social opportunities for the lonely, or deliverance from guilt without the inconvenience of repentance.

Other groups focus on social justice and community service but place little stress on spiritual rejuvenation and the Biblical call that Christ's followers should lead holy lives. They work to improve people's "condition" but do not call anyone to present their body as a living sacrifice.

Some churches stress salvation and tithing, but they provide little or no discipleship training. As a result, few step away from the foot of the cross or learn what it means to love God and their neighbor.

Too many congregations decide that their only option is maintaining, keeping up the building, mowing the lawn, holding on to their few remaining families; going through the same rituals again and again.

Congregations can change direction. Change grows from core convictions. Is sin so serious that it separates us from our Holy Creator? What is the incarnation and how does it impact my life? What does it mean to: "Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you?"

In a sense, you do not have to be concerned about these questions. Your church will choose a destination. That choice will be defined intentionally, or it will come about through passive disengagement. If it does not matter to you where your congregation ends, then head in any direction. You are bound to get somewhere. But if the destination matters, then I suggest that you distinguish between the wise and the foolish.

T. S. Elliot was a pessimistic fellow, but he was wise. Here is his assessment of the modern age: "Where is the life we've lost in living? Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we've lost in information? The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries bring us farther from God and nearer to the dust."

God's Word speaks to all our needs. Consider Proverbs 4:7-9. "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding. Exalt her; and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to honor when thou dost embrace her. She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace: a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee."

Jesus spoke often about wisdom and foolishness: The wise man built his house on a rock. Wise bridesmaids made adequate preparations. A certain man was so wealthy that he could not store all his possessions. He decided to build larger warehouses. Jesus said, "You foolish one. This night your soul is required of you." From the cross, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them. They do not know what they are doing. They are foolish."

Psalms 119:11 says, "I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you." Psalm 119:34 teaches: "Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart." These are wise choices. They result in the proper direction.

Louise Fletcher Tarkington once said, "I wish there were some wonderful place called the land of beginning again. Where all our mistakes, and all our heartaches, and all of our poor selfish grief could be dropped like a shabby old coat at the door and never put on again."

Perhaps this year named for perfect vision presents an opportunity for each of us to read the Bible from beginning to end with open minds and hearts. Those divine, ancient words can direct us on paths of wisdom and righteousness. Who needs resolutions when Jesus tells us near the end of His book, "Behold, I am making all things new."

Obedient Heart Fellowship believes that the entire Bible is true and relevant. We accept salvation by grace through faith in Jesus, and we attempt to love and serve Him by keeping his commandments. See Revelation 14:12. We meet each



Sabbath—Seventh Day—in Marion. 11:00 A.M. We are currently seeking a meeting location. 828-460-7913

Jim & Beverly Huskins are members of Obedient Heart Fellowship.

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Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them:  
because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the  
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Veteran's Services & DSS Collaborate  
to Better Serve Mitchell County Veterans  
Mitchell County

Our mission at America Serves is to catalyze and instill a sustainable, community-based commitment to care coordination for America's military-connected members and their families. We do so by providing innovative strategies and expert community navigation with those who are also committed to improving engagement, access, and effective collaborative relationships ultimately benefiting the nation's all-volunteer armed forces, veterans, and their families.

America Serves does this through a series of centers placed throughout the country. The coordination centers are community-based and are hosted by a variety of human service organizations. In Western North Carolina, the coordination center is based on Veterans Service of the Carolinas and offers programs to assist Veterans, Family Members and Caregivers in Housing, Employment and Care Coordination. The NCServes Western Coordination Center was added to the Organization in 2017 and is based in Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry, more specifically the Veterans Service of the Carolinas. This center has been a crucial piece in assisting Veterans and their families holistically. Care Coordinators and Intake Specialists in the Coordination Center can send and receive referrals for all human service needs thru an electronic platform, Unite Us.

Utilizing UniteUs allows us to assist more efficiently as we can connect beneficiaries to resources in real-time. UniteUs is also able to give coordinated care to these Veterans while improving the efficacy of financial resources by having access to track provider, service, and outcome data. Ultimately, UniteUs is able to track who gets that money, how it's being spent, and who is accessing services.

Collaborating with community partners such as Mitchell County DSS and Veteran Services is crucial because it extends our reach, making access more accommodating to those living in more rural communities. Providers like Mitchell County DSS and Veteran Services can send referrals to the coordination center for services such as health care, education, housing, employment, benefits, recreation, and legal services. These referrals are then triaged to other network providers who can meet needs.

As a result of our collaboration with Mitchell County DSS and Veterans Services we have access to a network of over 90 providers in Western North Carolina and 250 individual users who have been trained on the platform to send and receive referrals. Through this partnership, both organizations are looking to enhance the services that are available to veterans, family members, and caregivers in the Mitchell County area. Mitchell County DSS and Veterans Services will be able to utilize the UniteUs platform to send and receive referrals for veterans, family members, and caregivers they are currently serving.

Mitchell County DSS and Veterans Services are already doing great work in the area and serving the community in an impactful way and through this collaboration, we hope the Veterans in Mitchell County are utilizing resources available to them as well as identify gaps and barriers.



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 rambunctious son named Jim. 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 communicated with God.

I have no doubt that my parents' unswerving love for Jesus Christ, renewed by daily conversation with Him, in turn, cemented their own deep 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 thanks, 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 follow their horoscopes, attempting to manipulate an unidentified "higher power." One of my friends teasingly admits that he utters a prayer each morning on the way to work when he passes the doughnut shop. He knows it is unhealthy to eat the greasy pastries, but he loves them dearly. Therefore, he asks the Lord for permission to indulge himself each day. He'll say, "If it is Your will that I have a doughnut this morning, let there be a parking space available as I circle the block." If no spot can be found for his car, he circles 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 anxiety, and in periods of praise we have shared this wonderful privilege of talking directly to our heavenly Father. What a concept! No appointment is needed to enter into His presence. We don't have to go through His subordinates or bribe His secretaries. He is simply there, whenever we bow together 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 1983, after years of discomfort and a vague sense of spiritual unrest, Christian recording artist Steve Green poured out his heart to the Lord in prayer and experienced a spiritual renewal. Just a few weeks later, his wife, Marijean, did the same thing. For the first time in their marriage, the Greens 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 and tying us together. Our 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*



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How Democrats and Republicans differ on impeachment: 'Ideas shape the course of history'

By Jim Denison

The lawyer for House Judiciary Committee Democrats told the committee yesterday that evidence for President Trump's impeachment is "overwhelming" and "uncontradicted" and stated that it "cannot be disputed." The Republicans' lawyer, by contrast, stated: "This unfair process reflects the degree to which Democrats are obsessed with impeaching President Trump by any means necessary."

Unsurprisingly, 83.2 percent of Democrats support impeaching the president, while only 9.1 percent of Republicans agree.

The Saudi gunman and polyamorous families

The Saudi gunman who killed three people at the Pensacola naval base apparently went on Twitter shortly before the shooting to blast US support of Israel and accuse America of being anti-Muslim. This was reported by a US official as the FBI confirmed it is operating on the assumption that the attack was an act of terrorism.

In other news, a twenty-year-old woman from Jacksonville, Florida, is expecting her first child. Here's what makes her story unusual: the father is one of four men with whom she is in a polyamorous relationship. She told reporters that the five plans to raise the child together as a family.

Meanwhile, an article in The Federalist warns that "male transjacking will ultimately end women's sports." The column cites a biological male who competes in women's mixed martial arts and recently shattered a competitor's eye socket. It also names Gabrielle Ludwig, a six-foot-six-inch biological male who starts on the women's basketball team at Mission College in California and "mysteriously led the league in rebounds," among other examples.

"Ideas shape the course of history."

One hundred years ago, a little-known British economist published a book protesting the Versailles treaty that brought the First World War to its conclusion. John Maynard Keynes correctly foresaw the chaos that led to the rise of Nazi Germany.

The now-famous public intellectual was right: "Ideas shape the course of history."

Democrats and Republicans obviously have very different views regarding the impeachment of the president. Jihadist ideas continue to inflame conflict here and around the world. And the crescendo of support for polyamory and "gender fluidity" in our culture is manifested daily in the news.

"You rise at dawn and hurry to carry them out"

The significance of ideas is one of the most dominant ideas in the word of God as well.

For instance, Micah 2 warns: "What sorrow awaits you who lie awake at night, thinking up evil plans" (v. 1a NLT). Why is such private sin so deadly? Because "you rise at dawn and hurry to carry them out" (v. 1b NLT).

Sinful actions are preceded by sinful thoughts. Therefore the battle for the mind is so crucial.

An example: Because the Israelites living on the eastern side of the Jordan River "broke faith with the God of their fathers, and whored after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them" (1 Chronicles 5:25), the Lord "took them into exile" (v. 26).

And another: Micah 3:5 warns of "the prophets who lead my people astray, who cry 'peace' when they have something to eat, but declare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths." Here we learn that prosperity can deceive us into thinking all is well with God when all is well with us.

"There are only two kinds of people in the end"

God wants to speak his truth to and through us, as Micah testified: "But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin" (Micah 3:8). But we must be submitted to his Spirit to hear his voice.

Here's how: "Let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths" (Micah 4:2). When we make time to be with God and learn his ways, we will "walk in his paths." But only then.

Our Lord envisions a future when the nations "shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore" (v. 3). But so long as God is a Sunday hobby, an option for those who choose to be "religious," our culture will not and cannot experience the peace and purpose he alone can give.

C. S. Lewis notes in The Great Divorce: "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.'"

"One thing is necessary"

In a recent First15 devotional, Craig Denison focuses on the narrative in Luke 10 where Jesus visited Mary and Martha. While Mary "sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching" (v. 39), "Martha was distracted with much serving" (v. 40). Jesus said of Mary's focus on him: "One thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken from her" (v. 42).

It is true that we need what Martha does. Meals must be prepared; work must be done. However, it is also true that our culture values Martha over Mary. We are



known for what we do more than for who and Whose we are.

Craig notes: "If it's really true that only one thing is necessary, we need to fight for that one thing above all else. We need to devote ourselves to sitting at the feet of Jesus above every other pursuit."

In a Martha culture, have you made time to be like Mary yet today?

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

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## All Things New

By Caron Cline  
Burke County

Purchasing or receiving something new tends to stimulate the most complacent or apathetic individual. The human heart bores easily and even the most content admit that the thought of a new car, house, job, etc. tends to cause that heart to pick up its pace. Each year we anticipate the Thanksgiving season, followed immediately by the season of Advent, with all its festivities and fellowship with loved ones. As the year draws to a close, we turn our thoughts to the coming of a new year. What will the future bring? Will it be exciting or could danger be lurking ahead? Regardless of the uncertainty, we charge boldly into the future with optimism and purpose. The bottom line is: we love a new beginning.

Where does this desire originate? Could it come from our heavenly Father? As we navigate the Scriptures, we find that God loves new things! The word 'new' is used approximately 150 times in the Bible. His intent is to bestow upon His children new things; new gifts! When God called Moses to return to Egypt as the deliverer of His people, Moses wondered if the people would receive him as their leader. We read these words in Exodus 3:13-14, "Then Moses said to God, 'If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you', and they ask me, 'What is His name?' 'what shall I say to them?' " God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM'. These words teach us that God is always in the present. He is in the 'now' and therefore, with Him, all things are new. This principle provided for the children of Israel as Moses led them through the wilderness for 40 years. Neither their clothes nor their sandals ever wore out although the desert heat and rough terrain should have taken a vicious toll upon them. Miraculously, these basic necessities retained their newness.

Unfortunately, we live in a fallen world and in a body of death. God has not chosen to repeat the wilderness miracle in our world today. Sin has taken its toll on everything within our sight and, in the natural, all that surrounds us is spiraling downward. Thankfully, as believers, we walk by faith and not by sight, standing on the promises of God of new things to come.

However, Jesus promised that if we received Him as Lord and Savior, we would have a new beginning, known as being born again. 2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us that "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come". These words seem to echo a similar thought from the prophet Isaiah in chapter 43, verse 18-19, "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"

How amazing to realize that we can become new people with new hearts and new minds! The New Covenant that Jesus made with His Father by pouring out His own blood for us opened the door for these new hearts. God spoke through Jeremiah of this New Covenant and explained it in this manner: "...after those days, declares the Lord, I will put My law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God and they will be My people...for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more". We have been made new!

Another wonderful promise from our Father was also conveyed through the prophet Jeremiah in Lamentations 3:22-23: "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness". Who doesn't need new mercies every morning? What a wonderful promise!

Lastly, we have the greatest promise of all. In the book of the Revelation, chapter 21, we read of our future home. Every believer will someday dwell in a new heaven and a new earth where righteousness will reign. "And He who was seated on the throne said, 'Behold, I am making all things new'".

As we slip into 2020, the potential for success and prosperity is equal to our potential for loss and devastation. However, in the spiritual, we are constantly being renewed and moving from glory to glory.

Walk in newness of life! The future is bright!

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

Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. John 14:6



## Come to God's Table

By Joyce Meyer



In Psalm 42:5 (AMP), the psalmist asked, "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become restless and disturbed within me?" It seems that many people often feel this way. Because of the pressures of everyday life—in our work, finances, our homes or relationships—there is some form of depression, discouragement, or discontentment in almost everyone you see.

But it really doesn't have to be that way. We do not need to live our lives in despair, restless or disturbed. We can be content, encouraged and joyful even in the midst of troubles.

For many years I felt bad about myself because of the abuse I endured for most of my childhood. I felt damaged and ashamed and focused more on what I did wrong than anything else. That is until I came to an understanding of who I am in Christ.

You see, what we think of ourselves has a lot to do with how we feel about ourselves. And when you give your life to Christ, you don't have to be mad at yourself because you don't do everything right. You can enjoy your life even while you have a problem!

The question is, can you see yourself the way God sees you—the way He says you are in His Word? Will you trust the Holy Spirit to work in you until you can see it? Don't worry...you don't have to wait until He's done; the work is ongoing. You just need to trust Him.

## Come to the Table

In a book I read about shepherds and sheep, it talks about how a shepherd will go to the "tablelands," a high plateau that is difficult to reach but where it is good, healthy grass for the sheep to graze. He goes and "prepares" the land by removing any poisonous grasses and flowers that could harm the sheep. In Psalm 23:5 (NIV), David says, "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows." And 2 Samuel, chapter 9 tells a beautiful story that conveys how welcome we are at the table of the king.

After the deaths of King Saul and his son Jonathan, David began to search for someone from the bloodline of Saul, to whom he could show favor to honor his friend Jonathan (2 Samuel 9:1). He just wanted to be good to someone in Saul and Jonathan's family on Jonathan's behalf.

David found out that Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, was still alive. But he was told that the young man had "issues." His feet were lame. That was no matter to King David, who sent for Mephibosheth to be brought to him.

Mephibosheth came before King David in fear and shame, bowing and asking, "What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?" (v.8 NIV). Many of us come to God that way because we do not feel good enough or that we deserve God's love and mercy.

I felt this way for a long time, so I understand what it's like. But we don't have to clean ourselves up to come to God, because the truth is, we can't make ourselves good enough in our own effort or strength. God wants us to come to Him just as we are, and then He will change the things about us that need to be changed as we grow in our relationship with Him.

David assured Mephibosheth, saying, "Don't be afraid, for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table" (v. 7 NIV).

The last verse of that chapter says, "Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem because he always ate at the king's table; he was lame in both feet" (NIV). What a beautiful account of unconditional love, acceptance and redemption!

## You Are Always Welcome

This can be our story as well. As Psalm 23:5 says, God's table has been prepared for us in the presence of all our enemies—all our issues and problems. The Lord welcomes us to His table and anoints our heads with oil, a symbol of the Holy Spirit, who refreshes and energizes our hearts. And He continually fills our cup to overflowing!

When we live in God's presence, our "cup"—our life—will overflow with His love, grace, mercy, and every other good thing He has for us. The Lord is a Good Shepherd, and there is no reason for you to feel insecure, ashamed or fearful before Him. You are always welcome at His table, in the presence of God!

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



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## Mirror, Mirror On The Wall...

By Steve Bietz  
Burke County

Although lots of portraits of Queen Elizabeth exist, she did not pose for many of them. If she disliked a particular picture, she would have it destroyed.

Her Secretary of State, Robert Cecil, an astute diplomat, worded it carefully... "Many painters have done portraits of the Queen but none has actually shown her looks or charms. Therefore, her Majesty commands all manner of persons to stop doing portraits of her until a clever painter has finished one which all other painters can copy. Her Majesty, in the meantime, forbids the showing of any portraits which are ugly until they are improved."

So, what did Queen Elizabeth really look like? Quotes from her visitors to her court shed some light.

In her Twenty-Second Year: "Her figure and face are handsome; she has such an air of dignified majesty that no one could ever doubt that she is queen."

In her Twenty-Fourth Year: "Although her face is comely rather than handsome, she is tall and well-formed, with good skin, although swarthy; she has fine eyes and above all, a beautiful hand with which she makes a display."

In her Thirty-Second Year: "Her hair was more reddish than yellow, curled naturally in appearance."

In her Sixty-Fourth Year: "When anyone speaks of her beauty, she says she was never beautiful. Nevertheless, she speaks of her beauty as often as she can."

In her Sixty-Fifth Year: "Her face is oblong, fair but wrinkled; her eyes small, yet black and pleasant; her nose a little hooked; her teeth black; she wore false hair and that red."

By the way, historians tell us Queen Elizabeth ate sugar almost constantly and it turned her teeth black. It is also known that she contracted smallpox in 1562 at the age of 29 which left her face scarred. She took to wearing white lead make up to cover the scars. Then, in her later years, she suffered the loss of her hair and her teeth. It was at this same time that she commanded that all the mirrors in her rooms be removed. If she was to travel from the palace to any other location, and she was very active late in life, Elizabeth required that before her arrival, all mirrors must be removed from the place.

Indeed, mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest of them all? James describes the law of God as a mirror. "For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was." James 1:22, 23. The law, like a mirror, tells us if our spiritual face is dirty or our lives are sin stained. If the spiritual mirror tells us that our face is soiled and needs washing, what will you and I do to remedy the situation? Try to wash our face for the mirror? Or maybe hide the Holy mirror because it reveals a sad fact that is disagreeable. Neither course of action would clean our faces.

We must discover the true relationship existing between the law of God and the Gospel. On one side there are those that insist that by strictly keeping the law of God we may somehow, someday, earn God's gift of salvation. That wouldn't be much of a gift, would it? Romans 3:20 tells us that no one is going to work his way into heaven merely because he outwardly keeps the commandments of God. Still, others contend that the claims of God's law must be forever banished if one is to enjoy the full freedom of the gospel. This they claim, in spite of God claiming that His law is holy and just and good. (Romans 7:12)

Both ditches will get us lost. God's law has a very important role for all of us. It reveals sin and impresses upon us our need for a Redeemer that can cleanse us. No, the law cannot wash and save us; it merely points out sin in our lives. Only Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, can save us. The law is God's sin detector, for "by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20) It is the straight edge of the Law that shows us how crooked we are.

The apostle Paul declared that a glimpse of the commandments revealed to him his own sin: "I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law said, thou shalt not covet." Romans 7:7.

Have you and I looked at the mirror on the wall known as the Ten Commandments recently? Don't have all of God's mirrors removed from your house. Instead, may we look at the mirror of God's law often, and then run to Christ so that we can be forgiven, and our dirty faces cleansed. We may even come to the point that the Psalmist reached in his relationship with the commandments of God when he said: "Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day." Psalm 119:97.

Steve Bietz, Pastor, Morganton Seventh day Adventist Church.



## Fresh Start...New Beginnings

By Chris Rathbone  
Mitchell County



Happy New Year everyone! As always, it's hard to believe that another year has passed and here we are in 2020. It seems as though the Thanksgiving and Christmas season came and went so quickly and here we are in a new year. We have been richly blessed by the Lord in that He has seen us through another year. No doubt 2019 had its ups and downs. But here we are, alive to face another year with Jesus. As we reflect on last year, I'm sure that many of us have had many challenges. There are some who faced financial or career changes. Some, out of nowhere, had changes to their health situation. For many, no doubt, the passing of a loved one seemed to change everything in your life. There were situations that none of us saw coming nor had we planned for such events in our lives. However, by God's grace and with Jesus by our side, we made it.

Even with all the challenges we faced, let us not forget the blessings of the previous year! Well, we are still alive! That's a big one in itself! We made through 2019 with food to eat, clothes on our back, a roof over our heads, a job, electricity, transportation, etc. And guess what? Those aren't even the best blessings we had! There's our family, our friends, our church families, all those people in our lives that we love. When times were hard, we had someone there by our side to help us along the way, to pray with us and for us. We were fortunate enough to have a church family to worship our Savior with us. The fellowship of the believers is such a blessing from God. God is good, even when life is hard, God is good.

As we reflect on last year we are also looking forward to the future. We may not know what lies ahead in this upcoming year, but we do know the One who does! We often make a lot of plans for a New Year. Plans to change some bad habits and start some good ones. The number of diet plans that start on January 1st would make our heads spin. I'd say that diet and exercise resolutions are at the top of the list and are also at the top for being a resolution that is broken. We have become a culture that is obsessed with physical health while we ignore our spiritual health. Billions of dollars are spent each year on "healthy living". Gym memberships, exercise equipment, nutrition plans, personal trainers, vitamins, organic foods, oils, meds, miracle creams, etc. Infomercials promise results that no one else can deliver. Now don't get me wrong, I certainly believe that diet and exercise bring benefits into our lives and certainly help us feel better. That's something I strive to do myself, although it's certainly a struggle sometimes. The mistake we make is emphasizing physical health while ignoring our spiritual health.

The physical bodies that you and I live in are temporary. Every single one of us, apart from Jesus coming for His church, has an appointment with death. We will leave this world for heaven or hell through physical death. There's no escaping it apart from Jesus coming and if you're lost without Jesus there's no escape at all! While it is beneficial for us to have healthy habits, those benefits are only temporary. Regardless of how healthy we eat, how much we exercise, how many vitamins we take; we will all continue to grow older. We cannot stop the aging process no matter how hard we try. The most important thing is that we have placed our faith in Jesus as our Savior and whether we leave this world when Jesus comes or through death, we are ready!

Now I know you're probably thinking, "Good grief preacher, can you give us a little encouragement?" Well, I'm glad you asked! The challenge before us in this New Year shouldn't be focused just on our physical health, but on the most important thing in our lives: our relationship with Jesus. The apostle Paul wrote in 1st Timothy 4:8 "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Paul isn't saying that there is no "profit" to physical exercise, he's saying that it is only temporary. "Godliness", or the spiritual part of our lives has benefits in this life and the life to come. In other words, the priority should be on the spiritual and not just the physical.

This new year let's get our priorities where they should be. Yes, we can strive to eat right and exercise for the temporary benefits it brings in this life. But how bout we strive for godliness. Those things that will bring us benefits both now and in eternity. How much better this year before us could be if we pray more, study more, worship more and witness more. What if we decide we are going to seek the kingdom of God first? What great blessings we could all be if we decide to serve in our local church instead of just being a pew warmer! Let's resolve to live Godly in Christ and let Him cause the rest to fall in place! We have been given a New Year, let's live it for the glory of Jesus!

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



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## New Year, New Plans, New You

By Phillip Greene  
Avery County



*"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. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."* Romans 12:1, 2 (KJV)

With the New Year beginning, I got to thinking about resolutions and how many of us make them, but they rarely make it through the first month. When many make resolutions, it involves a dramatic change to their lives; a change to habits or diet.

One thing that always seems to happen is a drastic effort to start the year, an effort to attack this new plan they have with zeal. Many lose sight of their goals early on due to the lack of instant results. They lose the zeal to fight for their goals when a small setback comes their way.

Face it, we've all found ourselves evaluating our lives at the end of each year, wondering what we could have done to make our lives better and figuring new ways to improve ourselves.

With the passing of each year comes the passing of old ways. Many make resolutions in an effort to succeed in the coming months. There are those who plan to lose weight, those that are dead set on starting that new workout plan, and those that vow to make little improvements in their daily life.

The Christian life is one that is similar to the coming of a new year. In the years of our lives, we face a new year when we accept Jesus as our personal Savior. The old is passing away to the new, and our resolution is simple...to become like Christ!

*"28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified."* Romans 8:28-30 (NIV)

This statement to the Romans by Paul tells us as Christians that we all have the same "New Year's" resolution. God calls us His children; he has known each of us since we were in our mother's womb. David tells us in Psalm 134 who was foreknown -

*"13 For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."* Psalm 139:13-14 (NIV)

So we know that God has made the resolution for us, and Paul tells us what that is letting us know is that we are to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus, and we are called, justified, and glorified according to his will. So this year make the resolution to be what God has called you to be.... put away the old, and let the new come in.

*"17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"* 1 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

I want to encourage you to take inventory and set spiritual goals. What are your plans to further the Kingdom of God in 2020?

Continue in Romans chapter 12, starting in verse 9 where we see the marks of a servant: *"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."* Romans 12:9-21 (KJV)

Look over this list and look deep within your heart to see if you have goals for your Christian walk that coincide with these marks.

Get your fire burning in 2020. Fan the flames and let the Lord work through you to accomplish your goals and turn your heart over to the King of Kings.

What will you do for the Lord in 2020?

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





The Enduring Gospel

By Dr. Tom Walker  
McDowell County

Rev 14:6-7 reads: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."

The Gospel can be described by using many descriptive words. Here are a few of them found in the New Testament. It is called "the Gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24), the Gospel of His Son (Rom. 1:9), the Gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16), the Gospel of peace (Rom. 10:15), the Gospel of the uncircumcision and the Gospel of circumcision (Gal. 2:7), the Gospel of your salvation (Eph. 1:13), the hope of the Gospel (Col. 1:23), the glorious Gospel (1 Timothy 1:11), and in Revelation 14:6 the everlasting Gospel."

Everlasting should not be difficult to define. It means continuous, forever or permanent. It means to continue without stopping or to continue to exist forever. If you divide up the word it has two parts "ever" and "lasting". The Gospel of Christ is good news now and according to the verse before us, it will last forever.

Our opening verses involve the seventh seal being opened. The victory of God's Lamb is assured in these verses. This "everlasting Gospel" will be preached to the entire world in the end time. I believe this vision symbolizes preaching the truth of Christ to the entire world. Remember that the time John the Revelator presents in these two verses will be a time when Jews are going to be scattered all over the earth. They will have to flee because of the intense persecution by the Antichrist, the Man of Sin.

There will be 144,000 Jews who will be witnessing among God's chosen people- the Jews. They will go into the wilderness areas where those people will flee for safety. The population of the earth will probably be smaller at that time, due to devastation upon the earth, and many areas will become uninhabited.

In addition, there will be many Gentiles converted also during the tribulation period. The Lord's true followers are not silent. If those witnesses decide to be silent, God can use angelic beings to proclaim the Gospel of God's dear Son, as is pictured in our two text verses.

Having set the background for this passage, let's look at these two verses in depth.

There Is A Message to Give

That message is an everlasting Gospel. However, many today are changing the message of the Gospel from how it was originally intended to be understood. Today's gospel in many places is a social gospel; not one that is built upon the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ. What is the social gospel? It is a religious movement that arose in the United States in the late nineteenth century with the goal of making the Christian churches responsive to social problems, such as poverty and prostitution. Leaders of the movement argued that Jesus' message was as much about social reform as about salvation. We should do our part to cure societies' ills, but the main thing we should do is give out the Gospel message.

The message of this angel is an everlasting message. It should be noted that the word "angel" literally means "messenger," and that it is used at times to refer to men, as in the seven letters in chapters 2 and 3. The context must determine whether the angel is a man or a spirit-being. The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as a message will never need revision. It simply stands as it is and it always will, continuously and will not end. As I have written before, gospel means "good news." "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20). "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). "[Christ] whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28).

We must give out the Gospel to others. If we do not do so, who will? It is the assignment of God to the church to be witnesses of who He is and what He can do.

The Message Is For All Nations

Rev 14:6 "...To preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Everyone on earth needs to hear the message we have to give to them. It is obvious the Lord has a world view; that is, He is interested in all mankind coming to a knowledge of the truth. I do not know how the Lord could have made His desires and intentions clearer known.

One of the most outstanding features of the Gospel of Christ is that it is for every man. The Bible reminds us that Jesus tasted death for every man (Heb. 2:9). The Scriptures also tell us that God so loved the world, meaning that He loves and cares about all of humanity (John 3:16). To say Jesus loves some people and does not love or care about others is a misunderstanding of the Word of God and the very nature of God. When I was a little boy in church, we used to sing a song in Sunday School and Bible School that said, "Red and yellow black and white, they're all precious in His sight, Jesus loves the little children of the world."

The Message Will Be Declared

As we read verse 7, the content of this message delivered during the tribulation

continued on page 46



Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 1 John 4:1



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Are You Shifting The Blame?

By Shawn Thomas

*"The people spoke against God and Moses, 'Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this miserable food.'" (Numbers 21:5)*

Numbers 21:4 says the people of Israel "became impatient because of the journey" in the wilderness. But as people often do, they vented their anger in the wrong direction. Verse 5 says that "The people spoke against God and Moses, 'Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die ...?'" Why were they blaming "God and Moses"? The reason they were dying in the wilderness was entirely their own fault. Numbers 14 tells us that the people refused to enter the Canaan at the direction of the Lord through Moses, so God sentenced them to die in the wilderness instead of inheriting the Promised Land (14:35). It was not God's fault they were floundering and dying in the wilderness. It was their own.

But like many of us today, the people of Israel were looking for someone else to blame. It can be hard to own up to our mistakes, so we often look to "shift the blame" to someone else: our spouse, child, a supervisor, co-worker, a classmate — or even, like Israel here, to God Himself.

Are you doing this? Are you suffering the consequences of your own disobedience to God in some area of your life, but you have not been willing to admit it? Is there someone you have been angry with — maybe even God? — instead of admitting that you have brought this upon yourself? If so, you never will make any progress before God or man, until you first stop trying to shift the blame.

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



The Good Shepherd

By Tracey Jessup

*"My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand." — John 10:27-28*

It is a fear of every parent who has ever sent a child to college. It is the concern of anyone who works in higher education. And while safety and security are a priority for every campus, unfortunately, tragic events still happen. On Tuesday evening in May 2019, it happened close to home at the University of North Carolina — Charlotte (UNCC). A leader from Charlotte's Interspersed campus ministry was speaking at the student-led worship service at Gardner-Webb University that same night and two UNCC students came with him. As details related to the shooting continued to unfold, Neal Payne, associate minister to the university, as well as students who gathered to worship, prayed over these new friends from UNCC on behalf of our nearby sister institution of higher education.

We later learned that two students were killed, including 21-year-old Riley Howell. Police on Wednesday saluted Howell as a hero for having the courage to fight the gunman. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Chief of Police Kerr Putney said at a news conference, Howell "took the fight to the assailant" and "took the assailant off his feet." If Howell had not done what he did, Putney said the assailant "may not have been disarmed." Unfortunately, he gave his life in the process, but his sacrifice saved lives."

Family and friends spoke of Howell as one who always put others before himself. His mother told NBC's Today show, "While kids were running one way, our son turned and ran toward the shooter. If he was in the room when something like that was happening, and he had turned away, he wouldn't have been able to live with himself."

The context for today's passage includes the Parable of the Good Shepherd in which Jesus makes the statement, "I am the good shepherd...and I lay down my life for the sheep...No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord" (John 10:14, 18). The sacrifice of Christ offers eternal life to all who believe. We hear His voice, we are known by Christ, and we follow Him.

Then Jesus makes this wonderful promise - "And no one will snatch them out of my hand" (v. 28). No greater safety or security is imaginable for the follower of Christ. This assurance is reinforced again when Jesus says, "What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand" (v. 29).


Theologian Elisabeth Johnson writes, "The abundant life of which Jesus speaks is not necessarily about abundance in years, or in wealth, or status, or accomplishments. It is a life that is abundant in the love of God made known in Jesus Christ, love that overflows to others...It is eternal life because its source is in God who is eternal...and in Jesus, who is the resurrection and the life.

Amidst all the other voices that evoke fear, make demands, or give advice, the voice of the good shepherd is a voice of promise -- a voice that calls us by name and claims us as God's own" (workingpreacher.org 4/17/16).

Prayer: Lord, thank you that in your embrace we find not only safety and security, but also comfort, healing, justice, mercy, and peace.

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







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# Men's Bible Study

## The Importance of Men Studying the Bible

By Steve Gaito  
McDowell County



Did you know that almost 9 out of 10 US households own a Bible? In fact, the average household has three. This is according to an article by Lifeway research on April 25, 2017. Given the accessibility of the Bible, the question is why more people don't read the Bible. The statistics of how much people have actually read are as follows.

- 10% have read none of it • 13% only a few sentences • 30% several passages
- 15% at least half of it • 12% almost all of it • 11% all of it • 9% all of it more than once

According to the article, men are even more likely to skip Bible reading than women. This given the fact that the Bible challenges us to be the leaders of our family. How can we be leaders without knowing how we are to lead? The Bible gives clear direction on biblical leadership. Churches have done their part in teaching scripture and in the short time that pastors have, it is a great starting point. There appears to be an opportunity for men to come together in an informal setting to share what scripture says, what it wants us to learn and how to apply it in our lives to make a difference in our community. It will be an environment where men share their success and failure to help and encourage others. The fact is that none of us is perfect and we can learn from others. I have been a member of the YMCA since I was 6 years old (I am now 56) and their core values have remained the same over the years. Spirit, Mind and Body serve as their core mission to serve the community. I have spoken with the YMCA and they have agreed that it is consistent with their mission of Spirit to provide an opportunity for a men's small group. This small group will be a non-denominational group that wants to look at scripture verse by verse to apply to our lives and encourage and support one another in our community. This small group is open to both YMCA members and non-members alike. We will meet weekly on Wednesdays from 7:30 to 8:30 am starting January 8th. If you would like more information or have questions please contact either Steve Gaito [steve@retirerm.com](mailto:steve@retirerm.com) or Toby Bramblett [tbramblett@ymcawnc.org](mailto:tbramblett@ymcawnc.org). We would love to answer your questions.

We hope you will consider joining us and bring a friend.  
Thanks, and Happy New Year.

## Retirement Resources Management

### The Secure Act

By Steve Gaito  
McDowell County

The SECURE ACT and what it may mean for your retirement. It appears that the SECURE ACT will finally be signed into law as part of the OMNIBUS Budget act. The SECURE ACT stands for Setting Up Every Community for Retirement Enhancement Act and for the most part it is a good piece of bipartisan legislation. It passed the House 417 to 3 earlier this year and has been sitting in the Senate since. This legislation, if signed into law will have the most significant changes in retirement planning in decades. Some key points are moving the age that you have to start taking money out of qualified (IRA, 401(k) or 403(b)) plans though required minimum distributions (RMD) from 70 1/2 to age 72. It will also open the door for annuities to be included in retirement plan options and non-spouse beneficiaries of Inherited IRA's will not be able to stretch or delay distributions from these plans beyond 10 years.

There are some other small changes, but for the most part, the financial world appears to embrace this bill. I believe that it will have an impact on people that have IRAs that are larger than \$100,000 and have children or grandchildren that they planned on passing this money to over their lifespan. It also basically eliminates IRA trust plans and they will all have to be rewritten. With traditional IRAs especially larger ones, the key decision will be not when to start taking distributions, but how to take your distributions. This will require analysis to see the best option for you and your beneficiaries.

There is another benefit of this legislation and that is due to the lowest tax rates in our lives, there is an opportunity to distribute these qualified plans and utilize either Roth IRAs or Indexed Universal Life Insurance. Several experts in IRAs like Ed Slott have suggested that this will be the preferred way to handle both the changes in tax law and the new legislation. One thing is for sure. You need to analyze your own situation as there are no cookie-cutter plans and depending on your unique situation your plan will not be like your friends or neighbors. It is also important to decide what you want to have happen to these accounts after your death and how you want to have the money distributed.

If you have any questions about the pending laws or IRA planning, please come and sit with me in my office. I provide a complimentary initial meeting and we can see what impact these changes have on you and your retirement plans.

To schedule your appointment, call my office (828) 559-0299 or send me an email to [steve@retirerm.com](mailto:steve@retirerm.com)

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

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# Glenwood Baptist Church

## Something To Think About - What Happens When A Preacher Preaches?

By Dennis Love  
McDowell County

Every now and then you may hear it said that "preaching is dead" or "the day of preaching is over." I don't believe that for one second. There might be some dead preaching out there, but preaching will never be dead! Did you hear about the preacher who used a lot of notes in his sermon? One day he was preaching, and a gust of wind blew through the window and out went his notes through another window. A milk cow came along and ate the preacher's notes, and she dried up! There may be some dead and dried up preaching out there, but the preaching of the Word of God is never a dead and dry experience. Listen to what the Bible says happens when a preacher preaches. *"But he that prophesieth (or preaches) speaketh unto men to edification and exhortation and comfort."* (1 Corinthians 14:3) Notice three words in this verse. (1) Edification. (2) Exhortation. (3) Comfort. God tells us in this verse what will happen when a preacher preaches. People are going to be built up—Edified. People are going to be cheered up—Exhorted. People are going to be strengthened up—Comforted. Why would anybody want to miss hearing his or her preacher preach in 2020 when God is going to use the preaching of His Word to build you up, to cheer you up and to strengthen you up! Don't we all need to be built up in our most holy faith? Don't we all need to be cheered up in our daily walk with the Lord? Don't we all need to experience the overwhelming comfort and peace of our Lord?

According to the Bible, preaching is far from dead. It is very much alive and well in our churches. Go tell your preacher to keep on preaching because you have read 1 Corinthians 14:3 and you need to be built up, cheered up and strengthened up. Isn't it amazing what God can and will do through the preaching of His Word! In my opinion, that's 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.*

*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Romans 6:4*



# Morganton Baptist Church

## Content to Remain Unchanged

By Dan Qurollo  
Burke County



As we begin another year, much emphasis is placed upon resolutions for the new year. Many "resolutions" do not last long, for the excitement soon diminishes as the responsibility and challenge increase. Tragically, many Christians seem to make the same resolution each year. As believers, we must resolve to truly seek God-honoring change and avoid contentment to remain unchanged.

The Jews proudly claimed to anticipate the coming of the Messiah. For hundreds of years, the prophets had told of a day when the long-awaited Messiah would come. Despite all the prophecies within Scripture and their knowledge of Scripture, the religious leaders of Judaism tragically missed His coming. As Jesus confronted them with the truth, their hearts became harder each time.

One such exchange is recorded in Mark 12:1-12. Jesus told a parable (an earthly story with a heavenly meaning) in which a man planted a vineyard and then appointed keepers of the vineyard. When the master sent a servant, the husbandmen beat him and sent him away empty. They did this to many more servants, even killing some. Eventually, the master decided to send his son, reasoning that he would surely be received. Tragically, he was killed as well. Jesus used that story to illustrate the Scriptural teaching *"The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner"* (Psalm 118:22-23). Mark 12:12 contains their reaction, *"And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him and went their way."*

Rather than changing, these individuals chose to depart. They would rather leave while being wrong than to admit they are wrong and be corrected.

Tragically, many believers hear the teaching of the Word of God and are convicted by it. However, they would rather leave and continue in their lifestyle than to admit their wrongdoing and seek forgiveness. They are described as hearers only in James 1:22-25.

When convicted by the teaching of the Word of God, do you depart and remain unchanged? Or do you confess it and forsake it? Are you content to remain unchanged?

*Pastor Dan Qurollo is pastor Morganton Baptist Church. Check us out on our website [www.morgantonbaptist.net](http://www.morgantonbaptist.net) or find us on Facebook and YouTube.*

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All the Sins of Mankind

By Alan Griffin

*"Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; but blasphemies against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin" -because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."* Mark 3: 28-30



It is impossible for us to do what is right before the eyes of God. We are not capable of completing a single task. Since the fall of mankind, we are cursed with sin. It flows through our mind and body like a sickness. *But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousness is like filthy rags; We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.* Isaiah 64:6 (NKJV) *As it is written; there is none righteous... because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.* Romans 3:10,23 (NKJV) The righteousness that comes from God is without flaw. Jesus Christ walked this earth completely sinless. He did what the Law could not do because of the weakness of the flesh so that the righteousness of the Law could be fulfilled in us through Him.

There is no other way to enter the Kingdom of Heaven but to be righteous before God. How then, with our sin-filled minds and bodies can we justify ourselves? That is an impossibility. We must accept the fact that we are totally depraved. We are incapable of doing anything right. Look at the world around you. Do you see anything getting better? Every single day I see mankind reach a new low. I promise you that in the end, if it were left up to us, we would totally destroy this earth and everything in it. *All of us are like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way, but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.* Isaiah 53:6 (NASB) Job tells us that if he would see himself as perfect, he would be perverse, and Isaiah said, *Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people with unclean lips, for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.* Isaiah 6:5 (NKJV) When we look upon the Holiness, righteousness, and perfection of Jesus Christ we then see ourselves as we really are, and we confess our depravity.

Praise God for His wonderful gift of eternal life that He gave us through Jesus Christ. God demanded perfection for a sacrifice to pay the debt of our sins. He literally placed Himself on the cross because what God demanded, only He could provide. *"Through His flesh, He provided righteousness, holiness, justification, and sanctification of our souls. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."* Romans 8:2-5 (NKJV)

In Him: We have been redeemed through His blood and have been forgiven of our sins according to the riches of His grace. We no longer walk as people that have been condemned to death. We live as eternal beings in Christ.

In Him: We have been made to know the mystery of His will according to His kind intention which He purposed for us. The mystery of salvation and His church have been revealed to us in these last times. We no longer must wonder what God has planned for us.

In Him: We have a glimpse, an understanding, of the times to come. When all things will be summed up in Christ, in heaven, and on earth.

In Him: We have obtained an inheritance, and we have a purpose for our life through Him. We are not workers or slaves, but we have received adoption as sons and daughters of God. We are coinheritors with Jesus Christ of all creation. We are not yet sure what we will be, but we know when we see Jesus, we will be like Him.

In Him: After we heard the message of the truth of the gospel, of our salvation, we believed. We were then sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise who was given to us as a pledge of our inheritance.

In Him: We are enriched in all speech and knowledge through our personal relationship with Him by the Holy Spirit. We were chosen before the foundation of the world was laid that we would be holy and blameless. *God made Jesus Christ, who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we might become righteous before God.* 2 Corinthians 5:21(NASB) *He bore our sins in His body on the cross so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds we are healed.* 1 Peter 2:24(NASB)

In Him: Our righteousness is not derived from the law, but through faith in Christ, we have a righteousness that comes from God based on faith. What we were unable to do for ourselves God did for us through the sacrifice of His Son.

When through faith we accept the finished work of Jesus Christ we receive the life His death accomplished, and through Him, we have imputed righteousness. We are justified by faith just as if we had never sinned. When God looks down at us, He sees a pure, sinless being because the sacrificial blood of Jesus Christ covers us like a blanket. When Jesus died on the cross, we died with Him. In Galatians 2:20 Paul tells us, *"I have been with Christ, and it is no longer I who live but lives in me, and I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, whom and Himself up for me."* Galatians 2:(NASB)

As believers, we are dead to sin and we are raised with Him to a new life, a new creation where all things of the past are gone.

All the sins of mankind have been forgiven. *Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter...* Mark 3:28 (NASB) The price has been paid. Your redemption letter has been nailed upon the jailhouse door. The door is open, and you are free to go. Your debt has been paid. Wouldn't you like to take a minute with me and pray? Dear Lord Jesus Christ,

I believe you took the pain of the cross to give me a new life. I ask you to come into my life and to give me your peace and joy. I confess that I am a sinner -- that I have gone my own way and have done wrong. Please forgive me for my sins. I receive you now as my Lord and Savior. Please fill me with your Holy Spirit. Help me to follow you and to serve you all my life. Thank you, Lord Jesus. Amen.

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



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## Regional News

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

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

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

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

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

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

Women's Day group meet @ First Presbyterian Church, Spruce Pine 10 am-11:30 am Mitchell County Women's Evening group meet @ Grassy Creek Baptist Church, Spruce Pine 5:45 pm-7:15 pm Mitchell County Men's Begin Tuesday, September 10, Men meet @ Higgins Methodist Church, Burnsville 6:55 pm-8:25 pm - Yancey County Contact: Nancy Ball (843)597-1196 (Day Women) - Angie Woody (828)467-3830 (Evening Women)

## Burke County

**Burke County Chamber Events** - Gateway to Woodworking - January 14, 16 & 21, 2020 Location: Western Piedmont Community College Building J- 1000 Burkemont Avenue, Morganton, NC Time: 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. Fee: \$ 96.20. Want space, equipment, and guidance to create your own woodworking projects? Western Piedmont Community College is offering an introduction to the safest and best practices for woodshop. This class is a prerequisite class for woodworking open labs. Students will build a serving tray. Students will learn about the shop's overall workspace including wood storage, rough ends, equipment in the machining areas, as well as seeing demonstrations of layout, measurement, and case fitting strategies. Individuals who have already taken the Gateway class previously may work on their own projects. Individuals must wear safety glasses and closed-toed shoes.

**Catawba River Baptist Association** - G3 Discipleship Tool - How do you take a new Christian and help them to become a reproducing disciple? That is a question many have asked and have had difficulty finding the answer. To help our leaders train their church members to become reproducing disciples we will train participating pastors/leaders for 10 weeks beginning January 21st at 10 a.m. at our CRBA office. We (Chuck Campbell and I) will be demonstrating the G3 discipleship tool (The Imperative Life of a Christ Follower) for the purpose of duplicating it in our CRBA churches. I will first be training pastors and staff and then will offer to other leaders. If you are interested in being trained in using this wonderful discipleship tool; meeting weekly for ten weeks and then reproducing it in others, please give us a call at our CRBA office.

**Hurricane Relief** - We have an exciting mission 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 night which covers all supplies, lodging, and food. If interested, please call our CRBA office at 828-437-0137 for more information and to register.

**VBS Kick-Start Training** - We are excited to host this year's VBS Kick-Start Training which will take place on Monday, January 26th beginning with supper at 6 p.m. Whether your church will be using LifeWay or some other VBS Curriculum for the summer of 2020 this training is for you. Stanley Mearse of Mountain View Baptist Church in Hickory will be leading our training which will give each participant a Kick-Start on their VBS planning. Important topics will be covered such as planning, volunteer recruitment, best VBS practices, and effective follow-up. We will be serving a light meal (free of charge) so, please RSVP by calling our CRBA office at 828-437-0137.

**Women/Girls Mission Opportunities** - The CRBA Women's Ministry Team invites all ladies and girls to come and fellowship while working to serve our community. On Saturday, January 11th there will be several mission opportuni-

ties for you to volunteer at with one of our Burke County local ministries. The projects that are available are at Burke County Habitat for Humanity and BUCM. Please call the CRBA office at 828-437-0137 to sign-up or with any questions

**Faith Community Church, Connelly Springs** - SOUPER BOWL for HOSPICE, Thursday, January 30th. 5-7 PM at Heritage Middle School in Valdese. \$10 donation to Burke Hospice and Palliative Care gets you a pottery bowl or mug and a meal: soups, salad, dessert, beverage. 100% of the money goes to Hospice. All costs are underwritten by the church and our sponsors, Myra's Restaurant of Valdese, Thrivent Financial, and Farris Insurance. For more information contact Rev. Kyle Canerday, 828-409-4508 First Baptist Church - Valdese - NC Baptist Singers & Orchestra in Concert, Monday, January 13, 2020, at 7:00 pm, 500 Fast Street, NW, Valdese, NC 28690. [www.valdesefirstbaptist.org](http://www.valdesefirstbaptist.org), church phone: 828-874-2266

**Great Hope Seventh-Day Adventist Church** - REVERSING DIABETES seminar is about to begin again for those who want to reverse their diabetes 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 Foothills Thrift Store). You will love feeling healthier!

**Missionary Ridge Baptist Church** - 2nd Annual SMBC Soup & Chili Cook-Off! - January 25, 2020, Sat 12 PM - Missionary Ridge Baptist Church - Morganton, North Carolina; Join us for our 2nd Annual SMBC Soup & Chili Cook-Off on Saturday, January 25, 2020, from 12-2 PM at Missionary Ridge Baptist Church in Morganton, NC! Admission is \$5 at the door. Who has the best soup or chili?? YOU be the judge! Your church can have the opportunity to WIN a FREE RETREAT by entering a soup or chili into the event! Contact Sara at the camp with your name, church name, and the name of your soup and/or chili! :)

**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 [@thegivingheartthriftshop](https://www.facebook.com/thegivingheartthriftshop), The Giving Heart Thrift Shop is a ministry of the Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church.

**Music & Worship Fellowship Meeting** - January 6, 2020; Mon 6 PM - Abele's Family Restaurant - Morganton, North Carolina - Ministers of Music and Worship Leaders are invited to join us on Monday, January 6th at 6 p.m. at Abele's in Morganton. We will be meeting in the conference room and will enjoy great food (each person pays for their own) and helpful dialogue. Join us for this great opportunity to learn from others and feel free to bring your spouse.

**Valdese Events** Movies at the Rock: Wizard of Oz - January 10, 2020, Fri, 7 - 10 PM, The Old Rock School, 400 Main St W, Valdese, NC. When a tornado rips through Kansas, Dorothy (Judy Garland) and her dog, Toto, are whisked away in their house to the magical land of Oz. They follow the Yellow Brick Road toward the Emerald City to meet the Wizard, and in route, they meet a Scarecrow (Ray Bolger) that needs a brain, a Tin Man (Jack Haley) missing a heart, and a Cowardly Lion (Bert Lahr) who wants courage. The wizard asks the group to bring him the broom of the Wicked Witch of the West (Margaret Hamilton) to earn his help. Free admission. No outside concessions allowed. Must register online. Phone: 828-879-2129; Website: <https://www.townofvaldese.com/old-rock-school/>; Email: [mwalker@ci.valdese.nc.us](mailto:mwalker@ci.valdese.nc.us)

**5th Annual South Mountains Marathons** - Jan 11, 2020 - Jan 12, 2020, - South Mountains State Park - 3001 S. Mountain Park, Connelly Springs, NC. Back for the 5th year, South Mountains Marathons promises to be a great kick-off to the new year of trail running! If you love great views, beautiful waterfalls, and some stellar climbs and descents, then you don't want to miss out! This year the marathon/50K and half will be held on separate days, the marathon/50K being Saturday, Jan 11th and a half Sunday, Jan 12th. Only 150 spots are available in both races! Be sure to hurry and sign up as this race has sold out 3 years in a row! If you dare, sign up for both for an amazing weekend of phenomenal trail running! Registration opens August 1st, 2019 at 8 am! Cost: \$ 65 to \$ 85; Registration: visit [ultrasignup.com](http://ultrasignup.com)

## McDowell County

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

**McDowell County DHHS** - Stewards of Children: Learn How to Prevent, Recognize, and React Responsibly to Child Sexual Abuse - McDowell County Dept Social Services. 145 E. Court St PO Box 338. Marion, North Carolina 28752. Dates and Times: January 13, 2020 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM, Check in: January 13, 2020 12:30 PM. Early Registration Fee \$ 30.00 Phone: 828-652-3355. Child sexual abuse is likely the most prevalent health problem children face, with the most serious array of consequences. In fact, 1 in 10 children will experience sexual abuse



before their 18th birthday.

This means that whether you work with youth, are a parent, or are simply a member of a community, it is highly likely that someone you know or care for has experienced, or is currently experiencing, child sexual abuse. It's going to happen unless you stop it from happening. The good news is, it can be stopped. Stewards of Children® uses real people and real stories to show you how to protect children. The framework of the training is built off of the foundation of The 5 Steps to Protecting Children™.

You'll meet survivors who lived through child sexual abuse, experienced its immediate and long-term effects, and ultimately were able to find healing. You'll meet experts who work with children and families and confront abuse daily. Many of these survivors and experts are also parents themselves. Stewards of Children® is the only evidence-informed, third-party evaluated child sexual abuse prevention training of its kind.

**New Community Outreach** Benefits McDowell Families with Children Teens for Christ B.E.A.R. Closet (Baby Equipment and Resource Closet) - Beginning Wednesday, August 1st, 2018 the youth group at Cross United Methodist Church located at 85 West Cross Street in Marion will launch a new outreach ministry benefiting families with children. The outreach will be open the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. and the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. For more information or if you are interested in volunteer opportunities call (828) 803-8790 or email [TeensforChristBEARcloset@yahoo.com](mailto:TeensforChristBEARcloset@yahoo.com)

Mitchell County

**Celebrate Recovery** - This is a Christ and Biblical Based Program, giving hip and help for men, women, and families suffering from addiction. Any questions contact Josh Wise@ 385-0061

**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 Bakersville, the Mitchell Chamber of Commerce, and the Mayland Small Business Center, the free breakfast workshops place a focus on providing applicable information and business networking that will link 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 areas 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 8:00 am. The meetings are always finished up by 9:30 am. Everyone is welcome at the business breakfast so make plans to attend.  
1/9, TH, 8:00-9:30 a.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Cook Mitchell County Administration Building, Bakersville 828.766.1295  
Top 25 FREE Apps for Small Businesses (2 Hours) NEW! Save time, increase mobility and grow productivity with these 25 business-related apps for your tablet or smartphone. SBC Director, Allen Cook, will provide insight and features of each app as it relates to specific business tasks. This is a great workshop for those who like to conduct business via their smartphone. 1/16, TH, 1:30-3:30 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Cook Avery 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 savvy 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 ONE: How to Start & Finance a Small Business (2.5 Hours)** - This seminar will cover key strategies for business start-up and financing. Students will gain information about business structures, potential legal issues, licensing, zoning, and operations. Learn the importance of a self-assessment and how to evaluate the feasibility of your business idea. Discover resources available to help start, finance, and successfully operate your business. 1/28, T, 1:30-4:00 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Cook Yancey 828.766.1295

**CLASS TWO: How to Write a Business Plan (2.5 Hours)** - A business plan is vital to starting and operating a business. Learn how to turn ideas into a solid plan for financing and long-term success. This seminar teaches the important components of a business plan and helps lay the foundation for a functional plan. Discover how a business plan is used by potential lenders, the dos and don'ts of writing a plan, and steps for making the process easy. Participants will be given templates for building an effective business plan. 1/30, TH, 1:30-4:00 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Cook Yancey 828.766.1295

**CLASS THREE: Basics of Bookkeeping (2.5 Hours)** - This class will discuss common bookkeeping methods used for small businesses as well as popular online bookkeeping platforms. Attendees will gain a workable knowledge of how to properly 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: Hammering Yancey 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. 2/6, TH, 1:30-4:00 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Hammering Yancey 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 typical customer in the area and how to build a customer profile to attract new customers. In addition, attendees will explore a variety of market research tools that provide critical information about the competition, industry, and customers. 2/11, T, 1:30-4:00 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Drum-Dickson Yancey 828.766.1295

**CLASS SIX: Marketing your Business (2.5 Hours)** - This class will discuss common 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 branding, advertising, and grassroots marketing techniques. Explore the components of an effective marketing plan in this comprehensive seminar. 2/13, TH, 1:30-4:00 p.m. Fee Waived Instructor: Brossman Yancey 828.766.1295

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

Tipton Hill Community Foundation (Tipton Hill) – Country Breakfast, the first Saturday each month, 7:30 – 10:30 am, at the old Methodist Church, across from Jerry's Store. Come join us for homemade sausage, scrambled eggs, gravy, jellies, juice, and coffee. Eat-in or take-out, all funds support the Tipton Hill Community Foundation.

**Western Carolina Church GriefShare Ministry** - meets on Thursday's at 6:00 pm at 31 Cross Street Suite 289, Spruce Pine, NC in Mitchell County  
Facilitator: Carolyn Dotts. For more information call church office 828-765-4633 or cell 828-467-1433. 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-Use Kitchen so that we could provide a certified area at a reasonable cost for locals trying to sell their products. This way we strive to help community entrepreneurs with their part-time business.  
So, if you have a product you want to market and sell (like jams, jellies, baked goods, etc.) or if you need a commercial kitchen for catering, having a private Pop Up dinner, hosting a class or whatever you're imagining, we hope our Shared Use Kitchen can provide you with a solution.  
Come visit our space, get an application and let us talk to see what is that you have in mind!  
We are also serving lunch on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm

Yancey County

**Community Viewing Night** -Bare Dark Sky Observatory - 66 Energy Exchange Dr, Burnsville, NC  
Date: Saturday, January 18th and Friday, January 24th and Friday, January 31st, 2020; Time: 6:45 pm to 8:45 pm; Cost: \$5 to \$15; Phone: 828-765-7351. Enjoy an evening of stargazing as you've never seen before. Through the 34-inch diameter Sam Scope, you can see the craters of the moon in detail, as well as Saturn's rings and the eye of Jupiter. Take part in fun astronomy trivia and gain a greater knowledge of the night sky.  
No parking is allowed at the observatory. Shuttles to and from the Earth to Sky Park parking lot will be provided. Please arrive promptly at your designated time to the parking lot located by the red quonset hut buildings. To get to the parking area take a left at the fork in the gravel road.  
Dress comfortably for nighttime weather, as it is sometimes cool in the mountain air. There are no water fountains at the observatory so bringing bottled water is recommended. Closed-toed shoes and a flashlight are also recommended.  
The observatory will not be open during inclement weather or on cloudy nights. In the case of inclement weather, ticket holders are notified 36 hours prior to the event of any changes.

**Feed-A-Child Yancey County** - Higgins fills bags on the second Tuesday of each month. We have been fortunate to have enough volunteers to fill the bags so far. They are going to continue the program this summer through the churches in the county that have Wednesday night meals. If you have any questions about Feed-A-Child they can be directed to Bill & Nancy Watkins at 828-675-5367.





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### Red Light Prayers

By Kurt Bomar  
Avery County



*Walk-in wisdom toward them that are without,  
redeeming the time. Col. 4:5*

When I was young, I never thought about how long I would live. Now it is increasingly on my mind. James was right when he wrote: "Why you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes." (4:14).

Life goes by fast, so we need to make it count. How do we do this? We redeem the time. We need to be creative in finding ways to make every moment count.

Here's one little tip: red light prayers!

According to the USA today the average American will spend six months of his life just waiting at red lights!

Wouldn't this be a great time to pray for your Church, your town, or your loved ones (as well as your enemies)? Think of how much our Nation needs your prayers in these dangerous times.

Here's another thought. What if you wrote out that Bible verse that you always wanted to memorize and placed it somewhere handy in your car. Those 15-45 seconds of idle time are perfect for a quick glance at that verse. You could have it memorized in no time. Think how quickly you could build up a reservoir of great Scripture in your heart as you add verse after verse.

Big changes in your life start with small changes in your habits. Redeem the time!

Selah, (think about it)

Kurt Bomar is pastor of Walnut Grove Church.



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His Unfailing Presence

By Bruce Cannon  
Mitchell County

*Another year I enter...Its history unknown;  
Oh, how my feet would tremble...To tread its paths alone!  
But I have heard a whisper; I know I shall be blest;  
"My presence shall go with thee, And I will give thee rest."*

*What will the New Year bring me? I may not, must not know;  
Will it be love and rapture, Or loneliness and woe?  
Hush! Hush! I hear His whisper; I surely shall be blest;  
"My presence shall go with thee, And I will give thee rest."*  
--Unknown Author

Happy New Year Everyone! Another year is passing and a new one dawns. Time slips by so quickly. The hustle and bustle of the holidays left us wondering where the time went.

As we enter into this New Year, I am so thankful we will not go it alone. If we know Christ as our Savior, He promises to go with us. His grace is always in the present tense. He is already in our tomorrows as much as He is in our today. Will hardships come our way? He will be there to buffer them and to see us through. Will joys unmeasured come our way? He will be there to make them even sweeter. Will we need to cry out to Him? He promised He would be there to hear our prayer. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

This New Year may offer many challenges, but it also offers so many opportunities. My prayer is for the Church to experience a genuine revival in 2020. Someone once said, "We will never change this world by the criticism of it, nor by the conformity to it, but by the combustion within it of lives ignited by the Spirit of God." I want that power and presence profoundly in my life and Church and wish that for all of us.

A census of the seven to a ten-mile radius around our churches would show that well over half of our neighbors do not go to Church and, most likely, do not know the Lord. That must be the explanation as to why we have not seen an end, or decrease, to the ever-increasing drug epidemic in our area or a huge reduction in the other social problems/sins that are steadily manifesting themselves.

Pray with me that God would send a great revival in our churches and that 2020 will be the year we can see, with 20/20 vision, the power of God moving in our midst. Pray that our churches would be full of Him and of those seeking the Lord. Pray that our streets would be safer and homes more Christ-like.... that 2020 will be the year that will truly count for Him,

From my heart to yours, Happy New Year!

*Rev. Bruce Cannon currently serves as the Senior Pastor of Bear Creek Baptist Church in Bakersville. Formerly he served as Director of Missions for the Bladen Baptist Association and has served on the General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.*



Survivor Recounts Miracles Of 9/11

By Hilda Valentine

Powerful ... Gut-wrenching ... Redemptive

When Hilda Valentine accepted her dream job as Supervising Case Manager with Aon at Two World Trade Center in August 2001, she had been raised to "push through" hard situations. So, she tackled the job's challenges and, despite her fear of heights, steeled herself daily for the express ride to the 100th floor.

Built to withstand high winds, the skyscraper would sway as much as 3 feet from the center, creating headaches and motion sickness in Hilda. Yet, she writes, "With each new challenge, I became more determined to persevere. Life was good, and all was well." Getting to the 100th floor seemed like her main challenge.

The Angel in the Stairwell

On September 11, 2001, Hilda was working at her desk by the massive windows when the first plane hit the North Tower at 8:46 a.m. As she and her co-workers attempted to flee down the stairwell, the next plane hit the second tower, tossing them around violently. By then she was on the 75th floor just below the impact point. Yet in the midst of the chaos, God sent an angel to give her clear directions, pray for strength into her, and miraculously save her life.

Told with gut-wrenching honesty, the author of *The Other Side of Nothing* spares no personal details of either her brokenness or of God's great love and grace. Left with massive and little understood injuries, both psychological and physical, and a sense of deep alienation, Hilda has suffered everything from violent, sustained shock to watching others die to a frightening out-of-body experience and endless mental replays of terror. She lost her sense of peace and safety and her closeness to her only daughter experienced constant pain and frequent flashbacks and feared assaults from the hijackers' angry spirits.

She says, "I basically had two emotions: I was either crying uncontrollably or enraged and cursing like a wild person."

Worst of all, Hilda felt isolated from her church community. And it was years before she learned she suffered from a neurocognitive disorder and auditory processing disorder from the plane's blast while she was in the staircase, as well as possibly a traumatic brain injury.

Every time Hilda thought of that day, she wondered, Lord, did you know I was in the building? Then one day at church, in her spirit she heard God say, I knew you were there. That's why I sent my angel to come and get you.

Today Hilda enjoys life with her family while continuing to heal. She says, "You have to decide to fight your way back from trauma to normalcy because a fight it will be. . . . We have to fight the good fight because there are people who we have to go back and strengthen. We have to declare to them the works of the Lord. We have to be that gleam of hope and beacon of light so they can survive the struggle also."

*The Other Side of Nothing* is a scathingly honest revelation by a broken survivor of a great tragedy and a story of great hope in the goodness and healing love of God.

Survivors of disaster will find light for their path in this book.

LINKS:

Amazon: *The Other Side of Nothing*

*Hilda M. Valentine is a 9/11 survivor who worked in Tower Two on the 100th floor. Her book The Other Side of Nothing chronicles her survival story of that day as well as her long journey towards medical, emotional, social, and spiritual healing.*



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# YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

## US House of Representatives NC District 11



Congressman  
Mark Meadows  
202-225-6401  
[www.meadows.house.gov](http://www.meadows.house.gov)

### Impeachment Update

On December 5, 2019, Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced that the House Judiciary Committee will begin drafting articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump. This step comes following the first impeachment hearing held by the Judiciary Committee during the ongoing, partisan impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump. Last week's hearing featured law professors who came with preconceived, set notions about the President but had no material facts about the conversation held between President Trump and Ukrainian President Zelensky. This process continues to be founded on hearsay, opinion, and presumptions without any standard of fact. I will continue to fight this baseless attempt by House Democrats to undo the 2016 election.

### Fighting for Lower Prescription Drug Costs

I sent a letter to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) about barriers to market access for low-cost generic prescription drugs, which is one important solution to combat the rising costs of prescription drugs. Under President Trump, the FDA has expedited the approval process for a record-breaking number of generic and biosimilar pharmaceutical products. Unfortunately, many of these lower-cost alternatives have not made it to the market because of anti-competitive barriers to market access. I am concerned about the anti-competitive practices that are keeping low-cost prescription drugs off the market and I am working on statutory and regulatory resolutions to address this problem.

### More Dental Care in WNC

I am glad to announce that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) unveiled a new rural development investment plan that, among other things, will improve access to dental care for Americans in rural areas, including Western North Carolina. East Carolina University (ECU) will be receiving a \$500,000 grant through the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant program to fund a statewide distance learning rural dental care project. ECU will send senior dental and graduate doctors serving their residency requirements to study and work at six Community Service-Learning Centers around the state, two of which will be in Jackson and Mitchell counties. The project will serve over 5,000 residents in North Carolina.

Telemedicine is an important step forward in the effort to improve healthcare options for Western North Carolinian families. It expands access to care by allowing patients to communicate with their doctors without having to travel long distances. I applaud President Trump and USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue for their leadership in promoting healthy outcomes for rural Americans, and I congratulate ECU on this exciting opportunity. I am grateful for the faculty, staff, and students at the ECU School of Dental Medicine and for their dedication to serving the people of our state.

### Expanding Public Transportation in North Carolina

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has been awarded a \$17 million discretionary grant to improve buses and bus facilities. This investment is an important opportunity for our state to expand public transit. With these funds, NCDOT will be able to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses and related equipment, and construct bus facilities in Western North Carolina. I am grateful for Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao's work to advance transit opportunities for Americans and improve our nation's infrastructure. As a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I am committed to finding sustainable solutions to Western North Carolina's infrastructure needs.

### Taking Care of Veterans in Rural Areas

I co-sponsored H.R.4589, a bipartisan bill to maintain access to healthcare for veterans living in rural areas. This bill authorizes the Veteran Affairs (VA) Grant Program for Transportation of Highly Rural Veterans to make permanent transportation options to rural veterans in need of medical care. Almost a quarter of our nation's veterans, 4.7 million, reside in rural communities, and 58% of rural veterans are enrolled in the VA healthcare system. This program allocates funds for transporting rural veterans to VA Medical Centers and facilities, as well as employing new approaches to serve all veterans and their families. After their brave service, Congress must ensure they do not have to sacrifice the benefits of rural living in order to receive the highest quality care.

### Meeting with North Carolina County Commissioners

This week, I had the privilege of attending the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners' meeting in Washington, D.C. It was an incredible opportunity to hear updates about the work of the Association in North Carolina, and I am grateful for our Commissioners' dedication to our state.

### Congrats to Western Carolina University Marching Band

Congratulations to Western Carolina University Marching Band for performing in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City and representing our state so well.

### Fighting for the Ratification of the USMCA

I signed on to a letter led by Representative Michael Conaway (TX-11) to urge Speaker Pelosi to stop delaying the passage of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). USMCA brings the more than 25-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) into the 21st century with updated provisions for digital trade, intellectual property, financial services, and agriculture trade. American voters support Congress passing the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement by a nearly four-to-one margin, according to recent polling data. While Speaker Pelosi and the House Democrats continue to pursue a partisan impeachment inquiry, farmers, business owners, and manufacturers are hurting. This Agreement will greatly benefit our state. Thousands of North Carolinian businesses and 32,000 jobs rely on trade with Mexico and Canada and nearly three-quarters of North Carolinian exports to Mexico and Canada come from small- to medium-sized businesses and provide markets worth \$10 billion for the state.

### Bipartisan Dialogue on the United States-Israel Relationship

Last week, I had the privilege to host a briefing along with Congressman Max Rose (D-NY), Dean Phillips (D-MN), and the organization, Our Soldiers Speak (O.S.S.), on "The Israel Defense Forces: An Evolving Military for a Changing Middle East. Strategy. Alliances. Inclusion." Our Soldiers Speak is a non-profit organization that brings representatives from the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) and other senior Israeli leaders to the United States to discuss issues that Israel and the IDF face and strategies to ensure the safety of their people and combat extremist terrorism. O.S.S. is a great organization and I am proud to have joined them again in highlighting the importance of the U.S.-Israeli relationship and on efforts to strengthen this important relationship.

Briefings like this help facilitate bipartisan dialogue about the importance of maintaining a strong United States-Israel relationship for hundreds of congressional staffers, Israeli senior offices, and leaders. I am proud to be a strong defender of our strongest ally, Israel, in Congress.

### Historic Employment Numbers

Last month's U.S. employment numbers were remarkable. 266,000 jobs were added in November. Since President Trump's election, the economy has added 7 million jobs. Unemployment decreased to 3.5%, remaining a 50-year-low, and minority unemployment remains at a historic low. Workers are also earning more: real wage growth over the past year for an average full-time worker was more than \$1,000. I applaud the Trump Administration's efforts to ensure that our economy is thriving, and Americans have access to opportunity and work.

### Recent Legislative Action

Robocalls - There were 49 billion robocalls in 2019 alone. I voted in favor of the TRACED Act, which requires service providers to take it upon themselves to block robocalls on the network-level that are identified as fake without additional costs to the consumer. It also enhances the ability of the Department of Justice to crack down on these malicious calls. U.S. telecommunications must be secure and not open to abuse or exploitation.





# YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

## NC House District 118



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

### NC Chamber Names Presnell As A 2019 Jobs Champion

The NC Chamber recognizes Legislators who exhibit pro-jobs voting records on key bills identified as critical to preserving and enhancing a positive climate for business and job creation in North Carolina. The Legislators recognized have voted at least 80% of the time for pro-growth policies enhancing our state as a whole.

"The 2019 legislative session saw a number of successes for North Carolina's job creators and communities, and we are grateful for Rep. Presnell's leadership in promoting pro-growth policies," said Ray Starling, general counsel at the NC Chamber.

Ready for a good cup of hot chocolate! You can share this throughout the Holidays.

#### Recipe:

3 cups dry nonfat or whole milk powder (Carnation)

2 cups powdered sugar

1 1/2 cups cocoa powder, Dutch-process or natural unsweetened (Hershey's brand)

1 1/2 cups finely chopped white chocolate or white chocolate chips

1/4 teaspoon salt

Mix all ingredients in a large bowl or food processor until finely ground. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 months.

Put 1/3 cup of cocoa mix in a mug and stir in 1 cup of hot milk or water (richer with milk)

Top with marshmallows, if desired. ENJOY

May you all have a blessed christmas and prosperous new year!



The staff at the General Assembly decorated this special tree on our floor in the Legislative Office Building.



### Senate Confirms Richard E. Myers to Serve as District Judge for Eastern North Carolina in Historic Vote

Yesterday, the Senate voted to confirm a well-qualified and widely respected legal scholar to serve as a U.S. District Judge for Eastern North Carolina. Professor Richard Myers was confirmed by a strong bipartisan vote of 68-21. I was honored to speak on the Senate floor ahead of his vote to urge my colleagues to support his nomination to the bench.

Sen. Burr speaks on the Senate floor ahead of Professor Myers' confirmation vote this week.

"The first thing I want my colleagues to know is that Professor Myers embodies a work ethic and diligence that we deserve in all our judges. As an immigrant of Kingston, Jamaica, Professor Myers was the first-generation college student in his family. He worked his way through undergraduate, his undergraduate degree at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington and after college pursued a career in journalism. He worked for the Wilmington Morning Star and it was his investigative reporting that gave him the desire to earn his law degree. He graduated Magna Cum Laude at the University of North Carolina Law School and began a legal career as a clerk for Judge David Sentelle of the D.C. District Court of Appeals.

"Second, Professor Myers will be a judge who understands the value of public service. Having made a career change from practicing at a prestigious private firm to contributing to our nation's justice system, following the attacks of September 11, 2001. He said that his change in career and I quote him, 'was something I felt I could do and that I owed the country that had been really good to my family,' unquote... Professor Myers then took a different path of service at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill instructing the next generation of lawyers to be people in his own words, and I quote, 'do the right thing, every day,' unquote.

"If confirmed, Professor Myers will serve on the Eastern District of North Carolina and as Senator Tillis said will hold court in Wilmington. Ironically, this court is currently meeting in the building that once housed the Wilmington Morning Star—his first job as a reporter. However, when considering Professor Myers' story, it seems fitting that someone with the character, work ethic, and service approach to life will be returning to the building of his first post-college job wearing a robe of a federal judge.

"I have faith in Professor Myers' ability 'to do the right thing, every day' in this critically important role and I'm grateful for the opportunity to speak on his behalf to our colleagues."

## NC Senate District 46



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

Happy New Year! I hope that each of you experienced a peaceful and blessed Christmas holiday filled with family, fellowship, and laughter. As we move forward into a new decade, I am reminded of how quickly it seems that time passes. It was ten years ago, in early 2010, that Lydia and I decided together that I would seek to represent the people of Burke and Caldwell counties in the NC Senate. At that time, Sen. Jim Jacumin was retiring from the Senate due to his wife's increasing health issues. (She has since passed away and Sen. Jacumin remarried in 2016.) After a successful election in November 2010, Lydia and I and our three young daughters embarked on a new and unfamiliar life journey. Being in the Senate required me to travel to Raleigh almost every week of the year, mostly for 3 days at a time. We weren't used to being separated or traveling separately (not since my time in the Army), but we adjusted, and decided that Lydia and the girls would visit in Raleigh as often as possible. Since we were homeschooling our daughters, it gave us the flexibility to bring them to Raleigh during some weeks, and not fall behind in their studies. As I was learning what it means to be a representative to my constituents, getting to visit Raleigh gave our children a greater knowledge of how state government works. Since the cost of living in Raleigh was higher than in our rural area, one thing that was an adjustment was going back to living with a roommate, as I hadn't done that since I was an Army 2nd Lieutenant. Fortunately for me, I soon realized that one of my new fellow senators was Dan Soucek, a West Point classmate, and in January 2011 we decided to rent an apartment together. On many occasions since then, I have joked with family and friends that, "I never thought I'd have to go back to living with a roommate again, but I figured if I did, it would be OK living with a former West Point cadet." The rest, as they say, is history. Sen. Soucek and I roomed together for several years, and he has since retired from political life. As I look back on the past nine years, I am thankful for all the wonderful people that I have had the opportunity to meet and work with in Raleigh, both in the House and Senate and all across state government. Even more rewarding has been the opportunity during those years to serve (at different times) the people of Avery, Burke, Caldwell, and Cleveland counties, and to work with the local elected leaders of those counties and their municipalities. Our children are grown now (how time flies!), so they are no longer traveling to Raleigh with us. But as 2020 begins, ushering in a new decade, Lydia and I truly consider it an honor to work with you and for you as we all strive to improve our communities. It is our hope that the coming years will bring renewed friendships, cooperation and bipartisanship across all levels of our local, state and federal governments as we deal with new challenges and opportunities that are sure to come.

I leave you with these verses from the Book of Jeremiah to start out the new year: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." (Jer. 29:11-13). I hope that God will bless your plans in 2020.

# God Bless America

continued on page 35



God's View of a New Year

By John McCoury  
Roan Mountain, Tennessee

*The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Ecclesiastes 1:9*

Real Living Solomon is not suggesting that working or eating is wrong. Many people enjoy doing both. But if life consists of only working and eating, then we are being controlled by our appetites, and that almost puts us on the same level as animals. As far as nature is concerned, self-preservation may be the first law of life. But we who are made in the image of God must live for something higher (John 12:20-28). In the new creation (2 Cor. 5:17) self-preservation may well be the first law of death (Mark 8:34-38). Is Solomon telling us that we shouldn't dream great dreams or have a burning ambition to accomplish something in life? Of course not, but we must take care that our ambition is motivated by the glory of God and not the praise from people. We must want to serve others and not promote ourselves if we think our achievements will automatically bring satisfaction, we are wrong. True satisfaction comes doing the will of God from the heart (Eph. 6:6). *"My food," said Jesus "is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work"* (John 4:34).

A new year! 2020! Before the year 2000, I tried to imagine how things would be twenty years later. Twenty years have passed since then. Much has changed, but God remains. How does God regard a new year? To us, the next twelve months lie cloudy by the limitations of our humanity. To God, the future is as clear as the past and present. We begin a year knowing there will be an end to it if time continues. But we cannot see what lies between the beginning and the end. We came to the end of a year yesterday. Today we put up new calendars to track the present and to plan the future. But do we meet all the appointments we mark on a calendar? If a day is unmarked on a calendar does that prevent anything significant from happening on that day? What is the solution to such uncertainty? The God who knows, no new year understands our thoughts *"afar off"* (Psalm 139:2). The new year, though unknown before us, is like an open book before Him. December 31, 2019 doesn't mean anymore to Him than January 1, 2020. God's eternal view is an infinite perspective. His providence works without regard to time. The life that God gives may only last for a very short time. However, that life has fulfilled its purpose just as well as a saint who lives to be a hundred years old.

As you try to see what the new year will hold, don't look too hard. Look at the face of God, who sees both you and the future that you can't perceive. Then follow His infinitely wise direction toward eternity with Him. Look not for new things in the new year; rather seek for the Ancient of Days, who holds the new year.

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



"Power to Fight our Battles"

By Christy Young  
Mitchell County



I think we all can agree that we're in a battle in this world. We may not always see it, and often times forget that we are in the battle but will quickly be reminded that it's there. If you are a believer, Satan is constantly on your back. He finds great pleasure in filling our minds with discouragement and defeat. Bringing fear, stress, and hardship to our lives. I can attest that I personally deal with these things often. The stronger my desire to serve God, the more I realize the evidence of the evil forces of Satan.

Folks, we live in spiritual warfare! God reminds us in His word to be aware of Satan's schemes, to be alert, and to stay close to Him. James 4:7 says, *"Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* How do we submit ourselves to God? He arms us with a sword, His Word, the Bible. In His word, He instructs us to stand against the enemies' lies. As we ground ourselves in His Word, we gain wisdom, discernment, and courage to fight our battles. Standing strong and using good judgment during a storm can often be hard. Sometimes our flesh takes control and our actions don't always line up with the word of God. But the Bible teaches us in 1 Peter 5:8-9, *"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith."* The enemy comes to destroy us, using the things we hold most dear. He wants us to feel defeated and depleted of our self-worth. But our self-worth is not found in our worldly accomplishment, but in Jesus alone! We are His servants and placed upon this earth to carry out His perfect plan. Let us be reminded that we must seek God's Truth, asking Him to reveal what is real and not be blinded by Satan's lies.

As Christian, we will be torn down and judged by others. It is easy to follow out Christ-like behavior when we are on top of the mountain, but when storms rage our flesh can sometimes take control. How we react to false accusations and adversity will define our character. In Isaiah, 54:17, *"No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; and every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their vindication is from Me," declares the Lord.*

Pray that God will bring darkness into light and His truth will forever be seen. Put on the full armor of God, realizing that we are stronger than any force of evil in the presence and powerful name of Jesus. He never leaves us to defend ourselves in darkness, and may we all be reminded that He is constantly fighting for us, even when we cannot see. Remember Prayer + Gods Word = Power to Fight our Battles.

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

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But to one person you may be the world.

Dr. Seuss



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# YOUR GOVERNMENT PAGES

## NC Senate District 47



Sen. Ralph Hise  
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In looking ahead to the year before us, it's worth looking back at 2019 to highlight some of the legislative accomplishments of Senate Republicans in the NC General Assembly:

- Small Business Health Care Act – provides businesses with more health care options to cover their employees.
- Voter ID – continues Voter ID efforts by setting up an approval process for student ID cards.
- Expand Youth Internship Opportunities – expands opportunities for students to participate in trade industry internships.
- Prison Reform Act – commissions a study of best practices to implement and help protect our prison guards.
- Enhance Insurance Coverage for Public Education Buildings – provides schools better insurance options, saving taxpayers money.
- Testing Reduction Act – Eliminates duplicative NC final exams and requires local districts to reduce local testing.
- Combat Absentee Ballot Fraud – Strengthens penalties for violating absentee ballot laws and requires ID for mail-in ballots.
- Strengthen Child Sex Abuse Laws – Protects children from sexual abuse and strengthens sexual assault laws.
- Standing Up for Rape Victims Act – Clears backlog of untested rape kits and establishes a protocol for testing future kits.
- Repeal Tuition Surcharge – Repeals the tuition surcharge on students (usually veterans) who take longer than 4 years to complete their college degree.

Unfortunately, some important legislation for North Carolinians was blocked by Gov. Cooper who vetoed bills that would have accomplished the following:

- Ban post-birth abortions
- Require sheriffs to cooperate with ICE instead of turning criminals loose in communities
- Remove foreign citizens from voter rolls
- Cut taxes

Last month, I was recognized by two NC organizations for my 2019 legislative record. Civitas Action is a 501(c)(4) non-profit whose mission is to educate NC voters on policy issues and actions of members of the NC General Assembly. In December, they released their Annual Freedom Rankings of each state legislator, based on each member's votes on legislation supporting limited government, personal responsibility, free-markets, and civic engagement. With a score of 85.7, I tied for second place in the Senate, behind the top-ranked senator, John Alexander, who scored 90.9. Civitas Action graded votes specifically related to property rights, government transparency, health care, and corporate welfare.

Also, in December, I was selected by the NC Chamber as a Jobs Champion in their 2019 issue of How They Voted, which details lawmakers' voting records on key bills identified as critical to preserving and enhancing a positive climate for business and job creation in North Carolina. The NC Chamber's legislative agenda included the following areas: education and talent supply, competitive business climate, and infrastructure and growth leadership. My score of 92 was based on my votes on several bills related to these policy areas.

I am pleased to be recognized for my legislative support for the priorities of both these organizations and look forward in 2020 to continuing to support limited government initiatives, pro-growth policies, and keeping our state's business climate competitive. Because I want to continue my work in these areas and many others, I filed on December 12th as the Republican candidate for the seat I currently hold for the 47th District of the NC Senate.

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

## NC House District 86

### North Carolina Among National Leaders in Teacher Pay Raises

North Carolina has made significant progress in teacher pay raises over the last several years. This includes an average 20-percentage pay raise over the past five years, which is the third highest in the country. Just over the last two years, over Governor Cooper's earlier vetoes of two previous budgets, there was an average 9.9 percent teacher salary increase. Regrettably, Governor Cooper vetoed the most recent budget approved by the legislature last June. If he had signed that budget, teachers would have gotten yet two more years of raises, with an average 3.9 percent increase for this year and next. North Carolina stands strong, despite Governor Cooper's vetoes of raises. We now rank 29th in the nation in teacher pay, based on most recent data from the teacher's own national organization, the National Education Association (NEA). Because of the series of legislatively approved raises, our national ranking is up from the low 40's just a few years ago. Also, we are now 2nd in the Southeast only to Georgia which has a higher average that can largely be attributed to the economic powerhouse that continues in the Atlanta metropolitan area. Furthermore, 2017-2018 NEA benchmark data shows that North Carolina teacher pay for maximum salary ranges for bachelor's and master's degrees ranks 22nd and 28th in the country.

These remarkable advancements display consistent annual progress as the most recent figures are evidence of notable growth from the previous year which had North Carolina as 34th in the nation and 6th in the Southeast. Furthermore, research from The John Locke Foundation points out that data released by the NEA does not account for differences in the cost of living among the different states where teachers live and work. The lower, more affordable cost of living in North Carolina, coupled with the increases in teacher pay over the last five years, advanced North Carolina to 20th in the nation for adjusted cost-of-living teacher pay, according to The Locke Foundation. These figures in totality represent the commitment of the legislature to North Carolina's education system, and this all despite both the Governor's multiple veto attempts and having inherited a teacher pay system a few years ago that was ranked 45th nationally. The legislature continues its commitment as a next goalpost to reach 1st in the Southeast on teacher pay.



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By Alice Horton  
Burke County

Each year as I prepare for the Christmas season, one scripture plays on repeat in my head, Romans 12:2 "Do not conform to this world...". Next, Thanksgiving happens... and, immediately following is Black Friday. Yet again, I whisper this scripture to myself, "but be retransformed by the renewing of your minds." It is so difficult to "renew your mind" with the enticements of ADS, children's gift requests, and all the material things we so often get lost in...and then New Year's happens and we are prone to forget again to "renew our minds" due to the pressures of New Year resolutions of losing weight and thinking of beach trips and summer vacations.

During the holiday season there are so many things that spring us into action, remind us of God's Love and the idea of what is truly important. However, as quickly as the season passes, those thoughts of helping strangers, and going out of your way seems to dissipate and we get caught up in our own desires and deadlines. So, I pose the question to my brothers and sisters in Christ, "how do we stay on track throughout the year?" Ecclesiastes 3:1-22 shares the fact that "there is a season for everything under heaven". However, I can never seem to escape the realization that, "... NEED Knows No Season! This then reminds me of what Jesus says in John 16:33, "In this world, you will always have trouble...". Why do anything then, if it is never going to change? Why, because of stories like the following two that I experienced in my first week at Burke United Christian Ministries!

Early in the month of December, I was blown away by the JOY that I was able to share with a young man here at Burke United Christian Ministries. He came to the window and said, "I'm here to check my mail for the last time". I, along with many of the staff, celebrated with this man and praised God for this new development in his life. Why so much excitement over mail? You see, clients that pick up their mail at BUCM are generally homeless and, if they are able to stop receiving mail, then it must mean that they have made arrangements to take up residence in housing. This accomplishment is quite the challenge and therefore anyone that reaches this goal deserves a celebration! Later that week, I overheard a client ask one of our crisis counselors for a pump. So, with nothing to go on but a desire to help, the counselor went to check in the thrift store. Well, as in God's economy, sure enough, there in the BUCM Thrift store was a pump and a mattress. The counselor approached the man and said, "Is this what you were looking for?" Then, with tears in his eyes, the man says, "Yes, now I don't have to sleep on the ground!"

How would you like to share the Love of Christ, make the act of "GIVING" a part of ALL of your Seasons this year and to play a role in stories similar to these? Share these stories, remember your brother and sister in Christ living in poverty, get together with your friends and have an office food drive, clean out your closet and donate it to the store and/or clothing closet. No matter what you do, don't forget that Jesus isn't just the reason for the season, he is the reason for Everything in EVERY Season! The good news is that you can make a difference as the rest of the scripture in John 16:33, "... but cheer up, I (God) have overcome the world"! AMEN!

Alice Horton is the Executive Director of Burke United Christian Ministries. She is a graduate of Appalachian State University and has worked in the nonprofit field for the last 20 years. If you are interested in learning more about Burke United Christian Ministries or volunteering. Please call us at 828-433-8075.



Habits of the Heart:  
A Study of the Spiritual Disciplines -  
Meditation

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



The call and privilege of the believer is to worship and serve the Lord. And the pathway to following Christ Jesus in humble obedience is the pathway of discipline. I shared last month in the introduction to this series of studies that our Lord Jesus Christ came to set us free from sin and death so that we could (and would) follow Him and experience a deep, intimate, and eternal relationship of faith. Our Lord desires that we love Him, follow Him, and serve Him and in order to do that, the Christian must follow the pathway of spiritual discipline.

The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 9:14, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer." Many have suggested that the first step toward a deeper relationship with Christ comes through the spiritual discipline of "meditation."

Meditation, as a spiritual discipline, was not foreign to the writers of the Scriptures—for we see this word used throughout the Old Testament to describe the ageless practice of an inward discipline of drawing near to God. We read in Genesis 24:63 that "Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening." David, the Psalmist, wrote time-and-time again about his practice of meditating upon the Law of God and upon the presence and promises of God. "When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches" he wrote in Psalms 63:6 and again in Psalm 119:148, "My eyes anticipate the night watches, That I may meditate on Your word." In the introduction to the Book of Psalms (1:1-2), we are introduced to the "blessed" man "... who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night."

There is so much noise, busyness, and distractions in the world that we live in today. And our adversary, the devil, has seized upon these powerful things to prevent God's children from diving into solitude, silence, and meditation. But God invites His beloved creation into a deep, intimate relationship. He declared in Psalm 46:10, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." In the NASV translation, this verse reads, "Cease [striving] and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." It is absolutely clear what God is commanding us to do in order to know Him completely—Stop! Stop what you are doing! Stop whatever you are focused upon! Cease, halt, quit—stop and be quiet before the Lord. That is what meditation is about. It is the discipline of laying everything down and becoming quiet and still for God to speak to us. What makes it hard? We can't let go! We are too busy and too driven. The demands are too great, and the time is too short. But, the inevitable result of our failure to stop, be still, and meditate upon the Lord is that we will not nor cannot hear God!

Richard Foster points out that in Eastern forms of meditation, the goal is to become "detached" from the world. But Foster argues that Christian meditation "goes far beyond the notion of detachment... we must go on to the attachment." In other words, the believer and follower of Jesus seeks to detach themselves from the confusion that is all around them so that they may pursue and surely experience a greater attachment to God. So, Christian meditation leads us to the inner wholeness necessary to give ourselves completely, freely, and wholly to Christ.

The spiritual discipline of meditation calls us to enter into the living presence of God for ourselves. It is the "front porch," so to speak. God invites us into His presence. In order to prepare to be present with Almighty, eternal God, we have some preparation to do. We cleanse our thoughts, detach 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 (Note: how do you prepare to invite an honored guest into your home?). That is what we do!

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

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By Dave Ramsey

Cash Them in and So Something Better

Dear Dave,  
My wife and I are following your plan, and recently we found some old savings bonds that had been given to her by her grandfather when she was a kid. Do you think we should go ahead and cash these in before they reach their final maturity date in a few months? John



Dear John,  
Absolutely! Every one of those savings bonds is accruing interest at the appropriate rate for the type of bond it is. The problem is every one of those rates stinks. I hate savings bonds. We're talking about some very low-interest rates.  
Another reason I don't like savings bonds is they're not financial instruments which cause you to be responsible with them. People lose them, they forget about them, and then maybe they turn up in an old lockbox somewhere down the road after making a whopping two or three percent.  
Back in the day, they used to be positioned as patriotic and all that. But who wants to finance the stuff this government does? We're not supporting World War II anymore, you know. Cash them in, and depending on what Baby Step you're on, put it toward your emergency fund, your debt snowball, retirement, your mortgage—just be proactive, and do something better with the money! —Dave

Decisions and Sacrifices

Dear Dave,  
We have two preschool kids, and I'm a stay-at-home mom. My husband brings home about \$2,500 a month, and our mortgage payment is \$1,000 a month. Recently, we've had to tap into our savings in order to pay the bills. Should I go back to work? There are a couple of reputable daycare centers near us, but I'm just not sure if this is the right thing to do. Tammy

Dear Tammy,  
Being a full-time mom is a wonderful thing. And honestly, I can't blame you for wanting to stay home with your children when they're so young.  
The biggest problem I see is that 40 percent of your husband's paycheck is going toward your mortgage. That's way too much! A house payment should never be more than 25 percent of your take-home pay.  
I know trying to live on the \$1,500 that's left is hard, especially with two babies in the house. But it doesn't sound like a lot of fat can be trimmed right now. One of you might consider taking on a part-time job nights or weekends for a while, or he could look into enhancing his education. Either one of these would help get your income up. Selling the house is an option, too. But I'm not a fan of that one except in the most extreme circumstances.  
Right now, I'm viewing this as a math problem with three components. The components are income, house payment, and lifestyle. You and your husband need to sit down and have a serious heart-to-heart talk about things. There will have to be some sacrifices in order to make things better, but only the two of you together can determine exactly what's best for your family.  
God bless you all. —Dave

Who will be liable for the debt?

Dear Dave,  
My parents are getting up there in years, and they aren't really prepared for when they pass away. They can't afford life insurance at this point, and they also have a lot of debt. When they die, who will be liable for their debt? Tammi

Dear Tammi,  
Any outstanding debt your parents have upon passing will likely go against their estate. If they have a positive net worth—meaning they owned more than they owed—there will be money left over after the debts are paid, and this could go toward an inheritance. If they have a negative net worth, which means they owed more than they owned, everything could be sold off to cover as much of the debt as possible. Regardless, you would only be held liable for any of their debt if you were a co-signer on the loans.  
I'd also suggest getting their permission to buy burial policies on them. If they won't agree to this, you might have to save up money for their final expenses yourself. In most areas, \$10,000 to \$15,000 is enough to cover basic burial costs for two people. —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](http://daveramsey.com) and on Twitter at [@DaveRamsey](https://twitter.com/DaveRamsey).



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# Crossword

## ACROSS

1 God has ascended \_\_\_\_\_ shouts of joy (Ps 47:5)  
 5 When you hear of \_\_\_\_\_ and revolutions, do not be frightened (Luke 21:9)  
 9 between us and you a great \_\_\_\_\_ has been fixed (Luke 16:26)  
 14 a white horse, whose \_\_\_\_\_ is called Faithful and True (Rev 19:11)  
 16 Jesus cried out in a \_\_\_\_\_ voice, "Eloi, Eloi, (Mark 15:34)  
 18 Even in laughter the heart may \_\_\_\_\_ (Prov 14:13)  
 19 \_\_\_\_\_, O LORD! Deliver me, O my God (Ps 3:7)  
 20 Take a pot, and put an \_\_\_\_\_ full of manna therein (Exodus 16:33) KJV  
 21 the lad ran, he \_\_\_\_\_ an arrow beyond him (1 Sam 20:36)  
 22 A cheerful heart is good \_\_\_\_\_ (Prov 17:22)  
 24 Jacob set up \_\_\_\_\_ pillar at the place (1,5) (Gen 35:14)  
 26 At midnight the cry \_\_\_\_\_ out: 'Here's the bridegroom (Matt 25:6)  
 27 people stood watching, and the rulers even \_\_\_\_\_ at him (Luke 23:35)  
 28 But you are a \_\_\_\_\_ around me, O LORD (Ps 3:3)  
 31 To whom will you \_\_\_\_\_ me that we may be compared? (Isa 46:5)  
 32 a papyrus basket for him and coated it with \_\_\_\_\_ and pitch (Exod 2:3)  
 33 Saul \_\_\_\_\_ him very much, and David became one of his (1 Sam 16:21)  
 35 by his knowledge the \_\_\_\_\_ were divided (Prov 3:20)  
 39 I see \_\_\_\_\_ of an almond tree (1,3) (Jer 1:11)  
 41 his \_\_\_\_\_ lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime (Ps 30:5)  
 43 for himself a pillar, which is in the king's \_\_\_\_\_ (2 Sam 18:18) (KJV)  
 44 O LORD, \_\_\_\_\_ them in our day, in our time make them known (Hab 3:2)  
 46 I mean not that other men be \_\_\_\_\_, and ye burdened (2 Cor 8:13) (KJV)  
 48 be better for him to be thrown into the \_\_\_\_\_ with a millstone (Luke 17:2)  
 49 Kedorlaomer king of Elam and \_\_\_\_\_ king of Goiim (Gen 14:1)  
 51 With boughs in hand, join in the \_\_\_\_\_ procession (Ps 118:27)  
 53 and they \_\_\_\_\_ into the land of Armenia (Isa 37:38) KJV  
 56 do not let your \_\_\_\_\_ hand know what your right hand is doing (Matt 6:3)  
 57 the day of the Lord will come like \_\_\_\_\_ in the night (1,5) (1 Thess 5:2)  
 58 \_\_\_\_\_, I will give you what

you have not asked for (1 Kings 3:13)  
 62 neither hammer nor axe nor any \_\_\_\_\_ of iron (1 King 6:7)  
 63 all the trees of \_\_\_\_\_, that were in the garden of God (Ezek 31:9)  
 65 The carpenter measures with \_\_\_\_\_ (1,4) (Isa 44:13)  
 66 Salvation is found in no one \_\_\_\_\_, for there is no other name (Acts 4:12)  
 67 I put a \_\_\_\_\_ on your nose, earrings on your ears (Ezek 16:12)  
 68 He \_\_\_\_\_ his flock like a shepherd (Isa 40:11)  
 69 God will meet all your \_\_\_\_\_ according to his glorious riches (Phil 4:19)  
 70 As the Father has loved \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ have I loved you (2,2) (John 15:9)  
 71 The owl will \_\_\_\_\_ there and lay eggs (Isa 34:15)

## DOWN

1 Bring me a heifer, a goat and \_\_\_\_\_ (1,3) (Gen 15:9)  
 2 Rescue me from the \_\_\_\_\_, do not let me sink (Ps 69:14)  
 3 \_\_\_\_\_ one miracle, and you are all astonished (1,3) (John 7:21)  
 4 Brethren, my heart's \_\_\_\_\_ and prayer to God for Israel is (Romans 10:1)  
 6 her maidens walked \_\_\_\_\_ by the river's side (Exodus 2:5)  
 7 his appeal to the Emperor I decided to send him to \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 25:25)  
 8 if someone wants to \_\_\_\_\_ you and take your tunic (Matt 5:40)  
 10 the angels \_\_\_\_\_ Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy (Gen 19:15) (KJV)  
 11 and will make the Valley of \_\_\_\_\_ a door of hope (Hos 2:15)  
 12 His face \_\_\_\_\_ like the sun, and his clothes became as white (Matt 17:2)  
 13 the hollow of his hand, and \_\_\_\_\_ out heaven with the span (Isa 40:12) KJV  
 15 I want you to \_\_\_\_\_ the words spoken in the past by the holy (2 Peter 3:2)  
 17 by us who ate and \_\_\_\_\_ with him after he rose from the dead (Acts 10:41)  
 23 Xerxes who ruled over 127 provinces stretching from \_\_\_\_\_ to Cush (Esth 1:1)  
 25 If you have faith as small as a mustard \_\_\_\_\_ (Luke 17:6)  
 27 a scroll with writing on both \_\_\_\_\_ and sealed with seven seals (Rev 5:1)  
 28 we have seen his \_\_\_\_\_ in the east, and are come to worship him (Matt 2:2)  
 29 rabbit (Deut 14:7) (KJV)  
 30 their conscience seared with a hot \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Tim 4:2)  
 31 Is it \_\_\_\_\_ for you to flog a Roman citizen? (Acts 22:25)

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34 get three seahs of fine flour and \_\_\_\_\_ it and bake some bread (Gen 18:6)  
 36 they shall come from the \_\_\_\_\_, and from the west (Luke 13:29)  
 37 appeal, request (2 Chr 6:19)  
 38 Daniel, close up and \_\_\_\_\_ the words of the scroll (Dan 12:4)  
 40 a sketch of the altar, with \_\_\_\_\_ plans for its construction (2 Kings 16:10)  
 42 I \_\_\_\_\_ to those whose sin does not lead to death (1 John 5:16)  
 45 and to \_\_\_\_\_ them with the towel (John 13:5)  
 47 My eyes have seen the \_\_\_\_\_ of my adversaries (Ps 92:11)  
 50 When thou vowest a vow unto God, \_\_\_\_\_ not to pay it (Eccles 5:4) KJV  
 52 Do not trust in extortion or take pride in \_\_\_\_\_ goods (Ps 62:10)

53 figs, which are so bad they cannot be \_\_\_\_\_ (Jer 24:8)  
 54 men \_\_\_\_\_ into the city that day as men steal in (2 Sam 19:3)  
 55 So Lot \_\_\_\_\_ for himself the whole plain of the Jordan (Gen 13:11)  
 56 Yet the LORD \_\_\_\_\_ to be gracious to you (Isa 30:18)  
 58 the inscription that was written: \_\_\_\_\_, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN (Dan 5:25)  
 59 I am the \_\_\_\_\_; you are the branches (John 15:5)  
 60 He makes clouds rise from the \_\_\_\_\_ of the earth (Ps 135:7)  
 61 thou mayest give him \_\_\_\_\_ from the days of adversity (Ps 94:13) KJV  
 64 when Isaac was old, and his eyes were \_\_\_\_\_ (Gen 27:1)

Solution on page 14

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LONGSHORTE



# New Dimensions School

By David Burleson  
Burke County

It is difficult to believe that almost half the school year is already completed and the Christmas holidays are behind us. The New Dimensions' children have achieved a great deal of success thus far and we anticipate even more achievements during the remainder of the school year. Our students have improved academically, competed well athletically, and participated proudly in a variety of other activities. Most importantly, we are proud that our children have progressed in their character development and citizenship skills.

It was the renowned author, Charles Dickens, who once said: "There seems a magic in the very name of Christmas." I know that each of us shares Dickens's sentiments, even more, when we think of the meaning of the holiday season that we have just experienced. The festivities of this wonderful time of year offered us many opportunities to be with those who make our lives special and to reflect upon our numerous blessings.

During this magical season, I am most thankful for the privilege of serving as the Director of the New Dimensions School. I am grateful to the staff members who share their many gifts of encouragement, love, knowledge, and patience with each student every day. Each staff member makes daily contributions to the academic and personal success of every child.

During the entire month of December, New Dimensions provided numerous opportunities for our school family to give back to community organizations that assist those in need. From food drives to providing Christmas presents, our school was very involved in helping others.

With continued community support and the dedicated staff of New Dimensions, we will exceed the level of past accomplishments and experience even greater growth in 2020. Quality schools are vital to the economic development of our county. Therefore, our school is dedicated to preparing our children for the successful, productive citizenry.

I want to thank each individual in our school that works so diligently each day to provide the best possible education to our students. My gratitude is extended to each parent who has provided support to his/her child and to the school. We are very blessed to live in a community that conscientiously assumes its responsibility to educate children and to provide the necessary resources for their success.

As we enter 2020, we anticipate the year with excitement; yet, we know much work is yet to be done. It is imperative that we continue to work together as a community to continue to emphasize the importance of education. It is also of great importance to meet the needs of each student that is in our school.

The new year also provides the opportunity for new students to enroll at New Dimensions. Open enrollment 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 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. A special open house just for rising sixth graders will be held on Thursday, February 27 also from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. If these dates are not convenient, the staff of New Dimensions will be more than happy to provide individual tours. Just give us a call (828-437-5753) or email us at [dburleson@ndschool.org](mailto:dburleson@ndschool.org) to schedule a tour. At the end of the enrollment period, it will be determined if there are more applications than spaces available for each grade. 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 by the deadline will be accepted. If the number of applicants for a particular grade level exceeds available spaces for that grade level, a lottery system will determine admission eligibility. Students who are not offered enrollment will be placed on a waitlist. After all spaces for a grade level are filled, the lottery will continue until all applying students have been assigned a priority number on the waitlist. The waitlist will not carry into the next school year.

New Dimensions just received some great news from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Center for Safer Schools. New Dimensions application for funding under the FY 2019 NC School Safety Grant Program was accepted. The funds, totaling over \$87,000, will go toward school camera system and safety equipment (\$36,958), a School Resource Officer in Partnership with the City of Morganton (\$33,000) and students-in-crisis services (\$17,500). Our school looks forward to utilizing these funds to better serve our students and staff. The school safety equipment funds will be used for a long-awaited camera system and special locks for each classroom if needed for a lockdown. The funds for students-in-crisis services will be used to contract with a Caring Alternative to assist with the physical, mental, emotional, and social health needs of students and families. These funds will provide support to our students as they grow and achieve.

As our school continues to work with parents and the community to fulfill the challenge of educating our children, please share your ideas and suggestions. Your input is greatly appreciated and needed. Together, we can accomplish so much for the young people of our school.

Best wishes to you and your family for a wonderful new year. With your continued support, the New Dimensions Charter School can and will help each child achieve all the success and happiness he/she so richly deserves. Together we can make sure that no child is left behind.

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



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# Happy New Year!



## Talk in a Whisper or Scream Louder!

### - Addiction to the Big Bottle and the Little Bottle

By Lawrence Traynor  
Jacksonville Beach, Florida



I never thought my personal addiction struggles may one day be of value in helping others suffering from addiction to the Big Bottle, alcohol and the Little Bottle, pills. I just loved escaping through drinking and as my drinking progressed, I felt like it had just started raining and I was the third monkey running to get aboard the Ark.

I am not a licensed medical doctor or member of the medical community, but I am not, as we say in Boston, "just another guy in the diner," either when it comes to alcohol addiction. I am a recovering alcoholic with twenty-eight years (10,220 days) of continuous sobriety making me uniquely qualified to offer insight into this family tragedy.

Alcohol is a legal, controlled substance and today one of the most common addictions in America. Alcohol addiction, also known as alcoholism, is marked by an emotional and physical craving for alcohol and an inability to stop drinking — even when it causes extreme personal or social harm. Unfortunately, 47% of Men and 41% of Women do not receive the substance abuse treatment they need from the Big Bottle and or the Little Bottle.

Not everyone who drinks is an alcoholic, but anyone whose life is negatively impacted by alcohol on a consistent basis is usually considered to have a problem with alcohol. Even people who drink only during social activities or only drink beer or wine on the weekends are susceptible to an alcohol use disorder. Alcoholism is hereditary and oftentimes referred to as a family disease.

In the extreme, those with severe alcohol dependency may feel they simply cannot start their day without a quick, harmless swig or two of vodka, or finish their day without a glass or four of whiskey, gin or vodka straight or on the rocks.

Alcoholism has been described not only as a disease but as an "allergy" as well. Can you imagine someone being allergic to nuts or certain seafood thinking that just this once it will be OK to eat them knowing for certain how violently ill, they will become upon consumption? This is the insidious, insane behavior of the afflicted mind of an alcoholic and addict.

Alcoholism is a progressive disease. It is imperative we remember our loved ones and their families, that are slowly losing their addiction battle with the Big Bottle and or the Little Bottle, are sick and suffering from a disease and not a simple lack of willpower. In an alcoholic's mind, there is no such thing as one when it comes to a bottle of beer or a glass of wine.

The disease of addiction is described in Twelve Step literature as being "cunning and baffling" for a reason. Why?

Alcoholism is the only disease that tells the person suffering that they really don't have a problem with their alcohol consumption and if their friends and family members would just leave them alone to simply drink in peace then everything would be fine. This is the power of the denial so often associated with this disease.

What men and women must do when caught in the vortex of addiction and denial is to reach out and ask for help. Anyone reading this who is battling addiction knows that reaching out for help is what logically you should do, but don't or can't. Surrender does not come easy. An alcoholic and addict will resort to seeking help only when their addiction leads them to hit their "bottom", allowing them to become ready and willing to finally give up being sick and tired of being sick and tired.

There are only two "bottoms" an alcoholic will experience. These are what are referred to as high bottoms and low bottoms. Examples of an alcohol addict's low bottom oftentimes include DWI's, divorce, bankruptcy, job loss, house arrest, and jail.

Fortunately, in my case, it was a high bottom. I remember it had snowed earlier in the day on January 22nd, 1992. It was a cold, wintry afternoon. I was living with my wife and children on the outskirts of Boston. It was Super Bowl Sunday and the refrigerator was stocked with beer, planned well in advance for watching the big game on television. The life-changing conversation between my wife and myself took place in our kitchen. I was unaware and not prepared for her ultimatum of either immediately stopping my drinking and getting help or losing my marriage and children. That was it. That was my bottom.

I proceeded to open the kitchen refrigerator door, took out the last bottle of beer I had and threw it as hard as I could into the woods of our backyard. The bottle made a violent, smashing sound as it hit and splattered off a nearby tree. I have not had a drop of alcohol since.

If a loved one, family member or maybe "just another guy in the diner" is struggling and losing their battle with alcohol (Big Bottle) or (Little Bottle) pills, remember it is not a question of their willpower or self-control. They are sick and have a disease. Pray for them of course, let them know you love them and care about them, but most importantly tell them they are not weak-willed, that they have a treatable disease and that there is help. In order to get them to realize they need help and surrender you must either talk in a whisper or scream louder!

*Lawrence (Laurie) Traynor lives in Jacksonville Beach, Florida — a member of the recovery community and volunteers his time free of charge in helping addicts and alcoholics, their loved ones and their families locate drug and alcohol assistance resources, (904) 553-1600*

## From Trickle to Waterfalls

By Jan Merop  
Avery County



Hiking alongside babbling brooks or gushing streams fills me with energy. I love listening to the water sing as it spills over the pathway of rocks and boulders.

When we last visited Colorado, we hiked in Rocky Mountain National Park. We could hear water...sometimes trickling like musical pianissimo, other times like a crescendo.

However, when we reached the waterfall and sat alongside, it was like a whole symphony flowing out from a source whose beginning was still unknown to us. And it reminds me of how God's Word is like that for me.

God is the source of life, power, wisdom, strength, peace, and joy. He has no beginning or end. And He invites me and you to sit beside Him and get to know Him better by studying and memorizing Scripture.

As I learn a verse, then another, and another, it has a cumulative effect in my soul. Like the trickling effect of one whose thirst is quenched sip by sip, God's Word seeps into my soul. Scripture memorization started out in Sunday school and Vacation Bible School and continued over the years.

By learning verses one by one, a storehouse of refreshment built within me. How often certain verses come to mind at just the right time. Sometimes I'm neither searching nor hoping for inspiration. But the Holy Spirit within me recalls to my memory the truths from the Bible I need at the moment.

Through the years I committed more and more Scripture to memory. I do not say this boastfully, but, thankfully. For my memorization is far from that of many. I have a friend who has memorized chapters. But the point is, that God refreshes us with the living water of His Word when we drink from the fountain of life He provides.

When I sip water throughout the day, I feel the refreshment within my whole body. God's words are like that. My heart and mind are continually refreshed as His wisdom and truth permeate every crevice.

In Psalm 42 we read how the deer pants for the water brooks. The Psalmist then declares that his soul pants for the living God. He wants his living water. And when the Psalmist feels cast down, he reminds himself in verse 7, NKJV, "Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and billows have gone over me."

Let the cumulative effect of learning God's Word be like a refreshing waterfall supplying the well of your soul. Selah

### THREE-PART HARMONY

*A trio of waterfalls is not silent.  
As the triplet's cascade over the mountain,  
rocks, and boulders to the pool below,  
it is like hearing a song in three-part harmony  
praising the Creator's majesty.*

*"He waters the hills from His upper chambers;  
The earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your works."  
Psalm 104: 13*



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

# Happy New Year!

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Students Gifted Desktop Computers for Home

By Jonelle Bobak  
Burke County

In partnership with Kramden Institute and STEM West, Burke County Public Schools was able to donate 150 desktop computers to students at nine elementary schools and two middle schools. The computers went home with families just in time for a holiday surprise.

Parents have been picking up the computers from their child's school over the last few weeks. George Hildebrand Elementary School's mom Amber Magni talked about what it means for her children. She said, "I almost started to cry. I know it is tough for them when they do not have what they need for school, so it means a lot. I was not expecting this, and this definitely shows how the Lord can answer prayers."

Another George Hildebrand mom Paula Barrows said her kids didn't know about the computer, just that they were getting a surprise.

George Hildebrand's grandmother Angela Browne said their computer will be the only one they have and will be used for learning. Browne said, "It shocked me. They have never had a (desktop) computer before, and they know it is for school because we have been told there are many preloaded educational student games for them to play. We are very grateful because this is going to help them."

Dr. Christie Abernathy, director of Advanced Learning and Innovation, worked with STEM West and Kramden to bring the computers to the district. "These desktop computers are refurbished computers that come preloaded with academic games and activities to enhance the children's learning opportunities at home and help them complete research and homework assignments. I reached out to our principals of the schools receiving the computers and had them handpick the families for the donation."

The schools with families receiving computers are East Burke and Walter Johnson middle, as well as WA Young, Mull, Glen Alpine, George Hildebrand, Drexel, Mountain View, Ray Childers, Forest Hill, and Hillcrest elementary schools.

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Larry Putnam said, "We want to thank all who helped make this donation possible, especially Kramden Institute and STEM West. Our students are exposed to smaller technology at school through tablets and laptops, and many are exposed to tablets and phones at home, but to be able to have a large desktop at home and access to all these from Kramden have to offer helps make learning more equitable for these families."

Kramden partnered with STEM West last year to help make the donations possible through the networking partnerships. Carol Moore, CEO, and president of STEM West said, "This is the second year of the Kramden partnership. Last year we provided 240 computers in Alexander and Caldwell counties. We are so glad Burke County could come on board this year. The goal is to level the playing field for our students to provide equal access to educational tools."

Kramden Institute is a nonprofit based in Durham, North Carolina with a mission to bridge the digital divide by providing technology tools and training. Since 2003, Kramden has refurbished and awarded more than 34,000 computers to students and families across North Carolina, with over 3,100 awarded in 2018. Kramden is supported by an active volunteer corps, with more than 2,000 individuals donating more than 13,500 hours of service last year.



Getting Ready For Flu Season

By Miguel Cruz  
Yancey County



Flu season is upon us and everywhere we go there are the signs up reminding us to "get our flu shot". If you are depending on the flu shot to protect you, you better have a backup plan. Year after year the CDC comes out with a report on the effectiveness of the last years' flu vaccine, I always read these reports with amusement and sadness because they show the effectiveness to be routinely between 10-60% effective. This means that 40-90% of the time the vaccines don't work because you have a different strain of flu bug than the vaccine works against.

This article is not meant to be for or against vaccines, just reporting the facts to help you through all the fake news out there. If you think vaccines are right for you, then do it. I'm against doctors bullying their patients into taking vaccines against their will because the facts just don't back up the effectiveness. By the way, all the debate about whether the flu vaccines cause you to have the flu, the vaccines will NOT give you the flu. I know we all heard about aunt Wilma who got the flu shot and the next day she was sick as dog.... What happened is that Aunt Wilma reacted to all the ingredients put into the vaccine like formaldehyde, aluminum, mercury and a host of others which are designed to activate the immune system to create the antibodies which eventually build your immunity. Aunt Wilma got "flu-like" symptoms as a result of her immune system reacting to these ingredients. The problem is, she still got sick, call it what you want, flu or no flu. Another point of concern is that these ingredients are also toxic to the body.

Now, for those of us who are into doing all we possibly can to prevent sickness without the use of pharmaceuticals whenever possible, here is a list of some of my favorite things to have on hand. Keep in mind you should not wait until you have all the symptoms before you go out and buy these, at the first sign of a symptom is the best time to start.

Echinacea: comes in liquid or capsule. I prefer liquid, follow directions on the bottle or 1 dropper in the mouth 3x per day.

Biocidin: A highly concentrated and effective herbal liquid. 1-5 drops in the mouth 3x per day

Vitamin D3 + K2: Vitamin D is important to many functions in the body including immunity. 5000 - 10,000 units per day

Lauricidin: Made from the anti-microbial factors in pure coconut oil. Follow directions on the bottle.

Vitamin C: Everyone knows about vitamin C, take as much as you can tolerate throughout the day in intervals. If you get loose stools, your taking too much.

Argentyn 23, silver hydrosol: Silver has natural anti-viral and anti-microbial properties. This is a professionally formulated liquid that is safe for children and adults and will NOT turn you blue. 1 tablespoon 3x per day for an adult. It also comes in a spray that works great for a sore throat.

There is certainly a host of other herbal combinations you can take so this is simply a list of what I keep around and recommend to my patients. The above recommendations are not meant to be medical advice as exact dosages can vary according to individual symptoms, age, and weight. You should consult your health care practitioner who is knowledgeable about natural remedies.

One caution I like to give is being aware of the quality of the product. Unfortunately, the cheaper brands are indeed of poor quality and a waste of money. I like to give any new products I recommend the litmus test of returning customers. As well as trying it myself and for my family, if a product works, then people will return for more and tell their friends and family about it to the point it sells itself. When that happens, I know I have a winner.

I hope this information will help you to have a healthy and happy winter.  
God Bless

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

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### Just a Little Talk

By Whitney Brooks



Inspiration winds its way to us in so many ways: prayer, scripture, poetry, and art. Recently I found myself humming a tried and true gospel number, "Just a Little Talk with Jesus" — you know the song. It's a catchy tune, and that day I could not get it out of my head.

I've heard that the best way to get a song unstuck from our mental radio is to actually listen to it, so that's exactly what I did. Behold the power of the Internet!

As this beloved hymn wound its way through my headphones, something sounded different. This song, which I've sung too many times to count, made a fresh impression. One line, in particular, pinched me: "Just a little talk with Jesus made me whole."

I listened again, and again, and again. I leaned back, eyes closed, and visualized the words of the song. My brain and my spirit formed their own chorus, singing a connection between the lyrics to this classic southern hymn and North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry's (NCBAM) groundbreaking One Hope program.

One Hope and its accompanying NCBAM Hope Line exist to serve aging adults suffering from loneliness and social isolation: folks who are in need of community and quality connection. Evidence has shown that a lack of access to daily interactions with others contributes to serious health problems, from cognitive decline to premature death.

The power of connection is mighty, and NCBAM is bridging this broad gap in the senior adult community by offering a friendly voice to anyone 65+ who needs to hear one. Once the Hope Line is fully up and running, over the next year, aging adults can call in anytime between 9:00 am and 9:00 pm, Monday through Friday, and share whatever is on their minds. They can talk with NCBAM Call Center staff or a Hope Line volunteer, pray together, and speak about their lives. The goal is that callers will really and truly feel heard. NCBAM staff and volunteers will help callers rediscover their purpose and reinforce their connection to Christ. One Hope strives to help people feel whole, the same way Jesus does in that treasured gospel tune.

As children of God, we were created to be connected and in community, to be in company with others. Feeling seen and heard is a basic human need, something we take for granted at times. Smartphones and computers provide the illusion of constant connection, but they are no replacement for good old-fashioned conversation.

As the One Hope outreach grows, NCBAM will be following in Christ's footsteps to have lots of "little talks" with aging adults in an effort to make them feel whole. We hope YOU are part of the conversation.

Whitney Brooks, NBC-HWC, works with individuals and groups as an integrative health coach. She refers to herself as a Healthy Aging Cheerleader. She is a member of First Baptist Church in uptown Lexington. Whitney is a member of NCBAM's Advisory Team and also serves as an advisor for the ministry's One Hope outreach.



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Perseverance

By Steve Williams  
Mitchell County

Howdy Folks, Happy New Year,  
Here we are starting another New Year. Many people are asking themselves, "How in the world am I going to be able to make it through 2020?" We are living in some pressing times. Even though the economy is on a good roll right now there are many things that are not. Everywhere you look things are crazy, to say the least. Our government leaders are acting like a bunch of idiots. We have people all around us who are going through pressing and tuff times in their life. People who have lost their mates asking how does a widow or widower go on after the flowers wilt and the grass grows over the grave? Others are asking how does a mother go on after her children grow up and no longer need her? How does a victim move beyond the abuse or injustice without being bitter? How does a patient go on after the physician breaks the news about the dreaded biopsy? How does a divorcee go on after a divorce? People are getting discouraged and throwing up their hands and saying, "What's the use, what do we do?" Well Paul tells the child of God in Philippians 3:13-14

13 "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Paul's saying here I don't have all the answers, but I know that there is one thing that I'm going to do, and that is I'm going to press on.

Pressing on is a term we must use a lot in our lives. Life is not always a joy ride but, life has its tuff times and tuff things we have to face along the way. Great Christians of our day did not get to where they are today by giving up. You know come to think about it, I have never seen a book written on how to quit, I believe the reason is all of us know how to do that. You say then. What is the secret? I don't know if you would call it a secret, it's just a fact of life and that is for a person to experience victory in their lives. they are going to have to press on. If you want Victory in your life you can't give up. Let me share with you four great truths about what victory is not in the Christians life. 1st Victory is not a once-for-all, automatic inheritance, but it is a daily process of life. 2nd Victory is not an emotional high. Christians do not gain victory by psyching themselves up or getting in the mood. The reason being we get psyched up and out of the mood too easy. 3rd Victory is not a dream reserved for super saints because God intends for all of us to experience victory in our Christians life. 4th Victory does not happen to us while we passively wait. You must be working toward making victory a reality in your life. It's foolish to think victory is just going to happen. But let me show you quickly what Victory is. Paul tells us there must be Action. Paul tells us that he "presses toward" moving forward in life. No one can go back in life and change one thing. That's why we must keep moving forward. Next, Paul tells us that he takes Aim because he is pressing toward a mark. Hey, when you go hunting if you expect to get something you must take aim and pull the trigger. If you fail to aim and just pull the trigger all the time, you'll never know where you are shooting or where it goes. That's what seems to happen in many Christians' lives. They seem to be pulling the trigger but failing to aim their lives in the right direction. Paul is showing us that we must be Disciplined. Discipline is one of the most heated terms of our time it goes right along with patience, and self-control. But just think just how many times discipline comes up in the life of a victorious person. No runner completes training without discipline. No weight loss program is successful or maintained without discipline, and no temptation is overcome without discipline. Paul shows us here if we take action and if we take aim and we discipline ourselves that we will be victorious. So, to have victory and to experience victory in our lives and in 2020 we must press on.

Words of Wisdom

- Great works are performed not by strength but by perseverance. Samuel Johnson
- Perseverance is the hard work you do after you get tired of doing the hard work you've already done. N/A
- Perseverance is the secret of all victories. N/A
- Patience and perseverance have a magical effect before which difficulties disappear and obstacles vanish. John Quincy Adams

Challenge for the New Year

- Just Remember in 2020 you have 12 new chapters in your life and 366 new chances to do better and to make a difference. Happy Leap Year.

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



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Shirley Hise Memorial Scholarship

By Patti Jensen  
Mitchell County

The Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors announces the Shirley Hise Memorial Scholarship Fund. The Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors announced at their annual dinner the establishment of the Shirley Hise Memorial Scholarship Fund in memory of long-time Chamber Director Shirley Hise. "Shirley was an integral part of the growth of the Chamber during her tenure as Director and continued her commitment to education and the support of her community throughout her life," said Patti Jensen, Mitchell County Chamber Director.

In honor of her undying commitment to her community, the Mitchell County Chamber and to education, a scholarship fund has been established to be given to a Mitchell High School student in the Spring of each year. Criteria for the scholarship will be established by the Board of Directors in partnership with the family of Shirley Hise.

The Chamber is providing the seed money to establish the scholarship and announces that anyone who would like to support the scholarship in Shirley's name is invited to participate. Pledge cards are available from the Chamber of Commerce by calling 765-9033 or you can fill out this form to notify us of your support.

Checks can be made out to the Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce with the "Shirley Hise Scholarship" written on the memo line. If you would like to make your donation via a credit card, please call us to have a link emailed to you.

If you would like to support this scholarship for local students:

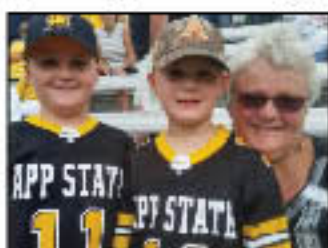
If you would like to support a local student by making a pledge to the scholarship fund, please complete this form and mail your check to Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce PO Box 858 Spruce Pine, NC 28777 The Mitchell County Chamber is a 501(c)6 nonprofit corporation.

If you have questions or would like to contact us concerning your pledge, please call the Chamber at 765-9033 or email [pjensen@mitchellcountychamber.org](mailto:pjensen@mitchellcountychamber.org).

For more information about the scholarship and to read the content of the scholarship presentation at the Annual Chamber Dinner please visit <https://mitchellcountychamber.org/mitchell-county-chamber-of-commerce-announces-shirley-hise-memorial-scholarship-fund/#cid=318&wid=901>.

Thank you for considering the support of this scholarship fund for local Mitchell County students.

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



Happy New Year!

Sudoku

Solution on page 14

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

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## First Baptist Church Nebo

### Letting Go, and Running Your Race

By Cody Penland  
McDowell County



In the apostle Paul's letter to the body of Christ in Philippi, he said, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13-14).

I feel it imperative that we understand that this is coming from a man who was merely five years removed from his third and last missionary journey, allowing Christ to use him to save countless numbers of souls in a plethora of places. He had witnessed the working of the Holy Spirit through the people at the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. However, there is another piece that is pivotal in capturing the magnitude of this statement. Prior to his conversion in 35 AD, Paul used to regularly persecute Christians. If anybody knew a thing or two about letting go and running the race set before us, I can say with confidence that Paul certainly understood what he was saying to the Christians in Philippi.

As a History major in college, the concept of forgetting the past can be difficult to conceptualize. As a broken sinner saved by grace, I have a hard time accepting that I was gleefully drowning in the world just ten years ago. We all have made bad decisions, said the wrong things, responded with animosity before taking time to pray about a situation... It is clear to me that we all are confronted with a multitude of "little"—however, major—battles each day. I find myself—as many Christians do—being quite critical on myself whenever I "slip up" or act in a way that is not representative of Christ Jesus living in me. Regardless, Paul's words still hold true to the Christian today!

One could hold the view that without hesitation or thought, Paul immediately started doing ministry for Christ at conversion (read Acts 9 to see Paul's conversion; incredible). I tend to think that at some point, however, Paul had to have thought on numerous occasions, "why me?" It is with my own absolute certainty that Peter probably wondered why Jesus would ever love him after he denied Him three times (Matt. 26:69-75). I tell our teenagers in our student ministry that idolatry is the easiest sin to commit. Make no mistake Christian, when you focus on your past to the point that it gets in the way of letting Our Savior mold you, move you to glorify His Name, and building His Kingdom—you have made the past your idol. Let me simplify that; if your past comes in front of your relationship with God, you are worshipping your past to the point that you are keeping it alive! I read a book during my time at Montreat College titled "Learning for the Love of God" by Derek Melleby and Donald Opitz. In the process of illustrating what a true Christian student looks like, the authors discuss the many things that students idolize before Christ. I personally had an issue with caring more about getting good grades and winning awards on the lacrosse field than I did with my relationship with Christ. I would say that for the majority of the time, I do not believe that the Christian maliciously intends to idolize things of the world or the past... but that's exactly what they do; they still build an idol.

We must learn from our successes and failures when they happen and be thankful for them. There is value in the good, bad, and the ugly when and immediately after they happen. As part of free will, I believe that God allows us to make mistakes so that we can learn from them. It is the same way with our successes! I have the wonderful blessing of coaching ages seven to nine boys' basketball for the local recreation department. In our very first game—and my first game EVER coaching—one of my boys, Greyson, threw up a seventeen-footer with two defenders in his face and banked it in. He then did a little fist pump and whispered the word "yes!" to himself. The sweetest, most shy little boy I have ever met, Michael, got his first point this season yesterday evening, a free throw. Success is fun! Winning is a blast! However, it cannot be the end-all to life. Brothers and sisters, if I was coaching to win basketball games and nothing more—if I was teaching student ministry to look good on social media—then what am I there for? If we bask in the glories of yesteryear, how can we continue to progress in our walk with Christ today?

Remember Greyson? He took that shot while we were down twenty-five points; just threw the ball up there in hopes of getting points for our team. He kept playing with all of his might, with no hesitation from all the mistakes we had made in the game. Remember Michael? He's one of the smallest kids in our league but still took his shots, got fouled, and made a free throw. We must continue to further God's Kingdom no matter what and run that race.

As we enter the new year, my prayer is that you look at the examples of Paul and these two young boys, remembering to keep running that race no matter what you have said, done, or thought. God still chose you and loves you unconditionally. Christian, keep your heart open and your eyes affixed on Him, and He will move mountains. The prophet Isaiah said, "Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert" (Isa. 43:18-19). Amen.

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.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; **Titus 3:5**

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The Year of Hindsight

By Timothy W. Tron  
Burke County

The spirit rests quietly within my soul. As I sit here in the Solarium on the campus of Appalachian State University, the man-made open space in which plants and trees create a comforting atmosphere of relaxation and respite, the sound of the water cascading into the pools behind me mends the weary being within. It has been a difficult year. The late days of December are upon us, and soon, we will welcome in the new year.

From those whispering echoes of flowing streams, the mind is taken back. I am transported to a place where the tiny rivulets run down granite walls, eventually uniting as one to create a monstrous cataclysm, which crashes, in erupting volumes, into pools below. They eventually pass through a series of boulders until they form gentle pools, which reflect upon the towering walls of the mountainsides nearby. In my mind, I am once again at the foot of Mount Col Pis in the Germanesca valley. Above me, the azure blue sky opens over the snow-clad peaks. Around me, the wildflowers bloom in the early summer, peaking their bright, colorful heads above the patches of snow that remain in this season of early June. In my recollections, I can see below where I stand, the calm of the pool that has formed into a surface of glass between the torrent above and below, allowing the reflection of my person to be seen. There, in the darkness of that pool, an elderly man stares back at me, someone that appears older than he feels. The eyes peer into my soul and my thoughts are riveted back to the here and now. It is as if the very nature of creation speaks to all that is within this scene; how much we can learn by knowing from whence we came, and in that theme, be thankful for all that was, ...is, ...and that which will be.

Not so long ago, my own world seemed to be spinning out of control. The darkness devoured enough of my life that, at one point, my prayers were simply for God to take me home; my heavenly home. The physical pain of the illness coupled with the preceding months of torment and anguish had come to a head. Many of you can relate. Some of you may even now be feeling these same pressures. Those of you who have suffered from health-related issues, or may still be suffering, can surely empathize. There are those times in life that you feel like just giving up. As someone once wrote in a song, "The darkest hour is just before dawn."

It is so true.

In those quiet, still, dark predawn hours, when we are the most alone, it is then the prince of darkness seeks us out. Alone we are vulnerable. He causes us to focus on us, on our shortcomings, on what we are incapable of doing by ourselves. This is our fallacy. It is when we are at our weakest when he tries to push us to the point of no return. We were never meant to go it alone, for as Jesus told his disciples, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." It is in these darkest hours when there is nothing left, we must fall to our knees. We must plead for God to take over, allowing the Comforter to come within, asking Jesus Christ to come into our lives.

"I must decrease so that He may increase," wrote John.

And Paul, who knew his share of suffering, would write, "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

As the Apostle Paul sat in prison, awaiting trial in Rome, he wrote to the churches and to his disciples, sharing with them the knowledge of the past, and the hope of the future. "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." -2Tim.4:7

In a year of hindsight, we have much to look back upon and be thankful.

While we have much to reflect upon, we should also take heart in knowing that through the many trials and persecutions, we have persevered, surviving unto this day to stand as a witness to God's guidance and protection. "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need." -Phil.4:12s.

Some may look back and long for, as they say, the good old' days. Lot's wife did just that, and in the end, became a pillar of salt. Her downfall was her longing to return to the addictions and sin of her fleshly desires from which they had become accustomed to in Sodom. For us to seek to return from whence we came is not part of God's plan. Backsliding, as they call it, shows that we have not grown in our faith nor have we released the bondages of many of our former lives. When one has found the beauty of living in Christ, becoming one with the Holy Spirit, and then falls back into the ways of the former life, they are as Paul said, "the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire," so vile and blasphemous is the act.

Then there are those that, like those ancient Israelites, with their backs to the Red Sea and Pharaoh's army fast approaching, cried to Moses that their plight was just as easily had been better off if they had remained in Egypt and remained slaves. They too wanted to return to their past, no matter how bad or tortuous it had been. Now, seeing their faith dwindle into cries before their leader, Moses alone reminded them of their recent revelations of miracles that had brought them to this point, the many plagues brought upon Pharaoh. Forcing them to look back in such a short-term recollection was probably not what they expected to be the answer. Yet, in that reflection, there was the guidance. Moses's intention was meant to focus their attention toward the future, the salvation from death through God's own hand. As God turned them to face the barrier that had at one point seemed to



be their end, the Red Sea, it now became their deliverance. Remarkably, they watched in awe as the mighty sea began to part, opening a vast void. Even more unbelievable was the fact that the ocean floor, which had been submerged under centuries of water, was now blown dry. This was of major importance because, as they escaped, they were not bogged down in the mud and mire. Imagine their instant utter relief as they began to tread upon the ancient seabed and began to flee the wrath of Pharaoh; thus, beginning their long journey to the land of Canaan, to the promised land that God had promised their forefather Abraham.

There was so much more ahead than what was behind. Yet, the Israelites had to be reminded of what they had survived to appreciate what was about to happen, so hardened were their hearts.

Each morning when we are blessed to awaken to a new day, we may face the life we had not imagined nor desired. Illnesses or situations beyond our control may have created a circumstance such that we may be forced to accept the "new normal" of simply living day-to-day. Whereby people's lives will forever be affected by the sickness or demise for which they must carry until their dying days. Even these people must know that, as did the Apostle Paul, there is a purpose in everything. Like Paul, he took comfort in his afflictions as much as he did in the joys of his ministry. So too, we must learn to embrace those earthly challenges. That which doesn't kill us will make us stronger, we have often heard.

Walking around a college campus, it is easy to see those who are so consumed by their daily toil of study and academic survival that they lose sight of the blessing unto which they have come. For many, to even be accepted into an institution of higher learning is a feat unto itself. Then those who have spent their entire lives in the classroom, have yet to know what the world is about. Their future is beyond the bindings of the books in which they live. Yet, the one book that provides hope beyond its cover is rarely seen; the Bible. Finding my own path now in a place where there had never before in these recent years, seemed an even remote possibility of returning, has awakened a thankfulness beyond compare. How is it possible? Every day, I seek God's guidance in showing me my purpose for being here, a college campus. Each day, there is a subtle nuance that chirps of hope like the morning sparrows at sunrise.

In the coming days, we will hear of the challenges and resolutions that come with a new year. This next year, 2020, the year of looking back, let us resolve to grow from our pasts, to regain that lost love of life, and to find God in everything we do. Let us be strengthened from the knowledge of what we have survived and allow that wisdom to bring us closer to seeking each footstep's direction from our Heavenly guide, our Lord and Savior. "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." -Phil.4:4-7

Take time for yourself this year. Find a spot where you can lean back and breathe in all that you've known and all that there is before you. Listen to the sounds of a gentle waterfall and be calmed. In everything we do, as we learn from our past, let us give thanks to the one who gave us all that we have, for now, and evermore.

Thanks be to God.

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



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period is given. Let's consider the three things that make up the content of the message that will be given.

First, we see the words "fear God." So many people today have no fear of God. God calls people in this age of grace to come to Him, but in a future day, He will judge mankind and the earth. That judgment will be very severe. On that day, there will be no mercy to the unbeliever. Rebellion and denial of God He will now tolerate. The reason He does that in this day of grace is to give us another opportunity for us to come to Him and escape the judgment that is yet to come.

The Bible says: *"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"* (Matthew 10:28). *"And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation"* (Luke 1:50). *"And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear"* (1 Peter 1:17). *"And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul"* (Deut. 10:12).

Secondly, the Bible tells us to "give glory to him." How do we give glory to God? We do so by acknowledging Him as the only true God and setting up worship to Him in our hearts, praising Him as the Great Ruler of Heaven and earth.

In closing, we are told to, *"worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."* *To worship God is to ascribe worship to Him; to attest to Him worthiness. It is saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created"* (Rev.4:11).

Things made by men do not last, but our Gospel is an everlasting one. It will endure the test of time, the assaults of Hell and the mocking of the ungodly. It is forever!

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

By Rev. Carlton and Wanda Barber  
McDowell County

Heavenly Hearts is a southern gospel group husband and wife, Rev. Carlton & Wanda Barber, who sings, at rest homes, fairs, festivals and churches, etc. all over N.C. & S.C. & G.A. & T.N.!!! Wanda was born in Kings Mountain N.C. and Carlton Fayetteville N.C.!!!! They now make their home in Marion N.C. with their ministry office located in Valdese N.C.!!! They run and own a singing, news chatting online worldwide radio station. Listen in at [inya-faithradio3.com/inyafaith](http://inya-faithradio3.com/inyafaith), This is also their web page to buy CDs and concert updates !!! All CDs are \$12.99 plus \$4 shipping and handling send check or money order to Wanda Barber P.O. Box 171 St. Paul's, N.C. 28384. To Book Them call (704)-441-7595 Their new Christmas Cd is out now, A Carolinas Christmas & Their New Gospel Cd \*\*\*\* Journey Of Faith!!!

They also do MaMa's Teddy Bears 4 Cancer Charity, in honor of Lois Gordon, Wanda's mother who passed away from cancer and in honor of Wanda's sister, Barbara who passed away from cancer in Old Fort N.C. when she was very young!!!

We go to rest homes and hospice houses and give out teddy bears and do free gospel concerts there !!! They just released a new single called Three More Days, out to national radio now via In Ya Faith Gospel Promotions & Media Company another division of their ministry that helps gospel groups and singers to advance their music ministries worldwide!!! Heavenly Hearts won 2018 Best Traditional Gospel Group Of The Year!!! In 2017 Carlton won Best Gospel Artist Of The Year and this year he has sung for country and gospel legend Randy Travis at his music festival in Marshville, N.C.!!!



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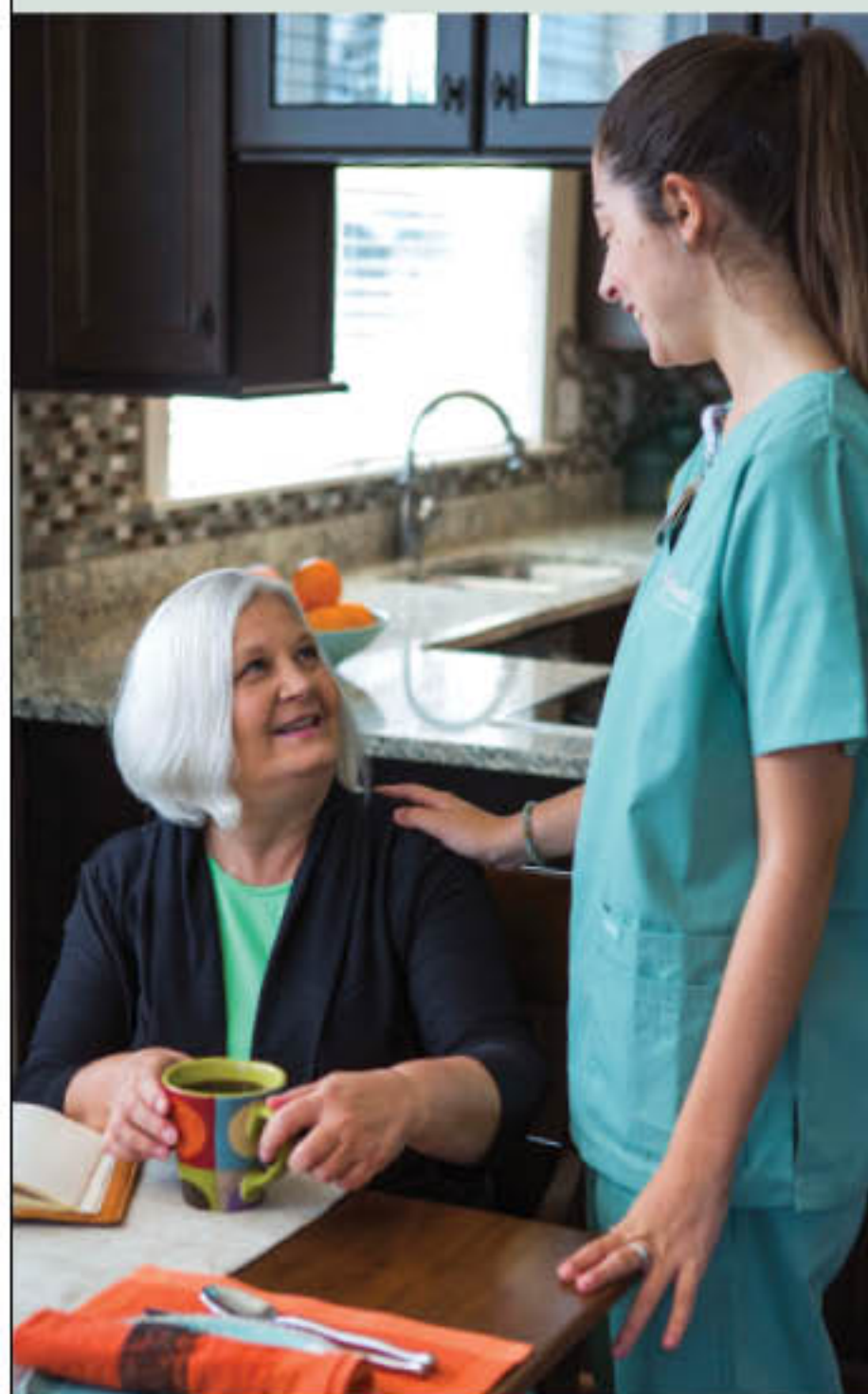
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