

# BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS



## Snow Hill Baptist

### No Regrets Family - For Immediate Release

By Dean Honeycutt  
Mitchell County



You may recognize the words “for immediate release” from the Mitchell, Avery, and Yancey Health Department COVID-19 daily updates. The daily updates from the MAYland Health Department inform us of the new COVID-19 cases in our counties. I am so grateful since the time the health department started informing us of cases, we have maintained a 98% to 99% survival rate. This is something to praise God for.

It saddens us that the US has surpassed 200,000 deaths associated with the coronavirus. It also saddens us that thousands upon thousands have died of cancer, abortion, heart attacks, and drug overdose. The point being something out there is eventually going to get all of us. The Bible says Hebrews 9:27 (KJV 1900) 27” *And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:*”

I am not going to go chase the virus down, but I realize death comes to all people and the Bible teaches me that God is ultimately in control. He is the one who gives life and takes life. When the Bible speaks of God being in control of life and death I do not want to be misunderstood. The Bible teaches “the wages of sin is death” we live in a fallen world and death and evil are a part of this fallen world. God is not and cannot be associated with sin or evil. Our bodies are created for this earth, but they cannot live forever in a fallen world. In a fallen world the body will fail. Death will come. It may be our heart, may be our lungs, or it may be old age. Life is like a vapor. It is here today and gone tomorrow.

Genesis 2:7 (KJV 1900) 7 “*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*” Genesis 3:19 (KJV 1900) 19 “*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*”

However, our spirits are made for eternity. That is why Adam and Eve were prevented from eating of the tree of life. God is a spirit and God is eternal and we are created in the image of God. However, our image is corrupted by sin and

therefore subject to sins debt and that is death. So how do we live forever in a body that will fail us?

Our spirit needs to be made alive. The only way to be made alive and live forever is to have the One who conquered death, hell and the grave living inside of us, and that is Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:22 (KJV 1900) 22 “*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*”

So “For Immediate Release” Thank the Lord Jesus Christ who came to earth to die on the cross for your sin and your salvation.

Folks, our nation is in a mess, and we are at a crossroads. This election is crucial for the direction of our nation and our moral compass. Our nation is going down a path of destruction. The Bible says Proverbs 14:34 (KJV 1900) 34 “*Righteousness exalteth a nation:*”

But sin is a reproach to any people.

What can we do? We can do what the Bible tells us to do. Repent of our sin and turn to God. When Israel was in the crosshairs of God’s judgment Israel had to humble herself before God and repent. We need to do the same as a nation. Second, All Lives Matter especially the child in the womb. Do everything we can to see Roe v Wade overturned. Third, uphold the family. The family and marriage are under attack. God created them male and female. Gender is determined at conception. Fourth, support your church and the freedom to gather and to worship the Creator of heaven and earth. Fifth, Back the Blue. Law enforcement is God designed and without it there is lawlessness.

I cannot tell anyone how to vote but as for me and my family, we will vote for the platform that has the convictions closest to the Bible. We will vote for candidates who want to protect the life of the baby in the womb, who recognize God ordained marriage between a man and a woman, and who protect the rights of Christian churches and worship.

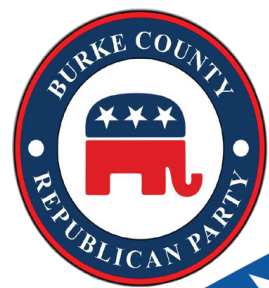
God bless you and your family. Pray and seek the Lord at this most critical time in our nation. Love others as Christ loves them and seeks the salvation of all people.

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.*

# BURKE COUNTY CONSERVATIVE VOTER GUIDE 2020

President <b>Donald J. Trump</b>	NC Auditor <b>Tony Street</b>	NC Supreme Court <b>Paul Newby</b> <b>Phil Berger Jr.</b> <b>Tamara Barringer</b>	NC House District 112 <b>David Rogers</b>
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US House District 5 <b>Viginia Foxx</b>	NC Comm of Labor <b>Josh Dobson</b>	NC House District 86 <b>Hugh Blackwell</b>	Register of Deeds <b>Stephanie A. Norman</b>
NC Governor <b>Dan Forest</b>	NC Secretary of State <b>E.C. Sykes</b>		
NC Lt. Governor <b>Mark Robinson</b>	NC Supr. of Public Instr. <b>Catherine Truitt</b>		
NC Attorney General <b>Jim O'Neill</b>	NC Treasurer <b>Dale R. Folwell</b>		



Early Voting begins October 15th!

**VOTE NOVEMBER 3RD!**

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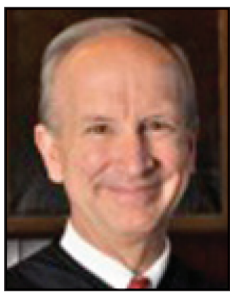
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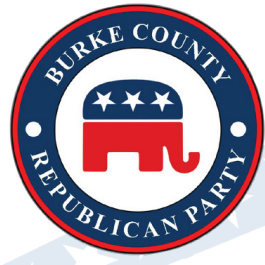
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**April C. Wood**  
[JudgeWoodforCOA.com](http://JudgeWoodforCOA.com)



Take this Conservative Voter Guide with you to your polling place. It's allowed and legal to do so.

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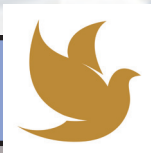
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*“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace: that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation: that saith unto Zion. Thy God reigneth!”*

Isaiah 52:7 KJV



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# Church Directory

**Landis Orthodox Presbyterian Church**  
4975 US 221  
Marion NC 28972  
(828)-756-7470  
www.landischurch.org

**Elder Mike Cloy**  
opcmikecloy@gmail.com

Sunday School 10:00 AM  
Worship Service 11:00 AM  
Fellowship Meal Following Worship  
Thursday Bible Study & Prayer 6:30pm

*Come Celebrate the Glory of God in Reverent Worship Ps. 96:3; John 17:1*

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

**Reverend Bruce Cannon**

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

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

**The Bridge Church of WNC**  
207 Pinebridge Avenue  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
www.bridgewnc.org

**Pastors - Tom & Tammy Anglin**

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

*"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

**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!

**The Rock Church**  
4806 US 64  
Morganton, NC 28655  
Phone: 828-334-3193  
www.trcmorganton.com

**Pastor - Billy Chapman**

Sunday Morning – 10 AM  
Sunday Night – 6 PM  
Tuesday Night – 7 PM

Come Join Us  
Tent Revival 2020

**Grassy Creek Baptist Church**  
793 Old NC 226 Hwy  
Spruce Pine, NC  
828-765-4620  
www.grassycreekbc.org

Sunday School 10:00am  
Morning Worship 11:00am  
Sunday evening 6:30pm  
Wednesday:  
J.A.M. (Jesus and Me) 6:30pm  
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 Beitz**

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

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

**Dr. Marcus R. Benfield**

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

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Bible Believing Church"

**Plumtree Presbyterian Church**  
4527 Hwy 19E  
Plumtree, NC 28664  
828-765-6919  
www.plumtreechurch.com

**Pastor Ryan Bridgeo**  
pastor@plumtreechurch.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

**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

**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  
Reaching the World with the Everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ!  
www.marionnc.adventistchurch.org

**First Baptist Church of Spruce Pine**  
125 Tappan Street  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
828-765-9411  
www.sprucepinefbc.com  
www.spfbc.blogspot.com

**Dr. Rocky Branch Senior Pastor**

Sunday School - 9:30 am  
Sunday Worship - 10:45 am  
Sunday Evening - 6:00 pm  
Wednesday Evening - 6:30 pm

*Knowing God, Seeing God, Serving 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

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

**Reverend Bobby Joe Greene**

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

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**Spruce Pine United Methodist Church**  
11090 Hwy. 226 South  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
www.sprucepineumc.org  
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

**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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# Grand View Baptist

## Jesus Is Our Confidence - Hebrews 10:19-25

By Glenda Ward  
*McDowell County*

Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance of eternal life that faith in Jesus Christ brings.

The book of Hebrews confirms that the Mosaic Covenant of the Old Testament had come to an end through the fulfillment by Jesus Christ, and warns some who had identified themselves as Christian against a falling back into the ways of the old covenant and pausing short of true faith in Christ. It also brings to the attention of Christians everywhere the preeminence of Jesus Christ. The key concept throughout the book of Hebrews is the superiority of Christ Jesus.

God's earthly dwelling place was the Temple. The place of the Holy of Holies. Only the High Priest was allowed to enter the Most Holy Place and then only once a year. When the High Priest did enter, he had to take a blood sacrifice. A thick curtain or veil blocked the entryway. This Holy place stood for 1500 years as a warning sign to the people of Israel., "Do not enter" was the message. As long as the Mosaic Covenant stood, so did the curtain. But that covenant came to an end at Christ's death on the cross. Jesus' death brought the completion of the Mosaic Covenant and marked the beginning of the New Covenant. Strange events ushered in this new era. The earth shook and there was darkness, graves opened up and the veil of the Temple was torn from top to bottom, as rocks were split into pieces. Those who were in the Temple witnessed a supernatural event. An invisible power ripped through the thick veil. People saw inside for the first time, the Most Holy Place. The way in now being open.

Some thirty years later the Temple was destroyed, the Most Holy Place of that time was gone. But the real and true Holy place still stands and the way in is open to everyone. Christ's blood is the confidence we have to enter into His throne of grace. It was the blood of Jesus that opened the way. Jesus is our confidence that we can experience the presence of God. We have no barrier to overcome if we put our trust in Him with confidence. We have nothing to fear. We can go into the presence of God where we find mercy and grace in time of need. We are to draw near to Him full in the assurance of faith.

*“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say His flesh. Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:” (Hebrews 10:19,20;22-24).*

A lot of time and energy is spent creating the appearance that we have our life altogether when, in reality, no one does. Beneath it all, where have you placed your confidence? Confidence in Christ is having trust in your life. It is walking boldly forward with clarity and faith. But actually where do we find our confidence in Christ? It begins with looking at our-self honestly. Human confidence is different from having confidence in Christ. Human confidence is dependent on the conditions and circumstances that are unpredictable. No one has it all together, and things often happen beyond our control.

God is the One and Only true living God. He is steady, unchanging, and altogether faithful and reliable in all of life. He alone is worthy of all our trust and confidence because of Who He Is. God reveals Himself to us in and through His Word. He governed the recording and preservation of His Word through the lives of men, so we could have His Holy Word today. His Word is complete and true without error in its original manuscripts. All things on earth will pass away, but God's Word, the Holy Bible will stand forever.

We are to approach the throne of grace with confidence. He is the God who gave Himself freely so we could know Him. We can come to Him constantly without hesitation or reservation, and with all confidence that He will hear when we call upon His Name. No matter how you feel, what you have done, or how weak you think your faith is; we can approach God, our Heavenly Father with confidence having the quiet assurance that He will hear and receive each and everyone who calls upon His Holy name. We are His if we believe in Jesus Christ and His death on the cross for our sins.

All can have confidence in Salvation. We don't have to hope or think we are saved or hope we will be at the end of our journey of life. We don't have to live in fear of losing His great gift of Salvation that He has so freely given. No one can do enough to earn it, we did nothing to earn it. It is only by God's grace that we receive it. If you believe in Christ Jesus, that He died in your place and paid in full for your debt of sin to reconcile you to God, then your Salvation is secure. We did nothing to earn it and we could never do enough to keep it. Good works we perform here on earth do not earn us our Salvation and will not get us into heaven. It is God's mercy and grace that gives us Salvation. That is God's gift to us. Our good works here on earth comes as a result of our Salvation, out of our new identity in Christ. Our good works are a product of our Salvation. After Salvation, God begins to sanctify us to make us more like Him. He changes and invites us into His work that He is already doing all around us. We are to let Him live in us and we are to have confidence in following Him and His direction. Find your confidence in Christ. Who He is, His Word and His grace will never change. Humble yourself and He will lift you up. Have confidence in Jesus Christ.

How can we get this precious confidence we so much desire ....where to go, where to look, what to do, who will help? Look to Jesus who came to earth taking on our flesh and blood as a tiny Child so He could take our guilt and sin to the cross and bury it in the grave forever.

Hebrews 10:19 thru Chapter 13 presents a summary of the Christian's life of confidence. This confidence begins with the forgiveness of sins in the blood of Christ. Where does our confidence come from? Our confidence comes from God. The source of the Christian's confidence is knowing and believing in Jesus Christ.



Why can we be confident in Christ? The dictionary defines confidence as: “the feeling or belief that one can rely on someone or something.” As Christians, we know we can rely on Jesus. The dictionary also defined confidence as “the state of being confident about the truth of something.” We also know that God’s truth sets us free. His truth continues to set us free daily. His truth tells me who I am – a child of God; Forgiven, Redeemed, and Equipped. Let your confidence in God build within you and it will show you a never-ending light that wants to shine through.

“Lord, as I seek to grow spiritually, keep me humble and mindful. Humble in how I consider myself, mindful in how I consider You. In all things, may You be the One who is praised, honored, and glorified forever.” Amen

*Glenda Ward is a member of Grand View Baptist Church in McDowell County. She is the mother of five grown children. Glenda is a Christian writer/author of "Something to Think About" – weekly Christian Articles. She writes Church Programs & Bulletins, VBS Material, Christmas and Easter Programs; all material based on the KJV of the Bible. Also testing the field in tributes, individual memorial writings, etc.*



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



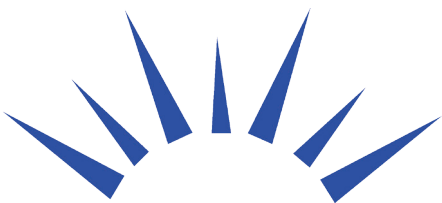
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The Sword of the Spirit

By Caron Cline  
Burke County



The Sword of the Spirit is the sixth piece of armor that Paul describes in Ephesians chapter 6. Paul makes it very clear that the sword of the Spirit is the word of God. When we examined the belt of truth, we discussed the importance of living by the truth of God’s word. Our lives are to be filled with God’s truth, honesty, and integrity. Unbelievers should see that we are people of our word. The belt of truth is a defensive weapon, but the sword of the Spirit is our only offensive weapon mentioned in these verses. Although it is an offensive weapon, we are probably not called to go after the devil since Jesus never did. The devil always came after Jesus and he will come or send one of his demons after us. The sword of the Spirit is our protection against his schemes. Satan followed Jesus into the wilderness where the Spirit had led Him after His baptism. When the devil tempted Jesus to short cut His mission on planet earth, He took out several swords from His arsenal and cut through the lies. (Deuteronomy 8:3; Deuteronomy 6:16; Deuteronomy 6:13) Our responsibility is to practice using our sword.

In the first century, there were at least 4 types of swords, but the word that Paul uses is ‘machaira’, which is a 19-inch-long, two-edged offensive weapon made of iron with a sharp tip for stabbing. Hebrews 4:12 also likens God’s word to a double-edged sword. The writer says it is actually sharper than a double-edged sword.

The Greek word for ‘two-edged’ is ‘distomos, literally meaning ‘two-mouthed’. Paul says in Ephesians 6:17 to take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. He is challenging us to remember who we are in Christ. We are chosen and sealed as holy and blameless children of God by the blood of Jesus Christ once we believe in His finished work on the cross. We must first be confident that we are saved and then proclaim it by using the very words of God, His promises. In other words, He has said it in His Word and we must repeat it and repeat it often, aloud. The enemy cannot read our minds, but he can hear our voices. Although he knows the Word of God, we declare and decree it as children of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is this power that makes all the difference and it is this power that makes the demons tremble.

Two Greek words can be translated ‘word’; logos and rhema. “Logos is generally used when describing a saying, a topic or divine expression”. The word ‘rhema’ means ‘an individual, collective, and specific utterance’. A ‘rhema’ word is usually a specific word that the Holy Spirit gives at just the right time. Sometimes we are praying over a matter and a verse comes to our mind. Sometimes there is a crisis and the Holy Spirit brings Scripture to our minds for our comfort or to share with someone else for their comfort.

In Ephesians 6:17, Paul uses the word ‘rhema’ for ‘word of God’. When God brings specific words and promises to our minds, it becomes a sword that can destroy the lies of the enemy. On the other hand, the sword becomes similar to a surgeon’s scalpel. The word of God can pierce as far as the division of soul and spirit to bring healing to a wound that is damaging our faith. In this case, the sword does bring pain, but the end result is a healthy soul.

The word of God is compared not only to a sword but also to fire and a hammer. In Jeremiah 23:29, God asks this question: “Is not My Word like fire and like a hammer which shatters a rock?”

A sword stabs, a fire burns and consumes and a hammer smashes even rocks into small pieces. In other words, the word of God is powerful and life-changing. Nothing it touches can remain the same.

Isaiah 55:11 reminds us that God’s word will not return void. Many times, we cannot see the end result, but God certainly does. He always accomplishes His purposes through it.

In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Paul proclaims that “All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work”. The devil does not want believers equipped for every good work.

Psalms 1 teaches that those who delight in the law of the Lord and meditate on it day and night will be as a tree planted by a stream of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever this person does will prosper and the devil doesn’t want God’s people to prosper.

Just as we must take the helmet of salvation, we must take the sword of the Spirit, the word of God.

Psalms 19:7-14 is a vivid picture of the power of the Word of God and contains a warning and a promise.

The word of God revives or converts the soul; it makes wise the simple; it rejoices the heart; it enlightens the eyes. These words are worth more than gold and they are sweeter than honey. We are warned by His word and we are rewarded by keeping it. As our words and thoughts echo God’s word, they rise to Him as a pleasing sacrifice.

We should be completely dressed in the armor of God now; the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. Prepare for battle; practice using the sword. Always speak it aloud so that power and authority are released against the forces of darkness. Remember, death and life are in the power of the tongue. Either we agree with God or we agree with the devil.

James 4:7 says ‘Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you’.

Resist him by proclaiming the promises that God has for His bride, which are all yes and amen in Christ. Then proclaim the promise God has given to the devil and his demonic host, eternal destruction.

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.

Witnessing Begins at Home

By Rev. John B. Sorensen

Is your home a lighthouse in your community? It can be. In Acts, Luke writes that early Christians met regularly together in their homes. They ate together, prayed together, worshipped together... *“and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved”* (Acts 2:47). As believers, how can we use our homes as a beacon of Christ’s light in our neighborhoods in the 21st century?

Start Inside

Successful outreach begins with prayer. Spend time praying for your neighbors, your friends, and those you meet in your community. Pray for them by name, and ask God to provide opportunities to speak with them about His gift of eternal life. Invite your spouse, roommate, children, or extended family to join you in prayer. Make it a family initiative. Prayer not only breaks our hearts for the lost, but it also draws us closer together as a family of believers.

Reach Out

Take time to develop relationships with people outside your family. Sometimes the people we know the least live the closest to us. Get to know them. Ask questions. Invest time into them. Ask if you can pray for them about anything. Often, we have no idea that people we see every day are struggling. A kind word or an offer of prayer can open the door for deeper, spiritual conversations. Focus on building trust and relationships, not presenting an agenda.

Invite In

Offer an invitation to friends or neighbors to join your family for dinner. If spiritual conversations have already taken place, invite them to study the Bible with you, or get together to pray about their needs. If you are hosting a small group or social gathering for your church, don’t forget your neighbors. Invite them to join in. Create a friendly, open-door environment and let them know that they are always welcomed. Christian peace and joy are often contagious. People want to know how they can experience it, too.

Point the Way

As we engage in spiritual conversations with those around us, questions will come up. Answer them to the best of your ability, keeping the focus on Jesus Christ and his sacrifice on the cross. If you don’t know the answer, promise to find out, but be sure to return with an answer. Always point to Jesus as the reason for the hope that we have.

Remember, our job is to tell others about the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. It is the job of the Holy Spirit to convict their hearts. He is the ultimate Light, the only One who can truly save anyone. Continue praying for your neighbors and people in your community, and God will open doors for you to share His Good News and His Light to the people around you.

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



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Dont Quit!

By David Valls  
Mitchell County

The scripture that was written by the apostle Paul "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" rings true today for every believer. What does this scripture mean to the Christian today? It lets us know that we don't need to give up...to quit every time we face a trial. We look at troubles we face and it seems nothing good can come from our circumstances. What we must do is look beyond the present, realizing that we have a hope that is an anchor of the soul... both sure and steadfast... so we must lay aside every weight and the sin that besets us. Paul wrote "Let us run the race that is set before us with patience." We have to look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. Paul told young Timothy, his son in the faith, to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. He wanted him to understand that being a Christian and serving GOD is not without challenges, disappointments, and heartaches. The Bible provides us with many examples of Christians who suffered many times over. We may feel like Jeremiah, thinking that God has somehow deceived us. He felt like quitting. He was so distraught that he did not even want to speak the name of the Lord again, but then he said that it was " like fire shut up in his bones"... so much so that he could not quit. Just put yourself in Jeremiah's shoes and perhaps hear the voice of God saying " Don't quit". We must press forward! Why? Because our Greatest testimony of God is showing His work in our lives. It's often from the hardest trials we face and when we walk in the darkest valleys, that God's light shines the brightest. God's light cannot be dimmed by the darkness of our circumstances because God is strong and we are weak. Remember, He does His best work in our lives when we are at our worst! I heard a message from a preacher who said that God uses the broken. We may feel useless during this time, but God says that His strength is made perfect in our weakness. We may be down to nothing BUT GOD IS UP TO SOMETHING! OUR GOD DON'T QUIT!! Praise his precious Holy Name!

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



Prove All Things

By Jody Griffin  
Avery and Mitchell Counties

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (1 Thessalonians 5:21)  
The apostle Paul wrote to the church in Thessalonica offering them counsel for living in tumultuous times. (Seems we all know what those are like...) The advice given in this verse could benefit any who would choose to receive its message and believe its truth. These are "ancient words, ever true" (Thank you Lynn DeShazo and Michael W. Smith, C. 2001, Integrity's Hosanna Music!) and they are words that can help us make our way through the minefields of our current landscape.

Over forty years ago as a young infantry soldier, I was trained in what to do if one finds oneself in such a position (minefield). First, stand in one place, and inspect your immediate surroundings, taking care to look for signs that the soil has been disturbed. Slowly and deliberately bend or stoop down. Then using a knife, bayonet or even a stick begin gently probing the ground in front of you just inches apart and at a depth adequate to identify foreign objects. Finally, when you have cleared a space adequate to take a step, do so. It was a painstakingly slow process but one where Paul's words come rushing into my memory. Missteps could be catastrophic!

Prove all things... dokemazo meaning to test, examine, or scrutinize to ascertain the genuine nature. As in, do the difficult work of evaluating your own thoughts, actions, RE-actions! And when you've completed the evaluation process, "hold fast that which is good". The word there is kathecho, and it means 'to have and to hold'. Sound familiar? These are words used in many traditional wedding ceremonies, 'to have and to hold, from this day forward'.

The implication here is that during times of trial it is valuable to deliberately evaluate our steps! And then upon completing said evaluation we should take hold and keep the evidence of our test by being committed to the process and then move forward accordingly.

The struggle we find ourselves in as a society contemporarily is filled with potential peril, a.k.a. a minefield. We would be wise to allow this Scripture to instruct our journey forward. I believe we may do well to break this down into action steps:

- 1. Stop right where we are and take a careful inventory of the place we find ourselves.
- 2. Use this inventory to determine the safest and most prudent way forward.
- 3. Gently probe the pathway to ensure that the route is safe.
- 4. Use this information as the foundation to undergird each step ahead of us.
- 5. Only allow that which is good to define our way.

The unspoken truth here is that anyone seeking to make their way along this life journey filled with conflict and uncertainty can receive the promise of God's Word. Proving and holding fast to Truth are the steps to safety and security, in this world AND in the Kingdom of God! The way may be excruciatingly slow, but the time and energy expended will be worth it as we strive to avoid catastrophic consequences of our missteps throughout life.

Safe travel friends!

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

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. Mark 11:24





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By Doug Harrell  
Mitchell County

This Life Lesson is going to be out on the edge a little bit, maybe way out, but I am going to be political if you would call it that. For the past three years I have prayed that the most liberal judge in the Supreme Court would retire, not die, but just step down. This judge had been the most vocal advocate of abortion, gay rights, and anti-Christian rights of any member on the highest court in the land. She reminded me of Jezebel in the Bible. Webster dictionary defines her this way: “the Phoenician wife of Ahab who according to the account in I and II Kings pressed the cult of Baal on the Israelite kingdom but was finally killed in accordance with Elijah's prophecy”.

In the past, there have been 29 times that a Supreme Court seat has come open the last year of a Presidents term, and all 29 times the sitting president has made a nomination to fill that term. I truly feel that God is giving America a chance to get back on the right path. A path that leads to Christian values and principles by putting in place leaders and people in places of high authority that truly believe in the Biblical values this country was founded on. I know I am going take flack on this but that is okay with me. I truly believe President Trump, faults, and all, was placed in a position to redirect this country back toward moral grounds. All through the Bible, we see leaders, great leaders, that were not perfect and had made mistakes, but God chose them. Paul was a great example of this. His primary mission before Jesus intervened was to kill Christians!

Think about the prophets of old. Their main message was to turn back to God before something terrible happened. That is where we are now! We need to turn back to God and know that we will face unrelenting pressure to follow the human-istic teaching that has so prevailed in America in the past fifty years. We have literally killed over sixty million babies in the womb in the name of women’s rights. Our churches have ordained openly homosexual men and women into the minis-try, we have glorified marriage between a couple of the same sex, we have created a multibillion-dollar porn industry that has polluted the minds of our children and all of this has been condoned by liberal-leaning judges on our highest courts in the land. Here in North Carolina the will of the people (that our constitution is writ-ten that marriage was between one man and one woman) was overturned by one political judge that has never been elected by the people.

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14 KJV

The struggle for the survival of our country will be more evident in the coming days than at any time in our lives. You are going to see things take place that we of my generation have never seen, the battle between right and wrong is going to be in your face full bore. I think about some verses in the book of John chapter 14 today and am claiming them for myself and pray you do as well.

“If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” John 14:15-18 KJV

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27 KJV

The peace of America is going to be in turmoil when President Trump announc-es his choice for the Supreme Court. To stop the continued growth of so-called liberalism is going to be akin to war, a war for the minds and souls of our very children and grandchildren, great-grandchildren, the future of the generations here in America. As many of you may be aware, there was a prayer march on Wash-ington September 26th and many churches were live streaming this event as well, I pray that you took part. It is interesting how God has orchestrated the timing of the death of the most liberal person on the Supreme Court with this prayer march.

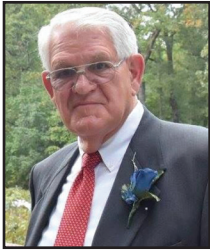
The cry from the humanistic left is going to be all about so-called reproductive rights for women, abortion, protection, and enhancements for the LGBT com-munity and that lifestyle. They are going to call it justice for all when in reality it is their goal to stop the worship of God, eliminate our ability as Christians to not provide services or hire those we feel would betray our beliefs, and the follow-ing or even mentioning of His commandments in public places. You can bet your bottom dollar that when that happens there will be a time that it will be illegal to even mention them in private. In reality, the purpose of the Supreme Court is to interpret the law and the constitution, not rewrite it or change it and this is what many of the liberals believe need to happen. To many of them, it is an outdated document that needs to be changed with the times, that is a problem.

The outcry will continue that our President is abolishing the Constitution by nominating a replacement when that is his duty to do so. As I mentioned before, there have been 29 instances in the past where an opening came up in the last year of a president’s term, all 29 times a person was nominated.

The waters of the world will be rough the next month or so. Remember that even though they may be full of turmoil, God is in control. Remember the song “Onward Christian Soldiers” in the coming days. March on in strength and unity under the flag of Jesus, pray, work tirelessly and vote.

Now is a chance to turn back to God, pray as never before. This is a critical moment in our history, a moment that will define this country for years to come. Pray that a God-fearing person with moral values that reflect the will of God be placed on our highest court. That a person that believes the Constitution is not to be changed by the court, but by the people and the duly elected Congress and Sen-ate. Pray that our President is anointed for the fight for the survival of this nation, one nation under God!

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



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1. Government

Proverbs 9:10

Romans 13

Luke 20:25

Notes:

2. Pro-life vs. Pro-choice

Psalms 139:13-16

Psalms 106:36-40

Luke 1:41-42

Notes:

3. Marriage

Genesis 2:21-25

Mark 10:6-9

Notes:

4. Foreign Affairs: ISRAEL

Genesis 12:1-3

Psalms 121

Psalms 122:6

Notes:

5. State of the Economy

Matthew 6:19-34

Deuteronomy 8

Notes:

6. Judges

2 Chronicles 19:5-7

Notes:

7. Social Issues

Poor-

Matthew 26:11

James 2:1-8

Rich-

1Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19

Racism-

Acts 17:26

Notes:

8. War/Peace

Ecclesiastes 3:8

John 14:27

John 16:33

Notes:

9. Purpose of the Church

Matthew 5:13-16

Matthew 28:18-20

Ephesians 6:10-20

2 Chronicles 7:14

Notes:

Understanding God’s WORD: 1 Corinthians 2:14

If you would like to become a Christian, read Matthew 11:28-30, John 3, Romans 10:9&10.

# Hickory Aglow

## Hickory Aglow to “Zoom” into its Gospel Mission

By Marion Stephan  
Burke County



“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28). To Morganton resident Pat James, president of the Hickory Aglow Lighthouse, the COVID-19 crisis, while tragic, will work to advance the Lighthouse’s vision of “transforming today’s culture.”

Like many organizations, the Hickory Lighthouse is now switching to Zoom meetings and is building up its presence on the World Wide Web. But James' vision for the Lighthouse is not merely to use technology to carry on during a crisis, but to proclaim the gospel to an even larger body. “Our new program format will use internet technology and a Zoom platform to reach not only the baby boomers but the millennials, the Xers, and the Zers. We are no longer a community lighthouse, but a global one.” This effort, she says, will extend well beyond the COVID 19 crisis.

The Lighthouse is initiating its first Zoom meeting on October 15, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Rebuilding of its website and Facebook pages are also underway. “We’re not doing things the way we’ve always done them,” James says. “It’s time for a change.”

The Zoom gatherings will contain the same elements that characterized the former in-person meetings: live worship music, short life application lessons from God’s word, special speakers, and time of intercessory prayer that will be open to participants. “We’re going to be alive in the Spirit, even though we’re doing it electronically,” James says. As soon as a link to the Zoom meeting is available, it will be posted on the “Meetings” page of the Hickory Lighthouse’s website at [www.aglownet.org/hickorync](http://www.aglownet.org/hickorync).

The theme of the first series of monthly meetings, says James, will be “influencing the seven mountains of culture in our nation.” These mountains include religion, family, arts/entertainment, media/news, government, education, and business/economics. The “seven mountains” theme originated during the 1970s and has been built upon by Christian leaders such as Lou Engle and Lance Wallnau. This subject is important, James says, because “Christians have not been as actively involved in these mountains of influence as they should be.”

James says the Holy Spirit has drawn her to Psalm 72:1-4, a scripture that uses mountain imagery to describe the effects of a righteous government on the culture of our society. Biblical cities, which contained schools, businesses, and other societal influences, tended to be built on high places like mountains, she notes.

“Give the king Your judgments, O God,  
And Your righteousness to the king’s Son.  
He will judge Your people with righteousness,  
And Your poor with justice.  
The mountains will bring peace to the people,  
And the little hills, by righteousness  
He will bring justice to the poor of the people;  
He will save the children of the needy,  
And will break in pieces the oppressor.”

Future meeting themes will relate to other missions embraced by Aglow. These include ministry to Muslims, reconciliation between men and women, supporting Israel, and combatting human trafficking.

In line with the upcoming presidential election, James says, the October 15 Zoom meeting will be “focusing on the mountain of government, and the role it plays in our culture.” The keynote speakers will be Warren Daniel, a senator in the North Carolina state legislature, and his wife Lydia.

Daniel, per a press release from his office, is a Burke County Native and a graduate of Freedom High School in Morganton, North Carolina. He was appointed to the United States Military Academy at West Point in July 1987, served six years in the Army, and then graduated with honors from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill School of Law. He and his wife have three daughters, ages 24, 21, and 20.

James has only lately taken up the mantle of the Hickory Aglow presidency, beginning her leadership on September 1. (She had previously served as president of the Hickory Lighthouse from 2015 through 2018.) Then, recently, the area leadership team asked her to lead the Lighthouse in “a new vision to go online with an electronic format,” she says. The prospect “really intrigued me” because it would be “helping the Lighthouse to be more relevant in today’s society.”

She says she prayed about the decision for a few weeks, seeking advice from local pastors and fellow Christians. She also wanted “confirmation from the Lord.” Then, at 4 o’clock one morning, she recalls, the Lord told her: “I’m calling you to lead this new team forward, with the new vision and the new format. Throw off all limitations. Break out into new territories . . . Hickory Aglow is a light in the darkness of this world, set upon a rock, to guide others faithfully along their journeys.”

James received “no negative feedback whatsoever” about the move, and her husband affirmed her decision. “When your husband thinks it’s a great idea, you go for it.”

The Hickory Aglow Lighthouse is a chapter of Aglow International. Per the Aglow International website at [www.aglow.org](http://www.aglow.org), “Aglow is an international organization of women and men in more than 170 nations of the world, presenting Biblical principles as solutions to the challenging issues of our time.” The 50-year-old organization’s purpose is “to propel the Kingdom forward through the elevation of the knowledge of God.”

Additional information about the Hickory Lighthouse is available at its website, [www.aglownet.org/hickorync](http://www.aglownet.org/hickorync); its Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/hickory.aglow](https://www.facebook.com/hickory.aglow); or by emailing [hickoryaglow2015@gmail.com](mailto:hickoryaglow2015@gmail.com).

Marion is retired and is active in His Place Worship Center, Marion, North Carolina.

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Thirteen-Year-Old Boy Dies In Oregon  
Wildfires With His Dog In His Lap: Biblical  
Hope For The Hardest Days We Face

By Jim Denison

At least thirty-five people have died in West Coast wildfires as of this morning. We are watching apocalyptic images of scorched trees, buildings reduced to rubble, and burned and blackened cars. The fires have produced a smoke cloud that covers almost a million square miles and has traveled 1,300 miles. Oregon officials are bracing for a "mass fatality incident" after wildfires in their state have burned over one million acres. One story is especially heartbreaking: a thirteen-year-old victim was found with his dog in his lap.

The remains of Wyatt Tofte, his grandmother, and Wyatt's dog were discovered inside the family car in Marion County, Oregon. A family member told reporters, "He got in there and tried to drive the car and started coming down the hill and then went off to the side for some reason. I guess all the tires were just burned up and everything, the pavement was so hot."

Killer mosquitoes and the love of God

Tropical Storm Sally is expected to become a hurricane today and appears likely to make landfall near the Louisiana–Mississippi border. It could bring up to twenty-four inches of rainfall with life-threatening storm surges and hurricane-force winds.

Meanwhile, farmers in Louisiana are dealing with a gruesome result of Hurricane Laura: thick swarms of mosquitoes driven from swamps and marshes by the storm have moved inland and are killing cattle and horses. The bugs bite the animals so many times that they die from blood loss and exhaustion trying to evade the swarms.

Add wildfires, hurricanes, and killer mosquitoes to the coronavirus pandemic that has taken more than 924,000 lives as of this morning.

Christians claim that there is a God who is all-knowing, all-loving, and all-powerful. We explain natural disasters as a consequence of the Fall: when humans sinned, all of creation was affected as well (Romans 8:22; Genesis 3:17–19). Prior to Genesis 3, there were no wildfires, hurricanes, or viruses.

We further explain much of innocent suffering as the consequence of misused freedom (cf. James 1:13–15). If someone misuses their free will to get drunk and wrecks their car, this is not God's fault. It is not even his fault if this person wrecks your car.

However, our all-knowing, all-loving, all-powerful God sometimes intervenes to prevent the consequences of the Fall and misused free will. Jesus calmed the stormy Sea of Galilee (Mark 4:35–41); the Lord protected Peter from King Herod's plan to execute him (Acts 12:1–11).

If the Lord sometimes intervenes to prevent innocent suffering, why does he not always intervene? If he could save Peter, why didn't he save Wyatt Tofte?

My father's heart disease and your suffering

My father had rheumatic fever in high school. The disease weakened his heart, leading to a heart attack when he was thirty-three years old and his death from a second heart attack at the age of fifty-five.

Our oldest son was diagnosed with cancer several years ago and had to undergo surgery and follow-up radiation. He is now well, but his suffering was another consequence of our fallen world.

I'm sure you can identify times of such suffering in your life and among those you know. In this light, can you still believe in an all-knowing, all-loving, all-powerful God?

The logical answer is that we can. The practical answer is that we must.

continued on page 24



Peace with God

By John McCoury  
Roan Mountain, Tennessee



"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Romans 5:1 The first thing that you learn as a Christian is that you are justified by faith. To help us understand what that means, the apostle brought in the example of Abraham in chapter four. Before the Law was given, Abraham was justified by faith. He was declared to be acceptable to God. He was God's friend. Abraham did not earn that. He was given that right at the beginning of his relationship with God when he believed God. That is what faith means. When Abraham believed that God could and would do what he had promised, Abraham was declared the friend of God and he entered into that close relationship with God that characterized his life. That is what it means to be justified by faith. You receive this with no merit on your part, but by faith alone, by believing God's promise, according to the work of his Son. That is justification.

Then, Paul says, there is a way by which you can test whether you really do believe that and have been justified by faith. Since we have been justified by faith, the sure result is that we have peace with God. As you think about your life and your relationship with God, if you really have believed that God justifies the ungodly, you will have peace with God. You are in the family of God. The war is over. All the conflict between you and God is ended; you are at peace with him.

I will never forget the day it was announced that the Vietnam war was over. People all over the world rejoicing because they were at peace. That is what happens in the heart when we understand that we have been justified by faith. The war is over, we are at peace with God. All conflict has ceased. If you do not have that sense of peace, the way to get it back is not by working on your feelings but by reviewing your justification. Go over the facts again, remind yourself of what God has declared. Then your faith is restored, and you can handle these doubts and fears. If you have peace with God, you have an answer to the accusation of your own conscience when you sin. I know that many young Christians, in that glory and the first flush of love in their relationship with the Lord, really think that they are not going to sin again. They cannot imagine going back and doing some of the things they once did. But eventually, they will be back doing some of those things. Perhaps they will not go back to all that they did formerly, but they will fall back. What do you say to your accusing conscience that says to you then, Are you a Christian? Could you possibly be a Christian and act like this? That is where justification by faith comes in. You remind yourself: My standing and my acceptance by God do not depend upon me. Even my sin doesn't cancel it out.

The whole essence of this truth is that God has found a way to put aside my sin, by faith in the work of his beloved Son on my behalf. In that truth, Lord, I confess my sin, and put my trust in you. Thank you, Father, for these riches that are given so freely in Jesus. I don't deserve them, but I have them because I have believed your great and mighty promise. I have peace with God, I have been reconciled. I have acceptance in your presence and continual access to your help. What is the alternative to our feelings when we are anxious and fearful about our relationship with God? Does peace with God depend upon us? Do we need to review the facts about our justification by faith?

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





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# Mine Creek Baptist Church

## Pray for our Nation

By Chris Rathbone  
Mitchell County



This article has been on my mind for several months. Even now, sitting here in front of this computer screen, there are still some things that have been rolling over in my head that I want to convey but unsure how exactly to communicate them. So here goes my best effort!

No doubt, unless you've been living with your head in the sand, you know our nation has been in turmoil since the election of 2016. The far left's attempt to undermine the president's term has been unprecedented, at least in my lifetime. It seems that every effort has been attempted to do anything to impeach, discredit, hinder, etc, etc, no matter the cost to the American taxpayer. To be honest, from my point of view, the regular American citizen has suffered neglect because both sides of the political aisle have been consumed accusing or defending the president instead of working to better our nation. At times it has been laughable to see the desperate measures that the left has taken to harm the president. However, it isn't funny, but sad. Sad that our leaders have come to point that they are willing to ignore the American people because they are obsessed with keeping their political power safe.

At times I've been mad, other times I've been sad, and even times I've been disgusted at how far our so-called leaders have gone simply because they hate the president. They say they don't, but their actions are stating otherwise. Personally, I'm a conservative, both Biblically and politically. Let me clear on one thing, my hope is not and never will be in politics, in an election, or a candidate for whom I may choose to cast my vote. My faith and hope are in Jesus alone! He holds my future and the future of this nation. Always has and always will! However, I choose to be involved in the political process in our nation by voting my convictions which are influenced by my Biblical convictions. I do my best to research the candidates and vote for those who are closest to my conservative convictions. For sure, there are times I vote for those who I may not agree with on everything, but they get my vote because, hopefully, their governing beliefs will better the community, state, or nation where I and my family live and protect our rights and freedoms as American citizens.

For many years now, there has been a push to silence a conservative opinion, especially to silence Christian conservative opinion. Many on the political left seem to be of the persuasion that conservative Christians shouldn't have an opinion on political topics. They believe that if we disagree with something our leaders in government are doing, we can't say or do anything. Well, children, I beg to differ! Those leaders are there making decisions that affect me, my family, my church family, my community, etc, etc. Not only will I speak up and make my voice heard, but I have the conviction that it is my responsibility as a Christian to herald from the mountain tops what is right.

The Bible teaches us that the government was instituted by God (Read Romans 13:1-7, I Peter 2:13-15). God ordained the government for the promotion of good in society and the punishment of evil in society. How can a God-ordained institution promote that which is good if good Godly people are not involved? Do we just let wicked leaders prevail? Do we just stay silent when our leaders are leading in an ungodly direction? My fellow Christians, if you and I don't stand up for what is right, who will? We must not be silent, we cannot be silent, for much is at stake for our children, our grandchildren, our communities, our nation!

Obviously, there is much wrong with our political system in this nation on all sides and how much I pray things would change. However, I cannot, I will not support any political party or candidate which blatantly contradicts God's word by striving to lead our nation in an ungodly direction. Liberalism, religiously and politically, has led to compromise and ungodliness, in the church and this nation. When a government is led by those who do not have Biblical convictions at all, they will lead this nation down a wicked path that personally, I have no desire to walk.

As a preacher, with God's help, till my dying day, I will preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus died for our sins on the cross, He shed His blood and suffered to pay the price for our salvation. He rose again proving that He was who He said He was and conquered death, hell, and the grave to secure the free gift of salvation. Jesus will come again to this earth to receive those who have repented of sin and placed their faith in Him as Savior. I will preach righteous and holy living as the way our Savior desires us to live and that our leaders will stand before our Holy God one day and give account on how they have used their position to govern this nation. They will be judged on the stewardship of what they were given as we all will. We, as God's people, must hold our leaders accountable and we must make the voice of righteousness and reason heard across this land to ALL our leaders!

God have mercy on and forgive our nation. Please forgive us as your people for allowing things to get where they are today. We have neglected to speak up for righteousness and what is good for so long, evil has permeated our nation. May we repent and cry for holiness across our land, in our halls of justice, in the walls of our government building, and most importantly, in the hearts of all people! In Jesus' name, Amen!

Christians, please be involved in the process of leading our nation back to God! Stand up and speak up for Biblical truth and convictions. The nation that forgets God shall be turned into hell. It is the righteousness that exalts a nation. Be strong in faith, be strong in righteous convictions, be bold to speak the truth in a world that has forgotten it. Above all, please pray for our nation!

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

*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Philippians 4:13*

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Habits of the Heart: A Study of the Spiritual Disciplines - "Worship"

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



In this monthly series of articles, I have sought to introduce you to twelve spiritual habits of the heart (spiritual disciplines) that we must pursue in our faith journey to maturity in Christ. Last month, we looked at the first of four “corporate disciplines”—confession. There remains three: worship, guidance, and celebration. These four represent the crowning achievement of the work of the Holy Spirit of God in the believer’s life.

One of the most beautiful accounts of worship in the Bible is found in Luke 7, the story of the “sinful woman” who brought what was considered by those around her “wasteful worship.” She wet the feet of Jesus with her tears, wiped them with her hair, kissed the Master’s feet...and then proceeded to pour her very costly alabaster jar of perfume on Jesus’ feet. As she poured her offering out, Jesus then washed away her tears and brokenness. This act of love and devotion towards Jesus is one of the greatest examples (among many in the scriptures) of true, heartfelt worship. Notice that it has nothing to do with song or music—rather, it has everything to do with adoration and devotion to the Savior.

How do we define worship? Will Temple defined it like this, “To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God. To feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.” Richard Foster adds, “It is to know, to feel, to experience the resurrected Christ in the midst of the gathered community. It is breaking into the Shekinah glory of God, or better yet, being invaded by the Shekinah of God.”

To worship is to seek the Lord God and nothing else! To worship is to come into His presence and offer Him what only He deserves—adoration, devotion, and praise. Jesus said it best (of course), “*But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*” (John 4:23-24) Did you hear that? Our great God seeks after us! He always and continually seeks after us! Somewhere within us, we know that! But, perhaps, what we miss is that our creator and the lover of our soul seeks after our worship.

What is the worship that He desires? It is purely to come before HIS presence out of a spirit of humility and with the expressed desire and purpose of offering Him our conscience presence, our wonderful imaginations, our open hearts, and our complete devotion.

What are we doing when we worship? The primary Greek word for “worship” is *proskuneō* (προσκυνέω). That Greek word begins with a prefix, *pros-* (προς-), which means “towards.” And the root word is *kuneō* (κυνέω), which means “to kiss.” The deep meaning of that word is “to prostrate oneself.” To worship is to fall down before the feet of the Lord of Glory, to prostrate ourselves before Him and ravish our devotion, praise, adoration, and commitment—just like the woman who worshipped at Jesus’ feet.

Worship has nothing to do with where we meet, how we worship, where we sit, or what we do! I like how Annie Dillard puts it. She writes, “It is madness to wear ladies straw hats to church... We should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews.” Why? Because true worship changes us! And if it doesn’t, then it hasn’t been worship! As Mark Grezlak argues, “Much of what passes for worship is rather the tail wagging the dog. We have put God on stage and sat ourselves comfortably in the audience. We should strive for the opposite: We are the performers before the audience of one.”

Again, true worship, the kind of worship that God seeks, was powerfully described by the Lord of glory Himself in the verses I quoted above. Jesus declared, “...true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.” “Worship,” exclaims Darlene Zsheck, the well-know Hillsong worship leader, “is when your spirit adores and connects with the Spirit of God. When the very core of your being is found loving Him.... lost in Him. It is not about the songs, it is not about how big the band or the choir is. All of those are wonderful expressions of worship, but they are not the essence of it. The essence of worship is when your heart and soul, all that is within you, adore and connects with the Spirit of God.”

The object of our worship is and must always be none other than Almighty God. Jesus answered that all-important question of whom we are to worship once and for all (Mt. 4:10). He said, “*You shall worship the LORD your God, and serve Him only.*” The one true God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the God whom Jesus Christ revealed. Mankind is warned not to have any other gods before them—for He alone is the one true God. He alone is worthy of our worship. We worship Him not only for who He is but also for what He has done!

And so, worship is to be a priority in the believer’s life. We hear that clearly stated by Jesus as He revealed the heart of God (Mk. 12:30), “*And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.*” Do you know what that means? Worship comes before service, before anything and everything else in our lives. Worship is important to God—so, it must be important to us! The pure song of the heart is the yearning for more of God and less of me.

Finally, look with me at the “avenues” for Worship. Worship is a spiritual discipline that God trusts will become a habit of our heart. He has called us to worship Him—and to do that, we must come into His very presence and sit at His feet. The first avenue into worship is to “be still before the Lord.” The Psalmist wrote (Ps. 46:10), “*Cease striving and know that I am God.*” Just as we previously surveyed the Spiritual Discipline of Solitude, solitude calls and moves us to be free to be alone both with ourselves and with God. Solitude frees us to entertain true company with our Father in Heaven. Isn’t that what worship really is? We are in the presence of our wonderful Savior and Lord and we seek to offer Him adoration, devotion, and praise. We seek to bring Him joy—and there is no greater way to do that but by worshipping Him. Yes, we seek to serve Him—but He first desires our devotion and adoration. We

show Him that by offering up praise. We entertain the Father with praise.

I am reminded of how much this father loved seeing his children “perform.” Now, I receive great joy as a grandfather watching my grandchildren sing or dance or perform in front of me and their Mimi. Keep in mind that our worship is not a performance; but rather an expression of our adoration, devotion, and praise to the Father. And the heavenly father loves our praise to Him!

A second avenue is through both personal, private, and corporate praise. Praise brings us into worship, declares Foster and he notes that the psalms are “the literature of worship and their most prominent feature is praise.” Singing, shouting, dancing, rejoicing, and adoring are all the language of praise that we see both in the psalms and throughout the Bible. The Apostle Paul urged the believers in Hebrews 13:15, “*Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.*” Peter tells us that as Christ’s royal priesthood, we are to offer up spiritual sacrifices. He wrote in 1 Peter 2:5, “*You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*” Remember when Paul and Silas found themselves thrown into a Philippian jail, they offered up songs of praise (Acts 16:25).


“Singing is meant to move us into praise,” argues Foster. Through music, we express our joy and our thanksgiving. If our focus remains upon being present with the Lord and upon offering our Master our adoration, devotion, and praise, then music can focus our attention toward God. Our emotions are channeled toward Him and we break out in song. We dance, make melody, and shout out our praise. We stand, clap, and lift our hands before the Lord of glory. We kneel, bow our heads, and lay prostrate before the Lord.


When we still the activities of our flesh, then the activity of the Holy Spirit of God alive in our hearts and lives may then dominate our activities, our relationships, our service, and our worship.


Finally, let us consider what is the appropriate style for worship? Is it traditional, contemporary, mixed, choir, praise band driven, instruments, no instruments, etc.? The answer to that question is all that seeks to offer Jesus our adoration, devotion, and praise. The guiding principle of worship is: worship the Lord in spirit and truth. Come before Him in thanksgiving and praise. Offer to Him our all and lay our body, mind, soul, and spirit upon the altar of worship and sacrifice.

The real question of worship is NOT what kind or style of worship meets MY needs! The real question is “what kind or style of worship does God call for?” Clearly, our Creator, Savior, Master, King, and Friend invites us to offer Him (and Him alone) wholehearted, authentic, real, meaningful, and life-changing worship. When we offer Him worship, then He prepares us and directs our paths to continue to the next part of His marvelous plan for our lives—service.

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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4	2	7	9	6	3	8	5	1
3	5	9	7	1	8	4	2	6
8	6	1	2	7	5	9	3	4
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Bill Graham Evangelism Association

Locals Share Hurricane Laura Experience with Billy Graham Rapid Response Team

By Lizzy Long

Every 15 minutes. That’s how often Mike Bullock looked out Pujo St. Cafe’s window in Lake Charles, Louisiana, as Hurricane Laura spiraled in the early morning hours of August 27.

Bullock decided to hunker down with his boss and cafe owner, Dan Schaad, who also runs Aunt Ruby’s—a historic bed and breakfast just down the street.

The 150-mph winds sent debris flying horizontally and caused the roof to rip off the eclectic cafe that served burgers, seafood, and pecan pies to locals just days before.

“Through the night, things got worse and worse,” Schaad told Billy Graham chaplain Richard Brown and Cheryl Bradbury, an on-call disaster relief worker for Samaritan’s Purse.

Brown and Bradbury saw the two men chainsawing and clearing trees mangled along fallen power lines at Aunt Ruby’s and decided to check on them.

Under the pouring rain, the group stood in the shelter of the side porch, which had sunflowers still tucked into a vase on the wall—somehow untouched by the Category 4 storm.

“You can see the First Baptist Church across the street, it’s crazy,” Schaad commented, adding that he went to a nearby cathedral.

Chunks of cement blocks had tumbled down the front stairs of the church after its giant stained glass windows blew out, letting rain pelt its interior. Amazingly, a concrete depiction of a Bible remained intact, bearing these Scriptures:

“Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.” —Matthew 11:28

“Go ye, ... and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.” —Matthew 28:19



Mike Bullock standing at the same window in Pujo St. Cafe where he watched the Category 4 storm rage through his town.

Fittingly, the Billy Graham Rapid Response Team’s Mobile Ministry Center is operating in the church’s parking lot, giving residents a safe space to find refuge in God and encouragement from crisis-trained chaplains. The chaplains are partnering with Samaritan’s Purse, which organizes volunteers to help residents get back on their feet in the cleanup process.

With many locals now returning from evacuations, Schaad explained he decided to ride out the storm because “I remember leaving last time [during Hurricane Rita and being] anxious to get back. Some of my employees stayed, and I wanted to be there for them.”

Sure enough, the men have helped clear some of the streets so emergency vehicles could get by and served the cafe’s food to emergency personnel.

Still, Bullock recognized the choice he made in staying.

“I just said, ‘Your will be done [to God],’” Bullock shared, adding that’s what he told his daughter ahead of the storm.

“My faith takes all fear of dying away from me. I don’t really worry about what’s happening in the world as long as me and Christ have things straight. That’s all that matters,” Bullock said.

He lost his wife in 2013 and has drawn close to God in his grief.

“Wherever I bend my knee, I know God’s with me. He’s in my heart and life,” he said. Bullock attests he’s still in the healing process, but his life looks much different than his youth.

At the age of 17, he went to prison. But that’s actually where he first met Christ during a preacher’s invitation to start a new life with God.

“I felt a blanket of warmth wash over me,” he recalled, adding that this was the first time he’s opened up since his wife’s death. “I had peace, and my anxiety was gone.”

As he talked, Bullock peered through his black-rimmed glasses. He emphasized that “it’s never too late” to turn to God.

“I was confused for a long time, angry [at myself for going to prison],” Bullock admitted.

But, he knows Who carried him through the hardest days and is relying on God as his devastated community recovers.

“I wish everyone had faith,” Bullock said.

Before heading out, chaplain Richard Brown prayed for the two residents: “God, I want to thank you for this appointment, to hear their story and how you brought them through the storm. Be with Dan and Mike, give them strength as the town rebuilds. Draw Yourself to them. Give them Your peace in this time.”

Do you have faith to rely on God in all circumstances? Get to know Him today.



Warfare

By Nancy Malik  
Avery County

Avery County was fondly named The Shire by my husband and myself as the green grass and beautiful gardens reminded us of the Hobbits from Lord of the Rings. They lived such a pleasant life of family, friendship, and gardens. But a ring was found that that had to be burned in a mountain in the middle of Mordor (Hell). A very brave hobbit, three of his friends, a spiritual leader, and 4 others became the fellowship of the ring. By the end of the first book, Frodo had to leave the group and take the ring to be destroyed. His best friend, Samwise, follows him. For the next two books, battles, warfare, betrayal, death are always part of the different paths the groups took as Frodo tries to get the ring (evil, sin) tossed back where it came from. Frodo represents Jesus as He walks toward the cross. Samwise, reminds me of John the Beloved, as he never left his master's side. Aragon, the un-crowned king, represents the King Eternal, Jesus.

We are in a battle, too. Our world has a dividing line of good vs. evil. The lines are strengthening on good (for those who know or want to know Jesus) vs those who want self and evil to rule. The battle; the warfare rages. COVID has helped bring the world together in a way that has never happened before. As a vaccine is desperately being sought, people will be demanding it. At the same time, world governments and leaders are making or breaking alliances with each other just as end-time Biblical prophecies are being fulfilled.

Keep your eyes on Jesus. Read your Bible, ask your pastors, even trustworthy Bible teachers, too. Phillip Greene, station manager for WECR Radio, 1130 AM, speaks M-F about revival, love, and Jesus!

We live in an exciting time. We live in a dangerous time. Jesus is the orchestra leader. Keep your eyes, your trust, and your belief in the work He did on the cross for our eternal salvation.

Stand Firm! Ephesians 6

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



Founding Fathers and How They Served Our Country — James Wilson

By David Streater, Ph.D.  
Burke County



As a young immigrant from Scotland, James Wilson was a preeminent scholar and benefactor to the United States. When he was 23, James came to America (1765) to make his way in life. Wilson’s background in Enlightenment principles, philosophy, and law served him well as a teacher, attorney, politician, and in other essential positions.

James proclaimed that the power of government comes from the people. Therefore, England’s Parliament had no authority over the colonies as America was not represented. Later, in Congress, Wilson was well respected and sought after for his legal and political opinions.

Wilson was one of eight immigrants to sign the Declaration of Independence. Also, he was one of six Founders to sign both the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. Not only was Wilson a commissioned military officer, director of the Bank of North America, and a member of the Constitutional Convention, he was one of the original associate justices of the United States Supreme Court he helped to design.

Unfortunately, all did not end well for Mr. Wilson. He was a great political orator, but his land speculation and other business ventures led him to debtor's prison. His final written comment was that he had been “hunted like a wild beast” by debt collectors. At 55, after being incarcerated, James died from malaria and a stroke on the shore of the Albemarle Sound, in Currituck County, North Carolina. James Wilson is best remembered for promoting the ideology that All Power is Derived from the People.

Please visit your Charters of Freedom setting in most western North Carolina counties. Teachers are welcome and encouraged to Contact Dr. Streater (david.streater@gmail.com) for information and complementary student education materials to enhance experiential field trips to the settings. A Charters of Freedom setting consists of the Declaration of Independence, the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. They are on permanent display analogous the Charters of Freedom in the National Archives, Washington, DC. Please visit our website (ChartersofFreedom.com) to learn more about our existing settings.

Vance and Mary Jo Patterson are the founders of Foundation Forward, a 501(c)3 education nonprofit organization.

Dr. David Streater is the director of education for Foundation Forward. He is a retired college instructor and administrator, and a retired probation and parole officer/administrator. David is a criminologist who has an acute history interest, served in the Navy, and is a resident of Burke County, NC.



Drive Through “Trick-Or-Trick”  
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Times Like These

By Pastor Terry Cheek Th.D.  
McDowell County

Modern society has been a madhouse for quite a while, and through it, all trying to indoctrinate us to think it was progress. What is a Christian to do? We are not to attack as some of the rebellious rioters and protestors have done. Neither can we hide in seclusion. Thoreau thought he escaped progress in his day by retreating to a cabin on Walden Pond, but there are not enough Walden Ponds and escape isn't a lodge in the wilderness. Today some are trying to reform society, God is not out to convert civilization, but He is going to take out a people for His name. Our age should be evangelized but it is not to be Christianized.

The key to Christian conduct in times like these can be found from Paul's advice to the Christians of Corinth. Paul lived in a day of progress. The powerful Roman Empire stretched from Britain to the Near East with armies, laws, government, and culture. It was an empire of Progress, but instead of being excited about the pomp and pageantry and instead of saying, "Get in step with the tempo of these times," Paul wrote: in 1st Corinthians 7:29-31 "But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; (30) And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; (31) And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away."

This passage may not be useful for an after-dinner speech to the Rotary Club or the Chamber of Commerce, but it is useful for a Christian pilgrim navigating this world. Let us break down this passage and see how speaks to times like these. Paul says first, "the time is short." Does he mean that life is short or that the Lord may soon return? For the saint of God, it can mean both, the shortness of time and the immediacy of our Lord's return. The Christian is never wrong when we live as though the Savior may come at any moment. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan said, "I never lay my head on the pillow at night without thinking that before morning dawns the final morning may have dawned."

Since the time is short, Paul continues to say, "it remaineth" – that is, while it lasts, from now on – "that they that have wives be as though they had none." Remember our Lord said, in Luke 14:26 "If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Devotion to Jesus must be so high and so deep and so intense that all other loyalties must seem as though they did not exist. If a man's wife understands this and is like-minded, there will be no difficulty. If not, there will be trouble and a man's biggest foe may be in his household. Dr. A.T. Robertson says: "This is the language of exaggerated contrast, but it must not be watered down until the point is gone." Tone it down as you will, you have here a devotion to Jesus that makes all other love and loyalty seem almost to disappear and I have not seen much of it in my lifetime.



I am not suggesting that we neglect our domestic obligations. Paul tells us in 1st Timothy 5:8 that a man who will not provide for his own has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel. It does mean that all other devotions are marginal, and Christ is central, and being central He sanctifies and glorifies the marginal!

We read next: "And they that weep as though they wept not." As difficult as life may become, we must not let our sorrows get us down. Into every life, there must come heartbreak, tragedy, and bereavement. Christians are to not sorrow as those who have no hope. I'm not suggesting that we are not to grieve. There is a place for grief, and we are to weep with them that weep. But it does mean that we are to carry on through our sorrow with true faith in our redeemer.

Continuing on we read, "they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not." Now today's motivational Christian would write something like this; "Major in rejoicing instead of weeping"? Paul, however, says the same thing about rejoicing that he says about weeping. We are not to attach too much importance to the enjoyments of life, the things that give us pleasure. "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" may be an American goal but it is not the Christian's main objective. God did not save us to make us happy but to make us holy. Happiness is a by-product and we are to take our enjoyments lightly as though they were incidental, which indeed they are. America is a pleasure-mad nation; even in religion, we hear about how much fun it is to be a Christian. Heed the warning, we can be slaves of joy as well as slaves of sorrow. We should learn to be independent of both shadow and sunshine. Paul had learned both to be abased and to abound, but he lived above both. Think about what it is that gives you the common joys of life? Whatever it is, it may be here today and gone tomorrow, so don't become too engrossed with it. Rejoice as though you rejoiced not.

We read further, "they that buy as though they possessed not." In other words, don't let your possessions possess you. I know some people who don't own their own home, their home owns them. Sadly, they are prisoners of their property. Others are held captive on thousands of acres of land or are chained to a safety deposit box in a bank. What they have bought has bought them! It is hard for a rich man to get into heaven because he must become poor in spirit and be as though he had nothing. That is why the rich ruler walked away from Jesus; he was unwilling to be as though he possessed nothing.

Then Paul writes, "they that use the world as not abusing it." The world we know is full of gadgets, games, gizmos, and facilities that are not wrong unless we make them ends in themselves or turn them to evil uses. For example, our television can give us good or evil as can the internet. This same idea applies to thousands of contraptions, businesses, interests, and hobbies that may be used to the glory of God. If they cannot be so used, then they are not to be used at all by the Christian!

All these matters – marriage, sorrows, joys, possessions, the world – are but temporary while you and I are made for eternity. It is foolish to give our main attention to any of them for they will pass, but we go on forever. Remember when Jesus was asked about the woman who had seven husbands: whose wife would she be in the next world? Jesus replied that in the next world we do not marry but are like angels. He didn't say we would be angels, but we shall be like angels. We tend to measure eternity by the yardstick of time. What we should do is measure time in the light of eternity, the temporal in the light of the eternal. When we look at all these concerns in the light of the shortness of time and the length of eternity, they will be in comparison as though they were not.

I want to close with a story. A man was given a trip to New Your City by some of his friends. That night in prayer after the sight-seeing trip, he thanked God he hadn't seen a thing he wanted!

In the light of our text I would say to the world, "Excuse me, please, I'm just passing through. I'm not excited about your boasted progress. It is just a little show manipulated by unseen hands and will soon be over for the time is short and the fad of this world is passing away!"

Until we meet again in person or print, may God richly bless you is my prayer! Terry provides pastoral services to McDowell Missions Ministries. Contact Terry at [www.theinspiringword.org](http://www.theinspiringword.org)

Terry is the Executive Director and broadcaster of The Inspiring Word media ministry. You can contact Terry by email at [theinspiringword@gmail.com](mailto:theinspiringword@gmail.com) Or by visiting [www.theinspiringword.org](http://www.theinspiringword.org)

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Making a Difference through Prayer - James 5:16

By Dan Quorollo  
Burke County



One of the amazing realities of prayer is the difference that we can make in the lives of others through prayer. Prayer is capable of changing an entire nation as well as a church. Those who devote themselves to fervent and continuous prayer will discover that it will transform their personal life. Until believers pray with confidence that prayer makes a difference, believers will seldom and inconsistently pray.

Praying for others, often referred to as intercessory prayer, enables believers to impact another person or group of people through prayer. Such prayer is commanded of believers in James 5:16 where James wrote in part, “pray one for another.”

When prayed from a pure heart, intercessory prayer knows no boundaries that often limit our ability. It crosses the boundary of time and geography. Because it is offered to God, it even passes the boundary of ability. It passes the boundary of the relationship. It is a privilege to be able to pray for people – even those whom we may not know but know of a particular situation they are battling. We all have prayed for individuals whom we have never met because we learned of something they were facing. Such prayer is a privilege beyond comprehension.

I could cite many examples of intercessory prayer. It was Moses who stood on multiple occasions between God and the Israelites, interceding to God on their behalf. Paul requested that the believers in Ephesus pray on his behalf that he might have the opportunities to present the gospel and the boldness to seize those opportunities (Ephesians 6:18-19). Before approaching the king, Esther asked that the Mordecai lead the Jews in fasting and prayer (Esther 4:15-16).

Do you really believe that prayer is effective? Do you really believe that you can make a difference in the life of another person through prayer? Both biblical and secular history is filled with examples of those who impacted many through prayer. Boldly and persistently pray for the unsaved whom you know. Pray for those who are burdened. Pray for those whom God brings to your mind. Pray for our country. Never grow disheartened in prayer; remain persistent in it.

*Pastor Dan Quorollo 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.*

*Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Psalms 37:4*



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# New Dimensions School

By David Burleson  
Burke County

New Dimensions currently has a total of 386 students enrolled with 80 in the virtual world at this time. This year we have been very fortunate to participate in the federal free snack program. Each day we receive snacks for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

The end of the first grading period at New Dimensions will be Thursday, October 29, signaling the time that the first report cards will be distributed. With the distribution of report cards, it's also time for New Dimensions to provide parents and teachers the opportunity to discuss the educational progress of the students we serve. This is a wonderful chance for parents to talk with their child's teacher and share any ideas or concerns they may have. A student's teacher also has to update parents on how their child is doing in school and how they can work together to provide the best education possible. The parent/teacher conference day is designated as Tuesday, November 3. I would encourage all parents to make every effort to attend a conference with your child's teacher. This is a great day to exercise our right to vote and conference with teachers.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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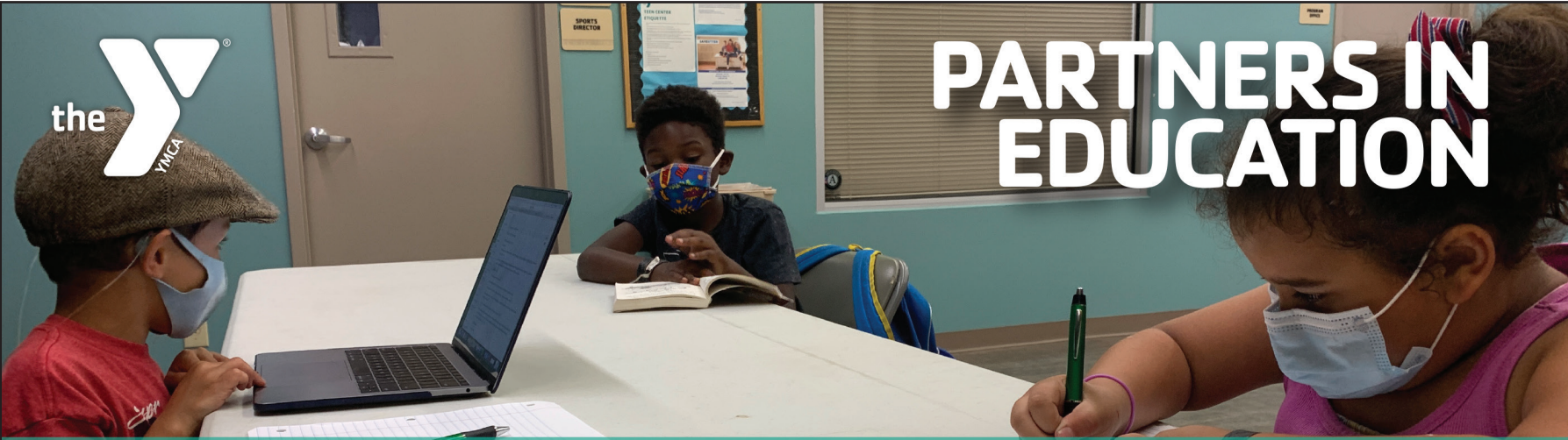
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# Redeemed Free Will Baptist Church

## Fret Not

By Patricia Jackson  
McDowell County

As a child growing up in a rural area, there were two notable places to go; the week of July 4th, camping at Myrtle Beach, and the Fall County Fair. I would count down the days as I relived the previous year's memorable experiences. I could picture in my mind the great body of water that spanned as far as the eye could see and almost hear the sounds of the water crashing against the long sandy beach. I could practically taste the saltwater and feel the sensation of floating on an inner-tube as I lazily enjoyed the sun's hot rays.

The County fair also held sights and sounds too fantastic to a child to miss. Even before we found a parking space among other cars lined in a row, I could hear the music, children's laughter, and see the lights on the colossal Ferris wheel as it turned. We excitedly urged our parents to "hurry up; let's go." My father would laugh and say, "It will all be there. It isn't going anywhere". Almost daily, before the event, I would fret over when we would go.

Those childhood memories came back to me as I read Psalm 37, written centuries ago by the Psalmist David. Verse 1 states, "*Fret not thyself because of evildoers.*" The definition of "Fret" is distraught, distressed, apprehensive, anxious, or agitated. My impatient fretting did not hasten these two events. As adults, we question whether we should do this or that, what will happen with either decision. Before long, we are in a storm of outright anxiety – or fretting!! We may not realize the relatively simple thought that if we worry or fret, it will not change the outcome.

Very few of us have ever or will experience persecution from evildoers to the degree David had. King Saul hunted David for years to kill him. But Psalm 37 tells us David knew he was not alone and that God cares. God worked to protect David and bring about His will in David's life. Verse 1 is written to us, you, and me, to bring peace to our hearts. God's words and promises never change. "*For I am the Lord, I change not.*" (Malachi 3:6). I Peter 3:12 "*for the eyes of the Lord are all over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.*" God listened to the concerns of David and others in the bible, and He will also listen to our worries and needs. "*I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.*" (Psalm 3:4).

God also responds or acts. In V. 2, David tells us that "*For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.*" "*In just a little while, the wicked will be no more.*" (Psalm 37:10). In V. 13, "*The Lord shall laugh at him*" indicates God is actively involved in bringing the wicked down. V 9. "*For evildoers shall be cut off and those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.*" The Lord loves justice, and He will not forsake His saints, nor abandon the righteous.

God promises to hear, respond, take action, and keep His eyes and ears open to our prayers. Therefore, our hearts should not be troubled. (John 14: 1).

My favorite reason not to fret or be anxious for something to happen is Isaiah 65:24 "*And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.*" These scriptures tell me God knows about my problem before I ask, and He will provide the solution that is best for me.

Patricia Jackson is the Assistant Teacher for the Ladies Class at Redeemed Free Will Baptist Church, Glenwood, NC. She is a grant writer for non-profits, a published author and retired Nursing Home Administrator. She lives in Rutherford County with her husband. Contact information: email address: wyo2go@bellsouth.net.



# Glenwood Baptist Church

## Something to Think About - Angels and More Angels

By Dennis Love  
McDowell County

About 60 years after Jesus had risen from the dead and ascended back to the Father in heaven, John was worshipping Jesus on the Lord's Day on a deserted island called Patmos. During his time of worship, Jesus shows up and John has the privilege of seeing Jesus in His resurrected glorified body. In Revelation 5:11, Jesus allows John to see so many angels around the throne of God worshipping Him that he could not number them. He says the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands. Ten thousand times ten thousand is a lot of angels. That comes to 100 million angels surrounding the throne of God worshipping Him. But if you want to get technical, the total number of angels John saw far exceeds the 100 million number. Ten thousand was the highest numerical figure in the Greek language. So, ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands is John's way of telling us that there were more angels than can be counted. This is what I call "Angels and More Angels."

Ray Stedman says that angels render service in some of the following ways and he backs it up with Scriptures.

- (1) Protection---Psalm 91:11
- (2) Guidance---Genesis 19:15-17
- (3) Encouragement---Judges 6:12
- (4) Deliverance---Acts 12:7
- (5) Supply---Psalm 105:40
- (6) Enlightenment---Matthew 2:19-20
- (7) Empowerment---Luke 22:43

Who created the angels? It was Christ Himself. (Colossians 1:16) Why did Jesus create the angels? Psalm 103:20 tells us why. We are told they exist as eternal servants to God the Father and God the Son. When the Father or the Son speaks, they immediately hearken to their words. What is the major role of angels in our life today? Hebrews 1:14 tells us that they are ministering spirits sent to serve those of us who are saved. So, Jesus created angels in order for them to render service to those of us who are saved. Those ways, as Ray Stedman says, is through protection, guidance, encouragement, deliverance, supply, enlightenment, and empowerment. Angels and more angels are right now walking this earth ready to act on our behalf. They are real and they are right now walking among us. They are rendering many services to those of us who are saved. Therefore, we can say boldly and confidently that we are never no never alone. Even when we are in an empty house, you are not the only one in the room. There is someone else who is always there with you! Now, in my opinion, this is really something to think about!

Dr. Dennis Love is the Senior Pastor at Glenwood Baptist Church in Marion, NC. He and his wife Vicki have been married for 40 years, and they have lived in Marion for six years. They have two sons and four grandchildren and two step-grandchildren.



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The Sum Total is Love

By Tracey Jessup

*“Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet;’ and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.”* (Romans 13:8-10)



Tyler and Melanie Tapajna canceled their wedding reception due to COVID-19. They were concerned about their families getting sick and did not want to risk anything. Their wedding dinner was scheduled to be catered by a food truck, and they could have received a full refund, but Tyler and Melanie chose to donate the food to Laura’s Home, a shelter in Cleveland, Ohio for women and children in need which helps people overcome homelessness. About 70 kids currently attend the program with their mothers.

According to a CBS news story, “Melanie and her now-husband, Tyler, held their ceremony on August 15, and right after tying the knot, they went to Laura’s Home to get to work. The food truck that was catering their wedding set up the food in Laura’s Home kitchen and the bride and groom helped serve the meal - while still wearing a wedding dress and tux... In total, the couple gave out about 100 meals to the kids and their moms” (Caitlin O’Kane, “Bride and groom who canceled wedding reception due to COVID-19 donate food to shelter,” 08/27/20). Tyler and Melanie’s wedding photos include shots of them in the kitchen and walking around to tables - as well as some of the smiling faces of the kids at Laura’s Home. The lesson they learned in all of this? Melanie said, “Even in hard times, you can give back.” The couple plans to make this an annual tradition. In today’s passage, the Apostle Paul moves from addressing the Christian’s responsibility to “be subject to the governing authorities,” to the Christian’s responsibility to love. One of the most familiar commands of the gospel is that of loving one another. We are more likely to associate love with a feeling rather than a command. Yet, the witness of the New Testament speaks in positive ways to our obligation to love one another. Jesus said, “*This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you*” (John 15:12). Similarly, the Apostle John writes, “*Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another*” (1 John 4:11).

Paul refers to loving our neighbor as an unpaid debt. While we should be dedicated to meeting our financial obligations, one debt always will remain outstanding. Our responsibility to love never goes away. Love is the fulfillment of the law. Jesus insisted that there is no other commandment greater than the commandments to love God and neighbor (Mark 12:30-31). Paul agrees. “*You can’t go wrong when you love others. When you add up everything in the law code, the sum total is love*” (Romans 13:10, The Message).

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the example of people like Tyler and Melanie who show what it means to love one’s neighbor. Most of all, thank you for the demonstration of your love in that “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

*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.*

By Bruce Cannon  
Mitchell County

Ecclesiastes 3:11 “*He hath made everything beautiful in his time... ”*  
Genesis 1:31 “*And God looked upon all that He had made, and indeed, it was very good. ”*



Once again, the Lord is getting ready to make western North Carolina a very color-filled, beautiful place. Already the fall colors are beginning in the higher elevations. How amazing! What a palette of colors the Lord uses to decorate the trees! How amazing is He to create such vivid colors and beauty for us to enjoy! And if He will do that for Himself and for us to enjoy, what more will He do for those who love Him? Paul wrote in Romans 8:32, “*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*”

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

Are we not much more important in the Lord’s eyes than the grasses of the field, the colors of the trees, and the sparrows? Absolutely! So as we see the fall colors, or the beauty of a sunrise or sunset, or the beauty of a starry night or the moon that is so beautiful to gaze upon remembering that there is a God who loves us more than words can say. He wants to walk with us through life! He wants to encourage us, give us peace, make our lives full of joy, and let us sense His presence in our lives fully. He gave His only begotten Son for our salvation! And if He will do that, and He did, He will also not withhold any good gift from us! He loves us so much!

As I write this article I am enjoying the Lord and want badly for you to enjoy Him as well. Tell Him you love Him right now. Tell Him how thankful you are to know that He is with you and will always be with you. Walk with Him. Pray to Him. Read His Word. As you do so, ask Him to let you see Him in all His beauty and glory. You can easily see Him in His creation! Only our God could create such a wonderful place! And, as you do these things feel His amazing love for you.

And, whenever you see the fall colors do not take them for granted. Remember there is a God who does all of this for us every year as a demonstration of His love.

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

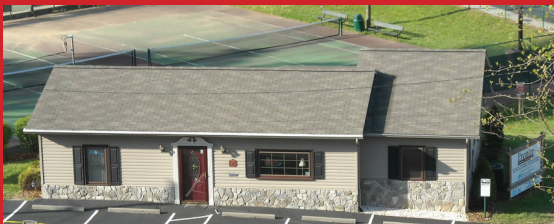
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The New Normal –  
AAIM State Leadership Conference

By Carol Layton



North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) held its State Leadership Conference on September 29. The event was live-streamed from Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church in Charlotte and is archived for viewing on NCBAM's YouTube channel. Pritchard is home to Rev. Stan Heiser who chairs NCBAM's AAIM leadership network (Aging Adults Innovating Ministry) and serves as minister to senior adults at Pritchard.

The conference featured three sessions: "The New Normal" by Whitney Brooks, NBC-HWC through Duke Integrative Medicine. Brooks examined life in the age of the Coronavirus for senior adults, and how the church can create a positive and effective "new normal,"—one that fosters genuine and meaningful connection, purpose, and well-being among seniors.

In "Communication Technology Ideas for COVID Times," Dr. Don Gilbert, Care and Seniors Pastor at Bay Leaf Baptist Church in Raleigh, demonstrated tools to help seniors maintain and grow relationships and shared how these tools can be used in church ministry.

Dr. Michael C. Blackwell, President/CEO Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, presented the closing keynote address: "In Between Times." Affectionately known as BCH's "Chief Encouragement Officer," Dr. Blackwell shared keys for staying strong in God during this Upside-Down time in world history.

He encouraged the practice of "patient persistence" and waiting on the Lord, listening to the Holy Spirit, and never giving up. To know who you are and whose you are; to seize every opportunity to learn new things about yourself and God; and (like Barnabus) to be the son or daughter of encouragement. Dr. Blackwell

ended his session and the conference with this charge: "This is a wonderful opportunity in your life to be who you were meant to be. We have accumulated wisdom and we need to share it. The best is yet to be!"

On October 6, 8, and 15, NCBAM Regional Directors will host remote regional meetings—sharing practical tools and initiatives for engaging senior adults, staying meaningfully connected, and spiritually fed. The remote western regional meeting will be held on October 8. View the meeting schedule at [NCBAM.org/events](https://ncbam.org/events).

*Carol Layton is the Director of Communications and Administration for NCBAM at Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina*

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The Art of Letting Go

By Lawrence Traylor  
Jacksonville Beach, Fla.



“She told me to follow her to the edge  
I said, ‘No, I am afraid’  
She told me again to come to the edge  
I said, ‘No, I am afraid I will fall’  
I came to the edge and she pushed me  
and I flew”  
Anonymous

Why do we Christians long for control knowing it is only when we let go (fly), abdicating all certainty and control that we overcome my innermost fears? It is in our surrendering control, not drinking, which terrifies us, alcoholics. Based on my disease’s penchant for denial, stopping is the last thing I ever wanted to do. I have learned that denial (“deNile”) is not just a river that flows through Egypt! Why is it so difficult for me to surrender, to let go? The irony is to “win” in life (sobriety) necessitates my letting go with unconditional surrender.

Anyone reading this who, like me, is battling alcoholism knows that reaching out for help is what we should do. But don’t. Surrender flies in the face of everything I have been taught since childhood and does not come easy to me.

My personal recovery teaches me that my alcoholism is a chronic, progressive, brain disease characterized by an impaired ability to control alcohol despite the certainty of incurring adverse social, occupational, or health consequences. Alcoholism is often referred to as a family disease and similar to other mental health disorders, frequently passed genetically among extended family members. The fruit (grape) rarely falls far from the vine.

One “letting go” metaphor that helps me, places me all alone, stranded in the middle of the ocean and on the verge of exhaustion, I am relentless in my continuing efforts to survive, frantically treading water, convinced that no other alternative to drowning exists for me. It is at this very point of vulnerability where surrender takes place. It is not until I realize that by surrendering and becoming perfectly still, lying on my back looking toward the sky, as I float, that I am at peace knowing I can and will survive.

I simply need to let go. The experience of surrendered release frequently surfaces upon exhaustion, the moment I “give up” my efforts, permitting myself to simply float and survive.

No matter how hard I deny to myself, family, loved ones, and friends, I knew in my heart I was no longer in control of my drinking. This knowing brings me closer to surrender. If you think you have a problem with alcohol, you probably do.

Often, alcoholics will resort to seeking help only when our addiction leads to hitting our “bottom,” allowing us to become ready and willing to let go, surrender and finally give up being sick and tired of being sick and tired.

Should you ask me as to the importance of surrender to getting sober you will quickly understand how crucial it was and is. The first step in every 12-Step program is the admission of powerlessness and the need for absolute surrender to win the addiction battle. I must continue to seek help for what I cannot face or accomplish alone; in seeking help, I accept my own powerlessness. Again, it is my denial that most often stops me in my tracks. It is in acceptance and admission, in acknowledging I am not in control when my spiritual journey begins. I have come to believe that peace and serenity are only obtained by relinquishing my ego-driven demand for control.

What prohibits our ability to let go often resides in taking ourselves so very seriously. The seventeenth-century spiritual teacher, Jean-Pierre Caussade, described this self-destructive reasoning and the inability to let go as, “pious pig-headedness.” In other words, to simply hone our ability to lighten up goes a long way toward our success in letting go. We are not by nature, “a glum lot” as 12-Step literature suggests, and need simply to stop playing God.

Maybe the greatest paradox in life is the insight gained in recognizing we are in control and successful only when we let go. This is the paradox of surrender as surrender begins with the acceptance that we are powerless and not in control. We give up control subsequently as a result of understanding and accepting we are not God and not in control.

I always believed I could control my drinking any time it becomes necessary. The simple truth is I was living a lie and possessed a secret I dare not share with anyone. Deep down inside I knew I was not able to control my drinking. It seems my self-discipline and ability to control my alcohol intake had essentially evaporated.

I believe surrender begins and access to inner peace and serenity is established with the acceptance that I am not and never have been in control – in reality, I am not in control of much of anything.

Another painless way of breaking the chains of control of alcoholism is discovered in the magic of not being mentally attached to a situation’s specific outcome. The American philosopher and psychologist, William James, proclaims the importance of being genuinely indifferent to what becomes of it all in his study and writings contained in The Varieties of Religious Experience.

What is the response to letting go? Prayer and forgiveness.

Prayer is my response to the realization, to my discovery that I am not in charge, not in control, and not God. Often my prayers are a silent cry and plea for help and guidance from the acknowledgement of a “higher power,” a power greater than myself.

It is imperative as Christians we forgive our loved ones who slowly lose their addiction battle with the Big Bottle (alcohol) and or the Little Bottle (pills and other mood-altering drugs) and remember they are sick and suffering from a genetic, family disease and not a lack of willpower or control. To forgive, to truly forgive, involves letting go of the deep-seated feeling of resentment, the identifi-

cation of self-as-victim. For me, forgiveness appears when I let go of the feeling of resentment by surrendering the vision of myself-as-victim. Forgiveness, I have come to believe has to do with letting go of the past - giving up the claim to control the past and refusing to be controlled by it.

If a loved one, family member, or friend is struggling and losing their battle with the Big Bottle or the Little Bottle, remember it is not a question of willpower and self-control. They are sick and suffering from a disease.

If you, a family member, or a friend can relate to any of this and would like to talk, please call me. And if you do not reach out to me, reach out to someone. There are countless resources available including Rational Recovery, Celebrate Recovery, 12-Step Programs, clergy and both toll-free Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association (SAMHSA), and National Alliance on Mental Health Issues (NAMI).

You have to do this alone but not alone. Remember, even the Lone Ranger had Tonto.

Lawrence (Laurie) Traylor 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

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Why we can and must trust our Father

On a logical level, the very fact that God is all-knowing, all-loving, and all-powerful assures us that he redeems our suffering for the greater good (cf. Romans 8:28).

Because he is omniscient, he knows our pain (cf. Hebrews 4:13; 1 John 3:20). Because he is all-loving, he wants only what is best for us (1 John 4:8). Because he is omnipotent, he can redeem anything for a greater purpose (cf. Matthew 19:26).

We may not understand such redemption on this side of eternity, but we can believe what we cannot yet see (1 Corinthians 13:12). In the meantime, "we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7).

On a practical level, we must not reject the love and power of God when we need them most. It is when we do not understand our suffering that we especially need to trust the One who sees what we cannot (Proverbs 15:3) and who loves us with unconditional grace (Titus 2:11). It is when our pain is greatest that we most need our Great Physician (cf. John 5:1–9).

And it is when life is most painful that God's people should be most on our knees. We can pray for rain where wildfires are raging. We can pray for protection and strength for those responding to this unfolding tragedy. We can pray for those in the path of Hurricane Sally, those in danger from wildfires, and those who are struggling with COVID-19.

And we can ask God to use us to answer our prayers in practical ways that incarnate his love and grace.

"You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing"

Lauren Daigle's "You Say," released more than two years ago, has now become the only song ever to spend one hundred weeks or more at the top of any of the Billboard hot song charts. Here is the chorus that has touched so many hearts:

You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing  
You say I am strong when I think I am weak  
And you say I am held when I am falling short  
When I don't belong, oh, you say I am yours.  
Our Father is offering you the same assurance right now.knees.

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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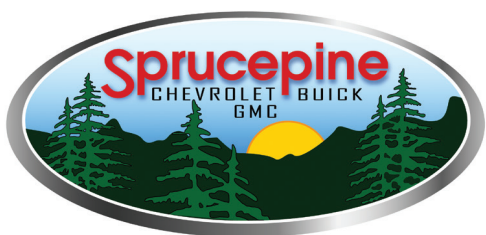
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Serve Him and Prosper - Job 36:11

By Ken Day  
McDowell County

The bible declares unto us; *“If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasure.”* (Job 36:11) Here we have a promise that is given to us in the book of Job. We should understand that the prosperity declared here is based on a conditional promise. Meaning we as disciples must obey God’s command for the condition to be right to receive prosperity and pleasure. God wants us to be healthy and to live a financially prosperous life. He wills the best for his children however, we must understand that we must love him and obey him so we can receive prosperity. Why should we seek this financial and physical prosperity? Because it is part of being a spiritually whole person and being made in the image of God. In the beginning, Adam and Eve were totally prosperous and God took care of all the needs. They were truly rich in all respects. Then they disobeyed the loving Father and were removed from paradise. You see there are results for disobedience. Job 36:12 says, *“But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.”* God wants to prosper us yet will we let him? Let us read and pray over these scriptures mentioned above. The Bible is a book of love and challenges His servants. I challenge you today to allow God to prosper you. Remember you must obey and serve Him.

Ken Day is an Agency Manager with Farm Bureau Insurance in McDowell County, and an Elder at Victory Church in Morganton.



First Baptist Church of Marshall

Humor  
Laughter is Healthy for You

By Buddy Freeman  
Madison County



The School of Psychiatry at Harvard University students had to make many mistakes. See if you can? The average person over 50 cannot do it.

- 1. This is this cat
- 2. This is is cat
- 3. This is how cat.
- 4. This is to cat.
- 5. This is keep cat.
- 6. This is an cat.
- 7. This is old cat.
- 8. This is sick cat.
- 9. This is cow cat.
- 10. This is forty cat.
- 11. This is seconds cat.

Read this very fact. Now go back and read the 3rd word in each line from the top...And I bet you cannot resist passing it on.....

One man inquired, “What color are your pastor’s eyes?” The person answered, “I shut my eyes.”

“Marriage: First year the man speaks, the woman listens. Second year woman speaks and listens. Third year-both speaks and neighbors listen.”

A young single Christian lady believed in prayer. One night in a fit of loneliness, she knelt at her bed and prayed, “Dear Lord, I asked nothing for myself but please send my mother a fine, handsome son-in-law.”

Dr Buddy Freeman is the former pastor of the First Baptist Church of Marshall, NC.



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An Evening on the Porch

By Tim Tron  
Burke County



The evening sky was muted. A serenity had bequeathed the mountainside below the Cone Manor, a living museum that sits above Blowing Rock, NC., just off the Blueridge Parkway. After having just finished my run, it was the cool-down time. Dusk had fallen, and the last vestiges of the golden rays of sunlight had departed from the distant peaks. Now, the gray sullenness that precedes the nightfall enveloped the stately grounds. Gone were all of the holiday weekend visitors. In their vacuum, a welcome stillness permeated the air.

From where I stood on the front porch steps overlooking the vast forest, falling away unto the breath of the shimmering waters of the lake, a calm overtook me. It was as if the place were all my own.

In my mind, my thoughts wandered back to when the house had been occupied by its original inhabitants. Thinking unto myself as if I were one of them, “How might the evening unfold?” Supper now complete, one was free to walk out upon the front porch and purview one’s holdings. Inside, the muffled sounds of the kitchen staff clearing away the table could be heard. Outside, the calls of the night begin to waft upon the gentle breeze – whippoorwills and nightingales begin their evening symphonies.

It is then, in the moment, that you realize the difference between then and now. There is no T.V. blaring the eternal, never ceasing sensationalized news story. There is no rampant shrill of amplified cacophony coming from various entertainment devices. There are no people with heads bent in apparent submissive prayer - their blue-lit faces reflecting the stolid control as their eyes glaze over from countless hours of overuse.

No, there is nothing here now but a sense of serenity.

Before all this, there was much more.

An evening stroll after dinner allowed for reflection of the day’s work. There, floating upon the mountain air, where the soft, gentle sounds of a piano. The melody of “Ada Plays - from Cold Mountain” toils in my head – a simpler time, a gentler time. Later, as the light fails from the sky, one shall retire inside. There, sheltered from the chilly night air, a good book from the personal library might carry one until the bedtime hours approach. Perhaps a letter to a distant acquaintance is necessary, so you sit at your desk, under the flickering light of lamp or candle, and begin scribing pen to paper. You pause between dips of your pen’s head into the inkwell and reflect upon the words freshly poured out onto the page. The sullenness of time grips your heart like the dark reaches of the night, which fast approaches.

Outside your window, a hoot owl calls, and you are reminded of a carriage ride up to the top of Flat Top where you and this friend, to whom you now write, watched God paint another beautiful sunset. Your concentration is broken when the sweet, delectable smells of something baking in the kitchen reaches you. Suddenly, your stomach answers as a momentary frill of joy leaps as if to answer. Later, as you sip warm milk as your palette is being sated by the fresh, hot apple pie, you peruse through scriptures. The late evening snack just before bed refreshes your spirit as the words of the Holy Spirit begin to speak to you. The two combine in your soul, and for a moment, there is nothing in this world that could make you feel any closer to heaven. A warmth envelopes your being as if the hand of God has wrapped around you. The Psalmist words come to mind, “He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.” The hoot owl calls once more as if to confirm those seemingly random thoughts. For a moment, you ponder the future and what it might hold for you and your family. As you lay your fork down beside the remaining crumbs on the fine china dessert plate, your eyes grow weary, and you momentarily nod off.

In the fog of a future time, you can see a world in turmoil. It is as if there is no peace in that far distant place. It is as if mankind has given in to all the lusts of the flesh. Your heart quickens, and God speaks to you, “*But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord God.*”

You awaken from the dream with a start. So troubled are you by the vision that you seek to find comfort before trying to resign to sleep for fear of where your thoughts may continue. Opening the book of Ezekiel, you find the rest of the scripture, “*And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.*” Your heart is calmed, and you close the well-worn pages of the Bible, retiring to your bed-chamber.

Just before falling asleep, you think to yourself, “How could anyone turn away from the Lord so much so that they would become detestable in their own abominations to the point that God would pour out his wrath upon them?” The white linen drapes gently move from the cold night’s air wafting through your open window. You pull the feather comforter up to your chin and exhale a contemplative, but comforting sigh. The warmth of the bedsheets warding off the crisp coolness of the coming fall reminds you of God’s love. “How much greater is He than we shall ever know,” are the last thoughts you whisper to yourself. Eyes heavy with sleep send you off, and you become one with a peaceful eternity.

While we may not live in a time where we can walk away from the bitter influences of mankind’s own self-demising attributes, be they through media, electronics, or the immediate world in which he lives, we can always seek shelter from the storm where we have always been able to go – to God. Seek out the simpler ways in life, and find time to turn off all that noise.

“*And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the*

*wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice. And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, ...”*

The Cone Manor became the backdrop for a peaceful evening that I had not anticipated, yet was a welcome respite from recent times. Too often, we fail to stop and pause in this busy life. It is when we stop and wait for the Lord that we are most often blessed beyond measure.

Yesterday evening, I felt a calling, a still small voice, if you will, to go back up to that porch from whence this tale began and take a picture to go along with the story. The storms had passed, and there was the chance that I might be afforded an unforgettable scene from which to draw. Upon my arrival, lo, there on the porch, I found a young man scribing in a journal next to an open bible. He was seated in a foldable camp chair he had brought along. The Park Service had removed all the rocking chairs from the porch because of COVID. Curious, I asked as to what he was reading. He responded, “the Bible.”

“What book and chapter, I asked further?”

“The gospel of Luke,” he replied hesitantly.

“A great book indeed,” and from there, a conversation began. I soon learned that the young man was searching for answers. His faith journey had hit a point where he knew not which way to turn. It was then, I realized why the voice had said to come. Retrieving a camp chair of my own from the car and a snack, we spent the remainder of the evening until dark, sitting there on that antiquated porch. It was as if the previous tale had come to life. The color slowly faded from the sky as clouds waltzed past us, following the contour of the valleys below. There, two men, previously total strangers, became brothers through shared faith. Questions were asked, and questions were answered. Like the Apostles to their own Disciples, the passing of one’s knowledge of God’s word onto the next generation transpired in a place fitting for its reception.

It was a blessing far more generous than one might envision on an evening such as this.

No matter the noise around you, seek Him, and he will find you.

Walk away into a place where that still small voice can find you once again.

Thanks be to God.



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

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Three Ways to Access Power  
When Feeling Helpless

By Marlene Houk  
Burke County



My cell phone’s dark face mocked me as I stared sheepishly at the pronged end of the cable flopping on the floor. But within seconds after plugging in the cord, our long-awaited movie continued, complete with colorful costumes and riveting action.

Has a power failure recently happened to you? These days, our ability to connect proves to be all-important as we attempt to continue with our lives. Quarantine, video-conferencing, virtual education, and continued careers rely upon the energy of electricity to an even greater extent than before our whole nation withdrew to reduce the effects of Coronavirus.

I accessed the solution to my helpless cell phone smoothly because I knew beforehand the process: plug in the cable. And I had observed others who had easily figured out the answer and continued their desired activities. And, of course, I knew the capabilities of my cell phone because of my extensive use.

As our phones need daily recharging, so we need spiritual power in our daily troubles. But how do we access and use it? Ephesians 1:19 declares, “*And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.*” We need the kind that lifts us above our troubles and helps us to see them from God’s view. The Lord empowers us to broaden our birds-eye view from our present helplessness and soar upwards to God’s eternal viewpoint. His perspective proves to be greater than our problems, and it eclipses our earthly troubles like the moon hides the sun. We can still see our troubles, but they are minimized to a manageable level. God provides a specific strength to those who believe in the Lord Jesus to enable us to fulfill His plan for us.

The Bible is the living word and has the force to change us. Tucked between the book of Nehemiah (the Keep Going book) and Job, (the Coping With Human Tragedy book) resides ten chapters, called Esther, packed with a behind-the-scenes potency that we need. And Queen Esther rises regally to the challenge, revealing three ways to access that power mentioned in Ephesians.

1. She knew who she was. She was a Jew and God had saved her people many times because He had chosen them to bear the Savior of the world. Her training with Mordecai had prepared her for the rigors of political chaos, and she referred three times to the king’s affirmation of her acceptance.

The Bible tells us that when we believe that Jesus is God, that He died and rose again for our sins, and that we ask Him to be our Savior from sin, we are assured of our inheritance in His Kingdom. The Holy Spirit trains us to reflect Christ’s glory, reassuring us of our heritage. (2 Corinthians 3:18) We declare His favor over us, and the Bible reassures us many times of the King of King’s attention to His children.

2. She was in a community with others of her faith. As she asked her mentor, Mordecai, to gather her people, the Jews, and ask them to fast for her, she accessed the intense potential of a community. They empowered her by reaffirming her identity as a Jew. They supported her desire to fulfill God’s plan for her. And, their sheer numbers reassured her that she was not alone.

The Bible encourages us to be in community with other Christians. Meet with others who love God’s Word and dive deeply into its treasures. Pray often, privately, corporately, and biblically. And benefit from the resources found in the Christian community: God’s Word, prayer, the Holy Spirit, and other Christians. 3. She stepped back from her routine of royal feasts and keeping up her position. Queen Esther understood the value of retreating into a time of reflection and preparation. The grueling trial of baiting her enemy, the wicked Haman who planned to kill her people demanded fortitude.

Psalms 46:10 inspires us to “*Be still and know that I am God.*” When we push aside the obligations of life to engage with our mighty God, He reveals Himself to us. As much as possible, retreat from the rigors of daily life and realign your thoughts with God’s Word.

According to review42.com, The average user will tap, swipe, and click their phone 2,617 times a day. And the number one wish for our cellphones is to have a better battery. The next time you feel helpless and overwhelmed by life, try these three ways to access God’s power that brings glory to Him and refocuses your view of life.

A cell phone has replaced my phonebook, my business files, and my social connections in varying degrees. Cell phones are so powerful nowadays that they have internal protection that shuts them off to prevent further damage. When talking with a friend the other day, her cell phone shut down within seconds due to overheating. They seem to always be within reach and considered to be valuable to a business, the health-care industry, and everything in between from restaurant reservations to assure that our children are safe and happy.

Extra Stuff

(She used food, repeating the king’s words and feelings, and her maids and the Jews) She asked her maids and the Jews to pray for her.

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)

*O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.*  
Isaiah 25:1

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# The Grove Church

## New Location of Church

By Pastor Zach Mason  
Mitchell County

The Grove Church was planted in Spruce Pine, NC with the simple desire to see Jesus glorified and lives transformed. While that seems like a worthy cause, I'm often asked: "Why plant a church here? There are so many churches here already, why start another one?" That is a great question, and it's one that I wrestled with myself for a while. The reality is if the gospel was heralded and revival broke out in our communities today, there still wouldn't be enough churches and pastors for people to get connected to and cared for.

It's with that thought in mind that my wife and I planted The Grove Church right in our living room in February of 2016. It started as just a Sunday night Bible Study, but that quickly grew into a Sunday morning worship gathering. That fall, we began to look for space outside of our living room and by Easter of 2017, we were gathering in the old empty bar on Lower Street above Hair Craft and the Spruce Pine Florist. We began to steadily grow into our new space, launching our Kids Ministry, GroveKids, and Home Groups, which is our model of discipleship and community.

By the fall of 2018, we began to reach capacity in our new space and began asking our members to stand so that guests could find seats. In the Spring of 2019, we moved to two identical worship gatherings on Sunday mornings to accommodate the growth that God had given us. By that August, we began reaching capacity at both of our gatherings and didn't believe God was done just yet. Not desiring to move to a third gathering, we began looking for a new home.

After some time and being unable to find that home, we were approached by the owner of 174 Oak Avenue with an incredibly generous proposal. One of our leaders developed a plan for our church that we presented to our members at our Christmas party, and in February 2020 we moved forward. While our renovations slowed down due to the Coronavirus pandemic, we were finally able to finish and have our first gathering in our new home on August 16th. That Sunday, we celebrated a new life in an old building, new life through two baptisms, and a new life through a baby shower. It was an incredible Sunday!

Lord willing, this new home will serve us for some time as we seek to live out our mission to be a family of disciple-making disciples for the glory of God and the good of all people. We are excited about what Jesus is doing in Western North Carolina and feel blessed and humbled to just be a part of it.

All that said, I never desired to pour so much time, effort, and money into a building for a church. I used to think that building didn't matter, but over the last couple of years, I've realized that buildings allow us a space to put down roots, to gather and equip disciples to go back to their community with the hope they've found in Jesus Christ so that others can experience the same life change that they have. We hope that The Grove Church would be a home for the weary to find rest, the confused to find wisdom, and the broken to find healing. We want The Grove to be a place where it's okay not to be okay, but it's not okay to stay that way. We also know we're not alone in Spruce Pine. We want to strengthen and be strengthened by other local churches and even plant new churches in Burnsville, Newland, and beyond.

Jesus said that He would build His church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it. It's because of that promise from Christ that we load up our water pistols and charge the gates of hell for His glory and the good of all people!

*Pastor Zack is the Lead Pastor of The Grove Church in Spruce Pine, NC, and a member of the Acts 29 Network of church-planting churches. To learn more about The Grove Church visit [thegrovesp.com](http://thegrovesp.com) and you can find out more about Acts 29 at [acts29.com](http://acts29.com)*



# Landis Presbyterian Church

## 'How Sweet and Awesome Is the Place:' This McDowell County Congregation is Looking Toward the Future

By Dalton Brooks  
McDowell County

An almost 100-year-old fixture in McDowell County's religious community is not planning to shutter its steeple just four years from its centennial birthday but looks to enter its 11th decade strong, with a fresh start under new denominational leadership.

Landis Presbyterian Church, of Marion, was received into the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) this past April "as a mission work of the Presbytery of the Southeast," said Ruling Elder Mike Cloy, member of the Provisional Session now overseeing Landis Orthodox Presbyterian Church, in an email.

Ruling Elder Tom Willis says Landis Church had "a desire to labor with the OPC" in Christian ministry, and that it was the denomination's strong sense of community that first drew him to it.

"The OPC is very, very personal from the denominational and Presbytery level to the individual work," said Willis, "whether it be mission work, foreign mission work, or a church plant, or a mission work like we are." Willis said the OPC's methods in finding those interested in joining with the denomination are "very direct and supportive," and the denomination enjoys unity despite widespread geography.

This support is evident in the attitude of Landis's current Session.

"The immediate goal for Landis OPC is to grow in membership so the members of Landis can call a pastor and...choose (men) to become ruling elders from amongst its members to establish their session," said Cloy.

The congregation is excited about the days to come at Landis Church, too. "These are fruitful times for us," they said in a forthcoming invitation letter, "and the Lord is at work building his church at Landis."

Church records say Landis began in 1923 as a Presbyterian Sunday school at Hick's Chapel, as a work of the pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Marion, the Rev. J.C. Story, who also later served as pastor at Landis from 1938-1940.

The church adopted the name "Landis" after moving to the Tom's Creek Schoolhouse located "on the farm of Mr. W.E. Landis, Dec. 18, 1927," said church records. The Sunday school was accepted as a church upon permission by the Concord Presbytery in 1933 with 35 members and completed its present building, located at 4975 US-221, in 1949. The church held dedication services Sunday, October 22, 1950.

Worship begins each Sunday at 11 a.m. with a fellowship meal following, and the midweek study is every Thursday at 6:30 p.m.

Landis OPC is currently overseen and guided by elders provided from regional OPC churches, the Regional Home Missionary for the OPC's Presbytery of the Southeast, and a professor of Greek and New Testament at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, a school that supports the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, said Cloy.



*Dalton Brooks is a WNC native. He has been a member of Landis Presbyterian Church since 2019, where he is also the church pianist.*

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2 Sides Of The Coin

By Harrietta Turner  
Mitchell County



We need to consider both.

Isn't it marvelous how amazingly forgiving our Father God is? When His chosen blessed servant King David, who already had wives, saw the beautiful Bathsheba, the wife of the soldier Uriah, he took her for himself, had her husband killed in battle when she became pregnant as a result, and God confronted him with his sins by the Prophet Nathan ... II SAMUEL Chapter 12. David repented and was totally forgiven ... however, the newborn son was taken from this earthly life by God ... consequences of our sins are not erased.

How do we know King David was totally forgiven? ... after David took the widowed Bathsheba (widowed due to his actions) and married and looked after her, their son Solomon who was born after their marriage was chosen by God to be the next King over Israel and the author of some chosen books of the Holy Bible. Almost unbelievable total forgiveness in the extreme.

In fact, King Solomon authored the other side of that coin (the coin of which both sides apply to us all) ... explained in the first chapter of Proverbs, where under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he explains that when God repeatedly warns His children patiently over and over but His warnings to stop sinning are repeatedly ignored and disobeyed God will allow very serious and painful results in the life of the unheeding one. And then when that individual cries out to God for mercy God will not heed his cries but will mock and laugh at him.

22 “How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?”

23” Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.”

24” Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded;”

25 “But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof:”

26 “I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;”

27” When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you.”

28” Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:”

29 “For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:”

30 “They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof.”

31 “Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.”

32 “For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.”

Is this not a very frightening result of ignoring His loving warnings ... as His Word says: THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM? And obviously, we had better get this wisdom in the beginning to avoid the terrible consequences of our lives and the lives of others!!!

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



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“We’re In God’s Hand, Brother!” (John 10:28)

By Shawn Thomas  
Angleton, Texas



One of my very favorite literary works of all time is Shakespeare’s “Henry V.” The play recalls how the English King Henry V was fighting the French because they did not recognize his claims to the land, and he won several battles against them at first — but over time his army was decimated by the length of the war and by illness. Henry tried to retreat back to England, but sensing his weakness, the French king sent a large army to block his path home. Henry was outnumbered by the French about three to one, and many of his men were weary and ill. Just before the French launched their attack, one of Henry’s nobles, Gloucester, turned to the king and said, “I hope they will not come upon us now.” But King Henry responded: “We’re in God’s hand, brother, not theirs!”

That is one of my favorite lines of all time, in any play, book, or movie. “We’re in God’s hand, brother!” Even when they were faced with what looked like an overwhelming foe, Henry recognized that GOD was in charge of his life and his situation, not the enemy — and he entrusted himself and the fate of his men to Him. (And as you may know, with God’s help Henry did pull off a historic defeat of the French that day — losing only about 100 men, while the French lost 6000 — and they actually won the day!) He was truly in “God’s hand, not theirs”!

I love that truth: “We’re in God’s hand, brother.”

And it IS a Biblical truth — especially for the people of God, who have committed their lives to Him through Jesus Christ. When you give your life to Him, the Bible says He does hold you in His hand. Jesus said in John 10:28 “I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish, and no one will pluck them out of My hand.”

Jesus said He holds us in His hand — and no one can take us out. In fact, He went on to say in the next verse: “My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all, and no one is able to pluck them out of the Father’s hand.” The Bible says as God’s children, we are in the hand of God, and nothing, and no one, can change that!

All through scripture the Bible refers to how we are being held by the hand of God:

— Psalm 95:7 says “For He is our God, And we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.”

— Psalm 18:35, 63:8 “Your right hand upholds me”

— Psalm 31:15 “My times are in Your hand” (some of us need to remember that today, in these “times”!)

— And I love this verse from Psalm 17:7: “Wondrously show Your lovingkindness, O Savior of those who take refuge at Your right hand.”

All of these verses and many more, remind us that as God’s people, we are being held in His hand.

We need to remember that, and we should be comforted by it. It’s easy, sometimes, when we find ourselves in a distressing situation, to forget it, so we need to purposefully remind ourselves of that truth when we get into those difficult situations: WE ARE IN GOD’S HAND!

There are surely many of us today, in various situations, who need to be reminded of this truth: maybe it’s because a hurricane is about to strike — or it may be some other specific situation you are facing. But you need to purposefully remind yourself: “I am in God’s hand” — and as King Henry did, but the specific thing that you’re facing in that place. He said, “I’m in God’s hand, brother, not theirs (talking about the French army).” Some of US tonight may need to make a similar, specific declaration of faith about OUR situation:

— I’m in God’s hand tonight, not the hurricane’s

— I’m in God’s hand today, not COVID-19’s

— I’m in God’s hand, not that sickness

— I’m in God’s hand, not that cancer.

— I’m in God’s hand, not the government’s

— I’m in God’s hand, not that oppressive boss’s

— I’m in God’s hand, not my creditor’s

— I’m in God’s hand, not my enemy’s

Say it about YOUR own situation: “I’m in GOD’S hand — not \_\_\_\_\_ (whatever your particular situation is).

And there may be those of us tonight who need to apply it not only to ourselves personally but also to some of our loved ones:

— Maybe YOU are not in the storm tonight, but you have friends or loved ones who are.

— Maybe YOU are not a bad situation this evening, but you know someone who IS.

You may need to remind yourself tonight about that loved one as well: “They are in GOD’S hands” — not the hands of the storm, not the hands of the situation, whatever it is. “They are in God’s hands.” So DO pray for them, and pray fervently, but make it a prayer of faith. Because you know they are in God’s hands. 2020 has been a year of “storms” of many different kinds. But let’s not keep our eyes fixed on any of the various “storms” of life — instead let’s look to the Lord and remember Who He is, and what He does for us. Especially if you know Jesus as your Savior, you and your loved ones are not in the hands of the storm, or of anything else — “We’re in GOD’S hand, brother!”

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.

Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations; Deuteronomy 7:9

# Berry Chapel Baptist Church

## God Gave Them Up

By Steve Williams  
Mitchell County

Can you believe that the United States is traveling down the road it is on today? Have you ever asked yourself why this may be happening? The Bible says in Ps 81:11, 12 *"But my people would not hearken to my voice;... So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels."* May I tell you that these are perilous days in which we're living. There are no if's, and's, or but's about it. We are on a collision course with disaster and judgment of God, and you can see this in many ways. Crime is on a rise like never before. What's right is wrong and what's wrong is right. Families have been destroyed, millions of babies are being destroyed in their mothers' womb, suicide and violent crime are at the top of the list. If you talk to people and say that the problem is sin they will disagree with you, because today sin is out of date. Do you know what the only sin is today? The only sin today is to call sin, sin. Then if you call sin, sin, they say you are intolerant, or a bigot or racist.

In the day that we are living, a man may be sick but he's not sinful, he may be weak but he's not wicked, he may be ill but he's not evil. If we were to tell people that what they're doing is wrong, they would have some excuse. It would be the environment, it would be genetics, it would be ignorance, but nobody wants to be blamed, everybody wants to be sympathized and pampered, them and their sin. People who sin bring upon themselves the Judgement and Wrath of God. Now we hear a lot about the love of God. God is love, His infinite love, His boundless love, He's measureless in His love. We say that God is love. Understand this God of love is also a God of Judgment and when you love righteousness, you will also hate sin. It is like this: The doctor who loves good health hates microbes and germs. Like the COVID Virus. When you love children, you hate child pornography, you hate child abuse. So, you see, you cannot have a God of Love without also having a God of Wrath or Judgement. If you just take the love of God and that's all you hear, you only have half of the story.

There is one thing that we have learned from history and that is we have failed to learn from it. History shows us clearly when you leave God out of your life, God will give you up. Paul even wrote on this in Romans 1:18-32. Please take the time to read this if you will. When Paul wrote this passage to Rome it was relevant then and it is relevant even in the day that we are living. Again, you can't leave God out because if you leave God out long enough God Will Give You Up. God cannot interfere with your choices of leaving Him out of your life. If God did interfere with man's choices, man's free will, our freedom to make choices, they would be nothing but a robot, forced to do God's will. So when a man turns away from God, he himself makes the choice to do so, and God cannot and will not interfere. When a man chooses to turn his back on God, then God has no other choice but to abandon man and allow them to do as they have chosen.

God gives man up according to the Bible due to two sins, Pride and the Lust. America has become a prideful nation. A large number of people no longer see or feel a need for God to be a part of our nation. They have taken prayer out of school. They want to take 10 Commandments down, they want to take In God We Trust off our money, and now they want to take God out of our pledge of allegiance to the American Flag. Now, is that not a prideful people?

We are also overwhelmed with the lust in this nation we live in. Sex sells and promotes almost everything. The things of this world, entice us. It seems that we can never have enough. Husbands and wives alike are willing to sell their families out for a one night fling. Husbands and wives are willing to put their families in such a debt that if they don't watch it we will lose all they have because they think that the things they want are what is going to make them happy. They lust after the things of this world.

My prayer is that God will open the eyes of this sinful world and help them to see how much they need God in their lives and also in our nation before He Gives us up.

### Words of Wisdom:

- He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep gaining what he cannot lose. Jim Elliot
- If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there. Lewis Carroll
- When in doubt don't. Benjamin Franklin
- The greater our knowledge increases the more our ignorance unfolds. John F. Kennedy

### Something to think about:

Q. If you turn your back on God, what do you have to look forward to?

A. \_\_ \_\_ LL



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



### 2020 Toy Store Registration

**Online Registration:** Go to [cranc.org/toystore](http://cranc.org/toystore) to download a Registration Application, then email it to [toystore@crbanc.org](mailto:toystore@crbanc.org) with one form of ID for you and each child.

**In-Person Registration:** Oct. 19th, 12pm-8pm or Oct. 20th, 8am-5pm @ the CRBA office **(1812 US 70 East, Morganton)**  
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Toy Store will be at the Catawba River Baptist Association this year on December 7th & 8th. For more information call **(828) 437-0137**.

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# NOV. 15 - DEC. 15

# Your Government Page

## NC Senate District 47



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

On March 10, of this year, Gov. Roy Cooper issued Executive Order 116 declaring a state of emergency in response to the spread of COVID-19. He subsequently issued six additional Shutdown Orders between March 17 and June 24, without the concurrence of the North Carolina Council of State which, in addition to the Governor, includes the following elected executive offices: Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Auditor, Treasurer, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Attorney General, Commissioner of Agriculture, Commissioner of Labor, and Commissioner of Insurance. The current Council of State comprises six Republicans and four Democrats.

On June 25, Lt. Gov. Dan Forest wrote a letter to Gov. Cooper setting forth his intent, as a member of the Council of State, to file a lawsuit against the governor for violating the Emergency Management Act and repeatedly ignoring state law, “enacting mandates that selectively target the businesses and citizens of North Carolina without concurrence from a majority of the Council of State.”

On July 1, Lt. Gov. Forest filed the lawsuit in Wake County Superior Court which detailed Executive Orders 118, 121, 135, 138, 141, and 147, all issued by Gov. Cooper without the concurrence of the Council of State, as required by law – N.C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.30(b). Also, Lt. Gov. Forest asked the Court for the following: A temporary restraining order prohibiting the Governor and anyone under his control from enforcing the Shutdown Orders until the provisions of those orders have the concurrence of a majority of the members of the Council of State.

- A permanent injunction prohibiting the Governor and anyone under his control from enforcing the Shutdown Orders until the provisions of those orders have the concurrence of a majority of the members of the Council of State.

- An order declaring the Governor’s Shutdown Orders to be null, void, and of no effect as violative of N.C. Gen. Stat. §166A-19.30 and N.C. Gen. Stat. § 130A-145, and prohibiting the issuance of subsequent orders of a similar nature without the concurrence of a majority of the members of the Council of State.

Unfortunately, on August 11, the judge ruled against Lt. Gov. Forest in this lawsuit. Following is Lt. Gov. Forest’s statement on the decision:

"Today, the court ruled that Governor Cooper has 100% of the power during a declared emergency and can act unilaterally to deny freedoms to every North Carolinian. If Governor Cooper has 100% of the power, then he has 100% of the responsibility. 100% of the responsibility for the disaster handling COVID-19 in nursing homes. 100% of the responsibility for every business that has had to permanently close because of his shutdown orders. 100% of the responsibility for every child that doesn't get a great education this year. And 100% of the responsibility for the long lines of unemployed workers still waiting to receive funds. Ultimately, the people of North Carolina will make the final decision in November."

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

## NC Senate District 46



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

Back in August, a leftist group represented by the DC attorney that defended Gov. Roy Cooper in the aftermath of the contested 2016 gubernatorial election, filed a lawsuit against the State of North Carolina in an attempt to undo the recently passed (and nearly unanimous) law that was designed to prevent ballot harvesting and absentee ballot fraud. This lawsuit seeks to reverse absentee ballot protections and extend the acceptance of absentee ballots far beyond election day. In late September, the democrat controlled NC Board of Elections colluded with the DC lawyers who filed the case and agreed to propose a settlement that would allow mail-in ballots to be accepted up to nine days after election day. The proposed "settlement" would also permit anonymous outdoor absentee ballot drop boxes. The law forbids anyone other than a voter or a voter’s near relative from delivering an absentee ballot and requires the Board of Elections to record who returns every ballot. But the collusive consent order allows outdoor “absentee ballot drop-off stations” and says, “a county board may not disapprove a ballot solely because it is placed in a dropbox.” The Democratic-controlled Board was kind enough to request signs on the drop boxes that tell ballot harvesters they’re not really supposed to use them. Another important safeguard that they are trying to eliminate is the witness requirement for absentee ballots. State law requires one witness to sign an absentee ballot and legibly include his or her name and address. But the collusive consent order effectively eliminates that requirement. If an absentee ballot is submitted without the required witness information, the Democratic-controlled Board of Elections will just mail a form to the address to which the ballot was sent, and the form can be returned with no witness information. The form can be returned nine days after the election. It's obvious that Attorney General Josh Stein (who was once a state Senator) is attempting to enter into a settlement deal with a friendly DC lawyer in an effort to sabotage the recent legislation that was passed to add additional security measures to our elections. All of this election meddling is going on while voting is already underway. The General Assembly will be vigorously fighting against these attempts at facilitating voter fraud in court. So, watch the news for updates.

On a more positive note, in early September, the General Assembly utilized federal CARES Act money to pass a COVID relief bill that created “Extra Credit” Grants of \$335 per household with children. These funds are intended to help parents who are facing unexpected financial burdens due to coronavirus school closures to pay for expenses such as childcare, virtual learning supplies, or lost hours at work. The Extra Credit initiative uses \$440 million in federal CARES Act funding to help offset unexpected costs of school closures to parents. Below is additional information about the grants. Please note the October 15 deadline and that eligible individuals who have filed their state return do NOT need to take any action to receive the grant.

Extra Credit Grants - The grant amount is \$335.00 for each eligible individual.

- NCDOR will award a grant to eligible individuals who report at least one qualifying child (age 16 or younger) on their 2019 state individual income tax return; spouses who file a joint state return count as one individual.

- Eligible individuals who have filed their state return do not need to take any action to receive the grant.

- An individual who did not file a 2019 state tax return solely because the individual’s gross income for the 2019 taxable year did not exceed the state filing requirements for the individual’s filing status may apply for a grant.

- An applicant must meet all requirements referenced in the law, including having at least one qualifying child age 16 or younger for the 2019 calendar year, to apply for the grant by October 15, 2020.

Additional information can be found at <https://www.ncdor.gov/extracredit>.

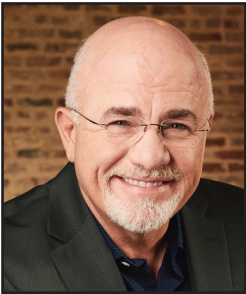
Thanks for allowing me to represent you in Raleigh. If I can ever be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 919-715-7823.

*God Bless America*

By Dave Ramsey

Build wealth in college?

Dear Dave,  
What advice do you have for college students who want to plan for the future and start building wealth? I'll finish my master's degree in marketing in less than two years, and I've been pretty lucky so far because my parents have paid for school. I bring in about \$2,200 a month at my job, and I have \$24,000 in savings. Alex



Dear Alex,  
If I were you, I'd get really good at the whole marketing thing. At this stage of the game, you are your best investment. You're a go-getter, so just keep on going and getting it.  
If you continue on this path, and by that, I mean working, going to school, and piling up cash, you're going to be able to put that marketing know-how to work in a big way. You'll be able to use some of the cash you've got stored away to set yourself up in your new life. What you're doing right now, in your situation, will give you a better return mathematically than a mutual fund.  
Do you get what I'm saying? An education that is usable is more valuable to you at this stage of the game than investing. Now, when you finish school and start living life in your new career, good growth stock mutual funds are what I'd recommend for retirement. And at that point, if you've got an extra \$30,000 or \$40,000 sitting there, that's even better.  
Great start, Alex. Well done! —Dave

Mandatory withdrawal at 72?

Dear Dave,  
I'll be 72 in October, and I have a Roth IRA I haven't done anything within a while. I've got about \$30,000 in it, and I believe I read where the government said there will be a mandatory withdrawal at age 72. If this is true, what should I do with that money?  
Danny

Dear Danny,  
I'm not positive there are mandatory withdrawals on a Roth IRA. I think that applies to traditional IRAs but double-check with your investment advisor to make sure.  
If it does apply to Roths, I'd take the required minimum distribution and move that amount to other investments. Or, since it's only \$30,000, if you've got another nest egg you plan to live on, you could just have some fun with the money.  
In any case, talk to your investment professional before taking action. If he has the heart of a teacher and cares about your best interests, he'll look at your overall financial situation and guide you in making the right decision. —Dave  
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*Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including The Total Money Makeover. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 14 million listeners each week on 600 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at daveramsey.com and on Twitter at @DaveRamsey.*

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# Obedient Heart Fellowship

## Testing, Testing

By Jim Huskins  
McDowell County



The Exodus is one of the most famous events in human history. Its purpose was more than moving God’s people from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Promised Land. Along the way, God conveyed instructions for how His people should live. He also subjected them to a series of tests to determine if they were learning those lessons.

The Hebrew word for testing is nacha. It is a judicial term and conveys the idea of being on trial before a judge. Exodus 15:22 through 16:16 is a fascinating account of some of these examinations.

Following the Red Sea Crossing, Israel stopped at Marah where the water was undrinkable. From there they traveled to Elim where God began teaching them that they must stop worshipping many “gods” and focus their devotion on Him. In Exodus 15:26, God promises His people that, if they will follow His instructions for living, He will bless them with good health.

After Elim, as they travel toward Mt. Sinai, they run out of food. The people complain that Moses is trying to starve them. Their grumbling was directed to their human leaders, but it was actually against God. The tone of God’s response was neither anger nor disgust.

No one knows how many people left Egypt, but it could have been two to three million. They have been traveling for two months. No matter how much food they started with, it is now running low. God told them He would send quail at night and bread in the morning. Most of us learned about manna as children. My teachers either did not notice or did not think it important, that this miracle was accompanied by a test that established an important principle.

The instruction is this: He will provide all the manna they need, but He will only give them enough for one day at a time. On the day before Sabbath, they are to gather enough for two days. The provision of manna was about more than filling hungry bellies. By giving them miraculous food, God was teaching a powerful lesson: “This is so you shall know it was Yehovah who brought you out of Egypt.” The Israelites did not understand who was responsible for leading them out of slavery. Every time they faced trouble, they blamed Moses. They were superstitious. They believed in magic and sorcery. They were not convinced that this god Yehovah had done all the mighty things they had seen. Moses was the visible human presence, so Moses caught the grief. It will be decades before Israel fully realizes that God is their only leader.

God commanded the entire community to draw near to Him. They saw the Glory of God in the cloud. This phrase, “the Glory of God,” is the English translation of the Hebrew phrase kevod Yehovah. This was the same divine presence that had been leading them, protecting them, and in full sight every day.

God’s presence is always available, but we must choose to draw near to Him. He will not violate our choice. When Israel stopped focusing on God, they became disheartened and disoriented. The same thing happens to us. We get used to the idea of Jesus within us, guiding us. Eventually, He becomes like an old piece of furniture or another feature of the landscape. We allow Him to go unnoticed. God’s presence never left Israel, but His people stopped paying attention.

The morning after they complained, the Israelites were greeted by a miracle. The ground was covered with something that looked like delicate frost. They turned to each other and said, “What is it?” Man hu is the Hebrew term. From it, we derive the English word “manna.” Moses tells them this is the bread from Heaven which God promised.

Each man was told to gather an “omer”—about ½ gallon—for each person in his household. Whether they gathered more than an omer or less than an omer, when they put it into an omer-sized jar, everyone had the same amount. The meaning of this event is long debated, but I believe that the implication is simple: When we devote ourselves to the faithful, obedient service of God Almighty, we do not need horde; no need to rush out to be first to gather; no need to worry if we will have enough. In God’s economy, His bounty is endless. His definition of equality is not about giving everyone exactly the same. Rather, it is about giving each person exactly what they need.

The Hebrews are told to gather only enough to eat that day. They are to leave nothing overnight. This is the same instruction they received for the Passover lamb. They were to eat their fill but dispose of the remainder before morning. Many Israelites ignored that part of the teaching. To their disgust, they found leftover manna rotted and stinking.

This is almost comical. They would have been better off to simply follow God’s instructions. This was an important part of the test. Some failed because they were too arrogant to follow clear instructions, but let’s not be quick to condemn.

How often do you and I pick and choose from God’s instructions? How often do we follow the parts that make sense to us and skip the parts that do not? The Bible does not teach that “grace” allows us to ignore any section of God’s Word that we do not like. When Jesus was giving His final instructions to those who would be the Apostles of the Church, He told them plainly in John 14:15 “If you love me, keep my commandments.” Whether or not we choose to do so is part of our test.

Obedient Heart Fellowship believes that the entire Bible is both 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. lostranger@mindspring.com

*Jim & Beverly Huskins are members of Obedient Heart Fellowship.*

***O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer. Psalms 31:23***

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# Drexel Memorial Baptist Church

## Governor's Volunteer Service Award

By Vickie Deal  
Burke County

Mr. Glenn Reep was presented the Governor's Volunteer Service Award Certificate and Pin by Pastor Lonnie Brown of Drexel Memorial Baptist Church and Ms. Wendy Mull of Burke United Christian Ministries at an ice cream social held in his honor on Sunday night, August 30, 2020.

Volunteer Burke announced the winners of the Governor's Volunteer Service Award in April 2020. The awards are sponsored through the North Carolina Commission of Volunteerism and Community Service and recognize people who have for years performed amazing work to serve the communities in which they live. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, however, a reception to honor the winners and present the certificates and pins was postponed. Mr. Reep had been nominated by Pastor Brown, as well as, Ms. Mull, Volunteer Supervisor for Burke United Christian Ministries (BUCM). He was recognized for his many hours and years of dedicated service as a volunteer at BUCM and his service at Drexel Memorial Baptist Church since August 23, 1998.

Glenn's life has revolved around service to God, his country, his family, and his community. He was born March 2, 1937, to Mary Lou England Reep and Glenn Jones Reep. Upon graduation from Glen Alpine High School, Glenn joined the Marines and served his country from 1956-1958. At the end of his Marine tour, he returned to Morganton and began his 30 years of service at Broughton Hospital. He married Doris O'Kelly Reep on August 31, 1962, and they were married for 47 years until her death in 2010. They have one daughter, Beth Reep Cook (Mitchell), and one granddaughter, Emily Cook Knight (Tyler). Mrs. Reep was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease in 2001, and Glenn was her devoted and primary caregiver for nine years in their home. Upon her passing, Glenn began his volunteer service for his community. He began at BUCM; then volunteered at Habitat Restore; and returned to BUCM where he continues to volunteer today. Glenn also serves at Drexel Memorial Baptist Church as a faithful member, an usher, and a participant in church workdays.

Glenn's heart of service has been, and continues to be, evidenced by the life he has lived and still lives each day in his devotion to his family, church, and community.

Ms. Vickie Deal is a member of the Publicity Team at Drexel Memorial Baptist Church.



The people in the photo are (left to right): Ms. Elizabeth Norris, BUCM; Ms. Wendy Mull, Volunteer Supervisor for BUCM; Mr. Glenn Reep, Governor's Volunteer Service Award Recipient; and Pastor Lonnie Brown, Drexel Memorial Baptist Church Drexel NC

# The Orchard at Altapass

## The Orchard Partnership Project With Penland School Complete

By Kate Groff  
Mitchell County




After two months of planning and weeks of painting, the Orchard is pleased to announce the completion of the "Props Project for Kids." Keith Moir from Penland School of Craft translated black and white images into vibrant, kid-friendly, plywood props that are installed around the Orchard. Kids have already begun to poke their heads through holes or windows and become those icons of Orchard life, past and present—apple, honey bee, Monarch butterfly (a favorite), and caterpillar, Clinchfield Railroad engine, tractor, and banjo player. "It's an expressive way to connect our young visitors to the land and to the ecosystem that is the glue of it all," said executive director, Beth Hilton. "Part of our mission is to educate people about the Orchard lands. And for kids, that means fun activities. If they complete the scavenger hunt and bring their sheets back to the barn, they'll receive a bag of fun activities that will engage them and help them appreciate what the Orchard means—its apples, pollinators, its history. We thank Penland for their generous collaborative spirit and dedication to the arts in all its forms." All the props are within close walking distance to the red barn. The scavenger coloring sheet that can be picked up inside, gives directions to each.



The Orchard is located at 1025 Orchard Road near Spruce Pine at mm 328.3 on the Blue Ridge Parkway and is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3), working orchard, heritage, and educational venue. Hours are 10 AM to 5 PM, open Wednesday-Sunday. Family- and pet-friendly. Wheelchair accessible. For information, please visit [altapassorchard.org](http://altapassorchard.org) or call 828-765-9531.

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





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You Complete Me

By Steve Gaito  
McDowell County



One of my favorite quotes comes from the movie “Jerry Maguire”. The scene sums up their relationship after Jerry tells her he loves her. Complete relates to a comprehensive connection between two people. Like puzzle pieces, they seamlessly go together. Now you may be asking what in the world does this have to do with retirement or financial planning. I hope you will see it by the end of this article. What I have found is that most advisors do a good job planning for what they know. An insurance agent will do a good job with insurance products and a financial advisor will do a good job with investment products. What I often find is incomplete planning. As a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER tm practitioner, I have for 27 years evolved in my planning. Early on it was the diversification of investments. Later it was adding predictable income with annuities. Now my practice focuses on two areas that are often overlooked but can have a significant impact on your retirement plan.

The first is Long-Term Care. In my opinion, failing to have a Long-Term Care plan as part of your retirement plan opens your plan up to a disaster. Fortunately for most people, it can be easily incorporated into your retirement plan if you know what to do. There are 5 different ways to pay for a Long-Term Care event. Which option you choose will determine the retirement income of your spouse or legacy you leave to your children. Long-Term Care is more than financial expense. It is the demand of time for family and options you will have for care. The other part of Long-Term Care is having it in place before you need it. This is another area I have evolved. Originally I was recommending Long-term Care around age 60 but now I have many clients that are funding their plan at age 50 or younger to take advantage of lower rates and to have it paid for by retirement. The benefit of funding it early is you take the risk of premium increases off the table and no ongoing expenses in retirement. Many people try to have their house paid for before retirement and having your Long-Term Care paid off before retirement is a great option too.

The second area I focus on is taxes. Here is where I differ from most. I look at cumulative taxes, not just current taxes. In other words, I take a macro view of taxation because I believe that the total taxes you pay over your lifetime is a greater risk than what happens in any one given year. Qualified Retirement Accounts (401(k), 403(b), 457, and IRA plans) have an embedded risk of tax increases in the future. Finding ways to minimize or eliminate this risk is critical to your retirement success. No one can guarantee that taxes will rise, but no one dismisses the risk that taxes put on retirement accounts. I help people evaluate their qualified accounts and see how large of a tax risk they face. If taxes remain the same paying taxes now will not affect your future income. If taxes are reduced you will have paid more taxes than you could have. If, however, taxes increase, which I believe is likely, you will have saved thousands or hundreds of thousands of taxes over your lifetime. What I can do is to show you the impact of taxes on both your income and the assets you leave on to your heirs. The question I have for you is, do you think taxes will go up given the national debt rising at trillions at a time. At the beginning of this article, I referenced the movie quote “you complete me”. If your current plan does not address Long-Term Care and Taxes it is complete, and I would love to complete your plan. I don’t manage assets and can show you how to reallocate your assets so you can have a complete plan.

To schedule a time to review your situation give me a call or send me an email. I do not charge for the initial meeting and there is no obligation on your part. What you will see is what a complete retirement plan looks like. Many professionals will build you a portfolio, but what I provide is a plan and a complete one at that too.

*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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Dug

By Christy Young  
Mitchell County

Meet our newest edition (and hopefully our last), Dug. We found Dug at our old house, under the outbuilding, living in a groundhog hole. He was a completely wild pup. He would growl, bark, and snap at us out of each groundhog hole opening.

He was so hungry, we were able to lure him out with a can of cat food, but not far enough to catch him. We ended up having to set a wild animal trap with a can of cat food in it. We left the trap for the evening and came back first thing the next morning. To much delight, there was a puppy in the trap and not a skunk or raccoon. I thought it would take days, weeks, even maybe months to tame him. He was scared and still wild when I carried the trap and put him in the car.

Once we got home, he took one look at Ruby, our other dog, and was no longer scared. My husband let him out in the dog kennel and with-in five minutes, he was in my husband's arms. I was shocked, that I had married a dog whisperer and didn't even know it!

When we first got Dug, he was the size of my hand. We gave him food and water and a much-needed bath. He wouldn't have it any other way but to be in the house with us. We took him to the vet and they were thinking the same as we were, that he was about five weeks old and was mostly beagle along with a much smaller dog.

Well Dug, is all pup, he loves to dig holes, hence his name, he loves to eat dirt and sand, and get stinky and dirty.

His best friend is Thomas our cat and they get into trouble together on a routine basis.

On a cool Fall Sunday morning, I let him out and he decided he wanted to stay there awhile and play. I didn't think much of it, he likes being outside more than Ruby. We watched church live on the internet while he was outside. He was finally ready to come in about the time church service was over. My oldest son, Levi, let him in.

Dug grabbed his turkey, the toy he loves, that he has to sleep with every night, and jumped on my bed to take his morning nap. Normally this is fine, but this morning he had got into something outside very stinky. He smelled like fresh P O O P. I don't know who's poop, but he stunk so bad I thought I was going to throw up. Every time we got him off the bed, he would jump back up. I had to work quickly. I grabbed him and carried him with my arms stretched out wide away from my body. I did not want to smell like that. Jonah, my youngest son, helped me get him in the sink for a bath.

The more I wet his fur the more he stunk. It was all I could do to not get sick. I could see poop stuck in his white fur.

Dug is half white and black with some brindle fur mixed in the black fur. I hurriedly rubbed some good smelling girl shampoo in his coat. When we started rinsing him we could see the dirt and poop come off and run down the sink drain revealing his beautiful white and black coat again. It then occurred to me that Dug was a lot like us and the shampoo and water were like God's grace.

When we sin our heart becomes ugly, and dirty, and even stinky. But when we repent of our sins (tell God we are sorry and ask for forgiveness) He washes away the dirt, the stink, and the ugliness. Our heart then becomes white as snow just like Dug's white fur.

Now Dug doesn't like to be clean, in fact, he hates it so much, that he will get dirty as soon as he gets a bath. It's like he would rather be dirty and stinky instead of being clean and good smelling. We, humans, are the same way, sometimes we know that it is wrong to do stuff but we do it anyway. We know it is a sin but instead of staying white as snow, we sin knowingly because we want to. Sometimes we like to sin. Sometimes, like Dug, we do it over and over. The devil tempts us to sin and knows what our weaknesses are. He wants us to sin and be a repeat sinner. He doesn't want us to have a close relationship with God.

But the good part is, God will forgive us and make us clean again when we ask Him to. Now, that doesn't mean that we should knowingly sin and ask for forgiveness, then turn around and repeat the process just because we know that God will forgive us. That is taking advantage of God. We are to try our very best to not sin and instead be Christlike. We are to live a godly example so that our life will draw others and cause them to want to be Christ-followers like we are.

Dear Lord, please help us to not sin, help us not be repeat sinners. Most importantly help us to remember to repent and ask for forgiveness each time we sin. Help us be Christlike and to walk close to you daily. We praise and thank you so much for forgiving us and for washing away our ugly sins every time we mess up. Thank you for wiping our slates clean and giving us a new chance, a new start each time we do wrong. In Jesus's name, we pray Amen.

*"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* 1John 1:9 KJV

*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, works at Mitchell County Finance Office, and is a member of Bear Creek Baptist Church.*



Press Release: Sept. 10, 2020


By Erica Allison, Formation PR + Brand

Dogwood Health Trust to Host Virtual Annual Meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 28  
Public invited to attend; submit questions in advance.

Asheville, N.C. – Dogwood Health Trust plans to host its first annual meeting, virtually, on Wed., October 28 from 3:30 – 5:30 pm. As part of Dogwood Health Trust's commitment to accountability within the communities it serves, the organization will hold at least one annual open meeting with the public each year. Additionally, Dogwood will provide an annual report to the region, posted on its website within a week of the Annual Meeting.

The upcoming Annual Meeting is open to the public and will cover updates about Dogwood's work over the past year. A panel of staff and Board members will be available to share updates, discuss community issues, and answer questions. Since this first meeting will be held virtually, Dogwood invites the public to offer comments, suggestions, or questions in advance. To register or offer comments, please visit [www.dht.org/annualmeeting](http://www.dht.org/annualmeeting).

Dogwood Health Trust is a North Carolina nonprofit corporation with the sole purpose of dramatically improving the health and well-being of all people and communities of Western North Carolina. Dogwood Health Trust was created from the net proceeds of the sale of Mission Hospital and focuses on innovative ways to address the many factors that contribute to overall health and wellness. To learn more, please visit [www.dht.org](http://www.dht.org).



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# Crossword

Crossword 259 and Solution

Across

1 It is God who \_\_\_\_ me with strength (2 Sam 22:33)

5 three thousand were \_\_\_\_ to their number that day (Acts 2:41)

9 All beautiful you are, my darling; there is no \_\_\_\_ in you (Song 4:7)

13 walking in the garden in the \_\_\_\_ of the day (Gen 3:8)

14 in your grandmother \_\_\_\_ and in your mother Eunice (2 Tim 1:5)

15 call on your god \_\_\_\_ he will take notice of us (Jonah 1:6)

16 they had gone through the \_\_\_\_ unto Paphos (Acts 13:6) KJV

17 is alive again; and was \_\_\_\_, and is found (Luke 15:32)

18 You are in \_\_\_\_ because you do not know the Scriptures (Matt 22:29)

19 Thou art my beloved Son; in \_\_\_\_ I am well pleased (Luke 3:22) KJV

20 Do not take advantage of a widow or an \_\_\_\_ (Ex 22:22)

22 the poor man had nothing except one little \_\_\_\_ lamb (2 Sam 12:3)

23 church bench

25 Jesus was in the home of a man known as Simon the \_\_\_\_ (Matt 26:6-7)

27 topaz and emerald, chrysolite, \_\_\_\_ and jasper (Ezek 28:13)

29 David played one of these musical instruments (1 Sam.16:23)

30 The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on \_\_\_\_ (Ezek 18:2)

34 Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and \_\_\_\_ (Ps 39:6)

35 Let me live that \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ praise you (1,3) (Ps 119:175)

37 the teachers of the law and the \_\_\_\_ mocked him (Matt 27:41-42)

39 \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ not forget your precepts (1,2) (Ps 119:141)

40 He who has ears, \_\_\_\_ him hear (Matt 11:15)

41 pitch dark, without a \_\_\_\_ of brightness (Amos 5:20)

42 the men started on their way to \_\_\_\_ out the land (Josh 18:8)

43 All the birds of the air \_\_\_\_ in its boughs (Ezek 31:6)

45 and he ate locusts and \_\_\_\_ honey (Mark 1:6)

46 Don't let anyone deceive you in \_\_\_\_ way (II Th 2:3)

47 reached for his sword, \_\_\_\_ it out and struck the servant (Matt 26:51)

48 In that day the mountains will \_\_\_\_ new wine (Joel 3:18)

50 shake the \_\_\_\_ off your feet when you leave that home (Matt 10:14)

52 and one cake of \_\_\_\_ bread (Ex 29:23) KJV

54 The trees of the LORD are full of \_\_\_\_ (Ps 104:16)

56 I had rebuilt the wall and not a \_\_\_\_ was left in it (Neh 6:1)

59 My mouth speaks what is true, for my lips \_\_\_\_ wickedness (Prov 8:7)

61 the people shall go out and gather a certain \_\_\_\_ every day (Exodus 16:4)

64 Destroy this temple, and \_\_\_\_ raise it again (1,4) (John 2:19)

66 Jesus was led by the Spirit \_\_\_\_ the desert to be tempted (Matt 4:1-2)

67 do not let your good be spoken \_\_\_\_ evil (2,2) (Rom 14:16) NKJV

68 Of what \_\_\_\_ is an idol, since a man has carved it? (Hab 2:18)

69 LORD will go before you, the God of Israel will be your \_\_\_\_ guard (Isa 52:12)

70 They will be called \_\_\_\_ of righteousness, a planting of the LORD (Isa 61:3)

71 for one official is \_\_\_\_ by a higher one, and over them both are (Eccl 5:8)

72 and a \_\_\_\_ of gold of fifty shekels weight (Joshua 7:21)

73 every man under his vine and under his fig \_\_\_\_ (1 King 4:25)

Down

1 Philip went down to \_\_\_\_ in Samaria and proclaimed (1,4) (Acts 8:5)

2 One of the sons of Benjamin (Gen 46:21)

3 the lizard, and the snail, and the \_\_\_\_ (Lev 11:30) (KJV)

4 Peter and his companions were very \_\_\_\_ (Luke 9:32)

5 David rebuked his men and did not \_\_\_\_ them to attack Saul (1 Sam 24:7)

6 I stand at the \_\_\_\_ and knock (Rev 3:20)

7 I will \_\_\_\_ my glory among the nations (Ezek 39:21)

8 the king was attracted to \_\_\_\_ more than to any of the other (Est 2:17)

9 Be not \_\_\_\_ from me, O God; come quickly (Ps 71:12)

10 strike the tambourine, play the melodious harp and \_\_\_\_ (Ps 81:2)

11 hurling stones and shooting arrows out of \_\_\_\_ (1,3) (1 Chr 12:2)

12 that my ways \_\_\_\_ directed to keep thy statutes! (Ps 119:5) KJV

15 the inscription that was written: MENE , \_\_\_\_, TEKEL, PARSIN (Dan 5:25)

21 I \_\_\_\_ to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus (1 Cor 1:10)

24 Half of the city will go into \_\_\_\_, but the rest of the people will not (Zech 14:2)

26 the whole moon turned blood \_\_\_\_ (Rev 6:12)

27 upon his kingdom, to \_\_\_\_ it, and to establish it (Isa 9:7)

28 A \_\_\_\_ is hidden for him on the ground (Job 18:10)

29 head covering

31 Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and \_\_\_\_ send

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71						72					73		
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greetings (Col 4:14)

32 in this place I will \_\_\_\_ peace, declares the LORD Almighty (Hag 2:9)

33 sent me from Kadesh-barnea to \_\_\_\_ out the land (Josh 14:7) KJV

34 he that keepeth understanding shall \_\_\_\_ good. (Prov 19:8) KJV

36 therefore \_\_\_\_ not with him that flattereth (Prov 20:19) (KJV)

38 Peter went to visit the saints in \_\_\_\_ (Acts 9:32)

41 they will tear me like a lion and \_\_\_\_ me to pieces (Ps 7:2)

44 Can \_\_\_\_ walk together, except they be agreed? (Amos 3:3)

45 ascending stages, so that the rooms \_\_\_\_ as one went upward (Ezek 41:7)

49 at the age of fifty, they must \_\_\_\_ from their regular service (Num 8:25)

51 I will plant them and not \_\_\_\_ them (Jer 24:6)

53 We hear that some among you are \_\_\_\_ . They are not busy (2 Thess 3:11)

54 Do not \_\_\_\_ up for yourselves treasures on earth (Matt 6:19)

55 father of David (Ruth 4:17)

56 I \_\_\_\_ half of my possessions to the poor (Luke 19:8)

57 If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far \_\_\_\_ (Job 11:14) KJV

58 Paul gathered a \_\_\_\_ of brushwood (Acts 28:2)

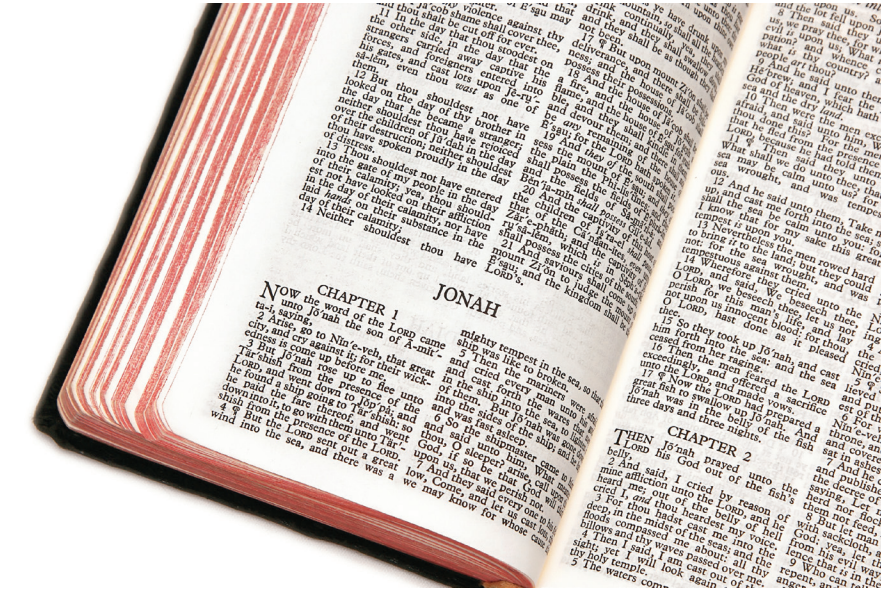
60 and be like a gazelle or like a young \_\_\_\_ (Song 2:17)

62 the people stood \_\_\_\_ off, and Moses drew near (Exodus 20:21)

63 \_\_\_\_ heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine (1 Tim 4:16) KJV

65 The sons of Shem: Elam, Asshur, Arphaxad, \_\_\_\_ (Gen 10:22)

*Solution on page 14*





# PRAY AND VOTE FOR THE UNBORN

WHY VOTE REPUBLICAN			
NO	Abortion on Demand	NO	Green Deal
NO	\$4 Trillion in New Taxes	NO	Taxpayer Funding of Abortion
Yes	Repeal Obamacare Tax	YES	Conservative Judges
Yes	100% Support Law enforcement	YES	Border Wall
Yes	Withdraw From Iran Nuclear Deal	YES	School Choice

**Your Vote Counts**  
Elections have been lost by as few as 6,000 votes  
**Express your Christian beliefs**  
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## McDowell County Conservatives

### Voter Guide

US President .....	Donald J. Trump	NC Supreme Ct. Assoc. Justice .....	Phil Berger, Jr.
US Senate .....	Thom Tillis	NC Supreme Ct. Assoc Justice .....	Tamara Barringer
US House District 11 .....	Madison Cawthorn	NC Court of Appeals .....	April C. Wood
NC Governor .....	Dan Forest	NC Court of Appeals .....	Fred Gore
NC LT Governor .....	Mark Robinson	NC Court of Appeals .....	Chris Dillon
NC Attorney General .....	Jim O'Neil	NC Court of Appeals .....	Jeff Carpenter
NC Auditor .....	Anthony Wayne (Tony) Street	NC Court of Appeals .....	Jefferson G. Griffin
NC Comm. Agriculture .....	Steve Troxler	NC Senate District 47 .....	Ralph Hise
NC Comm. Insurance.....	Mike Causey	NC House District 85 .....	Dudley Greene
NC Comm. Labor .....	Josh Dobson	District 29A Superior Court .....	Tommy Davis
NC Sec. of State .....	E.C. Sykes	District 29A District Court .....	Corey J. MacKinnon
NC Supt. Public Instruction .....	Catherine Truitt	McDowell County Register of Deeds ..	Lydia Tilley Effler
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NC Supreme Ct Chief Justice .....	Paul Newby	McDowell County Commissioner .....	Patrick Ellis

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**North Carolina General Election**

Nov.3rd, 2020

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**Voter Registration Deadline**

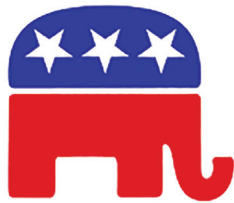
Fri. Oct. 9th, 2020

Deadline to request an Absentee Ballot - Tue. Oct. 27th, 2020

Deadline to return completed Absentee Ballot Tue. Nov. 3rd, 2020

**For More Information Contact**  
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