



# BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS



## Walnut Grove Church

### Settling in the Dregs

By Kurt Bomar  
Avery County

New Years is always a great time to take inventory of our lives. Have you ever noticed that’s when all the commercials seem to highlight their latest exercise equipment? Weight watchers get most of their sign-ups in January and I always see an influx of new dedicated exercisers at the gym (although they seem to fade away as we hit Feb. and March). And finally, Marie always reminds us that she has lost 40-50 pounds on Nutrisystem around this time.



The prophet Zephaniah speaks to this phenomenon:  
Zeph. 1:12 “ *At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent, who are like wine left on its dregs, who think, 'The LORD will do nothing, either good or bad.'*”

“Settled in their dregs” refers to the process of wine-making used in his day whereby a winemaker would allow the wine to settle for a while before pouring it into another vessel, leaving the dregs behind. If he waited too long to make the transfer, the wine would take on the taste of the dregs. This process would be repeated up to seven times until the wine was crystal clear.

It seems that the Israelites were in their December mode. That is, they were content to remain settled in their dregs. They were materialistic, comfortable, and content, not willing to stretch themselves and look to the moving hand of God.

We too can be in our December state of mind so God gives us a choice. We can spiritually say “it’s time to sign up at the gym, try out the bow flex, or give Marie a call” or we can say “I’m fine, what’s for dinner?”

But understand, the Lord wants us to always be growing. If we stretch ourselves Spiritually, He will help us out by shaking up our lives and pouring us out into another vessel.

How does this look? Our lives may be going fine until our boss says “you’re fired” or our boyfriend/girlfriend says “I’m out of here”. We say, “God, how can you let this happen, I thought you loved me?” He does. He loves you so much that He won’t allow you to get too comfortable or too settled because He knows if you do, your life will become clouded with dregs and you will lose the clarity you once had. So things get shaken up as He pours you from one vessel to another.

And you are left saying, “what’s going on? I better seek the Lord.” Thus we wait upon Him with renewed intensity.

Given that choice, I want to constantly be in a state of waiting on Him. I don’t want Him to have to shake me up. So let me encourage you to take inventory of your life at this time of year. Do you have an active ministry inside or outside your local church? There’s plenty of stuff to do, and plenty of desperate needs that need to be met. Get out there and look for them!

*Kurt Bomar is pastor of Walnut Grove Church.*





“A Test of Your Salvation”

By Shawn Thomas  
Angleton, Texas



Not long ago I visited with the parents of one of our new church members. The mother of this young woman told me how her daughter had made a profession of faith in Christ and was baptized when she was very young — but a few years later she came to her with questions about whether she had really been saved. This mom wisely told her: “I don’t want you to live your whole life with doubts about your salvation,” and so she helped her make sure that day that she really was saved. I talked to the daughter about it later and she said, “I am not ashamed of that testimony!” In fact, she said, “I’m so glad I ‘nailed it down’ before the pressures of high school and then college in California and then marriage and mothering 2 sons, one of which has special needs. Over the past 30 years, I can’t imagine having doubts about my relationship with Jesus, especially in the darkest of times.”

I appreciate her testimony because her experience is very common. Many, many people in our churches ask, “How can I know for sure if I’m really saved?” There is nothing more important than knowing for sure that you have eternal life in heaven. So how can you know?

Sometimes people say, “Well, if you ‘made a decision’ once, then you can know that you’re saved. But Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, “*NOT everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.*” So you can’t know you’re saved just because you supposedly “made a decision” some time in your past. So how CAN you know that you’re saved? Thankfully, God’s word gives us the answer. One of the best places in the Bible where we can test ourselves and find assurance for our salvation is the Book of I John. I John 5:13 gives us the purpose of that book: “*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may KNOW that you have eternal life.*” The whole purpose of I John is to assure Christians of their salvation. And it does that with a series of tests, throughout the book, about things that will be present in the life of a person who is genuinely saved.

One of the most important tests John gives us in his book is the TEST OF YOUR LIFE. John emphasizes this repeatedly throughout this book:  
— I John 1:6-7, “*If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.*”  
— 2:3 “*By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, ‘I have come to know Him,’ but does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*”  
— 3:3 has a similar test: “*Everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies Himself just as He is pure.*”  
— 3:7-8 says: “*the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. The one who practices sin is of the devil.*”  
— 5:3: “*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.*”

All of these verses say virtually the same thing: if you really know Jesus, your life will not be characterized by sin and disobedience. You will live a holy life, and you will keep His commandments.

We need to understand: There is NO assurance of salvation for the person who just CLAIMS to know Jesus, but who has no marks of holiness in their life, and who is not obeying His word.

In David McCullough’s book, The Wright Brothers he includes a testimony that the Brothers’ niece, Ivonette, shared about them. She said that when they were kids, and their toys got broken, “Uncle Orville” and “Uncle Wilbur” would fix them up, and make them better than new — with improvements they made with their ingenuity and mechanical expertise.

When I read that, I thought, “That’s what Jesus does for us!” When He finds us, we are like those toys — “broken” in our sin and disobedience. But Jesus takes us, and He “fixes” us, and He makes us better than we were before. He comes into our lives and He changes us.

Think about people we know who have met Jesus:  
— Here’s a woman in John 8 who used to be an adulteress, but now she has “gone

*continued on page 5*

Here are some of the essential elements of our faith at the Blue Ridge Christian News:

God

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has existed eternally in three persons and chooses to manifest Himself in these three ways: as God the Father, as God the Son, and as God the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.  
(Genesis 1:1, 26-27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; and 2 Corinthians 13:14)

Jesus

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, who is fully God and fully human in His incarnation. He lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all humanity by dying on a cross. He arose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to heaven and will return again to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.  
(Matthew 1:22-23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5; 14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14-15; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 1:3-4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14-15; Titus 2:13)

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the very Spirit of God, fully divine, manifested in the life of every believer from the moment of salvation. He is equal with the Father and the Son as God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. The Christian seeks to live under His daily control.  
(2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13; 14:16-17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:18)

The Bible

The Bible is the divinely inspired, authoritative, infallible, living and active Word of God to all men. It was written by human authors under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is the ultimate source of truth for Christian beliefs and living. In it we find a guideline for right relationship with God and God’s creation, and a blueprint for personal, emotional, and spiritual growth.  
(2 Timothy 1:13; 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:2-21; Psalm 119:105, 160; 12:6; Proverbs 30:5)

Humanity

Humanity is designed and made by God in His image. We have been created as cognitive, moral, ethical, and physical beings and have been equipped by God for both relationship with Him and with one another. Both male and female are gifted by the Creator with characteristics which equip them for the purpose for which they have been created: relationship, dominion, and responsibility. Although God designed us to have fellowship with Him, we became alienated from God through disobedience. As a result, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and choose to sin against God. We are incapable of regaining a right relationship with God through our own efforts.  
(Genesis 1:26-28; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6; 59:1-2; Romans 3:23; 5:22; Colossians 1:21; 2 Corinthians 5:17)

Eternity & Eternal Security

Our soul, the essence of our being, was created by God to exist forever. That forever is spent in one of two places: eternally present and in union with God because of His forgiveness and salvation or eternally separated from God because of sin and unbelief. At the moment that our physical body dies, those who are saved are immediately taken to heaven. Those who have rejected God’s gift of salvation will spend eternity separated from God in hell. Because God gives man eternal life through Jesus Christ, the believer is secure in that salvation for eternity. Salvation is maintained by the grace and power of God, not by the self-effort of the Christian. It is the grace and eternal power of God that gives this security.  
(John 3:16; 5:11-13, 10:29; 1 John 2:25; Romans 6:23; Revelation 20:15; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 7:25; 10:10-14; 1 Peter 1:3-5)

Salvation

Salvation is God’s gift of redemption and reconciliation to Himself and is offered freely to all who accept, by faith alone, Jesus Christ as God’s only son and receive Him as Lord and Savior. We can never make up for our sin with self-improvement or good works. It is only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God’s offer of forgiveness that you can be saved from sin’s penalty. Eternal life begins the moment you receive Jesus Christ into your life by faith.  
(Romans 5:1; 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 1:12; 14:6; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26)



# BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

*The Blue Ridge Christian News  
is moving to 152 Summit Ave., Spruce Pine, NC*



Contents

In Every Issue

Life Lessons - p. 25

Your Government - p. 32

BLUE RIDGE CHRISTIAN NEWS

**Publisher/Co-editor** – Brian Barrier  
828-413-0506  
brianb@brcnews.com  
**Office Manager/Co-editor** – Cathy Pritchard  
828-765-6800  
cathyp@brcnews.com  
**Sales:**  
Brian Barrier  
828-413-0506  
brianb@brcnews.com  
**Church Directory:**  
Brian Barrier  
828-765-6800  
brianb@brcnews.com

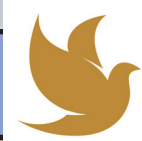
**Distribution:**  
Deborah Slagle  
Doug Braswell  
Amanda Silver  
Ashley Hoilman  
Albert Kaylor  
**Graphic Design / Layout**  
Lynn Elliott  
lynny@brcnews.com  
**Blue Ridge Christian News**  
152 Summit Ave.  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
Office – 828-765-6800

“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



Visit Us Online At: [www.brcnews.com](http://www.brcnews.com)



Thank You For Supporting Our Advertisers!

Serving: Avery - Burke - Madison - McDowell - Mitchell - Yancey Counties

ADVERTISER CLASSIFICATIONS

<b>APPLIANCES</b> Jonathan's Used Appliances (39)	Plumtree Presbyterian (4) Spruce Pine United Methodist (4) The Rock Church (4) The Bridge (4) West Burnsville Baptist (4)	<b>FUNERAL SERVICE</b> Beam Funeral Service (21) Heritage Funeral Home (8) McCain Funeral/Cremations (9) Sossoman's Funeral Home (13)	<b>INSURANCE</b> eBen Insurance (5) Custom Benefit Solutions (7) Fortner Insurance (17) Jeff Kincaid Insurance (4) Life Store Insurance (21) McDowell Farm Bureau (18, 27) Miller Insurance Group (11) Mitchell Co. Farm Bureau (31) Premier Insurance (12) State Farm Insurance (9) The Medical Lady (6)	Chick-fil-a (10) DT's (9) Western Sizzlin (22)
<b>AUTOMOBILES - Dealers</b> Marion Chrysler Dodge (27) Spruce Pine Chevrolet (23)	<b>CHIROPRACTIC</b> Cruz Chiropractic (22)	<b>FURNITURE</b> Buck Stove (25) L&L Furniture (30)	McDowell Farm Bureau (18, 27) Miller Insurance Group (11) Mitchell Co. Farm Bureau (31) Premier Insurance (12) State Farm Insurance (9) The Medical Lady (6)	<b>RETAIL</b> Grassy Creek Clothing (30) Mountain Time on Main (16)
<b>AUTOMOBILES - Repair/Supply</b> John's Precision Auto Body (21)	<b>COLLEGE</b> McDowell College (14)	<b>GAS SERVICE</b> Cornerstone Gas Service (16)	<b>PAWN SHOP</b> Mountaineer Pawn (39)	<b>REHABILITATION/NURSING</b> Brian Center (6)
<b>AUTOMOBILES - Tires</b> Buff Tire & Service (21) McCabe Tire & Service (34) Spruce Pine Tire (12)	<b>CPA</b> Jamie Miller (23)	<b>HARDWARE</b> Griffith's Store (15) Three Nails Hardware (10)	<b>PLUMBING/HEATING</b> Burleson Plumbing Heating (21) Benjamin Franklin Plumbing (12)	<b>SEWING SUPPLIES</b> Bill's Sewing (29)
<b>BOOKKEEPING</b> DM Bookkeeping (10)	<b>DSS</b> McDowell DSS (8) Mitchell DSS (13)	<b>HEALTH CARE</b> Carolina Home Care (20) Faith Family Health (9)	<b>RADIO STATION</b> WSVM (25)	<b>STORAGE</b> DR Storage (37)
<b>CHURCHES</b> Bear Creek Baptist (4) Berry Chapel Baptist (4) Burkemont Baptist (4) Bridge Worship Center Church (4) Faith Fellowship (4) First Baptist Spruce Pine (4) Grassy Creek Baptist (4) Landis Orthodox Presbyterian (4) Morganton Seventh day Adventist (4) Newland Christian Church (4) Pine Branch Baptist (4) Pleasant Hill Baptist Church (4)	<b>EVENTS</b> Billy Graham (40) Catawba River Baptist Assoc. (29) Christian Perspective Representatives (29) Freedom Life (39) Yancey Baptist Assoc. (14) Yancey Senior Center (22)	<b>HOSPICE</b> Hospice of Rutherfordton (20) Hospice of Blue the Ridge (17) Compassionate Care of Western North Carolina (18)	<b>REALTORS</b> Whitson Realty (15)	<b>TREE SERVICE</b> Ray's Tree Service (24)
	<b>FINANCIAL PLANNING</b> Retirement Resource Management (33)	<b>HOUSING</b> Clayton Homes (19)	<b>RESTAURANTS</b> Abele's (26) Appalachian Java (33) Bantam Chef (20) Bubba's Good Eats (13)	





## Church Directory

### The Rock Church

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

**Pastor - Micah Narlock**

Sunday Morning – 10 AM  
Sunday Night – 6:30 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

Disciple Life 9:45 AM  
Sunday Worship 10:55AM  
GCBC Kids 5:30 PM  
Wednesday Service 7:00 PM  
Youth 7:00 PM  
"That the world may know Christ"

### Morganton Seventh-day Adventist Church

2187 Jamestown Road  
Morganton, NC  
828-584-8212

**Pastor Steve Bietz**

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**  
**Rev. Tony Lominac -**  
**Associate Pastor**

Sunday School - 10:00am  
Worship -11:00am  
Sunday Evening - 6:00pm  
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

### 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 6:00 pm

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

### 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

"A Local Congregation of Christ's Church"

### Burkemont Baptist Church

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

**Sr. Pastor - Dr. Luke Lane**

Sunday Services  
8:30a - Early Worship  
9:45a - Sunday School  
11:00a - Worship  
Wednesday Services  
6:30p - Adult Choir & Orches-  
tra, Adult Bible Study, Youth  
Discipleship, Preschool &  
Children's TeamKid

### Mount Carmel Baptist Church

195 Gouges Creek Rd.  
Spruce Pine NC 28777

John 3:16 says that YOU are  
loved!

Find out why at  
www.mcfamilyforchrist.org

Sunday School - 10am  
Sunday Worship – 11am and 6pm  
Mid-week Service - Wednesdays  
at 6:30pm

"A Family Focused On Christ"

### 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!*

### 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

A Bible-believing Fellowship  
Loving God and Loving People

### 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!

### Spruce Pine United Methodist Church

11090 Hwy. 226 South  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
sprucepineumc@gmail.com  
828-765-7446

**Pastor Richard Schilling**

Sunday Worship - 9:00am  
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

### Bear Creek Baptist Church

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

**Reverend Bruce Cannon**

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

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

### Landis Orthodox Presbyterian Church

4975 US 221  
Marion NC 28972  
(828)-756-7470  
www.landischurch.org

**Elder Mike Cloy**  
opc@mikecloy@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*



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

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



The Sufficiency of Christ

By Toby Crowder  
Mitchell County

2 Cor 3:5 “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God;”

The phone call caught me totally off guard. “Yes, we have a check here that we need for you to come by and pick up.” As a young adult, I couldn’t possibly understand what the business owner meant. He informed me that my personal check had been returned for non-sufficient funds and that I needed to come to the business to make amends and pay the debt. It had been a simple (but expensive) oversight, and that experience taught me a very valuable lesson as a young husband. Even though more than twenty-five years have passed since then, and I do not remember what I purchased, one memory does stand clear... the returned check with the red ink that declared that I had “Non-sufficient Funds.” The word sufficient is an interesting one, and you will find it used over a dozen times in Scripture, and sufficiency is used three times. It conveys the image of having “as much as is needed” or more precisely “sufficient in ability.”



In our text, Paul was writing to the Corinthian church and in 2 Cor 2:14, he begins to thank God for the triumph that they have in Christ and that thought carries over into chapter three as he discusses the ministry of the New Covenant. It is in this context that Paul makes a tremendous statement of truth about the sufficiency of God. He is letting these believers know that Christ is “enough” and their faith in God was “enough.” Isn’t it an encouraging thought to know on the authority of Scripture that in a world destitute of so many things, that we in Him we have “enough?”

In the previous chapter, Paul has put forth the question in v.16, “...And who is sufficient for these things?” We can declare boldly along with Paul, that our sufficiency is in Him! To the Christian, He is sufficient. To the unsaved, He is sufficient for salvation. He is never lacking in having “as much as is needed.” Jesus Himself asserted this to be true in John 14:6 when He declared: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father; but by me.” Peter also declared this on the day of Pentecost as we read in Acts 4:12 “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” There is nothing else that will avail men for salvation... for He alone is sufficient!

Not only is He sufficient for salvation, but to the Christian, He is sufficient for our service. Paul was writing to the church here at Corinth and had a ministry there for Christ, they had work to do. Paul tells them in 3:2 “Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men:” and reminds them of this. For the disciple of Christ, we have a demanding job as we begin another New Year, yet it is a joy to be reminded that our sufficiency is not found in ourselves... it is found in Him! Our sufficiency as ministers of the Gospel doesn’t lie in our background, personality, education, or place of service. We can have a great facility, a great congregation, great ministries, and a strong budget, but we can never look to those things for sufficiency. Our sufficiency is in Christ and His finished work on Calvary!

Paul not only reminds this church that God is sufficient for salvation and service; later in the Epistle, he makes a statement that has strengthened and encouraged Christians in every situation imaginable. In 2 Cor 12:9a, Paul announces: “And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness...” Notice that this simple verse reminds us that God's grace IS sufficient for our every need. It is inexhaustible and will never diminish with time.

As we enter a New Year, may I encourage you to look to Jesus Christ for your sufficiency in salvation, in service, and His strengthening grace? We do not have to wonder, hope, or dream of having “enough”, but we can boldly declare with the apostle Paul that His grace is enough! May God bless you and yours richly in the New Year!

Toby Crowder serves as Pastor of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in Spruce Pine. He and his wife Leslie have been married for 28 years and have two daughters, Emilee, and Katy. He can be contacted via the church's website MCfamily-forChrist.org or mtcarmelsprucepine@gmail.com

and sinned no more.”

— Here’s a Zacchaeus in Luke 19, who used to rip people off on their taxes, but now he’s no longer doing it, and he’s given the money back to the people he stole from.

— Here’s an Apostle Paul, who used to hate and persecute Christians, but now he LOVES them!

— Here’s a John Newton, who used to buy and sell human beings as a slave trader, but then he met Jesus and became a pastor and writer of the song “Amazing Grace” with a counseling ministry through letter writing with people all over England.

— Here’s a Chuck Colson, who lied and stole and did whatever he could to make President Nixon a success, but then he repented and put his faith in Christ and began a prison ministry to people who were in prison like he had been!

We do not doubt that these people really met Jesus. They once walked in un-righteousness, but now they’re walking in righteousness. They were breaking His commandments, now they’re keeping His commandments. Their lives were changed. They aren’t doing what they did before. They were going one way, and now they’re going a different way. So we know they were saved.

What about YOU? Is your life characterized by KEEPING His commandments, or BREAKING His commandments? Are you walking in sin, or are you walking in righteousness? Has your life been changed by Jesus, or has it not? Your LIFE is the best indicator of whether you are really a Christian or not. Show me one person who says, “I can’t remember the exact date I was saved,” but they are serving Jesus today; and show me another person who says, “Oh yeah I was saved and baptized on July 27, 1968!” but they are living in sin today, and I will have much more confidence that the FIRST person was saved than that the second person was! The way you are living your life RIGHT NOW is a better indicator of whether you are really a genuine Christian than anything that supposedly happened in your past. What assurance does your obedience to Jesus, and the holiness of your LIFE today give about your salvation?

Now I know many will say, “I was saved as a child, so I didn’t have that ‘big change’ like some people did.” That is legitimate. And thank GOD you didn’t get into a life of sin. But you can still evaluate: is your life different than it WOULD have been if you had not been saved? Is your life different from how other people are living who have not been saved? Or is your life just the same as all the lost people around you? Is there any difference? If there’s no difference, you do not have Jesus. When someone really meets Jesus, He “fixes” them; He saves them; He changes them.

Now, this doesn’t mean that you will be perfect as a Christian. But it means you care enough to TRY! Ken Keithley of the Southeastern Baptist Seminary wrote: “The genuinely saved person hunger and thirsts for righteousness, even when he is struggling with temptation or even stumbles into sin. In fact, I am not overly concerned with the destiny of those who struggle nearly as much as I am about those who do not care enough to struggle. Indifference is more of a red flag than a weakness. The absence of a desire for the things of God clearly indicates a serious spiritual problem, and a continued indifference can possibly mean that a person confessing faith has never been genuinely converted.” (‘A critique of Perseverance of the Saints,’ in “Calvinism, A Biblical and Theological Critique” ed. by Allen and Lemke, p. 209)

Some people may say: “Pastor, you are making me uneasy; you are making me doubt my salvation.” Listen: according to I John, there are a lot of people who quite honestly, SHOULD be worried about their salvation! Sure, they’ve “been to church,” and “made a decision,” or “got baptized,” but they have never stopped sinning, and they are not living anything like the way Jesus commanded His followers to live — and worse, they don’t CARE to! If that’s the way you’re living, then you have every reason to doubt whether you were ever really saved.

But if you can look at your life honestly, and say, “You know, I am not perfect, but with God’s help I am trying not to sin” — then you have every reason to be comforted and have the assurance of your salvation.

There are several other tests of one’s salvation in the Book of I John:

- the test of your LOVE for the people of God (3:14, 4:7-8);
- the test of your SPIRIT (Is the Holy Spirit in you? (3:24, 4:13);
- and the test of your DOCTRINE: do you hold to the Biblical faith (4:2, 6, 14)?

But perhaps none of these tests is stronger than this one: what does the test of your LIFE say about whether you are genuinely saved?

“Test yourself to see whether you are in the faith.” (II Cor. 12:5)

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.



Marsha, Gale, Amy, Rhonda, Jennifer

828-765-3499  
www.ebenbenefits.com

MEDICARE

OPEN ENROLLMENT

OCT. 15 - DEC. 7

HEALTH INSURANCE

OPEN ENROLLMENT

Nov. 1 - Jan. 15

Here at eBen our family is your family. Our agents are here to learn more about your unique needs. We can create personalized policies to individuals including Medicare, and individual health insurance. We value long term relationships and are here when you need us. Our agents are very passionate about helping clients and will work with you one on one to create a personalized plan to ensure that you are receiving the best coverage based on your specific needs.



# The Orchard at Altapass

## Two-Year Pavilion Project Completed

By Kate Groff  
Mitchell County



The Orchard at Altapass is pleased to announce the renovation of the Olin Hefner Pavilion is completed after planning and implementing the “Bringing Back the Music” two-year project. Donor support and a grant from The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina–Mitchell County helped build a ramp connecting the red barn to the pavilion. Another from the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area added 12’ of roofed space. A vinyl enclosure system was installed on three sides last May. And thanks to an anonymous donor, six glass garage doors were positioned along the back this month, finishing the much-anticipated project.

“The Orchard is a non-profit organization. Despite a few bumps in the road, we garnered enough support to finish on time. We are so thankful—to individual donations and grants from The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina in Mitchell County and the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area,” said executive director Beth Hilton. “The addition of the glass doors from a friend of the Orchard completed the project, and we hope to open up the new facility to many more events and groups in the future.”



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

## Need A Medicare Plan?

Over 30 Years of Experience  
Serving Medicare Clients Since 1989



Just Call:

**The Medical Insurance Lady, Inc.**  
**Sumra Salame, Licensed Insurance Agent**

### Medicare Advantage Plans Medicare Prescription Plans and Medicare Supplement Plans

Part C, Part D and Medigap Explained  
Easy to Understand Information  
Compare Different Company's Plans and Prices

Call Today:  
**1-800-434-1677**

**If You Are  
Retiring Soon?  
Recently Moved?  
New To Medicare?**

Thank you to my clients for the confidence and trust you placed in me. I'm deeply honored and humbled by it and will continue to service you all year. Please call me if you have questions or concerns. I'm old school and believe in service after the sale.

We do not offer every plan available in your area. Any information we provide is limited to those plans we do offer in your area. Please contact Medicare.gov or 1-800-MEDICARE to get information on all of your options.

## The Brian Center team wants to be a resource to the community.

***It's our goal to get community members  
back home as quickly as possible!***

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

### Advanced Therapy Modalities

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

***Come take a tour and reserve your private room today!***



**WE ARE  
HERE FOR  
YOU.**



218 Laurel Creek Ct. • Spruce Pine, NC 28777 • Phone: 828-765-7312 • Fax: 828-765-7295



# Seventh Day Adventist Burnsville

## The New Resolution!

By Art Dmytriyev  
*Yancey County*

The brand New Year 2023 has just begun, and many people, hopefully, have started with their New Year resolutions. Exercise program, new fancy diet, education, new relationships, moving to a new place, building project, bucket list, etc... What is your New Year resolution? Is there any resolution at all? Perhaps, the New Year is not a holiday you care for, or resolutions are not your lifestyle. Whatever it is, let me share what you could do this coming year.

If you open the Bible, you can find a passage where Jesus says that He creates everything new. (Revelation 21:5). What does it include? It includes absolutely everything. He said: *“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also.”* (John 14:1-3) He is resolving not just for a certain period but for Eternity; not just for a certain group of people but for everyone who accepts it! His Eternal Resolution is all-inclusive: everyone is invited. As in that parable of the great supper (Luke 14:15-24), everyone got an invitation, but the problem is that no one was willing to come (verse 24). Many are called but a few have chosen to come.

The story goes, that once upon a time, on a Christmas break someone was trying to do something nice for the students of a seminary. They purchased 100 tickets and a hotel reservation to Hawaii. All that the students should do is come and claim the tickets. Guess how many students came? Out of 600 seminarians, only 8 (eight) came to claim the tickets and 2 (two) actually went on that trip! What does it tell you? There are a lot, who can get called, but only a few choose to come. What does it have to do with a New Year resolution? It tells that Jesus Christ went to prepare a place for you and me, and He is making an Eternal resolution. He invited us to come to His Banquet. Are we willing to come? The invitation is a straightforward one: “*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*”(Matthew 11:28–30 KJV). Christ wants you and me to cooperate with Him on His Resolution! Let me suggest that this New Year's resolution will be to accept the Lord's invitation and to work on preparing ourselves for the Heavenly Banquet. There is still room. Why don't we begin this process today, and every following year, it will continually be our resolution? Imagine spending all your never-ending life with Jesus and everyone who chose to be in the Kingdom of God!

These famous Bible verses mention the principle that God operates: *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."* (John 3:16-17 KJV).

Dear reader, what is your decision regarding your salvation today? Would you like to accept the suggestion to cooperate with Christ and His angels to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12). If yes, then please let God know this today as you come to Him in prayer! May the Lord Bless You! Happy New Year!

*Pr. Art Dmytriyeu is originally from Siberia. He has traveled the world in Evangelism and pastoral ministry. He serves as a pastor in North Carolina, holds a Master of Divinity degree, and is currently a Doctor of Ministry candidate. More information at: <https://burnsvillenc.adventistchurch.org/pastors-blog>*



By Cody McCain  
*Burke County*

*“Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.’”* Matthew 16:24 (New Living Translation)



The term “discipleship” has almost become an archaic term in the church, particularly the church here in the United States. We’ve often time replaced the word disciple with terms such as “church member,” “parishioner,” “covenant partners,” etc. But the true essence of Christianity is not just “joining an organization” but living as radical disciples of Jesus Christ. Disciple literally means “disciplined one,” something we don’t want to truly address in our teachings. We talk much about personal advancement, achievement, wealth, and overall “prosperity” but what about discipleship? What is Jesus truly looking for from those who profess His name in this hour? About two years ago I had a dream one night that I was in a church service and suddenly someone yelled out, “come outside!” I immediately ran to the outside of the church and saw in the distance a huge water tower – larger than any I’d ever seen – that was rotating at an extremely high rate of speed. Suddenly, the water tower collapsed and a huge wall of water – almost like a tsunami – began to race toward the area I was standing. I braced for the impact of this deluge and it indeed hit the area I was standing, yet I was not knocked down but continued to stand. The water ran through the entire church, moving everything in its path and even filling up the baptistry. The dream then shifted, and I beheld a line of hundreds possibly thousands of individuals that went from the inside of the church, around the building, and into the distance. I walked back inside the church and these individuals were lined up, confessing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, being baptized, and going out to serve. There were so many people, I had to get into the baptistry and assist with the baptisms! When I woke up the Holy Spirit began to minister to me saying: “The spinning water tower is symbolic of the prayers of the righteous causing a stirring of the reservoirs of Heaven. Its collapse is the release of my Word and Spirit that comes to cleanse the Body of Christ and turn many from their transgressions. It will disrupt ‘church as usual’ and bring her back to a true worship and devotion of Me! Because of this cleansing, salvation and redemption would flow THROUGH my Body to reach the lost and make disciples that will continue the spread of my eternal Word!” Yes, it is the heart of God to refocus the church to discipleship! You may ask, “What does discipleship look like?” The answer lies in the words Jesus spoke to his disciples in the above verse; but to understand Matthew 16:24, we’ll need to look at the preceding verses (particularly verses 22 and 23).

To give a summary of the occasion of verses 22 and 23, Jesus was preparing His disciples for His ordained trip to Jerusalem to suffer, die, and be raised again on the third day. Peter – who had just confessed His revelation of Jesus as the Messiah in verse 16 – came under the influence of the kingdom of darkness and began to rebuke Jesus, saying, “This cannot happen to you!” Jesus’ response: “*Get behind me Satan, you are a stumbling block to me, for you don’t have in mind the things of God but the things of man!*” This begs the question, what are the “things of men” that Jesus mentioned? The New Revised Standard Version of this text translates it this way: “...for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.” The “setting of the mind” is a Greek verb *phroneō* which means: “to have understanding” or “to side with one.” Peter being a Jew – and familiar with teachings from the Law and the Prophets – already had in mind the way the Messiah would set up His Messianic rule on the earth! I’m sure Peter heard the passage from Isaiah 9:7 at some point which stated, “*He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice*

*continued on page 9*

# Business Owners

## Has the Cost of Health Insurance Got You Down?

## Are Your Employees Frustrated with Their Costs?

## Ready to cut the Health Care Red Tape?



*We are a local company of nationally recognized experts*

***Contact me today – I can help!***

Phone: **(828) 413-3581**

Email: [cristy@custombenefits.work](mailto:cristy@custombenefits.work)

Website: [www.custombenefits.work](http://www.custombenefits.work)





Free And Guaranteed

By Christopher L. Scott  
Moses Lake, Washington

When I was 15 years old I tried to spend as much time as possible at the golf course. I played golf with a lot of older men who shared their wisdom with me. I distinctly remember one man telling me to beware of two words: “free” and “guaranteed.” He told me: “Christopher, remember these two things in life: One, nothing in life is free. Two, nothing in life is guaranteed.”

He continued and said that when you hear someone say that something is “free” there will always be a price to pay later on. There might be a request for your contact information, and time involved to get the free thing - or the free thing might only be part of what you want, so you have to pay for the other half.

He also explained that if something is guaranteed there’s usually a catch. Often a guarantee is only good for a limited time, or you have to have the receipt, or the guarantee could be voided based on specific conditions.

That advice came to my mind as I read Paul’s introduction to his letter to the believers in the city of Corinth, *“I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that in everything you were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any gift, awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord”* (1 Corinthians 1:4-9, NASB).

In Paul’s introduction, he starts with his expression of thanks. He gives thanks because God’s gift of salvation had been given to these believers in Corinth. *“the grace of God was given to you in Christ”* (1 Cor 1:4b). This was a guarantee for them, *“our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end”* (1 Cor 7:7b-8a). Notice the word “confirm” that Paul uses. It means a guarantee. Paul told the Corinthians that they had God’s guarantee that they would be in Christ’s presence at His future return to the earth. The reason for this guarantee is stated in the next verse, *“God is faithful”* (1 Cor 1:9a).

That man I was playing golf with gave me good advice. Nothing is free and there are no guarantees. With one exception: when we place our faith in God for salvation it is a free gift offered to us. *“The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 6:23b). This free gift of eternal life guarantees our place in heaven forever (Romans 8:31-39). We know that God is faithful. His offer of salvation is free and it’s guaranteed.

Christopher L. Scott, a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary, is a pastor and freelance writer. Learn more about his writing ministry at [ChristopherLynnScott.com](http://ChristopherLynnScott.com).



New Year's Schedule

By Steve Bietz  
Burke County

The song starts with layers of clock noises. The clocks were all recorded separately at an antique store and then the band blended them together. The lyrics were written by the band's co-founder, English musician singer-songwriter, and composer, Roger Waters. Even though he was only 28 when he wrote the words to the song entitled "Time" one quickly realizes that the song's topic is our human mortality. The song was released in 1983 on the album by the group Pink Floyd on their most successful album entitled "On The Dark Side Of The Moon." It sold 45 million copies. On The Dark Side Of The Moon is one of the most critically acclaimed records in history. The album was recorded at the fabled Abbey Road Studios.

Here is the chorus to the song, 'Time.' "And you run and you run to catch up with the sun but it's sinking. Racing around to come up behind you again. The sun is the same in the usual way but you're older. Shorter of breath and one day closer to death."

Not one of those songs that makes you whistle while you work is it. However, it has been said that the future is slow, but the past is fast. No getting around it, the song 'Time' makes a fair point. Us mortals, because of sin, have an expiration date. Scripture says that *"the wages of sin is death."* (Romans 6:23) Paul also writes that *"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."* (Romans 3:23) 'All' pretty much covers all of us I think. So we all face getting older and death.

When we think of the great Biblical prophet Moses, we don't automatically think of him as a songwriter. But his words in Psalm 90 in the Bible have sold a lot more copies than the Pink Floyd song 'Time' on the album 'On The Dark Side Of The Moon.'

Moses, like Roger Waters, considered the topic of our mortality in his song. Moses wrote *"We finish our years like a sigh. The days of our lives are 70 years, and if by reason of strength they are 80 years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow."* (Psalm 90:9,10)

But Moses is not just making one of those 'death and taxes' comments. He is making a point. He is reminding us to consider how short life is so that we use time as wisely as possible. Yes, with the New Year comes a list of resolutions. I'm not going to share the statistics of how many resolutions we actually keep... it's a bit depressing. One resolution that we should have at the top of our list is to spend our time wisely, which also means we spend quality time with our Father God.

That we take the time to worship God in church. That we take the time to pray to God each day. We need communion with God more than we deem necessary. I don't know of anything more important than spending time with God. Why don't you and I schedule in God every day in this New Year, 2023?



Steve Bietz, Pastor, Morganton Seventh day Adventist Church.

# Heritage

FUNERAL SERVICE & CREMATORY

*Service with Dedication & Compassion*



**Helping Families & Friends Honor Their Loved One.**

With over 165 years of combined experience serving Burke, Catawba, and Caldwell County families, the owners and staff of Heritage Funeral Service and Crematory are committed to helping families plan a personal and meaningful ceremony that celebrates life, and begins the much-needed healing process.



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

*We are now the new owners of Mackie Funeral Service in Granite Falls, 35 Duke St.*

**1507 E. Main St. | Phone: (828) 874-0411 | Business Hours**  
**Valdese, NC 28690 | Fax: (828) 874-5390 | Mon -Sun: 9am – 5pm**  
**24 Hour Availability**



# Happy New Year



**Hey y'all, we are Steven and Jennifer Painter. We started out as some of those folks who saw a sad story on the news about a child who had been neglected or abused and said, “why did this have to happen? We would have gladly taken that child and loved him/her!” Yet we didn’t make a move to actually BECOME that family because “it was never the right time” or “we don’t know where to start”. But really, when IS it the right time? Answer: now. How do we get started? Answer: just make the call! There are children NOW who need someone to bridge that gap. Contact McDowell DSS to learn more. 828-652-3355.**



# What Does It Mean To Be A Disciple?

continued from page 7

and righteousness from that time on and forever.” However, what Jesus was describing regarding suffering and death looked like a completely different picture of the Messiah that Peter had in mind! Let’s stop for a moment and ask ourselves a question: how often do we do what Peter did? How often do we have our own carnal perspective of the things of God versus a Biblical perspective? Could it be that many times we don’t have a Biblical perspective because we don’t discipline ourselves to study God’s Word and allow Holy Spirit to give us revelation and insight? After all, if Peter would have read Isaiah 53 (another passage concerning the coming Messiah as the “suffering servant”) he would have clearly seen that what Jesus was describing was perfectly in line with what the Messiah would look like! The focus of discipleship cannot be carnal, or “what can I get out of it.” The focus of discipleship must be how we can reveal Christ to others through our submission to Him! In Peter’s mind (along with other Jews of the time), the Messiah was supposed to initiate an earthly kingdom unlike any other (which will happen at the end of this age) yet failing to understand that there is more to “Messiahship” than just being an earthly “hero”! American Christianity has perpetuated a similar mindset: “Serve Jesus so you can be blessed in this life!” Because we fail to have a revelatory understanding of scripture regarding what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, this allows room for disappointment and even deception in the life of a believer! Let’s break down each clause of this verse to get the full understanding of what Jesus was saying!

“If any of you wants to be my follower...”

There is a powerful concept behind this statement which points to one thing: THE POWER OF CHOICE! The word “want” (or “will” in the KJV) is the Greek word the $\lambda\omega$  which literally means: to have in mind, intend, or desire; this word is also in the present active tense which suggests ONGOING or CONTINUAL action. To be a disciple of Jesus Christ we must daily WILL OURSELVES to do so! Our will is that part of our minds that intentionally directs it toward specific thoughts our actions. If we will ourselves to follow Christ, this means intentionally directing our minds toward the thoughts and actions of Christ! This goes well beyond how we “feel” (let’s be honest, we don’t always feel like studying the word, praying, worshiping, attending church, walking in obedience, etc.)! But we choose to will ourselves to follow Christ simply because of who He is (we see His track record in the Word of God!) and our love for Him! After all, He willed Himself to shed His blood for us when he declared, “...yet not my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42)!

“...you must give up your own way...”

Now we are on to the next part of this verse which says, “you must give up your own way” (the King James Version reads, “let him deny himself”). Literally speaking, to “deny one’s self” in this context means to “affirm that one has no acquaintance or connection with someone; to lose sight of one’s self and one’s own interests. Now, this sounds like a hard pill to swallow that we are so accustomed to having things our way or no way! True discipleship means that we lose sight of ourselves (from our own fleshly perspective) and see ourselves the way Christ sees us. It also means that we abandon our own selfish interests and seek to know and understand Christ’s interests! Discipleship leaves no room for doing what pleases our fleshly nature (the part of us that focuses on pleasure, convenience, comfort, materialism, etc.) but challenges us to sow our lives to please the Spirit. Galatians 6:8 affirms this when it says, “Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.” When we deny ourselves for the sake of Christ, we make our lives reflective of His heart and nature! Yet if we choose to be selfish and prioritize “our way” then we will cause our minds to be directed towards thoughts and actions that pertain to self!

“...take up your cross...”

Let’s examine what it truly means to “take up your cross.” In the ancient Roman empire, a commonly used form of execution was crucifixion on a wooden cross. For a criminal to carry a cross meant certain DEATH! In Jesus’ case, the cross was His PURPOSE and ASSIGNMENT. He declared in John 18:37, “To this end I was born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.” He bore witness to the truth through His death on the cross, testifying that He was the Lamb of God, that was to take away the sins of the world! How do we take up a cross and testify to the truth as Jesus did? By understanding what our purpose and assignment is from God! Whatever God has assigned to us will kill us! Whoa, that’s kind of extreme, but the essence of our purpose and assignment is not for our flesh to be glorified but for it to DIE (as we see in the previous section) so that God is glorified! Our purpose and assignment are also designed for someone else’s redemption! Just as Jesus’ assignment of the cross brought about our redemption, what God has assigned to us should follow the same pattern. This should cause us to ask some serious questions: Do I know and understand my purpose and assignment? If I am walking in my purpose and assignment am I walking in it in such a way that God is glorified and the lost are being drawn into a relationship with Christ? If no one is coming into a knowledge of Jesus Christ because of our activities, we really need to evaluate what we’re doing and why we’re doing it!

“...follow me.”

The final portion of this verse presents us with another powerful principle. I love the way the Amplified Version of this text reads when it says, “...follow me [cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly to My example in living, and if need be, in dying also].” The word “follow” in this portion of the verse is the Greek verb akolouth $\epsilon\omega$  which means “to join one as an attendant or to accompany one;” it also means “to side with a party” (as in politics). There are two implications here regarding a disciple of Christ, the first being this: a disciple joins with Christ

continued on page 26



## Faith Family Health

*New primary care for all ages.  
Let our family take care of your family!*



Looking for trustworthy, convenient care? We are now accepting patients of all ages.

We pledge to take time to listen and be attentive to the needs of the patient. We will offer same-day appointments most days, however, subject to limited availability.

Local, personable care from the youngest patient to the youngest at heart! We provide primary care needs including wellness, disease management and minor acute care. We offer affordable cash pay options for uninsured, competitive Commercial License physical exam rates, as well as try to accommodate most acute needs on the day of contact.


Accepting all major insurances, Medicare, Medicaid.

**Call 828-536-5125 for an appointment.**



PROVIDERS: Karen B. Peterson [ FNP-C ]  
Misty Peterson Dotts [ FNP-C ]

14 Academy St. Burnsville, NC 28714 • Hours: 8:30 AM - 5 PM • Monday-Friday  
**Office - 828-536-5125**



**DT'S BLUE RIDGE JAVA  
COFFEE SHOP & CAFE'**

**Breakfast • Lunch**

**828-766-8008**

**169 Locust St. (Lower St.)  
Spruce Pine, NC**

Daily: 7:00am - 5:00pm  
Closed Sunday  
Go to Church

**Deli Sandwiches  
Hamburgers  
Hot Dogs  
Soup & Salad  
Ice Cream  
Pastries**

**Don't Forget  
Gift Cards!**



**New, low auto rates. Same good neighbor.**

Here's the deal, MORGANTON.  
State Farm® has new, lower auto rates, so you can save more cash and get local service that's always the real deal. Call me today for a quote.

**Rick Franklin, Agent**  
507 A Burkemont Avenue  
Morganton, NC 28655  
Bus: 828-437-6285  
rickfranklin.bwmq@statefarm.com

Like a good neighbor,  
State Farm is there®





**McCain Funeral Home & Cremations, LLC**

220 Avery Avenue  
Morganton, NC 28655  
office: (828)-608-0873  
fax: (828)-608-0874  
[www.mccainfuneralhome.com](http://www.mccainfuneralhome.com)





Romans 1:16-17

By Terry Cheek  
McDowell County



Paul writes in his letter to the Roman church some of the most intense doctrines and theology in all of God's word. Among them, we find the following from chapter one, verses sixteen and seventeen. *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith.”*<sup>1</sup> We understand these verses to be among the many which teach the doctrine of justification. Will you join me for a deeper understanding of these verses and what they reveal about justification?

Paul opens with what I consider a very unusual statement. *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ”* Why would Paul feel it necessary to open with this? If you have followed this series, you know that in previous articles, I discussed how Paul and all of the Church faced persecution from the Roman government, pontifical Jews, and followers of antagonistic religions. Included in this persecution was their attempt to disgrace Paul, Church leaders, and ultimately the gospel. If successful, the consequence would make Christians ashamed of the gospel. Therefore, silencing the preaching, teaching, and witness of its power. I feel it was important for Paul to encourage the Church, then and now, by letting them know he was not ashamed of the gospel. His firm footing of the gospel supplied a foundation for his doctrine of justification.

*“for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth”* power is the noun that sets justification in motion. Power translates the Greek word dunamos from which we also get our word dynamite. The gospel is the dynamite of God's word. It is that powerful. We often give a very flippant Amen to this statement when we should be zealous toward the gospel every time we open our Bible, at home, at church, in public, and in private. Martin Luther had this saying regarding God's word. <sup>2</sup>*“Luther said that in times past, people would run to the ends of the world had they known of a place where they could hear God speak. Now that we hear and read God’s Word every day, this does not happen. We hear the gospel in our homes, where fathers, mothers, and children sing and speak of it. The preacher speaks of it in the parish church. We ought to lift our hands and rejoice that we have been given the honor of hearing God speak to us through His Word. People say, “There is preaching every day, often many times every day so that we soon grow weary of it. What do we get out of it? I go to church, but I don’t get much out of it.” Yet, this power isn’t just sitting there for anyone. It is composed by God the Holy Spirit through the hands and mouths of man only for those who believe. God's grace opens our hearts for us to believe. Only then does the power (dunamos) of the gospel reveal itself. We should glorify God through our lives every day because of the gospel.*

Paul clarifies the order of God's dispersing of the gospel. First, it was given to his chosen race, the Jew, then to the Greek (Gentile). This is not a prophecy of things to come. It is a description of what is taking place at that time. The gospel was being shared with everyone. There is no restriction. God uses his elect to spread the gospel, then and now. The understanding that God would use the saved sinner as a vessel worthy to possess, read and share his written word is beyond humbling.

Paul continues to write. *“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.”* From the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed. It is fitting

to interject here that these two verses opened Martin Luther’s eyes and heart as he prepared to preach and teach notes on Romans. Luther arrived at this point and understood that the Pope, Priesthood, or the Roman church provided no hope for the soul's salvation. Salvation came only through God's righteousness, grace, and faith in Jesus Christ. “He (Luther) glanced at a manuscript from Augustine and found where Augustine said that the righteousness here is not God’s righteousness but that which He provides for people who do not have any righteousness. It is the righteousness He makes available by grace to all who believe. Luther called it “alien righteousness.” This righteousness is not our own; it is Jesus’ righteousness.”<sup>2</sup> The phrase “*faith to faith*” seems to have many thoughts. I agree with the school of thought of this phrase paralleling “*everyone who believeth*” from the previous verse. Faith that one has and shares through the gospel is multiplied by God to others for their belief in Christ as Lord and Savior. This phrase introduces the final and anchoring phrase of these two verses, “as it is written, the just shall live by faith.” Paul tells us faith isn’t new to mankind or the growing Church. *“Abraham, the father of the faithful, believed, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness* (Rom. 4:3), *just as every person’s genuine faith, before and after Abraham, has been reckoned to him as righteousness* (see Heb. 11:4-40).”<sup>3</sup> John MacArthur. The just, a.k.a. justified, are the redeemed in Christ. I remember an acronym for justified from years ago, and I’ll bet many of you have heard it too. It goes like this, just as if I’d never sinned. Notice with me Habakkuk 2: 1-4, *“I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reprov’d. And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end, it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.”* <sup>1</sup> Living by faith means exactly what is written. A believer is committed to being a vessel justified for God's righteousness to work through. When the believer understands this, we immediately realize this is something beyond our ability to fulfill. Therefore, we repent daily and live humbly before the Lord, trusting in Jesus to be the author and finisher of our faith. There is much more to be written about this passage, but I submit this rambling to the Lord for his application to your heart and mind.

Until we meet again, in print or person, may God bless you is my prayer!

<sup>3</sup>MacArthur, John. Romans 1-16 MacArthur New Testament Commentary Two Volume Set (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.  
<sup>2</sup>Sproul, R.C. Romans: An Expositional Commentary (p. 17). Ligonier Ministries. Kindle Edition.  
<sup>1</sup> Nelson, Thomas. The Holy Bible, King James Study Bible (KJV) (Kindle Locations 149132-149137). Thomas Nelson. Kindle Edition.

*Terry Cheek is the founder and broadcaster of The Inspiring Word media ministry. He and Lori are members of Blue Ridge Church of Marion N.C. You can contact Terry by email at theinspiringword@gmail.com.*



**D.M. Reliable Bookkeeping** is a professional book-keeping service that was established in 2014 with the goal of providing fast, reliable service to business owners who need help getting their books in order for tax filing season. With over 5 years of experience in bookkeeping, our team can get your records up-to-date quickly and efficiently so you can focus on what you do best: running your business!

**Deborah@dmreliablebookkeeping.com • 828-537-2220**



**THREE NAILS HARDWARE**

110 Estatoa Ave. • Newland, NC • 828-733-0408

*“Where nails and seeds are still sold by the pound, and thank-you’s are given by the bushel.”*

CASE, CASE, CASE, CASE XX, TESTED XX, XX, and various other marks used herein are registered trademarks of W.R. Case & Sons Cutlery Company.

**I Buy Vehicles**

**828-413-0506 or**

**Christiancarbuyer@gmail.com**



**Chick-fil-A**

**MORGANTON, NC**

1006 Burkemont Avenue • Morganton, NC 28655 • (828) 439-2373





God's Final Word

By John McCoury  
Roan Mountain, Tennessee

In the past, God spoke to our people through the prophets. He spoke many times. He spoke in different ways. But in these last days, he has spoken to us through his Son. He is the one whom God appointed to receive all things.

God made everything through him. Hebrews 1:1-2 When you open the Old Testament you are reading the Word of God spoken to the fathers by the prophets. I hope you understand and value the Old Testament. What a marvelous book! How many ways God spoke in that book — in dreams, in visions, in sudden appearances. He spoke in that wonderful act of inspiration, that nobody fully understands, where somebody speaking the words that come to his mind and heart is uttering the words of God. And it comes to us in many different forms, as the writer of Hebrews says. You open Genesis and you have first the very straightforward, but majestic and moving tale of creation, of the fall, and the flood. This is followed by the simple narrative of the lives of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Then the story of Moses and the Exodus, and the thundering of the Law, coming at last to the sweet singing of the Psalmist, the homespun wisdom of Proverbs, and the delicate tenderness of the Song of Solomon. Then the rest of the Old Testament is filled with the exalted visions of the prophets, these mighty men who spoke to times of crisis in the nation and yet lifted their eyes and saw far beyond the horizons of time to great events that God was going to bring into being when the seasons rolled around. Yet, when you finish the book, and you have heard all the matchless oratory of the prophets, you still realize that God's voice has not answered the deep questions of the human heart. It is only when you open the Gospels and begin to read of Jesus, who he was, what he did, where he went, what he said, how he acted, how he lived, and the way he handled situations, that all the utterance of the prophets begins to merge into one great voice and we get God's final word to humankind.

In Montana is what is called, The Three Forks of the Missouri River, the place where three rivers flow together to form the Missouri. They rise in the mountains in the western part of Montana and they form this great river, the Missouri, that flows on down through Montana and then into North Dakota, South Dakota, through Missouri, and joins the Mississippi along with the Ohio. Altogether this forms the greatest river system and drainage network that the world knows. All these rivers drain out of hills and valleys and mountain ranges that are far separated from one another. I always think of that when I think of the way the Old Testament has flowed together to form the one great voice that speaks in the New. All the various themes that God introduces to humankind in the Old Testament are brought together in the voice of Jesus. He is God's final word to man, greater than the prophets, fulfilling everything they have written.

Lord Jesus, you are God's final word. I thank you that I can see how the entire story of the Old Testament finds its fulfillment in you. Are we missing the grandeur of the world's greatest epic through neglect of either the Old or New Testaments? Is the Person at the epicenter of it all central in our personal lives?

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



Is Human Goodness the Answer to what Ails America?

By Dennis Love  
McDowell County



It would be interesting to know how many Americans will resolve to live better in 2023. Americans, for the most part, are good people and they want to strive to be better people. As Christians, we support morality. As Christians, we strive to be better people. We're certainly not in favor of immortality. We despise wickedness and hate evil. However, we must understand that God's divine favor cannot be earned by human "goodness." Even our goodness falls way short of God's demands. Jesus said in Matthew 5:20, *"For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of Heaven."* The scribes and the Pharisees were considered the best of the best people in that day, but their goodness was not the answer for the ails of Israel. That is why the best of human good works are likened to *"filthy rags"* in Isaiah 64:6.

Being moral or good was never the message of the Old Testament. It was never the message of Jesus. It is not the message of the New Testament. It has never been God's message to the world. Good people die every day without hope. Almost 158,000 people die every day without Jesus. (That number should motivate and move us as believers into action!) And the vast majority of this great number are good people.

Remember this: It was people who considered themselves highly moral, good and religious who killed Americans by flying planes into our buildings. It is people who consider themselves highly moral, good, and religious who are right now plotting evil ways to kill Americans. It was people who thought of themselves as being highly moral, good, and deeply religious who conspired with the Romans to crucify Jesus. It was the moral and the immoral who schemed together to kill Him, and in His death, He provided salvation they both desperately needed.

So, human goodness is not the answer to what ails America or even this world. Being more moral is not the answer to what ails America or even this world. Higher moral standards alone will never earn God's blessing on our country or any other country. The answer to what ails America, and the world is the GOSPEL. And our calling as individual believers and the church is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with all nations regardless of what unbelievers in our nation do.

The answer to the ails of America is for God's people to get back to sharing the Gospel with other people. If we would resolve to share the Gospel in 2023, I believe He would once again bestow upon this great nation His blessing. May each of us resolve to be a witness right in our county, our state, our country, and the nations just as He commands us in Acts 1:8. *"But you shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and you shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

Dr. Dennis Love is the Associational Missions Strategist for the Blue Ridge Baptist Association in McDowell County. Dr. Love has been in full-time ministry work for 31 years. He and his wife Vicki have been married for almost 42 years, and they have lived in Marion for almost 8 years. They have two sons, four grandchildren and two step-grandchildren. He can be reached via email at: [dlovebrba@yahoo.com](mailto:dlovebrba@yahoo.com)

Happy New Year

Check out our new Website-[www.brcnews.com](http://www.brcnews.com)  
And find us on Facebook



**Miller**  
**Insurance Group, Inc.**  
**AUTO•HOME•BUSINESS•LIFE**

(828) 765-1711

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

*"INSURANCE is the most IMPORTANT thing  
a person has because it protects him against  
the loss of everything he has in the world."*  
-H.O. Hirt, ERIE Founder



Erie  
Insurance®

7548A Hwy 19E, Spruce Pine, NC • [www.miller-insurance-group.com](http://www.miller-insurance-group.com)



Premier  
INSURANCE SERVICES, INC.

Providing you knowledgeable assistance  
and high quality service.



Contact one of our  
knowledgeable  
agents today

Proudly serving the great citizens of Western NC  
for 25 years with Health,  
Employer Group Health Plans, Medicare Plans, Life,  
Annuities, 401K Transfers and Long Term Care Coverage  
Now also offering Auto, Home, RV & Commercial Coverages

275 North Main Street • Marion, NC 28752  
828.652.1553 local • 888.528.1553 toll free

Merry Christmas  
from our family to yours...

And the angel said to them,  
“Fear not, for behold, I bring  
you good news of great joy that  
will be for all the people. For  
unto you is born this day in the  
city of David a Savior, who is  
Christ the Lord.  
~Luke 2:10-11

Spruce Pine Tire Service  
Since 1959  
977 Oak Avenue  
Spruce Pine, NC  
828 765 2186  
Quick and Quality Tire Service!

FALKEN

Summit  
tires

KENDA  
TIRES



COOPER  
TIRES

KUMHO TIRE

Confession – Bringing Grace To Life

By Glenda Ward  
McDowell County



In the opening chapter of 1 John, verse 9 gives us an accurate picture of what confession involves.  
“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Confession is to be of one Word. This is to say what Jesus says in John 14:6 “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” It is that of which one holds to be true, to declare faith in God, to declare to be a follower of Jesus Christ, and to declare your name is written in the Book of Life. “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.”

Common Misunderstandings About Confession

- Confession – God tells us when we confess our sins, we can expect the fulfillment of His promise to forgive us of our sins. God also promises to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- Confession – is not a person-to-person event. It is a conversation that takes place between us and God.
- Confession – is not something we do to earn forgiveness. We don’t earn our forgiveness; Jesus Christ has already earned the forgiveness and cleansing that God grants us as His gift.

What Confession Really Means

When we confess to God that we have tried to live independently from Him, and want to join ourselves anew to Him, He responds by cleansing us at the core of our being. That initial cleansing is a one-time event that happens at salvation.  
But then there are our current daily human failures. These need to be cleansed as well by humbling ourselves before God every day. Confession is to say the same thing that God says. When we confess, we describe something exactly as God describes it. Each time we fall short of God’s character we agree with God by naming to Him our faulty attitude, unkind words, or selfish actions exactly what God names them. Confession is no more and no less than being honest and transparent before God. When we are smitten down because we have sinned against God, and we turn again to Him, confessing His name, praying, and making supplication; we make our confession to God. (Reference 1 Kings 8:33)  
“God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. On our new birth and our new creation in Christ, through faith, in which we are now children of God; “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk-in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth” (1 John 1:5-6).

For there is one mediator between God and man, and that is the man Jesus Christ (Reference 1 Timothy 2:5). At one time we were in darkness, but now we are light in the Lord. We are children of light and part of the light is truth. The truth is that we cannot be marked by the secretness of cloaking ourselves or our motives so that people don’t know who we really are! We won’t try to pose ourselves on the outside what we are not on the inside. That includes being truthful about our sinfulness and struggles with our sins. We need to be known as open books appropriately read by accountable, mature people in our life. Not a secretive person. “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another” (Ephesians 4:25). We are people of truth and this is a foundational building block of relational confession. We are to own and acknowledge our sins as true disciples, and own the guilt we feel that goes with it. We are to declare to be true and to admit to our sins in words instead of trying to deny our sins. (Reference Job chapter 11)

God’s doctrine is pure, and we are to be clean of sin in His eyes. With the mouth, confession is made to salvation (Romans 10). The Biblical meaning of Confession means agreeing with God about our actions. It does not mean atoning for our sins, nor does it earn us forgiveness. In the first chapter of 1 John, verse 9 gives us an accurate picture of what our confession involves. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” The act of confessing places us in harmony with God and others. It is uniting us to God! We shall confess before our Heavenly Father who is in heaven. As in the disturbing of the conscience, we are to disclose all our sins and faults to God.

Confessing is Two Things:

1. Confessing your faith in Jesus Christ to the world.
  2. Confessing your sins to God.
- The confession of Christ and the confession of sin are both necessary for salvation. One is pointless without the other. We have to be honest about our faith and honest about our faults (1 Timothy 6:12-13). When we confess our sins, we are confessing to God something we did wrong. When we confess Christ, we are confessing before God something that we have done right ...we believe in Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Savior – the Son of God.

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.

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



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



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



CHECK OUT THESE GREAT OFFERS!

\$75 OFF  
New Water Heater  
Installation

\$50 OFF  
ANY Drain Cleared

\$25 OFF  
Any Repair

Each location independently owned and operated.

If there's any delay, it's you we pay!®



Home Depot Employees  
Return Lost Envelope Filled With Cash

By Jim Denison

*“Let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth” (1 John 3:18).*

Adam Adkisson, a Home Depot employee in Bellevue, Tennessee, recently noticed a small envelope in aisle 22. When he picked it up, he discovered it was packed with \$ 700 in cash. He could have kept the money and presumably, no one would have been the wiser. Instead, he contacted a manager named Alissa Rocchi, who made a post about the envelope on Facebook.

A person responded, describing the envelope in detail and confirming that the money belonged to his business partner. The owner was grateful to get his money back since he planned to use it to buy Christmas gifts for his children.

Rocchi explained why she and Adkisson responded to the lost money as they did: “One of [Home Depot’s] core values says to do the right thing. That is just us living our core values.”

Imagine how different our society would be if everyone agreed. How many Americans believe in heaven and hell?

For decades now, we have been living in a “post-truth” culture. The claim that all truth claims are personal and subjective is known academically as “relativism.” It is inherently illogical, of course: to claim there are no objective truths is to make an objective truth claim. It’s like saying, “It’s a fact that there are no such things as facts.”

Nonetheless, the delusion that reality must conform to our opinions is pervasive and exceedingly dangerous today. For example, a recent study found that only 61 percent of Americans believe in the existence of heaven and hell. What’s more, only half of those who think hell exists believe it will be a place of suffering.

Of course, I can deny the existence of the Washington Monument, but that doesn’t make the Washington Monument less real. Such spiritual relativism is one of Satan’s subtlest strategies. If he can lure us into viewing eternal realities through the prism of our personal beliefs, by the time we discover how tragically wrong we were, it will be too late.

The philosophical theologian John Hick illustrated this theme with a parable: two men are on a journey, one a Christian and one a skeptic. The Christian is convinced that their road will lead to the Holy City, while the skeptic is convinced it will lead nowhere significant.

The two men travel together for many days. Across their journey, they encounter times of sunshine and times of rain, days when hiking is easy, and days when it is difficult. All the while, the believer is certain that he is headed to his eternal reward, and the skeptic is certain that he is going nowhere important.

Finally, the two come to the last bend in the road and one is right while the other is wrong. A friend’s thoughtful email

Today’s discussion was prompted by an insightful email I received from a dear friend in response to yesterday’s Daily Article. I noted in my column that Cambridge Dictionary has altered its definitions of the words man and woman so that they can refer to people who were born with a different sex than the identity they now claim.

My friend asked, “On a larger scale, what is the relevance of a dictionary if its editors can change definitions based on their personal subjective truth? What will we do when different dictionaries offer conflicting definitions? Which student’s answer is correct on the test? And has the time come for something akin to a Christian dictionary?”

If words can mean anything we want them to mean, we cannot have speed limits or traffic laws. If your “north” is different from my “north,” we cannot have a map that works for us both. Of course, the nonsense of such a worldview is intuitively obvious. This is why relativists only exercise relativism when it benefits them personally.

People who have decided there is no such thing as heaven or hell are people who don’t want to live with the fact that their beliefs and actions in this world have eternal consequences in the next. Heterosexuals who support same-sex marriage in the name of “tolerance” want that same tolerance extended to them when they make unbiblical choices of their own. A conversation with an Iranian server

My wife and I were eating dinner in San Antonio recently when we got into a conversation with our server. He told us that he had immigrated to our country from Iran because of the persecution he faced there over his Christian beliefs.

I asked him if he had been treated well in America, hoping that his Iranian ethnicity had not caused difficulties for him in our country. He understood my question to refer instead to his faith and responded, “Everything is easy in America because no one here cares about your religion.”

Of course, Someone does.

Consider God’s prophetic warning: “I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the men who are complacent, those who say in their hearts, ‘The LORD will not do good, nor will he do ill’” (Zephaniah 1:12). By contrast, God assures his people, “If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land” (Isaiah 1:19).

Consider these two verses in the context of Christmas: A loving father cannot give his children presents that will harm them. Conversely, he cannot give them good gifts they are not close enough to him to receive.



“Living our core values”

If you reject the relativism of our day and choose to live by the inspired, authoritative word of God, you will position yourself to experience and to share your Father’s best. And, as with the Home Depot employees in Tennessee, our confused culture will take notice of such sacrificial character.

Their example prompts a question appropriate for every follower of Jesus: Are you “living our core values” today?

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

Check out our Website-[www.brcnews.com](http://www.brcnews.com)  
And find us on Facebook



**Sossoman**  
Funeral Home & Crematory Center

*Professional Service with Compassion and Care*

**1011 South Sterling St. • Morganton, NC 28655**  
**(828) 437-3211 • [www.Sossomanfh.com](http://www.Sossomanfh.com)**

Are you good with kids? How about Teens?

Have you ever considered fostering a teen or a sibling group?



**Mitchell County Department of Social Services**  
is looking for families to open their hearts and homes to children in need in Mitchell County.

**Call for more information about becoming a Foster or Adoptive Parent!**

**828-688-2175**



**CHOOSE BUBBA'S FOR ALL YOUR CATERING NEEDS**



**Inside dining with limited seating**

- Churches
- Reunions
- Holidays
- Family Gatherings

**828-678-3388** **394 East Main St. Burnsville, NC**



Sudoku Solution

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

Crossword Solution

L	A	P	S		V	A	S	S	A	L		I	S	A		
A	F	O	O	L	I	S	H		M	A	T	R	I	X		
S	L	I	P		P	H	I	L	I	P		O	N	E		
H	E	N		H	E	A	P			W	I	N	G			
	A	T	H	I	R	D			T	W	I	N		A		
U			A	L	S	O			W	I	N	N	I	N	G	
P	E	A	R	L		W	R	O	N	G		Y	O	U		
W	A	R	M		W		O		E		M	I	N	A		
A	S	A		S	H	A	W	L		G	O	M	E	R		
R	E	B	U	K	E	R		E	N	O	S	No.274		D		
D			S	I	T	E			B	O	O	T	H	S		
	P	E	E	P				P	A	I	D		E	A	R	
W	I	N		P	A	G	A	N	S			O	N	C	E	
A	N	D	R	E	W			R	O	E	B	U	C	K	S	
Y	E	S			D	E	F	E	N	D			T	E	S	T

COPYRIGHT 2022 BIBLEWORDGAMES.COM ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

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

FM 104.7

REAL COUNTRY

WKYK

AM 940 • WKYK.COM

LISTEN: 11A.M.  
EVERY SATURDAY  
GOSPEL PREACHING

Brought To You By:  
YANCEY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION  
Burnsville, North Carolina 28714

Foundation Forward

John Hancock

By David Streater, Ph.D.  
Burke County



This is an American history educational moment of those who made a difference during the Revolutionary War era and how they served our Country.

John Hancock is a renowned Founding Father for several reasons. One is his king-sized signature on the Declaration of Independence. Hancock was born in 1737 in Braintree (now Quincy), Massachusetts. John lost his father when he was seven. As John's mother was poor and became homeless, she sent him to live with his wealthy aunt and uncle, Lydia and Thomas Hancock. Being childless, they showered John with the luxuries of life, including a Harvard education. Though John missed his mother and siblings, he adored his aunt and uncle and later inherited their wealth. His life-long friend, Samuel Adams, introduced Hancock to the Revolutionary War efforts, which brought him into conflict with British policies. Adams and Hancock had a symbiotic relationship. Hancock financed Adams' political activities. Hancock wanted to fight the invading British as a Minuteman, but Adams convinced him he was more valuable as a political leader. However, Hancock was a businessman at heart and initially became a political leader in protecting his economic interests.

Hancock was the president of Massachusetts before statehood, then served as president of the Second Continental Congress. Unfortunately, he died at 56, during his 11th year as governor of Massachusetts. The legend continues that Hancock boldly signed the Declaration of Independence so King George III of England could see it without glasses. As a result, the phrase "place your John Hancock here" when signing essential documents became an idiom.

When rallying citizens against the British, Hancock said: "Let every man do what is right in his own eyes." John Hancock was a true patriot and Founding Father whose legends about him are truly as great as the person.

Please visit your Charters of Freedom setting in most western North Carolina counties. 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 to the Charters of Freedom in the National Archives, Washington, DC. Please visit our website (FoundationForward.com) to learn more about our existing settings.

All teachers are encouraged to contact Dr. Streater for information and complementary student education materials to enhance experiential field trips to a Charter of Freedom settings. Everyone is welcome and urged to obtain a personalized engraved legacy paver for placement at their local Charters of Freedom setting. Please contact Dr. Streater (david.streater@mymail.barry.edu) for engraved legacy paver information and complementary educational materials.

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.



EARN WHILE YOU LEARN.

BECOME AN APPRENTICE.

MAP.MCDOWELLTECH.EDU

For More Information or To Register,  
Call Thomas Champ at 828-659-0454



# Roan Mountain Baptist Church

## A Three-Point Checklist for the New Year

By Russell McKinney  
Mitchell County



*"Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established. Do not turn to the right or the left. Remove your foot from evil."* (Proverbs 4:25-27, N.K.J.V.)

These verses make for one of the Bible's best texts on the subject of a new year. In them, Solomon offers a three-point checklist that can help us make this new year a godly, blessed, spiritually productive one. Let's take a look at that checklist.

Item #1 is: "Rivet your attention upon this new year." Solomon says, *"Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids right before you."* Think of yourself as standing on the precipice of this new year. What should you do as you stand here? You should focus your attention straight ahead and fix your gaze on what lies ahead.

One day a man stormed into the office of his local newspaper and said to the secretary, "I need to see the guy who is in charge of the obituaries." When the secretary pointed him to a rookie reporter, the man marched over to that reporter and said, "Young man, my name appeared in your obituary column today, but as you can see, I am very much alive. So, I want you to print a retraction in tomorrow's paper." To that, the young man said, "Sir, I'm afraid that we don't print retractions in our obituary column. But what I can do is put you in tomorrow's birth announcements and give you a fresh start!"

This new year can be your fresh start with Jesus. You can have a fresh start in the areas of prayer, Bible study, church attendance, personal holiness, giving, and evangelism. Whatever sins you've committed in the past, whatever mistakes you've made, whatever you went through last year, rivet your attention on this new year.

Item #2 on the checklist is: "Reassess the path you are traveling." Solomon says, *"Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established."* The Hebrew word translated as "ponder" means to mentally weigh. The point is, think about the path you are currently traveling. Is it a path that will take you into more intimate fellowship with Jesus? Is it a path that will take you into a deeper level of service to Him? Is it a path that will make you a better Christian and a better person?

Most people never take the time to stop and really think about where their path is leading them. This is why they repeat the same mistakes over and over again, year after year. I read about a man who went to the doctor to get some help for his two burned ears. The doctor said, "Before I treat you, I've just got to know how you burned your ears." The fellow said, "Well, doc, I'll tell you what happened. The phone rang while I was ironing my shirt, and I picked up the iron instead of the phone." The doctor said, "That's terrible! But what happened to your other ear?" The man said, "The guy called back."

Finally, item #3 on the checklist is: "Resist the temptation to veer off your God-approved path." Let's say that you get on the path the Lord wants you to be walking. Is that the end of the story? No, it isn't. Solomon gives the warning: *"Do not turn to the right or the left. Remove your foot from evil."*

Some people are very good at making fresh starts with the Lord. Such a person goes his or her own way for a while and then says, "I've got to get right with the Lord." The person then makes a renewed effort at living a Christ-honoring life. He or she walks that God-approved path for a while but eventually strays from it as some sinful pleasure off to the right or the left proves too tempting to resist. Then, after the person has filled up on the sin, he or she again says, "I've got to get right with the Lord," and at that point, the cycle starts anew. I hope you understand that such a roller-coaster walk with Christ isn't what He has in mind for you. How much better it is to get on God's path for your life and then resist the temptation to veer off your God-approved path.

In closing, let me tell you about two boys who once tried to outwit a wise old man. Because these boys had grown tired of hearing other people talk about the great wisdom the man possessed, they decided to humble him. First, they caught a very small bird, which one of the boys concealed in his hand. Next, they went to the old man, where the boy with the bird asked him, "What do you think I have in my hand?" The old man answered, "You have a bird in your hand. I can see some of its feathers." The boy said, "Yes, but is the bird dead or alive?"

It was here that the boys planned to trick the old man. If he said "dead," the boy would open his hand and let the bird fly away. But if the man said "alive," the boy would crush the bird before opening his hand. So, how did the wise old man answer? He looked at the boy and said, "As you will it, son. As you will it."

Will this new year be one in which you serve Christ better than you ever have? The answer is: As you will it. Herschel Hobbs, that notable preacher of days gone by, said, "Years become new only if we make them so." Ah, but the good news is that you really can make this new year "new" if you will follow Solomon's spiritual checklist. That means: rivet your attention on this new year, reassessing the path you are traveling, and resisting the temptation to veer off your God-approved path. By doing these things, you'll be able to make this year the best one you've ever had in serving Jesus.

*Russell McKinney lives in the English Woods area of Spruce Pine and serves as the pastor of Roan Mountain Baptist Church in Bakersville*

***Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. Isaiah 43:19***

# Griffith's General Store

*"A Little Out Of The Way, But ALOT Less to Pay"*



## Toyotomi-Laser Heaters Wood Stoves - Buck & U.S. Stove Red Max Power Equipment Bartlett & Cargill Feed Animal Health Supplies



Tipton Hill, NC  
4301 NC 197 North  
Green Mountain, NC 28740

Jerry & David Griffith  
davidgriffith58@frontier.com

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

# Whitson Realty

*"The Broker That Gets Results"*

**HOMES • FARMS  
LAKEFRONT • LOTS  
ACREAGE • COMMERCIAL**





**South of 1-40  
3800 Sugar Hill Rd.  
Marion, NC 28752**

**Dennis J. Whitson, Broker | 1999 Realtor of the Year**  
**(828) 738-3540**



Kids' Corner

Brownie's Kittens

By Christy Lowman  
Burke County

Have you ever heard the saying, “A picture is worth a thousand words?”

Well, this picture says all there is to say about Brownie. We call the kittens “Brownie’s kittens,” because she loves them so much. She has fussed over them; momma’s them to death and worries countlessly over them. She also gives them kisses, cleans their ears, and plays with them every single day, even when she doesn’t want to.

I realized I have a lot in common with Brownie. I’m not sure it’s a good thing being compared to a dog, and for the record, I certainly don’t lick and clean other people’s ears. However, there are traits that we both have in common. I love just about all animals, (except bats, I’m not a fan) and will care for them to the best ability much the same way with people. Of course, if bats needed help I’d figure out a way to help them, too. Brownie is like this because she prides herself on being a fill-in Momma.

Brownie is a little hyper and tries to do a bunch of things at once. She is always running everywhere. I’m always multi-tasking, and my mind never shuts off. It’s going a mile a minute, thinking of everything under the sun at the same time, even when I’m trying to go to sleep.

Brownie goes out of her way to try to make others happy, and she tries her very best to get everyone to like her. She wants everyone, and every animal to be her friend. The ones that don’t really care for her, will go out of her way to change their mind. Needless to say, it hasn’t worked so far. Ruby, unfortunately, is not a fan of Brownie. She tolerates her but is not her best friend, which is what Brownie desires most. My Dad is another that she wants to like her more than anything. She is so wrapped up in making this a reality she doesn’t always see the ones right in front of her that adore her. This is so me. I love making other people happy. I want everyone to like me and I try very hard to make that happen.

Another example is Brownie is a worrier. She likes to know where the kittens are at all times and she checks on them regularly. She also doesn’t like to make anyone mad. This is also me. I am a people pleaser, and I’m constantly worrying if I made someone mad. I’m constantly worried about what others think of me and if I accidentally offended someone.

God finally told me it was time to let this go. It doesn’t matter what I do, people already have their opinion of me. Nothing I say or do is going to change



their mind. It is already made up. So what if I accidentally upset them or make them mad? If I’m living for Christ that is all that matters. Only He can change the mindset and hearts of people, not me. He told me, to focus on what is really important, doing what pleases Him. That is truly the most important thing. If I do that, then the rest will fall in place. Only then will I have peace, and enjoy true happiness when I focus on pleasing my Lord and Savior instead of others.

January first is one of the most exciting days of the year for me. Do you know why? It is because I reflect on the past year. I examine myself and see what I need to try and change the next year. Everyone has things they change about themselves to become a better follower of Christ. God will also show me things I need to work on. This year, He wants me to focus on our relationship and start living more for Him. He wants me to stop sweating and worrying about little stuff like how others feel about me. He will handle that part himself. Honestly, I’m ready to give that up anyway because it is quite exhausting! He wants me to quit being a people pleaser and instead be a God pleaser.

God has also laid on my heart so many projects and stories for the New Year. They will keep me very busy and I won’t have time for worrying and stressing. There will be no room for those thoughts to take up space in my mind.

What about you? Are you a worrier? Maybe you are a people pleaser too? Do you care what others think about you? Do you try to make everyone like you?

What has God laid on your heart to work on changing about yourself? What are you going to do to get closer to God this brand new year?

Dear Lord, please show each one of us what you will have us work on this next year about ourselves and our relationship with You. Help us live for You instead of living to please others. Help us to not worry about anything. Instead, help us cast all our worries to You for You to take care of. I pray that each one of us will include You in our future, that we will trust You and give You complete control of what is yet to come in our lives. In Jesus’s name, I pray, Amen.

“Obviously, I’m not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ’s servant.” Galatians 1:10 NLT

“Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.” Ephesians 6:7 NLT

Christy Lowman is a Christian author and illustrator that lives in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains with her husband and two children. She enjoys writing and illustrating books for all ages. Some of her short stories are published with Guideposts and HCI. Christy gives all the glory to God in everything she does. A portion of every book sold from the Small Bible Character Series will be donated to battle human trafficking. You can buy her books at [https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp\\_byline\\_sr\\_book\\_1?ie=UTF8&field-author=Christy+Lowman&search-alias=books&text=Christy+Lowman&sort=relevancerank](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref=dp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&field-author=Christy+Lowman&search-alias=books&text=Christy+Lowman&sort=relevancerank). You can reach her at <https://www.facebook.com/authorChristyLowman/> or [christyssoaps@yahoo.com](mailto:christyssoaps@yahoo.com).



# CORNERSTONE GAS SERVICE

GRAND CANYON GAS LOGS

Rinnai TANKLESS WATER HEATERS

WHITE MOUNTAIN HEARTH by Empire Comfort Systems

- SALES
- INSTALLATION
- YEARLY MAINTENANCE AGREEMENTS
- NATURAL GAS OR PROPANE

**Burnsville, NC 28714 • 828-284-2687**  
*jbswann72@gmail.com*

## Mountain Time On Main St.

*Mountain Time Is The Best Time*

105 West Main St.  
**Burnsville, NC 28714**



1179 Main St. Unit 6  
**Blowing Rock NC, 28605**



603 East Main St.  
**Burnsville NC, 28714**





Jams  
Jellies



Outdoor living  
Fireplaces  
Artisan Work  
Amish Furniture



Contact  
828-385-3243  
828-385-0657  
[mtntimewholesale@outlook.com](mailto:mtntimewholesale@outlook.com)  
[kyleighpaigep@gmail.com](mailto:kyleighpaigep@gmail.com)



www.brcnews.com

January 2023 - Blue Ridge Christian News page 16



# Obedient Heart Fellowship

## Covenant of Shalom

By Jim Huskins  
McDowell County



Most of us have experienced the pain of unresolvable family rifts. The most gut-wrenching family split in history occurred because the wisest man who ever lived insisted on behaving like an idiot.

This tragedy is recorded in 1 Kings 11. King Solomon was so wise and so wealthy that his fame spread around the world. A stream of dignitaries and heads of state visited Jerusalem to see if the rumors were true. The Queen of Sheba summarized Solomon’s glory by proclaiming “the half has not been told.” Why would a man who had been blessed by God in such measure turn away from the source of all that is good and devote himself to lies?

The short answer is that Solomon had a weakness for women. This same weakness is at the core of many family problems. Solomon’s case was unique, however, since he chose to marry seven hundred women and keep three hundred more as surrogate wives. This is nowhere near historical accounts of the size of famous harems around the ancient world, but it is an astounding number in a culture governed by Torah. In Deuteronomy 17:14-17, God gives specific regulations for future kings of Israel. In the context of injunctions against over-dependence on war horses and wealth, Hebrew kings are told to “*not acquire many wives..., lest his heart turns away.*” This instruction foreshadowed Solomon’s demise.

Solomon loved his women, and he wanted to please them. Since he had chosen most of them from outside of Israel—thus violating other provisions of the Torah—many of his wives brought their familiar pagan idols and worship rituals. Over time, his efforts to satisfy his women led to him turning away from God to follow false gods. The result is revealed in 1 Kings 11:9, “*And the LORD was angry with Solomon.*” God hates pagan worship. He finds idolatry particularly offensive when practiced by those He calls to lead His people.

God promised King David that he would always have a descendant on Israel’s throne. After Solomon’s death, God tore ten tribes away from David’s line. These became the Northern Kingdom which kept the name Israel. God left the tribes of Judah and Benjamin under David’s offspring. The Southern Kingdom was known as Judah. These two factions of God’s family were never rejoined. The reunion was rendered impossible around 740 B.C. when mighty Assyria conquered Israel and carried her into exile. The so-called “Ten Lost Tribes” were subsequently scattered to the winds. God allowed this dispersal because of flagrant disobedience to His instructions for living. Israel’s primary sin was idolatry. Evidence suggests that much of Europe and the Americas was eventually settled by those descendants of the Patriarch, Jacob.

The Church has been so focused for so long on the narrative of Messiah that we have missed God’s even larger purpose. Few Christians are aware that the primary theme of the Bible is the reunification of God’s Family. The story of Jesus is marvelous. None of us could stand before Holy God without forgiveness that only comes by grace through faith in the Son of God. Redemption is so important that it is easy for us to miss the fact that Jesus did not die just so we may have “personal salvation.” God created us for Himself. We were made in His image so that He might enjoy sweet fellowship with people who were free to reject Him but did not do so. We are saved so that we may join God’s never-ending family reunion. His family is in Israel.

The perfect life and the sacrificial death of the Lamb of God make possible the impossible family reunion. That was Jesus’ primary mission. “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel,” He says in Matthew 15:24. Throughout the Bible, God promises to rejoin the severed factions of His family. None of those prophecies is more vivid than Ezekiel’s vision of the Valley of Dry Bones.

The Church has trivialized Ezekiel’s vision by deeming it only worthy of children’s stories and borderline-silly songs. Ezekiel 37 is a powerful summary of God’s divine purpose. Verse 11 tells us that “these bones are the whole house of Israel.” In verse 12 God promises, “*I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel.*” Verses 21 and 22 say, “*I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. And one king shall be king over them all, and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms.*”

This marvelous chapter goes on to detail the perfection of Christ’s Millennial Kingdom. The Son of David will be King. None of God’s children will defile themselves with idols or detestable things. All will walk perfectly according to God’s Torah. We will inhabit forever the land God gave to Jacob, and God Himself will live among us. This perfection will be possible because God will base that Kingdom on a covenant of Shalom. (Ezekiel 37:26)

Shalom is more than the absence of conflict. The ancient Hebrew meaning is “to make something whole.” God’s standard of wholeness for His children includes freedom from sin and its consequences; freedom from lust and divided loyalty; freedom from hunger and deprivation; freedom from disease and decay; freedom from danger and bondage; freedom from shattered relationships and unworthy goals; freedom from shame; freedom from separation. God’s Shalom both requires and provides the same intimacy with Him that Adam and Eve enjoyed in The Garden. Regardless of our genetics, we are adopted into Israel through saving faith. All who follow Jesus in faithful obedience will know nothing but Shalom when He returns to gather His family to Himself.

Obedient Heart Fellowship meets each Sabbath (Seventh Day) at 2460 US 221 Business N. Marion, NC. 10:00 A.M. 828-460-7913

*Jim Huskins is pastor of Obedient Heart Fellowship.*

**you might not know we have life, home, auto and business insurance. now you do.**

**simple human sense.**

**"Serving Our Mountain Communities for over 100 Years"**

**FORTNER**  
INSURANCE AGENCY

**www.fortnerinsurance.com**

**LIFE • HOME • CAR • BUSINESS**

**Auto-Owners**  
INSURANCE

## Services Offered

- 24 Hour Nursing Support
- Pain and Symptom Management
- Certified Nursing Assistant Services
- Respiratory Therapy
- Social Work Support
- Bereavement Services
- Palliative Care Program
- Volunteer Support
- Chaplain Services
- Physician and FNP Visits
- Ongoing Education
- Support and Education for Loved Ones

**For more information about our services or if You would like to make a referral call 828-765-5677**



Humor

By Buddy Freeman  
Madison County



An older gentleman went to an optician to get his eyes tested for glasses. The optician placed a card in front of the man and asked, “Can you read this plainly?” The man said, “No.” Then the optician brought the card closer and asked, “Can you read this plainly?” The man said, “No.” So the optician put the card right in front of the man’s eyes and said, “surely you can read this now.” The old man said, “No, I never learned to read.”

AT what time of day was Adam born? A little before Eve.

When was radio first mentioned in the Bible? When the Lord took a rib from Adam and made a loudspeaker.

Sign in a restaurant: “Shopping with your husband is like going hunting with a game warden.”


A physician asked a new patient, “Did you see anyone before coming to me?” “Yes,” the patient replied, “I talked to the pharmacist at the pharmacy.” The physician chuckled. “And what kind of ridiculous advice did that idiot give you?” The patient said, “He advised me to come to see you.”

People are funny – they want the front of the bus, the middle of the road, and the back of the church.

“Dear Andy: “How are you today?” Your mother and I are fine. We miss you very much. Please turn the computer off and come down to dinner with us.”



Someone asked me why I married Gayla. I said, “Because she was different from all the other ladies I dated.” He asked, “How was she different.” I said, “She was the only one who would marry me.”

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




Auto • Home • Life • Health • Banking

#1 AUTO INSURER  
IN THE NATION  
*Again!*



Per CRASH Network's 2020  
& 2021 Insurer Report Card's  
Polling of Collision Repair Shops



**828-652-4525**  
**Kenneth W Day**  
FSS, LUTCF  
Agency Manager

**ncfbins.com**

\*North Carolina Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company "Farm Bureau" Insurance of North Carolina, Inc. "Southern Farm Bureau" Life Insurance Company, Jackson, MS "A" independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

Check out our new Website-[www.brcnews.com](http://www.brcnews.com)  
And find us on Facebook

happy new year



# Compassionate Care

## WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA



“Does your provider  
make house calls?”

“Ours do!”

**Call our Hospice & Palliative care  
team today for more information.  
Serving Mitchell, Yancey, Madison &  
Buncombe counties.**  
**828-682-9675**



Young Scientists Compete In Annual Fair

By Cheryl Shuffler  
Burke County

Is curry calming? Are bees colorblind? Can color change tastes? Burke County middle schoolers asked these and other intriguing questions as part of their projects in the annual Continental Middle School Science Fair. Burke County Public Schools, in partnership with Continental, hosted the annual middle school science fair Thursday at Liberty Middle School. A total of 33 students entered 20 projects in six categories. In addition to research and a project board, the students made a presentation to judges and answered questions. The judges said the projects were inventive, and creative and solved practical problems. Several of the winners will advance their projects to the regional science fair. The winners are:

- Biological Science A  
1st - Reese Garrison and Elise Sawdy (Liberty) “Curry to Calm” - Advancing to the Regionals  
2nd - Gabby Fisher (Liberty) “Are Bees Colorblind?”  
Biological Science B  
1st - Bailey Heape (Table Rock) “Guilty as Charged” - Advancing to the Regionals  
2nd - Leah Clark (Liberty) “Best Mascara Remover” - Advancing to the Regionals  
3rd - Patience Kohler (Heritage) “Can Color Change Taste” - Advancing to the Regionals  
Chemistry  
1st - Alicia Abernathy, Miracle Covington, Joceyln Holloman (Table Rock) Split It Up: The Study of Separating Hydrogen and Oxygen - Advancing to the Regionals  
2nd - Rylee Nolen (Liberty) “The Egg Breakdown”

- Earth and Environmental Science  
1st - Adyson Allen and Macie Digh (Table Rock) “Growing Up: The Study of pH for Tomato Plants” - Advancing to the Regionals  
2nd - Will Evans (Liberty) “Trout Tales - A Study of Trout Streams in Burke County and How Water Pollution Impacts Stream” - Advancing to the Regionals  
Engineering  
1st - Knowlton Lee (Liberty) “Pascal’s Launch: Designing a Hydraulic Rocket Launcher” - Advancing to the Regionals  
2nd - Eli Propst (Liberty) “A Study of Exoskeletons” - Advancing to the Regionals  
3rd - Ruby Rangle Gomez, Naomi Singleton Chavarria, Soriano Chavarria (Walter Johnson) “Engineering Martian Bricks”- Advancing to the Regionals  
Physics  
1st - Luke Borders (East Burke Middle) “Measuring Cell Phone Electromagnetic Radiation” - Advancing to the Regionals  
2nd - Hunter Mascroft (East Burke Middle) “Dad, The Computer Isn’t Working”

Burke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Mike Swan said, “I am always amazed by our students, their intelligence and their creativity, and this year’s entries into the 2022 Middle School Science Fair are no different. These students followed the scientific method, asked tough questions, and had some interesting ideas on what they wanted to research. I applaud them for doing a fantastic job with their projects and for making science fun. Congratulations to all the participants and the winners and best wishes to those headed to regionals and the next level. I also would like to thank Continental for sponsoring the science fair and investing in our students.”

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



By Joe Sturz  
Shenandoah, Va



God’s chosen spiritually born-again people (John 3:3-8;15:16; I Peter 2:9) are often poor in this world (I Corinthians 1:25-28). God promises to work in them (Philippians 2:13) through the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:10-14) the blessings of:  
--comfort (Isaiah 61:2-3; Matthew 5:4), patience and hope (Romans 5:3-5),  
--riches of faith to those that love Him (James 2:5),  
--being an heir to His eternal kingdom (Matthew 5:3 James 2:5),  
--His undeserved favor in this life (James 4:6).  
So let those that are poor in this world and love the Lord (James 2:5) take heart and be blessed as they walk by faith in Him and His Word (Romans 1:16-17; II Cor. 1:20; 5:7).  
The good news to sinners is that Jesus Christ died on the cross to take the punishment due our sins and rose again from the dead to secure a place in heaven for all those that repent of their sins (I John 1:9) and trust in and follow Him (I Cor. 15:1-58).  
[www.sturzchristiancounseling.com](http://www.sturzchristiancounseling.com)

Joe Sturz, a Christian counselor at Sturz Christian Counseling Service now living in Page County, [www.sturzchristiancounseling.com](http://www.sturzchristiancounseling.com) ministering to people with problems and sharing what the Lord has taught me through: His Word, my mistakes, failures and successes and 47+ years as a Biblical counselor applying all of the Bible to all of life in daily messages on Facebook and email.



**FREE TRADE-IN EVALUATION\***  
**OCTOBER 1ST- DECEMBER 31ST**  
**TRADE-IN & TRADE-UP to a new EnergySmart Home!\***



**1276 Burkemont Ave  
Morganton, NC 28655**

**Call Us Today  
(828) 433-8455**

**[www.ClaytonMorganton.com](http://www.ClaytonMorganton.com)**

\*Value of current manufactured home trade in toward purchase of a new manufactured home is determined by resale values in your area and final evaluation determination by home center manager. Deposit funds in addition to trade in may be required.



Creation Science; What Is It?

By Nancy Malik  
Avery County



Over two decades ago I was introduced to God's creation powerfully. I had been hearing murmurings of it over a few years. In 2002, my family and I had to leave our beloved Colorado to go help both of my in-laws in SW Florida. Being a mountain girl most of my life it seemed impossible to go so far away. All that hot sun was not good for one who could sunburn in seconds. I was in deep depression, but we started attending a big non-denominational church. In Sunday School, our first week there, the teacher was talking about Creation Science. She had asked the church to fund money for an entire wall for Creation Science books in the church library. I read voraciously and began to watch scales fall off my eyes. The world was not millions or billions of years old. We did not evolve from fish to monkeys to humans. God created the world in six perfect 24-hour days. Man was created from dirt on day 6. The perfect accounting of our genealogy of the Old Testament directs us to 4000 years before Christ and 2000 years after He was born. That makes 6 millenniums. We are sitting near the arrival of a perfect 1000- year reign of Christ here on earth.

Creation Science is God's science that represents a Creator who loves His people He created. Each one of us ever born was created within our mother's womb at His touch. We are not perfect, but we are a gift of His. People have been born for thousands of years and many, never knew His name, but they knew Him. This new concept of life the way God meant it, changed my outlook entirely. I taught His truth for the next fourteen years to many young people. I was blessed to give Creation Science Chapels a few times every year on topics from His whales, to the world at 14,000'. His perfection in His world has been seen from the bottom of the seas to the tops of the highest mountains and out into His magnificent universe. When viewing the 3 stars of the Pleiades with a strong telescope, you can see there is a star in the middle that is actually a cloud of gases. When beginning to study His phenomena, the furthest nebula that could be seen by a satellite (Hubble) sent out to find it, sent pictures back of The Eye of God. It was the furthest one out at the beginning of the 21st Century. Now with much more advanced viewing methods these men and women have found another door to a universe. Our God is always full of His glorious surprises to keep us on our toes.

We came to Avery County when my husband was in his last year of life. Moving here with him in advanced cancer, gave him a wonderful year. We bought a small cabin on a creek on a couple of acres and he flourished to work on that land. As he got weaker and then was put into Hospice, he would teach the nurses about God's amazing word. They loved "church" with Gregg. Being given an extra year of life to enjoy God's creation in Avery County touched him deeply. He was so glad I had such a beautiful place to continue my life. For two and a half years, I did a radio show for WECR called Adventures in Creation. After the station was closed, I continue to write for the Blue Ridge Christian Newspaper and the Avery Journal. Spending time in thought and wonder to write these articles has kept me grounded in the Amazing Glory of His Creation.

Oh, there also is an elk, Braveheart, who was brought here to introduce the school children and people of the county to what a real bull elk and his "harem" including calves, look like. With all the elk things named within this county, it is a blessing to see them. This elk and I know each other very well. To have one come when he knows you and you call him, is heavenly! That is just another component of Creation Science. Man taking care of God's world. We could do better, but He sure left us beauty and mystery in these high Blue Ridge Mountains. That is Creation Science in a beautiful place.

Nancy Malik moved to Avery County six years ago. The past few years have been a journey of learning how to be a widow and loving the county the Lord led them to on an amazing journey for The Safe Place for the ends times many years ago. She has a precocious black cat, Midi, who always lets her know when something exciting is happening outside. She prays for the readers of the Blue Ridge Christian News to be blessed by God's goodness.

Carolina Home Care Specialists, INC

Excellence in Personalized Care

Medicaid Covered Services

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

Other Services

- Private Pay
- Insurance
- VA Homemaker Service
- Companion/Sitter
- Respite

Now Hiring CNAs

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

Phone (828) 765-4343 • (866) 765-4340



THE HOSPICE YOU  
CHOOSE MAKES  
A DIFFERENCE.

Choose the one with:

- Local staff
- Hospice inpatient unit
- Hospice and palliative care trained staff
- Palliative care in all settings
- Admissions 24 hours a day every day
- Grief counseling provided through Blue Ridge Hope
- Same-day admissions
- Kids Path™



GIVE US A CALL TODAY! (828) 245-0095  
YOU WILL BE GLAD YOU DID! (800) 218-CARE (2273)



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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you!!

Bantam Chef proudly practices and promotes  
recycling for a cleaner community  
and a greener environment.



Ask about our ongoing recycling program  
and how you can participate in our contributions  
to Hospice of McDowell County.



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



# Enjoying Everyday Life

## Anchored by Hope, Amazed by God

By Joyce Meyer

I used to be one of the most negative people I knew. My motto was, “If I don’t expect anything good to happen, then I won’t be disappointed when it doesn’t.” But God’s way of seeing things is just the opposite! He wants us to live our lives filled with hope, expecting Him to do something great at any moment.

What is hope? One definition of hope is “a favorable and confident expectation.” It’s a positive attitude and the happy anticipation that something good is going to happen.

Real hope is not a wishy-washy, vague “let’s just wait and see what happens” attitude; it’s believing and trusting that what God promised, He will do. God is just looking for opportunities to be good to His children and He wants us to expect it!

The Bible says that hope is the anchor of our soul (see Hebrews 6:19). When things look dark and we don’t have an answer, that’s when hope kicks in to remind us that our new beginning is right around the corner.

For instance, when it looks like everybody else is getting their prayers answered and we’re tired and feel like giving up, it’s hoping that steadies our hearts and helps us hold on to our faith in God’s promise.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:8, hope is described as a helmet. So, what we think must be pretty important. Our attitude and what we’re expecting have everything to do with what we’re thinking and saying.

I encourage you to take control of your thoughts and words first thing every morning. When you wake up, don’t settle for thoughts like, Well, I guess I’ll try to make it through another day.

Instead, anticipate good things from God. Think and declare things like: “God, thank You for this day! I know that You love me and You have a good plan for me today. Apart from You, I can do nothing, but in Christ, I can do whatever I need to do. And with Your help, I am going to have a good attitude and positive thoughts.”

Then, whatever you’re waiting for God to do in your life, expect His goodness to come through for you. Say, “Today could be the day!”

It’s important to realize that we can’t live by how we feel if we want to have a positive, hope-filled life. When negative feelings come, if we don’t give in to them and feed them, they will die.

So, don’t allow yourself to get caught in the trap of waiting to feel hopeful, but instead, decide to be full of hope. When you make a conscious decision to think positive, faith-filled thoughts throughout the day, your feelings will eventually catch up with your decision!

### Life with God Is Supposed to Be Amazing

Several years ago, I asked the Lord, “Why don’t I have exciting, special things happen in my life anymore?” God spoke to my heart and said, “Joyce, I still do those things all the time. You have just gotten used to it.”

You see, God wants us to live amazed by His goodness in our lives...to actively take notice of the truly wonderful things He does for us. Why? Because when we live amazed, we will never be without hope!

In the Bible, the story of Abraham is a great example of what I’m talking about. God had blessed Abraham abundantly. However, there was one thing that he and his wife, Sarah, didn’t have—a child. Abraham said, “...Lord God, what reward will You give me since I am [leaving this world] childless...?”

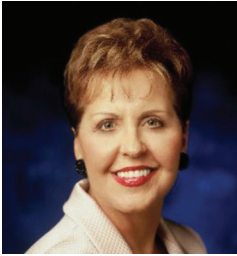
“And the Lord brought Abram outside [his tent into the night] and said, ‘Look now toward the heavens and count the stars—if you are able to count them.’ Then He said to him, ‘So [numerous] shall your descendants be’” (Genesis 15:2, 5 AMP).

Although Abraham’s circumstances looked hopeless, the Lord brought him out of his tent to amaze him and remind him that He can do the impossible.

I believe we can spend too much time “in our tent,” looking at our own problems. That’s why the Bible says to look “away [from all that will distract] to Jesus, Who is the Leader and the Source of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2 AMPC). Every time we decide to pray, read God’s Word or simply dwell on the great things He has done for us in the past, it produces hope. And, like Abraham, we soon begin thinking, Wow, maybe God can do this for me!

When times are tough and you feel discouraged, it’s time to step outside the tent and see what God has to say. When you do, you’ll find that He is just waiting to amaze you.

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She hosts the Enjoying Everyday Life radio and TV programs, which air on hundreds of stations worldwide. For more information, visit [www.joycemeyer.org](http://www.joycemeyer.org).



**Avery County’s Local Choice For Insurance**





**151 Cranberry Street, Newland**  
**lifestoreinsurance.com**  
**828-737-0679**

**Christy Dellinger**     **Jarrod Hughes**

**Buff’s Tire & Service**

**YOUR ONE-STOP  
TOTAL CAR CARE  
EXPERTS!**



**FOR ALL THINGS AUTO, TAKE IT TO BUFF’S!**  
*Check Engine Diagnosis • Alignments • Brakes • Oil Changes • Inspections*

**1211 BURKEMONT AVE., MORGANTON, NC**  
**Located in: Magnolia Plasa • 828-438-3800**  
*“We’ve Moved Across the Street next to Rural King. Come See Us!”*



**2170 Rutherford Rd. • Marion, NC 28752**  
**828-559-8111 • Fax 828-559-8112**  
**[www.beamfuneralservice.com](http://www.beamfuneralservice.com)**  
**[beamfuneralservice@gmail.com](mailto:beamfuneralservice@gmail.com)**



**HVAC  
MAINTENANCE PROGRAM**

**WHY ENROLL IN OUR MAINTENANCE PROGRAM?**

- ★ PREVENT COSTLY REPAIRS AND BREAKDOWNS
- ★ CORRECTION OF DEVELOPING PROBLEMS
- ★ LONGER EQUIPMENT LIFESPAN
- ★ SAVE 10% ON REPAIR PARTS
- ★ FRONT OF THE LINE SERVICE
- ★ REDUCE ENERGY USE



**STARTING AS  
LOW AS \$129  
OR \$12 MONTHLY**

**Burleson  
Plumbing & Heating**

141 HIGHLAND AVE  
SPRUCE PINE, NC 28777  
828-765-4042  
[BURLESONPLUMBING@GMAIL.COM](mailto:BURLESONPLUMBING@GMAIL.COM)  
[BURLESONPLUMBING.COM](http://BURLESONPLUMBING.COM)

**John’s Precision Auto Body**

**Experienced Body  
Tech Needed**

**1385 Rutherford Road**  
**Marion, NC 28752**  
**(828) 652-2018**  
**Fax (828) 652-4896**



# Bear Creek Baptist Church

Happy New Year Everyone! May You Be Blessed Beyond All Measure Throughout 2023!

By Bruce Cannon  
Mitchell County



As you read this article the New Year may have already come. If so, 2022 is in the history books. All of its successes, hardships, blessings, and failures are in the past. But are they really in the past? Have we properly and biblically dealt with our failings and allowed ourselves to have God's blessings on this New Year?

The Apostle Paul knew all about past failings. As an older man, he still remembered how he failed the Lord in his younger days. He writes in 1 Timothy 1:13, that before his conversion he was "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." He was brutal. We can read in Acts how he was an accomplice to the stoning of Stephen, how he beat and put into prison anyone who was a follower of Christ, and how he blasphemed the Lord Jesus.

While he never forgot his past, he properly dealt with it so that, in the eyes of God, it could indeed be in the past...so that it would not hinder him from having the current blessings of the Lord upon his life and ministry. 1 Timothy is written much later in his ministry. He had already, by that time, ran a brilliant race for the Lord, but he still remembered his past and allowed his past to motivate him to do more for the Lord than any other disciple. He knew of what he had been forgiven and showed that knowledge in the race he ran for the Lord. He considered himself a huge debtor to the Lord.

What about you and me? Have we properly dealt with our past? Are we in a current position to have everything the Lord wants to pour out upon us? I do not speak of material possessions or financial blessings; though we are very thankful for these blessings also! NO! I speak of the most important blessings...peace, grace, mercy, wisdom, guidance, and answered prayer ....what we desperately need to get through life successfully.

Are there past failings in your life that you have attempted to ignore or cover-up? Are there things that you need to make right before the Lord? Remember, He knows everything. He knows every sin you and I are guilty of AND stands ready to forgive when we humbly ask Him to do so! (Thank You, Lord!) But we must ask!

We do not know what this New Year is going to bring. I believe strongly in Bible prophecy and know that you and I are living in what could very well be the year of Christ's return for the Church. Since we are so close to the return of the Lord, all of the end-time prophecies concerning what we will be experiencing, trying to live through, and trying to raise our family are ringing true right before our eyes. I do not see a return to Christ by our nation! Rather, I see a continual turning away from Him by our political leadership and a falling away from what is considered to be the spiritual leadership in America. I see our nation constantly being taken further away from God. Look at some of the decisions we are making regarding gender, abortion, marriage, and the like.

What is the point of this article? We desperately need to be in a position individually for the Lord to be able to bless us. We need Him! And, we need to lead our families and circle of friends to draw closer to Him as well. We need to get ourselves and everyone around us just as spiritually right before God as possible! 2023 is going to be a very challenging year! Trials and disturbing news will come regularly. But Psalm 91:1 teaches us "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the highest shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." If we are walking so close to the Lord that we are abiding under His shadow, we are always going to be in a position for His protection and provision! That, my friends, is how we can have a Blessed and Happy New Year! Amen!

From my family to yours "Happy New Year!"

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

# WANTED

## THE WESTERN SIZZLIN STEAK OF THE WEEK



- NOTORIOUS FOR BEING A GREAT VALUE •
- KNOWN TO BE "FLAMEKIST" TO LOCK IN THE JUICES •
- LEGENDARY FOR A BOLD AND DELICIOUS FLAVOR •

828.765.9151

South Hwy 226  
Spruce Pine, NC  
Spruce Pine Shopping Center



### YANCEY SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER

COME JOIN US FOR LUNCH  
SERVED MON-FRI 11:30am-12:00  
60 AND OVER EAT FREE

828-682-6011  
503 MEDICAL CAMPUS DR.  
BURNSVILLE, NC

## Low Back Pain We Can Help You



## Laser Therapy

- Promotes Active Lifestyle
- 95% Success Rate
- Improves Natural Healing
- Affordable
- Scientifically Proven
- Safe and Effective

**A POWERFUL TOOL THAT HEALS**

**We Are Open, Taking New Appointments,  
Following all CDC Guidelines**

**CRUZLife  
CENTER**

*Natural Health Care  
Solutions for Your Life*

- CHIROPRACTIC
- HEALTH COACHING
- LASER THERAPY

Burnsville, NC • 828-682-6157 • 800-772-7955  
cruzlifecenter.com



# Family of God Fellowship

## Do I Really Talk In My Sleep

By Dr. James L. Snyder  
Ocala, Florida



For a long time, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage has accused me of talking in my sleep. I never believed her and just thought she was joking. At least, I thought it was a joke.

One time she accused me of that and said, “Why do you talk so much in your sleep at night?”

Thinking this was a platform for jokes, I said, “That’s because, during the day, I don’t have any opportunity to talk.” Then I flashed her one of my signature smiles.

She didn’t throw any smile back but stared at me for a few moments with that stare that went right through my body.

It was about our third Christmas, and as we gathered around the Christmas tree, I handed her a little Christmas box all wrapped up in red paper with a nice little bow on the top.

Looking at me, she smiled and said, “Is this the watch you were talking about in your sleep the other night?”

Quite frankly, I did not know how to respond to that. It was a watch, but I did not know I had been talking about it in my sleep. So there has to be another reason for that!

One morning at breakfast as we were finishing, I said to her, “I’ve been thinking that today....”

She interrupted me and said to me, “I know. You want to go and get that new computer you’ve been talking about in your sleep.”

I have been worrying about what secrets I’m exposing at night while I’m sound asleep.

Then the other day at breakfast time, she looked at me and said, “I think that’s an excellent idea you have.”

Looking at her, I wondered what she was talking about, so I said, “What are you talking about?”

“You know,” she said with a big smile, “that vacation you’re planning for this coming summer. I think it is a wonderful idea.”

To be truthful, I had been thinking about a special vacation this coming summer, but I hadn’t said anything to her about it up to this point. How in the world does she know I’m thinking about this vacation?

Not knowing what to say, I looked at her, “Where did you ever get that idea?”

With one of her chuckles, she said, “You know. That vacation you were talking about in your sleep last night. I agree with everything you said about it.”

I was a little bit off at this point. I was thinking about that vacation, but I had no idea what I said in my sleep last night. I was afraid to ask her about the details of that vacation.

I’m not sure if I need a psychologist or what! How can I keep from talking in my sleep at night? And, what if while I’m sleeping, I’m talking nonsense and get myself into deep trouble with the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage? Can I really believe that what I say while I’m sleeping is actually true?

Thinking about this for some time, I devised a little plan. One night I would pretend I was asleep and talk in my sleep, or at least pretend to. It took me a while to come up with some ideas, but eventually, I did.

I pretended I was asleep one night, and I began talking around the middle of the night. I said, “I think I’m going to surprise my wife by buying her a brand-new car. After all, she deserves it.”

I thought this might bring some closure to all of these myths about me talking in my sleep.

Finally, I went to sleep and was quite anxious to get up in the morning and hear the response from The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

I was surprised when she said nothing about me talking in my sleep last night. Maybe she fell asleep and didn’t hear me. So, I decided to try it the next night. That following day there was absolutely nothing she said about me talking in my sleep.

I did this for two more nights in a row, and to my surprise, she never even acknowledged that I talked in my sleep.

I wondered if all of this talking in my sleep was just a fantasy from her point of view. I didn’t know what to do next because nothing I was doing was actually working.

Then I decided to do it one more night.

The following day at breakfast, while we were eating, she stared at me, and I said, “Is something wrong?”

“I don’t think that was very funny.”

“What are you talking about?” I asked her.

“You know what I mean, all that talking about buying me a new car, but I know you were not asleep when you said that. You are just trying to trick me, and I’m not going to have anything to do with that.”

I have learned that it is true only when I’m talking in my sleep. When I talk when I’m awake, it is not true. Oh, for the life of a husband!

Then I was reminded of a verse in the Bible. *“For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether”* (Psalm 139:4).

I’m comfortable with knowing God hears everything I say. With that, I need to discipline my tongue and keep it under control.

Dr. James L. Snyder is pastor of the Family of God Fellowship, 1471 Pine Road, Ocala, FL 34472. He lives with his wife in Silver Springs Shores. Call him at 352-687-4240 or e-mail [jamessnyder2@att.net](mailto:jamessnyder2@att.net). The church web site is [www.whatafel-lowship.com](http://www.whatafel-lowship.com)

ALL  
NEW!

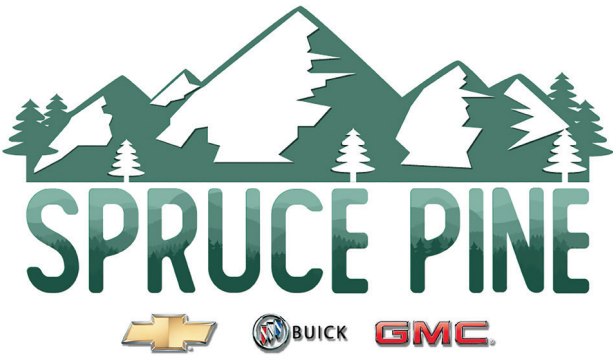


## Spruce Pine Chevrolet Buick GMC!

We are working hard to provide the best customer experience EVER!

- Factory Certified Personnel in every Department
- Genuine GM Parts
- Growing Inventory - New & Pre-owned
- Facility Upgrades Underway
- Factory Certified Service Technicians

*We are upgrading the facility, filling the lot with New and Pre-Owned inventory, and adding staff, All to provide the best customer experience for **YOU!***



36 Chevrolet Boulevard, Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
Phone: (828)765-4234

Jamie Miller, CPA



Jamie M. Miller, CPA, PLLC

1136 Greenwood Road  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777

phone: 828.765.4400  
fax: 828.765.4880

30 Fleming Ave  
Marion, NC 28752

phone: 828.652.6777  
fax: 828.652.6755



[jamie@highcountrycpa.com](mailto:jamie@highcountrycpa.com)  
[www.highcountrycpa.com](http://www.highcountrycpa.com)



# Marlene’s Meditations

## Knitting Designs and Spiritual Patterns

By Marlene Houk  
Burke County



“*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*” Philippians 1:6

The knitting needles clicked, and row one emerged. Puzzled, I glanced at four skimpy stitches cast on her needles. What a tiny dishcloth! I couldn’t imagine washing dishes, wiping counters, and scrubbing pots and pans with an inch-square cloth.

The next evening I again sat beside her on our couch and peered at her knitting. What an amazing difference from the night before! She had increased her stitches with each row and now a beautiful pattern emerged. The finished product would gift me with a useful and long-lasting linen for my kitchen. As I watched her knit, a spiritual analogy occurred to me. Much like a parent sometimes permits a child’s mistakes for maturity’s sake, God uses life’s trials to “grow us in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18).” He allows troubles to create patterns of maturity in us as Christians.

But, like my inability to see her diagonal design in knitting, the pattern of spiritual maturity emerges so slowly that we don’t recognize the spiritual value of an experience, especially in the beginning. This happened to Sarah, Abraham’s wife. Her story is recorded in Genesis but peaks in Hebrews 11:11 as God honors her with a place in the Hall of Faith. She had waited for God’s promise of baby Isaac for twenty-five years. But, in the slow, hard waiting, something amazing formed. The motif of Sarah’s faith slowly emerged: strong, secure, and settled. Verse 11 of Hebrews 11 says, “she judged him faithful who had promised.” The Scripture also declares in this verse that she received physical strength to reach God’s spiritual goal for her. She grew in her relationship with the Lord, and her knowledge of Him catapulted her to the role of our spiritual mother as declared in 1 Peter 3:6. Sarah’s faith and wisdom, slowly gathered in twenty-five years, yielded treasure troves of advice for us to live by today.

Philippians 1:6 describes Sarah’s long journey of faith. The Lord had begun a good work in Sarah about 1898 BC in Genesis 21. He completed His work with the announcement in 64 AD from Hebrews 11:11, almost 2,000 years later. She is our living breathing example of Hebrews 12:2 which says, “*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith,*”

Be encouraged. Your relationship with the Lord rules your circumstances, and you can focus on Jesus no matter the storms that rage around you. Like Sarah, your faith will provide a survival guide for others and will glorify God.

Now, when I wipe kitchen counters and wash dishes with my treasured dish-cloth, I think of how, stitch by stitch, God steadily and gradually forms a pattern of faith in my life for His glory.

*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)*



# RAY’S TREE SERVICE

- **Hazardous Tree Removal**
- **View Clearing**
- **Pruning**
- **Chipper Service**
- **Bucket Truck Service**
- **Hedge Trimming**
- **Hemlock Wooly Adelgid Control**
- **Landscaping & Grading**
- **Retaining Walls**
- **Stump Grinding**

**Certified Arborist • Insured • Free Estimates**  
**Serving This Area 10 Years**

**(828) 467-1113**

# Snow Hill Baptist Church

## No Regrets Family - The Road Less Traveled

By Dean Honeycutt  
Mitchell County



I have always encouraged my children not to give up and to always try even when it seems difficult to succeed. Sometimes we fail, and sometimes we succeed but at least we tried. It is the trying part that is difficult. When we see that something is not worth the effort, we rarely will put forth the effort to try. In other words, why bother if I am not going to succeed or at least see some progress?

I recall a time when my daughter was discouraged from trying out for a middle school basketball team. The girls already on the team were part of a traveling basketball team that she could not be a part of. During the off-season practices, my daughter felt lost and unwelcome because she did not know the drills and routines that others were accustomed to doing. She felt like giving up, but Pam and I encouraged her to try and do her best, and she made the team. We were so proud of her fortitude.

Parents always encourage their children and affirm them in what they do and participate in. We will never know our success until we try. Every child is good at something, even if it is talking, like one of mine. They are the best talker and friendliest people you have ever met. They never fail to thank a veteran for their service, and they can listen to another person’s problems. God has a purpose and place for every child. Parents, it is our responsibility to see our child move in God’s direction. What is God’s direction? God’s will is always associated with His Son Jesus Christ and the proclamation of the Gospel.

Not every child is going to excel at sports or academics. But God has gifted that child with an ability that is far more glorious than the best athlete or smartest person in the room. Parents, we cannot compare our children to other children because God has uniquely designed them for His glory. A child in the hand of God is of great value in God’s work on earth. God can use all hearts submitted to His glory. But often it is not the most talented or the smartest, but the one who is humble before God, that God will use for His glory. Think about David the runt of his family whom God made a king. Mary was a poor peasant, whom God made a mother to Jesus. Peter was an uneducated fisherman God used to build his Church. No, it is not the great and mighty God uses but the poor and humble of this life.

Children are a gift from God and should be protected and nurtured to follow and love the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Our greatest purpose will be in teaching our children to love God and share the Gospel of Christ. Our children will find fulfillment and success in this one life commitment. Just as the disciples in the Bible, if we focus primarily on talents, academics, or credentials and fail in following Jesus then we set ourselves and our children up for disappointment. Every disciple found their greatest fulfillment and effort in the Gospel. That is why Paul could say, “*for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*”

Whether your child may be gifted in academics, art, or sports, or is just average they are fearfully and wonderfully made by God for His glory. Can you imagine a child pursuing a career or path like roads on a GPS map with many various ways to get to a destination? All the roads may have difficulty. But only one road leads to true happiness and fulfillment. It is the road less traveled because it does not promote self-success or achievement. It is the road of self-sacrifice and sometimes at the expense of our desires. This road may be a difficult road that your child does not want to travel. But we must encourage them to try and not give up because this road leads to the destination that will glorify God and bring fulfillment to their life.

No regrets and Happy New Year.

*Pastor Dean Honeycutt shepherds Snow Hill Baptist Church in Bakersville, NC. He may be reached at 828-385-0213, [snowhillbaptist@gmail.com](mailto:snowhillbaptist@gmail.com) , or visit their website at [www.snowhillbaptist.com](http://www.snowhillbaptist.com).*

***And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. Revelation 21:4***



By Doug Harrell  
Mitchell County

As we are entering another New Year hopefully we will all take a few minutes and reflect on the past year, but our main focus will be on the coming year. Having memories of the past is important in that it gives us a basis to move forward. It's a benchmark of the past that we can learn from. The critical point is that we use the past as a stepping stone into the future, a springboard to the new and exciting horizon ahead. So many times, especially when we are up in age, we tend to want to live in the past and lose the joy of anticipation for the adventures that lay ahead. We tend to quit living and dreaming of things to come and instead dwell on our past successes or failures that we have encountered. The old saying that a rolling stone gathers no moss is still true. A lake that has no outlet will soon become dead and our lives are the same way. When we lose our desire to continue to move forward into new ventures and to seek to be of continued service to those around us we lose that spark of interest that is vital to our mental, emotional, and physical well-being.

As a new year comes, stop and reflect on the past year, but realize that it is the past and be determined to live life to the fullest as long as you have breath and can take nourishment. Set aside time by yourself or with your mate if you are blessed to have one and discuss, think about, and set goals for things you would like to experience or make happen in the coming year. Take time and set down the five most important things in your life, and set the priorities. Once you do that, think about what you need to do to put the time into those things that relate to the priorities you have set. The Bible tells us that a man without a vision shall perish, and this is so true. Your age in years is not as critical as the age in your mind. Associate with and cultivate friendships with those that are younger, and you will both gain from the experience. If you are blessed with children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren, invest some time with them.

The relationship that should be of most importance to each of us is the relationship with our Heavenly Father. Are you truly investing in and building this relationship? Reading your Bible on Sunday will probably never help you develop that close personal relationship that bears the fruit of closeness and companionship that we should all crave. We are told that even Jesus arose early before morning light to go spend time in prayer with God. If even Jesus felt the need, how about you and me? In just the past week or so I have lost some friends. The losses saddened me and made me realize even more how short our days are on this old earth.



The last thing I want to address is to live for today and enjoy the journey of life. Life is not a destination but a continual journey. I wrote earlier about looking for ways to do more in the coming years but make sure those things that you are focusing on are things of eternal importance, not things on this earth that will rust and fade away. Don't worry so much about your barns being full, your bank account being fat, and your car and house being the best on the block. Worry instead about the impact you will have on your family, friends, and neighbors. Will your having been here make a difference in their lives? Your legacy will be measured by the lives that you touched, not the money you left.

Have a wonderful and blessed New Year!

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



**WSVM 96.5**  
1490

*The Best Mix On The Dial*



**Thank you for 50 years!**  
**Heating Hearts And Homes**

**WWW.BUCKSTOVE.COM**

**Unmatched People, Unmatched Product, Unmatched Pride**



**Manufacturer of Wood Stoves, Gas Hearth Products, and Outdoor Leisure Items  
to include a full line of Outdoor Furniture, Fire Pits, Grills and More!**

Find the dealer nearest you by using our Dealer  
Locator on our website, or Visit our showroom located at:  
200 Ethan Allen Drive • Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
**828-765-6144 • info@buckstove.com**



# What Does It Mean To Be A Disciple?

continued from page 9

in His redemptive plan for mankind! Romans 8:17 describes us being “*heirs and joint heirs in Christ Jesus*.” This verse is most commonly used to point us to the spiritual blessings that we have in Christ Jesus (which is indeed true) but there is a deeper aspect of what we “share” with Christ. We are not only called to share in the blessings but we are called to share in the LABOR and THE SUFFERING of Christ! As Christians, we aren’t purposed to just sit around and personally benefit from the blessings of Christ; these blessings enable us to effectively labor (or work) in the cause of Christ and even endure the suffering that comes along with laboring for Him! The second implication of discipleship is this: a disciple takes Christ’s side! Just as we take sides in sports, politics, and even arguments, following Christ means taking His side! To take Jesus’ side is to take upon His reasoning, His perspective, His passion, and His truth! You may ask, “Well how is this possible?” 1 Corinthians 2:16 reminds us that, “*We have the MIND of CHRIST*,” because we’ve been given His mind we can take His side! Christ’s side leaves no room for partiality, but only truth and righteousness!

Father in Jesus’ name we glorify you for who you are! We thank you that you have called us your disciples. Father, we ask that you forgive us for where we have had the wrong idea and perspective regarding discipleship. Cause the Holy Spirit to rise within us to stir up a holy passion and desire to seek you, die to self, walk in the divine purpose you’ve given to us, and follow you wholeheartedly. Lord cause us to be radical disciples for your namesake and your glory! In Jesus’ name, we pray.....AMEN, AND IT IS SO!

*Cody T. McCain Sr. is the owner, funeral director, and embalmer of McCain Funeral Home & Cremations, LLC located in Morganton. He, along with his wife Shaunda, have a passion to serve their community with the love, integrity, and excellence of Christ.*

**BEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH**  
*Welcomes You to*  
*Celebrate Recovery*  
**Thursdays at 7:00pm**  
*Hope & Help from*  
*Addiction Through Christ*



**Voted Best Breakfast & Salad Bar  
in Morganton**

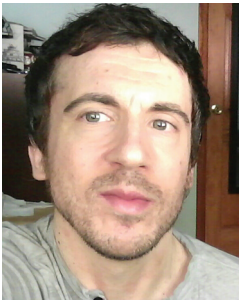
**I-40 at Exit 105**

**Morganton, NC**  
**828-433-5400**

# New Writer

## A Wedding Invitation and Procrastination

By Aaron Caruso  
Connecticut



How avoiding confrontation at any cost became the heaviest price to pay

Wedding Invitations are usually few and far between, but there was a time when I received two invitations in a matter of months, and it was an honor to receive them both. Nevertheless, I never responded to the second wedding invitation, nor mentioned to my friend that I had even received it.

You may be asking yourself why I never responded to the second invitation. I’ve asked myself that same question too, and I assure you - my lack of response had no malicious intent. But as you could probably guess, my silence led to an estranged friendship. I completely disappeared because of embarrassment and procrastination. If I could go back in time, I would do things differently. I’d quickly respond to my friend’s wedding invitation and explain to him why I couldn’t attend. Let me fill you in on those details.


When I was at my other friend’s wedding, I had a great time, but my drive home was a nightmare. About two hours into my five-hour journey, my car suddenly broke down. After a long wait in the middle of the night, a tow truck finally came to bring me to the nearest town with a car repair shop and hotel. The repairs were costly, but I still felt blessed to return home unscathed. However, I came to realize that my car was unreliable for road trips, and I was sure that my old, worn-out vehicle would leave me stranded if I ignored my better judgment and hit the road again. It was now just barely getting me around town, and there was no way I could push my car beyond its limits without dire consequences. When I received the second wedding invitation and saw that the ceremony was hundreds of miles away, I knew I couldn’t attend.

Not driving to the wedding was the right decision, but not telling my friend why I couldn’t come was one of the most boneheaded decisions of my life. Had I told him, maybe he would have connected me with someone I could’ve gotten a ride with, or maybe he would have simply said that he understood my situation. I’ll never know for sure because I never gave him the chance. What I do know for sure is that he wouldn’t have been upset or offended at all, because he was one of the kindest and most easygoing friends I’ve ever had.


I didn’t see my friend again until about a year after his wedding. I had completely lost touch with him because I was ashamed to call and say, “Hey, how are you? Oh, by the way, I’m sorry that I never responded to your wedding invitation.” But in reality, that’s exactly what I should have done. When I bumped into him at the mall, he was his normal smiling self, yet I could still feel the tension from the elephant in the room. Some things needed to be said, but I must confess that I failed to say them. I stuck to safe, small talk until we parted ways. My opportunity to make amends had been totally wasted, and it was yet again embarrassment and procrastination that stopped me from doing the right thing.

That was the last time I saw my friend. A short time later, I left the area to seek new opportunities after my college graduation. The future looks bright, but there’s still something I need to rectify from my past. Because I don’t have my friend’s current phone number or email, I tried finding him on social media and search engines, but he’s nowhere to be found. So it’s time to make a public apology. Wayne, I’m sorry that I never explained to you why I couldn’t attend your wedding, nor even had the decency to RSVP when I received your invitation. I believe that you, of all people, would have been gracious and understanding. This is long overdue, but I want to say thank you very much for inviting me to your wedding. And if I ever find you, you’ll be receiving an invitation to my future wedding in the mail.

*Aaron Caruso is a freelance writer. Some of his articles are published with Today’s Christian Living, The Upper Room, The Secret Place, and Prayer Connect. His passion is to inspire and encourage others to live the more abundant life in Christ.*



## Auto Insurance Made In North Carolina





**828-652-4525**

**Kenneth W. Day**  
FSS, LUTC  
Agency Manager  
kenneth.day@ncfbins.com

Real service. Real people.

An Authorized Agency for

  
BlueCross BlueShield  
of North Carolina



NC000000001  
\*North Carolina Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Company  
\*Farm Bureau Insurance of North Carolina, Inc.  
\*Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company, Jackson, MS  
\*An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association

**Auto • Home • Life • Health • Bank**



By Jim Smith  
McDowell County

Michael Fox is the newest member of Heart Cry. Michael has a gift and passion for music. He came to Freedom Life several years back by meeting Danny Hampton in the prison during Sunday worship meetings. Michael began to talk with Danny and share his passion to play guitar and assist in the music portion of the worship services. God began to sculpt Michael's heart into a place where he wanted to change and move into a better place after leaving prison. Every day was one day closer for Michael to leave the prison and begin a new life. The excitement began to build. His dedication to prayer and to dig deeper into God's word was becoming evident to those around him. Soon after exiting his term in prison - Freedom Life began to work with Michael to help him have the most successful reentry he could back into the McDowell Community.



For many, I would like to explain what reentry really looks like. In the prerelease stage, the offender begins setting into motion the plans for his or her transition into the community. One of the most important elements for the client to address is their housing and employment plans. These two elements are the foundation of settings a positive lifestyle in motion, along with spiritual and life coaching skill management. Freedom Life begins to give coaching with capacities of survival needs—a place to live, a place to work, food on the table, and people to love. The attention to these basic details will give stability to the clients. But, it is equally necessary to alert the client to changes that have taken place in the community since his or her incarceration. For example, some local police departments are alerting offenders about changes in policing, including greater collaboration with correctional and community entities, that have occurred during the offender's incarceration. The police department also reports to the offender that police officers are well aware of who has returned to the community, thus reducing the anonymity of the offender. Alerting the offender to these and other socio-political changes helps the adjustment process. One interesting fact that was shared with me recently in an interview with a client that has been incarcerated for a longer amount of time, what the rapid technological change. While in prison, clients do not necessarily know about the advances in technology, electric cars, or the changes that came about in society because of Covid, and many times they enter a world that has progressed way beyond their scope of understanding.



The early stages of release usually focus on the offender's perception of adjustment in the community and a reassessment of criminogenic factors. That is, it is critical to have the offender begin to assess the degree to which he or she is vulnerable to involvement in criminal behavior. If the reentry process has a pre-release phase that develops a reasonable plan for the offender, then the purpose of the post-release phase should be to stabilize the offender by making sure that more attention is paid to the quality of life issues. More attention is given to the offender's survival needs and determining how these impact the offender's ability to maintain a crime-free lifestyle. The transition from prison to the community is complex, intertwined with balancing the needs of society with the needs of the individual offender. Society at large is concerned with safety first and foremost. People look towards public agencies to ensure that returning offenders are "safe" and will not commit violent acts in their communities. Immense concerns about safety emerge over the past two decades, in which decay and blight were heightened by criminal activities of drug dealers and random acts of violence committed by offenders under parole supervision. While the needs of society to protect itself are evident, the returning offender is ensnared in a web of social, economic, and psychological needs. Part of the dilemma is how best to engage the offender in the reentry process, and the process that supports the offender to be accountable for his/her own behavior. The nature of prisons and prisonization dilutes the offender's sense of responsibility. It is important for reentry to occur in a manner that empowers the offender to be a productive citizen contributing to the community. The reentry process must be directed toward ensuring that the offender assumes responsibility and control for his/ her own behavior. The success of reentry will be measured by the offender's integration into the community and his or her assumption of more responsibility for a prosocial, crime-free lifestyle. From Michael: God has thoroughly changed my perspective of who He is, and who I am in Him. I am fearfully and wonderfully made in His image. I was not made to fit into an image of a Christian according to the world's standards. The only image for any of us truly is that of His Son Jesus. I spent over 20 years in addiction. I used


it all to numb the pain of my own brokenness. I struggled with worthlessness and rejection. I found myself listening to the wrong voices and believing the lies of the enemy. I found myself incarcerated in 2013 and Jesus met me there, where I was. He came into the midst of my mess to give me a message of His love for me. I grew up in church but never truly knew the love of God until I found myself in jail. There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God. I am now alive as I have never been and free from the bonds of addiction. While incarcerated I met Danny Hampton and Scott Kelley. They showed me through their actions just how much God loved me. Through Godly counsel from Danny God has turned my rejection into acceptance and is showing me just how much He values me. It was there that Danny invited me to join Heart Cry and be a part of Freedom Life. It is truly a privilege and honor to be able to be a voice of encouragement to those battling the same struggles I have faced. I love seeing the miracle of God's grace and mercy in the lives of those around me and look forward to seeing what He is going to do tomorrow. God is not done. He has always been faithful in my life, working things out behind the scenes that I never thought I would see. And I can't wait to see what He is going to do with this ministry.

Jim Smith is an area Worship Arts Director, He is the Development Director at Freedom Life Ministries, and run a production company wjscreativegroup.com

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

START SOMETHING NEW

SALES EVENT






NEW Ram 2500 Big Horn Crew Cab 4X4

SIGNATURE EDITION by SHERROD Customs  
6.7 Liter Cummins Diesel, Leather, Heated Seats, Navigation

Don't Miss This One!!



NEW 2022 Jeep Wrangler Unlimited Sahara 4X4

8.4" Touch Screen Navigation, Body Color 3 Piece Hard Top  
3.6 Liter V6 Engine

WINTER TIME READY!!

Pre-Ordering YOUR Vehicle NOW

1. Customize a new vehicle to your liking

2. We will place your order

3 You pay a risk-free & refundable \$4 Deposit

4. Factory will build the vehicle and ship to us

5. You take delivery of your beautiful new vehicle or Can complete the purchase remotely and we will Ship to your home or office

6. Bonus: Free Shipping within a 150-mile radius!





44 Worley Road

Marion, NC 28752

(828) 559-9014



It Takes Focus

By Caron Cline  
Burke County



Forty years ago, the thought of stepping into a new millennium seemed almost ludicrous. Yet this generation is entering the 23rd year of the 21st century and the days are evaporating as quickly as the dew. One never knows what the future holds and what a blessing that can be! Will the events of this year produce prosperity and peace or be filled with trouble and anxiety? The course of the year will follow our focus. Will we allow our thoughts to be drawn to those things that are emotionally draining, physically demanding, and spiritually defeating? Or will we allow our thoughts to be drawn to the promises of God? A spirit of oppression hovers over the lives of too many believers these days and one must remain diligent and intentional in order to experience the victorious and abundant Christian life. The writer of the book of Hebrews reminds believers to fix their eyes on Jesus, the author and the finisher of their faith. Our Lord set His eyes toward the cross and the redemption His sacrifice would purchase. Every drop of the Savior’s blood was spilled at Calvary as all mankind’s sins fell upon Him; indeed, He actually became sin. Despite the horror of the cross, Jesus kept His eyes on fulfilling the will of His Father. This concentrated focus produced a supernatural joy that no suffering could erase. Hebrews 12:3 promises that fixing our eyes on Jesus and His sacrifice will protect believers from becoming weary and losing heart. After all, no one has ever experienced the anguish of body, soul, and spirit that Jesus experienced. We have no reason to drown in discouragement. Our lives are hidden with Christ in God, according to Colossians 3:3. No safer refuge exists, and focusing on this truth radically changes one’s perspective. The promises in God’s Word are opportunities to overcome the deceptive forces assaulting hearts and minds. Despite the waves that may crash over the ships of our lives in 2023, fixing our eyes on Jesus will lead us safely to shore. Beholding the face of our Lord reminds us that all the promises of God are ‘yes’ and ‘amen’ in Him. The word of God is filled with amazing promises which will be released in time of need. (2 Corinthians 1:20) Focusing on Jesus also reminds us that He will never leave us nor forsake us. He is a ‘with us’ God, Who understands every situation and has the solution before the problem even arises. (Hebrews 13:5) Fixing our eyes on Christ will remind us that He works all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purposes. The size of the storm is inconsequential, for He is completely sovereign over everything and will use it for good. The key to abundant life is remaining focused on Jesus Christ. Our footsteps will follow our focus and by beholding Him, we will become more like Him, walking as He walked, loving as He loved, and overcoming as He overcame.

*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.*

**Out of town? You can still read the "Good News" on our new Website: [www.brcnews.com](http://www.brcnews.com) And find us on Facebook**

Sudoku

*Solution on page 14*

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

A Foolish Question?

By Ken and Jan Merop  
Cleveland, Tennessee



Have you ever wanted to ask a question but held back so you wouldn’t appear foolish? I think we all have done that at one time or another. Why is it that we would rather remain unknowledgeable than ask? Embarrassment. We simply don’t want to appear foolish. But when someone hesitates to ask me a question, I encourage them to ask. After all, we can’t know everything and I remind them that no question is foolish. Yet, recently, I found myself doing just that. We had just finished watching the practice session of our youth group’s pantomime for a program at church. I was almost 100% sure I understood it; so, I felt a little embarrassed to ask. But then I just put that aside and presented my question. Contrary to feeling foolish, I was glad I had asked. My question encouraged the youth leader and the youth to know that their performance had definitely delivered the intended message. I felt better knowing that if I had received it, others would, too. In the everyday circumstances of life, we are often confronted with challenging situations. These challenges raise questions. But rather than ask, we sometimes plunge ahead in our own limited knowledge. When we fall flat on our faces, we really feel foolish. The Bible addresses this in chapter 1 of the book of James when referring to trials and temptations. It even says to count these ‘intruders’ as joy because through these trials our faith is tested and the virtue of patience is produced. No matter the dilemma (even if it’s after the fact), the Bible teaches us that God wants us to come to him and ask for help. We read in James 1: 5, NKJV, “*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*” “Without reproach” really jumped out at me one day. This means that when I come to God with my questions, not only will he answer; but he will not be condescending. He will not make me feel foolish or guilty for asking. But the Lord wants us to come to him with a believing heart that is pulsing with faith not doubt – knowing the One I come to will answer. Will I hear an audible voice? Not likely. But God has already addressed the issues of life in his Word, the Bible. So, be sensitive to how he may lead us in Scripture or even the spoken word of other believers. God is not limited in how he will answer. So, ask. Selah

FROSTY COVERING

*The quiet expectation alive within the snowy atmosphere was an invitation for us to walk slowly under its canopy. As we inhaled the clean mountain air and observed the delicate etchings of the snow’s designs, we luxuriated in the artistry of our Creator’s hand. “All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.” Colossians 1: 16 & 17*



*After six years in the mountains of Avery County, Ken and Jan Merop are now living in the hilly Tennessee countryside of Cleveland, TN...just outside of Chattanooga. Ken’s photos can be seen at [kenmeropphotography.com](http://kenmeropphotography.com).*



As It Were in the Days of Lot

By Todd Abraham  
Athens, Tenn.



THE EPIDEMIC LEVELS OF PORNOGRAPHY:

1. 56% of divorces report obsessive use / 70% of total divorces / 60 % of legal filings
2. 47% of men report their viewing is getting darker
3. 25% of all online searches and 35% of all downloads are related to pornography.
4. 47% of families in the United States reported that pornography is a problem in their homes.
5. According to the National Coalition for the Protection of Children & Families, 2010, 68% of divorce cases involve one party meeting someone over the Internet,
6. 96 hours a year watching on average/ low end
7. A Study on Australians ages 15-29 found that 100% of the men (82% of women) had viewed porn. Also, 69 percent of males and 23 percent of females first viewed porn at age 13 or younger. In addition, this study reported that more frequent pornography viewing correlated with mental health problems.
8. The estimated number of people who have a sexual addiction in the United States alone: is 12 to 30 million.
9. 66% of Internet-using 18- to 34-year-old men look at online pornography at least once a month.
10. The percentage of internet sites that are pornographic in nature right now: is 12%.
11. 2.5 billion emails per day are pornographic-related in some way.
- 66% of Internet-using 18- to 34-year-old men look at online pornography at least once a month.
12. 94% of sex addicts have filmed themselves having sex.
13. 3 out of 4 addicts have admitted that they regularly post naked photos of themselves online.
14. 73% of women and 98% of men reported internet porn use in the last 6 months, with 31% of internet porn users presenting anxiety symptoms when deprived of porn (source).

More than half of the men who identify themselves as Evangelical Christians admit that they have a pornography addiction and used it in the last week for self-satisfaction.

15. 62% of pastors struggle with porn addiction

THE ECONOMICS OF THE PORN INDUSTRY:

1. \$184,500 spent every minute

The pornography industry in the US generates \$12 billion in revenue per year.

2. A dated study from 2006 shows the porn industry is worth an estimated 97 billion dollars, globally, however, it has only increased.
3. In the United States alone, two hard-core pornographic movies are released every hour.
4. It is estimated that just in San Fernando Valley, the industry employs 20,000 people.
5. Mindgeek alone (which owns many of the largest porn sites) is valued at \$1.69 billion

PORN, TRAFFICKING, AND YOUTH:

1. The average child is now first exposed to Internet porn at age 11.
2. Under the age of 10 accounts for 22% of the porn consumption of minors
3. “57% of teens search out porn at least monthly”
4. 51% of male students and 32% of female students first viewed porn before their teenage years.
5. The first exposure to pornography among men is 12 years old, on average.
6. 10% of children in the 7th grade have stated that they are watching enough porn to be concerned that they may have an addiction issue and not be able to stop.
7. Under the age of 10 now account for 22% of online porn consumption under 18 -years old.
8. “90% of teens are either encouraging, accepting, or neutral when they talk about porn with their friends”
9. The Crimes against Children Research Center says that 1 in 5 teenagers have received a sexual solicitation via the web.
10. Only “about 25 percent of the youth who encountered a sexual approach or solicitation told a parent.”
11. “Nearly 27% of teens receive sexts”
12. Around 15% are sending them.
13. One out of 7 kids have received a solicitation of porn and 100K websites offer illegal child pornography.
14. “79 percent of young people’s unwanted exposure to pornography occurs in the home.”
15. “Per Google Analytics, pornography searches increase by 4,700% released a report when children are out of school.”
16. Victims of childhood sexual abuse often repeat a pattern of abuse in a subconscious attempt to gain control over their childhood trauma
17. The most common two methods of first exposure are 1) accidental online and 2) exposure by a friend or relative

LEGAL ISSUES & TRAFFICKING:

1. 70% of female trafficking victims are trafficked into the commercial sex industry, including porn, stripping, and legal brothels.
2. 4.8 MILLION people are trapped in forced sexual exploitation globally
3. A 2015 meta-analysis of 22 studies from seven countries found that internationally the consumption of pornography was significantly associated with increases

in verbal and physical aggression, among males and females alike.

4. Human trafficking is the fastest-growing criminal enterprise of the 21st century.
5. 1/3 of total daily searches on porn sites are for “teen porn.” ([121] Watson, Connie. "The Globalization of Sex." CBC News. CBC/Radio Canada, 18 June 2009. Web. 06 Jan. 2015. )

My name is Todd Abraham. I'm an evangelist of the gospel of Jesus Christ and publisher of Heartbeat Christian News which has been in publication for 9 years now by the grace of God. You can read all about it at [www.HBCNewsMonthly.com](http://www.HBCNewsMonthly.com).

**Join Our Mission**

**REVIVE** Biblical support for our citizens, communities, employees, and elected officials by providing an avenue for aid, advocacy, accountability, and awareness.

PO Box 2567 Marion, NC 28752  
[www.CPRforYourCounty.org](http://www.CPRforYourCounty.org) • [support@cprformcdowell.org](mailto:support@cprformcdowell.org)

Christian

Voter Guides

**Catawba River**  
**BAPTIST ASSOCIATION**

*...partnering with churches to reach communities for Christ*

Visit our Website at [crbanc.org](http://crbanc.org)  
Follow us on Facebook and Instagram

**(828) 397-7154 • (828) 397-6941**  
301 Main Ave • East Hildebran, NC 28637  
[www.Billsewing.com](http://www.Billsewing.com) • email: [brs@billsewing.com](mailto:brs@billsewing.com)

*For all your Home and Industrial Sewing Equipment Needs!*

**Visit Our Quilt Shop**

**Janome Sewing Equipment**  
Over 1500 Bolts of Fabrics and that is not all  
Check our website for specials

**M-F 8:00am – 5:00pm**



# Marion Aglow Lighthouse

## Marion Aglow Explores the River of God

By Marion Stephan  
McDowell County



Ezekiel 1:1 describes how the prophet Ezekiel, as he lay by the river Chebar, saw heaven open and experienced visions of God. Similarly, asserts author and prophetic teacher Ruth Magiacapre, Christians are now positioned by the river of God, about to move with the current into a new era.

Mangiacapre delivered these words during the Marion Aglow Lighthouse's December 10 meeting at His Place Worship Center in Marion. She was speaking on "Releasing Prophetic Keys for the New Era."

When we enter the river, she said, it "over-floods and overflows us... It's not that we are out of control. It's the ultimate test that you're going to be in the river of God, where you are moved by the current. You don't resist the current, you are moved by it."

When many churches were shut down during the early stages of Covid-19, Mangiacapre noted, "God used this pivotal time in history" to "call His people back to their first love." Now we are entering a new era, a "time in history that will never be seen again." God is "cultivating a new wineskin" in us. In addition, "the post-Covid wine will not be able to be contained in the pre-Covid skin."

"There are rivers on the inside of us – it's not a river, but there are rivers," Mangiacapre told the listeners. "And one thing I love about a river is that it will find its way around resistance." We may sense that "things are tense and crazy in the earth." We may be hearing disturbing political news. However, "It doesn't matter. The river of God within us will be able to navigate around all that stuff, and we will be able to stay in the flow of the Spirit of God..."

Sometimes, she said, our concerns with home responsibilities or the "burdens of this, that, and the other thing" cause us to leave the river and travel down tributaries. Yet the tributaries lead nowhere. However, the river of God leads to areas where "everything grows, fruit grows." The river of God "flows into dead areas and it brings forth life."

If we remain in the river, if we are flooded with "the understanding that there are rivers on the inside of us," revival will follow, she said. "It's not like we're waiting for revival." We "become revival... We become the move of God."

She noted that the most important keys for remaining in the river of God are reflected in the seven spirits listed in Isaiah 11:1. These spirits begin with the Holy Spirit, followed by "the Spirit of wisdom and understanding/the Spirit of counsel and might/the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."

The Holy Spirit Himself is "the door to the seven spirits of God." The baptism of the Spirit begins with the gift of tongues – our "prayer language." Then it expands into "the full comprehension - the full understanding - of the seven Spirits of God."

The Spirit of wisdom, she explained, is "not just words," but "the mind of God.... The Lord overshadows our minds with the mind of God." The Spirit of understanding involves transformation, an awareness of God's purpose for us.

The Spirit of counsel involves coming together to strategize, to move into alignment with God's plans. It occurs when believers say, "'Let's gather together. Let's pray. Let's ask the spirit of wisdom. Let's get in that place of listening.'"

The Spirit of might is "the finishing endurance, the power of God to keep you physically well to endure to finish the race."

The Spirit of knowledge involves understanding the signs of the times and the events occurring in the world around us. "We're at war. You can know this is what's happening when you have knowledge." The Spirit of the fear of the Lord will "cause people to repent" and will "bring justice and righteousness."

We are surrounded by disquieting events such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine and rumors of World War III. However, she asserted, darkness may cover the earth but "His glory will be seen on His people. So when we step into the full understanding of the Spirit of God at work in us, and we avail ourselves to be the tabernacle of his presence, glory will dispel darkness."

The Marion Aglow Lighthouse meets the second Saturday of each month at 10 am, at His Place Worship Center, 1423 Highway 70 West, Marion, North Carolina, and on Facebook Live. The January 14 meeting will feature a videotaped prophetic word that Dutch Sheets delivered during Aglow International's "We Know" conference in November 2022.

Dutch Sheets is an author, speaker, teacher, preacher, and founder of Dutch Sheets Ministries. Through "Give Him 15®," his daily prayer and podcast ministry, he leads a prayer for the nations via YouTube videos, the "Give Him 15" mobile app, and other media outlets.

Additional information about the Lighthouse, including links to the Facebook Live meetings, are available at Marion Aglow's website and Facebook page: <https://aglownet.org/marionnc/> and <https://www.facebook.com/marionaglow2022/>, respectively.

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

**Out of town? You can still read the  
"Good News" on our new Website:  
[www.brcnews.com](http://www.brcnews.com)  
And find us on Facebook**

## Carhartt Accessories for Men, Women, and Children. Extraordinary Warmth for Cold Winter Months



FLEECE 2-IN-1 HAT



WOOL BLEND SOCKS



WINTER DEX II  
INSULATED GLOVE

# Grassy Creek CLOTHING

12451 Hwy 226 S., Spruce Pine (828) 766-7502

[www.grassycreekclothing.com](http://www.grassycreekclothing.com)

Mon-Sat 8:30am-5:30pm

Closed Sunday  
-Go to Church



Buck Stove



Rinnai Heater

## Come In and Check Out Our Great Selection of Stoves and Heaters!



Toyostove



Vermont Casting



274 Oak Avenue  
Spruce Pine, NC 28777  
Phone: (828) 765- 5557

Check out our website that is now live at [www.L-Lfurniture.com](http://www.L-Lfurniture.com)



# Pleasant Hill Baptist Church

# The Magi's Story

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



God's Messiah has arrived on planet earth! The birth of Jesus has already taken place. Meanwhile, another story is brewing in a distant land. It is the story of Persian magi. Here is his story:

There it was right before my weary eyes. I had been studying sacred writings for months on end. I and my esteemed colleagues in the institute had collected scrolls filled with religious writings from far and wide. Most of the priests and teachers belonged to a priestly cast of seekers, both clerics, and scholars. Our search was for truth. Our quest was unquenchable. We scoured religion, science, astronomy, and the sciences for the priceless truths that would benefit humanity. We taught astrology, medicine, and the natural sciences in the institute—but our real passion (my real passion) was learning and seeking after the truth. To be perfectly honest, I was seeking my own personal deliverer. Stories and narratives came from everywhere; from all peoples, tongues, tribes, and nationalities. There were similar stories; for instance, there were several creation stories. Deliverance stories were always a big hit—and indeed, they did especially perk my interest. But I was looking for something that would change the world. I was looking for evidence of a God who cared enough about me to offer me a deep personal relationship.

Our country, Persia, once a huge empire, had at one time conquered and enslaved the people of Israel. Great men from among their number had risen to prominence and influence among our kings and princes. One of them was Daniel. The Hebrews had brought with them their sacred scrolls. It was the stories contained in these scrolls that drew me in. I was intrigued and mesmerized. And at the same time, hopeful.

I found what I was looking for in one of those obscure scrolls written by this “Ibri” (a Hebrew) whose name was Musa (Moses). In my extensive historical studies, I had found that the great God, Jehovah, had chosen this man to lead the “Ivreet” (Hebrew) peoples out of bondage from Egypt, just as He had delivered His people from bondage to my own country. Musa was responsible for chronicling much of the early Jewish histories and I was fascinated by these stories of a God who loved and cared about His people. This God, Jehovah, desired to walk with His people, lead them, and guide them—and ultimately, save them from their calamities and sins.

There it was—In the scroll of “Berisheet” (Genesis). “*In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed*” (Genesis 22:18) and “*Judah will hold the royal scepter, And his descendants will always rule. Nations will bring him tribute and bow in obedience before him*” (Genesis 49:10) That’s when I got the idea. If I should find this new ruler, then I would bring Him precious gifts and bow in reverence and obedience to him.

Before I knew it, these prophesies were jumping off the pages of the scrolls. The evidence was overwhelming. The Jewish prophet Yeshaya (Isaiah) wrote, *“But the LORD will still give you proof. A virgin is pregnant; she will have a son and will name him Immanuel”* (Isaiah 7:14). He foretold, *“A child is born to us! A son is given to us! And he will be our ruler. He will be called, “Wonderful Counselor,” “Mighty God,” “Eternal Father,” “Prince of Peace.”* (Isaiah 9:6) He went on to write, *“What I saw in my vision hasn’t happened yet. But someday, a king of Israel will appear like a star”* In the scroll of “Bema-daber” (Numbers), the same words appeared again. *“I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; A star shall come forth from Jacob, A scepter shall rise from Israel, And shall crush through the forehead of Moab, And tear down all the sons of Sheth.”* (Numbers 24:17).

That was it! It all started making sense to me—this great God, Jehovah, was about to send a new king into this world; one who would rule over all. He would come as a child and He would come for all of us. His power and dominion would be the likes of nothing ever seen nor witnessed in the annals of history. Not even great Persia could stand in comparison.

So, I began to share these obscure prophesies with my colleagues. I continued to search through Hebrew Scriptures, even as I made the rounds with my learned colleagues—trying to ascertain in much greater detail the particulars of time and place. I searched for signs, and indicators of the impending entrance of this Jewish Messiah, who offered to be a Savior for all peoples of the earth.

We were searching the stars each evening, looking in the heavens for the star that would signal that this great Messiah and king was born. Then one evening, high in the western night sky, we found the star. That settled it. We had to go! We must immediately set out and search for this newborn baby—who was destined to become the ruler of the world.

The prophetic scriptures only told us that this Jewish Messiah would be born somewhere in the land of the Jews. So, it was absolutely necessary for us to first go to the center of Judaism, Jerusalem. There, we would inquire from those learned Jewish scholars to see if there were any further prophetic scriptures, perhaps missing from our volumes, that would shed light on exactly where the child would be born.

I had convinced many of my friends and colleagues to go along. It really didn't take much convincing—for they were as excited as I was. So, we began making preparations for the long journey westward. It took us a couple of weeks: to gather our provisions; purchase the camels and other animals needed to make a long desert journey, procure the proper papers of passage that would be needed along the way; and secure our finest gifts that would be offered to the Messiah-King. Our caravan set out just a couple of weeks after we had sighted the star. Our excitement and anticipation had rallied many to our noble cause. The desert trek

[www.brcnews.com](http://www.brcnews.com)

was often treacherous and brutal. We couldn't afford to be vandalized or set upon by thieves. Our mission was too important. The priceless gifts must be guarded by experienced men who would safeguard both us and our cargo. These costly, precious riches only fit for a king could only be laid down at the feet of the Messiah-King.

Along with our wives, children, servants, and armed guards, we started the journey with goats, donkeys, and camels. We traveled for months and finally arrived in Jerusalem. This great traveling caravan of regally robed astrologers and noblemen made quite a stir when we entered the city. That's what we wanted. We wanted to draw the attention of the rulers—hoping that we might even gain an entrance to the local Jewish king's estate. Only he would have the pull to gather his most knowledgeable priests and scribes. Surely, they would have knowledge of further prophecies which would help pinpoint the exact location of the birth of the Messiah-King.

It worked! We were ushered into the presence of King Herod. He seemed taken back by the whole ordeal when we inquired, “*Where is He who has been born King of the Jews for we have seen His star in the east, and have come to worship Him.*” No doubt, a strange question to ask of a sitting king—but Herod quickly rebounded to place his best scholars on a hasty search of the scriptures. They found what they were looking for in the scroll of “Micha” (Micah), “*But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.*” (Micah 5:2)

Although there were many towns named Bethlehem, the prophecy was unmistakable. This was the small town “Bethlehem-Judah” of which the inhabitants were called Ephrathites. It was actually the birthplace of the famous Jewish King David. It all made sense. The same star that had shown so brilliantly when we departed our homeland, now led us to a little town a short distance from Jerusalem. There, we found the young child and his mother. His father, Joseph, had rented a flat.

I tell you—the moment we laid our eyes on this child, joy, and awe exploded from our hearts. We fell down on our knees in worship and admiration. Tears fell down our cheeks as we beheld our King. You see, He wasn't just Israel's king—He was my king too. And at that very moment, I found the answer to all of the questions of my searching heart. Yeshua (Jesus) was truly the One for whom I had been seeking all of my life.

We had brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh, the most precious and priceless commodities available to us. And we laid these gifts before God's Messiah. But, the most valuable gift that I gave Jesus that night—was myself. I am His and He is mine forever more.

A wise man once shared with me that the best gift is one that is: unexpected; given with genuine joy; personal; lasting; and on time. What gifts will you continue to give as you come to worship our Savior, Redeemer, and King?

*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.*



**PROUDLY LOCAL.  
PROUDLY NORTH  
CAROLINIAN.**

# MITCHELL CO. FARM BUREAU

## Spruce Pine

**828-765-9678**

## Bakersville

**828-688-3745**



Auto • Home • Life • Health • Bank

An Authorized Agency for



**BlueCross BlueShield  
of North Carolina**

**URCSUB/E-27A**

\*North Carolina Farm Bureau® Mutual Insurance Company \*Farm Bureau® Insurance  
of North Carolina, Inc. \*Southern Farm Bureau® Life Insurance Company, Jackson, MS  
\*An independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association



# Your Government Page

## NC Senate District 47



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

We have an alarming and growing opioid epidemic in our country and our state. In March 2022, the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services reported that in 2020 there were an average of eight opioid overdose deaths per day in North Carolina. While a significant number of opioid deaths are due to drugs being brought across our southern border illegally, an overdose of legally prescribed opioids has been and continues to be a cause of death.

To combat the rising problem of opioid addiction and deaths, N.C. General Assembly passed The STOP Act, signed into law in 2017, kickstarting our state's efforts to improve opioid prescribing practices, increase the availability of opioid antagonists, and designate certain Schedule II and III drugs as "targeted controlled substances." Although the two years following the passage of The STOP Act saw a decline in opioid deaths and overdoses, deaths and overdoses increased significantly in 2020, which many have attributed to the pandemic.

Several years back, states began suing both pharmaceutical companies that produce opioids and retailers that distribute them. Last February, as part of a national settlement, pharmaceutical companies AmerisourceBergen, Cardinal, Johnson & Johnson, and McKesson agreed to pay out \$26 billion. Our state's share of this settlement is \$750 million. Among retail pharmacies, in November, Walmart agreed to a \$3.1 billion settlement with 43 states, including North Carolina. And, in December, Walgreens and CVS agreed to an \$11 billion national settlement.

Settlements awarded are determined by population and level of severity of opioid abuse. Settlement funds will be directed toward services and programs to aid those suffering from opioid addiction, with a focus on overdose prevention, harm reduction, and substance use treatment services.

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

## NC Commissioner of Labor



NC Commissioner of Labor  
Josh Dobson  
1-800-625-2267

The month of December was quite a busy month for me. The Christmas season was in full swing at the N.C. Department of Labor. My schedule was filled with events, parties, and activities. I was blessed to travel and see many of our employees that work across the state in our regional offices. I was also very happy about the time to spend the holidays with my family and friends.

The N.C. Department of Labor held its 24th consecutive Toys for Tots drive benefiting the Marine Toys for Tots Foundation on Dec. 14. Thanks to our partners and our regional offices in Raleigh, Charlotte, Asheville, Winston-Salem, and Wilmington, we had our overall best year ever! We collected 1,478 toys, which included 10 bicycles/trikes, and had \$4,300 in monetary donations. Christmas time is the season of giving and I am so happy to participate in the Toys for Tots campaign. It makes my heart happy to know that hundreds of children will wake up on Christmas morning with new toys under the tree.

January 2 marks my two-year anniversary as Labor Commissioner. It is hard to believe that I am halfway through my term as Labor Commissioner. 2022 has been another great year of learning, traveling the state, and meeting great people. I am thankful for your support and encouragement and I am looking forward to the new opportunities to come in 2023.

I hope everyone's 2023 is filled with many blessings, opportunities, peace, love, and joy.

## NC House District 86



Rep. Hugh Blackwell  
919-733-5805  
[Hugh.Blackwell@ncleg.net](mailto:Hugh.Blackwell@ncleg.net)

I am excited to say that the "Year of the Trail" for the state of North Carolina is just beginning. Last year, I had the pleasure of working with a great group of folks who also recognize North Carolina's huge assets and great potential when it comes to our state's outdoors, especially our developing state trails system and multiple local trails. My interactions with knowledgeable trail advocates resulted in my introduction of the "Year of the Trail" bill in the North Carolina House of Representatives. The bill ultimately became law so that throughout 2023 we will be promoting the use and support of North Carolina trails. The bill declares 2023 as the "North Carolina Year of the Trail". The intention is to raise public awareness of our state's trails and the recreational, health, and economic benefits they offer to all segments of our population over the entire state.

North Carolina is fortunate to have twelve state trails, spanning from the mountains, to the piedmont, to the coast. We want all to know about what these trails offer in the various regions of the state so that more and more folks will explore them in ways most attractive to each user. In particular, for those living in and around the Blue Ridge Mountains, there are four state trails you might want to check out, not to mention the local trails. State trails in our area include Mountain to the Sea, Fonta Flora, Wilderness Gateway, and Over Mountain Victory. I hope you, your family, and your friends will take advantage of these free trail resources that truly make our region special.

In celebration of the Year of the Trail, many businesses and organizations are planning events throughout 2023 across these state trails, with different themes and activities for adults as well as children, seniors included. We want to encourage people to take advantage of our trails, whether it is to get started hiking and exercising, to add a new site for recreation and health, or to encourage a broader appreciation for our trails and our state's beautiful outdoors. To find out more about these great events, visit the Year of the Trail info on the website: [greattrailsnc.com/events](http://greattrailsnc.com/events).

## NC Senate District 46



Sen. Warren Daniel  
[Warren.Daniel@ncleg.net](mailto:Warren.Daniel@ncleg.net)  
919-715-7823

Happy New Year! I hope that each of you has experienced a peaceful and blessed Christmas holiday filled with family, fellowship, and remembrance of all our blessings. As we move forward into a new year, I am reminded of how quickly it seems that time passes. It was thirteen years ago, in late 2009, that Lydia and I decided together that I would seek to represent the citizens of Burke County in the NC Senate. As I look back on the past twelve years, I am thankful for all the wonderful people that I have had the opportunity to meet and work with in Raleigh, both in the House and Senate and across state government. Even more rewarding has been the opportunity during those years to serve (at different times) those living in Avery, Burke, Caldwell, and Cleveland counties, and to work with the local elected leaders of those counties and their municipalities. I truly consider it an honor to have worked with you and for you to improve our communities. As the 2023-2024 legislative session begins, the new 46th Senate District will be comprised of Burke, McDowell, and portions of eastern Buncombe County. I hope that the coming year will bring new and renewed friendships, cooperation, and bipartisanship across all levels of our state and local governments as we face new challenges and opportunities that are sure to come. I leave you with this thought: You're at the beginning of a new year. What plans do you have for yourself in the year to come? And how will you choose your goals for this year? This is a good verse to guide you in answering those questions: *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths."* (Proverbs 3: 5-6). If we can understand and apply God's definition of the word "ALL" in this passage, we will be on the right path. I hope that God will bless and prosper you and your family in 2023.

# God Bless America



By Dave Ramsey

My parents offered to pay off the rest of my mortgage with a small interest rate. What do you think?

Dear Dave,

I'm 32 and a teacher. My house is my only debt, and there's \$55,000 left on my mortgage. My parents always taught my brother and me about saving and being smart with money. The other day, mom and dad offered to pay off the rest of my mortgage by loaning me the money with a very small interest rate. I know you don't like the idea of mixing money and family, but considering I have a great relationship with my parents, what do you think about this offer? Lacy

Dear Lacy,

I'm going to make a suggestion before saying don't do this. See what I did there?

But seriously, I'd recommend they just make the money a gift and reduce your portion of any later inheritance by that amount. By doing this, you could help reduce the possibility of your brother feeling slighted in any way.

I would never loan my kids money. And here's why: One hundred percent of the time, the Bible says the borrower is a slave to the lender. That doesn't exempt parents and their kids. No matter how nice your masters are, you're still a slave in this kind of situation — and you'll feel it. Family dinners and get-togethers are different when you're sitting down to eat with your masters — your creditors — instead of just good ol' Mom and Dad.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not suggesting you should act ungrateful that they offered a loan instead of a gift. It's a generous thing either way. But if they don't want to go the gift route, that's fine. You have a good job, and a nice home, and you'll be okay. The thing is, I just wouldn't want to take a chance on straining a great relationship — or even ruining it — because of money.

Lacy, you're 32, a teacher, and a homeowner. In my mind, that says a lot about you, your maturity, and your work ethic. That being the case, I get how this could be a weird thing for you to do. So, I'm going to give you an out: Blame me. Just tell them you talked to me, and I said don't do the loan idea. Tell them I gave you the make-it-a-gift-tied-to-the-inheritance idea.

If your mom or dad wants to talk to me about things, that's fine. I'll be kind to them. But I'll tell the truth like I always do.— Dave

Is it even worth it to buy a house these days?

Dear Dave,

Is it even worth it to buy a house these days? I've always been told buying a house is the adult thing to do and that it's a great investment, but I can't find anything decent and livable in my area for less than \$350,000. My wife and I are debt-free, and we're expecting our first baby in January. I was hoping to get your advice. Craig

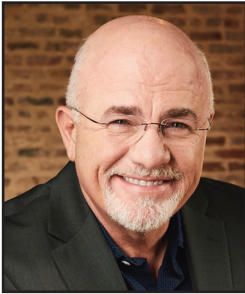
Dear Craig,

I can understand how things might feel a little hopeless in your current situation. You're probably feeling the weight of the responsibility a new life brings to the picture. Things are getting really fast, aren't they? Believe me, I get it.

The truth is you may not be ready to buy a house today. And that's okay. Having a new baby on the horizon doesn't mean you have to run out and buy a home. That little boy or girl isn't going to know the difference between a house and an apartment for a long time. Right now, giving your child a safe, loving environment is the most important thing.

Now, looking down the road, is owning a house worth it? Yes. But it's not worth doing it at the wrong time or in a stupid way. You first need to make sure the income is there. Then, you need an emergency fund of three to six months of expenses in place along with a strong down payment. So, what if you don't buy a home for another two or three years? Home buying should always be done with patience and wisdom.

There are two or three things that make buying a home a great long-term invest-



ment versus renting your whole life:

1. Rents go up every year. If you lock in a good, fixed-rate mortgage, that payment will stay the same.
2. The value of your home will increase. When you rent, you don't own your residence, and you won't benefit from the value of it going up.
3. Our study of 10,000 millionaires showed that most say two things were integral parts of their ability to build wealth: Good retirement investments and a paid-off home.

A house is a great wealth-building tool, and it can also stabilize the biggest line item in your budget — housing.

God bless you guys, Craig!

— Dave

Dave Ramsey is CEO of Ramsey Solutions. He has authored seven best-selling books, including *The Total Money Makeover*. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 14 million listeners each week on 600 radio stations and multiple digital platforms. Follow Dave on the web at [daveramsey.com](http://daveramsey.com) and on Twitter at [@DaveRamsey](https://twitter.com/DaveRamsey).

BEAR CREEK BAPTIST  
CHURCH  
*Welcomes You to*  
*Celebrate Recovery*  
Thursdays at 7:00pm  
*Hope & Help from*  
*Addiction Through Christ*

**Breakfast & Lunch Restaurant**

Hours: Monday - Saturday 7 am-7 pm  
and Sundays 8 am-3 pm.

**APPALACHIAN**  
• J A V A •  
*Café & Desserts*

8 West Main St. Burnsville, NC

THE NEW  
**HOLISTIC  
RETIREMENT**

Emerging Risks for American Savers ... and  
How to Overcome Them With Long Game Thinking

Martin H. Ruby, FSA  
Neil Wilding  
Becky Ruby Swansburg

Do you want to learn ways to help  
protect and position your retirement  
assets for long term success?

You're in luck! For a limited time, we  
are offering a free digital copy of The  
New Holistic Retirement by Martin  
H. Ruby!

Email us today to get yours!

68 South Main Street, Suite 200  
Marion NC 28752  
[Steve@retirerm.com](mailto:Steve@retirerm.com), [Morgan.wylie@retirerm.com](mailto:Morgan.wylie@retirerm.com)

**Steven W. Gaito**  
CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™  
*Less Taxes / More Retirement*

Social Security Analysis / Long Term Care Planning  
Tax Efficient Retirement Planning

 **Retirement  
Resource Management**  
Education, Analysis and Consulting



Revelation Chapter 6: The Deceptive Rider on the White Horse

By Rev. Mark Creech



Some argue that no one has ever gone to heaven and come back to tell us what they saw, but evidently, that’s what happened to the apostle John. In chapters four and five of the book of Revelation, John, by invitation from the Lord, visited the very throne room of the Almighty. There he witnessed things remarkable for which there was a little earthly reference. He was allowed to see what pertains to the earth’s final days.

Why was the apostle given this privilege and then instructed to write it down and report it in detail? The late Dr. Billy Graham explains in his book, Approaching Hoofbeats:

“Behind the universe, there is a Power worthy of our praise and our trust. Despite rumors to the contrary, we are not creatures abandoned on a planet spinning madly through the universe, lost in galaxies upon galaxies of gaseous flaming suns or burnt-out cinder moons. We are the children of a great and wonderful God who even now sits in power, accomplishing His purposes in His creation...The national powers that we see hellbent on destruction – amassing weapons, killing, and being killed – are not the ultimate power. Nor are the individual figures who rule in our lives the ultimate powers; mothers, fathers, teachers, pastors, counselors, politicians, diplomats, bankers, police officers, social workers, wardens and jailors, probation officers, tax collectors, dictators, and their soldiers, kings, and presidents will one day stand powerless before this God...The Revelation is carefully calculated to restore and renew hope.”

In chapter 5, the Lord Jesus Christ is the only one in the entire universe found worthy to take the seven-sealed scroll, which is the title deed to the world. Each seal he opens shall reveal the final course of God’s redemptive purposes for this universe and everything in it.

As John, the four creatures, the twenty-four elders, the thousands upon thousands of angels, and the saved of all the ages, witness the Lamb (Christ) open the first seal of the scroll, the Bible says:

“Then I heard one of the four living beings say with a voice like thunder, ‘Come!’ I looked up and saw a white horse standing there. Its rider carried a bow, and a crown was placed on his head. He rode out to win many battles and gain the victory” (Revelation 6:1-2).

Events on the earth have been building for quite some time for this moment. Like the low and steady rumble from a bass drum that grows increasingly intense and the curtain from the stage that starts to roll back, the first act of God’s judgment is revealed. But who is this rider upon a white horse?

Some have said they believe this rider on the white horse is Christ. Almost all the biblical writers until AD 150 took the white horse and its rider as a symbol of the Gospel message, successfully advancing to people of every race, tribe, and language. The color white in the Bible, it has been argued, is always associated with Jesus or spiritual victory.

As compelling as this argument is, it doesn’t seem to fit the context. As seen later in the book of Revelation, three other horsemen follow the white horseman, and they represent war, famine, and death. Would we expect these to follow in the train of the Gospel’s success? Hardly.

Christ seems to be the rider of the white horse mentioned in Revelation 19:11-16.

The Greek word stephanos describes the crown worn by the rider in Revelation 6, meaning this rider is not crowned at first but receives a victor’s crown later. His bow has no arrow, which indicates the many battles he wins are by diplomacy. The rider on the white horse in Revelation 19 comes with the armies of heaven to engage in the last great war – the battle of Armageddon, where all the ungodly forces from every land will gather to challenge God’s sovereignty. The rider on the white horse in Revelation 19 wears crowns or diadema, which are crowns of royalty.

So, the rider on the white horse in Revelation 6 is an imposter – a counterfeit. He appears as someone good who brings peace and prosperity. He poses as the world’s Messiah, but trouble will follow in his wake like no other in human history.

This rider is the one the Scriptures refer to as the AntiChrist.

AntiChrist describes a spirit opposed to the core Gospel truth in John’s First and Second Epistles.

John says, “Anyone who says that Jesus is not the Christ. Anyone who denies the Father and the Son is an antichrist. Anyone who denies the Son doesn’t have the Father, either (I John 2:22).“

Again, John writes, “This is how we know if they have the Spirit of God: If a person claiming to be a prophet acknowledges that Jesus Christ came in a real body, that person has the Spirit of God. But if someone claims to be a prophet and does not acknowledge the truth about Jesus, that person is not from God. Such a person has the spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard is coming into the world and indeed is already here” (I John 4:2-3).

The apostle also speaks of many “Anti-Christ” in I John 2:18.

Throughout the centuries, there have been those who operate in the spirit of antichrists, denying or distorting the truth of the Gospel. Cults operate in the spirit of the antichrist. Liberal theologians who deny the deity of Jesus and say he was only a good man or just a tremendous teacher speak in the spirit of the antichrist. These same theologians who do not accept Jesus’ death as substitutionary for the sinner but believe it was only a religious martyr’s demise are antichrists. These same wolves in sheep’s clothing who deny his bodily resurrection from the grave are antichrists.

Prosperity preachers today who get people to set their affections on materialism

rather than the life of the Cross – a life of sacrifice for God and one’s fellow man – are operating in the spirit of antichrists.

The spirit of the antichrist is represented in people who always reference Jesus as meek and mild, only helping the poor, the sick, and the needy, but never rebuking sin and becoming righteously indignant with sinful behavior. Although Jesus talked about hell more often than he did heaven, the spirit of the antichrist says Jesus would never condemn someone to such a terrible place of torment.

For many, Jesus seemingly embraces all forms of sexual immorality. He is depicted in scenes wrapped with a rainbow flag or a beer in his hand or smoking a marijuana cigarette. These are the spirit of the antichrist.

Nevertheless, in several places in Scripture, writers recognize an identifiable end-time individual who shall appear – a man who personifies evil itself. This individual will come as an angel of light but is really an extremely wicked man who arises to climax and brings to a sinful close human history without God. The apostle Paul said of this person:

“Don’t be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that the day of the Lord has already begun. Don’t believe them, even if they claim to have had a spiritual vision, a revelation, or a letter supposedly from us. Don’t be fooled by what they say. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed—the one who brings destruction. He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.” (I Thessalonians 2:2-4).

This rider on the white horse is a counterfeit Emancipator and Deliverer who is brilliant and strategic; with such persuasive arguments concerning politics, religion, military, economics, commerce, etc., the entire world, including the Jews, will see him as their long-awaited Savior.

His success as a world conqueror is because he is in league with the devil himself. He will even unite world religions under his leadership, declaring himself God. Sadly, people will believe him.

We might have already seen a microcosm of this in history.

The late Dr. R.C. Sproul, theologian, pastor, teacher, and chairman of the board of Ligonier Ministries, has written:

“When I was studying back in Europe back in the sixties, even though it was twenty years after the end of World War II, the bookstores in Amsterdam were filled with literature about the Second World War. The memories were still very vivid and keen to these people, who suffered so much more than we in this country suffered at that time. I remember reading a book that was a result of the release of earlier classified documents from the archives that were titled Hitler, the Scourge of Europe, in which private documents of Hitler’s were photocopied and printed. One was an early entry from his diary, which was scribbled in Hitler’s own handwriting: ‘This evening I have made a covenant with Satan.’ He wasn’t just kidding. There was a serious effort by Adolf Hitler to engage the assistance of the Prince of Darkness in the programs he set forth. Obviously, that was all happening under the sovereignty of God. God has his reasons for allowing that to happen for a season, but obviously, he reserves that moment when his powerful judgment falls on Satan and people like Hitler, and God’s righteous power is ultimately vindicated.”

How very true! Something of this nature will happen again, but even more dramatically and with a broader scope. Current events seem to be quickly developing in this direction as we see Christian churches departing from sound doctrinal teaching and declining in membership, especially in the West. Everywhere in Europe, there are empty cathedrals and church buildings.

A rider sits on a white horse, chomping at the bit and poised to spring from the gate to race throughout the earth, deceiving the masses. Hell will follow him. There is a way for you and your family to avoid this tragedy. Surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ now. There are no more Messiahs. He is the only hope. He is the one true Savior.

Repent of your sins and turn to Jesus in faith that you might be raptured, redeemed from the coming peril that awaits those in the last days who refuse to believe the Gospel.

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



# NOW OPEN!!!

**A family owned & operated business**  
(an entity of Buff's Tire & Service)  
**Located at 303 Burkemont Ave,**  
**Morganton, NC**  
(across from Freedom Insurance)

**Manager:**  
**Nicholas McCabe**  
**828-608-0840**



**We offer multiple services including:**

- New Tires
- Brakes
- Alignments
- NC State Inspections
- General Repairs



Temple Maintenance

By Miguel Cruz  
Yancey County

“Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” 1 Corinthians 6:19 KJV

In this series of articles, I want to focus on current useful research that comes across my desk and share it with everyone. In these times of censored media outlets and questionable research, it’s hard to know what to believe.

My goal is for us to do the best we can in taking care of the temple of the Holy Ghost (our body) which has been entrusted to us while on this earth. I firmly believe that we are truly spiritual beings residing in temporary bodies. I subscribe to Medline, Medscape, PuB Med, and others to keep up with current topics and follow up with my own research. I get daily feeds that I read through and will be sharing in this publication. Let’s get started.

Prescription drugs designed to boost cognitive function do not work and may even decrease productivity. 35th European College of Neuropsychopharmacology:

Randomized controlled studies have shown that while these medications give the sensation of being more alert, they have not improved function and even decreased it compared to a placebo. These medications are derivatives of amphetamines which hype you up and can be addictive. There are lots of natural, herbal-based cognitive boosters that have clinically been effective.

The Role of Aspirin Today, Medscape, July 2022,

Aspirin has been around for 125 years and is one of the most widely used drugs in the world, particularly for joint pain. While this article discusses all the good aspects of aspirin, it also discusses some reasons NOT to take it according to the current research. Here are some statements.

“People with atrial fibrillation or embolic strokes need to have blood thinners, the addition of aspirin to the other blood thinners does not increase efficacy, it only increases the risk for bleeding.”

“People above the age of 75 taking aspirin have an increased risk for intestinal bleeding”. It’s important to know that an estimated 20,000 deaths per year are attributed to taking NSAID’s, including aspirin.

“In the last 5 years, research has clearly shown that aspirin is not effective in the prevention of vascular events of stroke, myocardial infarction, and vascular death, it only increases the risk of bleeding.” If your doctor has you on daily aspirin, you should discuss this with them.

Processed Foods Tied to a Faster Rate of Cognitive Decline: Alzheimer’s Association Conference 2022

This is old news that we have all heard before but important to understand if you are noticing any signs of early dementia such as losing your keys often, walking into a room, forgetting why, and having words of familiar objects that you can’t think of. Don’t wait until it’s too late to do something about it. Processed foods can be defined as most things that come from a box or package and definitely fast foods.

Exercise Slows Progression of Cognitive Decline in Early Parkinson’s, Neurology, January 13

“Just 1-2 hours of moderate to vigorous exercise twice per week appears to slow the progression and cognitive decline in early Parkinson’s disease.”

More recent research indicates positive effects of intense exercise for short periods, as little as 10 minutes. Another reason not to wait until it’s too late to help yourself.

I believe the general takeaway from the research cited is that there is a time and place for medications, but do not expect them to fix you without any effort on your part. I believe we can live out our 4 score and 20 years or more in decent health, able to do the things we want, and have a decent state of mind if we practice regular temple maintenance and do those things which we know are healthy. God Bless

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



By Steve Williams  
Mitchell County



It’s a fact all of us took some wrong steps last year. For some believers, it is extremely hard to accept the truth that we made some bad choices or decisions. Many just try to explain things away or why they happened to them. Folks, explanations are sometimes like crutches, they don’t take away the limp, but they do help us to walk with it. I hate to say it but the truth is, it’s easier for us to accept our problems if we think we know the reason for them. Again, it’s safe to say that we all made some bad steps last year. If we were truthful we would say I’d like to make some better steps in 2023. The way to do this is simple if we will follow God’s Word. Christians need to learn to be persistent in their Christian walk with God. As Christians, we need to understand that when we make a mistake it’s not over. We’re not to Give Up, Let Up or Back Up. We need to Look Up to our Lord and Savior and press on. When you & I mess up we do not automatically become failures in the eyes of God. Christians need to learn the difference between being a failure and experiencing failure in life. Once we trust in Christ as our Savior, we are new creations, and our past failings are just that—in the past. If Peter would have allowed his past to follow him, he would have never accomplished anything for the Lord. (Denying Christ) Any future mistakes in our lives are to be regarded as temporary defeats; they do not define who we are. Peter learned this lesson well. No matter how many times he was reviled, chased out of town, or put in prison, he did not consider himself a failure. Rather, he looked to His Lord to determine the truth about who he was—a forgiven sinner. Christians, we need to understand this important fact. It isn’t the load that weighs us down- it’s the way we carry the load. God’s Word promises us that He will make our burdens light, and also make a way for us to walk. Christians also need to learn something else as encountering difficulties and tests does not automatically mean changing direction. They may delay us in reaching our goals, but they are not necessarily a dead end. Look at trials not as reasons to quit, but as opportunities that can assist us in reaching our goals in 2023. During moments of defeat, God wants to teach us something that will help us succeed later on. Our steps will get tangled up, but we need to know what to do and what to avoid if we expect to experience a better 2023. Here are a few tips I believe will help all of us next year.

Don’t strut around, because remember what the Bible says. Proverbs 16:18 “Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.” Many times we just get too big for our britches and leave God out of the equation of our life. We do as we please instead of what He desires us to do. Next, we don’t need to stray away from God. The Bible says. John 10:27 “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” We are His sheep, and we know sheep are quick to stray away. We battle day in and day out on what we want to do and what God wants us to do, and before we know it, we have strayed away from God. Next, don’t lower your Christian values. The Bible says in Romans 12:2 “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” When we are not careful, we allow the world to change us instead of us trying to change the World. The world is always tempting us to lower our values. The sad thing is many people are allowing themselves to fall into this trap. Lastly, we don’t need to stop. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 15:58 “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” So many times, when we make a mistake, we just want to throw up our hands and quit, but that is not an option for Christians. Yes, Christians make mistakes, but we are not to be quitters. The reason is our example of Jesus Christ who never quit on His way to the cross, but he kept pressing on.

Words Of Wisdom:

- Be at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let every new year find you a better man. Benjamin Franklin
- With the new year comes a refueled motivation to improve on the past one. N/A
- So many times we think things will make us happy but things as I have seen in my life are short-lived. N/A
- Life’s tough and maybe you feel as if you are failing, but were going to have to learn how to Pass Life Tests. Study and Hard Work. N/A

Life Tuff Lessons:

- I heard of a young man who had taken his test at college and he’d made a zero. He went in to see the professor, and he argued with the professor. He said, "Professor, I don't think I deserved this zero." And the professor said, "Neither do I, son, but it was the lowest grade I had."

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

Thou Shalt Laugh

By John Martin

WHAT DID YOU THINK OF TODAY'S SERMON, BROTHER GREEN?

A GOOD SERMON IS LIKE BAKING A CAKE, PASTOR ...

...THEY BOTH COULD USE A LITTLE SHORTENING.

© 2023 John Martin Features



Buried With Hope

By Tim Tron  
*Burke County*



It had all happened so suddenly, without warning. The sound of a mighty force inhaling all the air around you, then with one tremendous breath, exhaling - all that was once became naught. The last thing he remembered was the earth disappearing beneath his snowshoes and then nothing. For a long while, he lay trapped beneath the tomb of white, unaware of what had happened. When he awoke, he suddenly realized he was imprisoned by a force beyond his strength to overcome.

For as long as Benjamin Perrou could remember, he had heard tales of men caught up in avalanches and never seen again. That Alpine region was known for its precarious winter dangers. Snow, as beautiful as it appears, can be just as dangerous. Benjamin had seen the evidence of snow slides firsthand. One of the many gorges up in the Germanesca valley had been destroyed by one. Like a mighty hand, the forest, and everything in its path had been erased. Trees as big around as six men holding hands could reach had been snapped off at the root, like a twig on a branch. The earth, rocks, and timber had become one giant wall of death. The snow that engulfed it all concealed the extent of the damage until the spring thaws came. It was then that everyone saw how powerful, and dangerous the word “Avalanche” could mean. Trees looked like grass mown down and then strewn in patterns that looked like water flowing down the mountain.

Benjamin could feel his arms and legs, but something heavy, if it could be called that, was holding them locked in place. There was a sharp pain in his lower back that felt like fire when he tried to move. A small air pocket, space enough before his face, afforded him time. “Maybe enough air to live until they find me?” But then again, he had left his house in the little village of Balziglia before dawn. His wife, Maria, and newborn son were still asleep. His goal was to reach the upper shepherd’s hut and return home by noon. He and his cousin Markus had to flee the upper pastures because of an early winter storm leaving behind precious rations of food they had stored up over the summer.

Christmas was now past; the winter months were now pressing upon them. It was a new year, 1510, yet it didn’t feel like anything new worth celebrating. The cellar shelves were getting bare. Working with sheep wasn’t keeping his family fed. He desperately needed to travel back to the shepherd’s hut to retrieve the much-needed supplies. When he mentioned the trip to Maria, she only became angry because of the danger of traveling up to higher elevations during this time of year. She had begged him to go into the lower valleys and maybe find a job in Pinerolo, where her Uncle had a leatherworking shop. During the grazing months, Benjamin and his cousin would go to the higher elevations to graze their herds for weeks on end. It was the family tradition. The separation was painful for Maria – her heart longed for her Benji. She often said she didn’t know what she would do without him. She had no idea he was leaving that morning. So, when Maria awoke to feed the baby, she realized Benjamin had gone – her heart sank. Fearing the worse, she began to wonder if he would ever return.

Meanwhile, Benjamin began to wonder if the life of his ancestors was no longer possible. There were still those from the Waldensian Valleys studying in the Barbi College, going out in pairs across Europe sharing the gospel, and facing death and persecution. But Benjamin had not felt that calling. He had grown lazy. It had been weeks since he sat down and went through the daily practice of putting the Word of God to memory. It felt like God was a distant thought as the fear of his family going hungry began to gnaw at his soul. The urgency to act had hit him in the night, and it was foremost on his mind when the coming dawn was still a distant thought. He was already several miles up the mountain when the sun kissed the edge of Mount Piatasse. The sled tied to his waist had made a curious trail behind him in the freshly fallen snow, weaving in and out of his ski trail. He was alone, save for his faithful traveling companion and sheepdog, Jacques. If anyone knew his whereabouts, it was Jacques. But for all Benjamin knew, he too, was buried alive and dead.

Benjamin’s heart was racing as the thoughts continued out of control, fighting for the remnants of any sanity that was left. He fought the fear to panic, but there it was, on the edge of the precipice, waiting to dive into his soul.

“What will it be like to die a slow, painful death - buried alive? Would he ever see Maria and Jacob again?”

“Where is God when you need him?”

It was this last thread of mental torment that finally grabbed his attention. In all his worry and despair, he had failed to notice the one thing that meant the most to him and his family – God. Then he again thought to himself, “But truly, was this God’s will – to bury him alive? Was there anything even He could do?”

Feeling the end approaching, he began speaking out loud, “I know that if nothing else, I will go to my grave praying for my dear Maria and my newborn son, Jacob.” Around him, the weight of the snow, rocks, and trees began to creak as it settled farther, sealing his tomb all the tighter. Hearing his fate becoming more profound, Benjamin began to pray to God. “Dear Lord, if it is your will to rescue me, I would be forever grateful. But I’m not afraid to die, for I know in my heart, mind, and soul that you will be with me. There is no place that I don’t carry you, nor is there any place that I can turn that you are not there. Please take care of my family should you call me home. They are so young and helpless. My cousins and neighbors can fulfill their earthly needs, but I fear that their hearts will be forever plagued by my absence. Please fill that void with your love.” Tears began to choke off his words as he paused. “Dear God, I love Maria as I love you....” A loud

crack above him and another weight seem to be added to the load already upon his chest. He could barely breathe but continued, “Lord, I don’t make many new year’s resolutions, but this one thing I say, that if I survive this, by some miracle, I will seek to serve you in any capacity, in whatever way you choose. My soul is yours, take it and do as you wish. In Jesus’s name I pray,” and at that, the tears welled up in his throat as the air became nearly too thick to breathe, “Amen.” The frozen mass around him began to seep into his body, and soon even the pain dissipated. Finally, there was no more feeling in his frame. Numb from the cold, he began to drift off into a peaceful sleep.

Before Benjamin stood a marble staircase gleaming white in a brilliant light. The weight upon his body was so great that he could only crawl, so he did, slowly up, one marble step at a time. Above him, he could see a shadowed translucent figure lit by a brilliant light from behind. Slowly Benjamin approached the shadowy being. The closer he came, the more fearful of the being he became until suddenly, there was a voice like thunder that echoed into his very core, “The just shall live by faith! Get up and walk like a man.” Afraid not to do as the angelic being demanded, he tried to stand, but there was a weight upon his body that held him bound.

“I, I can’t get up.”

“The just shall live by faith! You have made your own bondage. The Grace of God that will set you free.”

“But, my body...it is as if I am tied to the earth.” He strained with all his might, yet, he could barely move enough to twitch a toe. “Help me; that’s all I ask. Please, tell God I need Him.”

Somewhere beyond the Angel atop the staircase came the distant sounds of a dog barking. His mind tried to understand as the stairway dissolved into a cascading waterfall surrounded by a crystal clear pool of water at the bottom, into which it plummeted. Summer grasses, rich and succulent, fed the pearl white sheep that surrounded the oasis. From behind the herd came Jacques racing toward him. For a moment, his heart was overjoyed, and a warmth filled his aching soul. And then there was nothing.

The sound of barking once more. Scratching. Barking.

Benjamin began to cry; the feeling of suffocation overwhelmed him. He realized he might never see his Maria again. Then something warm brushed away the tear. The hand of God?

Again a bark, the brush from the wings of an Angel, a warm tongue across his cheek.

Blinking, unable to focus, Benjamin slowly realized it was Jacques, and it wasn’t a dream. The faithful dog had dug down to where he was trapped and was now trying to free his master. The fresh air felt alive on his face. Jacques kept digging and soon had enough snow and rocks removed that Benjamin’s face was entirely free. He gasped in large mouthfuls of air but realized there was no way alone that Jacques could lift him out of the twisted maze of limbs and ice which entangled his body.

“Go get help, boy,” Benjamin begged of the dog. But he wasn’t leaving his master. The dog sat and stared blankly, ears tilting at the sound of Benjamin’s voice coming from the hole in the snow. He barked in return and would go back to digging and licking Benjamin’s face. But as the day wore on, so did Benjamin’s patience. He realized this was not the answer and that he might still die a slow death.

He again turned to prayer and once more sought God with every fiber of his being. There was nothing God couldn’t do; this he knew in his heart. As he finished in the silence, with Jacques patiently looking on, a cloud passed over, totally obscuring the setting sun, and for a moment, the pair, Benjamin and Jacques, disappeared in its mist. When it cleared, there stood before them a stranger.

“Guten tag.”

Benjamin blinked, “Huh, hello.” At the sound of a voice. From where he lay beneath the snow, he couldn’t see the man. Jacques began to growl, the hair standing up on his neck. He quickly ran and stood between Benjamin and the outsider. “It’s ok boy, the stranger said.” Benjamin could hear his footsteps crunching in the snow nearby as he approached. Jacques’s protective stance quickly dissipated. There was something about the man the dog trusted. Benjamin knew Jacques well enough to know this was a good sign.

“I see an extreme misfortune you have had.”

“Yes,” Benjamin could barely feel his mouth move. The numbness was growing, and soon, he would no longer be able to speak if something wasn’t done.

“It seems God has me here just in time placed.”

“Thanks be to God,” Benjamin breathed out.

The stranger dropped his back, removing a small saber, fell to his knees, and quickly began carefully digging around Benjamin. Jacques joined in, and within an hour, they freed him from his frozen prison. The stranger started a fire and soon began setting Benjamin’s broken legs with wood splints. Afterward, he quickly wrapped him up in a warm blanket with a cup of some hot, dark warm liquid. As he sipped, the feeling began to return to his broken legs, as did the pain. There was a shallow puncture to his back from a stick, but the stranger had wrapped his midsection in cloth to stop the bleeding. As bad as it was, Benjamin knew it could have ended much worse.

“Did you believe God had abandoned you?”

The words brought Benjamin back to the moment. He shook his head, yes, his hand shivering as he slowly lifted the drink to his lips. The bitter brew flowed down his throat, warming his entire being from within, dulling the pain in his legs. A sense of something greater than the moment began to grow inside. He felt it a first like a slight breeze, one that you can ignore if you choose, but he didn’t.

*continued on page 37*



Instead, he welcomed it, and it grew. There was also something strange about his liberator. His language seemed foreign, possibly from Germanic regions to the north, but he wasn’t sure. The man before him asked where he was from, and Benjamin pointed to the valley, “There, down below us in the village of Balziglia.”

The man smiled.  
“Who are you and where are you, you.... from,” Benjamin replied.  
“Oh, not too far from this place,” he smiled. “But I must return to start a new life.”  
“Sounds familiar,” Benjamin said, even more curious. “What did you say your name was?”  
“I didn’t,” he smiled again.  
“I’m Benjamin.”  
“Nice to meet Benjamin, Brother Martin I am, just a simple monk.”  
“Where is home, Martin?”  
“Oh, over the mountains in the village of Erfurt. I was from my pilgrimage to Rome returning. Many things in my life must now change. My life’s goal a priest to become was.”  
“Oh,” for Benjamin’s family for centuries had been persecuted by the Roman Catholic church, so priests were people that his family tried to avoid. Yet, here he was now, having been literally saved by one. The least he could do was to hear him out.

“What makes you say, ‘was’ to become a priest?”  
“Something to me in Rome happened. Something Godly. Let’s just say I now with new eyes can see.”  
“What about you, Benjamin? Do you with new eyes see? You were trapped and near death. Surely you had to God prayed?”

Benjamin began to remember the dream and, without thinking, began sharing, “Yes, you can trust I prayed. And yes, I was indeed blessed with a gift from God. Just a few days ago, I felt like my life was nothing, that I was losing my soul to the world. The scripture, *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”* kept repeating in my head. Then I was buried in the avalanche and feared I would die. In desperation, I prayed to God. Then an Angel of the Lord spoke to me in a vision while I was climbing a beautiful marble staircase. He said that I needed to stand up, that the just shall live by faith.”

Martin, seated across the fire from Benjamin and Jacques, stood up immediately, dropping his mug of liquid and spilling it across the snow-covered ground. His face, almost in shock at the words, scared Jacques enough that he let out a sharp bark. He looked at Benjamin as if he, too, had seen the Angel of the Lord  
“What did you say?”  
“Did I say something wrong?”  
“No, no,” he paused, hands outstretched as if he was trying to keep from falling, “ What was the last thing you just said, the thing that God said to you?”  
“That the just shall live by faith?”

Martin stared blankly, looking at something beyond Benjamin, something he could not see. It was a minute or two before Martin recovered and could speak. Finally, he answered in a grave, measured tone, “You have spoken words that can only be confirmation to my soul. God has indeed spoken.

Benjamin Perrou, I don’t know who you are or what is going on in your life right now, but if it is possible if you will allow God to lead your life, I want you with me back to Erfurt to return. There is something special about you that I must learn more about.”

“But I have a wife and child.”  
“Great, then them you must bring. We wonderful schools for your child have, and I will help you to become a man of God, a preacher, or at the very least, an evangelist. This your calling is, brother Benjamin!”

Tears began streaming down Benjamin’s face as he realized this was the answer to his prayer, the one he had made when he realized his life might end. God had answered him, but in a way he never imagined. He didn’t know this Martin, but there was something about him that he trusted, something special that he knew had to be correct. That day, Benjamin felt like David being called from the field by Samuel to be anointed, King.

Later that night, Maria had barely drifted off, having cried herself to sleep when

she heard the gentle rapping at the door. Fearful and with much trepidation, she held the lantern in one hand as she peered through the ajar door. There she saw a stranger holding onto a rope tied to a sled upon which lay a man covered in a blanket.

“Are you Frau Perrou,” the stranger asked.  
“Ya, yes...,” she said, still too scared to open the door beyond a crack. Then out of the darkness bounded Jacques, barking, tail wagging, bounding at the door. Maria, forgetting her fear, swung the door open as Jacques leaped into her outstretched arms, licking her face uncontrollably.  
“Maria?”  
The voice came from the blanket as Benjamin realized he was finally home, raised up enough to see Maria’s light.  
“Benji,” she screamed and ran to him, dropping the lantern at her side and throwing her arms around his neck.  
“Careful,” the stranger beckoned, removing the blanket revealing Benjamin’s broken limbs.  
“Benji,” she gasped.  
“Yes, I was buried by an avalanche, but God sent a couple of angels to deliver me. Let us go inside, and I will tell you the rest of the story over some hot stew and a good piece of your delicious bread for our guest.”

It was then Maria realized her prayer had been answered – her Benji was alive. She would continue to weep with joy as he would introduce her to his new friend and explain to her how their life had been changed by a prayer made in desperation. From that day forward they never had need or want. Benjamin would take his little family to Erfurt, where he would study with Martin, Eventually. They would return to the valleys of his homeland where he would preach the Word of God.

Martin would go on to make even greater history when he would eventually nail his disagreements with the Roman Catholic Church to the door of the church in Wurms. You know the rest of that story, a little something called the Reformation. But more importantly, two men, once strangers brought together miraculously, would never forget the words of God that changed their lives forever when He said - “The just shall live by faith.”

For Benjamin’s calling became more than a New Year’s resolution – it became his promise to God.  
Thanks be to God.

*Timothy W. Tron lives in Collettsville, NC. with his family. He is currently the Systems Administrator for the Computer Science Department at App. State. Timothy is the former Director of the Trail of Faith in Valdese, where he still volunteers and helps with tours. He is the author of a new Christian series, “Children of the Light”, with the first book being, “Bruecke to Heaven”, revised as “Bridge 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 is currently acting as the Faculty/Staff Liaison for the Ratio Christi campus ministry at App. State. He can be reached at trontw@appstate.edu You can visit his website at //www.timothywtron.com/ or see more of his writings HERE.*

BEAR CREEK BAPTIST  
CHURCH  
*Welcomes You to*  
*Celebrate Recovery*  
**Thursdays at 7:00pm**  
*Hope & Help from*  
*Addiction Through Christ*

# Camper & Boat Storage



• DR •

MINI  
STORAGE



14307 Hwy 226 • Spruce Pine, NC *3/10 mile North of Walmart*  
1485 Elk Park Highway • Newland, NC *Climate Controlled*

828-260-3396 • 828-766-4585  
[www.drstoragenc.com](http://www.drstoragenc.com)



# Crossword

Crossword 277

ACROSS

1 The \_\_\_\_ is not held secure, the sail is not spread (Isa 33:23)  
5 he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of \_\_\_\_ (2 Sam 6:19)  
9 Then God said, "Let the \_\_\_\_ produce vegetation (Gen 1:11)  
13 whatsoever hath \_\_\_\_\_, that shall ye not offer (1,7) (Lev 22:20) KJV  
14 But if he be \_\_\_\_ than thy estimation, then he shall present (Lev 27:8) KJV  
15 The twenty ninth book of the Old Testament.  
16 The \_\_\_\_\_ trees cover him with their shadow (Job 40:22)  
17 Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and \_\_\_\_ the five kings of Midian (Num 31:8)  
18 I came near unto \_\_\_\_\_ of them that stood by (Daniel 7:16)  
19 \_\_\_\_ man can live and not see death? (Ps 89:48)  
20 they which went up also from Telhahesha, Cherub, \_\_\_\_ (Neh 7:61) KJV  
21 They \_\_\_\_, "The Lord needs it." (Luke 19:34)  
23 I hold \_\_\_\_ to your statutes, O LORD (Ps 119:31)  
25 "You \_\_\_\_ were with Jesus of Galilee," she said (Matt 26:69)  
26 know that you have no authority to \_\_\_\_ taxes (Ezra 7:24)  
29 topaz, and the diamond, the \_\_\_\_, the onyx (Ezek 28:13)  
32 their sailors came alongside to trade for your \_\_\_\_ (Ezek 27:9)  
34 saying, \_\_\_\_, Eli, lama sabachthani (Matt 27:46)  
36 you must cancel any debt your brother \_\_\_\_\_ you (Deut 15:3)  
38 ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you \_\_\_\_ (Matt 11:28) KJV  
39 the hour cometh, \_\_\_\_, is now come, (John 16:32) KJV  
40 from the hand of the wicked, from the \_\_\_\_ of evil (Ps 71:4)  
43 lies down, like a lioness who \_\_\_\_ to rouse him? (Gen 49:9)  
44 a vine, and brought forth branches, and shot forth \_\_\_\_ (Ezek 17:6) KJV  
46 Saul and Abner son of Ner had \_\_\_\_ down (1 Sam 26:5)  
49 he entered the temple \_\_\_\_ and began driving out those who were (Luke 19:45)  
50 We \_\_\_\_\_ whenever we are weak but you are strong (3,4) (2 Cor 13:9)  
54 in \_\_\_\_, Zeboim and Neballat (Neh 11:34)  
57 The body is a \_\_\_\_, though it

is made up of many parts (1 Cor 12:12)  
58 Sir, come down \_\_\_\_ my child die (John 4:49) KJV  
59 30th book of the Old Testament  
60 If anyone \_\_\_\_ to be first, he must be the very last (Mark 9:35)  
61 will men take \_\_\_\_\_ of it to hang any vessel thereon (1,3) (Ezek 15:3) KJV  
62 rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, \_\_\_\_, slander (Col 3:8)  
63 forthwith they sprung up, because they had no \_\_\_\_ of earth (Matt 13:5) KJV  
64 You were in \_\_\_\_, the garden of God (Ezek 28:13)  
65 the most upright worse than a \_\_\_\_ hedge (Mic 7:4)  
66 Likewise every good \_\_\_\_ bears good fruit (Matt 7:17)  
Down  
1 You will overthrow every fortified city and every \_\_\_\_ town (2 Kings 3:19)  
2 a gentle tongue can break \_\_\_\_\_ (1,4) (Prov 25:15)  
3 Multitudes who \_\_\_\_ in the dust of the earth will awake (Dan 12:2)  
4 exiles who lived at \_\_\_\_ Abib near the Kebar River (Ezek 3:15)  
5 make its plates and \_\_\_\_ of pure gold (Ex 25:29)  
6 The law is only \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ of the good things that are (1,6) (Heb 10:1)  
7 let them also \_\_\_\_ love thy name be joyful in thee (Ps 5:11) KJV  
8 David sent them to you to explore the city and \_\_\_\_ it out (2 Sam 10:3)  
9 Teach me, O \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_ follow your decrees (4,2) (Ps 119:33)  
10 there before me was a man riding \_\_\_\_\_ horse (1,3) (Zech 1:8)  
11 Bel bows down, \_\_\_\_ stoops low; their idols (Isa 46:1)  
12 by us who ate and \_\_\_\_ with him after he rose from the dead (Acts 10:41)  
19 Therefore disaster \_\_\_\_ overtake him in an instant (Prov 6:15)  
20 the poison of \_\_\_\_ is under their lips (Rom 3:13) KJV  
22 The good shepherd \_\_\_\_ down his life for the sheep (John 10:11)  
23 king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and \_\_\_\_\_ trees (1 King 9:11)  
24 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. \_\_\_\_ (Phil 4:20)  
27 with the words of David, and of Asaph the \_\_\_\_ (2 Chr 29:30)  
28 he himself gives all men life and breath and everything

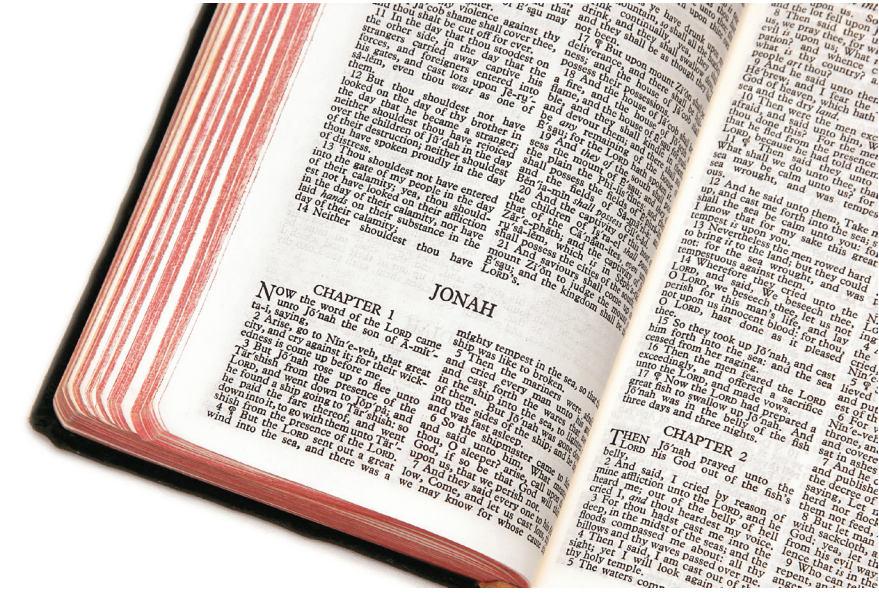
1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9		10	11	12
13									14					
15					16							17		
18				19						20	21			
	22		23					24	25					26
27			28					29				30	31	
32	33	34				35	36					37		
38					39						40			
41				42		43		44		45				
46			47					48	49					
			50					51				52	53	
	54	55					56					57		58
59				60	61						62			
63							64							
65				66						67				

COPYRIGHT 2021 BIBLEWORDGAMES.COM ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

\_\_\_\_ (Acts 17:25)  
29 "All these I have kept since I was a \_\_\_\_, " he said (Luke 18:21)  
30 twenty he goats, two hundred \_\_\_\_, and twenty rams (Gen 32:14)  
31 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor \_\_\_\_ (Luke 12:24)  
33 he was riding upon his \_\_\_\_, and his two servants were with him (Num 22:22)  
35 seven of every kind of clean animal, a male and \_\_\_\_ mate (Gen 7:2)  
37 I particularly \_\_\_\_ you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon (Heb 13:19)  
38 "At midnight the cry \_\_\_\_ out: 'Here's the bridegroom!' (Matt 25:6)  
40 \_\_\_\_ your sword upon your side, O mighty one (Ps 45:3)  
41 gather your children together, \_\_\_\_\_ hen gathers her chicks (2,1) (Luke 13:34)  
42 the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the \_\_\_\_ (Amos 9:13)

43 there was a continual \_\_\_\_ given him of the king (Jer 52:34) KJV  
45 here were plentiful supplies of flour, fig cakes, \_\_\_\_ cakes (1 Chron 12:40)  
47 wicked men have \_\_\_\_ among you (Deut 13:13)  
48 In you, O LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to \_\_\_\_ (Ps 71:1)  
51 Jesus was in Bethany in the home of a man known as Simon the \_\_\_\_ (Matt 26:6)  
52 angels hastened Lot, saying, \_\_\_\_, take thy wife (Gen 19:15) KJV  
53 the \_\_\_\_ forest has been cut down (Zech 11:2)  
55 As \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ man who casteth firebrands (1,3) (Prov 26:18) KJV  
56 they will \_\_\_\_ out the bread by weight (Lev 26:26)  
57 loose the bands of wickedness, to \_\_\_\_ the heavy burdens (Isa 58:6) KJV  
60 she began to \_\_\_\_ his feet with her tears (Luke 7:38)  
61 picnic pest (Prov 6:6)

Solution on page 14





POEM

By Regina McIntosh  
Yancey County



*In a Sunday sermon...  
The preacher told us this –  
Listen to the still small voice,  
Who whispers peace and grace,  
The voice of a Savior, Jesus – the divine,  
Who abides in heaven, awaiting His time  
To shine!*

*The preacher mentioned thoughts –  
Reminded that what we think, each opinion,  
Is a silent reflection, a direction...  
From the heart... where our ideas are formed –  
From our soul, where our love is born*

*The preacher told us to hear the words –  
Our hopes and dreams, our beliefs, our thinking.  
All those things that make up our reflections,  
Our reasoning and our deliberating...  
Everything that brings our life meaning –  
Thoughts of good and thoughts of bad,  
Dreams that could and dreams that died  
Hopes and prayers, the light that reflects...*

*The preacher told us that we need to remember –  
Our thought life – that is our heart life,  
Our thoughts are our spirit’s song, our joy –  
Our peace and love – everything that makes us  
Who we truly are ... embracing each feeling  
With gentling and healing, everything that our thinking  
Can possibly reveal!*

*The preacher assured us that our thoughts –  
Can bring us wisdom, - and also doubt  
Our thoughts can inspire us to believe  
Our thoughts can combine to make us grieve  
Our thoughts are lessons – our thoughts are peace  
Our thoughts are blessings and our thoughts ...  
Give us wings!*

*The preacher told us – to remember, please...  
It is our thoughts that God can read – so listen  
To the silence of every tender dream,  
Listen to the light – erasing shadows and gloom  
Listen to the music – of hope, faith, and love  
Listen to the spirit – of One who brings the truth...  
The hope of every thought, the faith that stirs,  
The promise of a love that comes from God above*

*The preacher mentioned – the thoughts that inspire us  
And the preacher mentioned – the love that is a fire in us*

*When you are thinking of the good and the bad,  
Listen to the joy – listen to the glad  
And find your healing – your happiness...  
In thinking of all the wonder God arouses,  
All the joy, peace, and grace – all the pleasure....  
That comes from thinking of His gift – the Son  
Who is the best giver there is – the only One...  
Who converts our doubts, our worries, our fears....  
Erases the sadness, all of the tears –  
With a love that lasts throughout the years!*

Philippians 4:8 King James Version  
“8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

Regina is a heart and soul who loves the Lord, her family, church, nature, camping, writing, and reading. Her poems have been published by Blue Mountain Arts and she has a recent book of Inspirational Christian Poetry available on Amazon – A Light in the Darkness by Regina McIntosh. Learn more about her by visiting her website at [www.reginamcintosh.com](http://www.reginamcintosh.com)

Out of town? You can still read the  
"Good News" on our new Website:  
[www.brcnews.com](http://www.brcnews.com)  
And find us on Facebook



# FREEDOM

## PRESSURE WASHING

A DIVISION OF FREEDOM LIFE

## Jonathan's USED APPLIANCES



### NEW LOCATION!

- Come and see the friendly staff at Jonathan's for all your appliance needs.
- We repair all major brands of appliances.

*We Deliver!*

- Washer
- Dryers
- Stoves
- Refrigerators

Cash it, Don't Trash It!  
We buy your used appliances!

560 Oak Avenue • Spruce Pine, NC  
828-766-9005 • (Cell) 828-766-9389



## AMAZING DEALS!

MONDAY—FRIDAY 9 TO 5  
SATURDAY—9 TO 2

# MOUNTAINEER PAWN SHOP

**NEED QUICK CASH?**  
We loan money on ANY item of value!

## WHY PAY RETAIL?

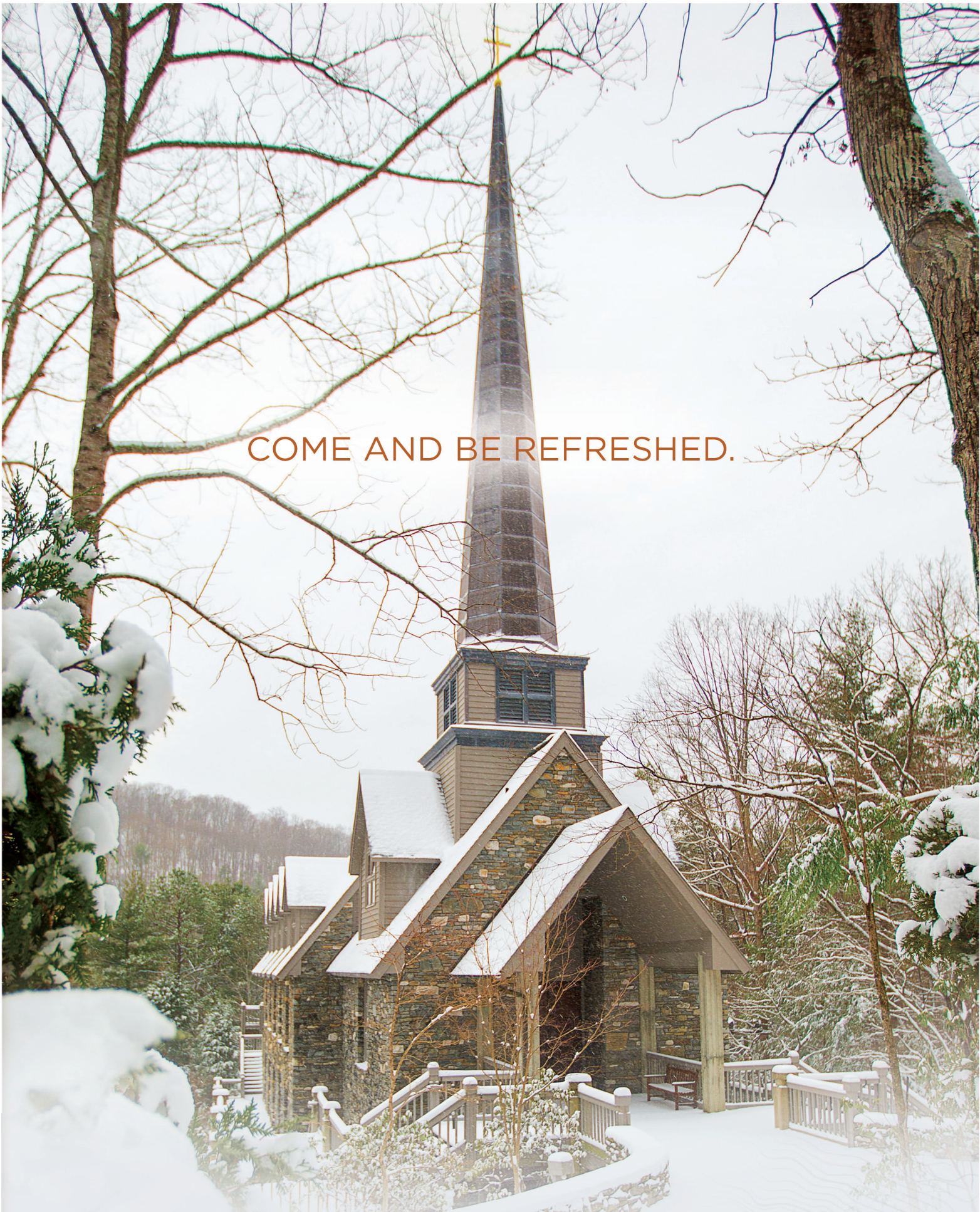
We have Gold, Silver, Coins, Jewelry, Game Systems, TV's, Laptops, Tools, Firearms, Ammo, and MUCH more...If you want it, We probably have it! STOP BY TODAY!!

Gold is at an all-time high! Bring in your unwanted rings, necklaces, and other jewelry for TOP DOLLAR!

Come meet the PAWN SISTERS  
12513 Highway 226 South  
Spruce Pine, NC  
(828) 765 - 7651

### GUNS & AMMO!





COME AND BE REFRESHED.



Come to the Billy Graham Training Center at The Cove in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of Asheville and focus on God and your relationship with Him. Plan a self-directed or guided Personal Spiritual Retreat—ideal for

individuals or couples. Return home renewed after experiencing our caring hospitality, chef-prepared meals, and scenic walking trails.

“The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul.” —PSALM 19:7, NIV

**BILLY GRAHAM**  
Training Center at The Cove  
*Seminars. Retreats. Concerts.*

    @thecovenc

FOR DETAILS, VISIT [THECOVE.ORG](http://THECOVE.ORG) OR CALL 828-771-4800.

A MINISTRY OF BILLY GRAHAM EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION ©2022 BGEA