



Cancellations: Fall "Friends of Children" days and "Founders Day" at Camp Duncan on Saturday, September 18 have been canceled.

Charity & Children

And now abides faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity. Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina



@bchfamily

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Growing up is never lonely at children's homes

By Jim Edminson, Editor

Time has a way of drawing people home. Recently, Patricia (Pat) Forbes Wayt drove on the Mills Home campus and felt like she had come home.

"I came to Thomasville in 1950," Pat says. "I was five years old."

Pat came to Mills Home and her three siblings went to Kennedy Home. In those days, a child had to be six to live at the Kinston campus. She moved to be with her brother and two sisters the following year.

"I lived at Kennedy Home until my freshman year in high school," she recalls. "Both places are special to me. They were home most of my childhood."

Pat's father was murdered when she was two years old. Her mother, a waitress in Rocky Mount, struggled to keep her family together. She worked long hours, and her small children were left alone most days until she returned—long after dark.

"Mother was courageous," Pat asserts. "She did all she could, and when she could do no more, she turned to Baptist Children's Homes. I think back and shudder to imagine what could have happened if she had not."

Pat has many fun and happy childhood memories. She remembers playing in the snow, eating lots of ice cream after her tonsils were removed, and joyful Christmases. She says the children had plenty to eat while other children she knew did not. Pat takes pride in the chores she did at Kennedy Home: putting vegetables and fruit preserves in jars for the winter

months, raking leaves around her cottage, and working in the laundry building.

"My starched shirts did not have a wrinkle," Pat chuckles. "They were so well ironed they could stand up by themselves."

Her mother, who had moved to Raleigh, would visit and bring picnic lunches that the small family enjoyed at a nearby Kinston park.

"I always looked forward to our picnics," she says. "Mother made the best fried chicken and potato salad."

Pat's mother knew she loved chocolate-on-chocolate cookies and fresh Sunbeam Bread. Almost every visit, she would bring her a loaf of bread and a package of cookies.

The sad times when her mother returned to Raleigh are seared in her memories along with her good ones.

"I would cry as I watched her drive away," she recalls. "I knew she had to go and I had to stay, but I could not help but feel abandoned. I remember my siblings comforting me until I could cry no more."

Pat knows living at Mills Home and Kennedy Home saved her. She says it is on these campuses that she learned the importance of home, family, and God in one's life. It was at Kennedy Home that she began her personal walk with the Lord.

"I loved to sing, and still do," she reminisces. "I sang when

churches visited. I wore a pretty dress and shiny black patent leather shoes and sang, 'Oh dandelion so yellow and gay, what do you do all day? I just stand here in tall green grass 'till the children come out to play.'"

Pat says that despite feeling alone sometimes, she was never lonely growing up. "It is what these homes offered and continue to provide children to this very day."



Patricia Forbes Wayt



Creativity drives innovation in BCH's ministry

By Michael C. Blackwell, President/CEO

One of the most creative things I've ever done in ministry is start the college outreach at Ridge Road Baptist Church in Raleigh. This was in 1970 when I was 28. I was minister for youth and college students, but we had no college students.

It started with some freshmen from NC State and from nearby all-female Meredith College. Eventually, we had more than 100 every Sunday. It was hard work—creative work. It all began from nothing.

I was able to motivate adults in the church to help, which was a key to success. The Krispy Kreme doughnuts provided each week at a special discount of \$4.80 for 10 dozen helped. I also got the address of every freshman from Meredith and NC State and wrote them a personal note. They never forgot that.

We started a coffee house in a building adjacent to the church. We had 200 on opening night. It was a creative venture that carried a high risk that some church members would not understand what we were doing. Our continued operation of the coffee house actually came to a vote and this unique outreach ministry was overwhelmingly approved. That was a period of creativity backed with passion and an ability to get people to do what I wanted them to do. It was the first time I realized I had leadership potential.

After I left that church staff to become a pastor, I met with my students from those years annually for probably 15 straight years. Several are in ministry careers and one is on my trustee board now and another handful are on my BCH Council of Advisors, which is a special "think-tank" of "outside the box" ideas.

Nothing requires creativity like starting something from nothing.

When North Carolina Baptists shifted their focus for ministry among a rapidly-aging population away from residential facilities, they asked BCH to come up with a plan—and to be responsible for whatever we created.

This was an opportunity to put a stamp on something completely new. There was no template, no model, and no precedent. This

would be pure, utter, 100-percent creativity.

We brainstormed and imagined. We came up with a name that itself exudes energy: NCBAM: North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry. Or "BAM!"

We've gone from nothing to providing year-round service for hundreds of frail elderly adults that enables them to stay in their homes. Our staff is minimal, and its primary function is to organize volunteer labor across the state, with the hands-on labor being provided by local church volunteers.

All these volunteers needed was a central clearinghouse, which we provide, and off they went to minister. What heavenly providence when the pandemic arose last year, we had just implemented *Hope Line* for seniors to call when they needed to hear a friendly voice.

We're growing and expanding. We help with conferences for the aging that other entities conduct. We've have three Aging Adults Innovating Ministry regional meetings and help churches establish better senior adult ministries.

We had a mandate to meet a specific need, and "BAM!" That's when the creative juices flow and good things arise from nothing.

The social conditions that called Baptist Children's Home into existence in 1885 did not remain stagnant. All through the decades, we've developed services and created ministries, to meet changing needs.

We began a home for teen mothers and their babies; family care for hard working moms and their children; early childhood education; family

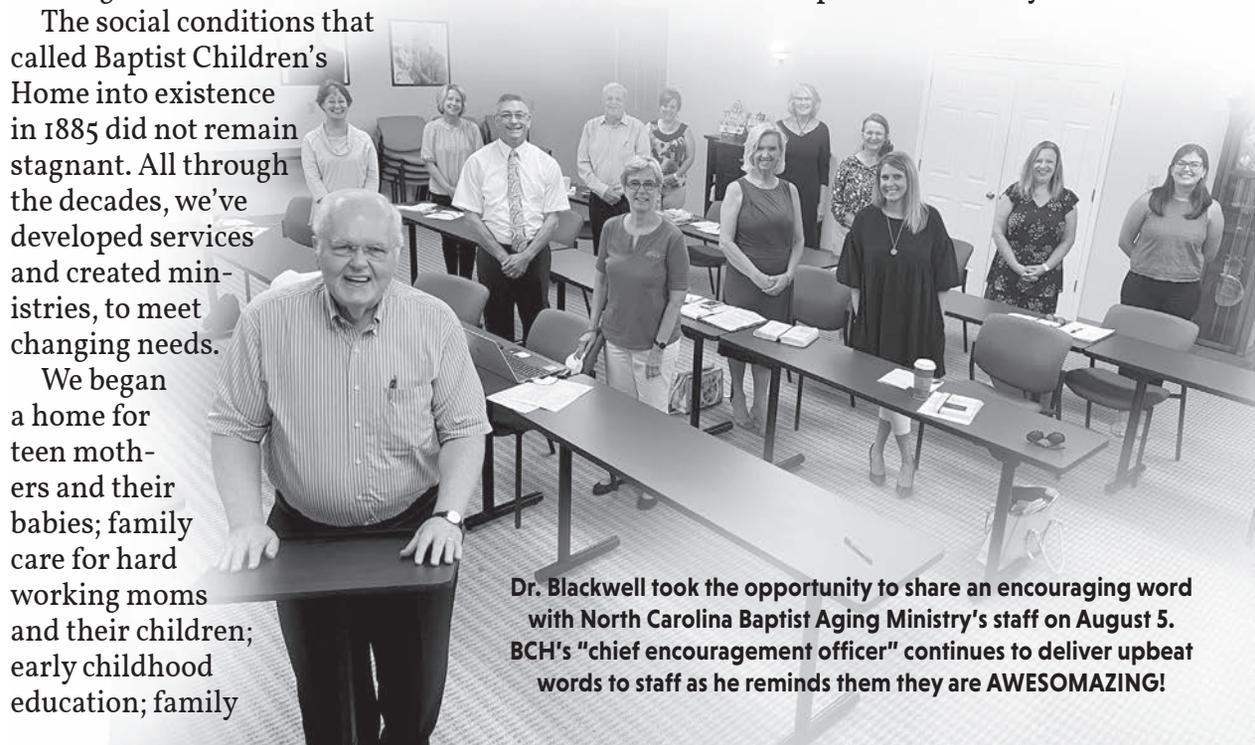
foster care homes offering foster families larger homes to meet the needs of larger groups of foster children; wilderness camping for both girls and boys; the Greater Vision Outreach ministry to meet the needs of struggling families in our communities, a ministry to orphans in Guatemala, and most recently Christian Adoption Services (CAS).

Timing is everything. I was approached many times over the years by elderly parents with adult children who were mentally unable to live by themselves. The parents' greatest concern was what would happen to their children if they no longer were around to care for them.

With much investigation and some seed money, we created a ministry for intellectually and developmentally disabled adults. We established one by one a network of homes where these adults can live and age with caring supervision.

Mastery of the creative process is rarely an accident. When the brass ring comes around, you've got to grab it. What is absolutely critical is to be aware that:

- Creativity requires inspiration.
- Inspiration demands action.
- Action expresses creativity



Dr. Blackwell took the opportunity to share an encouraging word with North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry's staff on August 5. BCH's "chief encouragement officer" continues to deliver upbeat words to staff as he reminds them they are AWESOMAZING!

Mission:

sharing hope . . . changing lives

Vision:

To provide the highest quality of Christian services to children, adults and families in a caring culture of measurable excellence

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Tractor ride benefiting NCBAM breaks all records

By Carol Layton, Director of Communications and Administration, NCBAM

Each summer, a tractor ride kicks off the Southeast Old Threshers' Reunion held at Denton FarmPark. Tractors are paraded through the countryside; a BBQ lunch is enjoyed by drivers and riders—all for the benefit of a local nonprofit. This year, North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) was selected to receive proceeds from the event as well as the live auction held the first evening of the Reunion.

Supporters of NCBAM broke all fundraising records. Through sponsorships, admissions, and the live auction, NCBAM received \$29,647—all of which will be used in direct ministry projects for frail seniors across North Carolina. NCBAM's fundraising campaign was called, "Rev'n Up for Rampin' Up," because most of the funds will be used to purchase lumber for wheelchair ramps. Other safety needs of seniors will also be addressed, such as grab bars, handrails, and smoke alarm installations.

Key sponsorships were provided by Loflin Fabrication and Bob and Carolyn Tucker of ShoeShow. At the opening ceremony, James Cook of Troy Lumber presented an additional check for \$5,000, saying "The most rewarding thing we can do is help other people. I'm so grateful God allowed Troy Lumber to be part of this." Nearly two dozen other groups helped sponsor the event, including state and local agencies serving seniors. Gary's BBQ in Concord prepared the lunch, Pepsi Bottling



Tim Loflin of Denton FarmPark presented a record-breaking check for \$29,647 to NCBAM Director Dr. Sandy Gregory on August 5. The funds were raised during the annual "Tractor Ride" that kicks off the Southeast Old Threshers' Reunion held at the FarmPark in Denton, NC. Through sponsorships, admissions, and the live auction, funds raised will be used during Rampin' Up! 2022. Inset photo, NCBAM team members rode in a farm trailer provided by Jeff Noah of Glorieta Baptist Church.

Ventures supplied drinks, and Big D's Mini Doughnuts provided dessert.

"We're so grateful to the mission-minded family that runs Denton FarmPark and to all who supported the Tractor Ride," said NCBAM's director, Dr. Sandy C. Gregory.

"It was a wonderful experience for our team to see the support and know the funds will bless the lives of many seniors—increasing their access to community and making them safer in their homes."

Bike for Hope \$100,000 Goal

Lewis Smith is more than halfway to his goal!

Lewis has raised \$76,000! Help him as he cycles a total of 600 miles in a series of 12, 50-mile stages throughout September. He will ride his bike on a safe, perimeter road at Charlotte Motor Speedway in Concord. All proceeds will bring hope and healing to children and families served by Baptist Children's Homes.



Give immediately at bchfamily.org/givenow and choose "Bike for Hope" from the Direct My Gift menu. Send a check with "Bike for Hope" in the memo to BCH, P.O. Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27361. Contact Lewis Smith at 828.421.9300 or lgsmith@bchfamily.org

EVENT CANCELLATIONS

We have made the difficult decision to cancel all of our fall "Friends of Children" mission days. In addition, "Founders Day" on Saturday, September 18 at Camp Duncan in Aberdeen has been canceled.

We have been closely monitoring the latest COVID-19 news and feel it is best, for the well-being of visitors, children and staff, to cancel these in-person events. This is a tough choice as our children and caregivers were looking forward to seeing you in person. We do not, however, want to take unnecessary risks with anyone's health as you and those we serve are dear to us. You and your church group can go on mission with us by using the "Month of Prayer" guide (see page 7). In the meantime, please know how much your friendship and faithful support mean to us. Watch bchfamily.org for updates.

Let your light shine today!

By **Brenda B. Gray**,
Executive Vice President,
Development & Communications

Recently, my electricity went out and the house was in complete darkness. I stumbled around, tripping over the dog, looking for a candle and a lighter when I remembered there was a flashlight on my cell phone. I turned on the flashlight and it brought light to the whole room. It is amazing how one small light can make such a difference.

In Matthew 5:14-16, we read, “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

God has called us out to be light in the darkness. It was after 10:00 one night when my front doorbell rang. I thought it was strange because no one ever comes to my front door. As I opened the door, one of our children in care was standing before me sobbing—big tears rolling down her face. I invited her in and shared with her that I first needed to call her cottage parents and let them know where she was and that she was safe. I made the call and went back to sit and listen. She shared how she was going through a dark period in her life and she wasn’t sure if she could keep on trying.

“Every time I feel like I am making progress something bad happens,” she confided.

I shared with her that there are so many people who love her and care about her. After listening to her situation, we talked for a while and then we prayed. I listened as she poured her heart out to God. As she got ready to leave, she shared that she had planned on running away, but as she was about to walk through the archway, just beyond my house, she looked back and saw that my light was on and decided to reach out for help.

Over the years, I have watched this child grow into a beautiful young lady. She now has a family of her own. She recently called to let me know she is settling into her new home in another state. She gave the phone to her son who said, “How are you doing Granny? Get ready, Mama says I can visit at Christmas.”



For many of those who come to us in need of refuge, the darkness of abuse, neglect, and family crisis can seem overwhelming. They struggle with daily pressures and the flashbacks of the past. It is a very difficult time for them. Sometimes the progress seems slow and to make it through another day is a victory to celebrate.

Once they walk through our doors, they are no longer on this journey through their darkness alone. We are here—you are here to help light their way!

As a child, I would raise my finger high into the air while singing, “This little light of mine, I’m gonna let it shine.” As an adult, I discovered no one’s light is little. When we allow God’s light to shine through us, it can make a real difference in the life of another. For someone in darkness, a glimmer of kindness and hope is brighter than anyone can imagine.

For the child abandoned at the mall, you are a light. For the young lady sitting at the abortion clinic who chose adoption instead, you are a light. For the baby found in the ditch in Guatemala, you are a light. For the frail aging adult alone in her apartment who found a friend through NCBAM, you are a light. For the child kidnapped who was then rescued and came to us, you are a light. For the child who lived in a drug infested environment, whose Mom went to prison, you are a light. For the family with no food, you are a light. For the child wanting a family of her own, you are a light. For Samantha who just entered college, you are a light. For the thousands

who cried out to us for help and heard the message of God’s love for them for the first time, you are a light.

Light has a way of changing a situation, filling the room with hope so that what was formerly frightening becomes clear. Light allows us to see the truth. The writer of I John shares in his writing, “...because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.” Let it be so for each one who walks through our doors.

Jesus challenged us all, when He said, “In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your father in heaven.”

When our children and families, our staff, the people in your communities, and the citizens of North Carolina see “light” through you, our Heavenly Father is glorified!

My challenge to you is keep your light on, holding it high, lighting the way that others may see their way to hope and healing.

Last year you provided light for more than 195,000 in need of help. There are still so many in need. In our state, more than 16,000 children are removed from their home each year. Every child deserves a family. Every child deserves a home. We cannot do what we do without you. There are many ways you can shine your light to help. Call me for more information at 336-689-4442. Remember the darkness cannot hide the light.

Shine Your Light...Glorify God!

"I don't feel like
I would've gotten
SAVED
if not for Odum Home."

Samantha

has been in the foster care system since she was a young girl. Her future looked dim until almost five years ago when she came to live at Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH) Odum Home in Pembroke, NC. Here, Samantha graduated high school in 2021 and achieved her dream of attending college. Most importantly, Samantha heard the Gospel at BCH and asked Jesus into her heart. Because of the support and prayers of North Carolina Baptists, Samantha's future is bright and filled with hope!

Watch Samantha's story
www.bchnc.org/sam



Your offering changes lives!

Though your prayers & support, BCH
provided homes, hope and healing to

195,000

children, families, and adults in 2020.

725 salvations have been
proclaimed in the last
five years because you made it
possible for the Gospel to be shared.

Churches, please collect an Annual
Offering. Videos and resources are at
www.bchoffering.org



SHARING HOPE...CHANGING LIVES

Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina

ANNUAL OFFERING

Resources at www.bchoffering.org | Call 336.474.1209 to schedule a speaker.

Week of Prayer: November 14-21, 2021 | Offering Goal: \$1,500,000   

A boy's answered prayer named "Mister Junior"

By **Brad Gearhart**, Director, Camp Duncan for Girls

It was 2011 and I was paddling down the Edisto River in South Carolina with two other chiefs and ten campers from Cameron Boys Camp. Little did I realize at that time what big things God had in store.

We had set out on a 12-day river trip that would help prepare us for a longer trip on the James River in Virginia later that summer. The excitement was high as we looked forward to a great adventure. But as with all trips, we were a little nervous—it turned out for good reason.

We soon realized this wasn't going to be a trip where we knocked out a lot of mileage at the beginning of the day, allowing us time in the afternoons for swimming and exploring. On this first day, we were stopped by a major obstacle—more than a dozen trees had fallen across the river, completely blocking our way. We pulled the canoes from the water and while the group problem-solved the best course of action, a powerful, but seemingly unimportant, conversation began between a boy and his chief.

One of the campers had been struggling. He listened to the chiefs talk about a god who cared about him and the other boys but he was skeptical. His life, up to this time, cast a shadow over his heart. So, Chris decided to test the god that the group had been talking about. He would pray a prayer to see if God really cared about him.

His prayer went something like this: "God, if you really care about me, I want my group to meet a man who drives a big truck, wears bib overalls, has gray hair, and gives us deer burgers."

No one laughed. Some of the boys nodded, while one camper said "amen." The prayer was not mentioned again until day three—the toughest day of the whole trip.

The river narrowed. As we turned the bend, we were confronted by more fallen trees. We were in and out of the water, hacking dead branches, going around or squeezing under large trees that lay across the river. Making things worse, we found ourselves in an oxbow—we were on a portion of the river that wasn't the main channel. The trees now



Baptist Children's Homes' two residential wilderness camps offer the freedom of being outdoors and the structure of small groups with constant, caring supervision. Children live in groups of ten with three counselors called "chiefs." Learn more at www.bchfamily.org.

encroached from both banks. At this point, I said a prayer of my own asking God to help us figure out where we were and how to get back to where we needed to be.

Just as things became bleak, the trees crept back to reveal a large open field. I took a breath and gave thanks. The field was made by large machines that clear cut about 100 acres of woodland through which the river now flowed.

We weren't out of the proverbial woods yet. But I was grateful. Remnants of tangled branches made the paddling hard as we worked back into the shade of standing trees.

One of the boys called our attention to a grassy boat ramp ahead. There were no signs or any indication that would keep us from making it our campsite for the night. We all gave a sigh of relief.

As we unpacked our canoes, the boys and chiefs set out on their agreed upon tasks to make this area "home" for the night. And then the most remarkable thing occurred.

Shortly after the group went about their chores, I heard the rumblings of a truck. I looked up and saw a few boys, along with a chief, who had set out to gather firewood riding in the back of an approaching truck. I feared we would have to move the camp site. I wasn't sure what to do—other than pray again.

The truck was a big 3500 Dodge dually.

It came to a stop and the driver opened the door. There stood before us a tall man with unruly gray hair. The man told us that he owned the property and told us that we had made camp on a small part of his nearly 4,000-acre hunting club.

I began to apologize when a smile broke across his sun-baked face. He introduced himself as "Mister Junior" and welcomed us to spend the night. And then it happened. Mister Junior said he imagined we were all hungry, and he invited us to a cookout where deer burgers were to be the main course!

There was an audible gasp. I could hear a murmur in the group. Then we heard Chris as he softly said, "God answered my prayer."

Answered prayer reminds us just how great our God is. The answer to Chris's prayer ignited a fire in the group. The campers were determined after meeting Mister Junior to pray to God about all things—taking it a little too far they added to Chris's request that night, ice cold watermelon and sweet tea.

The chiefs and I took the opportunity to teach the boys to pray instead for restored relationships in their families, a renewed

love for their parents, and the energy and desire to work hard toward their goals.

God's timing is perfect. And I am convinced His answers come at the right time to meet our needs. Cameron Boys Camp and Camp Duncan for Girls need



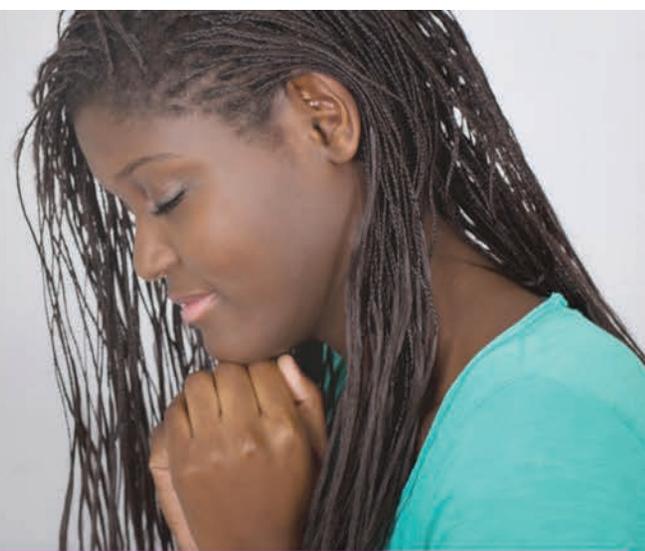
Brad Gearhart

chiefs. Baptist Children's Homes is in need of staff across the state. Help spread the word. Learn more by visiting www.bchnc.org/career.

I get excited when I reflect back on Chris's answered prayer. I know in this season of needs, God is about to do some miracles—in just the right time. By the way, Mister Junior wasn't wearing bib overalls that day, but knowing the God we serve, I know there were more than one pair hanging in his closet.

A month of prayer

We know prayer changes things, and Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) needs your prayers especially now. By using this four-week prayer guide, your church, Sunday School class, small group or youth group can pray every day for the specific need of a child, family, BCH caregiver, or others we serve. The guide gives you insight into the heartache and struggles of those we care for 24/7. For additional copies of the prayer guide, go to bchfamily.org/prayer



SUNDAY Pray for the six-year-old boy at Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH) Broyhill Home in Clyde who was abandoned at the shopping mall. Pray that he finds healing from this experience as his cottage parents care for him and show him the unconditional love of Jesus.

MONDAY Pray for three brothers that live in one of our cottage homes at Kennedy Home in Kinston. These boys miss their mother and hope to visit with her soon. Pray that their mother will be able to get the resources to be able to provide the care they need and bring them back home.

TUESDAY Pray for the 15-year-old girl who is choosing to raise her baby with the support of her caregivers and staff at BCH's home for teen mothers and their babies in Thomasville. She also has a one-year-old child -- pray for this baby as well. Lift up the staff as they provide the care they need.

WEDNESDAY Pray for the continued success of three girls who have completed their time at Camp Duncan, one of BCH's two 24/7 residential wilderness camps. They are returning to their families after overcoming struggles including substance abuse and self-hatred. Two of them accepted Christ!

THURSDAY Pray for cottage parents, caregivers, chiefs at BCH's camps, case managers, Guatemala missionaries and staff throughout BCH's many ministries. Pray for their health and for God to refreshen and strengthen them as they carry out BCH's mission of *sharing hope...changing lives*.

FRIDAY Pray for one of our special needs men that lives at Three Forks Home in Zionville. He desires to be a better Christian and is asking others to pray for him. BCH provides nine caring homes for intellectually/developmentally disabled adults to help them achieve their highest level of independence.

SATURDAY Pray for a boy living in a cottage at Kennedy Home in Kinston who has begun asking questions about what it means to surrender your life to Christ. Pray that God will help his cottage parents find the right words to share with him.

SUNDAY Pray for the children who accepted Christ on Easter Sunday and have been baptized. Pray that they feel the love of Jesus each day as they grow in their faith. Pray for their cottage parents as they continue to model of the love of Christ to these, and other boys and girls, everyday.

MONDAY Pray for the 10-year-old girl who lost her mother this year. Until recently she has been living at a cottage with her cottage parents and the other girls at Mills Home. She is now living with her new BCH-trained foster family. Pray for healing in her life and for her foster parents as they care for her.

TUESDAY Pray that God will send the right people to fill the vacant positions at BCH's many ministries. There is a great need for cottage parents, caregivers, chiefs at the camps, case managers and other positions in order to provide ministry and care to hurting children and families.

WEDNESDAY Pray for the ninth grader at Cameron Boys Camp who is struggling with apathy as well as feeling like a failure because he cannot read or write. His mother also passed away. Pray for him, his chiefs and the other boys in his group that together God will use them to help him heal.

THURSDAY Pray for the mother of one of the intellectually/developmentally disabled men at Alverta Bolick Home in Asheboro -- he greatly appreciates everyone's prayers. His mother is on dialysis several times a week and recently underwent a hearing test. Please pray for her overall health and well-being.

FRIDAY Pray for the boy who was only able to stay at Odum Home in Pembroke for a week, but accepted Christ during his short stay. Pray that He will grow close to God going forward. Just as with this child, pray the seeds of Gospel grow in the hearts of BCH boys and girls regardless of how long they stay.

SATURDAY Pray for the 16-year-old who came to live at BCH because both parents overdosed. As the one who had to call 911, she is dealing with trauma and heartbreak. Pray for the families of the children BCH serves that they experience hope and healing from their struggles.

SUNDAY Pray for the five siblings living at Mills Home in Thomasville who desire a foster family. Pray that God will connect them with a family that has enough room in their home so they can all be together.

MONDAY Pray for a young elementary school girl in Guatemala who struggles to deal with the trauma and loss she endured before coming to live at Good Shepherd Ministries, the orphanage BCH oversees in Guatemala. Good Shepherd provides homes and medical care to impoverished orphans.

TUESDAY Pray for the aging grandparents who are not able to physically raise their grandchildren. BCH sees this situation regularly where grandparents have taken on the parental role as addictions and other lifestyle choices prevent their children from being the mothers and fathers they need to be.

WEDNESDAY Pray for the aging adult who is wheelchair bound and confined to her home. Pray for God to connect the right volunteers to provide a ramp so she can be as independent as possible. Operated by BCH, NCBAM provides a network of resources to help the aging maintain independence.

THURSDAY Pray for 15-year-old girl who recently jumped from a car after being kidnapped -- she broke her leg in the process. She is now safe at a BCH cottage where she is cared for by her cottage parents. Pray that she is able to overcome the trauma of this situation and find healing and peace.

FRIDAY Pray for the birth mothers that BCH's Christian Adoption Services has the opportunity to serve -- mothers who have placed their babies for adoption. Pray for their healing. Pray for the adoptive families as they provide love and care for these children.

SATURDAY Pray that boys and girls living in BCH's cottages and camps across the state will take advantage of the opportunities presented to them. From healing from past hurts to academic success to personal and spiritual growth, pray that they will embrace everything God desires them to be.

SUNDAY Pray for the 12-year old-girl that came to Broyhill Home with a bag of broken dishes. She told her cottage parents that she keeps them because they are all she has left from home. Each evening she looks at them and cries. Pray for her heartache and for her cottage parents as they comfort her.

MONDAY Pray for the single mother of a one-year-old child in BCH's Family Care cottage at Kennedy Home. She learned she is pregnant and has considered abortion. Through BCH's counsel, she is committed to raising her child. Pray BCH can help her put the support in place she needs to raise her children.

TUESDAY Pray that international adoptions can stay safely open. Many of these opportunities have just opened back up after being suspended due to COVID-19. Christian Adoption Services has several families adopting from the Philippines. Pray for their travels and that the adoptions can be completed.

WEDNESDAY Pray for BCH's foster/adopt ministry. Pray for God to connect churches, who wish to help children in the state's foster care system, with BCH who can equip them to begin a foster/adopt ministry in their church body. Pray for God to lead Christian couples to foster/adopt through BCH.

THURSDAY Pray for two sisters who live in one of Kennedy Home's cottages. An adoptive family for them has been identified, and the sisters have begun spending weekends with the family. Pray that the transition will be successful as they become a new family.

FRIDAY Pray for BCH's high school graduates who are attending college. Many of them have little to no support outside their BCH family. Pray they will make wise choices and know God and their BCH caregivers and case managers are always there for them.

SATURDAY Pray for God to be glorified through every ministry that BCH offers. Pray for seeds to be planted and for hearts and lives to be forever transformed as the Gospel is shared with those BCH caregivers and staff are privileged to serve.

Video shows Baptists vital to Samantha's success

Samantha has been in the foster care system since she was a young girl. Her situation was bleak until almost five years ago when she came to live at Baptist Children's Homes' (BCH) Odum Home in Pembroke. The 18-year-old just graduated from high school and has achieved her dream of attending college. Most importantly, Samantha heard the Gospel at BCH and asked Jesus into her heart.

Samantha's future, which once looked dim, is now bright and filled with hope through the support of North Carolina Baptists. Her inspirational story is the focus of the video for BCH's **Annual Offering**.

It is time for North Carolina Baptist churches to share the BCH story by planning, promoting, and then inviting members to give to this vital offering. This year's theme is "**Light Their Darkness**" based on John 1:5—a theme BCH Communications Director Blake Ragsdale believes is fitting for Samantha's story and the children BCH serves.

"You see the light of Christ all over Samantha's life. It's a testimony of what God is doing in the lives of children," said Ragsdale. "It's a story that begs to be shared because it shows how God works through the prayers and support given by North Carolina Baptists."

In April, Ragsdale was making preliminary plans for the 2021 Annual Offering by looking for the right story to share. He was at Odum Home to produce a **Charity & Children** (May 2021) article featuring the home's five high-school seniors who had all been accepted to college. It was during his interviews with the teens that Ragsdale began to feel a "nudge."

"I was taking notes and listening to these remarkable children when I felt God nudging me to pay particular attention to Samantha," he recalls. "During a break, I immediately found Odum Home Campus Manager Kathy Locklear to talk with her about Samantha being the focus of the video."

Only one month later, Ragsdale and Randy Durham's filming crew from Credence Pictures were with Samantha to film her story.

"I was thrilled when Samantha agreed to



Above, eighteen-year-old Samantha, who lives at Odum Home in Pembroke, embraces Vicki Burge from Village Baptist in Fayetteville. The annual offering film crew captured the high school graduation party organized by Village Baptists' "Saved to Serve" class. Below, Credence Pictures' Warren Gentry films Samantha and Odum Home campus manager Kathy Locklear.

share her story," said Ragsdale. "She has such a heart for the Lord, and it was evident she feels her story can inspire and impact others."

Part of the two-day film shoot included a graduation party for Samantha and her fellow seniors—a surprise celebration organized by the "Saved to Serve" class from Village Baptist in Fayetteville.

"Our crew was able to be the proverbial 'flies on the wall' as we filmed the surprise and smiles on the seniors' faces as they arrived at the party," said Ragsdale. "They wanted to provide the children with everything they need for college, but most importantly, they wanted to remind them that their class will always be there for them as they step into the future."

"This was more than just a party—this was about a relationship between a church and BCH's children."

Ragsdale hopes all aspects of Samantha's story and the involvement of North Carolina Baptists resonate as churches share the new video.

"The video shows how lives are forever transformed when North Carolina Baptists

shine the light of Christ into these children's lives," explained Ragsdale. "There's no better way to help a congregation understand the importance of giving to BCH's annual offering than to watch this story."

Churches are encouraged to show the video during in-person and online services as well as on social media. Short versions of the video are produced specifically to fit the time constraints of a church's order of service. The video can be downloaded at www.bchoffering.org or by ordering a free DVD by calling 336-474-1209.



Watch Samantha's Story

Visit bchnc.org/sam21 or scan the QR code to see her story! Visit bchoffering.org for digital long and short versions of the video you can share at church.



Homecoming was a marvelous success!

"We are family" strikes chord with attendees

By Lib Johnson

(336) 299-7412

libsjohnson@triad.rr.com

Homecoming 2021! How longingly awaited and so rapidly gone! We wish to express thanks for the opportunity to be together again. We thank the Mills Home staff for a welcoming, beautifully groomed campus. As always the Alumni Council executed a marvelous Homecoming.

How could the theme be better? **WE ARE FAMILY!** Decorations, welcoming signs, so much planning of activities, hours decorating the gym and executing other tasks gave us a most precious event. **President Jane Helms Brown** sends the Alumni Council (and all helping family members, friends, and other alumni) her heartfelt thanks for all you did to bring about such a marvelous Homecoming.

Thanks to **Pete Knight** for bringing together a great team for the morning worship service. **Joe Knight** led the Alumni choir and later his band presented special music; **Danny Bryant** touched hearts with his personal testimony; **Rev. Randy Stewart** delivered a moving yet humorous sermon; and **Dr. Blackwell** concluded with inspirational points and a song that said, "We'll leave the light on for you." Backing up the worship service was the beautiful organ and piano accompaniment by **Rev. Randy and Diane Stewart**. All Sunday afternoon, praise for the worship service and an overall great Homecoming abounded across the campus. As we move back to the earlier part of the weekend, folks will remember the hot dog and hamburger supper on Friday evening and the new event—the huge Saturday morning breakfast.

What a smashing success, thanks to the weekend cooks **Danny and Jane Brown, Rusty Bunker, Robert and Cindy Helms, Helen Helms, Sana and Joshua**

Myers, and Alyssa Thomas. The Alumni Council contributed all the breakfast items and concession snacks for the weekend from their personal funds.

A smashing success again was the Saturday evening meal that followed the 5:00 business meeting of the Mills Home Alumni Association. What a meal!

Thanks to **Cecelia Townsend Wilkerson** and her husband for handling the annual "Silent Auction." It provided numerous quality items that brought us the grand sum of \$3466.50.

Other council members, spouses, and other alumni contributed to the success of Homecoming: **Grady and Flora Hicks Patton, Ron and Lisa Carter Lancaster, Judy Knight, Ron and Julie Maiden Long, Jay Wood, Jimmy and Linda Rochelle, Sharon Stiles, Juanita White Messervey, Mike and Sandi Clay, Ruth Berndt Hodges, Martha Berndt Fisher, Jackie Elliott Walker, Bucky Clark, Keith Campbell, Lexi Churchill, Judy Knight, Clifton Lambreth, Charles Lambreth, Lib Johnson, Jim Edminson, and Mills Home staff: Larry Morris, John Mullen, Melinda Helsabeck, Patricia Carroll, Regina Keener, Kevin McPherson, Andrea Walker, and Linda Taylor.**

The annual Oscar awards this year were presented to **Joe Knight and Faye Yarborough Ridge** for the outstanding service they have rendered to the Mills Home Alumni Association over many years. We heartily congratulate them.

The ever gracious **Bill and Verna Byerly** will be holding their annual orphan picnic at their "western town" in Archdale on October 2—always the first Saturday of October. Everyone is invited.

Come when you wish Saturday morning and bring your favorite foods to share. Eating time will

be 12:30 pm. So, my dear friends, please mark your calendar for that date! The address is 6699 Muddy Creek Rd., Archdale, NC 27263. Call or text this number to let them know you are coming: 336-471-4267.

It is the cutest little town ever. Lots of animals out on the farm, a train to admire, a chapel for a moment of reverence, a post office, beautiful antique horse drawn carriages for a country ride, and other things to be found in this special western town—all built by **Bill Byerly** and his friends. And we can't forget the delicious food prepared by orphans. It is a fun experience and another little "homecoming" for brothers and sisters. Keep an eye out on further notices on Facebook and the next **Charity & Children.**

After Homecoming, **Phil Christman** shared: "I've been thinking of how to describe the family bond experience I think we all had from our Homecoming. I'm so sorry that some could not come and sorry that we have lost so many—my sweet sister **Bennie**, our orphan brother **Donald Burgess**, and many others. We will miss them all. However, there were and there was 'something there' that we all had in common in spite of many differences. You know what it was? **Orphan Love.** Yes, that is what I think it was. 'Orphan love' to you all and thank you for all our memories! I hope to see you all next year. Meanwhile take care and be safe."

Martha Fisher is requesting prayers for **Tim Armstrong** who has just had surgery. He is the brother of **Mike and Jeff**, (both now deceased) and **Dennis and Paula Armstrong.**

Also, please keep **Harry Walls** in your prayers as he recuperates from a second stroke suffered around July 29. He says he is rapidly growing stronger. Send

cards to Harry at 800 W. Holly Hill Rd., Thomasville, NC 27360.

Please keep **Louise Maness Pierce** in your prayers. She is still suffering from injuries sustained in a June auto accident which totaled her car. Send cards to Louise at this address: 316 Ridgeway Lane, Lexington, NC, 27295.

This is the "In Memoriam" list of alumni who died between August, 2020 up to July, 2021. It includes all but a few whose deaths came later.

Brenda Allen Hoff, '63-'68; Mike Armstrong, '74-'77; Addie Lee Batts Lether, '33-'43; Viola Batts Rus, '33-'47; Donnie Beck (staff child), 50s-60s; Belch Robert, '33-'41; Peggy Bentley Hall, '47-'56; Mark Berndt, '73-'78; Donald Burgess, '49-'60; David Canham, '75-'76; Bennie Christman Phillips, '57-'62; Cathy Lynn Clark Faust, '68-'73; Sandra Corder (staff wife), '57-'63; Emma Jean Crisp Maynard, '43-'54; Barbara Dagenhart Kepley, '51-'62; Vannie Downy Carter, '39-'51; Ruby Hauser Wooten, '42-'50; Dorothy Hoffman Vernon, '46-'58; Rebecca Jacobs Malone, '55-'66; Sidney Jacobs, '55-'59; Darlene Jones Jarrell, '55-'63; Earl Laws, '58-'63; Blair Little, '43-'51; Beverly M. Maiden Pacheco, '77-'80; Nick Martinez, '56-'58; Tommy McCracken, '68-'73; Helen McGee James, '50-'60; Andrew "Casey" Medlin, '29-'36; Essie Smathers Nichols, '46-'52; Ted Tucker, '55-'58; Richard Vaughn, '69-'77; Judy Wallin, '64-'67; Nancy Weimer Kindrick, '63-'73; Betty Jean Wheeler Bechtel, '48-'55; Tommy Wilson, '33-'44; Shirley Woodall Byers, '37-'47.



Lib Johnson was a resident of Mills Home from 1946 to 1957. Johnson began writing the Mills Home alumni column in 1992.



Cameron Boys Camp in Cameron
Boys pick berries for delicious treat
 The Trailblazers group at Cameron Boys Camp picked blackberries so that "Mom Lisa," one of Camp's cooks, could bake her delicious blackberry pie. The pie was eaten very quickly!



Christian Adoption Services
Family adds adoptive child's sibling
 A few years ago, Taylor and Carrie adopted their daughter through Christian Adoption Services (CAS), BCH's new ministry. This past month, the couple received an unexpected phone call from the birth mother of their adopted daughter. Because Taylor and Carrie had fostered a good relationship with their daughter's birth mother, they were asked if they would also consider bringing the adopted child's sibling permanently into their family. As a result, Carrie and Taylor adopted the second child so the siblings could remain together. Their story is a testament of how adoption is not only ministering to children but to birth parents as well.



Odum Home in Pembroke
Youth group provides craft bags
 Bags filled with summertime activities, such as games and crafts, were delivered by Priscilla Furby from Stewartsville Baptist Church in Virginia. The church's youth provided them.



Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte
Group keeps campus safe
 The Live Sent ministry team from Hickory Grove Baptist were recently at Mills Home in Thomasville clearing out older trees and limbs that could potentially damage the property.



Mills Home Homecoming
Alumni come together
 Past residents of Mills Home reunited the first weekend in August for Homecoming. The weekend brings together alumni for a time of reminiscing at the place they call "home."



Midway Baptist Church in West Jefferson
Youth group paints cottage
 Recently, a student group from Midway Baptist Church spent a missions day at Mills Home in Thomasville. The group helped by painting York Cottage.



Lindsay Home in Zionville
Ladies root for the home team
 The ladies of Lindsay Home witnessed a home-team victory by the Boone Bigfoot's baseball team. Lindsay Home is for intellectually/developmentally disabled adults.



Red Knights Motorcycle Club
Biker group brings in funds
 In just less than two months, the Red Knights Motorcycle Club organized a ride from Ashboro to Thomasville to benefit Mills Home. They raised \$6,000 through their efforts.



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Remembering Roger and Mary Williams

Final call for Fall Beach Retreat on Oct. 8, 9, & 10

By JOHN THOMPSON, 110 Lee K. Allen, Havelock, NC 28532 (282) 671-3515

jthompson117@ec.rr.com

In June, 1972, my interview before coming to Kennedy Home (KH) was with a wonderful man. His name was **Rev. Roger Williams**, the Superintendent of Kennedy Home at that time. He and his wife, **Ms. Mary**, took Becky, me, and our two boys under their loving, caring *wing* and taught us how to help children. I came as Kennedy Home Baptist Church's associate pastor in music, children, and youth. I led six choirs, taught 62 piano students, filled in for houseparents and at the pool and gym when needed, and was in charge of campus tours. **Becky** was church organist and secretary to seven men and one lady in the main office. Rev. Williams was our *direct* boss. Mrs. Williams sang in my adult choir and in the Kinston Community Chorus that I directed for Lenoir Community College. **Dr. W.R. Wagoner** was the president of Baptist Children's Homes at that time. **Rev. Rodney Beals** was pastor of the church and his wife was librarian.

Rev. Roger Williams was at first the pastor at the Mills Home Church. He was also the head of the Homes' development program. In 1967, he became superintendent at KH. During Rev. Williams' tenure, two staff houses, two family style cottages, a new infirmary, a new gym, and a new dairy barn were built. He proved to be one of the most progressive administrators in KH's history.

Judy Poteat remembers that Rev. Williams hired her husband **Richard** as farm manager in 1970 and she later became his secretary. Judy recalls that he was always kind to everyone.

He made an effort to know all the children in care. He was firm, but always in a caring way. He was known to be wise and had an amazing sense of humor.

He commanded respect, but more importantly, he loved the Lord and his life and actions were proof of his Christian faith.

Edward Gaston Pait recalls that Rev. Williams was always smiling and was a mentor to each young person he met. Edward always appreciated him listening to the children as if he knew what they were going to say. Edward remembers Rev. Williams' daughter Nancy fondly. She spent time with him to help with issues he had in high school.

Debbie McCormick Caulder, daughter of houseparents Mack and Pat McCormick, recounts that Rev. Williams married her and her husband Gary 47 years ago. She says Rev. Williams was an "awesome Christian."

Donna Duty remembers Rev. Williams going on the trip to Washington, D.C. with the 1974 high school graduates. She says **Danny Tharrington** was our driver and Rev. Williams sat up front as co-pilot!

Alumni President **Kattie Parker** remembers that Rev. Williams was a fine man and loved the Lord. He presented her the very first Bible she owned. She says he was an inspiration.

Margie Peterson Jones recalls that she and her husband **Bobby** were the first houseparents Rev. Williams employed.

Fred Hines also remembers that Rev. Williams was a strong man of faith and very compassionate. Fred had regular opportunities to interact with him and says he learned a lot from him. Rev. Williams recommended Fred as a candidate for the Lion's Club Exchange program and Fred was selected to travel Europe and spend the summer after his graduation in Helsinki, Finland.

Joyce Surbaugh says Rev. Williams was a good man. She recalls how he tried to teach a few of the girls how to golf. She says she

could never even hit it off the tee.

Becky Rochelle Barnett states that Rev. Williams married her and her husband in 1973. She recalls him traveling with the church choir and speaking at churches. She says he was a very kind man and so was Ms. Mary. Becky says she and her siblings came to KH in the evening during summer vacation. Most of the campus was closed down and they couldn't find anyone, so the siblings went to the Williams' home, and woke him and Ms. Mary. It was in the middle of the night but not an ill word was spoken. They made a few phone calls and lovingly made arrangements.

Larry and Brenda Gilliam remembers that Rev. Williams was a great man and loved all the children under his care. They recall how he would listen to when a child had something on their minds. They say he did not always agree, but shared why he disagreed. Fondly, they recall how he knew they were not perfect and recall that he saved a few from being kicked out a couple of times. They say Rev. Williams was respected more than he knew and heaven gained a great addition when he passed away.

Doris Russ writes that Roger and Mary were good friends to her and her husband **Vance** while at KH. Vance was head of the wilderness program and Doris was the church pianist. They became even better friends after the couple left because of Vance's health. Doris recalls that Rev. Williams retired shortly after and would stop by to see Vance periodically. Then the two couples began playing cards together. The foursome traveled together to Canada to celebrate the Williams' 50th wedding anniversary. She recalls that "Roger" was a great tour guide. They traveled using a 30-day train pass. She says they would get off at various

places, rent a car for the day, and visit the countryside. She says the four friends traveled all across Canada and was a most memorable trip.

The couple continued traveling, staying each winter in Florida for two weeks and, in the fall, they stayed in Maggie Valley for two weeks. Doris says they were special friends.

Mary Hawes, wife of **Rev. Horace Hawes** who directed KH social services, says that Rev. Williams married her and Horace 48 years ago. She goes on to say Roger recruited Horace from Connie Maxwell Children's Home in South Carolina. Within minutes of the arrival of Hawes' adopted daughter Kate, Roger and Mary were at their home to celebrate. She says they joined the Williams in 1978 on a trip to Israel. For more than 10 years, Roger was Horace's advocate, inspiration, and mentor professionally and personally. Mary says the special friendship with the Williams was a blessing.

Final Call! Register now for the Alumni Beach Retreat October 8, 9, & 10. Participants check in after 1:00 on Oct. 8. Spaghetti supper will be served for all who come about 7:00 p.m. Cost for two nights and three days at the cottage which includes six meals is only \$25 a person.

I encourage you to bring some 2-liter drinks to share along with some favorite homemade desserts. It would be good also if you brought a bag of snacks.

Editor's Note: It is with sadness that I share that John's sweet wife Becky passed on Saturday, August 21—one day before her 77th birthday and the couple's

56th wedding anniversary- JE



John Thompson served at Kennedy Home from 1972-1977. Today, he enjoys an active retirement.

Tell me, how can I roll, when the wheels won't go?

By Jim Edminson, Editor

The rhinestone studded jacket sparkles under the lights and the flashy Gibson guitar whirs as Merle Travis's thumb picks out the song "Nine Pound Hammer." The renown country and western singer, songwriter, and guitarist performs on the network television program *Ozark Jubilee* in 1955.

"This song is about a fella who complained about a nine pound hammer being too heavy for his size." Travis says.

The verses tell of a man's aversion to hard work. His *want to* was keeping him from the task at hand. Instead of mining coal, his thoughts wandered to his gal and a trip to town. Determined not to do the work, the miner complains his equipment is faulty: "Tell me, how can I roll, when the wheels won't go?"

Travis chuckles, "The lazy rascal."

The songwriter was born on November 29, 1917, in Rosewood, Kentucky. His father was a coal miner who worked the Number 9 coal seam that spread beneath the earth's surface from Kentucky to Pennsylvania. Despite how hard his dad worked, the family lived on the "bare edge" of poverty. Travis's first instrument was a hand-me-down five-string banjo. When he was 12 years old, his older brother gave him a homemade guitar. Over his career, he struggled with hardships, but he rose to fame.

In fact, the "Travis picking" style revolutionized musicians' approach to playing the guitar, influencing the likes of Chet Atkins and blues guitarist Earl Hooker. Travis was one of the most influential American guitarists of the 20th century. Unlike the miner in his song, he had no aversion to working hard and mastering his craft.

But it's easy to become distracted and veer off the path. Travis had multiple setbacks with alcohol and drug addiction in his life. A few times, he lost his way.

There is a great deal written about Judas. After all, he betrayed Jesus. And yet, it is difficult to imagine he was intent on the evil he perpetrated when he first became one of the original disciples. So, what happened?

The simplest answer would be that he lost his way. Instead of his fledgling faith in Jesus growing, he began to grumble and question if Jesus was the leader he thought, the one who would establish an earthly kingdom, the kingdom in which he so desired to be a part. His devotion failed because his *want to* changed.

David writes in Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd." He testifies that the Shepherd blesses His sheep with good things, offering mercy and giving peace, declaring "... thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Jesus describes Himself as the "good shepherd." In the parable of the lost sheep, He declares a devotion to the one who loses his way. He says emphatically, "Doesn't he (the shepherd) leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?"

He asserts that the Shepherd could do nothing else but go. And when He finds the one, He rejoices, "I have found my lost sheep!"

There are times when we find ourselves in a bad place, a place that pops up because we

have nibbled ourselves far away from Jesus. It can happen so fast.

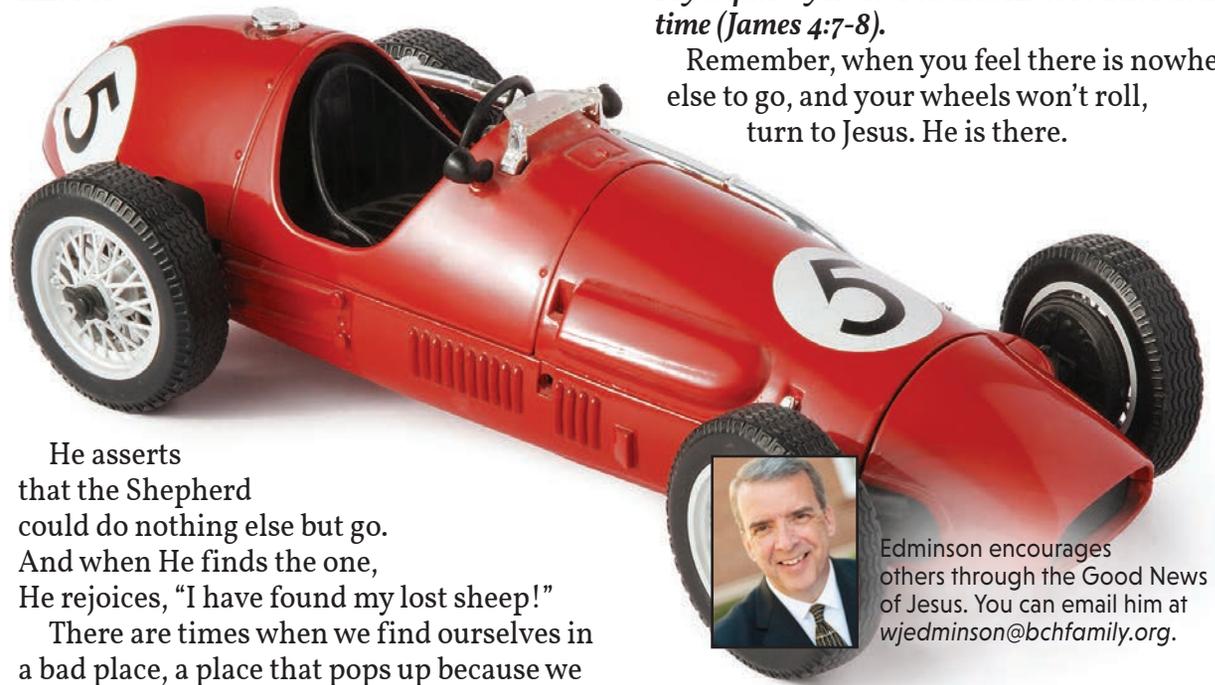
My mom was there standing with me in the department store, and then she wasn't. The bright red race car caught my attention. It was only a few steps from her side, and now I was lost. My five-year-old heart began to race. The store seemed enormous. On my tip toes, I frantically looked. I began to move between the aisles. I feared I would never see her again. Then a tender hand touched my shoulder. My mom picked me up in her arms. Found! I placed my arms around her neck and hugged her tight.

No matter where we find ourselves, the Shepherd is only a heartbeat away. Allow the excuses to fall away. Jesus bids the lost to come, the unsaved and believer alike.

Are you lost? Does your *want to* need to change? Have you veered from the way?

In *The Message*, Eugene Peterson writes: *So let God work His will in you. Yell a loud "no" to the Devil and watch him make himself scarce. Say a quiet "yes" to God and He'll be there in no time (James 4:7-8).*

Remember, when you feel there is nowhere else to go, and your wheels won't roll, turn to Jesus. He is there.



Edminson encourages others through the Good News of Jesus. You can email him at wjedminson@bchfamily.org.

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