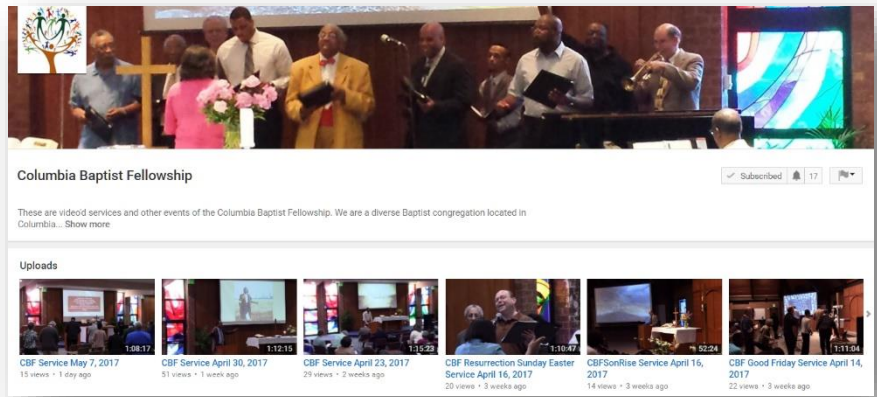


## Theological Musings from Dave's Laptop

May 9, 2017

As I settle “back into the saddle” after two weeks away, I want first of all to thank Tim Day and Ben Davis for covering the Wednesdays and Sundays while I was away, together with Jenetha Holmes, Rebecca Canfield, Gerry Witte, and all the others who picked up extra duties on my behalf.



I was able to watch both services on our *YouTube* channel. You should check it out . . . and our *Facebook* page, too! Rebecca is custodian of our *YouTube*, and Marilyn Dobyns is custodian of our *Facebook*. THANKS!!

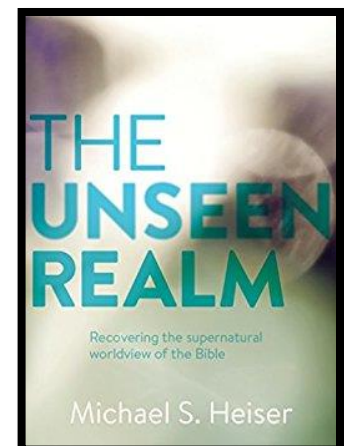
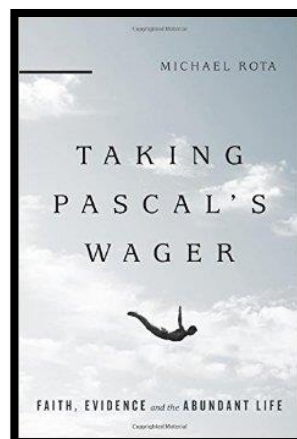
I bounced in and out of our house in Cross Junction, Virginia during my time away, since that’s where Jill is ☺. Most of the first week was spent driving to Georgetown, Kentucky for a ministry conference at my alma mater. I was able to make prayer meeting at the little church that was my first pastorate, First Baptist of Carlisle, Kentucky, and I stayed with Tom & Bonnie Metcalfe, who were our next-door neighbors in those days. Tom was—and still is—the Music Director.

Last week was spent at Massanutten, a ski resort in the Shenandoah Valley outside of Harrisonburg, Virginia (Neville once served a church in Harrisonburg). Jill was able to join me there for part of the week.

I had the goal of reading several books during the week, and actually finished two, whose covers you see here:

I also had the goal of walking 10,000 steps a day while at Massanutten, but an adventure the third day put a stop to that. While there is lots to do in every season of the year, Massanutten is really a ski resort, with the highest slope (I think) available in Virginia.

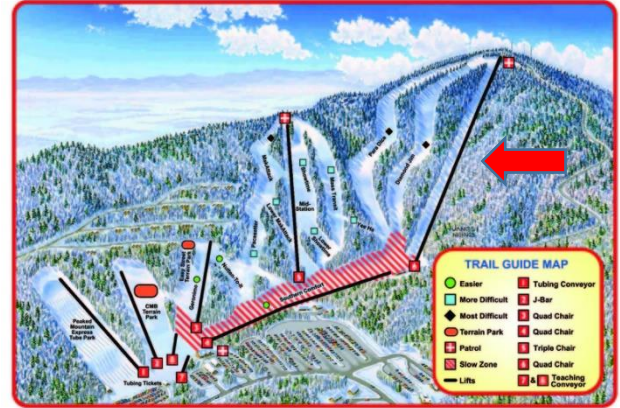
There is a long trail that runs across the top of the “bowl” to the summit



of Massanutten, but I decided one afternoon that it would be a lot quicker to just walk up the #6 ski lift slope to the summit. You can see this slope in the drawing and photo.

This decision was a mistake for a person of my age and condition. I did make it to the top, but the last several hundred vertical feet were pretty iffy. And after that adventure, my legs refused to do very much for several days!

I worshiped on both Sundays in the church that was closest to where I was staying: an independent Christian church the first week; and a United Methodist church the second week. Both were about our size, and both were very friendly . . . but they weren't CBF!



Well, so much for my vacation report. What I really want to comment on are the observations I made while spending two weeks driving through western Maryland, the entire length of West Virginia, eastern and central Kentucky, and the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

These notes are in no particular order. They apply almost equally to each of these locales:

- The areas in which I traveled appeared to be almost entirely white.
- They were populated with people who know how to plow a field, repair a tractor, a truck, or a piece of farm equipment, kill and dress a hog, and shoot and dress a deer.
- I almost never saw any of the fancy cars that are common in Columbia and even more common in DC, but I saw LOTS of pickup trucks, many of them muddy.
- These were not golf and tennis people, but hunters and fishermen/women.
- As in the city, some houses and properties were as neat as could be; others, not-so-much.
- Protection was provided by volunteer fire departments and rescue squads—those same farmers, for the most part.
- There were LOTS of “Mom & Pop” and family-run businesses.
- There was a lot of blue-collar work in factories (including at Toyota’s largest assembly plant, in Georgetown); lots of no-collar work in the fields.
- There were many factories that were humming and producing; and there were many factories and stores that were shuttered.
- These were people who live close to the land and who understand our vulnerability to wind, rain, and sun.
- This was small-town America; Rural America; Village America.

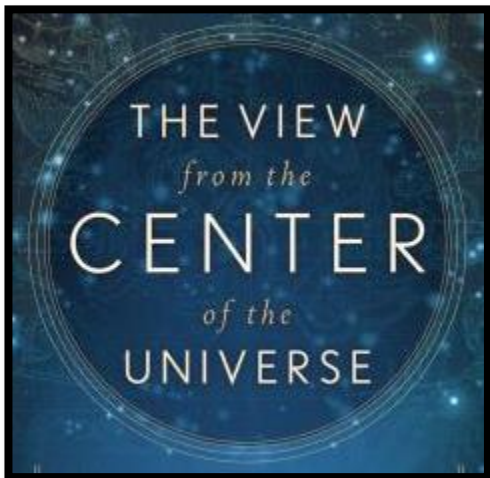


- These were people comfortable with animals wild and otherwise, and who know how to deal with them. I'm talking about sheep, goats, cattle, horses, chickens, ticks, snakes, deer, and bear, among others.
- In many areas, there was no cell phone service, and no Internet.
- There were lots of TRUMP signs and "Make Coal Great Again" signs.
- These were some of the places where OUR food comes from.
- There were many curvy roads, many single-lane roads, many gravel roads, and many dirt roads.
- The landscape tended to be wild, remote, hilly or mountainous, and forested.
- There were many house trailers of every sort and in every condition.
- There were breath-taking vistas just about anywhere you looked.
- I was frequently reminded of some favorite verses in Psalm 65:

*<sup>9</sup> You take care of the earth and water it, making it rich and fertile. The river of God has plenty of water; it provides a bountiful harvest of grain, for you have ordered it so. <sup>10</sup> You drench the plowed ground with rain, melting the clods and leveling the ridges. You soften the earth with showers and bless its abundant crops. <sup>11</sup> You crown the year with a bountiful harvest; even the hard pathways overflow with abundance. <sup>12</sup> The grasslands of the wilderness become a lush pasture, and the hillsides blossom with joy. <sup>13</sup> The meadows are clothed with flocks of sheep, and the valleys are carpeted with grain. They all shout and sing for joy! (Psalm 65:9-13).*

And I was frequently reminded that *the Americans who live where I've been the last two weeks live in a very different world from the one in which you and I live here "at the center of the Universe."* **And we are Americans, all.**

Dave

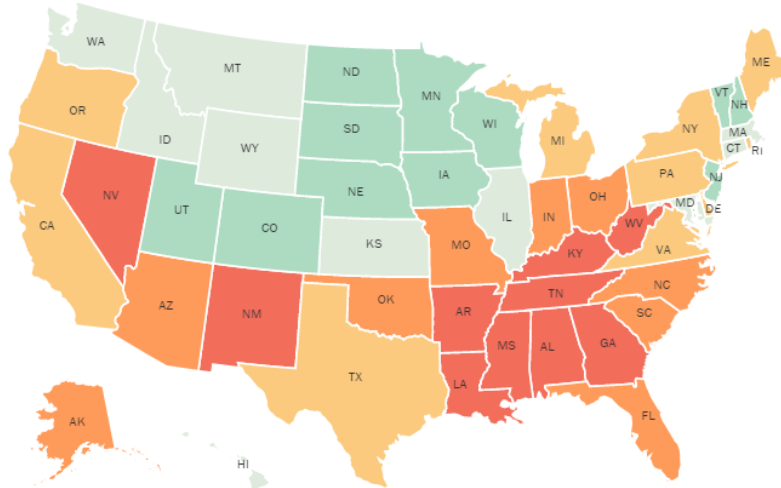


## The Most Stressed States

Hover or click on states for more details

■ HIGHEST 20% 
 ■ 60%+ 
 ■ 40%+ 
 ■ 20%+ 
 ■ LOWEST 20%

List Map



Source: [WalletHub](#)

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