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# Challenge™

THE GOOD NEWS PAPER

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# PAGTAHAK SA TAMANG LANDAS

Si Cindy Mojica ay lumaki sa Marintoc, sa bayan ng Mobo, lalawigan ng Masbate. Hindi naging madali ang kanyang kabataan dahil ipinanganak siyang may *osteogenesis imperfecta*, mas kilala bilang "brittle bone disease." Dahil sa genetic disorder na ito, naging marupok ang kanyang mga buto, dahilan upang madali itong mabali. Dahil dito, halos imposibleng makalakad siya nang mag-isa.

Dahil sa kanyang kondisyon, maraming pagsubok ang hinarap ni Cindy.

Noong siya ay nasa elementarya, hindi niya kayang magpunta sa paaralan nang mag-isa at lubos na umasa sa kanyang mga nakatatandang kapatid.

Ang kanyang kapatid na babae at lalaki ang nagbubuhat o umaalalay sa kanya papasok sa paaralan dahil hindi siya makalakad.

Araw-araw siyang sinusuportahan mula unang baitang hanggang ikaanim na baitang.

Sa kabila ng kanyang mga paghihirap, determinado siyang ipagpatuloy ang kanyang pag-aaral at abutin ang pangarap niyang makapagtapos.

Sa kasamaang-palad, naging dahilan din ng pangungutya ng kanyang mga kaklase ang kanyang kondisyon. Dahil siya ay maliit at hindi makalakad gaya ng ibang bata, madalas siyang makaramdam ng pagiging iba sa kanila.

Hindi siya makasali sa mga laro o aktibidad gaya ng pagtakbo at pakikipaglaro sa iba pang bata. Hindi niya mapigilang makaramdam ng lungkot at pagkainggit sa iba na nagagawa ang mga bagay na hindi niya kayang gawin.

Dumating sa punto na naisip ni Cindy na wala na siyang pag-asa. Pakiramdam niya ay imposibleng may magbago o gumanda pa ang kanyang buhay.

Mahirap din ang kanilang sitwasyon sa pamilya. Ang kanyang ama ay isang alcoholic, kaya madalas may hindi pagkakaunawaan sa kanilang tahanan. Ang kanyang buhay ay punong-puno ng paghihirap na tila walang katapusan.

Ngunit nagbago ang lahat nang makilala niya si Kristo. Noon, ang kanyang buhay ay puno ng kasalanan—sa murang edad, natutunan na niyang magsugal at gumawa ng maling mga desisyon.

Siya ay puno ng kayabangan, panlilinlang, inggit, kawalan ng pagpapatawad, at kawalang-kasiyahan sa buhay.

Ngunit sa pamamagitan ng isang banal na pagkaka-taon, napagtanto niya ang kanyang tunay na kalagayan.

Naunawaan niyang kailangan niya ang Diyos sa kanyang buhay at na ang paulit-ulit niyang kasalanan ay hindi kalugod-lugod sa Kanya.

Una niyang narinig ang Salita ng Diyos mula sa isang taong nagbabahagi ng mensahe ng Panginoon sa isang simbahan na kanyang dinaluhan. Doon niya napagtanto kung gaano niya kailangan ang Diyos at kung paano dapat magbago ang kanyang buhay. Taos-puso niyang tinanggap si Hesukristo bilang kanyang Panginoon at Tagapagligtas noong Marso 2013. Ang kanyang pastor ang gumabay sa kanya sa desisyong sundin si Kristo. Pagkalipas lamang ng isang buwan, noong Abril 2013, siya ay binautismuhan, hudyat ng pagsisimula ng kanyang espirituwal na paglalakbay.

Labing-isang taon na ang lumipas mula noong araw na iyon, at iyon ang unang hakbang ng kanyang bagong buhay bilang anak ng Diyos.

Sa biyaya ng Diyos at sa kanyang matibay na pananampalataya, nakapagtapos siya ng kursong Bachelor of Elementary Education mula sa Cataingan Municipal College.

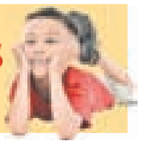
Ngunit hindi naging madali ang kanyang landas.

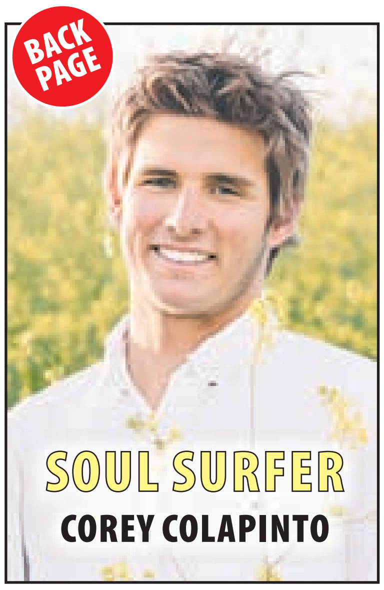
Linggu-linggo, may mga pagsubok siyang kinaharap na maaaring magpahina ng kanyang loob, ngunit pinili niyang magpatuloy. Bumabyahe siya nang dalawang oras para lamang makapasok sa klase—isang mahabang biyahe na maaaring nakakapagod para sa iba.

*Si Cindy Mojica sa kanyang pagtatapos. KALIWA: Si Cindy ay nakikipag-usap sa isang grupo ng mga bata.*

● Ipagpatuloy sa pahina 2

Fun for Kids
Page 5





*The Empress of Ireland. Photo: Getty Images.*

## Sacrifice and salvation

BY HARRIET COOMBE

**THE TRAGEDY OF** the sinking of the Titanic is well-known across the world but you may not have heard about another ship, the Empress of Ireland, which sank two years later, in May 1914. The 1477 passengers on board were on their way from Canada to London in foggy conditions when it was struck by a Norwegian coal ship, creating a large hole in the middle of the ship.

The Empress of Ireland sank rapidly, taking just 14 minutes to disappear beneath the water. Because of this, only a few lifeboats could be launched.

Sadly, many passengers were trapped below deck, asleep in their cabins, and had little chance to escape. Only 465 people survived, making it one of the worst peacetime maritime disasters.

Among the Empress of Ireland's passengers were 167 members of the Canadian Salvation Army, who were on their way to a conference in London. Their cabins were near where the lifejackets were stored so they were among the few who were able to quickly put them on.

But once they were in the water and saw so many people struggling to survive, they quickly gave up their lifejackets.

It is understood that they swam through the freezing water, asking distressed passengers, "Do you believe in Jesus?" If they said "No", then, in an act of selfless love and sacrifice, the Salvation Army member would remove their lifejacket and give it to the other person. This came at a great cost – only eight of the Salvation Army members survived. But they chose to die so that others could live and have the chance to find eternal salvation through Jesus.

**The heart of Easter**

I think this story mirrors the heart of Easter perfectly. Just as the Salvation Army members sacrificed their lives for others, Jesus Christ willingly laid down His life for humanity. His death on the cross was the ultimate act of selfless love and sacrifice, ensuring that all who believe in Him could be saved from the consequences of sin [wrongdoing against God].

● Turn to page 2

# Pagtahak sa tamang landas

Mula sa pahina 1

Cindy Mojica

Ngunit nagpatuloy siya, determinado sa kanyang pangarap na makapagtapos at maglingkod sa iba sa pamamagitan ng biyaya ng Diyos.

Isa sa mga pinakamahirap niyang pinagdaanan ay ang pambu-bully.

May ilang mga estudyante sa kolehiyo ang hindi nakaunawa sa kanyang kondisyon at kapansanan.

Tinitingnan siya ng may panghuhusga, at ang masasakit nilang salita ay muntik nang sumira sa kanyang kalooban.

Ngunit hindi niya hinayaang ang mga negatibong salitang iyon ang magdikta ng kanyang halaga.

Sa halip, humugot siya ng lakas at tapang mula kay Hesus.

Sa mga sandali ng pagdududa at sakit, nakahanap siya ng kapayapaan at katatagan sa kanyang pananampalataya.

Sa kabila ng lahat, hindi lang siya nagtapos ng isang degree kundi nagdala rin ng patotoo ng katapatan at biyaya ng Diyos. Pagaamin ni Cindy na hindi talagang madali maging Kristiyano.

Inakala niyang magiging madali ito, ngunit maraming beses nang sinubok ang kanyang pananampalataya.

Galing siya sa isang buhay na makamundo, at marami siyang kinaharap na pagsubok.

Ngunit sa pamamagitan ng habag at biyaya ng Diyos, napagtagumpayan niya ang bawat hamon.

Alam niyang hindi siya perpekto, ngunit nauunawaan niya na ang tunay na Kristiyano ay nagsisikap na mamuhay sa paraan na kalugod-lugod sa Diyos.

At kahit nagkakamali minsan, binibigyan tayo ng Diyos ng karunungan upang maunawaan kung ano ang tama at mali.

"Ang pinakamalaking pagbabago sa aking buhay ay nang ipagkatiwala ko ang lahat sa Diyos. Unti-unting nawala ang mga makasalanang gawi na aking nakasanayan. Hindi ito naging madali noong una, ngunit sa Kanyang biyaya at awa, nalampasan ko ang lahat. Natutunan kong ipagkatiwala sa Diyos ang lahat ng aking desisyon at ibahagi ang mabuting balita ng kaligtasan sa mga hindi pa nakakakilala sa Kanya."

Ang kanyang life verse ay mula sa 1 Corinto 15:58: "*Kaya nga, mga minamahal kong kapatid, maging matatag kayo, huwag matinag, at maging masigasig sa paggawa para sa Panginoon, yamang alam ninyong hindi masasayang ang inyong pagpapagal para sa Kanya.*"

"Ang pagiging tunay na Kristiyano ay ang pagkaunawang hindi nalulugod ang Diyos sa kasalanan. Binigyan Niya tayo ng karunungan upang maunawaan ang tama at mali, at para doon, ako ay lubos na nagpapasalamat."

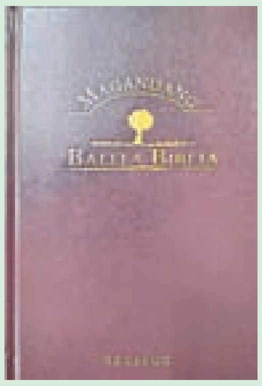
Ang kwento ni Cindy ay isang paalala na anuman ang mga hamong ating kinakaharap, sa tulong ng Diyos at isang pusong puno ng pananampalataya, kaya nating mapagtagumpayan ang lahat.

Si Hesus ang naging kanyang kanlungan, ang kanyang pinagmumulan ng tapang, at ang dahilan kung bakit nagpatuloy siyang lumaban sa mabuting laban ng pananampalataya. •

## Ang Salita para sa iyo

**Juan 1:35-51**

**Ang Unang Apat na Alagad ni Hesus**




35 Kinabukasan, naroon muli si Juan kasama ang dalawa sa kanyang mga alagad.
36 Nang makita niya si Hesus na nagdaraan ay kanyang sinabi, "Tingnan ninyo, siya ang Kordero ng Diyos!"
37 Narinig ng dalawang alagad ang sinabi niya, kaya't sumunod sila kay Hesus.
38 Lumingon si Hesus, at nang makita niyang sumusunod sa kanya ang mga ito, sila'y tinanong niya, "Ano ang kailangan ninyo?"
Sumagot sila, "Saan po kayo nakatira, Rabi?" Ang kahulugan ng salitang ito'y Guro.
39 "Halikayo at tingnan ninyo," sabi ni Hesus.
Sumama sila kay Hesus at nakita nila ang kanyang tinitirhan; at tumuloy sila roon nang araw na iyon. Noo'y mag-aalas kuwatro na ng hapon.
40 Ang isa sa dalawang alagad na nakarinig kay Juan at sumunod kay Hesus ay si Andres na kapatid ni Simon Pedro.
41 Unang hinanap ni Andres ang kanyang kapatid na si Simon. Sinabi niya rito, "Nakita na namin ang Mesiyas!" Ang kahulugan ng salitang ito'y Kristo.
42 At isinama ni Andres si Simon kay Hesus.
Tiningnan ni Hesus si Simon at sinabi sa kanya, "Ikaw ay si Simon na anak ni Juan. Ikaw ay tatawaging Cefas"[d] (na ang katumbas ay Pedro[e]).

**Ang Pagkatawag kina Felipe at Nathanael**

43 Kinabukasan, minabuti ni Hesus na pumunta sa Galilea. Nakita niya roon si Felipe at sinabi ni Hesus sa kanya, "Sumunod ka sa akin."
44 Si Felipe ay taga-Bethsaida, tulad nina Andres at Pedro.
45 Nakita ni Felipe si Nathanael at sinabi niya dito, "Natagpuan na namin ang tinutukoy ni Moises sa kanyang isinulat sa aklat ng Kautusan at gayundin ng mga propeta. Siya'y si Hesus na taga-Nazaret, na anak ni Jose."
46 "May mabuti bang maaaring magmula sa Nazaret?" tanong ni Nathanael. Sumagot si Felipe, "Halika't tingnan mo."
47 Nang makita ni Hesus na palapit sa kanya si Nathanael ay sinabi ni Hesus, "Masdan ninyo ang isang tunay na Israelita. Wala siyang anumang pagkukunwari."
48 Tinanong siya ni Nathanael, "Paano ninyo ako nakilala?"
Sumagot si Hesus, "Bago ka pa tawagin ni Felipe, nakita na kita nang ikaw ay nasa ilalim ng puno ng igos."
49 Sumagot si Nathanael, "Rabi, kayo nga po ang Anak ng Diyos! Kayo ang Hari ng Israel!"
50 Sinabi ni Hesus, "Sumampalataya ka ba dahil sa sinabi ko sa iyong nakita kita sa ilalim ng puno ng igos? Higit pa riyan ang masasaksihan mo."
51 At sinabi niya sa kanya, "Pakatandaan mo: makikita ninyong bukás ang langit, at ang mga anghel ng Diyos ay manhik-manaog sa kinaroroonan ng Anak ng Tao!" •

Ang mga teksto ng banal na kasulatan ay mula sa Magandang Balita Biblia © 2012 Philippine Bible Society, ginamit nang may pahintulot.

## Sacrifice and salvation

From page 1

The Bible says in 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Good Friday is the day we remember Jesus' death. The reason it is called "Good" is because of what it means for us – His death bought our forgiveness and eternal life.

Three days later He rose again, demonstrating His victory over sin, death, and the grave, proving He is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Our response to Jesus' sacrifice is simple. Romans 10:9 says: "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

**Answering the question**

The question posed by those Salvation Army members in freezing waters in 1914 is as important today as it was over a century ago: "Do you know Jesus?" If you have not yet made the decision to follow Christ, today can be your moment of salvation. See the box on page 7 entitled ***How do I Become a Christian*** for more information. •

# Against the odds

BY ANDREW MILLER

Rodel and his wife, Dina.

Rodel is deaf blind. He was born 44 years ago in San Pablo city in Laguna Philippines. He has been deaf from birth but his loss of vision has been a gradual process, the result of retinal optic nerve degeneration. He hears nothing, and has extremely limited vision (a metre or two directly in front).

When he was 10 years old, he went to church for the first time. It was a Deaf church, part of a network of 21 Deaf churches each led by a Deaf pastor.

Some of those pastors were supported by Deaf Ministries International (DMI), so this was Rodel's first introduction to the DMI family. He gave his life to Christ two years later and was baptised [a symbol of dying to your old life] two years after that. From that point on, Rodel had a heart for the gospel [the good news about Jesus] and was keen to see it taken to the Deaf all around his province.

In 2003, Rodel began to study at a remote Bible college. This time was equally enriching and challenging for him. The study uplifted him and the fellowship of students strengthened him, but it was the deceptive ways of people that tested his resolve.

This depravity in people only increased Rodel's resolve to work in ministry.

He wanted the Deaf to be free from the oppression of this world and embrace the light of another Kingdom.

He went out to find the Deaf in the province of Samar and began to share with them the gospel.

At that time, he was staying with a local family while being financially supported by a man in Japan. Yet the family kept all the money and refused to even acknowledge that any had been sent.

So Rodel raised a small income for himself by farming. After a year, he had a congregation of 10 and in time, more would come. Mostly young people, they were the poorest of the poor, the most desolate among a desolate people. Few had received any education. Fewer still could sign. He mainly used rudimentary gestures and images with them.

Shortly after beginning this ministry, Pastor Rodel found support in Pastor Albert, who is Deaf and leading a DMI church in Bacolod, and in Doug who is hearing and was running a service for the Deaf in Zamboanguita. He also began to receive financial support from DMI – and this time, no-one was stealing it from him! And so the churches grew.

God used this man. God used this deaf blind man to take the gospel to the Deaf. God used this deaf blind man to grow churches in Borongon (Samar) and in Zamboanguita (Negros Oriental), and in time Pastor Rodel found himself discipling 40 church members.

He married Dina, also Deaf, and they now minister together. •

This story was first published by Deaf Ministries International (deafmin.org) and is used with kind permission.

**Sabi ng Panginoon: Kung hindi ka MASASAKTAN paano mo malalaman manggagamot ako? Kung hindi ka MALUNGKOT paano mo malalaman na kaibigan mo ako? Kung hindi ka NAWALAN paano mo malalaman na handa akong magpuno sa lahat? Sa tingin mo, kung ang iyong buhay ay ginawa kong PERPEKTO kikilalanin mo pa ba ako?**

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(ATIN is Filipino/Tagalog for "ours")

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- to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ
- to assist the disadvantaged and vulnerable with food parcels and aide
- to distribute Bibles

**What the logo means:**

The logo represents a person between a cross and a heart, representing faith in Jesus combined with service to others out of love. The font represents bamboo, symbolising strength, flexibility, endurance and grace.

If you would like more information please contact:

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# MULA SA HIRAP TUNGO SA PAG-ASA

Para sa marami, ang kahirapan at pagsubok ay maaaring maging hadlang sa pagtupad ng mga pangarap. Ngunit para kay Manuel John Villamor o Emman—isang musikero, worship leader, at guro—ang kanyang buhay ay isang buhay na patotoo ng kapangyarihan ng pananampalataya at katatagan. Ipinapakita ng kanyang paglalakbay na walang pagsubok na hindi kayang lampasan kapag ang pananampalataya ang siyang gumagabay.

Lumaki si Emman sa isang pamilyang kapos sa pera, kung saan maging ang mga pangunahing pangangailangan sa buhay ay mahirap abutin. Madalas siyang pumapasok sa paaralan nang walang baon at nakaranas ng pang-aapi dahil sa kanilang kalagayang pinansyal. Dahil sa kawalan ng motibasyon, nagpatuloy siya sa pag-aaral nang parang wala siyang direksyon. Lumaki siya sa isang tahanang may magkaibang paniniwala, kaya't madalas siyang nalilito at naghahanap ng mas malalim na layunin sa buhay. "Noon, sumasabay lang ako sa agos ng mundo. Naranasan kong magkasala—maging mayabang, mainitin ang ulo, mahilig makipag-away, at suwail sa magulang," ibinahagi niya.

Nagbago ang lahat noong 2016 nang, sa edad na 15, tinanggap ni Emman ang paanyaya ng isang kaibigan na dumalo sa Mobo Baptist Church. Doon niya naranasan ang makapangyarihang pagmamahal ni Kristo na nagbigay ng bagong direksyon sa kanyang buhay. Habang ipinapahayag ng pastor ang Mabuting Balita mula sa Salita ng Diyos, naramdaman ni Emman ang isang matinding tawag—ang panawagan na sumunod kay Hesus. Ipinaliwanag ng pastor na lahat ng tao ay makasalanan at hindi nakaabot sa kaluwalhatian ng Diyos. Sa sandaling iyon, kumilos ang Banal na Espiritu sa puso ni Emman, ipinakita sa kanya ang kanyang pangangailangan ng kaligtasan. Napagtanto niya na tanging kay Hesus matatagpuan ang tunay na kapayapaan, kalakasan, at layunin sa buhay. Siya ang nagbibigay ng kapatawaran, panibagong simula, at dakilang plano para sa hinaharap ni Emman.

Manuel John Villamor

Bilang isang mahilig sa musika, naakit siya sa masiglang Worship Team sa simbahan. Ang kanyang unang pagbisita ay naging simula ng isang pagbabago sa kanyang buhay. Noong una, may pag-aalinlangan ang kanyang pamilya, ngunit hindi nagtagal ay nasaksihan nila ang positibong pagbabago sa kanya. Naging mas responsable siya sa bahay, naging mabuting estudyante sa paaralan, at nagsimulang ipakita sa kanyang mga gawa ang pag-ibig at disiplina ng Diyos. Kalaunan, pati ang kanyang ama ay nadala sa simbahan—patunay na ang isang pusong binago ng Diyos ay maaaring magdala ng pagbabago sa buong pamilya.

Ang paglalakbay ni Emman ay patunay din ng tiyaga sa kanyang pagmamahal sa musika. Dahil wala siyang sariling gitara noon, nanghihiram lamang siya at natutong tumugtog sa pamamagitan ng matinding pagsisikap at walang sawang practice. Nagbunga ang kanyang pagsisikap nang manalo siya sa isang lokal na paligsahan sa musika, na nagbigay-daan upang makabili siya ng sariling gitara. Ang dating hiniram na instrumento ay naging isang habambuhay na hilig—na ngayon ay ginagamit niya upang luwalhatiin ang Diyos.

Ngunit hindi lang musika ang nagbago sa kanya. Nang siya ay pumasok sa kolehiyo na may bagong layunin, naging gabay niya ang kanyang pananampalataya. Sa pamamagitan ng pagsisikap at lakas na mula sa Diyos, nagtapos siya bilang Magna Cum Laude sa kursong Bachelor of Secondary Education, major in Mathematics mula sa Osmeña Colleges sa Masbate City—isang patunay na sa tulong ng Diyos, walang pangarap na imposibleng abutin.

Gayunpaman, bago siya nakapagtapos, muli siyang sinubok ng buhay. Ang kanyang ama, na may sakit na diabetes, ay kinailangang putulan ng paa. Kahit na ang kanyang mga nakatatandang kapatid ay nagtatrabaho sa Maynila at sa ibang bansa, si Emman, bilang lalake at panggitnang anak, ang nag-alaga sa kanilang ama habang tinatapos ang kanyang pag-aaral. Determinado siyang bumuo ng mas magandang kinabukasan, kaya't pinaghandaan niya ang Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). Namuhay siya nang matipid, nangungupahan sa maliit na kwarto, at madalas ay nabubuhay lamang sa kanin na nilalagyan ng gatas. Ngunit hindi natinag ang kanyang pananampalataya. Nagbunga ang kanyang pagsisikap nang pumasa siya sa LET sa unang subok.

Nagkaroon ng bagong pagkakataon si Emman nang alukin siya ng trabaho bilang guro sa Vietnam. Doon, naging mahusay siya sa pagtuturo habang patuloy na naglilingkod sa simbahan at sumali pa sa isang orkestra. Sa edad na 23, tila patungo na siya sa isang mas magandang kinabukasan.

Ngunit muli siyang tinawag pabalik sa Pilipinas nang lumala ang kalagayan ng kanyang ama, na kailangang sumailalim sa regular na dialysis at gamutan. Kahit na hinihimok siya ng kanyang paaralan at mga estudyante sa Vietnam na manatili, alam ni Emman na ang pananampalataya at pamilya ang una, kaya't pinili niyang bumalik upang maalagaan ang kanyang ama.

Kamakailan, ibinahagi ni Emman ang kanyang kwento sa "Cafellowship" Youth Program sa ATIN-Asia Community Hub—isang pagtitipon kung saan nagkakasama ang mga tao sa isang simpleng pagsasalo ng kape at pagkain habang ibinabahagi ang mga sariling kwento. Maraming nakaugnay sa kanyang kwento—mga pamilyang dumaranas ng krisis, kahirapan, at pagkakasangkot ng mahal sa buhay sa bisyo. Sa pamamagitan ng kanyang salita, pinaalala ni Emman sa lahat na walang pagsubok na hindi kayang lampasan, at ang biyaya ng Diyos ay may kakayahang baguhin ang kahit na anong desperadong sitwasyon.

Ibinahagi ni Emman, "Ang nais kong iparating sa iba ay ang pag-ibig ng Diyos. Kahit ano pa ang ating nakaraan o kung sino tayo, isinakripisyo Niya ang Kanyang buhay para sa ating kaligtasan. Tinuruan Niya tayong mahalin ang ating kapwa at magpatawad. Si Hesus ang nagbibigay sa atin ng pag-asa at lakas sa araw-araw."

> **"Isinakripisyo Niya ang Kanyang buhay para sa ating kaligtasan."**

Makikita natin sa buhay ni Emman ang kapangyarihan ng pag-ibig ng Diyos—na kayang baguhin kahit ang pinakamahirap na kalagayan. Ang kanyang paboritong talata sa Bibliya ay: *"Nguni't hanapin muna ninyo ang kaharian ng Dios, at ang kaniyang katuwiran; at ang lahat ng mga bagay na ito ay pawang idaragdag sa inyo."* (Mateo 6:33).

"Tuwing binabasa ko ito, palagi akong nagtatagumpay sa aking mga ginagawa. Isa itong paalala na unahin ang Diyos, at Siya ang magbibigay ng tagumpay na ating hinahangad," pagtatapos ni Emman. •

# Belief despite living in a broken world

BY KELLY LADD BISHOP

THERE IS A lot of bad news. I often hear people lament; how can you possibly believe in God when bad things happen?

I look at it from the opposite angle. When bad things happen, how can you possibly not believe in God?

The news is just one frustrating story after another, from American politics to world news, it can feel overwhelming. It is overwhelming. Sometimes I think it is more than the human soul can handle.

STOCK PHOTO

I believe in God for many reasons. To me, there is enough historical evidence to make a convincing case.

To me, there is enough documentary and historical evidence around the Bible and the life of Jesus, that it certainly deserves serious consideration. To me, that serious consideration leads to solid evidence that the Scripture is true.

But faith is more than just being convinced of facts. Faith is a matter of heart. It comes from experiencing repentance, knowing our own brokenness and experiencing forgiveness.

We call it salvation. It's real. I believe in God for all of these reasons and more. And I believe in God because the world is a difficult place. Some people say that Christians and people of faith just need to believe in God to make them feel better.

The idea of God brings them comfort. It helps them deal with anxiety, and that's fine.

It's like we are taking some kind of supernatural pill to relax our nerves or buying into a fairy tale because it makes us feel good.

But to those who believe, it's not just about feeling good. And walking with God is certainly not always relaxing. But it does bring us hope.

God brings hope because nothing makes sense without God.

Without God we live in a difficult world that will just continue to be difficult forever, or until we destroy it, or it destroys us. Without God, the problems are insurmountable, and the struggle is meaningless.

But for Christians there is the promise of redemption. The Bible says, "the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God" (Romans 8:21).

God promises us that this is temporary. The world won't be difficult forever.

The world will be "liberated from its bondage to decay." That's powerful imagery. And it's a promise.

Just as we experience redemption in our souls now through salvation, all of creation will one day be redeemed. In the meantime, we are to live in that promise. We are to make the world better wherever we can, bringing in glimpses of redemption, working with God, loving God's world and people. The world is difficult. But God hears our cries. God answers prayers.

And God has not forsaken us. God is doing a greater work, and because of God, one day bad things will no longer happen. Thank God.

"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death, or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away" (Revelation 21:4). •

Kelly holds an M.Div, and a B.A. in Biology. She spent seven years working in youth ministry, and has most recently worked as an associate pastor. She is passionate about exploring God's word and issues of faith and culture. You can read more at www.kellyladdbishop.com

# Nalligtas nang 'di sadya

NINA SIMEON NEO

Hoi Lim Cheang

Katulad ng sinumang 17-taong-gulang, sabik si Hoi Lim Cheang na makuha ang kanyang lisensya sa pagmamaneho. Tuwang-tuwa sa kanyang bagong kalayaan, siya ay nagmaneho sa kalsada.

Gayunpaman, na-distract siya sa isang nakabaligtad na sports car at hindi niya napansin ang pedestrian na nasa harapan niya.

"Hindi ko namalayan na may pedestrian na may pinupulot sa daan," sabi niya sa Challenge News.

"Huli na para magpreno ako, kaya nabangga ko siya.

"Tumilapon siya sa harapan ng kotse ko at ang ulo niya ay bumangga sa windshield. Pagkatapos, bumagsak siya pabalik sa lupa."

Napakalakas ng impact kaya nagkaroon ng bitak ang kanyang windshield. Sa pagkabigla, ginawa niya ang unang bagay na pumasok sa isip niya – magdasal.

Lumaki si Hoi Lim sa Ipoh, Malaysia kung saan ang kanyang mga magulang ay nagsasagawa ng mga relihiyosong tradisyon tulad ng pagsamba sa mga ninuno at pagsusunog ng mga alay para sa mga patay.

"Pero ipinapadala nila kami sa children's church tuwing Linggo ng umaga dahil nakita nila na isang oportunidad ito bilang libreng daycare," sabi ng 28-taong-gulang na residente ng Perth.

"Kaya lumaki kaming magkakapatid sa simbahan, pero hindi namin talaga kilala kung sino ang Diyos."

Sa simbahan, natutunan niyang magdasal.

"Para sa akin, ang Diyos ng Kristiyano noon ay isa lang sa mga diyos na puwede kong tawagin tuwing hindi ko nagawa ang aking homework."

Kaya nang mangyari ang aksidente, agad siyang nagdasal.

"Sinabi ko kay Panginoon, 'Kung totoo Ka, tulungan Mo ako. Kapag tinulungan Mo ako, babalik ako sa simbahan.'"

Pagkatapos ng panalangin, tumayo ang pedestrian na nabangga niya at lumakad papunta sa gilid ng kalsada.

"Mabait siya sa akin at sinabi niyang alam niyang baguhan pa lang akong nagmamaneho. Nang inalok ko siyang gumawa ng police report, tumanggi siya dahil alam niyang maaapektuhan ang aking provisional license.

"Makalipas ang ilang araw, nag-text siya sa akin at sinabing ayon sa medical check-up, wala siyang malalang pinsala maliban sa soft tissue damage. Hindi niya rin ako pinaabala sa anumang gastusin dahil may insurance siya.

"Doon ko na-realize – Ang Diyos ay isang mapagmahal na Ama na gustong turuan ako ng isang mahalagang leksyon, pero hindi Siya gumawa ng kapahamakan sa akin o sa pedestrian. Ang nasira lang ay ang windshield ko."

Dahil sa naramdamang pagmamahal ng Diyos, tinupad ni Hoi Lim ang pangako niyang bumalik sa simbahan.

"Bumalik ako sa simbahan at binuksan ang puso ko para alamin kung ano talaga ang Kristiyanismo."

Doon, tinanggap niya ang paanyaya ng pastor na i-commit ang kanyang buhay kay Hesus.

"Pero hindi ko pa noon lubos na naintindihan ang ibig sabihin nito."

Nang lumipat siya sa Kuala Lumpur, nakilala niya ang isang mentor na ipinaliwanag sa kanya ang Ebanghelyo – ang mensahe na si Hesus ay namatay upang tubusin ang kasalanan ng tao.

"Tiniyaga niya akong turuan tungkol sa pagpapatawad ng Diyos, biyaya, at pagkahabag.

"Sa unang pagkakataon, may taong may pasensya na pinakinggan ang lahat ng tanong ko, kaya nagkaroon ng linaw sa aking mga pagdududa.

"Doon ko rin tunay na naunawaan ang Ebanghelyo at nagdesisyong sumunod kay Hesus."

Nagdasal si Hoi Lim ng pan-ala-ngin ng pagtatalaga ng kanyang buhay kay Hesus. Mula noon, nakita niya ang pagbabago sa kanyang buhay.

"Ang pinakamalaking pagbabago ay ang pagkaunawa kong wala akong karapatang humusga sa iba. Ang Diyos ang pinagmumulan ng pagpapatawad, at kung napatawad na Niya ako, sino ako para hindi magpatawad?"

Napansin din niyang nagbago ang kanyang pananaw sa pera.

"Noon, sobrang kuripot ko at hinahabol ko ang pera dahil ganoon ako pinalaki.

"Pero pagkatapos kong makilala si Hesus, natutunan kong hindi ito ang bagay na dapat kong habulin."

Naranasan din niya ang kapayapaan at kagalakan na alam niyang nagmumula sa Diyos.

"Ito ang aking sukatan kung gaano ako kalapit sa Diyos. Kapag malayo ako sa Kanya, mas balisa ako at hindi ganoon kasaya."

Ngunit hindi doon nagtapos ang kanyang kwento.

Bilang isang second-year emergency medical officer, nakatagpo siya ng isang pasyente na may halos parehong sitwasyon sa kanyang aksidente mahigit sampung taon na ang nakalipas.

"Parehong-pareho ang sitwasyon – ang pedestrian ay nabangga ng sasakyan, tumilapon sa itaas, bumangga sa windshield, at bumagsak muli."

Ngunit sa pagkakataong ito, malala ang pinsala ng pasyente.

"Nagkaroon siya ng dalawang uri ng pagdurugo sa utak, maraming bali, at pagdurugo sa baga.

"Nang makita ko siya, naisip ko, 'Ganito pala dapat kagrabe ang nangyari sa akin.'"

Inisip niya ang pagkakaiba ng dalawang aksidente.

"Isa itong himala."

Nang tanungin kung ano ang buhay niya kung wala si Hesus, "Siguro katulad ako ng ibang kasamahan ko sa trabaho – nagtatrabaho araw at gabi para lang habulin at makuha ang mga materyal na bagay. Siguro palagi rin akong galit at hindi marunong magpatawad." •

Si Hoi Lim Cheang noong siya ay 17 taong gulang.

## nudge WITH KARL FAASE

### Hindi matitiis na kakulangan

**SI BILL HAYDEN** ay isang kilalang politiko sa Australia na nagsilbi bilang Foreign Minister sa ilalim ni Bob Hawke at kalaunan ay naging Gobernador Heneral ng bansa. Sa buong buhay niya bilang pulitiko, matibay siyang hindi naniniwala sa Diyos.

Ngunit sa edad na 85, nagbago ang lahat nang siya ay tumanggap sa pananampalataya kay Kristo at siya nagpabautismo. Sa aklat na Christians ni Greg Sheridan, ibinahagi ni Hayden ang dahilan ng kanyang pagbabagong-loob.

Sinabi niya, "Hindi ko na kayang tiisin ang kawalan. Sa loob ko, may isang puwang na hindi mapunan nang walang paniniwala."

Ang kwento ni Hayden ay isang paalala na hindi kailanman huli ang lahat upang muling pag-isipan ang tungkol sa Diyos.

Bakit hindi mo subukang buksan ang Bibliya at alamin kung ano ang sinasabi nito tungkol sa pananampalataya kay Hesus? Baka doon mo rin matagpuan ang sagot sa nararamdaman mong kakulangan. •

# What the doctor needed

Dr Li Wan pulls no punches when describing himself: cold-blooded and arrogant.

"I really was an arrogant so-and-so," the Melbourne GP admits in *Everyday Saints*, a podcast by The Melbourne Anglican.

"That was the attitude I had. When I spoke to other doctors I was like, 'Who are you? What do you know? How many publications have you been featured in?' I was so arrogant."

Dr Li arrived in Australia from China, where he was an intensive care doctor, in 2003.

He spent the next 11 years as the intensive care registrar in a Melbourne hospital, where he proceeded to work himself to the bone.

While he was pulling double shifts and working what felt like "eight to nine days a week", his wife began attending church.

"She was brought there by the liver transplant surgeon's wife," Dr Li shares. "I asked her, 'Is this a cult?'

"I was an atheist. I only believed in science but I ended up following her to church. No, she did not force me to go, she dragged me there."

At that time, Dr Li had applied for various scholarships. The church prayed and fasted for him, something that moved him deeply.

"I didn't know any of them. How could these complete strangers pray for me just out of the goodness of their hearts – not for money or fame or anything?

"I was very touched by these warm-hearted people – I didn't even know all of their names! So when my wife asked me to get baptised [a symbol of dying to your old life] with her in 2004, I did."

The baptism took place on Sunday, December 12, 2004.

Dr Li had not made any conscious decision to commit his life to Christ – he did it just to keep his wife company.

The very next day, he received a letter from Melbourne University confirming his application for a scholarship to its PhD program had been approved.

And on the following day, he got another letter from the university telling him they would support his studies to the tune of $18,000.

Dr Li said he broke down and cried. "I said, 'God, You have looked after me in a difficult time. You know my weakness and my need.

"For the first time, I knew God was truthful and full of mercy and I became a believer."

Wanting a less hectic work schedule so that he could attend church more regularly, he tried the emergency department for a while but found it equally punishing.

Then one day a friend suggested he become a GP. Dr Li balked – to him, general practice was a step down in the medical field.

Unlike being a specialist, there was no glamour or status in being a GP.

"In the old days, you didn't need special training to be a GP. It was what you became straight out of medical school," he explained.

"But those days are gone now. Now you need a lot of training before you can pass the GP exam. It's much more strict."

But the more regular hours appealed to Dr Li, who by now had a second child. So he made the move in 2011 – and has not regretted a minute of it.

"The moment I stepped into general practice I enjoyed it, I really enjoyed it.

"I have connections to people now that really touch me. In the past, I was just a cold-blooded doctor. Patients were just numbers to me.

"But as a GP, I get to know my patients, hear their stories.

"They talk to me, laugh and cry in front of me. I share their life journeys. It's a real privilege."

He says his professional life today is a far cry from the fame and prestige he hungered for when he first arrived.

"God has humbled me and brought so much good change into my life," he attests.

"I think I really needed my soul to be filled with this – and it's all because of God. I see God's work in people's lives."

Other doors opened for the good doctor. In 2011, he was invited to preach at his church once a week, a practice that has continued to this day.

"Praise the Lord, this year another five churches have asked me to speak to their congregation," he smiles.

"God has done wonders in my life. I was really such a bad, arrogant person."

He says he has been through a lot of sadness, much of it self-inflicted by his quest for career recognition.

"But God pushed me down, and taught me not to be too proud of myself. He taught me it's not my studies, or how clever I am. It's how great He is.

"Everybody on Earth is after fame and money, but Christian doctors should not. What we do we do for His glory alone." •

Dr Li Wan

# Youth Truth

## Pagkalulong at paglaya

Si Jose ay ipinanganak at lumaki sa Cebu sa Pilipinas, ang panganay sa apat na magkakapatid.

"Namatay ang tatay ko noong ako ay 15 taong gulang, at makalipas ang dalawang taon, lumipat ang buong pamilya ko ang nanay at mga kapatid ko sa Australia," kuwento niya sa Salvo's Magazine.

Matapos ang high school, nagsumikap si Jose na makatulong sa pamilya niya sa pamamagitan ng pagtatrabaho sa isang malaking institusyong pampinansyal at mga kompanya ng pamumuhunan.

"Sa paglingon ko sa nakaraan, masasabi kong medyo matagumpay ang panahong iyon ng buhay ko. Maganda ang trabaho ko, nakapagtapos ng pag-aaral ang mga kapatid ko, nag-asawa ang ate at ang bunso kong kapatid, maayos ang relasyon ko sa pamilya ko, at may ilan akong mabubuting kaibigan."

Nagbago ang lahat noong 2003 nang inimbitahan siya ng isang kaibigan sa bahay nito upang manood ng football isang Linggo ng hapon. "Kasing-natural ng pagkuha ng beer sa ref, inilabas niya ang isang glass pipe at isang malinaw na plastik na may lamang kristal na substansiya. Iyon pala ang tinatawag na ICE, o crystal methamphetamine. Ayon sa kaibigan ko, ito ang nagbibigay ng talino. Ani niya, lahat ng propesyonal ay gumagamit nito."

> Hindi ko makita ang saysay ng buhay.

Nahumaling si Jose sa unang tikim pa lang ng ICE. Napalakas nito ang loob niya at nawala ang sakit ng pangungulila na nararamdaman niya. Ngunit pinanatili rin siyang gising ng ilang araw. Kapag gusto niyang matulog, iinom siya ng whiskey.

"Noong una, ako pa ang nagdedesisyon kung gagamit o hindi. Pero mabilis akong nalulong, at hindi na tanong kung gagamit ako kundi kailan ako makakakuha ng ICE sa araw na iyon. Pagkalipas ng anim na buwan, gumagastos na ako ng $1000 kada linggo para lang sa bisyong ito. Ayos lang ito hanggang sa maubos ang ipon ko."

Dahil sa kanyang pagkalulong, nawala ang trabaho, sasakyan, at bahay niya.

"Napilitan akong bumalik sa bahay ng nanay ko. Nangutang ako sa credit card para matustusan ang bisyo ko. Pati bahay ng kapatid ko, pinapasok ko para magnakaw ng gamit na maipapalit sa droga. Sa huli, pinalayas ako ng nanay ko, at tuluyan akong nahiwalay sa pamilya ko.

"Dahil desperado akong makahanap ng pera, gumawa ako ng krimen. Nagnakaw ako, nandaya, nag-shoplift, nagnakaw ng sulat, at ginamit ang mga credit card ng iba.

"Sabi nila, tatlong lugar lang ang patutunguhan ng isang adik sa ICE: bilangguan, ospital, o kamatayan. Sa loob ng 13 taong pagkakalulong ko, naranasan ko ang una at ikalawa."

Naalala ni Jose ang pakiramdam ng matinding kalungkutan nang makalaya siya mula sa 18-buwang pagkakakulong at walang sinumang naghihintay sa kanya sa labas. Agad siyang pumunta sa bahay ng isang dealer para muling makagamit ng droga.

Noong 2015, muli siyang inaresto dahil sa ilegal na pagmamay-ari ng droga. Binigyan siya ng pagkakataong dumaan sa rehabilitasyon sa ibang estado. Pumayag siya ngunit balak niyang tumakas sa oras na makarating siya roon. Ngunit habang naglalakad sa paliparan, isang matinding realisasyon ang tumama sa kanya.

"Tiningnan ko ang ibang tao na may dalang maleta at halatang masaya sila. Pagkatapos, nakita ko ang tunay kong sitwasyon. Ako ay 45 taong gulang, at ang kabuuan ng buhay ko ay nasa isang itim na supot ng basura, na ang laman ay hindi pa nga akin.

"Doon ko napagtanto ang katotohanan. Binasag ko ang cellphone ko para hindi ako matukso na makipag-ugnayan sa mga dating dealer o koneksyon at ginugol ko ang susunod na 11 buwan sa rehabilitation center." Habang nasa programa, natutunan ni Jose ang mga bagong gawain upang magkaroon ng bagong paraan ng pamumuhay. Gumigising siya ng 5:30 ng umaga, gumagawa ng mga bagay na ayaw niyang gawin (tulad ng pagwawalis ng dahon araw-araw), at natutunan ang mga kasanayang tulad ng pagtatakda ng matatalinong layunin, pagba-budget, at pagluluto. Dumaan din siya sa therapy upang gumaling mula sa kanyang emosyonal na sugat.

"Mahalaga ito dahil kapag tinanggal mo ang droga sa isang adik, ang matitira ay ang mga dahilan kung bakit siya nalulong sa una.

"Isang araw sa bawat pagkakataon, naging malinis ako... Sa simula, mahirap ang pagbawi ko. Hindi dahil tumigil ako sa paggamit ng droga, ay naging madali na ang buhay."

Nahirapan siyang makahanap ng trabaho at bahay. Kahit na higit anim na buwan na siyang malinis, pakiramdam niya ay wala siyang halaga.

"Hindi ko makita ang saysay ng buhay. Pakiramdam ko, ako pa rin ang parehong tao. Wala akong pag-asa. Walang kabuluhan ang lahat.

"Isang madaling araw, mga alas-tres o alas-kuwatro, bumangon ako para buksan ang pinto para sa tuta namin sa farm. Natapakan ko ang aking Bibliya at bumukas ito sa Aklat ng Eclesiastes. Nabasa ko ang mga salitang: 'Walang kabuluhan, walang kabuluhan, lahat ay walang kabuluhan.' Nabigla ako.

"Doon ko naunawaan na walang halaga ang kabutihan o kamalian kung hindi tayo nakaugat sa Diyos. Napagtanto ko rin na hindi ko kailangang hanapin ang Diyos dahil Siya na mismo ang dumating para sa atin sa pamamagitan ni Hesus. Doon nagsimula ang tunay kong pagbabago."

Isinuko ni Jose ang kanyang buhay kay Hesus. Nagsimula siyang dumalo sa simbahan at sumali sa mga programa at serbisyo upang muling buuin ang kanyang buhay at pagkatao. Ngayon, mahigit walong taon nang malinis si Jose. Nagtapos siya sa unibersidad at ngayon ay nagbibigay ng suporta sa mga kapwa niya gumaling mula sa pagkaadik. Nagpapalaganap din siya ng kaalaman tungkol sa panganib ng ICE sa mga paaralan at Juvenile Justice Centres sa buong Australia, kasama ang Salvos. •

*Ang artikulong ito ay unang inilathala sa Salvos Magazine at ginamit nang may pahintulot.*

## Leaving old paths

BY KARL FAASE

**THERE ARE MANY** metaphors for life and one is walking a path, which is following a route created by others. There are times in our lives when we look at the path we are on and we recognise it's leading us towards disaster. Do you feel that way about your future? What do we do if we are on the wrong path? Here are three suggestions:

First – Repent. This is a term the Bible uses which means stop the direction you are going and turn back. Second – Replace. You need something new; replace your old path or actions with something new. Third – Refuse. There is always the desire to go back to what you know. Don't do it. Refuse to go back. Find a new path following Jesus. •

Jazlyn Tham

## My double life became whole

BY SIMEON NEO

When Jazlyn Tham moved to Perth from Singapore, she had no ambition or purpose. She felt insecure and found little meaning in life.

"I was lonely and desperate to fit in, so I would do anything for attention," she tells *Challenge News*.

She struggled to make friends with the girls in her class, so she sought companionship through relationships with boys. But when those relationships failed, she felt the void in her heart grow wider.

"My self-esteem dwindled through the years as I fought to feel worthy to the people I cared about. I felt like God was a distant parent telling me what to do. And all I had to do was nod 'yes', repent [express regret for wrongdoing] the next Sunday, and do it all again."

Growing up in a Christian household, Jazlyn was familiar with Christianity and knew about God.

"I was brought up as a regular churchgoer and gained a lot of head knowledge about Christianity over the years. I went to church every Sunday to hear that Jesus loved me, then lived Monday to Saturday as if He did not."

When Jazlyn entered her late teens, things got worse. She craved more freedom and started lying to her parents. By the time she graduated from school, she was living a life of partying, alcohol, smoking and drugs.

"I continued going to church to prevent any suspicions about what I was doing outside. I hid my life from my church friends out of guilt, yet I couldn't give up this worldly freedom that I idolised."

Once, while she was leading worship at church, she fell asleep on stage under the guise of praying.

"I was at my lowest in those days and so ashamed of who I had become," she admits. "I felt so far from God."

When Jazlyn moved to Perth, she was introduced to the Overseas Christian Fellowship (OCF) in Perth, a student-led Christian club that meets for Bible studies, speaker events and social get-togethers.

"I was looked after and ministered to. There were times I felt too guilty and wanted to step away, but God encouraged me, and I kept showing up."

Jazlyn decided to start attending church again and recommitted her life to Christ. But this time, she allowed her heart to be changed.

"I was crushed upon realising how far I had strayed from the faith," she admits. "I mustered the courage to give up the worldly pleasures that seemed fun but only served to damage my physical, mental and spiritual health."

With the help of her community from church and OCF, Jazlyn's faith began to grow.

"I reconnected with my old friends from church and felt liberated from the lies at last. I also found encouragement from sermons and meeting new friends who were grounded in Christ."

Jazlyn is now married and continues attending church with her husband. She is also serving regularly on the worship team at her church. Reflecting on how her life has been transformed, Jazlyn sees a change in her heart and her attitude from the old person she was.

"I was loved by the people around me and reminded that I did not have to do this alone. It was a painful process losing some loved ones, but I have never looked back since.

"Despite my rebellion and selfishness, God welcomed me back with open arms like a prodigal son." •

# Unplanned moments of peace

BY CAROL ROUND

STOCK PHOTO

**A RECENT TRIP** to the zoo with our youngest granddaughter was more memorable than we'd anticipated. We expected to experience the sights and sounds of the wild animals through a five-year-old's eyes – which we did.

However, we didn't expect unplanned events to lead to delays throughout the day.

The first delay was easily solved when the women's restroom was shut down as we waited in line.

Two toilets overflowed and Ruby and I had to find another restroom. Problem solved.

The next two unplanned moments involved emergencies requiring ambulances, one for a zoo employee and the other for a zoo patron.

In the first instance, we were waiting for our lunch order to be filled when an emergency led to the kitchen being closed.

We munched on popcorn to satisfy our grumbling stomachs.

The second event led to the zoo train being shut down when a zoo visitor had a heart attack on the train.

We prayed for both individuals needing medical assistance.

**Finding peace**

When we find ourselves in stressful times, prayer is the answer to finding the peace that only God can provide. Delays and emergencies happen.

Our lives are filled with interruptions, inconveniences, frustrations, and unexpected events.

Accidents happen.

Traffic makes us late. An appliance or vehicle breaks when we can least afford to fix it or replace it. Unexpected illnesses delay or change our plans.

In times like these, we can seek God. Instead of being frustrated and angry, or blaming others for the inconvenience, we need to seek His peace. When life goes awry, we can be certain God has a better plan.

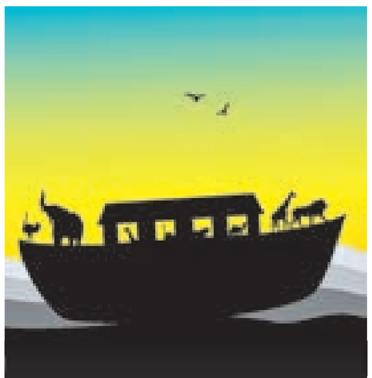
**A better plan**

As Jesus' disciples witnessed the events of week leading up to His crucifixion, all their future hopes and dreams were turned upside down.

They expected to see the establishment of an earthly kingdom under the royal reign of Jesus. Instead, they watched as Jesus was betrayed, experienced humiliation, and led away to an excruciating death on the cross.

Horrified, the disciples were confused at what they witnessed. In the depths of their despair, they forgot His words. They forgot His promise. Death was not the final answer. Thankfully, for us, Jesus rose on the third day. It was all a part of God's marvellous plan for our salvation. No matter what happens to interrupt our day, we can take to heart the peace we can find knowing Jesus has overcome the world. •

I always love hearing from my readers. Please e-mail me at carol@carolaround.com with your thoughts or visit my blog for more inspiration at www.carolaround.com.



## Could all the animals have fit on the ark?

**At an average size of a sheep, Noah could have fit all the animals into 156 railway stock cars. The ark had the capacity, according to the dimensions given in the Bible, to hold 522 stock cars. So, yes, all the animals and the provisions for them would have easily fit on the ark.**

## Tanong at sagot

**T: Mayroon bang mga kontradiksyon sa Bibliya?**

**S:** Bagamat may ilan na nagsasabing puno ng kontradiksyon ang Bibliya, hindi ito totoo. Ang bilang ng tila mga kontradiksyon ay talagang napakakaunti para sa isang aklat na kasing-laki at kasing-lawak ng Bibliya. Ang mga tila hindi pagkakatugma ay higit na isang bagay ng pag-uusisa kaysa isang malaking isyu. Wala itong epekto sa anumang mahalagang pangyayari o paniniwala sa pananampalataya.

Narito ang isang halimbawa ng sinasabing kontradiksyon. Inutusan ni Pilato na maglagay ng karatula sa krus kung saan ipinako si Hesus. Tatlo sa mga ebanghelyo ang nagtala ng isinulat sa karatulang iyon:

- Sa Mateo: "Ito si Hesus, ang Hari ng mga Hudyo."
- Sa Marcos: "Ang Hari ng mga Hudyo."
- Sa Juan: "Si Hesus na taga-Nazaret, ang Hari ng mga Hudyo."

Magkakaiba ang pagkakasulat ng mga ito, kaya't tila mayroong hindi pagkakatugma. Ang kahanga-hangang bagay, gayunpaman, ay pareho nilang inilalarawan ang parehong pangyayari nang may detalye – si Hesus ay ipinako sa krus. Sa puntong ito, lahat sila ay nagkakaisa. Maging ang paglalagay ng karatula sa krus ay kapwa nilang naitala, at ang kahulugan ng karatula ay pareho sa tatlong ulat!

Paano naman ang eksaktong pagkakasulat? Ang mga ebanghelyo ay orihinal na isinulat sa wikang Griyego, na hindi gumagamit ng quotation marks tulad ng sa atin ngayon upang ipahiwatig ang isang tuwirang sipi o direct quote. Gumamit ang mga manunulat ng ebanghelyo ng hindi tuwirang sipi, kaya may kaunting pagkakaiba sa kanilang paglalahad.

Narito naman ang isa pang halimbawa ng tila kontradiksyon. Nasa libingan ba si Hesus nang dalawang gabi o tatlong gabi bago ang Kanyang muling pagkabuhay? Sinabi ni Hesus bago ang Kanyang pagpapako sa krus: "Sapagkat kung paanong si Jonas ay tatlong araw at tatlong gabi sa tiyan ng malaking isda, gayundin ang Anak ng Tao ay tatlong araw at tatlong gabi sa puso ng lupa." (Mateo 12:40)

Samantala, sa Marcos, itinala ang isa pang pahayag ni Hesus:

"Aakyat tayo sa Jerusalem, at ang Anak ng Tao ay ipagkakanulo sa mga punong saserdote at mga guro ng kautusan. Kanilang hahatulan Siya ng kamatayan at ibibigay sa mga Hentil, na Siya'y tutuyain, duduraan, hahagupitin, at papatayin. Ngunit makalipas ang tatlong araw, Siya ay muling mabubuhay." (Marcos 10:33-34)

Pinatay si Hesus noong Biyernes at nadiskubre ang Kanyang muling pagkabuhay noong Linggo. Paano ito naging tatlong araw at tatlong gabi sa libingan? Noong panahon ni Hesus, karaniwan sa kulturang Hudyo na ituring ang anumang bahagi ng isang araw o gabi bilang isang buong araw at gabi. Kaya't ang Biyernes, Sabado, at Linggo ay itinuturing na tatlong araw at tatlong gabi sa kanilang pananaw. Ginagamit din natin ang ganitong paraan ng pagpapahayag sa kasalukuyan – halimbawa, kung may nagsabing "Buong araw akong namili," hindi natin iniisip na literal na 24 oras siyang namili.

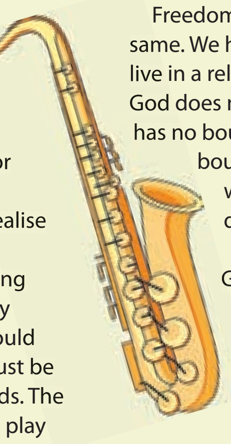
Ganito ang kalimitang nangyayari sa mga sinasabing kontradiksyon sa Bagong Tipan. Karamihan sa mga ito ay nalulutas sa pamamagitan ng masusing pagsusuri ng mismong teksto o sa pamamagitan ng pag-aaral ng kasaysayan at kultura sa panahong iyon. •

Ang artikulong ito ay unang nalathala sa Every-Student.com at ginamit nang may pahintulot.

## THE JOY OF HAVING LIMITS

BY KARL FAASE

**JAZZ MUSIC IS** not everyone's first choice — it is a unique style of music. In many concerts, you may actually be treated to music that no one has ever heard before because within many jazz pieces, there is the opportunity for free expression.



It is very important to realise that this is within limits.

If all the musicians playing at that moment did exactly what they wanted, you would not have music, it would just be a conglomeration of sounds. The ability of jazz musicians to play extemporaneously is in fact within strict limits. The freedom to play and experiment with the music is freedom within the bounds of the moment, the band and the music.

Freedom in this life is just the same. We have the freedom to live in a relationship with God, but God does not say that our freedom has no boundaries. Life with no boundaries is like music with no boundaries. It's a disaster.

Discover the freedom God has for you. A life lived to its maximum potential, but within the boundaries of God's Word to us. •

## HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

**What?** Salvation is an eternal relationship with God – now on Earth and, after we die, in Heaven.

*The Lord Jesus says: "I tell you the truth. Everyone who believes in Me has eternal life." John 6:47*

*"In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* John 16:33

**Who?** Anyone can gain the eternal life offered through Jesus Christ, regardless of how you have previously lived or what you have previously believed.

*God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.* John 3:16

**Why?** Because sin separates us from a holy God. Sin is all the wrong things we do, say and think, as well as our desire to be our own boss.

*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* Roman 3:23

**How?** The Bible says you become a Christian by confessing with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.

*If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.* Romans 10:8b-10

**Ready to change your life forever?** Here is a prayer you can pray, but you can also use your own words. The words are not as important as the heart attitude – which only God can see.

Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth,

I acknowledge that I am a sinner. Please forgive me for all the ways I have disobeyed and defied You.

Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to earth to live the perfect life I couldn't, and die on the cross for my sins. Thank You that His blood was sufficient to pay my debt to You, and His resurrection proves that there is life beyond death. I accept that His sacrifice is all I need to get right with You – I bring nothing I have done but I give you everything I am. Help me to live for You. Please be my Saviour and my Master. Amen.

**What now?**

1. Tell someone - either a Christian that you know or email us at challenge@atin-asia.com
2. Use the resources in the green box on this page to find a Bible to read and more information regarding Christianity.
3. Keep praying. Talk to God anywhere, about anything. He is always listening, and you don't need a formula.
4. Find a Bible-teaching church to attend.

**AS A NEXT STEP :**

I have prayed this prayer. ☐

Please send me:
- ☐ A Bible portion
- ☐ Some 'starting off' literature
- ☐ Information on a helpful church

** Please tick and write clearly **

Name ____________________ Phone ____________

Address ______________________________

Email address __________________________

*ATIN (Asia), Inc., P.O. Box 31, Masbate City, Masbate 5400 Philippines.*
*Email: challenge@atin-asia.com Facebook: facebook.com/ATINasiainc*

*All overseas enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country*

## Want to explore more?

Here are some **free**, helpful, Christian online resources

| | |
|---|---|
| Online Bible - **Olive Tree app** (we recommend that you start with an easy-to-read version like the ESV) | Audio Bible - **Bible.is app**, or **Youversion Bible app** |
| Christian radio station - **CBN radio app** (different channels for all genres of music) | Christian podcasts and sermons - **Edifi app** |
| Christian movies, serials and kids' shows - **Good. app** | Daily thoughts and inspiration - **Our Daily Bread app** |
| Advice on specific issues, Bible reading plans and studies for new believers - **Youversion Bible app**. | The Bible explained with visual aides - **Bible Project on YouTube**. |
| **Alpha Film Series on Youtube** - an online introduction to Christianity | For kids - **Superbook Kids Bible, videos and games app** |
| Comic book Bible online- **goodandevilbook.com** | **Manga Messiah app** Christian comic with free games app, illustrated in Japanese-style art |
| **YMI** (meant to be read as "Why am I?") Christian news outlet for young adults with various content, devotionals and resources. **ymi.today** | More inspiring faith stories - **back issues of Challenge News at challengenews.online** |

Corey Colapinto in action on the waves.

# SOUL SURFER

When his dad first took him surfing, Corey Colapinto was more interested in looking for sea creatures under rocks. Something changed when he was about 10. Surfing became his passion, and he began competing alongside his cousins Crosby and Griffin (currently ranked world No. 3).

Corey experienced early success at the Surfing America Championships, even defeating Griffin in the under-12 division.

However, when shortboard surfing stopped being fun and burnout set in, Corey stopped competing and started longboarding. Now a surfboard shaper and surfing coach, he shares with The Surfer's Bible about the biggest decision he ever made when he was 18.

"I had an injury that made me start questioning life... I was pretty depressed. I couldn't surf for six to nine months. I had a really bad knee injury.

"My buddy was inviting me to church and I kept saying, 'No, I don't know what that's about.' I kind of wanted to go because I had friends that were going, but I was stubborn and proud, and I just wanted to do things that I knew. Then one day after my buddy had asked a bunch of times and I said no a bunch of times, he asked me whether I believed in God, and I said, 'I have no idea. I don't even know, really.' I remember I was going to say no; I wanted to fight. But then I remember I really thought about it and said, 'I have no idea.' I was a little embarrassed having to say that. Then I asked him, 'And you? Do you believe in God?' And he said, 'Yeah, I do.' And I was like, 'Wow. That's chill.'

"I didn't know you could just say that. I was raised in this school system where it's all about evolution, so I thought it went against science. Those were just the beliefs I was raised with.

"I started going to church and I was like, 'Whoa, this is really rad.'

"I still had a lot of questions, so I started reading and researching apologetics and other faith-related things. Because I said, 'If this is the truth, I want to know and I have a lot of questions for it to answer.' So I read C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*. And it follows the argument from a moral side, how that points to God. I read a bit of the Bible too, but it was just a little confusing for me at the time. Then it started to make more and more sense, and eventually I became a Christian four or five months after going to church that first time.

Corey with his wife, Heidi.

"From the very first time I went to church, my heart was crying out to the Lord, being like, 'Lord, I need You to save me!'

"I didn't understand the concept of salvation, but I just knew I needed forgiveness, and I knew I needed to be saved from my own sin that was ruining my life. I remember crying out to the Lord and saying, 'You can have my whole life.' I was there offering my life and holding it out and coming before the Lord.

"It wasn't until later that I really understood it, but I don't think you need to understand a lot. You hear the Gospel, and you already know the truth – that we need a savior and we need forgiveness. Jesus died for that, and we can receive that by His grace through faith. I was just really curious after that, so I started digging into Christianity far more. And I remember being like, 'Whoa, this is so rad and so real. How did I not see it before?' All creation points to God."

When Corey shares about his faith on Instagram, he occasionally receives negative comments.

"For a while it kind of shook me, or I was like, 'Oh, no! People don't like what I'm doing!' All that fear of man stuff. So I wouldn't respond. And all of a sudden I was like, 'Dude, what am I afraid of? I'm just going to respond and be loving and kind.'

"Sometimes people will come at me all hot and I'll just be like, 'Oh I'm sorry you feel that way. I really believe this is the truth that God has told us in His Word,' and I'll be like 'Well, why do you believe what you believe?' And I'll just try to turn it into a conversation.

"I've had a lot of good conversations come out of that, where people are like, 'Wow, okay. I didn't know that's how you looked at it.'"

Corey refers to Matthew 16:26, which says, "*What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?*"

"Those are the words of Jesus. Asking, what good is it if you get everything you've wanted in this world? You know: pro surfing, the best waves, the best boards, you get all of it, but at the end of the day you lose your soul. The question is, is there anything more valuable than your soul?" •

This story was first published by *The Surfer's Bible* and is used with kind permission. Scan the QR code to read Corey's story in its entirety.

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