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BREAKING THE CYCLE

Pace is for cowards. Real men fight. And only real men win.

This was the attitude in the area Phumlani Ngwenya was raised in.

“As a Zulu boy we had to take care of cattle and fight every day,” he tells Challenge News.

“Fighting taught us to be warriors and not cowards.”

The fighting was not just around the livestock or at work. Phumlani also had to fight for every bit of food at the dining table.

With many siblings and half-siblings from his polygamist father, mealtimes were as much a battle as anything Phumlani faced in the field.

“As the last-born sibling I learned a lot of things the hard way,” he continues.

“When it was time for food everything was dished up in one dish. We had to eat like in a competition – it was survival of the fittest.”

Phumlani says he grew up in a family where Christianity was detested because he was taught that it promoted cowardice.

“Not even one of the 30 children of my father was a Christian or loved Christianity.

“All we were told was ‘grow up, get a job, have a house, as many wives as you can and honour your ancestors. And drink alcohol.’

“I knew nothing about Jesus Christ and I hated Christianity.”

Phumlani’s only spiritual connection was through the shamans of his village, who tied ropes and weights around his body to ward off the effects of his epilepsy.

“I had traditional ropes all over my body to protect me, but even then I had no assurance about tomorrow.”

When he was about 19, he and some friends went to a Christian crusade with mischief in mind. “We went to cause a distraction as usual,” he admits.

“But as I was standing there, I heard the preacher preaching from 2 Corinthians 5:17, which says that anyone who believes in Christ is a new creation.

“My heart wanted to be a new creation but I kept ignoring that voice in my mind.”

A week passed and Phumlani still couldn’t shake the Bible verse from his mind. Finally, he sat under a tree, burst into tears and cried out: “Lord I need this new life!”

He says he remembers this day like it was yesterday.

“That day I went home with a pair of scissors to cut off the ropes and weights from my body and said, ‘Jesus if I die today I want to fall in You.’

“This was because when I was given those ropes and weights, I was told my life or death depended on them.

“Praise God I did not die. Instead, my epilepsy stopped the same day.”

He has paid a price for his new faith – “hatred from family and friends” – and was chased out of the house by his brothers, who said they could not live with a person who believed in Christ.

But none of that shook his faith. “The peace of Jesus has been above all that hatred,” he says.

Since committing his life to Christ, Phumlani says he has experienced a freedom he could only dream of before.

“My life has been free! I have been a peaceful young man and I have been joyful ever since.”

“Christ has done miracles in my life. I am the first one of my mother’s children to go to university, the first one to work and buy a car before 25.”

Not only that, but Phumlani is charting a new family legacy in marriage as well by shunning the tradition of multiple marriages.

“Polygamy was believed to be a curse that we cannot escape but I am proud to say that through Christ I am married to only one wife.

“I have been lifted by Christ in my family in such a way that although I am the youngest from my mother I am regarded as the eldest because mum trusts me with decision-making that concerns the family – to God be the glory.” His message to others is:

“Life without Jesus is life without purpose. Life with Jesus is worth living even if it costs you everything. Choosing Jesus is not a one-off thing but daily living.

“It may not be easy, but it is worth it. Your close friends may turn away from you but He is the friend who is always there – bread when you are hungry, water when you are thirsty, air to breathe.”

RIGHT: Phumlani Ngwenya.
 INSET: Phumlani with his wife Esther on their wedding day.



Happy Easter!

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BACK PAGE

BEYOND THE GAME
JADEN IVEY

The donkey’s cross

IF YOU’VE EVER looked closely at a donkey, you may have noticed something interesting: a dark cross-like marking on its back. A line runs down the spine, and another crosses the shoulders, forming a subtle but striking shape.

Maybe the marking is just part of the donkey’s natural colouring. Or maybe its Creator left a pattern that points to something more important.

The story of the donkey carrying Jesus is found in all four Gospels and fulfills a prophecy written over 500 years earlier: “Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9).

The four Gospels in the Bible explain that Jesus arrived in Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish festival of Passover, entering the city riding a donkey. He was greeted by a crowd who laid down their cloaks and branches in His path, shouting “Hosanna!”

Hosanna is often described as a declaration of praise but it is actually a plea for salvation. The word comes from two Hebrew roots: yasha (“to save or deliver”) and anna (“I beg you” or “please”). Combined, hosanna literally means “I beg you to save!” or “Please, deliver us!” When the crowds shouted “Hosanna” as Jesus entered Jerusalem, they weren’t just celebrating – they were crying out for salvation, recognising Him as the long-awaited Messiah who could rescue them.



• Turn to page 2

Stock photo

The donkey's cross

• From page 1

One might expect the Messiah to arrive in a gold carriage or on a powerful warhorse. But Jesus chose a humble donkey.

The donkey isn't known for its beauty or speed. It's often seen as stubborn, plain, even insignificant. And yet, in this story, the donkey is a symbol of quiet strength, of faithfully carrying a burden without fame or reward.

It carried Jesus into Jerusalem, the very city where, just days later, He would give His life on a cross.

There, Jesus was crucified – not as a political rebel or failed teacher, but as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of humanity.

He took our place, bearing the weight of our guilt, so that anyone who turns to Him in repentance and faith can be forgiven, made clean, and restored to a right relationship with God.

While it is not found in the Bible, legend says that as the donkey stood near the cross on the day Jesus died, the shadow of that cross fell across its back. From that moment on, its kind bore the shape of the cross.

But the story didn't end at the cross. Jesus didn't stay in the grave. He rose again, and His resurrection is a promise: that we can be made new. That shame can be exchanged for healing. That fear can be replaced with peace. That love, not death, has the final word.

If your heart is stirred by this idea of a God who chose humility, who sees value in the lowly, and who offers grace freely, that might be Him reaching out to you. Jesus once said, "Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). That invitation still stands. You don't have to be perfect. You don't have to carry it all alone.

You're invited – to bring your questions, your hurts, your hopes – to the One who carried the heaviest burden of all, and still bears the mark of love. For more information see the box entitled **How do I Become a Christian** on page 7.

Faith born in tragedy

BY MARISHIA VAN DYK

I did not grow up as a believer, and for most of my life, I lived without any real relationship with God. Prayer, church, and the Bible were all unfamiliar to me. But everything changed on a single, devastating night in December 2022. My family and I were on our way to a holiday destination when we were involved in a head-on car collision.

Everyone in the car sustained serious injuries – but my youngest son, who had just turned 14, lost his life in the accident. That moment shattered my world and left a wound in my heart that I knew nothing on earth could heal.



Marishia van Dyk

While I was in the hospital, broken physically and emotionally, a woman I didn't know came to visit me every day. She prayed for me faithfully for an entire month. At the time, I didn't understand what she was doing or why she kept coming – but her presence brought me a kind of peace I couldn't explain.

After I was discharged from the hospital and returned home, I found myself with an overwhelming yearning for

Jesus Christ.

I didn't know how to reach out to Him – I had never prayed, never read the Bible, never even really set foot in a church. But I knew I needed Him. It was like my soul was crying out to Him.

A friend of ours invited us to his church, and on March 26, 2023, I attended for the first time. That day changed everything. I felt the presence of God in a way I never had before. I surrendered my life to Jesus. Since then, I have never looked back.

“That moment shattered my world.”

The transformation in my life has been profound. I went from someone who didn't know how to pray to someone who can't go a day without speaking to God.

The Bible, once a closed book to me, has become a source of life, truth, and guidance. God has taken what was broken and begun to restore it with His grace.

Out of my pain has come a calling. I feel deeply compelled to share the goodness of God and the hope of salvation with others. There is a fire in me that wasn't there before – a desire to share the gospel, to walk with others in their darkest moments, and to lead them to the One who can save and heal.

I believe God is calling me into ministry – not because I have all the answers, but because I know the One who does.

My life is a testimony of His mercy, and I want to spend the rest of my days pointing others to Jesus.

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Did you know? Challenge – The Good News Paper shares real stories of hope, transformation, and faith in multiple languages and special editions. Whether you'd like to read in Afrikaans, Spanish, or explore powerful stories from those in prison or the military, you can find it all online at za.challenge.news.

Coffee Break CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

ACROSS

- Surgical sutures
- Sign of boredom
- Soak up
- Blow the whistle
- Make larger
- Meeting with a doctor, say
- Round Table warrior
- Painting, dance, etc.
- Bring into country
- Soft, fluffy feathers
- Ominous; eerie

DOWN

- Toothpaste holder
- Shed item
- Winter sleep
- Solar _____
- Romulus or Remus
- Launch an assault
- Open-palm hit
- Very much dislike
- Heart and kidney
- Money in Madrid
- When shadows are short
- Chimps and bonobos
- "That's accurate"

SOLUTIONS PAGE 7

Smile files...



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

Ask Y: Answers to tough questions about God

QUESTION: ISN'T IT A BIT TOO FAR-FETCHED TO BELIEVE JESUS WAS GOD?

BY PETER MEADOWS

IT DOES SOUND far-fetched to believe the son of a carpenter born 2000 years ago was any more than just an exceptional person. But weigh the evidence and you face a different possibility. If you have read previous Ask Y columns you would have already heard about the massive impact Jesus made on history – leagues above all others. And the miracles – healing people, raising dead people to life and more – that mark Him as more than just 'human'. And there are more reasons to believe his claim to be true.

If God walked the Earth, what would you want Him to be like? And does Jesus match it? Let me try a few examples on you:

- Jesus was compassionate. Faced with a widowed mother whose only son – and her sole means of support – had died, Jesus raised him to life. Face to face with lepers, the AIDS victims of the day, He did the unthinkable and touched them.
- Jesus left no one out. Prostitutes, people who lived on the edge of society, and social outcasts were all welcomed by Him. And women, the underclass of the day, received special affirmation and dignity from the way He treated them.
- Jesus made ordinary people feel comfortable in his presence. There was nothing super-religious or standoffish about Him. Children swarmed round His feet, He was a welcome guest at a wedding; He enjoyed a normal social life.
- Jesus detested religious hypocrisy. He spoke out against those with a holier-than-thou attitude. Religion for the show of it stuck in His throat – and he said so.
- Jesus never wrote people off. He welcomed those ready for a new start. For example, a prostitute, a thief, and collaborator with the occupying enemy all received the chance to start again. His life expressed what you hope God would be like – that no one is too far gone to be loved by Him.

So Jesus stands out from the crowd by more than a few head and shoulders. He did the things you'd expect God to do. He behaved the way you'd expect God to behave. But, for me, the clincher is what those closest to Him had to say. Those closest to us know the truth about us. They can bring us down to Earth should we lose track of reality. Jesus too had his "nearest and dearest" – those who lived cheek by jowl with Him for three years listening, watching, and evaluating.

Their verdict? They came to believe Him to be God – with many giving their lives out of a conviction this was true. One, Thomas, actually knelt at Jesus' feet and declared, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus freely allowed Thomas to worship Him. And Jesus invites us to do the same.

Peter Meadows co-authored (with Joseph Steinberg) *The Book of Y*, the basis for the eight week Y Course that explores life's biggest questions.

NUDGE
WITH KARL FAASE

Believing in the dark

WAS THERE EVER a time in your life when you were curious about Jesus but unsure where to start? Nicodemus was a respected religious leader, yet he came to Jesus secretly at night, drawn by something he couldn't quite understand.

In this interaction, Jesus told him, "No one can see the Kingdom of God unless they are born again" (John 3:3).

It seems that Nicodemus wasn't ready to respond immediately. This is a very natural response. Not everyone who hears Jesus words will immediately want to be 'born again'.

Faith is a journey, and questions are part of the process.

This Easter, take time to seek Jesus – open the Bible, pray, and reflect.

Find an Easter church service near you and pop in. Give His words space to develop in your heart, like an old film photo gradually coming into focus.

The evidence for Easter

BY WIL POUNDS

MATTHEW ARNOLD SAID, “The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the best attested fact in history.”

Some of the best books on the resurrection have been written by lawyers who set out with the goal of disproving it as a historical fact.

Sir Edward Clark wrote, “As a lawyer I have made a prolonged study of the evidences for the first Easter. To me the evidence is conclusive, and in the high Court I have secured the verdict on evidence not nearly so compelling. As a lawyer I accept it unreservedly as the testimony of men to facts that they were able to substantiate.”

The historian Luke wrote that Jesus “presented Himself alive, after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of 40 days, and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 1:3). Jesus foretold His own death and resurrection (Luke 9:22; Mark 12:40).

After He rose from the dead Jesus appeared to a wide variety of people in numerous circumstances, throughout the land. He showed Himself alive as “demonstrative proofs.” Let me summarise briefly the testimony of eyewitnesses to the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Mary Magdalene was the first witness who saw Jesus alive after His resurrection (John 20:11-18). She was standing outside the tomb when Jesus startled her into recognising Him when He called her name, “Mary!” Surprised by joy, she grabbed hold of Him, and then rushed away to tell the disciples, “I have seen the Lord” (v 18).

Several women went to the tomb early that first Easter morning and an angel told them that Jesus had “risen from the dead” (Matthew 28:9-10). A few moments later they saw Jesus and “held Him by the feet and worshipped Him” (v 9). Jesus told these women to go and tell the disciples to meet Him in Galilee.

Later on that first Sunday two disciples were walking on the Emmaus Road from Jerusalem (Luke 24:12-32). A stranger caught up with them and listening to their conversation asked what they were talking about. At the end of their journey to Emmaus they invited Him for dinner and, “Their eyes were opened, and they recognised Him; and He vanished from their sight” (v 31).

Jesus appeared to Peter (Luke 24:33-35; 1 Cor. 15:5). Jesus spent special time with the disciple who had denied Him three times.

Peter was with 10 of the disciples when the two from Emmaus arrived back in Jerusalem to tell the disciples that they had met with Jesus (Luke 24:36-43). There in the upper room Jesus suddenly appeared to the gathered disciples, greeted them, and ate with them in their sight.

A week later 11 disciples, including Thomas, were in a secure room (John 20:26-31). Thomas refused to believe the witnesses for a week and then Jesus suddenly appeared to the men and said to Thomas, “Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but believing” (v 27). Thomas believed and declared, “My Lord and my God!” (v 28)

Sometime later seven of the disciples who had been fishermen



STOCK PHOTO

returned to Sea of Tiberias and talked with Jesus (John 21:1-25). A stranger on the beach directed them to a catch of 153 large fish. John recognised Jesus first and shouted to Peter, “It is the Lord!” That was the best catch of fish those old fishermen ever had. Jesus invited them to “come and have breakfast” with Him.

Jesus appeared to the 11 in Galilee who “saw Him, and worshipped Him.” Then He gave them His commission to share the message to the world (Matthew 28:16-20).

Jesus appeared to 500 people gathered in one place (1 Corinthians 15:6), and most of them were still alive 30 years later when the apostle Paul wrote his letter to the church at

Corinth, Greece in 56 A.D.

He also appeared to His half-brother James, and then after His ascension to an arrogant Jewish Pharisee named Saul (1 Corinthians 15:7-8). “And last of all, as it were to one untimely born, He appeared to me also” (v 8).

The last recorded appearance of Jesus before His ascension was to His disciples near Bethany (Acts 1:9-12). As He stood there talking to these eyewitnesses, “He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight” (v 9).

The historical evidence is accurate and clear. Jesus Christ is alive! •

This article was first published on abideinchrist.com and is used with kind permission.

My life was a mess

Bryan Ndlovu (pictured) grew up in a family that practiced the mystical shaman arts.

In fact, he tells Challenge News, one of his aunts was a very respected shaman in his village.

But none of this seemed to help Bryan, who says his life “was a mess”. “Growing up under her care was not easy,” he says. “Thinking of what happened to me I can cry even today. I struggled to forgive, I was bitter, my heart was broken.”

When he was 15, Bryan began drinking. “I hated my life. I was always drunk. I hated God. I didn’t even know if God existed. I thought there was no solution and I wanted to kill myself several times. I hated women also because of what my aunty did to me.” But everything changed for Bryan after he heard the Gospel – the good news that Jesus

Christ came to Earth to save mankind from its sins.

Bryan committed his life to God and now he has hope for the future, though he knows it is not an instant fix for his problems.

“It is a process. I am free but I am still struggling with some stuff. However, I believe Jesus is truly working in me.

“I know He hears me and He loves me. He is with me all the time – now I can forgive those who treated me badly.”

Bryan’s guiding verse is from the book of John: “If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, whatever you ask in My name it will be done for you” (John 15:17).

He shares that every time he prays those words he knows Jesus hears him. “The truth is that my life is different from the one I used to live.

“May the name of God be glorified for what He has done for me.” •



Peace after pain

Growing up in George in South Africa’s Western Cape, Reuben Barnard’s childhood seemed ordinary at first, but by the age of six, life began to shift dramatically.

“My father started showing up less and less at home. It came to a point where me and my two brothers didn’t see our father on weekends,” he recalled.

The absence of their father took a toll on the whole family.

“Our mother started getting sad over this and what was happening in the house. After a few years, my mother found out that my dad was cheating on her with someone else.”

The turmoil didn’t stop there. Constant fighting and abuse left deep emotional scars.

“My dad started to hit me and tried to play it off like he was making me ‘tough.’”

High school brought further challenges, including his parents’ divorce.

“This left me devastated, and throughout high school, it was something that kept me depressed.”

Like many teenagers, Reuben sought approval from his father and a sense of worth. He threw himself into rugby, hoping to prove himself.

“I started training – jogging five kilometres in the morning, going to the gym after school for an hour, then rugby practice later in the afternoon. I was doing this every day for the end of grade 11.”

His hard work paid off: he earned a spot on the school’s first team and a ticket to the World Schools Rugby Tournament in Thailand.

But then disaster struck. During tryouts, his leg collapsed in a scrum, and a doctor later told him he would have “leg problems for the rest of my life and that I wouldn’t be able to play rugby anymore.”

For Reuben, rugby was more than a sport; it was a way to reconnect with his father. “My whole life fell apart because the one thing I was doing to get back with my dad was gone, and I felt like a failure.”

The hopelessness became overwhelming, and he came dangerously close to taking his own life.

It was during this darkest time that Reuben’s perspective began to change.

“I always knew God, but I grew up in a church and didn’t think much of it until I went on an X3DE camp, which completely broke my religious mindset. I learned that



Reuben Barnard

I could have a relationship with God.” At the camp, something extraordinary happened.

“They prayed for my leg, and God healed it. From that day, I knew I had to change my old ways and truly go full out for God and His will for my life.”

The experience went beyond physical healing. Reuben surrendered his life to Jesus Christ and found emotional and relational restoration.

“Not only did my leg get healed, but I also forgave my father for what he has done to me and my family. Today the Holy Spirit is working with my father to restore our relationship because my dad started reaching out to me and wants to spend time with me.”

The transformation Reuben experienced touched every part of his life.

“After I became a Christian, I felt relieved and like all my burdens were taken away.”

His newfound faith helped him

embrace authenticity.

“I started to be the ‘real’ me and started to really care about others around me. My heart started going out to people in similar situations as me.”

Reuben draws inspiration from 1 Corinthians 13, which speaks about love and enduring commitment. He has also learned a key life lesson about resilience.

“Life won’t be easy when you give your life to Jesus, but because you have a solid foundation in Jesus, you can easily come back on your feet and stand up from mistakes.”

Through his journey, Reuben discovered that true healing comes not just from overcoming physical or emotional setbacks, but from building a life on a foundation of faith, forgiveness, and purpose. •

“The one thing I was doing to get back with my dad was gone.”

“I was bitter, my heart was broken.”

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English translation

Delivered from darkness

As a child, Antonio Sambo's life was steeped in the worship of ancestral spirits.

"I was dedicated to the worship of ancestral spirits," he told Challenge News. "I lived a life of sinful idolatry."

Antonio had an uncle, a Christian man who was troubled to see his young nephew carrying items that marked him as being involved in the occult.

One day, he took Antonio aside and shared the Gospel – the good news that Jesus Christ came to Earth to die for mankind's sins – with him.

That conversation, which took place when Antonio was 13, was the turning point in his life. He rejected the ancestor worship he had grown up with and committed his life to Jesus Christ.

"There was no big special event that made me turn to Jesus," Antonio shared. "It was the personal evangelism by my uncle that led me to Christ."

The change was immediate and life-giving. Recalling how he felt at the time, Antonio commented: "I felt great because the heavy burden of my sins was removed."

Joining a strong local church so that he could grow in his new faith, he discovered the joy of living by the Word of God. "My favourite verse is Mat-

thew 6:33: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you."

But his journey was not without struggles.

Some years later, he fell into adultery – a failure that weighed heavily on him. But in 1992 during a revival meeting at church one evening, he confessed his sin, repented and re-committed his life to God.

"I asked for His forgiveness and I knew His Word was true – 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'" (1 John 1:9)

That night became a new chapter in his walk with God. He admitted freely that the road of faith has plenty of bumps along the way.

"I have fallen and failed many times but God has helped me. He always rescues me and forgives me."

Today, 40 years later, Antonio is a pastor in Mozambique. Looking back, he sees God's faithfulness through every season in his life, good and bad.

Shona translation

KUDZIKINURWA KUBVA MURIMA

Kubvira ari mwana mudiki, hupenyu hwaAntonio Sambo, akanga akanyura mukunamata mashavi. "Ndakanga ndakazvipira kunamata mashavi," akaudza Challenge News.

"Ndakararama hupenyu hwechivi chekunamata vamwe vamwari." Antonio aive nasekuru hanzvadzi yamai vake aitenda muna Jesu Kristu, sekuru vake vakanetseka kuona muzukuru wavo anga asati abva zera akatatura zvinhu zvairatidza kuti aiita zvemashavi.

Rimwe zuva, sekuru vake vakamutora vakaenda naye parutivi vakagovera naye evhangeri – yoruponeso, kuti Jesu Kristu akauya pasi pano kuzofira zvivi zvedu

tose. Hurukuro yaakaita nasekuru vake ane makore gumi nematatu ndipo pakauya shanduko muupenyu hwake. Akasiya kunamata mashavi hwaive upenyu hwake achikura.

Antonio akati, "Hapana chitiko chikuru chakaita kuti nditevere Jesu, kusara kwekuparidzirwa kwandakaitwa nasekuru."

Shanduko haina kutora nguva, yakaitika ipapo ipapo zvakanzipa upenyu husingaperi nemufaro" Achiyeuka manzwiro aakaita panguva iyoyo, Antonio akati: "Ndakanzwa kufara nokuti mutoro wezvivi zvangu wakange wakaturwa."

Akave chikamu chekereke yakasimba yemunzvimbo maaigara akadzidza kuti akure mukutenda kwake kutsva, akawana mufaro wokurarama sezvinodzidzwa neShoko raMwari. Ndima yandinonyanya kufarira ndiMateu 6:33: "Asi tangai kutsvaka ushe hwaMwari nokururama kwake, izvozvi zvose zvichawedzerwa kwamuri." Asi hazvirevi kuti rwendo rwake rwakanga rwusina matambudziko. Makore akati ati fambe fambe, akawira muupombwe - kukundikana kwakamuremera zvikuru. Asi mamwe manheru muna 1992 pamusanganano werumutsiriro pakereke paaipindira, akareurura chivi chake, akapa upenyu hwake kuna Mwari zvakare. "Ndakakumbira ruregerero kunaMwari, nokuziva kuti Shoko rake nderechokwadi— 'Kana tichireurura zvivi zvedu, iye akatendeka uye akarurama kuti atikanganwire zvivi zvedu nokutinatsa pakusarurama kwose.'" (1 Johane 1:9)

Usiku ihwohwo hwakava chikamu chitsva mukufamba kwake naMwari. Akabvuma pachena kuti nzira yekutenda ine zvipingaidzo zvizhinji mukufamba. "Ndakadonha ndikakundikana kakawanda asi Mwari vakandibatsira. Anogara achindidzikinura uye anondiregerera." Nhasi, musure memakore makumi mana, Antonio mufundisi muMozambique. Achitarisa kumashure, anoona kutendeka kwaMwari mumwaka yese yehupenyu hwake, pane zvakanaka nezvakaipa.



Zulu translation

NGAKHULULWA EBUMNYAMENI

Njengomtwana, impilo ka Antonio Sambo yayijule ekukhonzeni amadlozi.

"Ngangizinikele ekukhonzeni amadlozi," etshela i Challenge News. "Ngangiphila impilo yokukhonza ithixo zesono." U Antonio wayenomalume okholwayo, kwakumhlukumeza ukubona umshana wakhe ephethe izinto ezikhombisa ukuthi ukhonza ithixo. Ngelinye ilanga, wabizela u Antonio ecaleni wamushumayeza ivangeli- indaba ezinhle ukuthi uJesu Kristu weza emhlabeni ukuzofela izono zabantu- ekhuluma naye.

Leyongxoxo, eyenzeka uma u Antonio eneminyaka ewu 13, yaguqula impilo yakhe. Wajikela amadlozi ayekhule ewakhonza wanikela impilo yakhe kuJesu Kristu. "Kwakungesihlo esikhulu esibalulekile esenza ukuthi ajikele kuJesu," esitshela u Antonio. "Kwaba umalume oweza kimi wangiholela ku Kristu."

Ushintsho lwaba khona masinya lunikela ngempilo. Ekhumbula ukuthi wazizwa kanjani ngaleso sikhathi, u Antonio ubeke wathi: "Ngazizwa ngijabule ngoba umthwalo wezono zami wawususiwe."

Waqala ukukhonza ebandleni elaliqinile, ukuze akhule ekukholweni kwakhe, wathola intokozo yokuphila ngezwi likaNkulunkulu. "Ivesi lakhe alithanda kakhulu uMathewu 6:33: "Kodwa funani kuqala umbuso kaNkulunkulu nokulung Kwakhe, zonke lezizinto ziyakungezelwa kini."

Kodwa ke uhambo lwakhe lube nezinsalelo.

Emva kweminyaka waphinga, ukuwa okwamsinda kakhulu, kodwa ngo 1992 kunenkonzo yemvuselelo ebandleni yasebusuku, ngavuma isono sami, ngaphenduka ngazinikela kabusha kuNkulunkulu.

"Ngacela ukuthi angithethelele futhi ngangazi ukuthi Izwi Lakhe liyiqiniso—"Uma nizivuma izono zenu, Uthembekile futhi ulungile ukusithethelela zonke izono zethu bese esihlanza kukho konke ukungalungi." (1 Johane 1:9). Lobobusuku kwaqala isahluko esisha ohambeni lwakhe noNkulunkulu. Wavuma ukuthi indlela yokukholwa inekhinsi endleleni.

"Ngiwile ngahluleka kaningi kodwa uNkulunkulu ungi-sizile. Uyangihlangula bese engithethelela."

Namhlanje, emva kweminyaka ewu 40, u Antonio ungumfundisi kwelaseMozambique. Uma ebuka emuva, ubona ukwethembeka kukaNkulunkulu ngazo zonke ikhathi empilweni yakhe, ezinhle nezimbi.

Sesotho translation

O lopolotse lefifing

Ha e sa le ngwana, bophelo ba Antonio Sambo bo ne bo tetebetse borapeding ba meya ya baholo-holo.

Ke ne ke inehetse borapeding ba meya ya baholo-holo, o boleletse Challenge News. Ke phetse bophelo ba borapedi ba ditshwantsho ba sebe.

Antonio o ne a e-na le malome, monna wa mokrestee ya neng a tshonyehile ha a bona motjhana wa hae e monyenyanane a jere dintho tse mo tshwenyang hore o ameha dinthong tsa boloi. Ka letsatsi le leng, o ile a nkela Antonio ka, mme a arolelana Evangelii -ditaba tse molemo tsa hore Jesu Kreste o tlile Lefatsheng ho tla shwela dibe tsa batho - le yena.

Puisano eo, e ileng ya etsahala ha Antonio a le dilemo tse 13, e bile a hana borapedi ba baholo-holo bao a hodileng le bona mme a nehelana ka bophelo ba hae jo Jesu Kreste.

Ha ho ketsahalo e kgolo e kgethehileng e ileng ya etsa hore ke retelehele ho Jesu, Antonio o ile a arolelana. Ebile boevangeli ba botho ba malome bo ileng ba nkisa ho Kreste.

Phethoho e bile ya hang-hang ebile e fana ka bophelo. Ha a hopola kamoo a neng a ikutlwa ke le moholo hobane morwalo o boima ya dibe tsa ka o ne o tlositswe.

A ikopanya le kereke e matla ya lehae e ntjha, o ile a fumana thabo ya ho phela ka Lentswe la Modimo. Temana eo ke e ratang haholo ke Matheu 6:33, Empa le batle mmuso wa Modimo le ho loka ha Hae pele, mme dintho tsena tsohle le tla di fuwa. Empa leeto la hae le ne le se ntle le mathata.

Dilemo tse mmalwa hamorao, o ile a wela bofebeng - ho hloleha ho ileng ha ho imela haholo. Empa ka 1992 nakong ya kopano ya tsoselletso kerekeng mantsibueng a mang, o ile a ipolela sebe sa hae, a baka mme a nehelana ka bophelo ba hae ho Modimo hape.

Ke ile ka kopa tshwarelo ya Hae mme ke ne ke tseba hore Lentswe la Hae ke nnete -Heba re ipolela dibe tsa rona, wa tshepahlala ebile o lokile ho re tshwarela dibe tsa rona le ho re hlwekisa bokgopo bohle (1 Johanne 1:9).

Bosiung boo e ile ya e-ba kgaolo e ntjha leetong la hae le Modimo. O ile a dumela ka bolokolohi hore tselo ya tumelo e na le mapheo a mangata tseleng.

Ke wele mme ka hloleha ka makgetlo a mangata empa Modimo o nthusitse. Kamehla wa mpholosa mme wa ntshwarela. Kajeno, dilemo tse 40 hamorao, Antonio ke moruti Mozambique. Ha a hetla morao, o bona botshepehi ba Modimo nakong e ngwe le e ngwe bophelong ba hae, botle le boboe.

Xhosa translation

Ukhululwe ebumnyameni

Njengomtwana, ubomi buka-Antonio Sambo babugxile ekunquleni imimoya yezinyanya.

"Ndandizinikele ekunquleni imimoya yezinyanya," uxelele iChallenge News. "Ndandiphila ubomi bonqulo-zithixo olunesono." U-Antonio wayenomalume, indoda engumKristu eyayikhathazekile kukubona umtshana wakhe omncinci ephethe izinto ezazimphawula njengobandakanyeka kwimilingo yobugqi.

Ngenye imini, wathabatha u-Antonio ecaleni waza wabelana naye ngeVangeli - iindaba ezilungileyo zokuba uYesu Kristu weza eMhlabeni ukuzofela izono zoluntu - naye.

Loo ncoko, eyenzeka xa u-Antonio wayeneminyaka eli-13 ubudala, yaba yeyona nto yatshintsha ubomi bakhe. Wayilahla inkonzo yezinyanya awayekhulele kuyo waza wanikela ubomi bakhe kuYesu Kristu. "Akukho siganeko sikhethekileyo sandenza ndaguqukelo kuYesu," u-Antonio uyabalisa. "Yayiluvangelo lomntu oluvela kumalume olwandikhokelela kuKristu."

Utshintsho lwakuawuleza kwaye lunika ubomi. Ekhumbula indlela awayevakalelwa ngayo ngelo xesha, u-Antonio wathi: "Ndaziva ndikhululekile kuba umthwalo onzima wezono zam wawususiwe."

Ejoyina icawa yasekuhlaleni enamandla ukuze akhule elukholweni lwakhe olutsha, wafumana uvuyo lokuphila ngeLizwi likaThixo. "Ivesi endiyithandayo nguMateyu 6:33: "Kodwa funani kuqala ubukumkani bukaThixo nobulungisa bakhe, kwaye zonke ezi zinto ziya kongezelwa nina."

Kodwa uhambo lwakhe aluzange lube ngaphandle kwemigudu.

Emva kweminyaka ethile, wawela ekukrexezeni - ukusilela okwamsinda kakhulu. Kodwa ngo-1992 ngexesha lenkonzo yokuvuselela ecaweni ngobusuku obunye, wavuma isono sakhe, waguquka waza wanikela ubomi bakhe kuThixo.

"Ndacela uxolelo lwakhe kwaye ndandisazi ukuba iLizwi lakhe liyinyaniso - 'Ukuba sizivuma izono zethu, uthembekile kwaye ulungisa ukuba asixolele izono zethu aze asihlambulule kuko konke ukungalungisi.'" (1 Yohane 1:9)

Obo busuku baba sisahluko esitsha ekuhambeni kwakhe noThixo. Wavuma ngokukhululekileyo ukuba indlela yokholo inemiqobo emininzi endleleni.

"Ndiwile ndaza ndasilela amaxesha amaninzi kodwa uThixo undincedile. Uhlala endisindisa kwaye endixolela."

Namhlanje, emva kweminyaka engama-40, uAntonio ungumfundisi eMozambique. Xa ejonga ngasemva, ubona ukwethembeka kukaThixo kuyo yonke imihla yobomi bakhe, okulungileyo nokubi.

FROM SCEPTIC TO SCHOLAR

BY NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN, CMI

For years Tommy Chan laboured under the belief that faith in God was only for the weak-minded, the unsophisticated and the gullible.

"I regarded religion as something for those who were naive or unable to find logical answers," the professor of civil engineering told *Creation* magazine's Neville Chamberlain.

Growing up in Hong Kong, he attended a Catholic school but dismissed God and swore allegiance to science instead.

"I believed science held the answers to all problems," he shared.

In the early 1980s, Tommy went to Brisbane as an overseas student with six others. Two in his group were devoted Christians.

"The two Christians were very kind and helped us settle into life in Australia, even though they were also newcomers. I valued their friendship, but I considered myself more knowledgeable, especially in the area of science."

When they invited him to church, he declined but their faith piqued his curiosity.

"To challenge their beliefs and expose Christianity as irrational, I visited a Christian bookstore. I

wanted to find books about Christianity that I, with my superior knowledge, could critique and refute."

The bookstore staff thought he was sincerely searching.

Noticing he was Chinese, they quietly asked a local Chinese church to pray for him.

Not long after, Tommy had a horse-riding accident and fractured his arm. While in hospital, his two Christian friends and a church elder visited him.

"I was deeply moved by their love and compassion, especially considering they barely knew me," he revealed. "Lying in the hospital, I realised how fragile life was. Had my head hit the ground instead of my arm, I might not have survived."

This newfound realisation of his vulnerability shook Tommy's all-encompassing belief in science.

"I began to question my belief that science could explain everything, in particular the ultimate origin of the universe. The evolution I had



Tommy Chan

learned might explain changes over time, but not how everything began. If one just said it started with a big bang, it wouldn't address what caused that in the first place."

His studies in thermodynamics added to his doubts.

"The first law states that energy cannot be created or destroyed.

This suggests that something must have always existed – either an eternal God, an eternal universe, or an unknown cause for a beginning.

"The second law indicates that everything naturally moves towards greater disorder. This seemed to contradict the idea that the universe was evolving into a more complex state."

He also realised that a belief in atheism was just as much a belief system as faith in God.

"My once-mocking question to Christians – 'If God created the universe, then who created God?' – now seemed to have an answer," he

admitted.

"By definition, if God needed to be created, He would not be God. The very nature of the God of the Bible is that He is eternal – without beginning or end."

After leaving hospital, his friends invited him to church again.

With his arm in a cast, Tommy couldn't use work as an excuse again and accepted the invitation.

After the service, a church leader invited him home for a meal.

The conversation was light and casual.

Tommy dropped his guard – and that's when the Bible found its mark.

"God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us," the church leader told Tommy, quoting Romans 5:8.

"At that moment, I felt overwhelmed by God's love," Tommy remembered.

"When the elder asked if I wanted to receive Christ, my eyes filled with tears. I realised how foolish I had been and how much God had been pursuing me.

"That day, Jesus Christ became my Lord and Saviour."

Another church leader, who was a lecturer in university, lent him a book called *The Genesis Flood*, which he

finished in less than a week.

"It opened a new horizon for me," remarked Tommy. "It aligned with my understanding of thermodynamics and provided an alternative perspective on the age of the Earth."

One of the things Tommy is most grateful for is that teaching gives him a natural platform to share his faith.

"By God's grace I can tell my students that I am a Christian who takes Genesis literally and truly believes what it states."

After graduation, Tommy returned to Hong Kong, taught at the HK Polytechnic University for 16 years and also led Bible studies for Chinese scholars.

"Many Chinese scholars valued intellectual discussions and were curious about why someone in academia would embrace Christianity. This allowed me to explain why I find the Bible so reliable and how its teachings are in harmony with scientific principles."

He revealed that many reject God not for lack of evidence but because "they do not want to acknowledge a Creator... they prefer to live without divine accountability."

In 2007, he returned to Brisbane, where he has been leading a "seeker" Sunday School class since 2009.

Around 200 or more have come to Christ through this ministry during the last 16 years.

Tommy often meets people who casually accept evolution because "they assume that science provides strong evidence for evolution."

"However, if one studies the so-called 'facts' of evolution more closely, it becomes clear they are not actually scientific but are based on incorrect assumptions."

The professor gives top marks to the Bible, which he asserted "already provides the best explanation for the fossil record without having to reinterpret the biblical narrative." •

HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

Anyone can gain the eternal life offered through Jesus Christ

We read in God's word: "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)

OUR PROBLEM:	Separation from God "Everyone has sinned. Nobody is good enough because God's standards are perfect" (Romans 3:23)	ADMIT
GOD'S REMEDY / SOLUTION:	Jesus died on the cross "God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8)	BELIEVE
OUR RESPONSE:	Trust Jesus by receiving Him "To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12)	COMMIT

Here is an example of how you can pray.

Dear Father in Heaven. I come to you now because I want to be saved. Please, forgive me of my sins. I believe that you sent your Son Jesus Christ to die for me and that you have raised him from the dead. I now ask Jesus Christ to come into my life as my Saviour and Lord. Take control of my life. Please make me the person You created me to be. In Jesus Christ's name. Amen

The Lord Jesus says: "I tell you the truth. Everyone who believes in me has eternal life." (John 6:47).
He gives life of a wonderful quality that continues forever.

What now?

1. Tell someone - either a Christian that you know or email us at info@challengenews.org
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. Reach out to the ministry that distributed this paper (see back page) and/or find a Bible-teaching church to attend.

AS A NEXT STEP: Please send me: Bible Some 'starting off' literature Information on a helpful church

I have prayed the prayer [ABOVE]

* Please tick and write clearly *

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Email address _____

Email to: sachallengenews@gmail.com

Out of South Africa enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country

“Lying in the hospital, I realised how fragile life was.”

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 stations - CBN radio app, Trans World Radio and Radio Pulpit		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	
Jesus Film project - 200+ videos in 2000+ languages jesusfilm.org/app youtube.com/@jesusfilm		Christian comics/manga - goodandevilbook.com and Manga Messiah app	

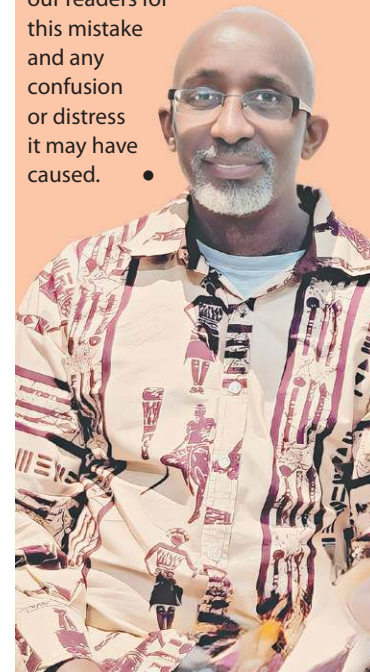
NEED PRAYER ?

Let us pray for you!
Phone toll-free: 0801 229 015
WhatsApp: 079 375 3345
Visit: needprayer.co.za

Correction

IN THE JANUARY 2026 edition of *Challenge News*, the page 6 article titled "Purpose at rock bottom" was published with the wrong photograph. The correct photograph of Abraham Mbuthi is included here.

Challenge News sincerely apologises to Mr Mbuthi and Abraham Paunari, whose photo was incorrectly used, as well as our readers for this mistake and any confusion or distress it may have caused.



STITCHES	T	6	4	9	1	3	8	7	5	2
U	O	I	Y	A	W	N	2	5	3	7
A	B	S	O	R	B	S	I	8	7	1
T	E	L	L	E	X	T	E	N	D	9
T	A	R	E	N	T	E	5	2	7	8
A	P	P	O	I	N	T	M	E	N	T
C	R	A	U	E	4	1	8	3	2	7
K	N	I	G	H	T	A	R	T	S	9
O	A	I	M	P	O	R	T	9	6	2
D	O	W	N	O	E	U	1	3	5	6
N	S	I	N	I	S	T	E	R	7	8

BEYOND THE GAME

From dazzling college performances to early NBA stardom, Jaden Ivey has carved out a name as one of basketball's most electrifying young guards. But behind the speed, scoring, and swagger is a young man who's battled pressures few ever see – and made choices that have reshaped everything.

Born on February 13, 2002, in South Bend, Indiana, Jaden seemed destined for athletic greatness. His mother, Niele Ivey, played in the WNBA and now coaches Notre Dame's women's basketball team. His father, Javin Hunter, was an NFL wide receiver. Jaden's path, however, was uniquely his own.

He began seriously focusing on basketball during his freshman year at Marian High School in Mishawaka, Indiana, later transferring to the elite La Lumiere School for his senior season.

At Purdue University from 2020 to 2022, Ivey quickly emerged as a top prospect. As a freshman, he posted 11.1 points and 3.3 rebounds per game, earning Big Ten All-Freshman honours. His sophomore year was even more impressive: 17.3 points, 4.9 rebounds, and 3.1 assists per game – leading to First-Team All-Big Ten recognition and a Second-Team All-American selection.

On the global stage, Ivey starred for Team USA at the 2021 FIBA Under-19 World Cup in Latvia. He led the team with 21 points in a group-stage win over Turkey and averaged 12.3 points per game across the tournament, helping secure the gold medal.

Selected fifth overall by the Detroit Pistons in the 2022 NBA Draft, Ivey wasted no time making his mark. He averaged 16.3 points,

3.9 rebounds, and 5.2 assists in his rookie campaign. In year two, he kept that momentum with 15.4 points, 3.4 rebounds, and 3.8 assists per game. And before a mid-season injury in 2024–25, he was putting up a career-best 17.6 points, 4.1 rebounds, and 4.0 assists.

But numbers only tell part of the story. Jaden's real transformation happened off the court.

"As I grew up, I just started to seek the wrong things," he told Sports Spectrum.

"Even in high school, I tried sleeping with women to fulfill a certain void in my heart. As I continued to grow as a man, I was trying to fill a void. I slept with women, I tried drinking alcohol, I tried going out to party – I tried to fit in with the world, basically."

Jaden shared his struggles with anger during college and his early NBA years, admitting it affected his relationship and that he tried to fill emotional voids in unhealthy ways.

As he and his fiancé, now wife, Caitlyn were about to have their first son, Jaden was struggling with drinking and a pornography addiction.

"I remember we were in Denver, Colorado, and I sat in the room and I'm just bawling, just crying, like, 'I don't know how to stop this pornography addiction. I'm about to have a child. I have to grow up. There are big things happening in my life.'

"All I could think about was my son having to go through the problems that I went through. I just called out to Jesus and said, 'Jesus, just please change my life. Just do something miraculous – just change my life, please.'

"I always knew Jesus was there. I went to Catholic church, I went to Catholic high school, and I always knew Jesus was there. Just in that moment, I called out to Jesus, and in a matter of months, things changed for me. I had my son, and I didn't have to feel that void in that way anymore."

Jaden said his life transformed from that point on.

"When I came to know Jesus, my life changed – did a whole 180 – and I have that peace, I have that joy that I've been searching for my entire life."

At a March 2024 press conference, Jaden boldly proclaimed his faith, quoting John 14:6:

"I just want to say that Jesus is the way, the truth, the life," he said. "To anyone in the world that's hearing this message, the Kingdom of Heaven is near. Jesus

“
I have that joy that I've been searching for my entire life.
”



Jaden Ivey #23 of the Detroit Pistons attempts a shot while being guarded by Pascal Siakam #43 of the Indiana Pacers in the second quarter at Gainbridge Fieldhouse in November 2025 in Indianapolis, Indiana. (Photo by Dylan Buell/Getty Images)



Jaden Ivey of the Detroit Pistons in September 2025 (Photo by Gregory Shamus/Getty Images).

is coming back, and we all have to repent for our sins and we have to put our faith in Jesus. He will come back when you least expect it, and it's time to wake up if you haven't put your faith in Jesus Christ."

In June 2024, Jaden and his wife were baptised – a public expression of their Christian faith.

Sharing the milestone on Instagram, Ivey declared he is "nothing without Jesus." He cited two powerful Bible verses:

"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." (James 1:17)

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Later in the year, Jaden revealed he faced spiritual setbacks. He found himself drifting, returning to temptations he thought were behind him.

He said the cares of the world began to reappear. He admitted, "I wasn't reading my Bible as often."

In a moment of clarity, he sat in his car and cried out to God:

"And I'm like, 'Lord, I know I can't do this without You. I know I see it.' I had no peace during that time for like two months."

He decided to surrender it all to God.

"I said, 'God, I surrender. I surrender fully. I need You. I need Your peace. I need Your love.' And He's there. That's just the Father He is."

On January 2025, Jaden broke his left fibula during a game against the Orlando Magic.

Speaking on the Sports Spectrum Podcast, he described the time as, "some of the toughest days I've had in my lifetime as far as pain goes."

He also shared that just days before the injury, he had a feeling it might happen – and that he was prepared: "It's sad, but without Christ, there's no peace," he said on the podcast.

"If your heart is in the wrong place, if your identity is only in basketball, you don't have peace. Even before when it happened, I'm just like, 'I have peace because I know Jesus is with me no matter what, no matter what I go through, no matter the trial.' And that's the peace that surpasses all understanding

(Philippians 4:7). I know this situation is going to help me grow even closer to Him, and I already feel it," he added. "Sometimes we ask God why is He doing this? We get in our own minds and our own thoughts," he said.

"But His thoughts are not our thoughts. He's in control and He has the plan. He knows the outcome. He knows it because it's greater. He knows the plan that He has for our lives."

Ivey underwent surgery and was re-evaluated in April 2025. By April 10, he was cleared to resume basketball activities and began a re-conditioning program.

His comeback was perfectly timed, as the Detroit Pistons clinched their first playoff berth since 2019.

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