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Kobus van Niekerk with his family.

Crash course to a new leaf

The thing about drugs, Kobus van Niekerk discovered just after he had his third child, is that you can hide the fact that you're taking them.

They don't leave a lingering smell, like alcohol. They're easy to hide in your pocket, unlike a bottle of whiskey.

Some of them, like Kobus' drugs of choice, keep you awake and alert for your family after punishing 12-hour, six-days-a-week work schedules.

Just a little hit here and there. Nobody needs to know. An addict? No, not you. You're too smart for that.

The lies he told himself worked for 10 years and by 2022, Kobus was a full-blown addict. He also made poor financial choices, like gambling, and was in serious debt.

> **"Anger became a daily part of me."**

"Gambling found its way in," the 40-year-old safety officer told Challenge News. "So did trying to scam and steal from family. I got caught up in pornography, chatting to other women.

"Then came depression. Anger became a daily part of me but I was too proud to ask for help."

Kobus had a happy childhood with parents who loved him and brought him regularly to church.

A big influence on his life was an uncle who would talk to him about Jesus and read the Bible to him, and he gave his life to God when he was 13 during a church camp.

Unfortunately, his family moved a lot during this time and Kobus found it tough to have to keep starting over again and again.

"I had to make new friends almost every year right up to when I started high school," he explained.

"Eventually I made friends but only by becoming a person who was willing to drink, smoke and experiment with drugs.

● Turn to page 2

I FOUND MY WAY HOME

When she entered high school, Aida Macuácua got involved with the wrong crowd. She would go to parties without telling her parents and only returned home the next morning. Her results at school were going downhill and she was nearly expelled for her involvement with gangs.

"I stopped listening to my parents and wanted to move out of home and start living on my own," she tells *Challenge News*. At the time of sharing her story, she was a student at Back to the Bible Mission.

"I would tell my mother, who's a prayer warrior, that even if she prays for me, I will not change.

"Thank God she never gave up."

Aida was born in Maputo City, Mozambique, to a happy family and both her parents were pastors. As a child, she was quiet and obedient to her parents.

"I grew up as a calm, quiet child of few words.

"I remember that my sister could take meat off my plate and I would do nothing."

Aida grew up attending Sunday school regularly with her siblings. But in high school, she made friends with some older kids, who introduced her to a life of bad habits and partying.

"I became disobedient, much too disobedient. I used to lie to my family a lot," she admits.

"I stopped going to church."

Things took a turn when she lost her grandmother, with whom she was close to. "I decided to go to church with my family. I woke up very early. I prepared myself and made breakfast for everybody.

"I wanted to go to church and I didn't know why."

At church, Aida sat at the back. The pastor was preaching on the Prodigal Son, a parable from the Bible about a wayward son who returned home and received forgiveness from his father.

"I cried and cried rivers of tears," Aida recalls.

"I realised that I was lost and that Jesus was calling me back. I was convicted of my sin. I gave my life to God. In that moment I realised I was changed and felt something different in my heart.

Aida Macuácua

Now 23, Aida says since then, her walk with God has been a daily journey of learning and submitting to Him.

"My walk with God has been a day by day lesson, a day by day of learning. The Word of God has been my strength and a light to my path.

"When I am sad, when I am in trouble and even in good moments, the Word of God is my companion."

Aida admits that following God does not come without its challenges. She shares how she struggles to submit to God's will.

"When I read the Bible and I find that the Bible is in contrast with my own thoughts, I have to submit to the Word of God. So I always pray that I will follow God's will.

"I remember a time when I went out with someone and when I asked God if I should continue, the Lord said no.

"It was difficult to accept and obey but I stopped everything."

● Turn to page 3

XHOSA/SHONA/ZULU/ SESOTHO story PAGE 6

Crash course to a new leaf

From page 1

"Eventually I made friends but only by becoming a person who was willing to drink, smoke and experiment with drugs.

"After school, drinking became more than just a social thing – it became a habit and later, a real problem."

He might have continued down the road to self-destruction had it not been for the miracle on September 21, 2021.

Kobus was driving home with his wife when one of his tyres burst. Pulling over, he got out of his vehicle to change the tyre.

Completely focussed on putting the new tyre on, he didn't realise how close he was to the traffic until he felt a "sudden, forceful push against me – as if someone pushed into the door of my car.

"At first I didn't understand what happened. My left side felt numb and I couldn't stand."

Hearing his wife screaming from inside the car – "a sound I will never forget" – he tried to stand but couldn't so he crawled instead to reassure her he was still alive.

When the ambulance arrived, the paramedics expected to find a dead body or at least a very badly injured victim.

Instead what they saw was nothing short of a miracle. Kobus explained: "They said they had never responded to an accident on that particular highway where the victim had survived – or at least didn't need to go into the ICU."

> **"My left side felt numb and I couldn't stand."**

Head-to-toe x-rays, tests and examinations couldn't find a single fracture or internal injury. All he suffered was a friction burn and a scratch on his hip.

It was only when he saw the tyre print on his clothes that he realised what happened – a vehicle had driven over his hip at high speed. He should have needed life-saving surgery; instead he was sent home the same day with ointment.

"I truly believe it was God's hand that kept me safe," Kobus said. "My wife told me she had the urge to call on the name of Jesus when I was changing the tyre. She immediately did that – and that's when I got hit."

Unfortunately, Kobus couldn't escape his collision with drugs as easily and by the following year was undeniably an addict.

He had lost much of his money and was on the brink of losing his family.

"One day, I sat on a rock, overwhelmed with despair, crying out to God for help," he shared.

A friend named Dirk came to mind. Kobus reached out to him and found a kind and kindred spirit who had himself struggled with addiction.

Dirk helped Kobus mend his relationship with his wife and they supported him through a 60-day rehab program.

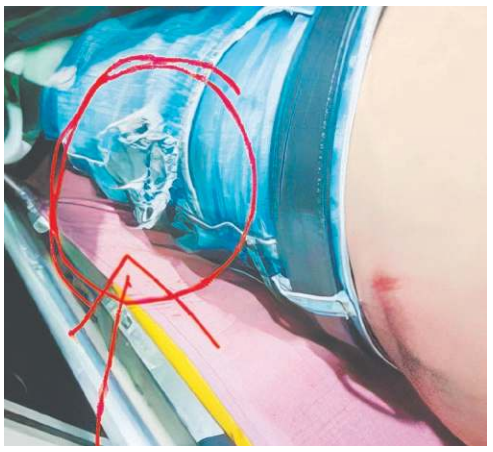
"My wife spoke to our pastor and my parents as well and they all supported me through rehab," said a grateful Kobus.

It was at rehab, where he had time to read his Bible, that Kobus recommitted his life to Christ.

"I found myself drawn to the Word more and more every night.

"That's when I felt a strong conviction – I knew deep down it was time to truly give my heart to God again.

"So I did. It was a quiet moment, just me and God, but it was real and life changing."



Kobus' minor injuries after being run over by a car on a highway.

Apart from one slip after his discharge, Kobus has stayed clean for more than a year.

He credits God and his wife's prayers with his turnaround.

"Her unwavering prayers and trust in God were my anchors through it all.

"Together, we learned the importance of praying for each other daily. A marriage grounded in God is like a three-strand rope – unbreakable."●

Read Challenge News online!

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

1 Waldorf salad fruit
4 Once and once again
7 Gung-ho
9 Upkeep, regular repairs
14 Ain't right?
15 Dispense liquid
16 Can for food
17 Volcanic fallout
19 Have a go at
20 Ciabatta or naan
22 A flu symptom
24 Pool contents
27 Get older
28 "____ we there yet?"
29 Desert sight
30 Europe's "boot"
31 Logbook listings
32 Jettison
33 Card game start

DOWN

1 Fess up
2 Gave temporarily
3 Chow down
4 Jack's inferior
5 Tin foil, e.g.
6 Worth ____ penny
8 Honkers
10 Onstage whisper
11 Road trip lodging
12 "Believe it or ___"
13 Bend; arc
17 Nab
18 US islands state
20 Starts out
21 Made sudden moves
22 Stay above water
23 Flower holders
25 Poke fun at
26 Palace dweller

SOLUTIONS PAGE 7

Smile files...

Green Vine Snake, Costa Rica / gettyimages

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

Dear *Challenge*,

Challenge The Good News Paper helped me to convert my uncle from witch doctors to Christianity. He was suffering from lung cancer and believed that he was bewitched.

He used muthi (traditional medicine) instead of medicine from the hospital, but he became terminally ill and went to the hospital. Doctors cut half of his lungs and treated him with chemotherapy. He could not stand the pain and asked me to ask God to take him.

I read a story of forgiveness in *Challenge* and asked him to forgive himself and his so-called enemies. A week later he recovered fully and has become a Christian.

Thank you very much for giving us knowledge about the love of God.

- Themba Phungwayo

Ask Y: Answers to tough questions about God

QUESTION: HOW CAN ANYONE KNOW FOR SURE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE DIE?

BY PETER MEADOWS

AS THEY SAY, death is a fact of life. And there is no shortage of theories as to what happens then – which seem to fall into three basic categories:

Category 1: The big snuff. Some believe death is simply the end – that it's goodbye and goodnight, with no wake-up call – ever.

Category 2: One more time. This is based on cosmic recycling. Depending on how well you did last time, you'll come back as a cockroach or a king – or something in between.

Category 3: Heaven, here I come. This is a belief that there's an existence we can consciously experience after death. Different cultures call it different things – Heaven, Nirvana, Elysium, the Happy Hunting Ground and so on.

But how can anyone know until we get there – or don't, as the case may be? For me, I'm happy to take the word of the expert on this. The only One who came from heaven and rose from the dead to go there – Jesus.

He left His hearers in no doubt that there is more to life than what we can see, feel, and touch "down here." He spoke of it as being:

A place where He is. To a thief being crucified with Him, Jesus said, "I promise that today you will be with Me in paradise." So "paradise," which is another word for "Heaven," exists and Jesus is there. And there's nothing here about the thief needing to "go round again" with the chance to do a better job next time.

Forever. The picture Jesus used to explain Heaven was of a spacious mansion-style boarding house with many rooms. "I'm going to get things ready for you," He told His followers. And this was so they would always "be together."

A great place to be. Heaven, said Jesus, is the ideal place to store what you treasure – because there are no thieves, moths or decay. Just think how profound that seemingly simple statement is. "No thieves" – which means in the whole of Heaven every single resident will be morally perfect. "No moths" – there will be nothing there to spoil the way things are. "No decay" – everything will stay perfect for ever.

A place for those who have pre-registered. Jesus said that Heaven's a place where the names of its intended residents are written down before they get there – in what He called "the book of life". How do they do it? Like getting into the club on VIP night – it's all in who you know and who you trust to get you in when it really matters. And that is Jesus Himself.

What will it be like? I imagine most people have a secret fear that Heaven will be as exciting as listening to worms sing. But it is going to be like nothing we can ever imagine.

Do we really believe the amazing God – who created creativity – has no more in mind for us than everlasting boredom? As God is there, Heaven must surely be the most exhilarating, mind-blowing, ever-changing, always something-up-His-sleeve place.

We may not be able to picture it, but if the limited environment of Earth keeps throwing up surprises, the potential of Heaven is unimaginable. So just make sure your name is in the book. ●

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.

Finding the fullness of life

From the outside, Tamara Dhilran's family seemed like any normal Indian South African family. Born in the 1980s in Umzinto, her father's job as a diesel mechanic provided enough for the family to live comfortably. Yet, being the oldest of three children, Tamara could see that while they had no lack of financial needs, her family had plenty of spiritual needs.

"My father's pursuit of faith was a search for deliverance. He suffered from major depression and had multiple mental health diagnoses," she tells Challenge News. Tamara is currently a student at Back to the Bible Mission.

Tamara Dhilran

Growing up in a Hindu family, their family life revolved around her father's faith.

Tamara's father sought Hindu priests, Muslim priests and even Sangomas (South African traditional healers) for solutions.

"He took us on a rollercoaster ride of occult practices. We would spend hours, often past midnight, waiting to be seen by these priests.

"As a youth my cry for a normal life was met with more attempts from my father to alleviate his mental distress."

To please her father, Tamara got involved in occult practices and went deep into philosophy, reading from philosophers such as Confucius.

However, Tamara only got more confused. She didn't find the peace she was looking for, and neither did her family.

"In my heart I knew my father's ways were not right. But I did not have a right way in sight."

When Tamara was an adult and married with two children, tragedy struck. She lost her husband, father-in-law and her cousin in a horrible car accident. For the next two years, she was stuck in a deep depression. She was at a crossroad when her friend invited her to church.

It was there that Tamara heard the verse John 10:10 which became the "first words of life" for her: "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I [Jesus] have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." She also received the verse John 14:6: "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'

"For several weeks I would just cry in God's presence, overwhelmed by its newness," she recounts.

"Before having any knowledge of the Word, it was the presence of God, the presence of true love that overwhelmed me. It broke down all barriers of resistance. I felt like the burdens that I had been carrying were being lifted."

Tamara made the decision to commit her life to Jesus. Since then, she has seen her life and the lives of her family members transform.

"As a single mother of two boys, Jesus became our anchor. The God of peace rules in the house of my teenage sons. They are now both planted firmly in the house of God, both serving in the church."

In raising her sons, she takes advice from Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."

These days, Tamara spends quality time with her sons through reading the Bible in the morning and praying with them before bedtime.

"What a stark contrast when I compare the years in my youth to the youth of my sons," she remarks.

"[Talking about Jesus] to my patients as a nurse has now become as natural as eating."

She has also seen God work in the lives of her parents, who are now also Christians and leaders within the church.

"Praise to the Lord Jesus! This is the abundant life." •

I found my way home

● From page 1

But the best part of being a Christian, she reflects, is to "not be afraid of death, to know that I can rely on a gracious and faithful God."

"I overcome my challenges by believing in John 16:33: '*These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*'

"This scripture encourages me and gives me peace that the Lord's victory is mine."

Aida's favourite scripture is 1 Corinthians 2:9: "*But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man. The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.'*"

Finally, Aida hopes to tell others that, "Christ is joy in times of sorrow. Christ is life where there is no life. Christ is everything. Being a Christian is much more than speaking but our lives must show that we serve a living God.

"Come to Jesus and have eternal life." •

Set free by truth

At 17 years old, Keziah Morisson hated her body. Struggling with depression and an eating disorder, she turned to alcohol to find respite. "I was also in a very toxic relationship that almost led to suicide," she told Challenge News.

As a child, Keziah was estranged from her father and lived with her mother and grandmother. Even though she grew up attending church with her family and hearing about who Jesus is, she shared that at the time, she was not interested in Christianity or Jesus.

"At my grandma's house I heard a lot about Jesus but I didn't see God's love because they were constantly talking about how bad my dad was and all I saw was hatred."

In 2025, Keziah was kicked out of her home. So she went to live with her father, who is a pastor. "[My dad] told me about Jesus and answered all my questions. [He] led me through the process of repenting and believing in Jesus. He showed me who Jesus really is. I felt a huge weight lifted off my shoulders and I felt excited to live for the God who saved my life and forgave all my sins [any thought or action that goes against God's will]."

Since then, Keziah saw how her life has changed.

"I stopped cursing and I left my drinking habits behind. I started dressing modestly [because] I love my body more and more every day and I am eating balanced [meals] now.

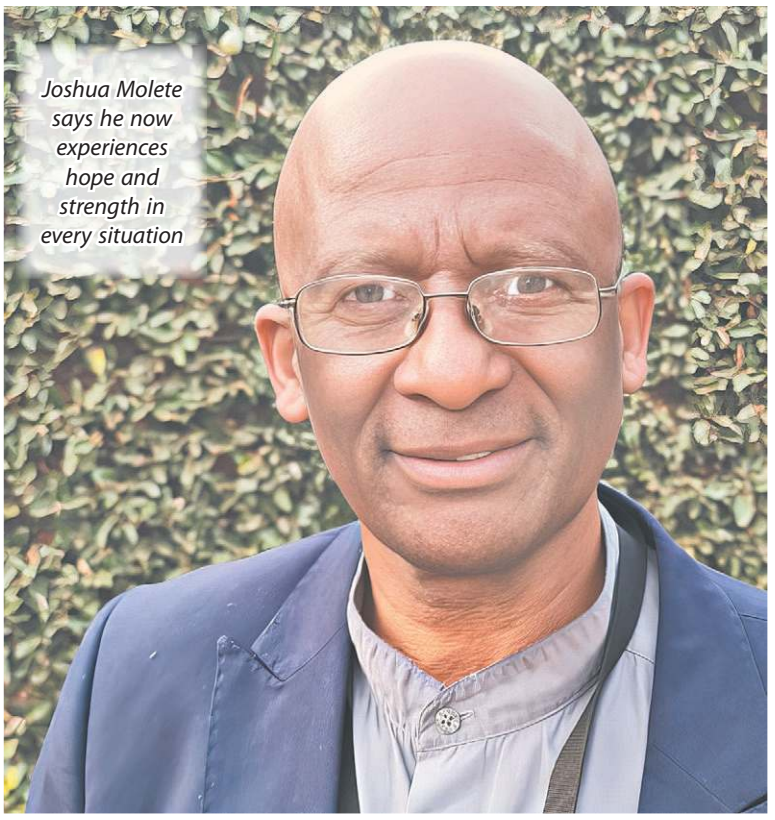
"I overcome challenges through the love I have for Jesus.

"God has been my hope [because] of what He has done for me and how He saved me and protected me from suicide."

Her favourite verse is John 8:32, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

"When you realise who Jesus is and He has done for you," she said. "There is no way you cannot love Him and give your life for Him." •

Keziah Morisson



Joshua Molete says he now experiences hope and strength in every situation

FROM PRIDE TO PEACE

Joshua Molete was as virtuous as they came. He didn't drink or smoke, womanise or gamble. His life was defined by family prayer times and regular church attendance.

"I believed I was living a good life because I kept certain moral standards," he told Challenge News. "I thought I was righteous before the Lord."

Joshua had grown up in a home steeped in Christianity. His father was an elder of their local church and he was happy to take part in all the activities.

Outwardly, he lived the model life but things were different on the inside, which is where Joshua struggled with less than holy feelings of anger, unforgiveness, and dishonesty. He realises this now, saying: "I depended on outward behaviours but inside, I was far from God."

The breakthrough came in the year 2000, in an unexpected way. His elder sister suffered from arthritis, and he often invited pastors to visit and pray for her.

During a home Bible study one evening, the group was praying for her as it always did. The leader read this passage from Isaiah 53:1: "Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

Those words had an instant effect on Joshua. "It was as if God was speaking directly to me and I heard the Gospel for the first time," he recalled. "I realised at that moment that I was not saved. My self-righteousness could not stand before a holy God. I needed forgiveness."

And so on 21 March 2000, at the age of 39, Joshua surrendered his life to Christ. "I repented and received Jesus as my Saviour. Immediately, I felt an overwhelming peace. It was like the heavy weight of my self-reliance and sin was lifted. There was calm, surrender, and freedom.

"It was a huge turning point in my life."

From that day forward, his life looked very different. Pride gave way to humility, and self-reliance to submission. "I felt freedom and release from the bondage of sin and unforgiveness. There was a deep assurance in my heart that I belonged to God," he said.

Instead of trying to know God through rituals and old familiar habits, he pursued a personal relationship. Daily Bible reading and prayer became all-important. "This helped me to stay connected to God."

One of the most significant changes was learning what it meant to live a life of sanctification. He described it as "making conscious choices to obey God's Word and to live according to His principles."

He shared honestly that It hasn't always been easy, but said Christ was his anchor through thick and thin.

"When faced with challenges, I've learned to overcome them by sharing my faith with others," he reflected. "Witnessing is not only for others' sake – it strengthens me too. God is my hope and strength in every situation. He is my guide and comfort, enabling me to live in a way that pleases Him."

The verse that first convicted him – Isaiah 53:1 – remains his favourite scripture to this day.

"It reminds me of the very moment God opened my eyes to my need for salvation. It was His arm revealed to me, His message believed by my heart." •

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English translation

A LIFE REBUILT

BY MARLON PETERSON

My name is Marlon Peterson. I live in Cape Town, South Africa, and I was born in a Christian family.

I made some friends, we started drinking. I got home drunk a lot of the time, and they tried to push me back into get me back into church. I met my first wife in church. We had two kids. Things just didn't go the way it should go. And got divorced after eight years.

My kids, I couldn't see them, so I really I hated life. I hated God. What was he doing? And then I started drinking. Every day I was drinking. I had my own business and I had an accident and I almost killed myself.

God brought me to meet Annalise, my current wife. We started attending church again. That didn't mean that we stopped drinking or going to parties – it just added a new dimension to our lives.

And then she invited me to this dinner. We go and there's this Alpha course [a course that explores the basics of the Christian faith, encouraging open discussion and questions about life, God, and meaning] that was being run there. And in this Alpha course, I meet Jesus, and gave our hearts to the Lord, both of us, and I said, we need to do this again. We need to get more involved with this.

And we ended up doing it in prisons, and there I realized that I want to fill every space of my life up with Jesus.

I said, "Lord, I'm all Yours. You show me where You want me to be." And this is how my life had been changed by Alpha. [At] church you hear someone speaking, but you never get to interact. you never really get to ask the questions that really you want to know. Why is Pastor saying that? Who is Jesus? Alpha creates safe space where you can sit down, speak into these questions and into each other. This is what Alpha brings to the church. It brings a relationship, a hunger to know Jesus and each other for community to socially, come together. •

With friendly permission from Alpha South Africa.

Marlon Peterson

Xhosa translation

HO A HA BOPHELO BO BOTJHA

Lebitso la ka ke Marlon Peterson . ke dula Cape Town , Afrika Borwa, mme ke hlahetse lelapeng la Bakreste.

Ke ile ka etsa metswalle , mme ra qala ho nwa. Hangata ke ne ke fihla hae ke tahilwe, mme lelapa la ka le ne le leka ho ntshosumelletsa hore ke kgutlele kerekeng.

Ke ile ka kopana le mosadi wa ka wa pele kerekeng .Re bile le bana ba babedi .Dintho ha diya ka tsa tsamaya kamoo di neng di lokela ho tsamaya kateng.Mme ra hlalana ka mora dilemo tse robedi.

Ke ne ke sa kgone ho bona bana ba ka ,kahoo ke ne ke hlohile bophelo haholo .Ke ne ke hlohile Modimo . Yaba ke qala ho nwa. Letsatsi le leng le le leng ke ne ke nwa . Ke ne ke e na le kgwebo ya ka mme ka ba le kotsi ya koloi moo ke ileng ka batla ke ipolaya.

Modimo o ile a etsa hore ke kopane le Annalise , mosadi wa ka wa hajwale . Re ile ra qala ho ya kerekeng hape. Seo se ne se sa bolele hore re ile ra emisa ho nwa kapa ho ya mekgatlong ya boithabiso , ho ile ha eketsa feela karolo e ntjha bophelong ba rona. Yaba o memela nna dijong tsena tsa mantsiboya .Re ile ra ya moo, mme ho ne ho e na le thupelo ya Alpha (thupelo e hlahlobang metheo ya tumelo ya Bokreste , e khothalletsang dipuisano tse bulehileng le dipotso mabapi le bophelo , Modimo le moelelo wa bophelo eneng e tswarwa moo . Thupelong ena ya Alpha ,ke ile ka kopana le Jesu , mme ka bobedi ba rona ra nehelana ka dipelo tsa rona ho Morena ,ka re, re hloka ho etsa sena hape. Re hloka ho kenella haholanyane ho sena.

Qetellong re ile ra qala ho etsa diteronkong ,mme moo ke ile ka hlokomela hore ke batla ho tlatsa karolo e ngwe le e ngwe ya bophelo ba ka ka Jesu.

Ka re , Morena , ke wa Hao ka botlalo . O Mpontshe moo o batlang hore ke be teng . Mme ke kamoo bophelo ba ka bo fetotsweng kateng ke Alpha. Kerekeng o utlwa motho a bua , empa ha o fumane monyetla wa ho buisana le yena , ha o fumane monyetla wa ho botsa dipotso tseo o hlileng o batlang ho di tseba . Hobaneng ha Moruti a bua jwalo? Jesu ke mang ? Alpha e theha sebaka se sireletsehileng moo o ka dulang fatshe , wa buisana ka dipotso tsena le ho buisana le ba bang .sena ke seo Alpha e se tlisang kerekeng. E tlisa kamano , takatso ya ho tseba Jesu le ba bang hammoho le moya wa setjhaba ho kopana hammoho. •

Ka tumello e mosa ho tswa ho Alpha South Africa.

Shona translation

Hupenyu hwakavakwazve

Zita rangu ndinonzi Marlon Peterson. Ndinogara kuCape Town, South Africa, uye ndakaberekerwa mumhuri yechiKristu.

Ndakaita shamwari, uye takatanga kunwa doro. Ndaisvika kumba ndakadhakwa nguva zhinji, uye [mhuri yangu] yakaedza kundimanikidza kuti ndidzokere kuchechi. Ndakasangana nemukadzi wangu wekutanga kuchechi. Takava nevana vaviri. Zvinhu hazvina kufamba sezvazvaifanira kufamba. Uye takarambana mushure memakore masere.

> **"Zuva rega rega ndainwa doro."**

Vana vangu, ndaisakwanisa kuvaona, saka ndaivenga hupenyu chaizvo. Ndaivenga Mwari. Aiitei? Uye ndakatanga kunwa doro. Zuva rega rega ndainwa doro. Ndaiva nebhizinesi rangu uye ndakaita tsaona uye ndakapotsa ndazviuraya.

Mwari akandiunza kuzosangana naAnnalize, mudzimai wangu wazvino. Takatanga kupinda kuchechi zvakare. Izvozvo zvaisareva kuti takarega kunwa doro kana kuenda kumapati - zvakangowedzera chimiro chitsva muhupenyu hwedu.

Uye akabva andikoka kukudya kwemanheru uku. Tinoenda uye kune iyi kosi yeAlfa [kosi inoongorora hwaro hwekutenda kwechiKristu, ichikurudzira hurukuro dzakasununguka nemibvunzo pamusoro pehupenyu, Mwari, uye zvazvinoreva] yaiitwa ikoko. Uye mune iyi kosi yeAlfa, ndinosangana naJesu, uye ndakapa moyo yedu kuna Ishe, tese, uye ndakati, tinofanira kuita izvi zvakare. Tinofanira kuwedzera kubatanidzwa neizvi.

Uye takazopedzisira tazviita mumajeri, uye ipapo ndakaona kuti ndinoda kuzadza nzvimbo yese yehupenyu hwangu naJesu.

Ndakati, "Ishe, ndiri wenyu. Ndiratidzei kwamunoda kuti ndive." Uye iyi ndiyo nzira iyo hupenyu hwangu hwakachinjwa naAlfa. [Kuchechi] unonzwa mumwe munhu achitaura, asi haumbofi wakabatana. Haumbofi wakanyatso bvunza mibvunzo yaunoda kuziva. Sei Mufundisi ari kutaura izvozvo? Jesu ndiani? Alpha anogadzira nzvimbo yakachengeteka kwaunogona kugara pasi, kutaura mibvunzo iyi uye kutaurirana. Izvi ndizvo zvinounzwa naAlfa kuchechi. Zvinounza hukama, nzara yekuziva Jesu nemumwe nemumwe uye yenharaunda, yekuungana pamwe chete. •

Nemvumo inobva kuAlpha South Africa.

Sesotho translation

Bophelo bo hahiloeng bocha

Lebitso la ka ke Marlon Peterson. Ke lula Cape Town, Afrika Borwa, 'me ke hlahetse lelapeng la Bakreste.

Ke ile ka etsa metsoalle, ra qala ho noa joala. Hangata ke ne ke fihla hae ke tahiloe, 'me ba leka ho nkhutlisetsa kerekeng. Ke ile ka kopana le mosali oa ka oa pele kerekeng. Re bile le bana ba babeli. Lintho ha lia ka tsa tsamaea kamoo li neng li lokela ho tsamaea kateng. Re ile ra hlalana ka mor'a lilemo tse robeli.

Ke ne ke sa khone ho bona bana ba ka, kahoo ke ne ke hloile bophelo haholo. Ke ne ke hloile Molimo. O ne a etsa'ng? Eaba ke qala ho noa joala. Ke ne ke noa letsatsi le letsatsi. Ke ne ke e-na le khoebo ea ka, 'me ka ba le kotsi moo ke ileng ka batla ke ipolaea.

Molimo o ile a etsa hore ke kopane le Annalise, mosali oa ka oa hajoale. Re ile ra qala ho ea kerekeng hape. Seo se ne se sa bolele hore re ile ra emisa ho noa kapa ho ea mekete – ho ile ha eketsa karolo e ncha bophelong ba rona.

Eaba o memela 'na lijong tsena tsa mantsiboea. Re ile ra ea moo, 'me ho ne ho tšoaroa thupelo ea Alpha [thupelo e hlahlobang metheo ea tumelo ea Bokreste, e khothalletsang lipuisano tse bulehileng le lipotso mabapi le bophelo, Molimo le moelelo oa bophelo]. Thupelong ena ea Alpha, ke ile ka kopana le Jesu, 'me ka bobeli ra nehelana ka lipelo tsa rona ho Morena; ka re, re hloka ho etsa sena hape. Re hloka ho kenella haholoanyane ho sena.

Qetellong re ile ra qala ho e etsa literonkong, 'me moo ke ile ka hlokomela hore ke batla ho tlatsa karolo e 'ngoe le e 'ngoe ea bophelo ba ka ka Jesu.

Ke ile ka re, "Morena, ke oa Hao ka botlalo. Mpontše moo U batlang hore ke be teng." 'Me ke kamoo bophelo ba ka bo ileng ba fetoloa kateng ke Alpha. Kerekeng u utloa motho a bua, empa ha u fumane monyetla oa ho buisana le eena; ha u fumane monyetla oa ho botsa lipotso tseo u hlileng u batlang ho li tseba. Hobaneng ha Moruti a bua joalo? Jesu ke mang? Alpha e theha sebaka se sireletsehileng moo u ka lulang fatše, ua buisana ka lipotso tsena le batho ba bang. Sena ke seo Alpha e se tlisang kerekeng. E tlisa kamano, takatso ea ho tseba Jesu le ba bang, le ho kopana ha sechaba hammoho. •

Ka tumello e mosa ea Alpha South Africa.

Zulu translation

Impilo eyakhiwa kabusha

Igama lami ngingu Marlon Petersen ozalwa eCape Town; South Africa, emndenini okholwayo.

Ngaba nabangani, saqala ukuphuza, ngangihlala ngibuya ekhaya ngiphuzile esikhathini esiningi, kodwa [umndeni wami] wazama ukungibuyisela esontweni.

Ngahlangana nonkosikazi wami wokuqala esontweni, saba nabantwana ababili. Izinto azihambanga ngendlela okwakufanele zihambe ngayo sahlukana emva kweminyaka ewu 8.

Abantwana bami, ngangingababoni, ngazonda impilo. Ngazonda noNkulunkulu. Wayenzani ngempela? Ngase ngiqhubeka nokuphuza, ngaphuza kakhulu. Nganginebhizinisi ngaba nengozi ngacishe ngazibulala.

UNkulunkulu wangihlanganisa no Anelissa unkosikazi wami wamanje, saqala ukuya esontweni sobabili. Lokho akusho ukuthi sayekela ukuphuza nokuya emaphathini, saphakamisa izinga kuphela.

Wangimemela esidlweni santambama. Uma sifika kwakune Alpha course [loloqeqesho lumayelana nezisekelo zobuKrestu, zikhuthaza ukuvula isifuba, nemibuzo ngempilo, nangoNkulunkulu, nencazelo] eyaqhutshwa lapho. Kuyona le Alpha course, ngahlangana noJesu, sanikela impilo zethu kuYena, sobabili, ngase ngithi siyayidinga futhi, sidinga ukuqhubeka nayo.

Sigcine sesiyenza nasemajele, ilapho ngabona ukuthi ngidinga ukumnika konke uJesu.

Ngathi "Nkosi ngingowakho, ngikhombise ukuthi ungifuna kuphi". Impilo yami yaguqulwa kanjalo i Alpha. Esontweni uzwa umuntu ekhuluma, kodwa awukwazi ukubuza lutho. Kungani umfundisi ekhuluma kanjena? Ubani uJesu? I Alpha idala indawo ephephile, lapho nikwazi ukubuza lemibuzo khona, nikhulumisane. Ilokho i Alpha ekuletha esontweni. Iletha ubudlelwano, nendlala yokwazi uJesu nomphakathi, nibumbane. •

Ivunyelwe Ngabakwa-Alpha South Africa

WHAT BRAIN SCANS CAN'T EXPLAIN

BY DRS CARL WIELAND AND DON BATTEN

When neuroscientist Dr Peter Line explained the intricacies of his scientific field, the human brain, his quiet passion was infectious.

"Around 100 billion neurons [nerve cells], each connecting to about a thousand others – that's about 100 trillion connections," he said.

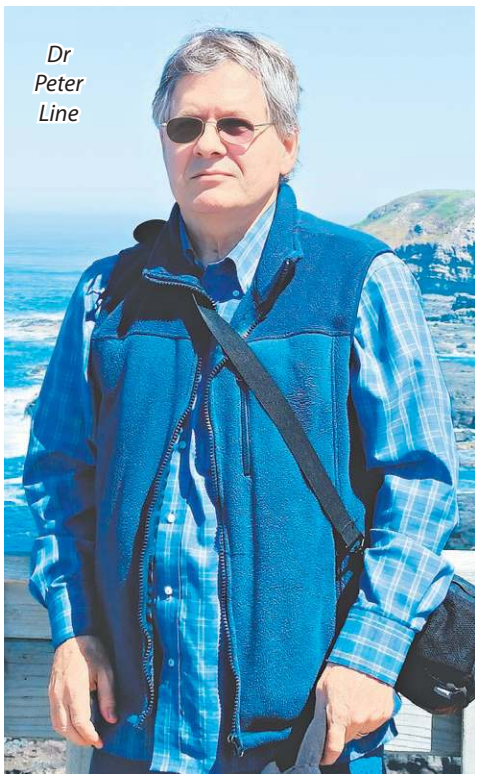
"And then there are other components, playing many different roles – the complexity is enormous."

Peter explained that the brain is quite unlike a computer, and is far more complex.

"For instance, if you knock out a portion of a computer's circuitry, the whole thing malfunctions. But the brain has a lot of built-in redundancy – if part of it is damaged, other parts can usually take over some of the function.

"There are still many specifics we don't understand. How, for instance, does this transmission of nerve signals enable thinking? And how can that then lead to consciousness?"

As he is a Christian, we asked Peter what he thought of research about a "God spot" in the brain, that allegedly makes people believe in God?


Dr Peter Line

"Scientifically, the whole notion is quite laughable, really", Peter said. "We can see which part of the brain 'lights up' in various situations... but that does not mean that there is a place in the brain set aside for religious experience, such as a 'God spot'. "Although brain regions may 'light up' due to neuronal activity, we just do not know what this means in terms of enabling a person to think."

Although he had what he called "some mild religious instruction" as a child, Peter said, "I used to take evolution for granted, because that is what society conditions you to believe, although my knowledge about evolution was really no better than my poor knowledge of the Bible.

"I wrestled with the idea of God. Any belief system that could interest me had to be true – I didn't want to waste my life believing in a false God, a false religion."

Peter was a keen triathlete, even competing successfully in Ironman events, but found that they didn't satisfy him.

"I knew deep down that I was a sinner," he said, "but I didn't know whether heaven or hell – or God – were real. I thought I would just hope for the best if I died.

"I realised early on, though, that the idea of God creating Adam from the dust, and the idea we descended from apes, were mutually exclusive."

One day, when pondering this, Peter told God, "if You really are there, God, then You have the power to solve this problem for me."

Months later, and after having commenced a university degree, he attended a film lecture by the late triple-doctorate scientist, Dr Arthur Wilder-Smith.

He said, "I thought I was going to hear an evolutionist, but he was giving evidence against evolution. I was taken by complete surprise, but what he said really made sense with what I knew about science. I felt a sense of relief – there is a God. I became a creationist in my heart right then, and I felt that this must be why Christians have that strong faith."

A few months after his intellectual conversion to creation, Peter decided to personally put his trust in Jesus Christ, convinced that Jesus is the Creator and Lord of all, who sacrificed His life on the cross to pay for the sins of any who would believe in Him, and then rose again three days later.

In recent years, Peter chose to develop a specialised interest in "ape-man" claims because, he said, "People get intimidated by all of this continual propaganda on 'human evolution.'"

Peter argued that Neanderthals, Homo erectus, and the tiny "Hobbit" fossils from the Indonesian island of Flores, are examples of descendants of Adam exhibiting human variation, such as the larger than average brains of Neanderthals.

"An increasing number of researchers are now suggesting that some form of microcephaly in pygmy humans is the likely explanation for the anatomy of the Hobbit," Peter said.

Specimens like the australopithecines (e.g. 'Lucy') are, for Dr Line, examples of extinct primates that had nothing to do with human ancestry, as even some evolutionists concede.

He said, "If someone finds a supposed link between two pigs, it makes no splash, but the slightest bit of variation in some teeth of what is supposed to be in the human line, and, wow – it's almost like ancestor worship. It's really quite scientifically irresponsible. And the saddest thing is that it keeps many people from trusting the Bible, and thus coming to know Jesus Christ.

"Christians have nothing to fear from these discoveries," Peter concluded. "None will turn out to be real 'ape-men', because God made Adam from the dust of the ground, not from an ape, and Eve from Adam's side. We were specially created – in the image of God." •

Edited article is courtesy of Creation Ministries International.

Homo erectus composite skull Peking Man.

DR PETER LINE (B. App. Sc., M.App.Sc., Ph.D.) specialises in the electrophysiology of the brain. He currently lectures in cellular biophysics and neuroanatomy at an Australian university. Authors Carl Wieland and Don Batten hold doctorates in medicine and plant physiology respectively.

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 :

I have prayed the prayer [ABOVE] ☐

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

** 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

Want to explore more?

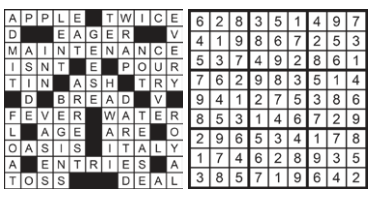
Here are some **free**, helpful, Christian online resources

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**
YMI - Christian news outlet for young adults with devotionals and resources. **ymi.today**	**NEED PRAYER ?**
More inspiring faith stories - **back issues of Challenge News at challengenews.online**	**Let us pray for you!** Phone toll-free: 0801 229 015 WhatsApp: 079 375 3345 Visit: needprayer.co.za

Cleansed from within

"I am a born-again Christian. I pray a lot, trusting God who saved me when I was a school child. God cleansed me from the bad things I used to do."

– Baby Beauty Magagula



FOOTBALLERS OF FAITH

England and France players pray together after the FIFA World Cup 2026 Bronze Final. (Photo by Buda Mendes/Getty Images)

"The beautiful game" is what football legend Pelé called the sport, celebrating the skill, creativity and joy found on the pitch. At the 2026 World Cup, that beauty was seen not only in spectacular goals and unforgettable moments, but also in the faith of players who used their global platform to honour Jesus Christ. Across the tournament, Christian footballers shared their faith through prayer, Bible verses, and acts of humility and gratitude. Their stories show that football is about more than trophies and results — it can also be a platform to point people towards hope, purpose and the One they follow. These are some of the players whose faith was on show during football's biggest tournament.

Sweden

Sweden's Anthony Elanga kept his Bible with him as part of his daily routine, saying: "The Bible gives me patience. It helps me if I'm not playing. Whether I get to play or not doesn't really matter. Both on and off the pitch it gives me security and peace."

Brazil

Player Danilos Santos was photographed openly praying on the field while young striker Endrick openly discussed his post-match prayers thanking God despite their elimination.

Athletes sometimes carry good luck charms with them but Endrick's hopes rest on God – he carries his Bible into the stadium.

Goalkeepers Alisson Becker and Ederson Santana de Moraes are extremely vocal and open about their faith in Christ. Alisson's social media bio is set to John 3:16.

Ederson plays with an "I belong to Jesus" tattoo on his chest.

After his late call-up to the 2026 World Cup squad, he posted "God's plan is always greater than mine" on Instagram.

Danilo Santos of Brazil prays during the round 6 match between Brazil and Norway. (Photo by Daniela Porcelli/Getty Images)

Ghana

In a social media video, forward Antoine Semenyo said that representing Ghana was a huge honour, but "representing God is everything", before reminding viewers that "[Jesus] is going to be returning soon."

Germany

After defeating Curaçao 7-1, German players Jonathan Tah and Felix Nmecha walked over to their opponents to form a joint prayer circle. German players also joined Ecuador in prayer after their match.

German midfielder Felix Nmecha explained: "During the game we are opponents, but after the game, we are all Christians. We are all brothers.... In our faith, we all believe that Jesus is glorified through the game and that's why we came together and simply prayed together."

During the game, Felix Nmecha knelt on one knee and performed the "crown down" gesture, in which he lifted an imaginary crown from his head and put it on the group, symbolising that all glory belongs to Jesus Christ and not to him.

In a postgame interview, he said: "All the glory I give to God, because He is the one who has given me this talent and the opportunity to be here living this dream."

Spain

Team manager Luis de la Fuente said he relied on God daily and prayed daily. He said he didn't pray for specific match results, as he believes it would be unfair to ask God to favour his team over an opponent. "There are not just one, but thousands of reasons why God exists," he said. "Without God, nothing in life has meaning."

England

Nicknamed the "God Squad" by some commentators. Bukayo Saka, Marc Guéhi, and Ivan Toney have frequently prayed together before matches, with players writing "Jesus loves you" on gear and pointing to the sky. Following a dramatic 3-2 win over Mexico that saw England progress to the quarter finals, defender Marc Guehi dropped to his knees and prayed. He often posts "Thank You Jesus" after key matches and writes Bible verses on his boots. Winger Bukayo Saka has always put his faith in God front and centre. Together with teammates Marc Guéhi and Eberechi Eze (dubbed the "Bible brothers"), Bukayo is seen praying regularly and lifting his hands in thankfulness to God after scoring. He told Eden Christian Books that he reads his Bible every night "and it gives me peace... I can go on the pitch and know that God has my back."

One of the most touching moments happened after the match for third place between England and France. After the game, which England won 6-4, seven players from both teams (Dayot Upamecano, Bukayo Saka, Maxence Lacroix, Eberechi Eze, Marc Guehi, Jean-Philippe Mateta, and Trevoh Chalobah) put their arms around each other and prayed in a beautiful show of Christian brotherhood. The moment was shared by many global news organisations and all over social media.

Well-known British broadcaster and journalist Dan Walker wrote in a Facebook post: "This is such a beautiful moment from the World Cup. Seven men, from two rivals... praying together at the end of their journey this summer. Opponents on the pitch... together in their faith."

Ecuador

Following its 2-1 historic victory over Germany, several players and staff dropped to their knees.

Midfielder Moises Caicedo led a post-match circle of thanksgiving. The team also posted videos of their regular hotel room Bible studies.

Curaçao

Curaçao, the tiniest country ever to qualify for a World Cup, turned the tournament into their personal pulpit. Before leaving for the World Cup, the team held a meeting with Presence Revival, a ministry based in the Netherlands. Videos of the team singing Jireh and Goodness of God circulated across social media. Forward Kenji Gorre said: "People are dealing with serious things, and one thing that I know to be true is that Jesus is the one who can really fill you."

He also declared: "Without Jesus we are nothing" and that he plays for an "audience of one".

Argentina

Legendary forward Lionel Messi publicly thanked God after beating Algeria. "I can't ask for anything more than everything I've already received," he said.

"God has truly spoiled me. I thank God that He has given me so much and everything that comes now is a blessing". Enzo Fernandez has always been open about his faith, often posting Bible-based messages and expressions of gratitude and identifying himself as a "child of God" on social media.

After scoring Argentina's dramatic winning goal against Egypt during the 2026 FIFA World Cup, he said: "I thank God. I feel privileged. All glory to God."

The United States

The US national team has been one of the most vocal about their faith. Led by defender Mark McKenzie, the team routinely forms prayer circles on the pitch.

Its displays of faith have been so visible that *The Guardian* newspaper dedicated a whole article to the extraordinary contrast between the lack of public displays of faith at previous World Cups and this men's team, who can't seem to stop sharing about God.

Winger Christian Pulisic (aka Captain America) famously shared photos of the team's prayer circle, noting his reliance on God for strength.

Following a match against Belgium, US players also joined Belgian players Jérémy Doku and Dodi Lukebakio to pray together.

Christian Pulisic also organised daily team gatherings that he called "Bible Time," where teammates sit together to read Scripture. He also wears a cross necklace given to him by his mother.

In a profile by storiesofrevival on Instagram, he shared his consistent reliance on God under tournament pressure: "I've had to continue to prove myself over and over again, but, as always, I reach out to God and He gives me strength."

Defender Mark MacKenzie also leading the team in a prayer of thanks after they progressed into the last 16. •

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