

Faith on the force

BY MICHAEL ASHCRAFT

Gruesome crimes that cannot be “unseen” can weigh down on and break the heart of police officers who got into law enforcement with enthusiasm and idealism.

Paul Lee, executive director of the Fellowship of Christian Peace Officers (FCPO) says the men and women in blue turn to anger, alcohol and divorce at higher frequencies than almost any other group in society.

Police have a divorce rate of 75% and a domestic abuse rate of 40%, the FCPO website says.

Lee says that what cops need to counteract the incredible stress they are under is a “biblical mindset”. Raised in church, Lee walk away from faith as a youngster and began working in law enforcement.

After years of apprehending criminals and witnessing unimaginable monstrosities on the cruel streets, Lee descended into an abyss of anger, distrustful cynicism and heavy drinking.

He divorced his wife.

“Being a police officer and seeing all the evil and trying to deal with that evil in my own strength, I had become calloused,” he remembers. “I felt nothing. I hated everybody. Nobody told you the truth.”

When Lee’s mother died, he thought over his life. In the shower before her funeral, Lee remembered her dedication to Christ and reflected on his own waywardness.

“I knew the life I was living was totally wrong. I had faulted God for 20 years. But the death of my mother totally broke me and brought me to the lowest point in my life.” Lee says. “My life was passing before my eyes like a bad B-movie. I was crying uncontrollably.”

In the shower, Lee said three things to the Lord: “I give up. I surrender. I throw in the towel.”

Those phrases weighed with extra meaning to him as a cop. “I had plenty of people give up to me. I was a cop,” he says. “I have many people surrender to me. They gave up control. They sat where I told them to sit. They stood where I told them to stand.”

“Throwing in the towel” was a boxing term that coaches use to save their boxers who refuse to give up but are being beaten so badly they might die.

“I was so beaten by the world,” he says. “I couldn’t take another punch.”

So Lee accepted Jesus into his heart in 1995 — after 17 years of handling the stress of police work in his own strength. He immediately joined the Chattanooga chapter of FCPO and was hooked up to their Bible studies and discipleship sup-



FCPO members praying with community members. Right: Paul Lee

port group.

Almost immediately, his outlook on life and police work changed. He worked the streets with renewed vigor and optimism, with the mentality of representing Christ to the people who never knew Him.

Lee and his brothers started a one-year Bible reading program. Twenty-three years later, he has read the Bible 23 times. What he saw in scriptures, he applied immediately to police work.

“What I found in the Bible was kind of shocking. There wasn’t an

exception clause for law enforcement officers,” Lee says. “As a matter of fact, we have to do it cleaner and better than others. We are the hands and feet of Christ. We might be the only ‘Christ’ people see in their lives.”

Policing the streets with a Biblical mindset is better than any other, he says. Without Christ, cops may take home too many burdens from the job. Or they might not process well the hate of politicians or lawbreakers, like those in New York who recently held a vandalizing protest

called “F—the police!”

“If you have the scriptures behind you and you have a firm foundation, then you know that lost people are acting like lost people,” Lee says. “Today we have lost people and lost cops out on the streets clashing and acting like lost people while Satan claps his hands together with glee.”



The cop, Lee says, is only an agent of enforcement, a tool in the hands of a loving and correcting Lord. God doesn’t expect the cop to shoulder the burden of the trials he is subjected to each day.

“In my lostness, my solution was to start drinking heavily” before getting saved, he says. “The feeling of aloneness and loneliness and that nobody really cares. With a Biblical mindset, you realize that God has put you there for His purposes, to carry out His mission, whatever that might be.”

The FCPO’s 250 local chapters reach out to the nation’s 1.1 million police officers with the Gospel from a perspective that cops can understand. This non-profit also aids cops with PTSD.

The FCPO sponsors cops to attend marriage retreats. They also run sporting events and barbecues to bring the gospel to unsaved buddies.

“We’re on the mission field,” Lee says. “You

don’t have to beat people over the head with the Bible. You just keep the compassion of Christ. Your purpose is far greater than just throwing somebody in jail.”

This article is from godreports.com and is used with kind permission. Michael Ashcraft teaches journalism at the Lighthouse Christian Academy in Santa Monica.

Infinite variety and you

BY JODY BENNETT

ONE of the wonderful things I love about God is that He is a God of infinite creativity and variety. Look at the world He has made; all the thousands of zebras, giraffe and tigers, and not one of them has the same markings as any other. Think of all the human beings who have ever lived, and not one of us has the same fingerprints or iris design. Even every single one of billions and billions of snowflakes or stars is unique! Look at leaves. There are so many varieties of shapes and sizes and variations of color in them. And yet they are all distinct in their species so that we can know an oak leaf from a fig leaf or a palm leaf anywhere. Did you know that there are 26 different species of flea on one stoat?!

(Incidentally I think this is a good argument for creation over evolution, since the forces of nature, had they been able to create one working design for a creature, would have replicated it like clones, and not had any reason to individualise each one.)

In this paper you will read the stories of people who



have come to know Jesus personally and you may think that coming to Christ means that God will take away your individuality and make you boring. That all Christians dress the same, or act the same. But God doesn’t make cookie-cutter Christians — Christians come in as many varieties as grains of sand. Rocker Alice Cooper on page 9 is a very different sort of Christian to the ex-Muslim on page 3, or the paralympian on page 12. When we become Christians God doesn’t erase our uniqueness but enhances it, since He is the one who made us unique in the first place! He doesn’t wipe our past out of existence, but reshapes and heals our experiences, the good and the bad, to make us into a beautiful masterpiece reflecting His glory. Each of us has a special aspect of the Creator that we can display to the world through our lives.

Just as there are so many variations in human beings in terms of skin color, facial features, body shape and hair texture, so there are a beautiful rainbow of differences in the people who follow God.

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Fun for Kids
Pages 5, 6 & 7

BACK PAGE

WHEN YOU JUST CAN'T
JESSICA LONG

I wanted a faith that made things happen!

At 15 years old, Swiss-born David Ohin believed there was a God somewhere behind the clouds, but he couldn't understand why God never answered his prayers.

David attended the local Catholic Church religiously for a while but gave up because "nothing happened". Every week he confessed his sins and then went out and did the same things again!

Then he met true Christ followers and realized "That's what I want! That's real! These guys have got something that I need."

A bit later he heard a missionary speaking about the difference between life with God and life lived without God, and David knew immediately that he was religious but had no relationship with God, which was what he desperately wanted.

From reading the Bible, he saw that the thing that stood in the way of that relationship was his sin. As Isaiah 59:2 says: But your iniquities have separated you from your God,

and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

David says he knew he was a sinner, no one had to tell him that! However, he also knew that coming to God would mean obeying God, including in what he did as a career.

"I had to choose between God and my athletic aspirations to be a long jump and 100m sprint Olympian. No one told me, but I knew athletics was my god and I had to choose which god to follow."

For about three months he felt torn in two by this mighty internal struggle, until it came to a head one night during a dance party of all things!

"It was about 4am, I was just sitting on a chair when I felt the spirit of God come upon me. In that moment I just wanted to get saved!" he exclaims. "Right there I wanted to get right with God."

Two days later, on Christmas Eve

I WAS LIKE A DRUG ADDICT SET FREE.



1990, David contacted a pastor he knew and asked him if he could come to his house to pray with him and give his life to Jesus.

In preparation, David had written down a list of all the sins he could ever remember committing. "It was a long list!" he admits.

With the pastor, David got down on his knees and prayed, "Jesus please save me! Come into my life, forgive my sin. I want to follow You. I want to surrender my life to You."

Immediately he felt like a heavy burden fell from his shoulders. God's presence filled the room and his heart was flooded with peace. David said he felt so happy and free that he took the list of his sins and threw it in the hearth fire,

knowing that God had forgiven every one of them through the sacrificial atoning death of Jesus on the cross.

"Some people say the Christian faith is a crutch, but I didn't need one," David says. "Everything was going well for me. I was a good athlete, school was going well, I had great parents. Life was good!"

"But the day I gave my life to Jesus was the day my life really started. I lost all desire for athletics instantly. I was like a drug addict set free. And I never, ever regretted it for one minute."

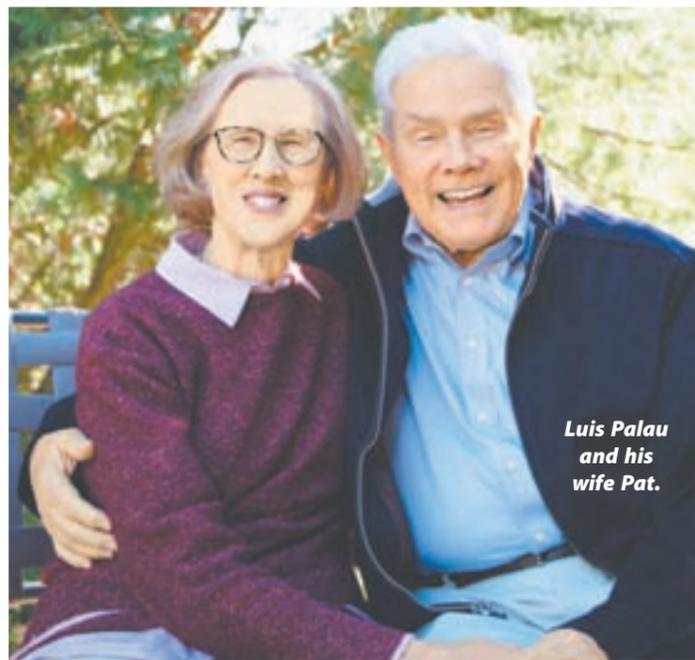
The transformation in David was so profound that within days his mother and brother also became Christians, followed by his school friend. About four months later, David's dad realized that the changes in his family were real and also gave his life to God. David's dad was radically changed, instantly giving up smoking and witchcraft, and today he is a missionary in Togo, West Africa.

One of the sins on David's list had been shoplifting. When he became a Christian, God impressed upon him that he needed to go to each of those shops and pay for what he had stolen. God even helped him to remember each item, how much it had cost and where he had lifted it from. This was an embarrassing and expensive exercise but David knew he had to obey.

After saving up the money, he went to pay for the stolen items. "When I walked out of each shop, after paying, the peace of God filled me. And after the final one, I was the happiest human being on the planet! I thought, 'If Jesus comes back now, I'm ready!'"

Today David and his wife Donna live in England and run Global Alive Ministries, which they founded to share the good news of Jesus with others through seminars and crusades.

"God is so real! God can transform lives. It is so exciting to live with God! I tell you it is the most exciting life there can be!" David declares.



Luis Palau and his wife Pat.

The Billy Graham of Latin America

Luis Palau was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, the eldest of seven siblings. When his construction worker father was killed in 1944, the family found themselves nearly destitute due to poor financial management.

Luis, at 10, had to leave school and become the bread winner.

From such humble beginnings though, the good looking young man went on to international prominence, becoming known as 'the Billy Graham of Latin America' and touching the lives of hundreds of millions with the good news about Jesus.

Luis died recently of lung cancer, on March 11, aged 86.

The enthusiastic and funny preacher was raised Catholic until age 12, when he came under the teaching of missionaries who explained to him that Christianity was more than rituals and service, but a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

In his early 20s he went with his mother's blessing to Bible College in Portland, Oregon, where he met his wife Patricia Scofield and later became life-long friends with evangelist Billy Graham.

Luis served as Graham's Spanish interpreter for several evangelistic campaigns before beginning his

own revival meetings. In his 60+-year ministry, it is estimated that he preached to about a billion people in 75 countries, including all over Latin America and in the USSR. Not to mention those reached on TV, the internet and radio.

He also wrote many books about faith, including *God is Relevant*, *¿Con quién me casaré?* (*Whom Shall I Marry?*), *Where is God When Bad Things Happen?* and *Say Yes!*, which have been translated into dozens of languages and distributed to the hundreds of thousands.

His organization, the Luis Palau Evangelical Association, was also involved in philanthropy work, sprucing up local public schools and addressing the problem of homelessness in Portland.

Unlike many well-known preachers, Luis' life was lived with integrity, but he says of his life, "Don't look at me, I'm a bad example; look to Jesus Christ. He is the best!"

Diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer in late 2017, he outlived his initial prognosis by two years. In his last years he published a memoir *Palau: A Life on Fire*, and allowed his life to be portrayed in a 2019 film *Palau: The movie*.

In his final days, the father of four, who was known for his humility and passion for Jesus, was placed in hospice care and his son Andrew was scheduled to lead a major evangelistic event in Florida. Knowing that he might die while Andrew was away, Luis told his son: "Go, Andrew. We've said all we need to say. No regrets. Pure joy. Now don't let me get in the way of you preaching the Good News!" Two thousand people made a decision to follow Jesus that weekend.

Colleague Jim Denison wrote: "Luis was one of the most joyful, vibrant, courageous Christians I have ever known. He once encouraged us: 'Don't pray for an easier life. Pray instead to be a stronger man or woman of God.'"

Luis leaves behind Pat, his wife of 60 years and four sons, together with their families.

"I hope my boys will put on my tomb something like 'My father wasn't perfect but he sure loved Jesus Christ' – something like that. I'll see you in heaven." Luis told CBN.



David sharing his faith on the street.

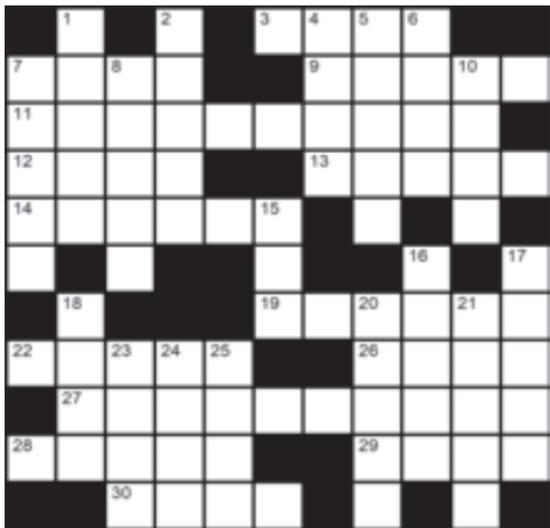
Coffee Break CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

ACROSS

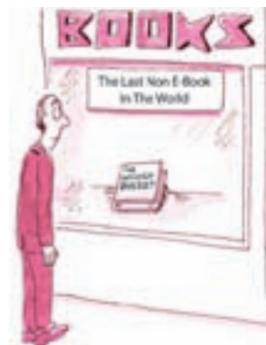
- 3 Go without (meals)
- 7 Trunk, torso
- 9 Battery terminal
- 11 Catastrophic destruction
- 12 Unload, as stock
- 13 Exterior
- 14 Small islands
- 19 Free (from)
- 22 Prophet in a fish
- 26 Wind instrument
- 27 Miner's lamp (6,4)
- 28 Long (for)
- 29 Lamenting word
- 30 Like a busybody

DOWN

- 1 Aspirations
- 2 Bike around
- 4 Fight stopping event
- 5 Contribution to discussion
- 6 Stake for a sign
- 7 Plain, no frills
- 8 Barbie & Ken
- 10 Not shallow
- 15 Hit the slopes
- 16 Like a hose
- 17 Precursors of Humvees
- 18 Flower on valentines
- 20 Back tooth
- 21 Bedouin, historically
- 23 Indian bread
- 24 Bushy hairdo
- 25 Coop group



SOLUTIONS PAGE 11



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Infinite variety & you

From page 1 When I was a teenager I thought that if I gave myself fully to God He would send me as a single missionary into a poor, remote place. That is what I thought all true God-followers did. What did He do instead? He fulfilled my deep longing for a husband and children and helped me use my natural talents, studies and personal experiences to bring Him glory in ways that also bring me more joy than I could have imagined.

Rest assured that if you turn your life over to God, your individuality will not be erased. You become a new creation in Christ but that new you is still you. God wants all sorts of Christians – intellectual ones and practical ones, dreamers and rule followers, extroverts and introverts, laughers and criers, the impetuous and the fearful, those who like ritual and those who like spontaneity. All people from all backgrounds and histories and abilities, carrying all sorts of burdens and sins, are all invited to find their true selves in relationship with Jesus Christ, who redeems us from our pasts and gives us a purpose and an eternal future with Him.



Some of the variety of leaf shapes in the world.

Prostitute discovers new purity

BY BEN LAHOOD

Annie Lobert was raised in Minneapolis. Her alcoholic father was relentlessly harsh toward her, so when the boys paid her compliments in high school, she swooned. Her high school sweetheart talked of forming a family, but then she found out he was cheating.

"I completely took my entire heart and gave it to this boy and when I found out that he was sleeping with several of my best girlfriends, it was such a shock to me."

Annie moved out on graduation day. She was working three jobs to make ends meet, so when a friend told her she had a Corvette in Waikiki and a lavish lifestyle spending days on the beach, Annie agreed to visit.

"I knew something wasn't right, but the lure of the possibility of having nice things and finally having money that I never had growing up" was too much to resist, she says.

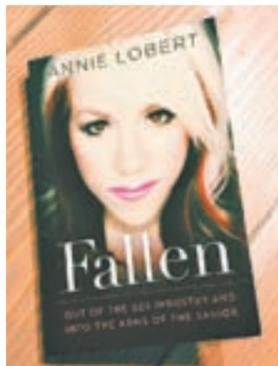
Her friend was prostituting herself, and Annie joined her.

"I became a different person, a harlot, the Queen of Lies," she says. "I was embraced by the devil and his false love."

At first the money was good, really good: between \$1,000 and \$10,000. But later she fell for a sweet-talking guy who took her to Las Vegas.

After she arrived she discovered her "boyfriend" was actually a pimp. She now had to work for him under threat of death.

After a day of working, she came home with a wad. "Break yourself," he told her, meaning that she must hand over all the



money to him. This was very different from his charming demeanour earlier, so she resisted.

"He proceeded to take me out by my hair," she remembers on an I am Second video. "He choked me. He threw me on the porch on my knees and he started kicking me. My nose broke. My ribs broke.

"I was looking at the devil." He raped her, held a gun to her head and let her know she would never escape alive.

After five years, she managed to get free.

"You'll leave the money, the cars, the houses all behind, because when you leave a pimp, you leave with nothing," she says.

Annie wasn't as young anymore, so the money wasn't as good. She developed cancer and lost all her hair undergoing chemotherapy.

She started taking painkillers for bone pain and became addicted. From there, she went on to cocaine. She was wearing wigs and staying in seedy motels. Feeling debased and dirty, she decided one night

to end it all with an overdose of freebase cocaine

"I went completely blind," she recalls. "It's like the whole room, the light that was on in that room turned dark, and I remember laying there. And I felt this demonic presence just come over me. I got really really scared and I just instinctively knew I was at death's door."

Her own funeral flashed in front of her eyes. People were crying. "She was just a prostitute," they said.

As she was slipping into death, Annie suddenly regretted her attempt at suicide. She cried out to God. "Jesus, please save me. I don't know if you are real, but I don't want to die."

An ambulance picked her up and a doctor told her she was lucky to be alive.

"Little lady, you should be dead," he told her. "God must be with you."

"I knew that Jesus heard my prayer and I laid there," Annie says. "And I had this peace come over me that was nothing like I had ever felt in my entire life, and I knew God gave me a second chance."

As she recovered in the hospital, Annie read her Bible. She

dared to attend church when she got out. She was surprised that nobody judged her.

As she read her Bible it transformed her self-concept. "God the Holy Spirit was just like speaking to me telling me that I was beautiful, that I was chosen, that I was set apart and I was a holy vessel for Him. I started to stand on Jesus's words that I'm home, that I'm healed, that I'm pure, that I'm a virgin in him, and that gives me peace."

An ex-client gave her a job at an auto body and design firm.

Then God called her back to the Strip.

"I want you to go back down to that strip," he told her. "I want you to tell the girls that are in slavery, that I love them. God loves you, no matter where you are, no matter what you've done, no matter how deep, how dirty you feel, there is hope of a new life. You can be made white as snow, if you accept him into your heart."

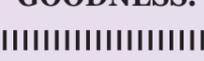
In 2005, she founded Hookers for Jesus outreach and opened a transition home called Destiny House for victims of sex trafficking.

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NO MATTER ... HOW DIRTY YOU FEEL, THERE IS HOPE OF A NEW LIFE.



GOD LOVES US IN SPITE OF OUR LACK OF GOODNESS.



From abuse and shame to freedom

Aishah's father had been an alcoholic for as long as she could remember. Her earliest memory of him was being spat at and kicked to the ground, being called names no five-year-old should hear.

When things deteriorated further, Aishah's mother, an American, feared for their lives so much she persuaded her husband to allow her to leave Jordan and return to the US on the pretext of improving Aishah's English.

"We moved in 2000. Dad would come and visit but his alcoholism just got worse and worse," Aishah explains.

She was about 14 when she left her home in Amman, Jordan. In the US, she fell in love with a boy at high school and got pregnant at age 17 - a disastrous turn of events for the teenager, whose Muslim family was very conservative and traditional.

"If I'd gone to my dad he would have murdered me - and I don't mean that figuratively," she shares in a video on YouTube. "And if I had told my mom, she would have told my dad. I didn't have anyone to confide in except my boyfriend."

Feeling she had no other options, Aishah had an abortion. She remembers that as being a very difficult time. "It was devastating for me. I struggled with shame, embarrassment, depression and anxiety."

She admits she tried many ways to fill the void and insecurity, but reveals "that only made things worse. It made the void deeper and I went into a dangerous and dark spiral."

Aishah says she had been taught her sins were unforgivable. "I knew I was hated by Allah. In fact, I read in the Koran a verse that said those who disbelieve and commit wrong, never will Allah forgive them nor will he guide them to a path. Except the path of hell."

Grief turned to fear and hopelessness when she read that. "I was crying and thinking of ways I could end my life because, if there's no forgiveness, then what's the point in me living?"

Something made her stop in the midst of her sobs. She heard a voice, an audible voice that said the name "Jesus".

"I looked up to heaven and opened my hands. I had tears running down my face and I said 'Jesus I don't know who you are but please reveal yourself to me because I can't go on living like this anymore.'"

As soon as she finished praying, Aishah says she felt different. "I felt peace," she smiles. "That was the first time I had ever felt any form of peace from praying."

Soon afterwards, she met a Christian man. While having dinner with his family one night, she says she found herself thinking: "I want what they have. They have love and joy and peace. They were so loving; they have Jesus in their lives."

She began attending church with them and soon heard Romans 5:8, which reads: "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

"The moment I discovered that God loves us not because of our goodness but rather in spite of our lack of goodness, was the moment I realized how different Christianity is," Aishah says, smiling.

She committed her life to Jesus Christ but had one last mountain to conquer - her unforgiveness towards her father. "For years I had a lot of anger towards my dad," she says candidly. "I prayed for the Lord to soften my heart and to help me see my dad as God saw him. When he was dying I was on the phone with him and I said:

'Baba, Jesus loves you and you can spend eternity with Him and us one day. He died on the cross for you. Your sins are forgiven if you give your life to Him. Do you receive Christ into your life?'

She expected a flat 'no'. "But instead, with a big smile in his voice he said, 'Yes, I do'. I was so excited; he said he was excited that he would see us again one day.

"Jesus says in John 10:10 that He came to give us abundant life. It's what He wants for all of us. I lived with so much shame and condemnation but now I have freedom, the freedom that comes through Jesus Christ," Aishah beams.

Have I got a book for you!

Christianity was the one religion where it didn't matter that Vann only had one arm.

BY MICHAEL COLLIE

As a young Buddhist, Vann Menghoeun was prevented from joining a monastery.

"I wanted to become a Buddhist monk. But because I have only one arm the head monk said 'no'. I was not surprised. I knew this taboo was consistent with Buddhist teaching, but I felt angry. I decided to change my religion. I began to study Taoism until I again discovered that having an incomplete body made it impossible for me to enter a monastic order."

Fearfully and wonderfully made



In his spare time Vann Menghoeun and his wife distribute books published in the Khmer language for people from a Buddhist background.

you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.' I was overwhelmed by gratitude and joy. I decided to trust in Jesus."

Books make us strong

Menghoeun thanks God for many blessings. "My father was a labourer and couldn't afford to send me to university, but God enabled me to do tertiary study, have a computer, get a job, marry and find a house."

"Christian books have made me strong. If we want to become more like Jesus we first have to know him. Reading helps us to know and follow Jesus. Christian books help us to understand God's word and put it into practice. Books are especially useful for young people making big decisions and church leaders teaching and caring for their people."

Sharing the gift of reading

"In my spare time I distribute books published in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, by Fount of Wisdom. These books are published in the Khmer language for people from a Buddhist background. I sell books in universities and churches.

"Reading is good for you. Reading is encouraging and makes us strong."

This article originally came from the SparkLit website and is used with kind permission.

Coffey: life is more than country music and cancer

Coffey Anderson is a country music singer who is currently starring in a new Netflix reality show called *Country Ever After*, which follows his family around as they make music, do life, laugh hysterically and talk about God.

The show came out of a practical joke that he pulled on his wife that ended up going viral and being liked by 57 million people!

Coffey (pronounced Cof-fay) is a highly amusing and entertaining guy, as proved by his podcast interview with Billy Hallowell on edifi. He is also a very talented musician, who grew up in Texas in a family of church singers and song writers. At 6 foot 5, everybody thought he would be a professional basketballer, but Coffey knew he wanted to sing.

He tells Billy that when they were offered a reality show deal with Roma Downey's Lightworkers they agreed it would not be the run-of-the-mill,

people-behaving-badly reality show, "because my wife and I agreed long ago to fight for each other, not with each other". The show, they agreed, would make people laugh and cry but would also be safe for kids and grandmothers, and be without a political agenda.

One of the issues dealt with on the show is Coffey's wife Criscilla's battle with cancer. The couple also pray openly and go to church on screen.

Through their faith in God and the example of his dad, Coffey wants to exhibit what real care and love look like during hard times.

"Life is not fair, but God is always good," Coffey declared, revealing that his mom died of lung cancer when he was 11. "I can remember how my dad took care of my mom,

and how he was the one carrying her to the bathroom and washing her back. So now, I'm taking care of my wife."

Coffey shares that as extrovert as he is, his wife's health struggles were hard for him to share on camera. He didn't want her looking weak and tired, or their children to see later how she had suffered. He wanted to protect his family, so when Criscilla started throwing up or there was a

problem with her colostomy bag, he just threw the camera crew out. But she said, "You've got to let them in. We have to show them the whole story."

Criscilla has stage 4 metastatic colon cancer, which is now in her lymph nodes.

Coffey admits Criscilla's illness has been hard on their faith. "It's

up and down. Some days it's easier to believe than others. That's why it is so important to surround yourself with people who are praying for you and with you. And to keep going back to inspiring things

— the Bible, Christian music, talking to Grandma or just getting out the house for a bit."

Coffey shares that his faith journey started young, growing up in a Christian home and singing in church from age six. His house was always filled with Christian music and prayer meetings and by college he was majoring in Spanish and Bible and determined to be a missionary in South America.

While in college, he borrowed a guitar from his then girlfriend's dad. Learning chords in his dorm room and singing while having his fellow college students lining the halls to listen. After singing in a local opening slot for a band (MercyMe) that came to town, Coffey had a small buzz. He never looked back! When record labels wouldn't sign him, he created CoffeySouthernMan on YouTube and started his own career.

His music, comedy, and personality got his channel to over 100,000 subscribers. He then started produc-



ing his own albums, booking his own shows, and editing his videos in his garage.

With Youtube and Facebook combined, Coffey Anderson has over 500 million views and has sold over 500,000 iTunes downloads. Tens of thousands of fans follow him on YouTube, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. He has released 12 albums, six of which are country and six are gospel.

After a failed marriage, and one child (now 18), Coffey met hip-hop dancer Criscilla Crosslands in church in 2008. She had recently been introduced to Jesus and the two of them decided to learn more about God together and try to live as Jesus commanded. They married on Valentine's Day, 2010.



Coffey Anderson with his wife Criscilla in hospital.

The couple couldn't be more different, as Coffey explains: she is vegan, he's a carnivore; she's city, he's country; and he's "a brother" and she's a white girl. Together they have a son Ethan, 9, and their two daughters Emmarie, 6, and Everleigh, 3.

Of Criscilla's illness, Coffey admits, "I just sit here feeling helpless at times but still believing that God is faithful."



Coffey Anderson with his wife Criscilla and children (from left) Everleigh, Ethan and Emmarie.

Trauma to triumph

BY JANICE TEO

It was just past 3.30pm when Mike Keating got home from school. The 14-year-old was hoping his mom would have an afternoon snack for him but she was nowhere to be found. He heard water running in the bathroom and knocked at the door. Getting no reply, he forced it open - and screamed.

His mother was lying unconscious in a bathtub full of water. She had shaved her head and slit her wrists. There was blood everywhere. Mike nearly passed out but held it together long enough to call his father.

His mother survived her suicide attempt but the unhappy marriage didn't and his parents got divorced soon after.

Mike left home a week later after a fight with his father, who had brought his girlfriend into his mother's bed. "I never had any sense my father loved me," says Mike, who is now 63. "He was very emotionally absent. And he was a harsh disciplinarian."

So at 14 and hardly able to read or write, Mike left home. For the next two-and-a-half years he lived on the streets of Perth, working as a garbage collector. When money was tight and he needed more drugs, more alcohol, a new watch or just somewhere to sleep, he turned to prostitution.

"I learned the hard way that when a man offers you a beer and a bed for the night, he may want something in return," he grimaces. "I was sexually exploited."

He sank deep into depression. There were a few suicide attempts. "Emotionally I was

completely cut off," he recalls. "I didn't have the coping skills for the kind of trauma I was exposed to."

Finally, one night on the way home from the pub, a desperate Mike did something he had only done as a child - he prayed. His mother, now in the advanced stages of dementia, had been a Catholic.

His memories of church were not happy, but he did remember hearing that God loved him. So that night he muttered: "Lord, if you're real, give me a ride on a motorbike." Then he stuck his thumb out.

"The next thing I heard was a Harley-Davidson engine - and a member of the Coffin Cheaters biker gang pulled over on his motorbike and gave me a lift!" he laughs.

Mike returned to live with his father, but after a week of violent disagreements he packed his bags again.

That was the week the man who would change his life went to his house. His name was Len Peretti, a tradesman who was so happy the long-haired teenager was convinced he was on drugs.

"Are you on something?" Mike asked him. The tradesman answered: "Yeah I'm on Jesus." Odd to name a drug after God, but what did Mike care? "Where can I buy some of those?" he asked.

The tradesman guffawed and invited him to church instead. After the service, he asked if Mike would like to give his life to Christ.

"I was at ground zero; I was already in a living hell," Mike recalls, "I prayed but didn't believe anything would happen." And that's when God

surprised Mike again. "God literally invaded my life as I was praying.

"I had a vision of Jesus and He looked at me with complete love and acceptance. The gaze of my Savior held no shame, no recrimination. It was immediately life-transforming.

"I cried and cried. I had bottled up all my emotions just to survive and I swore nobody would ever make me cry yet there I was sobbing uncontrollably."

Mike, who has recently retired as the senior pastor of a church in Perth, says he knew "something really deep had broken. I'd been to court-mandated counselling before, and they were kind but they had no answers. This was different."

He stopped his drug and alcohol addiction without rehab. His language was cleaned up - "that in itself was amazing!" he laughs. "God also told me to get rid of my music collection, which had records by bands like Black Sabbath."

He read the entire Bible within the first few weeks but admits "I was not instantly changed - my salvation was instant, but my sanctification took a bit longer."

The former uneducated 14-year-old ended up graduating dux of the Bible College he attended in New South Wales and holds a doctorate in Theology. He founded Western Australia's State Bible College, has been a board member of Teen Challenge for 30 years, has written

Mike Keating today and (inset) as a young man.



books and held major leadership positions with Australian Christian Churches for 35 years.

He has also planted numerous churches overseas, including two in Islamabad.

"It hasn't always been easy, but when I think of what could have happened to me - I mean I was a dead man walking at 16," he reflects. "I was completely broken. God saved me and has given me the most incredibly fulfilling life.

"This will sound like a cliché but for me it is absolutely the truth - if God can save me, He can fix anybody. Nobody's too broken or too busted."

Surprising truth behind shock rocker's façade



Alice Cooper performs during Fire Fight Australia at ANZ Stadium on February 16, 2020 in Sydney, Australia. (Photo by Cole Bennetts/Getty Images) **INSET:** The man behind the makeup.



Known as the godfather of shock rock, Alice Cooper has had a successful career spanning 50 years. But an addiction to drugs and alcohol almost ended that career, as well as his life.

Alice, whose real name is Vincent Furnier, spoke to Pastor Greg Laurie about his life in a video shared on YouTube.

Alice formed his music group in the 1960s when he was in high school and fame and success came quickly.

"When you're 20 years old you're also indestructible and fame does not come with an instruction book that says okay now you're famous and

His breaking point was when his wife Sheryl went away and had said to him before she left, "I can't watch this."

But, as Alice put it, cocaine was speaking a lot louder than her. He said he finally looked in the mirror and it looked as though blood was coming out of his eyes.

He flushed the cocaine down the toilet and went to bed for three days. When he woke up he called Sheryl and told her what had happened and that he was done with drugs.

She told him he had to prove it to her and part of the deal they made was that Alice

would attend church.

They started attending a Baptist church where the pastor preached about the reality of hell.

"I grew up in the church," Alice explains. "My dad was a pastor, my granddad was an evangelist and when the band happened it took me as far away as you

could possibly go. I knew who Jesus Christ was and I was denying him because I was living my own life and I was living my life without him. I knew that there had to either come a point where I either accepted Christ and started living that life, or if I died in this [life] I was in a lot of trouble and that's what really motivated me... A lot of people say, 'I came to Christ because of my love of Jesus' - I came to Christ because of my fear of God. I totally understood that hell was not getting high with Jim Morrison. Hell was going to be

the worst place ever."

Alice attended another church where the pastor preached the love of Christ.

"You put the two together and it was exactly right," he says.

Explaining what happened when he accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior, Alice said, "I just got to a point of saying I'm tired of this life and I know that this is right... when the Lord opens your eyes and you suddenly realize who you are and who He is, it's a whole different world."

Alice said he then got baptized and he spoke to his

pastor about quitting being 'Alice Cooper'. His pastor encouraged him to continue the persona.

"He said, 'What if you're Alice Cooper but what if you're now following Christ and you're a rock star but you don't live the rock star life? Your lifestyle is now your testimony,' and that made total sense to me," he explains.

So Alice continued making music but changes were taking place.

"My lyrics were now aiming towards Christ," he says.

He also completely quit using drugs and alcohol.

"I found when I got sober I had so much more fun touring because now I could remember what I did," Alice says.

He said his peers within the music industry noticed the change in him and asked him what happened.

"The Lord is in my life now," Alice replied. "I'm still Alice Cooper, I'm still playing this dark character, but he's an agent of Christ."

Now 73, Alice is the founder of Alice Cooper's Solid Rock, a non-profit faith-based organization which helps teenagers discover their passions by offering music, arts, vocational programs and time with each other.

I TOTALLY UNDERSTOOD HELL WAS NOT GETTING HIGH WITH JIM MORRISON.



this is what you're supposed to do," Alice says.

He said as a young man making a lot of money and having a lot of energy, he was like a kid in a candy shop.

In the interview, Alice talked about how many of his friends' lives were destroyed by drugs and that his life could have gone that way.



Ex-witch changed by Cooper's story

Former 'white witch' Simone Peer grew up learning about the occult from her mother.

Horoscopes, numerology, the Ouija Board, seeing ghosts, and psychic phenomenon were all normal

in her childhood home.

In an interview with CBN, Simone said she was molested by a neighbor when she was five years old and was also physically and verbally abused by a family member. These events led her to believe she was completely unlovable and worthless.

As a teenager, she attempted to numb her feelings with promiscuity, drugs and alcohol. However, she went on to experience suicidal thoughts.

In college she thought she found truth when she met a woman who taught her to use tarot cards.

"My attention would be drawn into different details of the card that would sort of open a door on that invisible side that would tell me those secrets," she remembers.

Simone immersed herself deeper into the occult as she researched more about new age ideas and practices.

When she was 20, she became a 'white witch' - something Simone thought was divine and heavenly. In her mind it was the 'good side' of the occult.

"I kept believing that if I pursued more and more and more light that I would find the answer to what was wrong with me and somehow I would get fixed, and it would all just feel better," Simone recalls.

For the next three decades Simone pursued enlightenment, aiming to become a high priestess - the highest level of white witchcraft.

Then she got involved in other forms of spirituality such as Santeria - a religion that involves animal sacrifice. "It was the shedding of blood in which we were able to be cleansed, healed and gain power and rise through levels of initiation," Simone explains.

Despite believing she was achieving new levels of enlightenment, Simone still felt empty.

"There were so many things about the spiritual path that I loved and that made me feel happy, however, my life was a contradiction," she says. "I also was in just the deepest, darkest pit. This is the beautiful deception."

In 2017 Simone watched a video about heavy metal musician Alice Cooper. In the video Alice said he found freedom from alcoholism and new life in Jesus Christ.

"I realized that I was an ambassador for Satan," Simone says. "I didn't even know what it meant to have Jesus. I didn't understand it at all, I just knew that my heart cracked open, I knew that He was there, and I knew

I was a 'Yes'. When I went through that salvation prayer and those of my sins that really stood out to me was: the thinking

that I was God, the thinking that my spells were not manipulations of other people and other things. And I just said it out loud and raised my hand to God and I pleaded and repented and prayed over myself."

After becoming a follower of Jesus, Simone turned away from everything associated with the occult and threw away physical objects associated with her former life in the new age.

She started attending a church and went through the process of being delivered from demonic strongholds, something that enabled her to feel free in her heart and spirit.

"For those who walked the same path that I did, Jesus is the answer that you are looking for," she says.

JESUS IS THE ANSWER THAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR



Simone Peer as she is now.

Mixed Bag

Richard Gunther

Strange words we used to use.

Here are some real words which people used to say as part of their normal speech:

GROAKING: to watch someone eat,
TWATTLE: gossip, idle talk,
JOLLUX: a fat person,
BEEF-WITTED: stupid,
SLUBBERDEGULLION: slovenly,
GRUMPISH: grumpy,
FUZZLED: drunk,
QUOCKERWODGER: a puppet,
COCKALORUM: a short person.

The meaning of words changes over time. For example high used to be up high, but now it means under the influence of drugs. Cool used to mean cold, wicked used to mean bad, and hot used to mean burning.

REPENT
TWATTLE

Fortunately this word still means stop going in THIS direction, turn around completely, and go in THAT direction.

In the verse John 3:16 we are told "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM should not perish, but have everlasting life".

The word "BELIEVES" means "obeys, and is subject to" - not like today's wishy-washy meaning. Anyone can 'believe' in Jesus - even the devil 'believes' in Jesus but that doesn't do him any good!

REPENT
JOLLUX

GRUMPISH
JOLLUX

GRUMPISH
JOLLUX

GRUMPISH
JOLLUX

Coping with Covid ...Coping with Covid ... Coping with Covid... Coping with Covid...



The owners of Zoom hearing about the vaccine rollout.

Laugh

WHEN YOU HAVEN'T BEEN TO SUNDAY SCHOOL OR CHURCH IN A WHILE ...



On average, a Panda feeds for approximately 12 hours per day. This is the same as an adult at home under quarantine, which is why we call it a "Pandemic"



American Lydia Booth never expected her mask to cause a problem at school, she simply liked that, "It makes me feel like I'm protected by Jesus."

School officials told her she couldn't wear it because of a policy not allowing masks with political or religious messages. However, Lydia's mother checked the handbook and dress code and didn't find that restriction.

Nevertheless, Lydia's classmates have been encouraging, sending her notes of support. One requested a mask just like it, and the older sister of another said she resolved to study the Bible after hearing about the case.



UPS mail carrier Mary caught delivering her parcel on the door camera.



Be kind



Calvary Temple Church in Hyderabad, with more than 330,000 members, has distributed 700 tons of food supplies to families in desperate need since Covid began. Now, as India is in the grip of a devastating second wave, their church building has been converted into a 300-bed Covid Care Centre.

"We admit anyone who knock on our door regardless of caste, creed, race and religion we admit them," Calvary Temple Pastor Dr P. Satish Kumar told the Global News Alliance. "And we try to provide needed treatment. The response has been tremendous. And it has been a wonderful experience in showing the love of Christ to all these needy ones."

"God is love and God is expecting us to show His love in action. We don't convert people but we direct people to the one who created them so that they will find a way and find peace and happiness."

When Lisette LeJeune of Houston, Texas, and her kids, who are 14 and 3 years old, got Covid-19 in December, their family members lived too far away to help much. As a makeup artist, Lisette has been out of work throughout the pandemic, and being a single parent made it hard to cope when she was really sick.

But a few days later, Lisette opened the front door to find a special care package!

Inside were several get-well essentials like chicken noodle soup, crackers, and cookies. There was also a handwritten note, from Mary, their mail carrier, a stranger Lisette had only briefly spoken to one time!

"Get-well wishes... I hope you all are feeling better!" the note read.

Lisette was instantly choked up by the thoughtfulness of the unexpected act of kindness.



Jessica Roth

Jessica Roth, who suffered months of long Covid, decided that 'the best medicine for despair is service,' so, among other

things, she and her children filled and refilled a basket of treats for delivery drivers, and sent cards to the loved ones they so desperately missed. "In suffering: serving matters," Jessica says, having found joy in the toughest of times.

Ponder



the covid vaccine isn't going to have a microchip in it..... you already voluntarily gave up your biometrics and location data willingly to the phone you're reading this tweet on. that is all.

1:56 PM · Nov 11, 2020



I asked my mom if she felt any side effects from her second vaccine shot today and she said "an acute appreciation for science"

10:53 AM · Mar 11, 2021



My boyfriend got his covid vaccine yesterday and I can tell you the most prominent side effect is the inability to shut up about getting the covid vaccine.

3:02 PM · Dec 16, 2020

Tweet: Call me a snob but I am holding out for a 100% effective vaccine.
Reply: The only 100% effective vaccine is death.

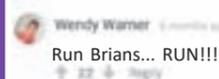


You won't take a vaccine because you don't know what's in it? Real quick, name all the ingredients in a Pop Tart.



COVID is a scam and the vaccine is being given out to control your Brians

5:44 PM · Nov 9, 2020



Data versus dogma

Sergei Golovin has three Masters degrees (in geophysics, education, and religious studies), two doctorates (in philosophy, and ministry) and lives in the Crimea region, Ukraine, with his family. He heads the Christian Center for Science and Apologetics.



Sergei Golovin and his wife Olga.

If you're a scientist in the Soviet Union, there is one sure way to make life difficult for yourself: believe and teach creation, not evolution.

That was what Soviet geophysicist Sergei Golovin did and it cost him his PhD.

Generations of communist 'atheology' have trained people not to search for a logical answer. The logical contradictions in communist ideology were carefully explained away as just the 'dialectics of history'. So even if they see contradictions in parts of evolution theory, many still just accept it."

Sergei did not start out believing in Creationism, which is the Biblical account of how the world was formed. Like many in his country, he grew up believing absolutely in Darwin's theory of evolution.

The lauded geophysicist worked in many areas — geophysics, laser optics and information theory — and said he started to notice atheism did not fit with any of them.

"I started looking for another ideological foundation," he said.

"While studying the Earth as part of solar system physics, I started to see design everywhere. It made me discouraged with atheism."

This discouragement was no mild unhappiness. It threatened to undermine everything Sergei had grown up believing and had built his career upon.

"Evolution was the 'scientific foundation' the communists used to promote their humanistic ideology and attack Christianity," he explained.

"I only came to the Bible later; I had been indoctrinated to think that only old women and crazy people believed in God," he laughed. "We had a lot of anti-religious communist propaganda.

"Even though many have suffered much under communism, they still think science has proven

they are products of time and chance. Having heard no alternative to evolution, life has even less purpose or meaning than under communism.

"One person told me: 'In my area of science I don't see any proof of evolution but since everybody believes in it, it must be true.'"

Once he accepted creation as the explanation for how the world was formed, Sergei knew he had to share his transformed world view.

"I wanted other people to see this wonderful truth, and so I started to tell students about Creation, but this was soon forbidden," he told Creation Ministries International. Undaunted, Sergei held underground meetings with students, professors and colleagues.

"As a geophysicist, no data, no evidence I knew of, contradicted the Bible, only the interpretations put on it. So you either believe in millions of years or 'six days' — and the interpretation based on the Bible is sounder. If you accept the Bible's truth, there's no room for you to think that it's only partly true."

Defying the threat by the authorities that he would be barred from continuing with his PhD, Sergei continued to share his discoveries and ultimately left the university. By this time he had completed his thesis and had several patented inventions in geophysics and laser optics.

Sergei's path from avowed atheist

to committed creationist began when he was given a Bible in the remote northern town of Spitzbergen. Finding himself 1000km from the North Pole with nothing else to do, he started reading it.

To his amazement, he found that everything he knew from personal experience and from science, fit with what he read in the book of Genesis.

"This was the only book that told the truth about all 'earthly things' which I could put to the test," he said. "And of course, if I accepted Genesis then I had to accept the rest. From Genesis I

found out why the Gospel is so important, and why Jesus Christ had to come and sacrifice His life. So through science I came to the Bible, through the Bible I came to Christ."

In 1991, he founded the Christian Center for Science and Apologetics to sow the gospel in former Soviet-bloc countries, using creation materials.

"In Ukraine, we now have 1.3 divorces for every new marriage, and about two abortions for every child born, plus a lot of abandoned street kids," he said. "Our ministry is also involved in missions to street kids and orphanages, but this is fighting the symptoms; to fight the disease itself we have to change the general worldview, to restore the foundations of society and the family. When people believe they are nothing more than evolved animals, they tend to behave accordingly, and to act increasingly less human."

Sergei said people commonly told him that they became solid Christians once they knew belief in Christ did not contradict science.

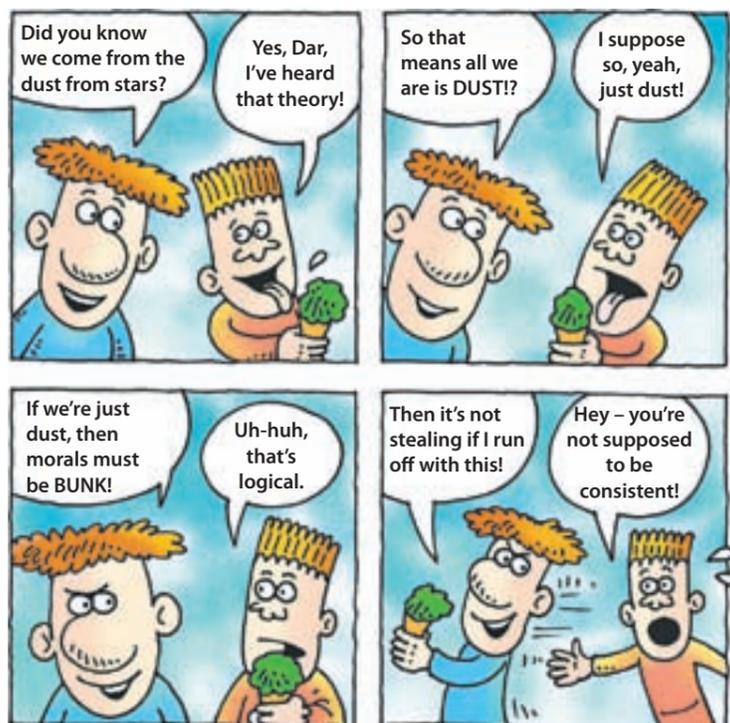
Among the materials Sergei uses is a video series titled *Science and the Bible*. A man who had for years resisted the Gospel message of salvation — the good news of Jesus' life, death and resurrection — watched it. The next day he went to church, repented and was baptised.

"For 10 years his wife had preached the Gospel to him, but the seeds fell on the pavement," Sergei said. "But as soon as the pavement was broken by the creation message, the fruit came."

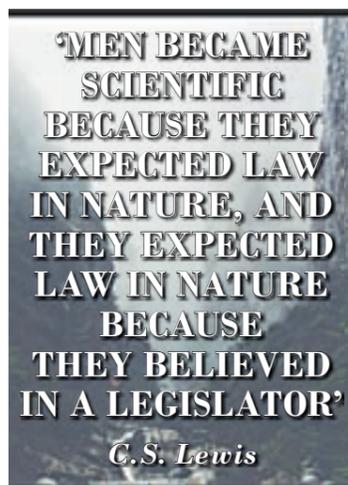
AS A GEOPHYSICIST, NO EVIDENCE I KNEW OF, CONTRADICTED THE BIBLE



Dar and Winny By Richard Gunther



Another version of this article first appeared in Creation magazine and the story is used with kind permission.



Believe it or Not

BY CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Flowing blood found in frozen mammoth

RUSSIAN scientists have recovered blood from a woolly mammoth so well preserved that hopes of obtaining viable DNA for 'cloning' the extinct species have surged again. The blood was in ice cavities below its belly and flowed freely when these were broken with a pick. The find was announced by the expedition's head, Dr. Semyon



Grigoriev, chairman of the Museum of Mammoths at Russia's North Eastern Federal University.

Scientists from the Russian Geographical Society were also involved.

This mammoth is believed to be 10,000 to 15,000 years old. This is still the most common sort of time frame given for mammoth extinction, despite long-standing secular suggestions that in some places they survived till around 4,000 years ago.

Of course, a post-Flood biblical Ice Age scenario for the freezing (see creation.com/mammoth), less than 4,000 years ago, seems much more believable in the light of this find.

In fact, even that seems a long time for something to last 'in the freezer'. The fact that the blood remained liquid even at subzero temperatures in the lab has revived discussion about mammoth blood containing special 'antifreeze' proteins (cf. creation.com/antifreeze-protein).

This is of course not as sensational for creationists as the discoveries of flexible soft tissue, nucleated cells, identifiable protein and even DNA from (unfrozen) dinosaur fossils supposed to be at least 65 million years old (see creation.com/dinosaurs).

But it is one more thing that helps bring home the reality—namely, that the whole creation is really much more 'fresh' than we have been led to believe.

Mammoth found with flowing blood, news.ninemsn.com.au, 30 May 2013. Can a mammoth carcass really preserve flowing blood and possibly live cells?, nature.com, 30 May 2013.

GET ANSWERS FOR YOUR FAMILY

Young people struggle to find purpose in life, believing that 'science' has made God irrelevant. CREATION MAGAZINE provides answers for your family.

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CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

THE IMPORTANCE OF RESILIENCE

BY ROB FURLONG

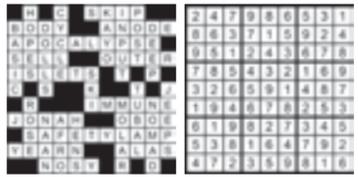
Every successful sprinter will tell you that the key to winning is keeping your focus on the finish line. Never look to see

where your opponent is and most certainly, never look back!

In his wonderful book, *A Resilient Life*, Gordon MacDonald writes "...there are some (people) who stand out from all the rest...the further they run, the stronger they get..."

He calls such people "resilient ones" and describes the qualities he has observed in them; qualities that are the reasons behind the strong impression they leave on people.

The same thought can be applied to marriages. Why is it that some marriages make it through the toughest of times - even emerging from them stronger - when other marriages fall apart?



It comes back to one word: resilience.

Resilient marriages are committed to finishing strong.

One of the more negative aspects to emerge from the COVID-19 crisis is the fact that people are not as resilient as they once were.

To put it bluntly, many of us have become psychologically flabby when it comes to dealing with what the present circumstances have thrown at us and this also includes our

relationships.

But resilient people - and marriages - are committed to both running and finishing the race of life strongly: they take seriously the vows they have made to each other to be committed to each other for life! To achieve this requires developing an intimate and open relationship with each other; a relationship where we can celebrate our successes but also be honest about our failings and above all, strengthen and support one another through the highs and lows of life.

Being resilient does not mean denying the realities of life - it simply means that in partnership with each other, and God, your marriage

commitment grows stronger over the years.

Resilient marriages are inspired by a big-picture view of life.

Resilient people finish strong because their vision of life is not simply a large one, it is a transcendent one.

The Bible often describes resilient people as men and women of incredible faith who endured to the end, despite overwhelming odds and persistent hostility directed against them.

Why did they run with such patience and endurance?

Because they had a big picture about what God had promised them and they pressed on toward that goal.

I wrote earlier this year about the importance of having a big picture, asking the question, "What is the big picture you have for your marriage?" and along the way I have presented a few ideas to encourage you to pursue and realize that goal.

Karen and I were both raised in dysfunctional homes - who hasn't been? - but we determined before we married that we would do things very differently in our marriage to what had been modeled to us in our families of origin.

The big picture for our marriage included things such as always resolving conflict between us and modeling this to our children, never putting our ministry before our relationship or children and teaching and living out our faith authentically to each other and our kids.



Run with the end in mind and you will finish strong!

Resilient marriages run free of the weight of the past.

Constantly looking back is guaranteed to prevent you from finishing strong, which is why Forrest Gump said:

"You have to put the past behind you before you can move forward."

Paul had this in mind when he wrote, "...forgetting what lies behind...I press on toward the goal..." (Philippians 3:13,14)

Resilient people - and marriages - do not allow past hurts to drag them down.

In other words, forgive each other regularly and freely, because bitterness destroys marriages.

When tough times threaten your marriage, seeking to tear it apart, remember this: resilient couples keep their focus - it's the only way to ensure finishing strong!

In the dark about death?

BY PETER BRAIN

There are many humorous graveyard inscriptions. Recently I came across one that said, "Here lies my wife: here let her lie! Now she's at rest, and so am I." Another said, "I told you I was sick."

Humor is one way of handling death, which we all know is anything but funny. There are other ways of coping with death, and all the uncertainty and fear it engenders. Some say there is nothing after death; what we see is all there is. Others rely on reincarnation as an explanation for death. Still others trivialize the awfulness of death by saying that death is just a natural part of life. And others, that everyone will go to Heaven or that God will give us a second chance after we die.



It's all fairly confusing, and sad, don't you think?

Especially since God would neither have us fearful nor living in the dark about death and eternity.

There are some who would say that the Christian faith is escapism - but what if, as Dr I. Howard Marshall writes, "it is the only ultimate realism"? Now, to make a claim like that there must be some clear public domain evidence. Wonderfully, there is. Marshall reminds us that "it rests foursquare on the fact that Jesus has defeated death, and anybody who can defeat death can defeat anything."

The coming of Jesus into our world gives us a new way of looking at things. He offers life eternal to all who trust Him now and will honor the choice of all who refuse Him with death eternal.

There is no reincarnation or second chance.

The choice of eternity hangs on the decision we make about Jesus now. One man said that "at death I shall change my place, but not my company", and another that "death has been described as the old family servant who opens the door to welcome the children home."

For those trusting in Jesus, death holds no more fear than going to sleep at night.

And it is all because of Jesus. We see this confidence in John Newton, who gave us the hymn *Amazing Grace*, when he said to one of his visitors toward the end of his life, "I am like a person going on a journey in a stage coach, who expects its arrival every hour and is frequently looking out of the window for it."

And the reason for his confidence was revealed by his friend who heard his final words, "My memory is nearly gone but I remember two things: that I am a great sinner and that Christ is a great Savior!"

HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth,

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

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

What now?

1. Tell someone - either a Christian that you know or email us at usaoffice@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. Find a Bible-teaching church to attend.

AS A NEXT STEP:

I have prayed this prayer.

Please send me:

 Bible

 Some 'starting off' literature

 Information on a helpful church

* Please tick and write clearly *

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Age, occupation (it helps) _____

Send to: **Challenge Literature Fellowship, 2634 Drake Road, Lebanon Ohio, 45036**
usaoffice@challengenews.org

All overseas enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country

C.S. Lewis on death from 'A Grief Observed'

- "You never know how much you really believe anything until its truth or falsehood becomes a matter of life and death to you."
- "The death of a beloved is an amputation."
- "It is hard to have patience with people who say, 'There is no death' or 'Death doesn't matter'. There is death. And whatever matters. And whatever happens has consequences, and it and they are irrevocable and irreversible."
- "No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear. I am not afraid, but the sensation is like being afraid."
- "Grief ... gives life a permanently provisional feeling. It doesn't seem worth starting anything. I can't settle down ... Up till this, I always had too little time. Now there is nothing but time."

Want to explore more?

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

Online Bible - Olive Tree app (we recommend that you start with an easy-to-read version like the ESV)	
Audio Bible - Bible.is app , or Youversion Bible app	
Christian radio station - CBN radio app (different channels for all genres of music)	
Christian podcasts and sermons - Edifi app	
Christian movies - New Faith Network app (7-day free trial)	
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 - the Bible Project on YouTube .	
Alpha Film Series on Youtube - an online introduction to Christianity.	
For kids - Superbook Kids Bible, videos and games app	
Comic book Bible online- goodandevilbook.com	
More inspiring faith stories - back issues of Challenge News at challengenews.online	



Jessica Long of the USA competes in the women's 100m freestyle - S8 final during the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. (Photo Atsushi Tomura/Getty Images)
INSET: Jessica in her prosthetics at The Women's Sports Foundation's 39th Annual Salute To Women In Sports And The Girls They Inspire Awards Gala on October 17, 2018 in New York City. (Photo Michael Loccisano/Getty Images)

SOMETIMES I JUST CAN'T

At 12 years old, Jessica Long swam in her first Paralympic Games. As she turned her head to breathe, she said to the competitor next to her, "I did not come here to get second." And she didn't. Jessica won her first gold medal that day and went on to compete at four Paralympic games and receive 23 medals (13 of them gold) and more than 60 world championship medals. As a child growing up with feelings of anger and rejection, Jessica had found her worth in excelling in swimming. She shared her story with the website iamsecond.com. "When I was born I was put up for adoption by a young 16-year-old

Russian girl because, due to a birth defect, she just wasn't able to care for me," Jessica recounts. Jessica was born with fibular hemimelia, a congenital disorder where part or all of the fibular bone is missing. Jessica and another little boy from Russia were adopted by a couple in America. "I did have a foot with three toes that they decided to amputate six months after I was adopted so I could be fitted in these little prosthetic legs and learn to walk just like everyone else," Jessica explains. "When I think back on my childhood, I didn't feel adopted. I just know I was angry – angry that I didn't have legs. Maybe that's why my birth mom didn't want me, because I didn't look like a normal person."

I WAS ANGRY THAT I DIDN'T HAVE LEGS.

Jessica said she felt like she was a burden to her adoptive parents. "Every time I grew I had to go to surgery and to get the bone cut back and that was excruciating," she says. "I don't think I knew what I did wrong to have to keep going back in for surgery. I didn't think I could even cry in front of my parents because I thought if I cried that somehow they would send me back to Russia." Jessica was raised in a Christian family and regularly attended church. "What I heard a lot of is that God made me this way and God always had a plan for me and God loves me and I didn't like it," Jessica admits. "I knew I didn't want anything to do with this God that made me this way. To top it all off, I was born on a leap year so all of my life the calendar would skip me every four years

before I had an actual birthday on February 29 and I think in my head as a little girl that just solidified how I felt about myself – that I was non-existent." Jessica discovered that she excelled in sports, especially swimming. "When I first joined the swim team I was 10 years old and I was the only disabled swimmer on the team," she says. "Most people didn't know I was missing my legs until I got out of the pool. I kept going back because honestly I just liked beating these girls with legs and it started to fulfil something in me – just earning love." Jessica's family found out about the Paralympic Games and at age 12 she was selected to represent America in the Athens Games, where she won her first Paralympic gold medal. "I started getting sponsorships and winning awards," Jessica says. "I signed a deal with Nike and was in *Sports Illustrated* and getting commercials and I wanted to be perfect in everything that I did." One year Jessica had 18 world record breaking performances. She began to find her worth in her success. "My worth was in swimming, my identity was swimming, but at the same time I was just broken and sad a lot," she recalls. "I developed an eating disorder, I really pulled away from my relationships and my family and I realized that I had no control over my life." Jessica said she was at a youth group Bible study one night when she realized she couldn't do it alone anymore. "I got up and I made the walk to the front and I found this woman

and I said, 'I want to give God my whole heart for once' and I prayed with her and as soon as I prayed it was the first time in my entire life that I felt enough. And then I was actually a part of God's family... I realized that God was prepping my heart for what was about to come." Jessica was approached by American broadcast television network NBC about returning to Russia to meet her birth mother. It was something she had always dreamed about so she agreed to go. "It hit me all of a sudden as soon as we landed in Russia that maybe my birth family didn't want to see me," Jessica remembers. "I felt really scared - why did I come here, why did I do this?" Nervous, Jessica took the 18-hour train journey to her birth parents' home. She could hear her birth parents crying as she approached the house. Their emotional reunion was filmed by NBC for a feature called *Long Way Home: The Jessica Long Story*. "Something (my birth mom) kept

saying was that she couldn't forgive herself for giving me up for adoption and I think if I had not accepted Christ as my Saviour I don't think I would have forgiven her either," Jessica says. "But it was in that moment that I realized that God has forgiven me my whole life and I forgave my mom." When Jessica returned to America she said she experienced a heart change but she also had a lot of questions. "I realized that it's okay to have those questions," she explains. "It's okay to talk to God about it." "Since accepting Christ as my Savior I don't have to have it all together. He knows that I don't have it all together and I think it's something I still fight. I still fight that feeling of not being in control and I am constantly reminded every day that I need to give it to God. Every day when I put on these two prosthetic legs that are heavy and they still hurt me... I think it's honestly this really cool beautiful reminder that I can't do it on my own. As determined as I am, I just can't." ●



Jessica Long standing tall on her prosthetics.

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