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# MY EASTER REBOUND

Ben Hylden almost died on Good Friday, but found a miracle at Easter.



Ben Hylden survived a horrific crash (inset) on Good Friday when he was 16. Photos from benhylden.com.



BY MARK ELLIS  
(ABRIDGED)

**S**ixteen-year-old Ben Hylden was in a hurry to get to physical therapy for a high

school basketball injury. Running late, he took a shortcut down a gravel road from his farm in Park River, North Dakota.

“There was ice and snow on the road,” he told God Reports. “I lost control on a patch of ice, went down into a ditch head-on, and flipped my car into a field numerous times.”

It happened to be Good Friday. Ben wasn’t wearing his seatbelt and got ejected through the passenger door, landing face-first in a field.

“At that moment my whole life shifted, everything changed in my life,” he recalls. “I was really into sports; I was an athlete and that was my identity in life. I thought that was all there was to life.”

Ben had a strong faith in God when he was young, but by the time he arrived in high school, his relationship with God was tenuous at best.

Spiritually, he was going through the motions.

“God began to be something like a checklist. Okay, I went to church. Okay, I went to youth group. Okay, I went to Bible camp. Instead of actually knowing God and having a strong faith, it was more about works.”

He was also not on good terms with his parents.

“I grew angry and stressed out because of the pressure of sports. I didn’t want to be on the farm working; I didn’t want to be milking cows. So we’d fight all the time, I’d be mad at them all the time. I just wasn’t in a good place. I was an angry person at that point in my life.”

Ejected violently from the car,

lying helplessly on the ground, Ben wondered if anyone would find him. “It was a back road. No one takes that road because of the snow and ice,” he recounts. He had little hope.

When Ben face-planted into the dirt, he bit through his tongue.

“I was swallowing all that blood and it went into my lungs instead of my stomach, so I was suffocating.”

● Turn to page 2



Photograph by Ken Duncan

## CAPTURING CREATION

Page 3: Beloved Australian photographer Ken Duncan shares the three miraculous encounters that changed his life in his new book, *Where Jesus Walked*.

**YOUTH TRUTH** Page 9

**Fun for Kids** Pages 5,6,7

**BACK PAGE**

**SOUL SURFER**  
COREY COLAPINTO

# MY EASTER REBOUND

• From page 1

"I shattered my entire face, broke my nose into nine pieces. My palate broke in half, and I broke six ribs. My pancreas, small intestines, liver, lungs, and kidneys were all bruised and bleeding, and the artery in my right leg was crushed." Later, it would be determined he also suffered a brain injury.

Ben actually attempted to crawl on his back toward home, using his elbows to move a few inches at a time, because he wanted to tell his parents he loved them before he died.

Miraculously, it was Ben's parents who discovered him five minutes after the crash. "They weren't looking for me because they thought I was already in town. But for some reason they decided to take that road, on that day, at that time."

At first, they couldn't identify their own son. "My face was totally distorted. They couldn't recognise me at all, because it was so full of mud and blood and swollen."

Immediately, his parents called 911.

Ben's mom looked down at his feet. "That was her first moment of recognition after she put a coat on me. She recognised my feet," he says.

As his parents attended to him, they watched their son's body go limp for about four minutes. "I wasn't breathing and I was gone. I remember taking that last breath."

It took at least 15 minutes for the ambulance to arrive.

Ben was still breathing in the



Ben with his book, Finding Faith in the Field.

ambulance when it arrived at the hospital. The doctors' prognosis was grim. "I had a really bad brain injury. I was supposed to lose parts of my organs, I was supposed to lose my right leg, have brain damage for the rest of my life."

When doctors attempted exploratory surgery, his lungs collapsed. "I wasn't breathing again for around five minutes," he says. Then doctors placed him on a mechanical ventilator.

"They said my lungs would swell

and I would suffocate and die by Easter."

Defying the odds and the doctors' expectations, Ben's lungs never swelled up.

"By Monday, I was rapidly healing. I was actually out of the ICU the next Thursday, in six days, which was in the doctors' minds insane."

Ben faced many challenges during a long recovery process. "There were many times that I just couldn't understand why all these things would happen to me. There was a point after my accident I got so depressed where I wanted to commit suicide. I was admitted into a psych ward."

It wasn't until Ben was a sophomore in college that he fully surrendered to God. "That was a tough year because I had another leg surgery, which really brought me down because that artery in my right leg stopped working. I thought I was done with all the injuries."

Before the surgery, Ben had been attracted by the party lifestyle in college.

"I started getting into the world, the drinking and the temptations of life. I was lost. I didn't want to do it. But then I kept doing it."

On the anniversary of his accident, something changed in Ben. "I woke up and I just began crying, just crying my eyes out. Because I knew I was in this pit. I just felt so empty and so full of guilt and sin and just didn't know how to get out of it."

Ready for change, Ben turned away from his wrongdoing and asked God for forgiveness.

God had rescued his body; now God rescued his soul. "As I was crying, that burden was being taken away."

He recognized he had to let go of trying to be good and placed all his faith and trust in Jesus Christ. With childlike faith, he asked the Holy Spirit to make him into somebody new. "This was the greatest moment of my life, my spiritual resurrection, because it gave me freedom," he says.

"From then on, it's been a journey to share my story and to share the gospel (the good news about Jesus)."

Ben has written a book about his life called *Finding Faith in the Field*.

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

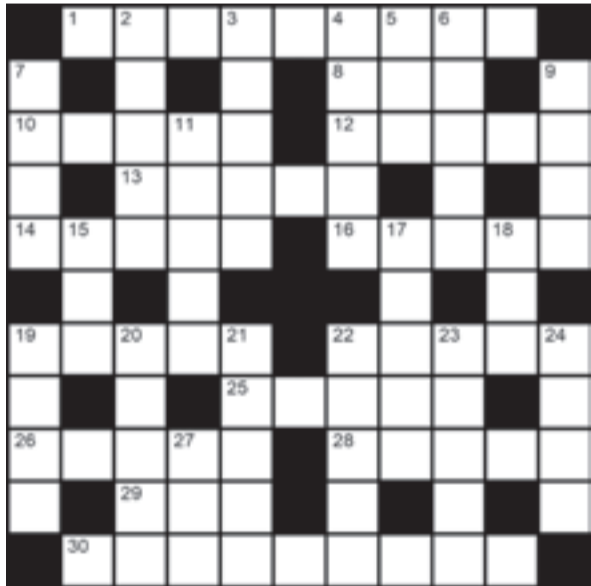
## Coffee Break CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

### ACROSS

1. Title of this newspaper
8. Neither this \_\_\_ that
10. Blowing a lot
12. Strong, thin string
13. Take to the podium
14. Courtroom event
16. Early \_\_\_
19. Human \_\_\_
22. Built for speed
25. Bury, entomb
26. Oscar, Emmy or Tony
28. Had dinner at home
29. Small amount
30. Heated, dry out

### DOWN

2. Vietnam's capital
3. Devoted
4. 'Go in' sign
5. In this moment
6. Sudoku patterns
7. Strike a fly
9. Low dam in a river
11. Outlet for a sink



- |                       |                         |                |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| 15. ___ v. Wade       | 20. All worked up       | 24. Showing    |
| 17. Small cove or bay | 21. Dizzy, light-headed | thoughtfulness |
| 18. Farm female       | 22. One step            | 27. Fan shout  |
| 19. Avian schnozz     | 23. Construct           |                |

SOLUTIONS PAGE 11



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

## Ask Y: Peter Meadows answers your questions about God



QUESTION: IF JESUS WAS SUCH A GOOD PERSON HOW COME HE ENDED UP BEING EXECUTED?

**YOU ARE RIGHT** – no one could ever say Jesus was anything other than 'good'. And that has to be the greatest understatement of all time.

So how come He died strung up like a common criminal? The answer – amazing as it must sound – is that this was God's plan from the start.

The significance of Jesus' death is ultimately wrapped up in who He was and what He came to do. You see Jesus didn't stumble onto the stage of history.

The script had already been written – with Him as the central character.

Jesus was to be the kingpin of God's rescue plan. The one who would deliver us all from the mess we've created.

The Jewish scriptures had been promising such a deliverer for hundreds of years.

They made clear statements – prophecies – recorded centuries before Jesus was ever born. This included specific details about the One who would come as the deliverer, such as –

- He would be born in Bethlehem and of a virgin
- He would be betrayed by a friend and sold for 30 pieces of silver
- He would be struck and spat on
- His hands and feet would be pierced – and so would His side
- The soldiers would throw dice for His clothes but would not break even a bone of his body
- He would be buried in a rich man's grave – and would rise again from the dead

Imagine the odds for any one

person living a life that matched even a few of these prophecies. Yet Jesus fulfilled them all. Without doubt He was THE One.

And God took all that trouble because of what the death of Jesus was designed to accomplish.

He was to die as a sacrifice to pay the debt all of us owe to God for failing to live His way.

The picture becomes clear when you take account of what happened at the time Jesus died. The record shows that at midday the sky went black – as black as midnight.

Again this had been foretold. Over 800 years before a Jewish prophet, Amos, wrote, "In that day, declares the Sovereign LORD, I will make the sun go down at noon and make the earth dark in broad daylight." (Amos 8:9)

That darkness points to the magnitude of what was taking place. It was a picture of the way Jesus had been abandoned due to our sin – and for the first time separated from his Father as He called out "My God, My God why have You forsaken Me?"

As Jesus became the curse of the world he drowned in our sin on a midnight afternoon.

And it was all for us – to make our forgiveness possible and so we can be clean and comfortable in God's presence.

But, of course, that calls for a response from us – one that calls for us to trust God with our life.

Peter Meadows is the co-author with Joseph Steinberg of The Book of Y the basis for the eight week Y Course that explores life's biggest questions.

## EASTER THOUGHTS

God proved His love on the cross. When Christ hung, and bled, and died, it was God saying to the world, 'I love you.'

Billy Graham

The resurrection is the central theme in every Christian sermon reported in the [Book of] Acts. The resurrection, and its consequences were the 'gospel' or good news which the Christians brought... The first fact in the history of Christendom is a number of people who say they have seen the resurrection.

C.S. Lewis

Few people seem to realize that the resurrection of Jesus is the cornerstone to a worldview that provides the perspective to all of life.

Josh McDowell

Let the resurrection joy lift us from loneliness and weakness and despair to strength and beauty and happiness.

Floyd W. Tomkins

## Challenge

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## Finance officer

CHALLENGE NEWS is currently seeking a skilled Finance Officer/Bookkeeper for our Perth office to play a crucial role in supporting the ministry's accounting and paper distribution functions.

This role will suit someone who has worked in a similar ministry organisation, with extensive experience in all aspects of bookkeeping, financial control and a strong knowledge of Reckon software.

The position will initially be two days per week and could suit applicants who are looking for a position during school hours.

To register your interest and receive further information, including responsibilities and a job description, please contact John Palandri (john@challengenews.org) or Len Lawrence (accounts@challengenews.org).

# CAPTURING CREATION

BY KEN DUNCAN

For me, becoming a believer in Jesus Christ was a supernatural journey. I grew up in a loving Christian home with parents who lived Godly lives. Wanting me to know God, my parents required me to go to church until I was 16.

Now, I am grateful for their wisdom, but younger me was rebellious. I used to get up early and hide to avoid going to church. One time I hid in a wheat silo on our neighbour's farm and only realised my mistake as I began sinking in the wheat.

Fortunately, my parents were relentless in searching for me. Another time, I climbed a huge tree. Near the top, a venomous snake started coming down towards me. Eventually, I gave in and went to church.

I believe God, like my earthly parents, is always looking to help His children. It is our sin (Self Indulgent Nature) that separates us from God.

We are born with the seed of sin since Adam and Eve made their big mistake in the garden of Eden. Believing Satan's lie, they ate from the one tree God told them not to eat from – the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Immediately they felt the consequence – separation from God.

Right from the beginning there was evidence of the spiritual war that rages on Earth for the souls of humanity.

God deeply desires connection with humanity, but He also gave us free will. So how can humanity reconnect with God? God first provided the Old Testament laws, with blood sacrifices to cover sin.

But humanity turned sinning into a business. So, God sent His precious Son, Jesus, to pay the ultimate price for our sins.

Jesus showed us the truth about His Heavenly Father,



Photographer Ken Duncan.

then He willingly laid down his life as a blood sacrifice for us. Jesus knew what faced Him, but He knew there was no other way. Jesus said, "... not My will, but Yours, be done." (Luke 22:42) If we believe in Him, our sins are washed away by His blood, and we are reconnected to God.

Younger me endured church, but that message seemed far too simple.

For years I went off photographing all over the world, while practising various belief systems, many of which contain some truth.

I pushed so hard in some ideologies that I almost lost my life. But my parents always prayed, and God had angels watching over me.

I had three miraculous encounters that eventually led me to surrender to Jesus.

First, I got involved in occult practices, thinking I had control over spiritual powers. One night, on top of Uluru (Ayers Rock) during a full moon, I was tormented by demonic spirits. The spiritual attack continued until I remembered the teachings from my youth and cried out "God help me!" The demonic powers were immediately cut off and I went to sleep for hours on that rock. When I awoke, I knew God had intervened, but still wasn't willing to give in.

“ I had run the gauntlet, and I was done fighting. ”

The second battle was in the body. While climbing, I took a fall that could have killed me, but only took skin off my foot and some other parts of my body.

The foot became badly infected and after long months of pain, a vascular specialist realised I had gangrene spreading through my foot. The doctors were discussing how

much of my foot they should amputate.

This was serious! I knew I had been running from Jesus. Again, in desperation, I called out to Jesus and a miracle happened. I felt Jesus' presence in my hospital room, the pain disappeared, and I went to sleep.

The next morning, the doctor was amazed. Gangrenous flesh had come back to life. As a man of science, he could not explain it, but he knew something miraculous had happened.

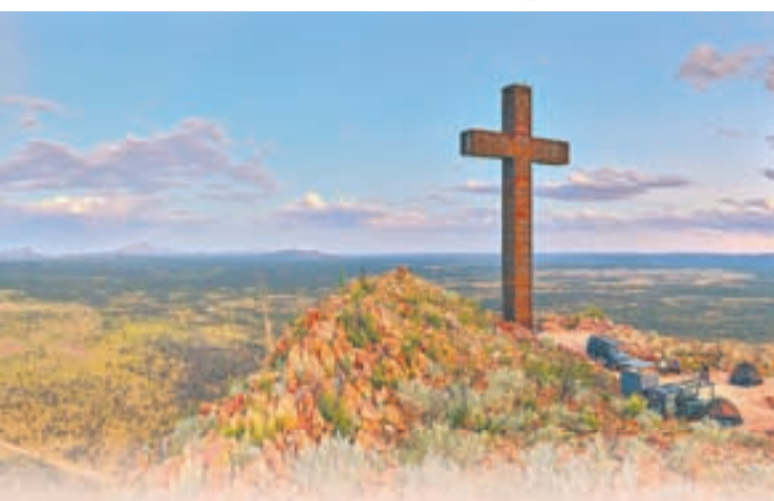
The doctor only amputated half of one toe and, if he had waited, I may have been healed completely. After that, you'd think I would give in. Not me!

My third encounter was that of the mind. While waiting for a photograph in the freezing wilderness of southwest Tasmania, I developed hypothermia. Just before my mind began to fail me, I got the image I wanted, and my mind told me to lie down and rest.

I would certainly have died there but, as I was drifting off to sleep, I clearly heard a voice say, "Get back to your car." That was the voice of God. I went back to my car, but everything was damp and cold, and I could not get warm. Once again, in desperation I called out, "God, please help me." Straight away, a warm glow hit the centre of my body and radiated out to my extremities.

The next morning, I realised God had helped me once again. I had run the gauntlet, and I was done fighting. Jesus was real and I had to do something about it.

Not long after that, I asked Jesus to be my Lord and Saviour.



## Crossing into forgiveness

AMID THE RUGGED beauty of the Northern Territory, a towering cross stands as a symbol of faith and forgiveness. Now a major outback tourism icon, the construction was a long time coming, commemorating a pivotal event in 1923, when four Indigenous leaders visited the Ikuntji community, 230km west of Alice Springs, to bring a message of forgiveness.

The local elders had been having dreams that something like this was coming and eagerly accepted the visitors' message that Jesus, the Son of God, came to Earth to die for mankind's sins.

When the surrounding communities heard about the visitors, they travelled for days to hear about Jesus and hundreds of people put their faith in Him as their Saviour.

The place these missionaries met the community members was on the flat area underneath what is now called Memory Mountain, named in remembrance that we are forgiven because of Jesus' death on the cross.

A monument was erected to commemorate the event and the community continues to follow Jesus to this day.

But the story of Memory Mountain did not end there. Decades later, in 2009, a new chapter began when renowned landscape photographer Ken Duncan visited the site to help create jobs for Indigenous people through tourism, music, creative arts and technology.

"They were having this thing called 'sing-along,'" Ken tells *Challenge News*. "They've been singing songs to Jesus since 1982 nearly every night. All of a sudden, the kids came to me and started saying, 'Ken, we've been seeing a vision of a cross up on top of the mountain and angels going up and down it (to and from heaven)... Then some of the women came up to me saying, 'We've been seeing it too. We need to put a cross on top of the mountain.' Then the elders come to me and said, 'Ken, we need to be building a cross on top of that mountain. We want people to understand that our land is covered by the blood of Jesus, and everyone is welcome, no matter what their beliefs, everyone is welcome, and it's a meeting place'"

A Christian since he had three supernatural encounters with God (see article on left), Ken initially thought they could go up there and construct something with "a few four by twos and a couple of bags of cement." Memory Mountain has spectacular 360-degree views of the surrounding countryside, and he quickly saw the potential of the community's dream for the location to become an iconic outback tourist destination. Ken had been walking alongside the Indigenous people of central Australia for many years and in 2010 he incorporated the Walk A While Foundation to help them tell their stories using their creative gifts.

"If you really want to know someone, you need to 'walk a while' with them," Ken explains.

“ We need to put a cross on top of the mountain. ”

The foundation raised almost \$2.5 million to build the Forgiveness Cross, a 20-metre-high steel structure whose foundations go six metres down into the rocky mountaintop.

Proudly spearheaded by the local elders and traditional land-owners, every step of

the construction process involved consultation with the local Indigenous population.

Finally the Forgiveness Cross was launched during the Easter celebrations in 2023, exactly 100 years since the four Indigenous pastors first brought the message of Jesus' forgiveness and salvation. Musicians came from all over Australia to join in the massive sing-along celebration.

Memory Mountain now hosts photography and cultural tours and a big creative arts festival is being planned. "We're looking at having tribes coming from all over Australia," Ken shares. "Anybody who wants to come will be able to come and camp there."

Ken says it will be a unique experience with creative workshops in a variety of fields like music and film. "The base of all creativity is the Creator," Ken says. "So we need a creative workshop that's not ashamed to be open to the Creator."

But there is much work to be done before this can happen. "We need amenities for visitors – power, water and toilets. If we all got together, we could do this so quickly."

For more information or to get involved, visit [www.walkawhile.org.au](http://www.walkawhile.org.au) or [www.memorymountain.com.au](http://www.memorymountain.com.au).

**nudge** WITH KARL FAASE

### Unbearable emptiness

**BILL HAYDEN IS** a well-known Australian ALP politician who was foreign minister under Bob Hawke and went on to be Australia's Governor General. All his life as a politician he was well known as an atheist.

Then, at the age of 85, Hayden converted to Christianity and was baptised. Greg Sheridan tells this story in his book titled *Christians* and he records the answer Hayden gave to his question about what changed his mind.

Hayden answered: "I couldn't bear the emptiness. In my mind there was an emptiness without belief."

Hayden's story is a reminder that it's never too late to consider revisiting the existence of God.

Can I encourage you to open a Bible and read again what it has to say about faith in Jesus? You might find an answer to the unbearable emptiness.

• Continued on page 10

# THE POWER AND THE PASSION



**D**r Esme Bamblett is a Bangerang and Wiradjuri woman. She was born in Leighton, New South Wales, and grew up in Shepparton, Victoria. The Bangerang people are from the Murray Goulbourn area.

The Wiradjuri People are the people of the three rivers – the Wambool (Macquarie), the Calare (Lachlan) and the Murrumbidgee.

Esme was just nine years old when American Christian evangelist Franklin Graham passed through her little home church in Shepparton, Victoria.

“I believe that’s when I gave my heart to the Lord,” says Esme. “I’ve been a Christian for most of my life. My passion is for the Lord.”

Esme is also passionate about family, Indigenous affairs, Indigenous history and Indigenous culture.

Esme is the chief executive of the Aborigines Advancement League, one of the oldest Indigenous organisations in Australia. It is primarily concerned with Indigenous welfare issues and the preservation of Indigenous culture and heritage.

Esme completed her PhD in Koori Identity in

2010. She has five children, 16 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

“I like big families. My mum is one of 14 children. I actually wanted to have 10 children but I stopped myself at five. All my children are born again Christians. They’ve been reared up in the nurture of the Lord,” says Esme.

“I’m a historian. I love history so I like stories. I could tell you a lot of stories about me and Jesus.

“Me and Jesus, we have a good thing going. He has done so many miracles in my life. He has looked after me and protected me through everything.

“I trekked to Queensland with my first husband, that’s 2000 kilometres or even 3000 kilometres...1900 miles it was back then.

“It took six days and we never had a cent. We stayed on the side of the road. I prayed every morning for a ride, and we got a ride every day.

“I love that Jesus loves me. He loves me unconditionally. He has always been there through thick and thin. Even at my worst, Jesus has been there.”

This story is used with kind permission from 40 Stories. To watch Esme’s story as well as others in video form, go to [40stories.org.au](http://40stories.org.au)



The Empress of Ireland. Photo: Getty Images.

## Sacrifice and salvation

BY HARRIET COOMBE

**THE TRAGEDY OF** the sinking of the Titanic is well-known across the world but you may not have heard about another ship, the Empress of Ireland, which sank two years later, in May 1914.

The 1477 passengers on board were on their way from Canada to London in foggy conditions when it was struck by a Norwegian coal ship, creating a large hole in the middle of the ship.

The Empress of Ireland sank rapidly, taking just 14 minutes to disappear beneath the water. Because of this, only a few lifeboats could be launched. Sadly, many passengers were trapped below deck, asleep in their cabins, and had little chance to escape. Only 465 people survived, making it one of the worst peacetime maritime disasters.

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

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

### The heart of Easter

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

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

Good Friday is the day we remember Jesus’ death. The reason it is called “Good” is because of what it means for us – His death bought our forgiveness and eternal life. Three days later He rose again, demonstrating His victory over sin, death, and the grave, proving He is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Our response to Jesus’ sacrifice is simple. Romans 10:9 says: “If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

### Answering the question

The question posed by those Salvation Army members in freezing waters in 1914 is as important today as it was over a century ago: “Do you know Jesus?” If you have not yet made the decision to follow Christ, today can be your moment of salvation. See the box on page 11 entitled *How do I Become a Christian* for more information.

## From close calls to a calling

**R**ob Skewes can recall many close calls during his childhood – situations that almost ended in tragedy. Looking back now, he recalls three specific events and considers how he managed to escape disaster.

The first incident was in 1966, when at the age of 13, Rob’s appendix burst. “Rushed by ambulance to hospital and immediately carted off to surgery, I spent almost four weeks in recovery,” he recalls. “Six months later, I then needed a follow-up operation.” Other close calls followed.

“One day, six or so friends and I were crammed into a Mini Moke – a vehicle as safe as a sardine can and not much bigger,” Rob shares. “Laughing and joking, we were waiting at a main road intersection for the traffic lights to change. As the lights turned green, we were about to move off, when through a gap in the Mini Moke’s canvas top, I saw a huge truck running a red light. I shouted, ‘Stop!’ and thankfully the driver listened – for the truck barely missed squashing us flat.”

The third incident was when Rob and his friends tried to make a tunnel to connect their backyards.

“Hidden beneath a harmless-looking tunnel entrance, we constructed a wooden trapdoor,” he explains. “And beneath the trapdoor was a ladder. Eventually the tunnel grew to be several metres long and reached a depth of about three metres – a distance we measured with the aid of a post hole digger. Some weeks later, our parents found out and put an end to the thing, though I still shudder to think about what might have happened.”

Rob now says the power of prayer protected him and his friends.

He grew up in a Christian home and attended Sunday school and Boys’ Brigade as a child but decided he had had enough of going to church when he was about 13.

“This resulted in me going to my maternal grandmother’s house on Sundays to cut her lawns and do



Rob Skewes with his wife Heather.

odd jobs, all while listening to my favourite pop music radio station,” Rob remembers. “My work done, I would then sit down to enjoy a roast lunch with my grandmother while we watched a local football show on TV. This was an arrangement I quite enjoyed.

“In hindsight, I can see this situation must have prompted my paternal grandmother and others to pray more earnestly for me. And thank goodness they did.”

After high school, Rob got a casual job while waiting to start teacher’s college. He remembers flipping through a Christian book which was in his parents’ car.

“The book was about prophetic insights on Israel in the world today. It made a compelling link with God’s Word as a historical document and a living God, active and working today.

“Then a former Sunday school mate began attending a new church. I tagged along. I found the preaching style engaging, the mix of music refreshing, the conversation enjoyable, and most importantly for me at the time, the church youth friendly and inclusive.”

Guest speakers such as young earth creationist Dr Carl Weiland spoke at the church, arousing Rob’s curiosity.

“Popular Christian musicians would sometimes turn up,” Rob says. “Now and then, Dean Hutton of *Curiosity Show* fame would give interesting children’s Gospel presentations using science.

“I came to understand that intelligent thinking about science, a love of music and interest in the arts did not have to be discarded just because one became a Christian.”

Then one night he came home late from a disco, feeling restless. “I turned on the TV,” he remembers. “On came [Christian speaker] Billy Graham. I listened, struck by his message. I knew in my heart he was right. I was a sinner. I needed God’s grace and forgiveness. There and then, I made the decision to follow Christ.”

When Rob began working as a teacher, he found the job demanding but rewarding. “But the real challenge was staying true to my faith in a secular setting. Non-Christian colleagues could be friendly, but distant. I sometimes felt a sense of exclusion. Importantly however, I gradually learnt how to be my true self as a Christian in the workplace.”

It wasn’t long though before Rob’s colleagues began to respect his authentic faith and admire his courage to stand up for what he believed in. As Rob reflects on his life, he recognises the many (often unseen) people who invested time and prayer into his life.

“The older I get, the more and more I’m convinced that even through the most daunting of childhood and traumatic youthful experiences, God has placed people to invest in lives. If only we knew the full story. Well, there’s a way to perhaps start pulling back the veil. Come humbly before our Father God and start a faith conversation with Him today.”

Rob is a retired primary school teacher and a history author. He is married to Heather and lives in Adelaide.

“I gradually learnt how to be my true self.”

# Hebrew professor sheds light

JONATHAN SARFATI  
INTERVIEWS DR  
ANDREW STEINMANN OF  
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

For most of Church history, Jewish and Christian scholars have understood Genesis 1 to teach literal creation days.

For example, James Barr, Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford University, said: “Probably, so far as I know, there is no professor of Hebrew or Old Testament at any world-class university who does not believe that the writer(s) of Genesis 1-11 intended to convey to their readers the ideas that:

- Creation took place in a series of six days which were the same as the days of 24 hours we now experience;

- The figures contained in the Genesis genealogies provided by simple addition a chronology from the beginning of the world up to later stages in the biblical story and;

- Noah’s flood was understood to be world-wide and extinguished all human and animal life except for those in the ark.<sup>1</sup>

Although Dr Barr understood what Genesis taught, he did not believe it. Dr Andrew Steinmann, Distinguished Professor of Theology and Hebrew of Concordia University, on the other hand, believes it whole-heartedly.

Dr Steinmann is a lifelong Christian who has authored several commentaries on Old Testament books and has also pastored a church and a retirement home.

He uses his comprehensive knowledge to refute those who argue against the literal interpretation of Genesis.

Some will argue that the word for ‘day’ in Hebrew, ‘yôm’, is not so clear in Genesis 1, because it can have several different meanings.

Take the English expression ‘in my father’s day’, which does not mean a literal day.<sup>2</sup>

That familiar turn of phrase contains contextual clues as to the meaning of the word ‘day’ and in Hebrew as in English, Dr Steinmann says, context is everything.

The preposition ‘in’, he says, implies an era, in contrast to a preposition such as ‘on’ which implies a point in time, a particular day (i.e. on the first day of the week).

“These clues are often obvious to native speakers of a language, but not so obvious to those for whom the language is not native. So, for Genesis, we must be very careful to look for the contextual clues, since no one today is a native speaker of ancient Hebrew.”

In Genesis 1, the six creation days close with the phrase, “There was an evening, and there was a morning.” Could this allow for creation days millions of years long, as ‘day-age’ theorists teach?

“Absolutely not!” Dr Steinmann replies. “Clearly this phrase used in this context notes the day-night cycle, a cycle begun on the first day with the creation of light. Moreover, this phrase is repeated five more times to emphasize that there is a succession of six solar days<sup>3</sup> during which God created the world.” (Gen-



Dr Andrew Steinmann of Concordia University

esis 1:8, 13, 19, 23, 31)

Furthermore, the days have a number. The beginning day of creation week is “day one”, further support for a 24-hour day.<sup>4,5</sup>

Dr Steinmann explains: “There was an evening, and there was a morning, one day” essentially says ‘evening + morning = one day.’

“In this context day is clearly defined as being a regular day...”

However, this pattern changes slightly for the last two days of creation week, because the text has the Hebrew article ‘ha’ (‘the’).

Dr Steinmann explains why: “The sixth and seventh days are highlighted as special days. On the sixth day God created humans to rule over the earth, and God consecrated the seventh day as the day He ceased His work of creating.

“Even the numbering of these days in the Hebrew text is somewhat unusual. The normal Hebrew constructions for ‘the sixth day’ and ‘the seventh day’ are not used.

“Instead, the text says ‘a day, the sixth one’ and ‘a day, the seventh one’ to highlight these two important days of the first week.”

Furthermore, it’s clear from the context that Genesis was intended to teach actual historical events.

Dr Steinmann, a published expert on Old Testament history and chronology,<sup>6</sup> points out: “Not only do these chapters contain narratives about people and their acts, but they are also linked to persons through genealogical accounts (e.g. Genesis 5, 10, 11:10-32).

“These genealogies testify to the real, historical nature of the persons in the narratives.”

Furthermore, Genesis 1-11 blends seamlessly into Genesis 12-50, and the latter can’t be understood without the former history.

Dr Steinmann elaborates: “The Genesis narrative slows at Genesis 12 to give us more detailed accounts of the events in the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but even these accounts are interspersed with genealogies (e.g. Ishmael’s descendants in Genesis 25:12-18).

“The events of the latter chapters of Genesis are so well documented... that we can confidently date many of the events of the lives of Israel’s patriarchs.”

Many in the church claim that the understanding of the days of Gen-

esis is a ‘side issue’. But Dr Steinmann disagrees: “Genesis is vitally important because the very gospel is at stake. Evolutionary theory holds that populations evolve, not individuals.

“But the Scriptures are clear that sin came into the world through one man, and the deliverance from sin through the one man Christ Jesus (Romans 5:12-15).

“If Adam was not literally the first human and the first sinner, then there is no reason for us to trust the work of Christ, ‘the last Adam’ and ‘the second man’ of the two, to deliver us from sin and death (1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-47:10).”

Why do many theologians deny what Genesis clearly says? Dr Steinmann feels they have capitulated to the world’s false philosophy.

“Because evolutionary theory and long-age dogma have become so widespread among scientists and so accepted in today’s world, many conservative biblical commentators have felt the need to somehow produce an explanation of the Genesis creation account that can be seen as being in harmony with what much of the educated world now accepts as established fact,” says Dr Steinmann.

“These explanations not only deny the plain meaning of Genesis, but also inevitably lead to denial of basic Christian doctrine, such as the atoning work of Christ.”

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Dr Andrew Steinmann holds a B.S.Ch.E. (chemical engineering) from the University of Cincinnati, OH; an M. Div. from Concordia Theological Seminary (Ft. Wayne, IN); and a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Studies from the University of Michigan. He has served as pastor to both a church and a retirement home. Dr Steinmann is now Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Theology and Hebrew at Concordia University Chicago, a conservative Lutheran liberal arts university. He is the author of over 20 books, including several commentaries on Old Testament books, and many theological papers, and is a member of the National Association of Professors of Hebrew.

## Believe it or not

BY CREATION MINISTRIES  
INTERNATIONAL

### SEVERED SLUG’S SLICK SURVIVAL SYSTEM

BY PHILIP ROBINSON,  
CREATION MINISTRIES  
INTERNATIONAL

**THE SEA SLUG’S** head immediately began moving around on its own after becoming separated from its body, shocking discoverer Sayaka Mitoh, then a doctoral student at Nara Women’s University in Japan.

“We thought that it would die soon without a heart and other important organs, but we were surprised again to find that it regenerated the whole body,” she said.<sup>1</sup>

After this accidental discovery, Mitoh conducted further research on two species of sea slug, *Elysia cf. marginata* and *Elysia atroviridis*.<sup>2</sup>

Voluntary shedding of a body part is called autotomy (Greek ‘self-cutting’). It is thought that losing the body is a defensive mechanism in reaction to a build-up of parasites or toxins in the body, which can inhibit reproduction. The sea slugs have a “transverse groove at their neck, which appears to be a predetermined ‘breakage plane’ from which the body breaks away.

Mitoh and her colleague, aquatic ecology professor Yoichi Yusa, gently tied a fine nylon string around this groove in six slugs. Five of them autotomized at that groove within a day. The remaining slug took nine days because the string shifted. After autotomy, *E. marginata* regenerated its entire body in about 20 days. *E. atroviridis* took only seven.

Both species are sacoglossan or ‘solar-powered’ sea slugs, thanks to chloroplasts that they integrate into their bodies from algae that they eat. (Chloroplasts are tiny factories that plants use to photosynthesize, i.e. make energy-containing sugars from sunlight, water, and air.) This process is known as kleptoplasty (Greek: ‘plast-stealing’). The chloroplasts continue their photosynthesis from light passing through the translucent skin of the slug. The animals can fuel their bodies from the chloroplasts’ photosynthesis, because of the way their digestive systems are spread around their bodies.

Sacoglossan sea slugs are the only multicellular animals known to do this. Mitoh and Yusa suggest that this ability enables them to survive long enough to regenerate another body after shedding the previous one.

The researchers conclude that “autotomy in this study is remarkable in that animals with complex body plans can survive even if they lose the main body.” Evolutionists must assert that this system evolved by a naturalistic trial-and-error, step-by-step process. Imagine a sea slug that had accumulated accidental DNA changes (mutations) that caused it to cast off its body. Unless it had already evolved all of the machinery and programming required to regenerate its entire cast-off body, it would be dead, and there would be no further offspring, obviously. So those DNA changes would not pass to future generations, and the whole process would have come to an end.

In short, it seems that, like for so many other natural marvels, all the components of the system would need to be present together to be of any benefit. Which means it could not have evolved by any Darwinian process in ‘stages’. Such a wonder of nature should rightly be ascribed to the Creator God of Genesis.

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# SAVED BY ACCIDENT

## A grandfather's legacy

"I had no hope of life. I thought of suicide."

These words of despair are hard to read coming from anyone but are even more heart-wrenching coming from a boy of seven. Yet this was exactly how Tanzanian Emmanuel Agisten, now 24, felt at that age. His twin brother had died and left him feeling very alone. He tells *Challenge News*: "After the death of my brother I lost confidence in everything as a child. I understood that once you die you are gone forever and that is the end of everything."



Emmanuel Agisten

"The world became hard to understand or process."

Two things stopped the youngster from doing anything drastic: first of all, he says he had "a feeling the world would continue without me anyway."

The other thing that stopped him was when his grandfather, who was a pastor, told him that if he gave his life to Jesus Christ he would see his brother again. "My grandfather helped me find comfort," Emmanuel shares. "I prayed to commit my life to Jesus Christ and gave my life to the Lord at the age of seven. Many people doubted I could be saved at that age but I told them I remember the transformation in my life after my grandfather passed. I didn't feel alone; I felt comfort in my prayers."

Emmanuel's beloved grandfather passed away a year later, but the lessons he taught his grandson have stood the test of time.

"He always taught me to ask the Lord for the Spirit of excellence, so that I could do what He asks of me. I also pray whenever I feel low, or when I need courage. I still do all this today."

Emmanuel says his trust in the Lord has given him the confidence to ask his Heavenly Father for anything.

"I have never lacked for anything. Any desire I would ask in my heart, and He granted me through the Spirit."

"My grandfather told me there is nothing I cannot do. God has given me many gifts and talents so that I can boast in Him. I remember when I had no confidence because I didn't have any talent. I prayed 'Lord Jesus may Your Spirit of excellence make me excellent also' and I began to excel."

"I prayed for my mother to be healed, and she was healed. I prayed to have the ability to play soccer, be wise, obedient and respectful. The Lord did all this for me; He saved me for His good use."

"Through the love and grace of God, Jesus has directed me to areas and places in my life where I can love others."

His personal message of faith to others is that there is no other comforter or healer than Jesus. "If you seek a personal relationship with Jesus, He shapes you through circumstances, people, places and experiences in order for you to be ready and equipped for where He is taking you."

"In Jesus Christ alone is hope found. There's no place in the world to find your identity or wholeness. We've heard of miracles of parting of seas and healing to the blind and lame, but the greatest miracle was the death of Jesus for mankind, which is me and you."

Emmanuel's favourite Bible verse is Romans 8:38 – "For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

BY SIMEON NEO

Like any 17-year-old, Hoi Lim Cheang was excited about getting her driver's license. Relishing in her newfound independence, she set out on the road.

However, she got distracted by an overturned sports car and missed the pedestrian right in front of her.

"I didn't realise there was a pedestrian picking up stuff on the road," she tells *Challenge News*.

"It was too late for me to slow down, so I hit him."

"He rolled over the front of my car and his head hit the windscreen. Then he rolled back down to the ground."

The impact was so bad that her windscreen had a noticeable crack. In shock, she did the first thing that came to mind – pray.

Growing up in Ipoh, her parents practiced religious traditions like ancestral worship and burning offerings for the dead.

"But they sent us to children church on Sunday mornings since they saw it as free day-care," says the 28-year-old Perth resident.

"So my siblings and I grew up in church but without knowing who God was."

At church she learned to pray.

"To me, the Christian God was just a god I could call on whenever I didn't do my homework."

So when she found herself in the accident, Hoi Lim said a quick prayer.

"I told God, 'If You are real, help me. If You help me, I'll go back to church.'"

After the prayer, the pedestrian she had hit got up and walked to the side of the road.

"He was very nice to me and said that he knew I was a new driver. When I offered to make a police report, he said no because he knew that it would affect my provisional license."

"A few days later, he texted me to say that the medical check found no major injuries apart from some soft tissue damage, and that he didn't need me to pay for anything since he had insurance coverage."

"That's when it struck me – God is a loving Father who wanted to teach me a gentle but strong lesson."

"But He didn't cause harm to me or the pedestrian. The only thing that was harmed was my windscreen."

Struck by the reality of God's love, Hoi Lim kept to her promise to start attending church.

"I went back to church and opened my heart to learn what Christianity is all about."

At church, she responded to the pastor's invitation to commit her life to Jesus.

"But I didn't understand what it meant."

When Hoi Lim moved to Kuala Lumpur, she met a mentor who shared with her the Gospel [the



Hoi Lim Cheang

I am to God. If I'm far from Him, I'll feel more anxious and less joyful."

But her story doesn't end there.

Now a second-year emergency medical officer, she recently encountered a patient with similar circumstances that reminded her of her own car accident more than 10 years ago.

"The situation of the car accident was the same as mine. The pedestrian was also hit by a car, rolled up the car and hit the windshield before rolling back down. It was exactly the same situation."

However, unlike in Hoi Lim's situation, the patient suffered major injuries that were life-threatening.

"The patient had two different types of brain haemorrhage, multiple fractures and bleeding in the lungs."

"I was there to receive the patient first-hand and I thought, 'This is how bad it could've been.'"

Thinking about the contrast between the two accidents, she says, "It was purely a miracle."

Reflecting on what life would've been like without Jesus, she says, "I think I would be like my other colleagues who work day and night, just to chase after material things. I'd also be angry at everyone all the time and hold on to grudges."

"In fact, I wouldn't even be here in Perth!"

message that Jesus came to die in place of man's sins] in a way that she understood.

"He disciplined me and taught me about asking God for forgiveness, God's grace and mercy."

"This was the first time someone was patient enough listen to all my questions and I was able to clear all my doubts."

"That's also when I encountered the Gospel and made a decision."

Hoi Lim prayed a prayer of commitment to Jesus [like the one on page 11]. Since then, she has seen her life change over the years.

"The biggest change is knowing that I have no right to judge anyone. God is the source of forgiveness and God has already forgiven me."

"Who am I not to forgive?"

Another change she noticed was her relationship with money.

"I used to be very stingy with money and I would chase after money since this was how I grew up."

"But after knowing Jesus, I know this is not what I should be chasing after."

Hoi Lim also experiences peace and joy that she knows comes from God.

"It's a benchmark for how close



Hoi Lim Cheang when she was 17.

### A DIFFERENT MAP

A Joyful Toon by Mike Waters



How can a young person stay on the path of purity?

By living according to Your word.

- Psalm 119:9 NIV

  
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Published 11 months of the year by Challenge Literature Fellowship (ABN 98 206 125 814).  
 Editor: Harriet Coombe.  
 Staff writers: Janice Teo, Simeon Neo.  
 PRICING: [au.challenge.news/pricing/](http://au.challenge.news/pricing/)  
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# Easter's gift of peace

**D**anica McKellar might be known for her iconic role as Winnie Cooper in the 1988 beloved series, *The Wonder Years*, but in the education community, she is renowned for penning a series of children's maths books. Today, the *Dancing with the Stars* alumna is a popular rom-com actress, often appearing in romantic comedy films by Hallmark and Great American Family.

Throughout her career, she has appeared in more than 20 romantic comedies. Her latest film, *A Cinderella Christmas Ball*, premiered last year. In an interview with Michael Foust on *Crosswalk Videos*, Danica describes why she loves romantic comedies.

"[It's] not just giving people an escape but also modelling human behaviour that hopefully will be inspirational," she explains.

"It's about seeing what human nature can be and then hopefully inspiring the audience to strive for that."

This comes as no surprise as the actress and author grew up with a strong moral compass and "a sense of doing something because it's the right thing just because it's the right thing to do."

"But I never really understood where that came from," she admits.

Growing up in Los Angeles, she had been exposed to the Christian faith, with her father converting to Christianity in his 40s. But Danica remained resistant.

"I'd always been so biased against Christianity for various reasons, mostly because of the bad reputation it's gotten with causing wars," she shares with *Fox News*. "You think,



Candace Cameron-Bure (left) and Danica McKellar in 2016. (Photo by Jerod Harris/Getty Images)

'Oh, Christians are these really judgmental people,' and all this religious stuff."

In an interview with CBN News, she says, "I'd always thought of religion and Christianity as being restrictive and limiting somehow."

So it came as a surprise when in April of 2022, the 47-year-old announced on a live Instagram video that she had made the decision to accept Jesus into her life.

"It all started one evening when I was struggling with the idea of forgiveness and DM'd my good friend @candacebure about a passage from the Bible she had read on her Instastories, and then she sent me a Bible, and invited me to church," Danica shares.

Fellow actress Candace Cameron Bure is known for openly sharing about her Christian faith online, including reading passages from the Bible on social media.

"I was curious and I'd been

listening to when [she] would read the Bible on [her] Instastories," Danica shares on Candace's YouTube channel.

"I always felt so comforted and happy."

It was the Sunday before Easter that Danica visited the church. In commemoration of Easter, the church performed a play dramatising the last days of Jesus' life, leading up to the crucifixion.

As she watched the play, Danica felt like she "suddenly understood".

"There was something about watching Jesus do things even if they're hard because it's the right thing to do.

"It just hit me like a wave. It was immediate. The Holy Spirit [the unseen presence of God] just flooded me."

That was the night that Danica accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Saviour.

"It was like these [romantic comedies] that we do. Like finding this relationship with Jesus and realising, 'Oh, it's You. It's always been You.'

"At its core, this is the most miraculous and incredible gift in the whole wide world."

When she came home from church, she decided to share her new faith publicly.

"I was like, 'This is the most amazing thing ever' and I just wanted everybody to know and have this and that this relationship is there for them if they just ask for it and seek it.

"I'm experiencing a relationship with God and Jesus that I've never had before."

Since then, Danica has read the entire Bible.

"It's a lot of information and I want to [read] it again to let it soak in more."

Three years on, she continues to have the same peace and joy that she had the night she received Jesus into her life. Though life for Danica is

not without its troubles, she now has "a different way of dealing with them".

"I don't have to figure everything out," she says. "That's not my burden. I get to turn it over to God.

"You don't feel alone anymore in your moments where you are by yourself. You're not alone. [That's] available to everybody at any time.

"My wish for the world is that they would feel that [peace] as well and be open to God's love because it's transformative, and it's there for everyone."

“I don't have to figure everything out. That's not my burden.”



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nudge

WITH KARL FAASE

## Wake me up inside

**THE BAND EVANESCENCE** released a song back in 2003 called *Bring Me to Life*. While it's over 20 years old now, it still has some great truths to consider. The songwriter cries out "wake me up inside" and to "save me from the nothing I've become." What a great challenge for us today.

We can think that being asleep is doing nothing but it is possible to be busy, really busy and yet asleep. We can be asleep to all the opportunities around us and to what life could hold. We can be asleep in busyness, in work, in acquisition, in our relationships and all the activities that fill up our time.

There is so much more to life than working to acquire and consume. There is love of our family and friends, there is beauty that surrounds us – in nature and in art – and there's a God who cares for us. Wake up to the possibilities in life and the opportunity of a relationship with God. Recognise that God is reaching out to you. God does not want to stop you from enjoying life but in fact to complete you and for you to experience fulfilment. You were created to live in a relationship with God. God wants to bring you to life.

# Capturing creation

• From page 3

The simple act of acknowledging that Jesus died on the cross for my sins, and giving Him authority over my life, brought a peace to my life that can only be truly understood through personal experience.

Jesus said to know God, we need to be born again. We were all born of the flesh; we had no say in that. When we are born again of the Spirit, it is our choice.

My life now as a Christian is very exciting. As a creative person, I love being connected to the Creator of all. My favourite Scripture is, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13) Nothing is impossible with Jesus. When we surrender to God, angels rejoice and demons tremble.

Leonardo da Vinci said, "Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication."

The truth of Jesus' story is very simple. Jesus came to make a way for our sins to be forgiven so we can be reconnected with God. When we receive the free gift of His grace, we can be empowered through the Holy Spirit to fulfil God's destiny for our lives. We have authority in Jesus' name to overcome anything the world may throw at us.

God loves us, but our choices determine whether we connect with His divine power.

He gave us free will, so we get to write the narrative of our own lives.

To experience the reality of what Jesus called being, "born again of the Spirit," we need to let go, and let God show us the way. To know God is to experience peace that transcends all circumstances.

If you would like to have that peace, see the *How do I Become a Christian* box on page 11. Then get ready to meet the supernatural God who is alive and well.

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Ken Duncan

## Recipe of the month

# Hot cross bun and butter pudding

**AN EASTER TWIST** on the old favourite bread and butter pudding.

### Ingredients

6 hot cross buns  
30g butter, softened  
2 eggs  
1 cup milk  
1 cup cream  
½ tsp cinnamon  
¼ cup caster sugar  
1 tsp vanilla essence  
1 tsp icing sugar (for dusting)  
Custard or ice cream (for serving)



### Method

Preheat your oven to 180°C (fan bake). Grease a large bowl with butter.

Slice hot cross buns 1 cm thick and spread each piece with a generous amount of butter. Arrange slices side by side in the bowl.

In a separate bowl whisk together eggs, milk, cream, cinnamon, sugar and vanilla then pour over the hot cross buns. Leave to soak for 10 minutes before putting it in to the oven. Bake for 35 mins until golden and cooked through.

Dust with icing sugar and serve with ice cream or custard.

# BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

## The most important relationship

BY ROB FURLONG

**BECAUSE THIS COLUMN** is about building better relationships, and because it's Easter, I want to focus on the most important relationship of all – our relationship with God.

Easter is preceded by the season known as Lent. This has been a 40-day spiritual exercise practiced within the church for almost 2000 years and is still observed by Christians of all persuasions today.

It has been regarded as a time of self-denial, self-control, and spiritual growth – a time of preparation of the heart to focus on the dramatic and world changing events of Easter – the death of Jesus for the sins of the world and His resurrection from the dead three days later. Whether you agree with it or not, the Bible has a lot to say about God and how our relationship with Him has been broken.

It also has a lot to say about how God has gone about restoring that relationship through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus.

Our relationship with God has been broken because we have all sinned. Sin is not a word many of us are comfortable with because we tend to define it by actions like murder or stealing. We defend ourselves by saying, "I don't do those sorts of things!" But the heart of sin is an attitude that says, "I want to run my life my way, not God's way – I don't want God telling me what to do!"

All of us have been guilty of that attitude at some point in our lives. As a result, our relationship with God is broken, and we live under the sentence of death.

Thankfully, God has not left the matter there. The Bible tells us that God's love for each one of us – yes, that includes you – is so great and immeasurable, that He has not treated us as we deserve.

On a gloomy Friday afternoon, with His life ebbing away and surrounded by a jeering, hate-filled mob of accusers spitting and cursing at Him, Jesus uttered some astounding words: "Father forgive them..."



In that awful, dreadful moment, He still found it within Him to forgive. This is the essence of Easter: forgiveness.

Incredibly, He sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sin, in our place, and when we make a deliberate choice to turn away from our rebellion against God and put our trust and faith in Jesus and what He has done, God forgives us and gives us eternal life!

It is so simple, yet many people either miss it, or stumble over it!

Your relationship with God can be restored this Easter by praying the following prayer which I have adapted from a great Christian leader, John Wesley. I think it beautifully reflects the heart's desire of those who want to sincerely follow Jesus:

*"O merciful Father, do not consider what I have done against you; but what my blessed Savior has done for me.*

*Don't consider what I have made of myself, but what He is making of*

*me for you my God. O that Christ may be 'wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption' to my soul. May His precious blood cleanse me from all my sins, and your Holy Spirit renew and sanctify my soul.*

*May He crucify my flesh with its passion and lusts, and cleanse me in every way."*

Amen. Easter also calls us to forgive others. As God has freely forgiven us, so we extend our forgiveness to those who have wronged or hurt us. When we forgive, we build better relationships.

May your Easter be blessed, your relationship with God restored, and your relationships with others, as you receive and give His forgiveness.

Take some time to reflect on having your relationship with God restored and where and how your relationships with others can also be healed.

### HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

Anyone can gain the eternal life offered though 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. 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Challenge Literature Fellowship, PO Box 978, Cloverdale WA 6985  
info@challengenews.org

All overseas enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country

## Thankfulness

BY PETER BRAIN

MANY YEARS AGO, Albert Einstein wrote, "A hundred times every day I remind myself that my inner and outer life depend upon the labours of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received and am still receiving."

The truth of Einstein's experience is borne out by the way that parents seek to teach their children to say "thank you."

I can remember my mum and dad saying, "Don't forget to say 'thank you.'"

The Sunday school chorus reminded us to be thankful not only to others but to God the source of all blessings. Do you remember it?

"Count your blessings, name them one by one.

"Count your blessings, see what God has done.

"Count your blessings, name them one by one.

"And it will surprise you what the Lord has done."

Thankfulness has many very attractive cousins: contentment, generosity, respect and trust in God to name a few. Ingratitude on the other hand spawns many ugly habits in us.

These include jealousy, covetousness, bitterness, pride and discontent.

The observation that "sickness is catching and health isn't" alerts us to the fact that we need to actively train ourselves and encourage one another to be thankful (both to God and to others).

I've never heard a parent saying, "Remember to be ungrateful!"

Thankfulness practised can transform us, our families, workplaces, community and churches.

Dr Arch Hart reports that, "In one university study, people suffering from a painful neuro-muscular disorder were instructed to regularly keep a record of things they could be grateful for. A kind word from someone. A gift from a neighbour. The smell of orange blossoms in the spring.

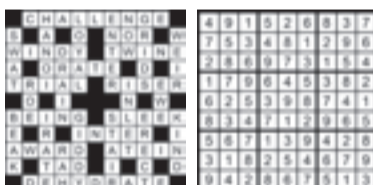
Life is full of little things to be grateful for, and the sufferers learned to count their blessings.

The results were astonishing. Improving in their pain management, they felt happier and emotionally more stable."

In the Bible, God commands us to be thankful – not only so that we recognise our dependence on Him but it also for our good.

In my own experience it does me good because being actively thankful towards God takes me out of my sinful propensity to feel sorry for myself and at the same time recognise the wonderful provision

He has made in giving me the friendship and help of others. I am so grateful to God for His innumerable blessings.



### Want to explore more?

Here are some free, helpful, Christian online resources

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





# SOUL SURFER



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

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

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

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

"My buddy was inviting me to church and I kept saying, 'No, I don't know what that's about.' I kind of wanted to go because I had friends that were going, but I was stubborn and proud, and I just wanted to do things that I knew. Then one day after my buddy had asked a bunch of times and I said no a bunch of times, he asked me whether I believed in God, and I said, 'I have no idea. I

don't even know, really.' I remember I was going to say no; I wanted to fight. But then I remember I really thought about it and said, 'I have no idea.' I was a little embarrassed having to say that. Then I asked him, 'And you? Do you believe in God?' And he said, 'Yeah, I do.' And I was like, 'Wow. That's chill.'

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

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

"I still had a lot of questions, so I started reading and researching apologetics and other faith-related things. Because I said, 'If this is the

truth, I want to know and I have a lot of questions for it to answer.' So I read C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*. And it follows the argument from a moral side, how that points to God. I read a bit of the Bible too, but it was just a little confusing for me at the time. Then it started to make more and more sense, and eventually I became a Christian four or five months after going to church that first time.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I've had a lot of good conversations come out of that, where people

are like, 'Wow, okay. I didn't know that's how you looked at it.'"

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

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

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



Corey with his wife, Heidi.

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