

TRANSFORMED OVERNIGHT

Ada Boland's life changed forever after a supernatural experience when she was a teenager.

When Ada Boland was 15 years old she had a supernatural encounter which not only changed her life forever, but impacted her entire family.

Ada was born in St George in South West Queensland, the sixth child of the late Lindsay and Betty Boland (nee Hall). Her mother's clan are the Yuwaalaraay people and her father's clan are the Bigumbul people, extending from Dirranbandi into New South Wales.

She tells 40 Stories about her transformational experience:

"One night I just got down on my knees in my bedroom [and prayed], 'God, are You really there? Are You really alive? Are You really what everybody's been talking about?'"

"I was popular, into sports and everything and yet on the inside it just felt like there was an emptiness and that something was missing."

Then that night she heard a voice calling out to her.

"I was sharing my bedroom with my niece Samantha. It would have been the early hours of the morning and I hear this voice.

"It was Samantha's voice and she was singing out, 'Auntie Ada, Auntie Ada.' I rolled over and she's dead asleep. I just went back to sleep and then not even five minutes, again: 'Auntie Ada, Auntie Ada.'"

"The second time I actually got out of bed and I went over to sort of wake her but she was just so dead asleep I couldn't even budge her to wake up. So I'm thinking, 'I wonder what's going on. Maybe she's dreaming.'"

"A couple of minutes after I got back into bed, there's this voice

again: 'Auntie Ada, Auntie Ada.'

"I turned over and there was this light that was coming into my bedroom. In the centre of the light there was a Man and it was God. God actually spoke to me and He said, 'Ada, I'm here. You were searching for Me.'"

"I started to shake and He said, 'You don't have to be afraid. You've been looking for Me and I'm here for you.'"

Ada describes this as the turning point in her life. It was when she first believed God was real and she



put her life in His hands, choosing to follow Him forever.

"We think we have to reach out to

God but He has tried so many times to reach us and that was through His Son Jesus. He came to us. At this particular time in my life He came looking for me because He saw the desire in my heart.

"I really wanted to know who He was and if He was real.

"From there I had – and I still have it – an overwhelming sense of peace and fulfilment in my life."

Ada's change started what she describes as a domino effect in her family.

"My mum changed her whole life around and came to God... We had massive encounters of God and things just happening in our lives that were supernatural.

"My mum and dad were contemplating divorce and separation because of alcohol and domestic violence. My dad was in the war, he went to Borneo and he fought in Papua New Guinea on the Kokoda Trail and here at Townsville as well, so he had lots of scars from the war in his life,

"He couldn't understand why my mother had changed so much – from a bitter, cursing, unhappy person to becoming somebody that had all this love in her heart.

"Mum used to say to me, 'God tells me to stop nagging, cook him dinner and leave it in the oven so if he comes home drunk well at least he's got his food.' And so there was this massive love in my life and in my mother's life and that was the next step of my dad becoming a Christian.

"There was this change of amazing love and grace [undeserved favour of God] that was beginning to grow in our family."

Ada's sisters – once thought of as the thugs of the town – also surrendered their lives to God.

No such word for Rafael

BY JOHN HUTCHINSON

RAFAEL Nadal, one of the all-time tennis greats and winner of 22 Grand Slam men's singles titles, including a record 14 French Open titles, was asked one of those "What if" questions about his game. To which he responded, "There's no such word as 'if' in tennis."

But how do you avoid the 'if' word? Sometimes it's like a slap in the face. We find ourselves saying, "If only I hadn't said that. If only I hadn't done that. If only I wasn't there at that particular time."

The 'if' word can throw up possibilities. It presents us with alternatives and consequences. What will happen if I invest in this? What if I take her advice? Will I be better off if I say nothing? I find it hard to believe there's no such word as 'if' in tennis.

There are a lot of 'if' words in the Bible and, if we're smart, we'll take note of them. Jesus said, "What will it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and then lose his soul?" (Mark 8:36)

The craving for wealth can take us over and dominate everything we think about. Some have amassed incredible amounts of money and real estate. But, how much can they take with them when they die? Not a cent! Gaining the world and losing our soul is the enterprise of fools. Our soul is eternal and should be high priority. We need to ask ourselves: Where will I spend eternity?

Jesus asked, "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?" (Matthew 7:9)

Unfortunately there are too many children who've

been given a stone instead of bread or a snake instead of fish. There are a lot of angry children out there – disillusioned by selfish and indifferent parents.

Jesus added these words: "If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him!" (Matthew 7:11)

The good gifts we can give our children are not necessarily material. Gifts of example, goodness, love, and commitment may be among the best.

God's great gift to us was His only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ and through Him a life-changing experience and beyond that – eternal life.

Here's an important 'if': "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9) It's a big thing to say, "Jesus is Lord." It's to acknowledge Him as the highest authority.

To "believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead" is also to believe He was dead. Jesus lived and died. He died violently. He died by crucifixion. He gave His life for us. He died for our sins. But, God raised Him from the dead in the same body which was nailed to the cross. People stared at the crucifixion wounds. A disciple wanted to touch them. This was the greatest event in the history of mankind – the crowning point in the ministry of Jesus on earth.

"If you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead – you will be saved" – what a promise! What an assurance! You will be saved from your sins, you will be saved from judgment to come and be raised from death to live eternally in the presence of God.

Rafael Nadal during a practice session recently. (Photo by Dan Istitene/Getty Images)



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BACK PAGE

SADDLE TO PULPIT
PAT DAY

Transformed overnight

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“When God turned up in our house, the influence of God just grew in all of us. I’ve always had two specific things that I hold onto. One is to be in the perfect will of God and the other one is to know that without God I can’t do anything. He’s just been so good to me.”

Ada founded and pastored a church in Townsville in 2004 and led the church for 11 years as an ordained minister.

Many people have come to know God through her life and the church has become very influential in the local community and across the nation.

Ada has travelled to many nations like Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, India, Singapore, Western Samoa, USA, Canada, and Africa to inspire and encourage others to rise and share in all that God has for them.

Ada’s family has also navigated through some very difficult times including the deaths of her niece Samantha and her parents.

“I can remember, even as a Christian, getting very bitter. Even when you know God, things go wrong, but I can remember I just did not want to get out of bed and I know that a lot of us have been there. We lose a sense of hope for the future. I had to make a choice.

“God always seems to turn up at the right time. We go through difficult times, but He’s there for us. This particular morning God actually got my attention and said ‘Ada, get up and get out of bed or you are going to miss what I’ve got for you down the road.’

“It sort of woke me up and shook me out of my bitterness, anger, frustration and lack of purpose so I made a choice that day and God has just been so faithful. He has given me the energy, strength and amazing peace. I don’t know how people can live without God!”

Ada has a message for her First Nations brothers and sisters: “God placed us here and I know that sometimes as Indigenous people we feel like that we don’t belong in our own country but I want to say to you today that you belong here. This is your home. This is your place. [God] made us and He positioned and placed us in a great nation called Australia and if we’re going to see change in our families and in our communities we’ve got to come back to the understanding that God is the Creator. He created everything for our good and for me Jesus gives us real life.”

For information about Ada’s ministry visit adaboland.com.



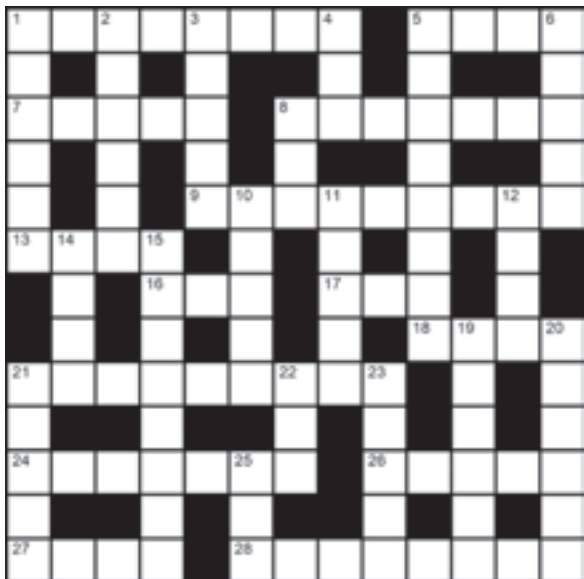
Coffee Break CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

ACROSS

- 1 Post wrapper
- 5 Eve’s fella
- 7 Large stones
- 8 “Downton Abbey” servant
- 9 Exclusion from group
- 13 It means ‘half’
- 16 Brit’s grandma
- 17 A vegetable
- 18 Temperature, abbr
- 21 Workers
- 24 Rich curtain fabric
- 26 Tropical hardwood
- 27 Trials & tribulations
- 28 Grappling entertainer

DOWN

- 1 Trip to the store, say
- 2 Sucky appliance
- 3 Cowboy’s cord
- 4 Cause of an “I” problem
- 5 An absolute ruler
- 6 Preacher’s residence
- 8 Suitable; in good health
- 10 Like dunes and beaches



- 11 Monetary unit of India
- 19 To praise highly
- 22 Farm female
- 12 A hoax
- 20 Words spoken to God
- 23 Slow-cooked meaty meals
- 14 A type of cheese
- 21 An arm joint
- 25 Garden moisture unwelcome

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SOLUTIONS PAGE 11



EYES ON THE HEAVENS

Bruce Bailey isn’t joking when he says he lived in the days of the horse and cart.

The 90-year-old Western Australian and his four siblings, who lived on a farm in the rural Western Australian town of Wongan Hills, used to go to school on one of those – until their mother found it too exhausting and stopped taking them.

Bruce ended up having only two years of school but being a determined young boy, he taught himself maths and spelling.

Growing up in a Christian home, Bruce had learned about God from a young age, but it wasn’t until he attended a Christian meeting at 14 that he made the personal decision to commit his life to Jesus Christ.

“The Bible message that day made me realise I was a sinner before a holy God,” he tells *Challenge News*.

“I deserved His righteous judgement for my sin. I heard that God still loved me. He sent His Son Jesus to take the penalty for all my sin when He died in my place on a cross and rose again.

“He was offering to save me and make me His loved child if I would ask the Lord Jesus to forgive me and receive Him as the Lord of my life.

“So that’s what I did – I gave my life to Jesus that night. I remember crying because I knew I was now saved.”

In 1950 Bruce started to learn to fly aeroplanes.

“I remember the chief flying instructor taking me into his office and saying to me, ‘Don’t do any more flying because you’ll never pass the flying exams’... I obtained my license about two years later. This instructor sent me a telegram saying, ‘Congratulations Bruce, flying wonders never cease!’”

In 1990 Bruce was appointed as a Magistrate in the Prison Department and worked in prisons for 10 years.

He remembers vividly an encounter he had with a prisoner who had been convicted of murder – he had killed his wife and three children.

“If you ask the Lord Jesus to forgive you, He will,” Bruce told him.

“No He won’t! It’s too bad!” the prisoner responded.

As Bruce got up to head back to court, the man put his head on the table and began crying his eyes out.

“I bent down and whispered in his ear with my hand on his shoulders that the Lord would forgive him and I encouraged him to accept Christ as his Saviour and go to a Prison Fellowship meeting.”



Bruce Bailey in the Aeropup he built in his carport.

Bruce has now been a Christian for more than 70 years and admits there have been “hard struggles” as well as good times.

“I’ve been selfish and sinful more times than I would care to admit, but I am so thankful that all my sin is forgiven because Jesus died for me.

“I’m thankful that God has made

me one of His loved, saved children through faith in the Lord Jesus. And that He will not only guide me through this life as I seek to follow Him but that He will take me safely through death into the next life where I can’t wait to be with Him and enjoy Him forever. I hope you will join me there too.”

Ask Y: Peter Meadows answers your questions about God

QUESTION: CAN’T I JUST FIGURE GOD OUT FOR MYSELF?



SOUNDS pretty easy doesn’t it? To use a bit of brain power and a smattering of commonsense to work out who or what God is, what He’s up to and what He wants from us?

But if that was possible we wouldn’t need Christmas. Okay, I know that sounds strange but hang in with me for a moment. First, let me give you a few reasons why figuring out God ourselves is always going to be like trying to push a cloud of smoke up a hill.

First, have you ever been to the dentist for a check-up hoping they would find nothing wrong – even if potential disaster was lurking somewhere beneath the enamel? I know I have – being more interested in my own self-interest than finding what was true.

In the same way there’s a bias when we start asking ourselves God-questions. We try to limit our discoveries to things which fit our comfort zones, mesh with our timetables and accommodate our priorities. And God may not be like that at all.

And what about the limit to our knowledge? Humankind has yet to even find a cure for the common cold. So how can we possibly believe we know enough to discover what the Creator of everything is like?

More than that, there’s also a limit to our reasoning power. A toddler asks “Why?” and “How?” and “Why?”

again... and again. The parent has the answers and would love to be able to give them, but doesn’t because the child’s intellectual ability does not stretch far enough to cope.

That’s how it is when exploring the God-agenda. Our brain power does not match the task.

So are we stranded in this vast universe with no way of knowing its Maker? That’s how it would be – but for the event we celebrate at Christmas. Because the often sentimental ‘baby in a manger’ stuff is actually the story of God opening up the conversation with us, coming down to our level to give us the answers we need.

It’s like what would have to happen if my goldfish were ever to come to know what I think of him. I’d have to become like him and enter his fishy little world. And at the event we call Christmas, that is what God did Himself. He came into our world as a Man, to let us have the answers to our questions about Him. That’s why Jesus is worth listening to!

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.

If you have a Y Question relating to issues of faith and God Peter or Joseph will do their best to answer it. Send your question to: challenge@veritem.com Subject: Y Course. We hope to publish their responses in future edition.

“LOOK UP ON A starry night and you will see THE MAJESTY AND POWER of an infinite Creator.”
- Billy Graham

DYING CHANGED HOW I LIVE

BY MARK ELLIS

Tina Hines was standing in her driveway, preparing to hike the Deem Hills Ridge-line trail near Phoenix, when she suffered a near-fatal heart attack. Efforts to revive her appeared futile at first, and for 27 long minutes her brain was deprived of oxygen – which should have resulted in permanent brain damage or death.

February 12th, 2018 started as an ordinary day. She and her husband Brian planned to meet at 4:30pm to start their hike. “It was a normal day, and I wasn’t feeling any stress or anxiety,” she recalls.

A few months earlier, Tina visited a cardiologist because she had experienced an irregular heart-beat. They diagnosed a left bundle branch block but did not seem overly concerned.

“I got a call from the doctor and they said everything is good, everything is clear, we’ll see you next year.” Tina works out regularly and is very fit for her age, so was somewhat blinded by her own pride to any potential problem, she admits.

On that afternoon in February, as Tina chatted in the driveway with a close friend, she collapsed and stopped breathing.

“I didn’t have a huge amount of pain. There was no warning. I went to my knees, feeling like I’m going to faint, and I completely blacked out.”

Within 30 seconds, her lips turned blue and her eyes rolled back in her head. Her whole face was bleeding after scraping against rocks bordering the driveway.

Brian called 911 and their friend started CPR. Within 3-4 minutes, the paramedics arrived and used a defibrillator to shock Tina’s heart three times. On the way to the medical center, there were two more failed attempts to revive her heart using the defibrillator.

“They called me dead on arrival,” she says. In the emergency room, sometime between 5:05 and 5:10pm, the doctors defibrillated Tina for a sixth time, and her heart finally began to beat again, but her brain had been deprived of oxygen for 27 minutes.

“That’s when I saw Jesus in those 27 minutes,” she says.

“He didn’t say anything to me. He was standing there in a white robe



Tina and her husband Brian.

“They were encouraged by that but strapped my arms down once more... In my mind and spirit, I had this unbelievable peace. I didn’t even care about why I was in the hospital. I had to tell them about seeing Jesus.”

At some point, she mouthed “what happened?”

Brian leaned down and said gently, “Baby you had a heart attack, a sudden cardiac arrest, and you’re in the hospital.”

Tina motioned with her hands that she wanted to write something.

Her son Jacob handed her a pen and paper. She started writing slowly, attempting to form the words I...t...s...R...E...A...L.

“What’s real?” Brian asked.

She pointed up toward the ceiling with one of her fingers and then tried to form a ‘J.’

Her daughter blurted out, “Heaven Mom?”

She nodded and everyone in the room started crying.

Before the doctor removed the tube from her throat, he informed the family she probably wouldn’t be able to talk right away.

But as soon as the tube came out the words gushed out.

“Oh my gosh!” she exclaimed. “Do you understand what happened? I saw Jesus face-to-face! It was a bright light and his arms stretched out toward me. It was the most peaceful and incredible experience I’ve ever had in my life.”

Everyone in the room was shocked and stunned. Celebration broke out in the room when her family knew Tina was going to be fine.

Every time a nurse or doctor entered the room, Tina kept sharing the amazing news: “I saw Jesus! I saw Jesus!”

The next day, she was surprisingly active, walking around the ICU making new friends and sharing her message of hope.

Everyone concluded her recovery was miraculous.

Six months after her heart event Tina was asked if she had ever seen the painting of Jesus by the young artist, Akiane – painted when she was only

eight years old.

Tina had never seen the painting or heard of the artist.

When they showed her a book with an image of the painting, she couldn’t believe it.

“That’s Him!” she cried out. “This is who I saw. This is the one who was comforting me, with the bright yellow light behind Him. This is the one I saw face-to-face.”

Today, Tina loves to share with others about her hope in Christ – and hope of heaven. “I want to be intentional, authentic and open about my beautiful experience with Jesus, and seeing him face-to-face. In the process I also want to share how dying has changed living.”

with arms stretched out.”

There was a bright yellow glow – like the sun – emanating from him. “It was almost blinding,” she says. There were also clouds behind him and Tina felt “incredible warmth and peace”.

Growing up in Pasadena, California, Tina prayed with her mother when she was six years old to receive Jesus as her Lord.

“I did not need this (near-death) experience to push me to Jesus,” Tina says. “I had a true, active, walking relationship with Christ.”

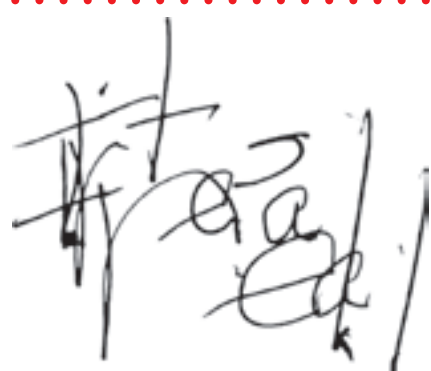
When Tina’s heart began to beat again, she was already intubated. “When they woke me up after that sixth shock, I tried to pull my tube out and tell people what happened. I opened my eyes and saw the hospital room and just wanted to tell them in those moments about seeing Jesus.

“They saw me reaching for my tube, so they strapped my arms down. They were surprised in a good way, hopeful there might be brain activity.”

Next, Tina was placed on a ventilator and in a medically induced coma. Family and friends had begun to pray around the clock.

The following afternoon they decided to wean her off the medication. “As I was getting weaned off, I tried to pull my tube out again,” Tina recounts.

“It was the most peaceful and incredible experience I’ve ever had in my life.”



Tina’s note to her family about meeting Jesus face-to-face in heaven: “It’s real!”



Grishma Parajuli

I spy the truth!

Grishma Parajuli became a spy when he was 16. It’s not something the Nepalese teenager ever thought he would find himself doing, but he felt he owed it to his religion and his culture to do so.

Grishma had been told that staff and missionaries at the local leprosy mission hospital, where he was helping illiterate patients read and write letters, were purposely neglecting patients who did not convert to Christianity.

Unaware that there was no truth to this, Grishma became outraged and vowed to defend his religion and culture against this foreign influence. His anger was understandable. Not only was he born into a high-caste Hindu family, his father was also a Hindu priest.

“Some of these people were saying some of the staff there encouraged them to change their religion, to convert to Christianity,” Grishma told the Church Missionary Society Summer School in New South Wales.

“If they converted, they are happy and if they are not converted, they would just give them no treatment and ignore them.”

He reported his fears to a government officer, who asked him to name names. When he couldn’t provide any, the officer told him to spy on the group and get the information.

So Grishma joined the fellowship group, fully intending to expose them.

The members welcomed the young spy warmly and gave him a copy of the New Testament. He tried to refuse it, but someone said: “Please accept it. If you read it and believe it, you will be saved. If you don’t believe it, you will get some knowledge out of it, so please read it.”

Grishma relented. Raised to believe Christianity was poles apart from his faith and background, he said he reluctantly began reading it only to “find out why”.

He began with the book of Matthew and before long found himself reading the Sermon on the Mount - and said he was confounded by what Jesus taught.

Still, when a nurse shared the Gospel [the good news that Jesus Christ came to earth to die for mankind’s sins and offer eternal life] with him, he told her he felt nothing. She responded: “One thing we can do for you, brother, we can pray for you. It’s up to God’s hand, so we’ll pray for you.”

At this, Grishma declared he would never convert. “If I am to be converted, then I will say clearly, ‘Your God is really God, but I know, I’m sure I will not be converted. I will say God is dead.’ I silenced her.”

Yet he continued to attend the meetings, and the group continued to pray for him. Finally, it was their actions that spoke loudest to him.

“I observed that missionaries and the Christian Nepalese church members are serving their neighbours with humble hearts, hugging them, touching them, washing their things,” he said.

“That touched me. The Christian service, the service of the missionaries, leaving their family, their country... coming to Nepal. Why?”

Unable to make sense of such kindness and sacrifice, Grishma put it down to the love of God.

“The power of the prayer, and power of Christian service, service of the missionaries, all together changed my heart. I became a Christian. I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ.” He says that was a great day - the boy who lived on the roof of the world felt on top of the world.

But then his troubles began. The 18-year-old was thrown out of his home when his family discovered he had accepted Jesus Christ.

“They compelled me to leave my home and family. I said ‘No, I didn’t want to leave my family, but I didn’t want to leave Jesus Christ.’

“They said ‘No, you cannot do both. You have to choose one – home/family or Jesus.’ Then I finally had to choose to follow Jesus.”

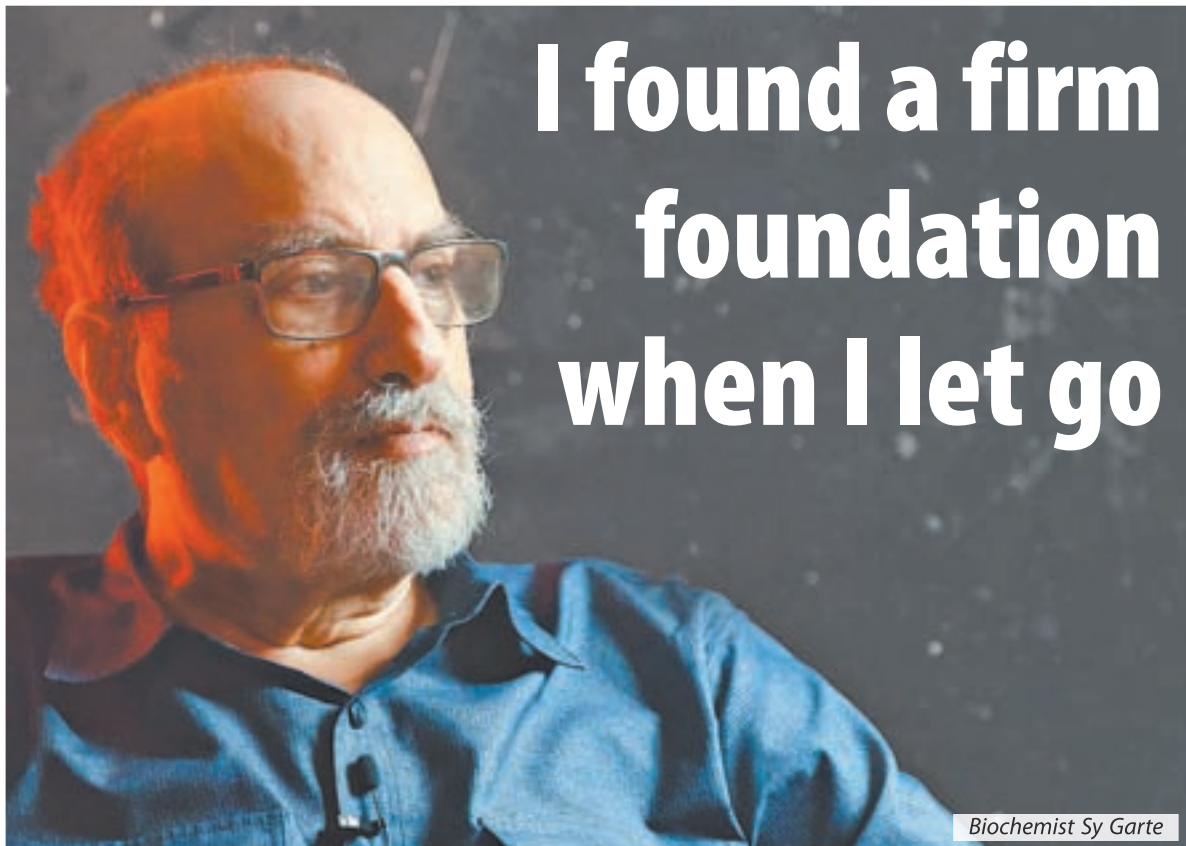
The pressure to quit Christianity was great, but Grishma stuck to his guns. He moved in with Christian friends, got a job and began a lifelong journey with God.

Today, with decades of ministry behind him, he is the senior pastor of Nayagaun church in Pokhara, where he has been serving for more than 30 years with his wife Laxmi.

He said the church in Nepal is growing despite government restrictions on open evangelism - a fact Grishma attributed to “faithful prayer”. His own church has gone from 15 members to 1000 and has 12 daughter congregations.

“There are many in Nepal like me, suffering for Jesus – there are many people who are persecuted from family, persecuted from government, persecuted from other religious groups; many suffer because they have accepted Jesus Christ. We focus on personal evangelism because now we cannot do mass evangelism,” he said.

“People can share their faith. They can give their testimony to their friends, neighbours, their coworkers and they can invite people to the church. People come and hear the Gospel, and they accept Jesus Christ.”



I found a firm foundation when I let go

Biochemist Sy Garte

From a young age, biochemist Sy Garte was captivated by the wonders of science. But his greatest discovery was one that shook him to his core and turned his worldview around.

Sy was raised by “fierce, militant atheists”, who were members of the American Communist Party.

As a child he did not know about world religions and when a classmate asked him why he hadn’t seen him at Mass and whether or not he was Jewish, Sy asked his parents what these words meant. They told him that religion was the worst thing in human history.

“I never even thought about not believing in God,” he writes in an article for *Biologos.org*. “The concept of an invisible supernatural being in the sky was laughable to me as a teenager and beyond. Only uneducated or desperate people would entertain such nonsense.”

Sy studied science in college and became enamoured with the “beautiful, undeniably true secrets of the chemistry of life and the even more wondrous excitement of doing scientific research”.

But as he learnt more about physics, he began to have doubts about his materialistic view of the universe.

“I was shaken by the mysteries revealed by the modern understanding of elementary particles and the nature of light. If space can bend, time can slow down, and wave functions collapse upon observation, then how valid could a rationalist view of nature be?”

He also wondered why, if there was no special purpose for humanity’s existence, it was important to fight for universal justice and dignity?

“I also began to contemplate other questions,” Sy writes in an article for *ChristianityToday.com*.

“Where did the universe come from? How did life begin? What does it mean to be a human being? What is the source of our creativity—of art, poetry, music, and humour? Perhaps, I thought, science cannot tell us everything.”

When Sy was 40, a friend invited him to attend a church service with her.

“It would be the first time I ever set foot in a church and I was terrified.

“I had no idea what to do, and I was sure that at some point the priest and the congregants would scowl and point at me, shouting, ‘Heathen, you will burn in hell!’

“That didn’t happen. The priest gave a sermon about the power of love. The people next to me shook my hand and wished me peace.”

Sy began to question his parents’ beliefs that Christianity was the chief source of historical evil.

He decided to read the Gospels (accounts of Jesus’ life and teaching in the Bible).

He was shocked to find them beautiful and inspiring but the idea that there was a God and that Jesus did miracles and rose from the dead was insurmountable.

Around this time he also began to have dreams about Jesus.

In an interview on *Inspiring Philosophy’s* YouTube channel, he shares: “I was dangling off the edge of a cliff – and I have terrible fear of heights so that was a terrifying feeling for me.

“I was holding onto a boulder that sort of stuck into the side of the cliff. I didn’t know what to do and then I heard a voice.

“There was someone standing on the cliff and the Voice said, ‘Just let go,’ and I thought ‘Let go? I’ll fall! That’s crazy!’ But He was insistent.

“He said, ‘Just let go’ and I let go, and as I did so, the whole world turned 90 degrees and instead of being on a cliff dangling I was lying on the ground holding onto this boulder which I had let go of.”

Sy says he remained stuck in a place of indecision for two or three years but then “(God) the Holy Spirit

pulled me over the threshold.”

One day, while he was driving, Sy says, “The Holy Spirit had mercy on me, took hold of me, and showed me the truth of Jesus Christ in a way that was totally convincing.”

Overcome with emotion, Sy pulled over his car to the side of the road and as the Voice in the dream encouraged him, “just let go”.

“‘Thank you, Lord,’ I said out loud in between sobs. ‘I believe, and I am saved. Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ.’ When I recovered my composure, I was aware of a great feeling of joy and release.

“I had no more doubts, no trace of hesitation—I had crossed over, stepping over the ruins of my prison cell into my new life of faith.

“From that day onward, my life has been devoted to the joyful service of our Lord.”

Sy was baptised at the age of 65 and is now the lay leader of his congregation. He is the editor-in-chief of the *American Scientific Affiliation’s* online magazine *God and Nature*.

He has also released a book called *The Works of His Hands: A Scientist’s Journey from Atheism to Faith* (Kregel Publications).

The book references Werner Heisenberg, the winner of the 1932 Nobel Prize in Physics for the creation of quantum mechanics, who said, “The first gulp from the glass of natural sciences will turn you into an atheist, but at the bottom of the glass God is waiting for you.”

Since converting to Christianity, Sy has made many discoveries.

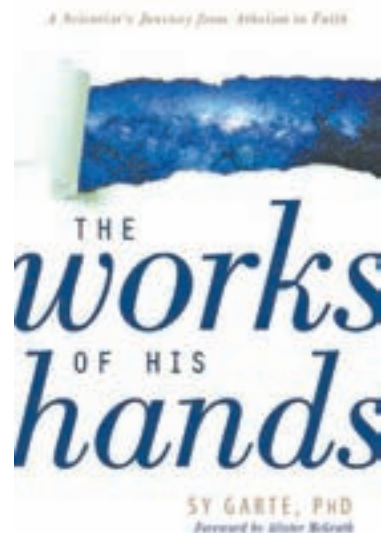
“I learned about the power of the Bible as a guide from God to the central questions of our existence.

“I learned that the true purpose of science is to describe how things are, not to engage in misplaced speculation about why the world is the way it is.

“I learned that modern atheist taunts about the purposelessness and meaninglessness of the universe and our own existence are not only false but destructive.

“Most importantly, I learned that nothing I have learned came through my own merit, but only from the grace of our Lord, whose love and mercy are beyond understanding.”

“Where did the universe come from? How did life begin?”



Sy’s book about his life.

STANDING UP FOR THE TRUTH

She has been vilified, reviled, threatened and bombarded with death threats on social media.

One man said he hoped she would die of Aids. Others wrote: “I really hope you get hit by a bus”, “You need a bullet” and “I wish nothing but bad for you and your family”.

They swore at her and told her to “rot in hell”.

She is Kirralie Smith, co-founder and national spokesperson of lobby group Binary, and it was just one picture that triggered all that hate. It showed her holding up a ballot paper in which she voted against



Kirralie Smith

same-sex marriage. Binary is an Australian organisation that, according to its website, was established to “protect and defend fundamental truth, and raise awareness about those who wish to tear it down. We affirm the fact that Sex is Binary. Male and Female. We avow biological truth.”

As hurt and shocked as she was by the response, Kirralie stands by her convictions. The mother-of-three became a Christian when she was 17 and has never backed down from a challenge.

Naturally athletic and competitive, the Sydney youngster’s life was filled with sport – netball, tennis, swimming, athletics and touch football.

Life as a child was idyllic, she tells *Challenge News*. Until it wasn’t. Her parents divorced while she was in her teens and she herself became beset by one sports injury after another. Her knee especially took a beating – she’s had nine surgeries and faces another.

With her ability to compete seriously hampered, Kirralie says she felt “lost and depressed. Sport was my identity and a refuge and now it was gone.”

A beloved great aunt was a Christian and set “a wonderful example”, but other than that, Kirralie did not have a good faith foundation.

“I was raised Catholic but only did some of the sacraments, Christmas and Easter. Mass was in Latin and I didn’t understand it.”

She also recalls a picture in her scripture class at school. It showed a person praying, but all his prayers bounced off the ceiling of sin and so never made it to God.

“I remember feeling afraid and defeated by that picture,” Kirralie says. “It made me give up hope that God would ever listen to me because I was a sinful person. I could never be good enough.”

Kirralie’s fear was fuelled by the fact that she had a few boyfriends at the time and had “compromised” her morals.

“I was deeply afraid God would punish me,” she remembers.

When she was 17, she began going out with a Christian boy whose family invited her to church, where the service was completely different.

“I had never experienced that kind hope or the joy that I experienced that day,” she says. “I was really hungry for Father God and didn’t even know it.”

Saying the Lord’s Prayer, she says, had a tremendous impact on her, as her father had moved out by this time.

Five weeks later she committed her life to Christ, and reconciled with her father.

“My fears about being too great a sinner disappeared when I finally understood that I could only be saved by His grace (undeserved love of God) and not by my works. That there was nothing I could do to ‘win’ God over. Jesus paid the price for me and He loves me unconditionally.

“I remember feeling so free! Forgiveness and grace were the biggest revelations to me,” says Kirralie, who has also done missionary work in Asia.

“I asked for my dad’s forgiveness and our relationship has gone from strength to strength. He’s not a believer yet but we are better than we ever have been.”

So captivated was she by God that she went to Bible school – “I just wanted to soak myself in His Word,” she shares.

Then life took another nosedive. Kirralie’s mother was diagnosed with cancer, and her husband had an affair and left her.

“But through all of this I felt very much held by God and supported by my church.

“I knew I had to learn to walk in... forgiveness and grace to those who hurt me. I moved from being a ‘victim’ to being a victor in my attitudes,” says Kirralie, who has since remarried. Those pillars of Christianity are things that she draws on today to cope with the challenges her work presents.

She was recently served with an Apprehended Violence Order for campaigning against transgender women in sport.

She was also sued in 2015 for defamation over claims Islamic certification supports terrorism. The case was settled out of court.

It isn’t all bad press though. Kirralie, who has three children, was named Mother of the Year in 2023 by Family Voice Australia, “a Christian voice promoting true family values”.

She says while she dislikes being bullied or misunderstood, she refuses to compromise the truth.

“It is a spiritual battle and the battle belongs to the Lord. I am to simply be salt and light as I seek what it is He wants me to do each day.”

IT'S ONLY NATURAL TO BELIEVE

BY RON NELLER, CREATION
MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Australian agricultural scientist Dr Ken Rickert doesn't have to look very far to confirm his belief in Biblical creation.

The evidence is all around him, under him and above him. Yes indeed, nature – and sunlight in particular – can say a lot if, like Ken, you know how to listen.

Ken uses sunlight as an example of God's handiwork. As an agricultural scientist, he knows how it sustains all life on Earth and controls the weather and climate.

His awareness of the many laws and processes in nature convinced him years ago that their existence and operation were highly consistent with the biblical account of creation.

The scope, elegance, simplicity, and importance of these laws and processes for life on Earth show him that such laws could not be the result of chance, and the general theory of evolution, which is ultimately based on chance, is clearly flawed.

Ken, who is now retired, held senior positions at the Queensland Agricultural College and later at The University of Queensland.

He was raised in rural Queensland by a Christian family and committed his life to Jesus Christ while at university, where he met wife Jan, an agricultural economist.



Ken and Jan Rickert (right) with their three daughters (L to R) Natasha, Cheryl, and Tricia.

Having been born in a rural environment, Ken developed a lifelong passion to understand agricultural and natural sciences.

This is a complex area that involves the study of the growth and reproduction of both plants and animals, as well as soils, water relations, and weather patterns.

He did his master's research on establishing pastures on heavy clay soils. This is a challenging topic as heavy clay soils are likely to be

poorly structured and not friable (do not break up but form large clods instead).

For his Ph.D., he undertook further study of these complex soil-plant atmosphere systems.

This equipped him with new skills and knowledge to work in pasture management.

His studies helped him to accept a creator God.

Indeed, God commanded Adam to be a farmer after the Fall [when

Adam and Eve disobeyed God] – “Therefore the Lord God sent him [Adam] out from the garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken.” (Genesis 3:23)

During his professional career, Ken faced no conflict in his journey in science and faith. Quite the opposite, in fact.

He says: “I felt privileged in discovering more and more evidence of God's awesome creation.”

Regretfully, he feels that this is becoming more difficult in schools and universities today due to changing attitudes.

“During my years in university, Christian views were generally tolerated, and not repudiated like they often are today.”

Advancements in knowledge and technologies have further convinced him of the truth of the Bible.

“New findings that continue to emerge are pointers to a master Creator,” he says.

“The outright rejection of the biblical account of creation is an example of a narrow-minded approach to historical science.

“The physical elements of our cosmos, universe, Earth's climate, and plant and animal life are underpinned by a vast number of natural laws and processes.

“Some of these laws were discovered by great scientists of the past, such as Isaac Newton who believed his work supported God's creation.

“Likewise, more recent discoveries, such as the genetic codes, also point con-

vincingly to God's creation rather than chance developments.”

Because God's creation includes the interdependence of the physical elements of creation, and natural laws and processes, Ken adds, “Christian scientists who study or apply natural laws and processes should feel closer to God through better appreciating His creative and sustaining powers.”

Dr Ken Rickert, B.Sc, M.Sc, Ph.D., was an agricultural scientist before his retirement, focusing on sustainable and profitable agricultural systems. His bachelor's and master's degrees in agricultural science are from The University of Queensland, Australia, and his PhD is from The University of Western Australia. Ken's initial work with the Queensland Department of Primary Industries focused on modelling pasture and beef production. Between 1984 and 2001 he held senior positions at the Queensland Agricultural College and later at The University of Queensland.



Ken inspecting natural grassland grazed by cattle near Toowoomba in Queensland.

The importance of our body temperature

PETER'S CORNER WITH PETER MIKULA

MANY of us have had some fever recently, perhaps dealing with the Covid-19 problem or for various other reasons. We reach for the thermometer and measure a too-high temperature, as the body deals with the infection.

It is known that our internal body temperature is normally about 37°C and is under the control of the hypothalamus which is part of our brain. The hypothalamus is tiny, but smart! It is a kind of control centre for hormones that regulate body temperature plus many other functions.

The hypothalamus is able to check our temperature and adjust it. If too cold, the hypothalamus may take action to make us shiver in order to produce warmth. If too hot, it may make us sweat to cool the skin.

Adjustments happen for example during hot or cold weather, or when we are super-active or taking it easy.

We get what we call a 'fever' when the hypothalamus dials up a higher temperature, as a reaction to virus or bacteria infection. The hypothalamus is a complex organ and marvellously designed to do its work.

Why is a temperature setting of about 37°C suitable? It appears that if it were set a lot higher, we would need to eat much more food to generate energy to maintain the temperature.

But if it were set much cooler, then we would be more susceptible to fungal infections. Also if temperature was not internally controlled – such as in 'cold-blooded' reptiles and many other life forms – then we would be stop-start beings, rather than blessed with steady metabolism and function.



How does the hypothalamus know what is hot, cold or just right? It knows that about 37°C is the target. But how does it know that? Who or what told it?

Evolution is not the answer. Evolution is a random accidental process. It has no idea that any temperature setting is even needed – it's not for cold-blooded creatures – so it certainly doesn't set out to accidentally make a hypothalamus, nor any of the many associated body systems required to keep the hypothalamus running correctly.

Creating part of a system is not a stepping stone to the full system. For

example, suppose evolution somehow learns how to raise body temperature. Halfway there! Sorry, but no. A creature that can only increase its temperature, but not decrease it, will soon die, and evolution dies with it and has to start over. It is an all or nothing requirement, and evolution totally fails to deliver. So next time you get a fever, be grateful, and give thanks to God, the real Creator, that your hypothalamus is working just fine!

I trust that these few words help you on your journey to know and appreciate God more and more each day. If God designed us so awesomely, then he cares for us – for you and me – equally as awesomely.

Sources: National Library of Medicine. How is body temperature regulated and what is fever? Article created: July 30, 2009; Last Update: November 17, 2016. Accessed at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK279457/>

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Peter Mikula is a mining engineer in Kalgoorlie who loves stargazing and talking with others about Jesus.

“This most beautiful system of the sun, planets and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being.” - Isaac Newton

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YOUTH TRUTH

Harvard Law School student speaks out

BY HARVARD LAW SCHOOL STUDENT MARIANNA MARQUES



Marianna Marques

I followed an unconventional path to Harvard Law School (HLS). I'm the first in my family to be born in the United States. I studied pre-med in undergrad, I only applied to one law school, and I never even took the LSAT. My time at HLS was not only divinely ordained, but also, simply, a miracle.

At a young age, I gave my life to Jesus Christ.

At age 13, while I was reflecting on my life plans, I heard God's voice (in my spirit) for the first time: *Those are your plans for yourself, not Mine.* Although God says in Scripture that He has a plan for each of us, I hadn't consulted Him as I had developed my own. I hadn't trusted that His plans would bring me satisfaction—I lacked faith and wanted control. But in that instance, I decided to trust Him and to surrender my plans.

But when I was 16, I gradually started to stray off His path for me. Still, He never left. At age 21, I got on my knees and repented (turned away from sin), and God began to restore me.

He revealed that it was only by His strength and by abiding in His Word that I could be free from sin and hurt, not on my own strength. I thought I was a "good person" and "free" during the past five years, but I realized that true freedom in Jesus meant that I did not have to live captive to sin.

These sins were the roots of the mental and spiritual health struggles I had been experiencing. He freed me—I started experiencing love, joy, and peace every day.

Although I had completed the pre-medical track in undergrad, I began to consider career alternatives while on a Fulbright fellowship in Spain.

Given my prior experience working with legal documents, I felt drawn to law school. By that time, I had learned my lesson and surrendered the decision to God.

I was thrilled upon receiving admission to HLS.

While I felt God wanted to use me to advocate for those who lack a voice, I didn't know the extent to which my own voice would be challenged during my time at HLS. To elevate the voice of others, I first needed to fight for my own.

[Marianna then goes on to explain how she was able to do this at Harvard.]

... Finding our voice is powerful. My voice in particular does not come from me, from the news I watch, from the people I follow, or even from my friends or family. My life belongs to Jesus Christ, so I choose to allow Him to speak through me.

When Jesus walked the Earth, many tried to silence Him and to stop Him from denouncing the corrupt religious leaders. They even killed Him, thinking that death would quench His voice.

But when He resurrected three days later, He proved that His voice would never die. Instead, His innocent blood was spilled in the place of our guilty blood.

He paid the price for our sins so that we could be free. Free from anxiety, depression, vices, anger, pain, trauma, pride, greed, and on and on. By asking Jesus to forgive us for all we've done wrong and by continually seeking Him, we are saved. We are set free from the pain of our past and worries of our present and future. We live forever (John 3). This good news is what my voice now proclaims.

While Harvard has challenged me to develop my voice, it has also given me abundant resources to do so. Now, there is no way I will be silent.

Marianna is a Brazilian American who graduated from Tufts University with a BA summa cum laude at age 20. At Tufts, she assembled and led a team to establish a tuition-free auxiliary nursing school in Honduras.

She spent 2017-2018 as a Fulbright fellow at Universidad Camilo Jose Cela in Madrid, Spain.

Currently, she is a JD Candidate at Harvard Law School, the editor in chief of the Harvard Latin American Law Review, and the Chief Operating Officer of Action for Education.

Read Marianna's inspiring testimony on Harvard's website at hls.harvard.edu/admissions/student-voices-mariannas-journey-to-hls/

Saved from suicide, he finds new life

Ashish had reached the peak of his career as one of the most successful trance DJs in Nagpur, India. But his life came crumbling down when he became addicted to alcohol, losing everything.

Sharing in a video interview with MANNA Testimonies, Ashish recalls how partying initially felt "like heaven".

"It feels so good partying with friends at clubs, discos, and girls," he says. "But it slowly eats into you."

Ashish's father was an alcoholic who abandoned his mother when he was a child. It plunged their family into poverty as his mother had to single-handedly raise Ashish and his siblings on a single income. While she worked tirelessly cleaning houses for a living, there were still times when Ashish and his siblings did not have enough food to eat.

His first encounter with music came when his mother got introduced to singing at orchestras and choirs. He would follow his mother to her performances and sit next to the sound operator and watch them perform their craft.

"There was a desire in my heart," says Ashish. "I wanted to be a DJ."

His opportunity came when one night the DJ did not turn up and Ashish took his place.

Then he began to play at private parties, before being introduced to playing at clubs where the rich of Nagpur would gather. Soon, he was gaining fame and recognition.

"I became a very well-known DJ in my town."

It was at the height of his career that he was introduced to alcohol, smoking and weed. He would spend his days partying and drinking every night. Ashish eventually became addicted.

"I started stealing money from my mom's pocket," he confesses.

"I was selling things from the house. My friends started pushing me away. My mom was not happy with me. My personality began to change.

"This addiction is a demon that kills you very slowly. When you realise it, it's too late."

Once, he borrowed money from a friend who confronted him. When Ashish admitted that he had no money to return him, his friend grabbed him by the collar and slapped him in public.

"He was so angry and he said, 'Give me my money or I will kill you!'"

"I felt so rejected and ashamed."

When his mum heard about the incident, she kicked him out of the house.

"You are the blood of your father," she told him. "You have done what he did."

"I felt like there was nothing left in my life," Ashish remembers.

Feeling hopeless, Ashish decided to end his life. He cried and drank from morning until night before heading to the well to drown himself. Standing at the well, Ashish looked up at the sky to say a final prayer: "God, I want to thank You for this life. You



Ashish. Photo: YouTube/@_MANNATESTIMONIES.

have given me this beautiful life but I messed up and I know You're not going to take me to heaven because I have done nothing good. I deserve hell but before I jump and finish my life, I just want to say thank You for this beautiful life You gave me."

But just as he was about to jump, Ashish felt a hand pull him back by his belt.

"What are you doing?" said the voice.

Ashish turned and hugged him as he cried.

"Don't do this," the voice told him. "Go home."

He never saw the person's face. In fact, Ashish had made sure there was no one around before he jumped.

"How come this guy showed up?" he asked himself.

Ashish went back to his room crying, when he found a dust-covered Bible on his cupboard.

"I put that Bible before me and I said, 'God why did You save me? You should've let me die.'"

But what happened next changed his life forever.

"I felt Somebody put His hand on my shoulder and telling me, 'It's okay, I'm with you.'"

"I closed my eyes and I said, 'God if You are true and if You are real and if You're trying to tell me that You are alive, give me a confirmation.'"

Just as Ashish prayed, the page of his Bible turned and his eyes fell on the verse: "*Today you have declared the Lord is your God.*" (Deuteronomy 26:17)

He quickly knelt down and prayed, "God from this moment, I accept You

as my Saviour. I believe now that You are the God who saves, You're the God who speaks and I know that Jesus is alive and Jesus is real. I give my life to You God, because I believe."

Since then, Ashish has felt freedom. He realised that he had been carrying a burden of shame all his life and

when God removed that shame from him, he felt alive.

"The only way is to repent and ask God for forgiveness because He would love to forgive you. He's a God that is slow to anger and quick to forgive."

Today Ashish lives in England and serves the Lord. He also plays Christian music in the streets where his music brings people to Jesus. •

“This addiction is a demon that kills you very slowly.”

HAMMERING HOME THE TRUTH

He was one of the highest earning music stars of the 1990s, the first rapper ever to have an album go diamond.

He sold 50 million records. According to news sources, at his peak he was worth US\$70 million and was bringing in US\$30 million a year. He won three Grammys and Record of the Year and a string of other prestigious awards.

It's safe to say you couldn't go anywhere in the '90s without hearing *U Can't Touch This* or *2 Legit 2 Quit* or seeing his trademark parachute pants on someone. The song was right - there were very few who could touch MC Hammer.

His lifestyle was as lavish as you might expect - he owned 17 luxury cars, a private jet, two helicopters, 21 race horses and spent an estimated \$US35 million overhauling his California mansion - including, it was reported, a pool in the shape of the pants he immortalized.

The bubble of bounty lasted five years and then, not surprisingly, the money ran out. The entertainer filed for bankruptcy in 1996 with over \$13m in debt. Hammer time indeed.

In a YouTube video with Genesis Music, Hammer, whose real name is Stanley Burrell, talks about his experience with fame and fortune.

"Fame is a double-edged sword and very few people can really deal with fame," he says. "It is very costly; if you're not careful on how to tame fame then fame will tame you."

This led to his fall from favour in the music industry and the performer faded into obscurity. These events plus the death of his friend and collaborator, the rapper Tupac Shakur, triggered a return to Christianity, the faith of his childhood and he became an ordained minister in the Memphis-based Church of God in Christ.

In 1997, he appeared on the Trinity Broadcasting Network. Referencing the Bible verse, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here" (2 Corinthians 5:17), he declared: "Tonight we are officially burying the old man. I want to walk sincerely in the newness of life with Christ."

Talking about his comeback to Christ, he told the LA Times: "Being a prodigal son took me away from the relationship I once knew. I just wanted to get back to the place I once had in my relationship with Jesus."



MC Hammer at The Richard Rogers Theater in New York City. (Photo by Bruce Glikas/Bruce Glikas).

"Whether the bankruptcy played any role in my refocusing, that's great. Hallelujah I hope it did! But the most important part of what occurred to me was missing the love of God in the way that I had known it."

In another interview, he was quoted as saying: "I had an up-close and personal conversation with God and He spanked me. I deserved it."

Hammer actually committed his life to Christ in 1984. He attended Bible studies and church almost daily, joined street outreach teams and formed a Gospel band called the Holy Ghost Boys.

But this early zeal petered out as commercial success landed. Even though he promised God he would include one praise song on every album, he was sucked into what he calls "some serious junk".

The business became an idol. He told *Charisma* magazine, "The 'business' drug takes all your time away from God, from the family.

"You create a utopia around you so you don't have to deal with the reality that you're not in the will of God. You wake up and realise

you're a backslider."

He decided to turn back to the Lord but it wasn't easy. In addition to bankruptcy, he suffered a serious knee injury and the trauma of his wife's cancer diagnosis.

However, he says God spoke to him in a dream and said: "You have suffered mentally and physically but if you keep your love for Me you can come out."

Hammer clung on to those words and says God not only brought him through his crisis but also healed both him and his wife.

Describing how he went from millionaire rapper to spreading the gospel, he says on the YouTube video: "One day I woke up and I said 'this is not me - enough is enough'. I knew in my heart that I was no longer a part of the body of Christ."

He told his pastor Willie Harper: "I'm ready for the mission God's given me. I plan on being obedient."

Hammer has gone into evangelism in a big way, devoting time to prison and youth ministries and preaches often. He also featured prominently in 1040:

Christianity in the New Asia, a documentary that examines the growth of Christianity in Asia.

In 1997, Hammer was invited to World Gospel '97 in Barbados and spoke at the local jail. According to the website believer-sportal.com, the organiser said "he preached until his shirt was soaked." Forty-two inmates were saved.

A self-described "Super Geek" he has reinvented himself as a tech investor and consultant.

But the most important thing to the redeemed rapper is his walk with God. "I want the world to know that all my blessings are coming through Jesus," he says. "God is now a daily presence in my life versus just a convenient one.

"I am honoured that Jesus has taken a wretch like me and said I got some work for you to do."

His famous moniker reflects his new purpose in life. Where MC used to mean Master of Ceremonies, he says it now means "Man of Christ."

“
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people can
really deal
with fame.”

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For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it — MATTHEW 16:25 NIV

Recipe of the month



SPIRAL VEGETABLE TART

THIN slices of carrots, zucchini, and yellow squash are rolled together into a spiral on top a savoury homemade crust to create a gorgeous and nutritious entree. Feel free to substitute or include other vegetables that are in season, such as beetroot, butternut squash, parsnips, eggplant, purple carrots, or even tomatoes.

Prep: 35 min
Cook: 35 min
Total: 1 hour 10 min
Serves 8

Crust

1 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup vegetable shortening
5 tablespoons ice cold water
3 to 4 carrots
2 medium zucchini
2 medium yellow squash
Cooking spray or butter
Flour (as needed)
5 tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon thyme
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper

Method

Measure flour into a large bowl.
Add the salt and shortening.

Using two dull butter knives or a pastry blender, blend the flour, salt and shortening until the shortening is the size of peas.

Fill a wide-mouthed glass with ice. Add water to the top.

Measure or pour the ice cold water into the flour mixture. Using a spatula or your hands, mix the water into the flour to form a large ball of dough.

You may need to add an extra tablespoon of water if you have excess flour.

If you added too much water, add additional flour until the dough is well formed but not too sticky. Handle and mix the dough as little as possible.

Form dough into a disc and wrap in wax paper. Place dough in the freezer for 10 minutes or the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

Wash vegetables and cut into 1.5mm to 3mm thick pieces lengthwise with a grater, mandoline, or sharp knife.

Discard any pieces that disintegrate or have too much skin.

Reserve each sliced vegetable in a separate bowl or small pan.

Assembly

Preheat oven to 180°C.

Lightly grease a 23cm tart pan or springform pan.

Lightly sprinkle a clean work surface with flour. Remove dough from fridge and roll the dough out with a rolling pin until it is about 25cm in diameter.

Place dough in a 23cm tart pan or a springform pan. Press dough firmly up against the wall of pan to form a circular wall. Set aside.

Roll one strip of zucchini into a tight circle. Then, wrap a carrot strip tightly around it, followed by a strip of yellow squash.

Repeat until you have a 5cm diameter spiral and place in the centre of the dough in the prepared pan.

Continue to alternate between zucchini, carrots, and squash and tightly wrap until all of the vegetable strips have been used or until you have reached the edge of the pan and cannot fit in any more.

It should look similar to the photo.

Note that you will likely need to keep one hand on the vegetable roll to keep it in place while you reach for additional strips.

A second pair of hands can be helpful (but is not necessary).

Using a pastry brush, gently brush oil over the top of the vegetables to evenly coat.

Sprinkle thyme, salt, and pepper evenly over vegetables.

Bake at 180°C until the vegetables are soft and well cooked, about 35 minutes. Remove from oven and let cool for 5 minutes before serving.

Recipe and photo from MakeBetterFood.com

BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

A deep, strong and immeasurable love

BY ROB FURLONG

MANY years ago, following a Mother's Day service, a mum in the congregation sent me the following letter:

"This Mother's Day was an emotional time for me. Sitting with my husband, daughter and son-in-law, the fact that my son was not sitting with us was overwhelmingly sad.

"I found my thoughts going back to the little 8-year-old boy, memories of a loving little boy, though mischievous, but not at all rebellious. My relationship with him today is a bittersweet one. At times I wish he would move out, but with that the fear of how things would go for him if he did is greater than the stress he causes us.

"Through his times of harmful decision making, whether financial or moral, I have a total sense of powerlessness. However, no matter what, I love him dearly. His choice of friends, along with other influences, has been negative and his lifestyle has spiralled downhill.

"Personally, there are times when I

struggle with faith and trust in God's dealing with him, and along with this is the shame and judgment I feel from others."

I know many of you reading this can relate to what this mum shared with me.

A heartache of this magnitude cannot be solved in the space of one column, but what I can do is hopefully give you some encouragement as you walk this difficult road.

Firstly, God does love your son or daughter. Whether you are a person of faith or not, I want you to know this with certainty. Sometimes I hear people say things like, "Well, maybe God has rejected that person. There is nothing you can do to change that, so just accept this is the way he or she is."

What heartless and wrong advice. In over 40 years of walking with people through the ups and downs of life, one thing I have learned with certainty is that God's love for everyone is deep, strong, and immeasurable.

Max Lucado once said, "If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on



STOCK PHOTO

it. If He had a wallet, your photo would be in it. He sends you flowers every spring and a sunrise every morning... Face it, friend. He is crazy about you!"

God's love for us is constantly reaching out to us, asking us to respond to Him in faith and trust – this includes your children...and you!

Secondly, you are not a failure as a parent. Many parents I know – including me – have experienced guilt from remembering "bad parenting moments" when they were raising their kids. Some of the guilt is real, sometimes its put on them by criticism from their now grown children, and sometimes its imagined.

Here's the thing – there is no perfect parent. Everyone of us has made mistakes, and we will continue to do so.

So how do we handle the guilt? Take ownership for the times when you "blew it." You'll know what these

are, and if you need to apologise, then do so. But don't take on false guilt. False guilt is when the past is exaggerated, or claims are made that you know are not true. Don't take that on. Own what you are responsible for, but don't accept the rest.

Stop the negative self-talk that you are the world's worst parent and don't waste energy worrying about what others think. My experience is that every parent – yes, every parent – has a child or sibling in their life who causes them pain!

And remember this. There has only ever been one perfect parent – God – and even His children rebelled!

I close with a short prayer for you today: "Father, please help everyone reading this to know Your peace and strength as they seek to love the rebel in their family. Give them hope to not give up on their loved one, because You most certainly haven't. Amen." ●

HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

Anyone can gain the eternal life offered through Jesus Christ

We read in God's word: "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16)

OUR PROBLEM: **Separation from God**
"Everyone has sinned. Nobody is good enough because God's standards are perfect" (Romans 3:23) **ADMIT**

GOD'S REMEDY / SOLUTION: **Jesus died on the cross**
"God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8) **BELIEVE**

OUR RESPONSE: **Trust Jesus by receiving Him**
"To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12) **COMMIT**

Here is an example of how you can pray.

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

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

He gives life of a wonderful quality that continues forever.

What now?

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

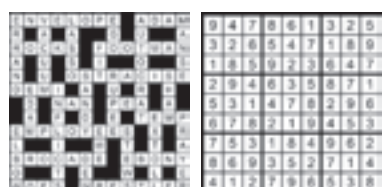
Name _____ Phone _____

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



Scan here to donate to the work of Challenge around the world.

Want to explore more?

Here are some free, helpful, Christian online resources

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

The mayonnaise jar and the coffee

WHEN things in your life seem almost too much to handle, when 24 hours in a day are not enough – remember the mayonnaise jar and the coffee...

A professor stood before his philosophy class with some items in front of him.

When the class began, he wordlessly picked up a large, empty jar and filled it with golf balls. He asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

So the professor picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar.

He shook the jar lightly – the pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He again asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed it was.

The professor then picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar.

Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He asked once more if the jar was full, and the students responded with a unanimous "Yes".

The professor then produced two cups of coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty spaces between the sand. The students laughed.

"Now," said the professor as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognise that this jar represents your life.

"The golf balls are the important things – God, family, children, health, friends, and your favourite passions.

"Things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full.

"The pebbles are the other things that matter, like your job, house, and car. The sand is everything else – the small stuff.

"If you put the sand into the jar first," he continued, "there is no room for the pebbles or golf balls.

"The same goes for life – if you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have time for the things that are important.

"Pay attention to the things that are critical to our happiness. Play with your children; take time to get medical check-ups; take your loved ones out to dinner.

"Maybe even play another 18 holes. There's always time to clean the house and fix that squeaky door. Take care of the golf balls first, the things that really matter – set your priorities, and the rest is just sand."

One of the students raised her hand and enquired what the coffee represented.

The professor smiled, "I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of cups of coffee with a friend."

– Author Unknown





Jockey Pat Day comes down the stretch aboard Louis Quatorze (far right) to win the 121st running of the Preakness Stakes at Pimlico Race Track in 1996. (Photo by BOB STRONG/AFP via Getty Images)

SADDLE TO PULPIT

Legendary jockey Pat Day may be small – he stands just 1.49 metres in his socks and weighs 48kg – but he has the heart and soul of a giant.

Professionally, he stood head and shoulders above his contemporaries. The ex-rodeo cowboy was inducted into the Racing Hall of Fame in 1991 and when he retired in 2005, he had amassed 8803 wins (fourth all-time) and was the all-time leading jockey in money earned.

Now 70, Pat can also walk tall in his personal life – although for much of his youth he was saddled with self-destructive habits.

“I thought [happiness] could be found in the sordid lifestyle of alcohol and drugs and carrying on,” he tells Tom Pedulla of America’s Best Racing. “It wasn’t.”

On the outside Pat lived a fabulous life – fame, money, success. But in reality it was a futile life as he lost decades to drugs and alcohol, often intoxicating himself into a stupor.

He was cocky and arrogant – and an unpleasant drunk.

“I would drink until I passed out and had no recall,” he tells Jeffrey Lee Puckett from the *Courier-Journal*. “I hammered down right up until the time I came to Christ.

“I would wake up in the morning and my wife would tell me about what a heel I had made of myself and I would spend half the day apologising to everybody.

“I had fame and fortune and all that the world had to offer,” he says.

“I discovered that it was very hollow and short-lived.”

All that changed on January 27, 1984, the night he became a born-again Christian. Pat was in a hotel room in Miami. Waking suddenly from a deep sleep, he heard an evangelist on the TV pleading for people to give their lives to Jesus Christ.

Something in his heart broke and he realised immediately this was what he’d been searching for all along.

“I just got down on my knees and wept and invited Jesus Christ into my life,” Pat tells Peter Johnson of *Charisma*. “My life changed radically and instantaneously.

“I had come to the conclusion that the moment I accepted Christ the chains had been broken. I had been set free from the addiction to drugs and alcohol.”

Speaking to the *Courier-Journal*, he says: “When I got up the next morning and walked outside I had never seen the world look so bright and so beautiful.

“The grass looked greener, the sky was bluer, the air was cleaner. It was a radical change.”

But now what? How did a professional jockey, whose entire career aids and abets gambling, live a Christian life?

Pat considered retiring. “As I baby in Christ I wasn’t sure what I was supposed to do or where I was supposed to go,” he reveals to *Charisma*.

He shared his quandary with a

chaplain. Together they sought God for direction.

“Through that process the Lord revealed to me that He saved me to work within the [racing] industry.”

Believing that God placed him in horse racing for a reason, Pat made sure he shone the spotlight on Christ after every win – and there were many – and in every press conference and interview.

He signed every autograph he was asked for with the words: “God loves you. John 3:16.”

“Christianity to me is not a way of life, it is life,” he tells *Charisma*. “My heart’s desire is to share that wonderful news.”

After his conversion, Pat helped establish the Kentucky Race Track Chaplaincy in the 1980s and became its chief spokesperson, and then president after his retirement in 2005.

He helped his wife establish a charity for single mothers and travels the country to speak about his faith and career. Ed Donnally, a long-time friend of Pat’s and development director of Racetrack Chaplaincy of America describes him this way: “Here’s a guy who’s won almost every horse race imaginable.

“He understands what his accomplishments are, but he always gives the credit to God. He’s someone who’s walked his talk a long time in a place where it wasn’t popular at all.”

Pat even earned the nickname “Little Jesus” because he testified about his love for Jesus at every

opportunity, whether it was from a pulpit or a saddle.

“Sportswriters didn’t really like him at all, because you’re going to get a quote about Jesus whether you want one or not,” Ed says. “He’s put Christ on the sports pages in a lot of places across the country.”

Rather than bask in the glory of his racing successes, Pat prefers to put God in the winner’s circle.

“The only thing that I can take credit for is the desire to serve God,” Pat tells *Charisma*. “Everything I have and all that I am is by the grace of God.”



Photo by A. Messerschmidt/Getty Images

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