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HIGH LIFE CRASHES DOWN

BY JANICE TEO

Sexually abused at eight. A heavy drug user by 18. A single mother at 21. By that age Perth mother Caroline Preedy, now 47, was a hardcore addict who could not make it through the day without drugs.

"If I wasn't high, I was a raging mess," the student services advisor

tells *Challenge News*. "I reached a point where I wasn't 'getting high' any more. I was using drugs just to be normal and do things like take my daughter to school and clean the house. I couldn't function without them."

Caroline immigrated to Perth with her parents from France when she was about three.

They lived in the mining town of Newman with her older sister, and it was at school there that Caroline was assaulted. She says the situation was dealt with but the emotional wounds she carried were harder to heal.

When she was 11, her parents moved to Perth, where they divorced not long after. "I was heartbroken. I had always been a daddy's girl and now the only male in my life had left me."

Desperate to fill that void, she fell into unhealthy relationships. Friends at high school introduced her to marijuana, which very quickly progressed to LSD, ecstasy and amphetamines.

"My relationships never gave me the security and love I craved so I took the drugs to help me numb the emptiness and pain," she explains.

Then Caroline became a mother. "I had this gorgeous daughter who I wanted desperately to get clean for. But I was no longer in control – the drugs were in control."

"I would like to say she was my priority throughout all that but I'm not going to lie. She saw things she should not have seen. Drugs were my priority. I did not have a casual problem."

"I needed drugs to start my day, so that I could walk out of the house,

to help me sleep, to battle anxiety."

Soon Caroline was hocking her possessions and stealing from family, friends and shops. "I hated it. Every night I would say no more, but when I woke up I only had one goal – to get high."

Her drug use increased after a



Caroline
Preedy

disastrous relationship.

To get money from her family and friends she would blackmail them with threats to harm herself.

Eventually they all cut her out of their lives. All... except her brother-in-law. He handed her a card for rehabilitation centre Adult & Teen

Challenge in Perth. That card saved Caroline's life.

She enrolled in its residential program. When she graduated 13 months later, she was free from drugs and was an entirely new person.

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YOUTH TRUTH Pages 9 & 10

Fun for Kids Pages 5, 6, 7

BACK PAGE

CHANGING THE GOAL POSTS

AARON TREDWAY

QUESTIONING THE TRUTH

BY HARRIET COOMBE

HAVE you ever wondered why Christians believe the Bible is the truth? Is there evidence outside of the Bible that Jesus really existed? Does history back up the claims the Bible makes?

Thankfully, there is plenty of evidence available to answer these questions:

Accurate records

The Bible has the most surviving copies of any ancient document.

There are about 25,000 manuscripts of the Bible from all over the ancient world, some dating back to as early as the second century. Although some people like to claim the Bible has been changed throughout the centuries, New Testament records are actually very accurate. The physical evidence confirms the Bible we can read today is the same as what the authors wrote 2000 years ago.

Historical evidence

Unlike other religious texts, the Bible includes historical claims that can and have been verified.

Archaeological finds have proven numerous times that the Bible corresponds to historical reality. For example, many buried cities have been uncovered exactly where the Bible describes them being.

Consistency is key

The 27 books of the New Testament were written independently of each other. So the book of James was written without the author having previously read the Gospel of Mark, or vice versa. And yet the messages within the books are clear and consistent. There are occasionally small differences in manuscripts, called variants, but they don't change major Christian beliefs or claims. The New Testament books were written relatively close to when Jesus lived on the earth, and before they were written, the history was preserved by a lost art called oral tradition as the majority of people in the ancient world couldn't read.

Prophecies fulfilled

The Bible is filled with hundreds of detailed prophecies which were written centuries before the events they accurately described.

● Turn to page 2

Questioning the truth

From page 1

For example, it says in the Old Testament that Jesus would:

- Be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14) in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), as a descendant of Abraham (Genesis 12:1–3), Isaac (Genesis 17:19), and Jacob (Genesis 28:14)
- Be betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41:9) for 30 pieces of silver that were used to purchase the potter's field (Zechariah 11:13)
- Be mocked and ridiculed, pierced in his hands and feet, and that lots were cast for his clothing (Psalm 22:7, 16, 18)
- Die (Daniel 9:26) as a sacrifice for our sins and buried in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:8–10)
- Rise from the dead after a short time in the grave (Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:10) (from answersingenesis.org)

Why would they lie?

Historical evidence shows that most of the New Testament authors were put to death for their claims that Jesus died and rose from the dead. Why, if they had concocted a lie about Jesus, would they continue to lie in the face of extreme suffering and death?

Historical documents

There are historic documents that refer to Jesus, His miracles, His disciples, His death, resurrection, and the rapidly growing group of followers who worshipped Him.

These writings have survived from early in the first century, the majority of which were handed down through Roman and Greek

scribes and are free from any allegations of tampering.

First century non-Christian historians, Thallus and Phlegon of Tralles, wrote about the crucifixion of Jesus and that darkness fell over the land when He died, which they concluded was due to a solar eclipse.

Another historian, Julius Africanus, wrote in AD 220 that this theory was "unreasonable".

As Jesus was crucified during the Jewish Passover holiday, which is celebrated at the full moon in the Hebrew month of Nisan, it was impossible for there to have been a solar eclipse.

In the first century, a Syrian writer, Mara Bar Serapion, wrote a letter to his son in prison which referenced Jesus as a real person.

The letter now resides at the British Museum and is often cited as evidence for the existence of Jesus.

Flavius Josephus (AD 37–103) was a Jewish historian whose writing confirms the existence of Biblical characters such as John the Baptist, Jesus' brother James, the High Priest Annas who tried Jesus before His crucifixion, and of course, Jesus Himself.

In one of his books, Josephus writes that Jesus was crucified and rose again three days later.

The Babylonian Talmud is a commentary on the Jewish scriptures and was most likely compiled between AD 70 and 200. It refers to Yeshu (Jesus) and the time, reason and mode of His execution.

High life comes crashing down

From page 1

The reason for her dramatic turnaround, Caroline says, is that she finally found the relationship she had pursued since she was a child – the one with Jesus Christ.

She shares that she had searched for God from primary school, where she voluntarily signed up for scripture classes and throughout her pre-teen years.

All that fell by the wayside when drugs came into the picture, but at Adult & Teen Challenge's chapel services Caroline learned about God's love and forgiveness, and His promise to make her a new person.

"I learned that by Jesus' death and resurrection I'd been forgiven and I was finally healed.

"My life today is so much better; however, like anybody, I have to face each day as it comes and deal with issues every day, make choices every day."

"Daily life is about the choices I make. But there's one choice that really keeps me strong, and that's to live my life for God and to care for other people."

In 2007 Caroline began working for Adult & Teen Challenge in Perth and has been there ever since, giving back to the community that led her out of her darkness. •

Caroline Preedy

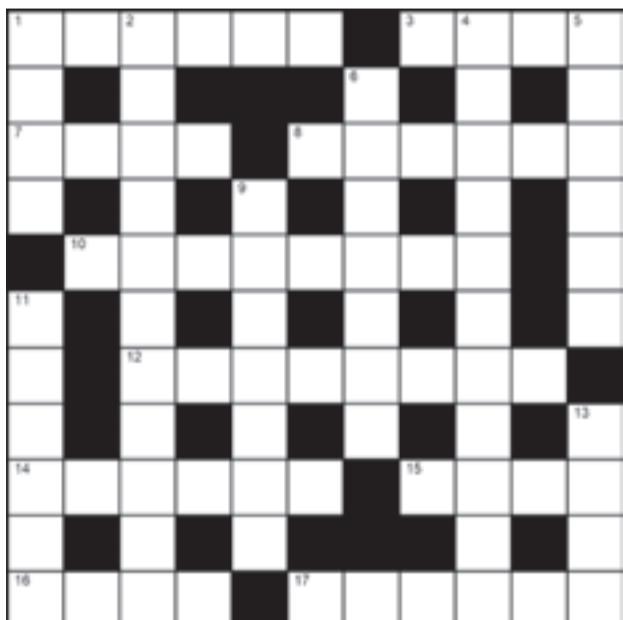


Coffee Break

CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

ACROSS

- 1 Internet access devices
 - 3 Not many (1,3)
 - 7 Errand, job
 - 8 To make amends for
 - 10 Blood infection
 - 12 Toy with rail track (5,3)
 - 14 Solitary
 - 15 Mix, as ingredients
 - 16 Coral formation
 - 17 At fault
- DOWN**
- 1 Silent
 - 2 Stop, cease
 - 4 A primary principle
 - 5 Any tech thingy
 - 6 Staying power
 - 9 Moral allegory
 - 11 School financial officer
 - 13 Site of a fabled gift horse



SOLUTIONS PAGE 11



"Ah ha, here's your problem! You're trying to make a living as a farmer!"

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

Don't be a silly willie

BY JOHN HUTCHINSON

I LOVE willie wagtails. I love their chatter and their swinging tails. I'm fascinated at how they build their nests – cleverly collecting spider webs and weaving them into one of the neatest nests you could see.

Willies often play risky games with cats. They land nearby and chatter in a tantalising way and taunt the cat to try and catch them. They just miss a pouncing paw by a split second. But, I have seen a willie wagtail caught by a clever cat. There is an electric light wire in our shearing shed where a pair of wagtails built a nest. The wire just drooped a bit and they carefully wound their nest onto it and laid their eggs. I loved watching them hatch and then feed their young. As the hatchlings grew they almost became too big for the nest.



However, when the temperature was up and the sun shone on the iron roof it got

too hot and the little ones in the nest died.

But, what did the willies do? They nested there again and lost their brood to the hot roof again and then again.

As smart as these birds are, like many people, they didn't learn from their mistakes. Most of us make mistakes. But mistakes have value if we let them teach us and make us smarter next time.

Not only can they make us smarter, they can also make others smarter if we pass on what we've learnt from them.

Others also make mistakes and smart people can learn a lot from the mistakes of others and be a lot wiser.

Don't be a silly willie!



The venom that affects everything

BY RICK LEWERS

SOME years back I was swimming with my family in the Cotter River outside Canberra. At the panicked voice of my wife, I turned to see that between me in the water and my son on the bank was an enormous brown snake.

I could not get to my son and my son could not get to me. It was as though time stood still. I have thought about that incident a lot. It reminds me of the state of the world.

There is a snake-like creature that exists and he positions himself between God and people and between people and people.

We know him as the devil and he first shows up in the Bible as a serpent whose venom produces a necrosis that leaves nothing in life unaffected – a venom we call "sin" that completely upsets the central spiritual system. John MacArthur Jnr writes: "Sin is the degenerative power in the human stream that makes a person susceptible to disease, illness, death and hell. Sin is the culprit in every broken marriage, every disrupted home, every shattered friendship, every argument, every pain, every sorrow every anguish and every death." God has written large upon his creation the truth that sin is a deadly poison that climaxes in eternal poverty.

Sin's venom works in no particular timeframe, sometimes killing instantly while at other times torturing people for the length of their lives leaving them sorrowfully unforgiven or making them bitterly unforgiving. The unforgiven remains crushed by their sin while the unforgiving are hardened by their bitterness.

Of course, when bitten by a venomous snake, the immediate course of action is to access the anti-venom. If you do not believe snake bite anti-venom exists then no one can help you. Similarly, if you do not believe in God, sin's anti-venom does not exist and there is no one who can help you.

Of course Jesus taught us that the anti-venom to sin's poison is only a prayer away: "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us". In the simplicity of the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught us that God the Father offers us forgiveness and inspires us to be forgiving. If you need forgiveness, God can offer it. If you need to forgive someone else, God can help. In the simplicity of this great prayer are the deepest resources for life. One can find the joy of sin's sorrows lifted and the chains of bitterness released. Isn't that something that everyone needs and worthy of praying for? I love the fact that Jesus met His death with the words "Father forgive them". It means God harbours no grudge and His forgiveness ends the sorrow of my guilt. If you want to be forgiven and forgiving, Jesus is the place to start.

MY LIFELESS FAITH WAS REVIVED

BY JANICE TEO

Being accepted into university usually triggers a great celebration. But it did just the opposite for 18-year-old Singaporean Pushpa Nabham.

Instead of joy she fell into a deep anxiety. As the first in her family to qualify for tertiary education, she felt great pressure to do well but didn't think she had what it took.

"I was filled with doubt and anxiety," Pushpa tells *Challenge News*. "It was such a change from the comfortable life I had known – a real jump into the unknown."

"Up to that point I was very confident in my own abilities; I felt like I was strong enough to handle anything. But now I asked myself: 'Could I cope? Will I succeed?' I lost all faith in myself."

It was then that Pushpa, who emigrated from Singapore to Perth in 1992, began looking around for what she describes as something "bigger than myself, a true higher power."

Up to then, her experience in religion had been eclectic to say the least.

There were Hindu gods in her house (her father, who died in a motorcycle accident when she was 12, was Hindu) as well as pictures of Mary and Jesus Christ (her mother was Catholic).

Pushpa herself used to attend Novena services (a novena is a series of prayers prayed over nine days to Mary to obtain special favours from God).

"But what kind of religion did I have? I only prayed when I needed help to pass my exams!"

"That kind of faith was not enough for me

I felt a great unburdening.

anymore. I felt very empty. I started searching for something bigger than myself."

It was around this time that Pushpa's brother-in-law committed his life to Jesus Christ.

On his visits to her home he would share the gospel (the good news that Jesus came to Earth to die for our sins).

"Even though I had heard the gospel before, there was something different about what he was saying and I became very hungry for more," she shares.

At that time Singapore was going through quite a revival of Christianity and Pushpa attended several church meetings.

"At one of those meetings God touched me really powerfully. I remember breaking down and crying buckets.

"I felt a great unburdening and the joy of the Lord filled my heart.

"This was so different from the religion I had been practising my whole life. From that time onwards my faith went from something lifeless and routine to something alive and real."

After she finished her university education and graduated as a teacher, Pushpa went on her first mission trip.

It was to Cambodia and launched her into what would become her lifelong vocation – looking after underprivileged children.

Recalling what drew her into the work, she says she had the same dream three times – that of a field ripe with grain.

"I realised God was showing me the Bible verse Matthew 9: 37-38 'behold the harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few', meaning there are lots of people who need to hear about God.

"I immediately felt this was the

calling on my life."

In 2012, she and a Malaysian pastor founded MIKI Home for underprivileged children in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

Pushpa continues to serve as advisor to MIKI Home.

At 70, she is still spritely and full of energy.

"I believe God renews my strength every day.

"The older I get the stronger I'll be!" she laughs. •



Pushpa Nabham

Q & A

Q: Does the Bible talk about reincarnation anywhere? How can we know this is our only life?

A: Great question. The Bible never mentions reincarnation, and in fact states the contrary: "It is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment." (Hebrews 9:27)

If the Bible is correct, then why doesn't God allow for reincarnation?

Consider that the idea of reincarnation may be flawed at its core.

Reincarnation is the theory that with enough lives, a person can somehow finally get it right and then be allowed into paradise/nirvana.

Many people think they are good enough – already – for heaven (they haven't robbed banks or killed anyone).

With reincarnation, the idea is very similar. The only difference is that it suggests that you'll be good enough... eventually.

Why is such a scheme flawed?

Because it doesn't take into account the sinfulness of man.

The Bible says that all people have sinned and fall short of God's glory (Romans 3:23), that all have turned from God and gone their own way (Isaiah 53:6), that there is not even one person who does good (Psalm 53:3), and that there is no one who doesn't sin (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

Therefore, what good would it do to come back to earth in a different body? The degree of change would not be enough to make a difference.

You live your first life as a sinner who has turned from God, then you come back as a different person who nonetheless is a sinner who turns from God.

This endless cycle would give no benefit to anyone.

Since we are sinners, we need forgiveness. Since we all turn away from God, we need to turn back to Him (repentance). This is the consistent message of the Bible.

God tells us to turn to Him for forgiveness and seek Him in order to know Him.

If we do that, then heaven begins in this life and can merely carry on into the next life.

For He Himself – not a different place to live – is what it's really all about.

Even though the Bible refutes reincarnation, it does speak of a resurrection of all people...

"An hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil to a resurrection of judgment." (John 5:28-29)

Here is more Scripture regarding that judgment: "And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it.... And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened....and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds....And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire." (Revelation 20:11-15)

Want to know how to have your name written in the book of life?

Sincerely ask God now for His forgiveness. Jesus died for your sins so that you could be forgiven. But to receive God's forgiveness you must turn to Him in sincerity and with a commitment of your life. See *How do I become a Christian* on page 11. •

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Do you have questions about the Bible or Christianity? Send an email to harriet@challengenews.org and we will do our best to answer it for you.

I discovered the best-kept secret

After Erez Soref completed his military service, he decided to travel the world. Born and raised in Israel, he did as many Israelis before him had done, and started out first in Southeast Asia.

Sharing his story on the One for Israel YouTube channel, he said he was born to a Sephardic Jewish family and wanted to understand the beliefs of other people groups around the world. During his travels he read Hindu and Buddhist literature and had many experiences that opened his eyes to the spiritual world. When his travels found him in Europe, he met a group of young believers in Jesus.

"Well, I'm Jewish and we don't believe in Jesus," he told them.

"Why?" they responded. "Jesus is Jewish!"

Erez said he wasn't sure, but he knew Jews didn't believe in Jesus. As he spent more time with the Christians, his curiosity increased. He was intrigued by what they called their "personal relationship with God".

"I couldn't understand it," Erez remembers. "I mean I could see it. I could see how it worked out in their lives. They would pray for one another. They would talk to God like one talks to a friend... it's very foreign to a Jewish mindset."

He was also shocked that these Christians were more familiar with passages in the Hebrew Scriptures than he was!

"In school we would study certain chapters, and we would skip over a lot of the other passages but they referred me to passages that they called 'prophetic' or 'Messianic', that talk about the Messiah, and I was amazed!" Erez says. "I said, 'How come you guys know the Hebrew Scripture? I mean, this is ours!'"

The Christians explained that the Hebrew Scriptures were part of the Old Testament and together with the New Testament, they formed their Bible. Erez decided to read the Hebrew Scriptures for himself and was surprised to



Erez Soref

find the passages the Christians had talked about that told when the Messiah would be born, what He would do and how they could recognise Him. So he decided to also read the New Testament.

"I was very surprised," Erez recalls. "First of all, it took place in Israel, in places I've been to many times. Growing up in Israel, I'd never heard anything about Jesus of Nazareth. I'd never met a Christian person. I'd never seen a New Testament."

Erez even visited family living on the shores of the Sea of Galilee several times a year. He had no idea Jesus and His disciples had also lived there.

"We refer to this phenomenon as Jesus being the best-kept secret among the Jewish people," Erez explains.

Erez felt drawn to Jesus and began to compare the prophecies about the Messiah in the Hebrew Scriptures with Jesus in the New

Testament. "To my amazement, it matched," he attests. "I became convinced, first in my head, then in my heart, that Yeshua [Hebrew for Jesus] is indeed the promised Messiah of our people. Shortly after that I started noticing changes in myself. I had a great hunger to read the Word of God – the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament."

Erez returned to Israel to tell his family and friends about what he had discovered. When he told his family he believed in Jesus the Messiah, they concluded Erez had lost his mind.

"My dad's family arranged a meeting for me with the chief psychiatrist in our city and he actually formally declared me to be sane," Erez explains. "I should have asked for that in writing. My mum's family arranged a meeting for me with the rabbi, and the rabbi promised my mum that he would prove to me that Yeshua is not the Messiah. The day before our meeting the rabbi called my mum, and he cancelled the meeting."

Erez was pleased to find other Jewish believers in Jesus and he attended their congregation. He wanted to study the Bible but was told that wasn't possible in Israel at that time. He instead travelled to America to complete his studies.

When he and his wife and children returned to Israel he knew he wanted to serve God.

"I remember very vividly how it felt coming to know Yeshua and having a deep desire to study the Scriptures and not knowing how to do it," Erez recalls. "I felt very strongly that I need to go and provide this opportunity for Israeli believers both Jewish and Arab to study the Word of God, in Hebrew, right where it happened."

Erez is now the president of One for Israel, which started as a Bible college and has expanded to become a multi-faceted ministry which aims to reach Israelis with the good news about Jesus. •

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Do you have questions about the Bible or Christianity? Send an email to harriet@challengenews.org and we will do our best to answer it for you.

Seeking answers to the afterlife

What is the meaning of life? Is there an afterlife? These were two questions that kept intruding in Paul Holliday's life. He considered himself an agnostic for the most part, not really caring whether God existed. But events and circumstances would happen and he would ask himself whether God could actually exist and what He would be like.

"I mainly wondered if there was an afterlife when I knew of someone who had passed away," Paul says. "It didn't make any sense why anyone would come into this world, live to a certain age, then die without any sort of reunion. Often, I would think to myself, what about all those things that people didn't do, places they wanted to see but never got a chance to? What about the people who they never got a chance to meet?"

"It seemed to me that there had to be an afterlife, a good one, where we would never have to say goodbye to a loved one or friend again."

Paul concluded that if God did exist and there was a heaven and hell, he would go to heaven.

"I was mostly a good person and I believed that all religions led to God," he says. Yet Paul knew that he was not always good, and he wondered whether this would jeopardise his entrance into a good afterlife.

"I had a big problem with lying," he explains.

"I used to lie to make myself look good, mostly in high school but it continued at work as well."

Then one Friday afternoon while he was working in the city, Paul had some of his questions answered.

"A friendly young man approached me and, as we talked, he invited me to go to church and discuss the Bible," he recalls. "I went along and asked a lot of questions such as, 'If I just live a good life will I go to heaven? And, 'how can we know whether God exists?' In response they showed me the book of Romans in the Bible, especially the first three chapters. I also asked, 'If someone turns to God for forgiveness one day, then dies the very next day, do they still go to heaven?'

"The people from that group answered 'Yes'. It was at that point I realised that it's not what we have done, but what God has done for us (Matthew 20:1-16 and Luke 23:40-43). I also asked whether following other religions led people to heaven. They responded by showing me John 14:6, 'Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" and Acts 4:12."

"I asked other questions and they answered them all from the Bible. I only stayed with this group for about a week because I found them very exclusive and critical of other churches. Instead, I attended my mum's friend's church and enrolled in a course that explained Christianity. I soon realised that my own standard of living compared to God's was a long way apart."

"I knew that if I died I would end up in hell, eternally separated from God. So, on one Sunday afternoon in December 1996, I went into my room and confessed to God that I fell short

of His perfect standards and that I needed His free gift of salvation that He offers to all of humanity through the Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul no longer believes being good is enough to get anyone into heaven, and sees this as the difference between Christianity and religion.

"Before I became a Christian if anyone told me 'If you just live a good life and don't harm anyone, you will go to heaven', I would have accepted that answer," he says.

"But I've realised this is religion and not true Christianity. Now, I get very sad when I meet so many nice people that say that, and in reality they are facing eternal separation from God. There are no second chances after a person dies, as shown in

Hebrews 9:27-28, which says, 'Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and He will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are

waiting for Him.'

"When nice and good people get sick or die at quite a young age, I often hear people say, 'It always happens to the wrong people, and not to the bad people who stab innocent people.' In reality, all of us are just as bad as one another. Romans 3:23 says, 'For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.' And it says in James 2:10, 'For whoever keeps the whole law, yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.'

"The difference between Christianity and religion is that Christians believe Jesus Christ lived the perfect life, not just a good life, and that He died willingly on the cross, taking the punishment humans deserved and then He rose again."

"No other person in all of history has ever done that and no religion teaches heaven is a free gift. According to God's Word, this must be a personal decision between us and God. Nobody else can do it for us, each and every one of us needs to respond in faith personally."

Paul is passionate about travelling and has served in his church for the past few years, where he enjoys meeting and greeting people. •

“There are no second chances after a person dies.”



Paul Holliday

MY DESPERATION LEFT ME

Guilt and shame are the twin engines of many an unhappy life and Inaya* had been on that hamster wheel for years.

"I was born in a Muslim family," she says on a YouTube video. "At a certain stage in my life, I decided to become a religious Muslim."

"I wanted to serve the god of Islam. I wanted to go to heaven and avoid going to hell so I married a very religious Muslim man to help me pursue my goal and purpose."

That did not go well. "My relationship with my husband was very toxic. He has very strong narcissistic traits and I suffered. There was physical abuse and I was tormented."

"It was just always a cycle of guilt, shame and blame and no matter how hard I worked I could not do enough."

She says she had the same experience with Islam. While she was careful to perform all the duties expected of her she experienced no breakthrough.

"I was reading and reciting and repeating but they made no sense for me whatsoever," she shares.

"I started to realise that this religion has a very thin relationship to the truth."

Unable to continue, she turned her back on Islam and went into "a phase of defiance."

"I was out to take my revenge from the years of deception I went through, to break every rule and the same for my marriage."

Inaya sought release but says "it's never an easy thing to break out from a narcissistic relationship."

She describes herself as completely lost and confused.

"You are addicted to that pain, to that poison that you used to take. Also, we had kids and my kids were suffering. It was just chaos."

It was then that a friend suggested Inaya see an "energy healer" for "spiritual support."

The healer chanted mantras and rituals over her. "She did things like open my 'third eye'. I felt good because I was thirsty for any type of spirituality."

Inaya went deeper into these practices and at one point in the middle of a meditation session,



Stock photo

said she felt something come into the room and sit next to her. This entity, Inaya says, began following her. Soon the migraines started.

She sought help from the healer, who performed more rituals to release her from the spirits, but Inaya felt worse after each visit. Then came the voices.

Desperate for help, Inaya saw many mediums and says she spent a fortune. "I knocked on the door of spiritists, energy healers, white witches. I went deeper into New Age to find help." This lasted for a few years.

One night in 2016, Inaya says she felt paralysed in bed, her mind filled with suicidal thoughts, depression and darkness.

"One thought came into my heart and I began to see that this pain and the mess I was in had only one reason – the fact that I didn't have God."

"So I lifted my head and said 'I don't know who You are. I don't know Your name. I don't know if You are Allah but I just know that You do exist and You can hear me.'

"I know that there is no pain in this life but the pain of being separated from You. I want You to

come into my life."

The next morning, Inaya woke up and while drinking her coffee watched some videos on YouTube – and nearly dropped her cup.

"Out of nowhere came a video of a man who talked about trusting God in the storm! If there was anyone on Earth going through a storm it was me!" she exclaims. "I cried throughout the video."

She contacted the man who posted the video, and to her amazement, he replied in an email and told her about Jesus Christ.

"He told me 'I cannot help you. There's only one person who can give you help and that is Jesus Christ, you need to believe in Him.'

"He pointed me to videos where I saw demons being cast out in Jesus' name."

Inaya soon committed her life to Jesus and joined some prayer groups.

One night they prayed for her to be filled with the Holy Spirit (the inner presence of God). She says she noticed the difference the very next morning.

"I went to smoke my cigarette as usual in the morning but it tasted awful. I wondered 'what's wrong with me? Am I sick? I crushed that pack of cigarettes and haven't smoked since.'

It wasn't just the urge to smoke that left Inaya. She says her craving for attention from social media "fell off" her without her even trying. "It wasn't a decision that I made, it was the Holy Spirit."

Thirsting for more of Jesus, she was baptised a short time later and says that she felt "full of power and courage, renewed in my heart."

"My desperation left me, depression left me. After going through the New Age teachings, Hinduism and Buddhism and Islam, I know I have found the truth."

"Sometimes we are confused and sometimes we fail and sometimes we need encouragement. Here is my testimony of my weakness so that you can be encouraged," Inaya concludes. •

*Name has been changed

"Fowl"-lowing the evidence

ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE
BY GAVIN COX IN CREATION
MAGAZINE (CREATION.COM)

Let's talk turkey. It's a topic David "Dubby" Rodda is very familiar with.

The Englishman, who describes himself as a "retired scientist, geneticist-cum-poultry breeder" specialised in genetics and animal breeding.

From 1952, he was personally involved in a turkey breeding project introducing specific colour genes. Turkey farmers used breeds with all-white feathers, because the pigment in dark feathers leaves unsightly stubs after slaughter. But they were unable to easily "sex" the hatchlings (distinguish male and female) without involved procedures.

The breakthrough outcome? After many years of effort, their male and female hatchlings had different colouration at birth, so could be easily distinguished. But they still had all-white feathers as adults.

The 87-year-old uses two other words to describe himself – "creationist" and "missionary".

This is because he has long been a Christian with a firm belief in biblical creation – that God created the world and all its living creatures.

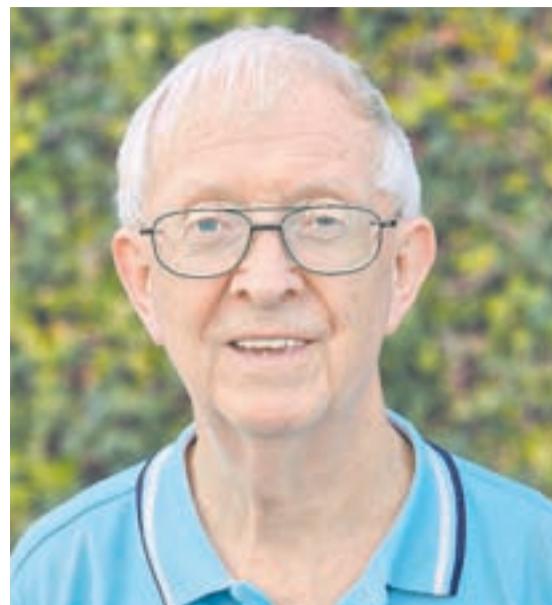
Raised in a Christian household, Dubby had an early conversion experience when he was eight but it was only when he was 14 that he received assurance of salvation.

Inspired by the writings of Dr Paul White, a pioneering missionary in Tanzania who wrote a series of books called *Jungle Doctor*, Dubby was challenged to reach African people under Islamic influence.¹

The challenge came from his missionary uncle, who said that few missionaries were going to these peoples.

He asked Dubby: "If God wanted you to go, would you be willing?"

Duby did not exactly warm to this, but nevertheless recognised, "Since Jesus is Lord of my life, if that is



David "Duby" Rodda

what He wants me to do, then I have no choice but to say 'Yes.' He then decided to plan his educational goals with missions in mind.

Prayer was always integral to Rodda's business; his family owned Rodda's Creamery, a household name in Cornwall.

The family always sought to put God first and according to Dubby "we witnessed His remarkable guidance on many occasions."

When Dubby started his doctoral studies in genetics and animal breeding,

he was confident God had created everything, but was unsure about whether or not this was by using evolution.

He expected that his professors would present him with lots of experimental evidence to justify the widespread confidence in evolutionary theory.

But, he says, in all the evolution

classes and papers he read, he found absolutely none!

So he questioned his professors about evolution. One professor loaned him a book about abiogenesis (or chemical evolution, the idea that the first life arose by itself from non-living chemicals).²

However, Dubby found it far too mathematically improbable to believe.

He boldly suggested, "Isn't it easier to believe in God?"

The professor's reply struck Dubby powerfully: "Well, yes, of course it is – but who wants to believe in God?"

Duby says, "His choice to refuse to believe in God was plainly in spite of the overwhelming evidence."

Around this time, Dubby was very impressed by a book by A.E. Wilder-Smith,³ one of the pioneers of the modern creation science movement.

His book described life's complex chemistry, the inconceivable amounts of information encoded into the "simplest" organisms, and the impossibility of life's chance emergence.

Take the turkey project for



Before 1971, both male and female poultts of Dubby's white turkeys all looked like the one on the far right. After 15 years of intensive breeding efforts, farm workers can now distinguish at a glance the brown females from the black males. All turkeys will grow up to have only white feathers as adults.

Mutation accumulation leads to extinction

PETER'S CORNER WITH PETER MIKULA

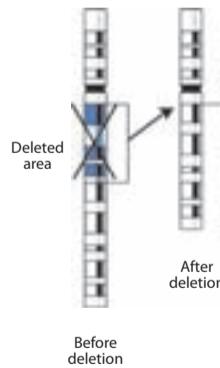
DID you know that mutations accumulate in our human generations quite quickly? A mutation is a random accidental change in the DNA sequence in a gene (genome). Scientists have estimated that each child carries on average 60 to 100 more mutations than their parents.

Most mutations that we accumulate are "slightly deleterious" which means that they are slightly harmful. For example they might interfere with our ability to produce a certain protein or enzyme.

Any really harmful mutations cause severe disease and death, but the slightly harmful ones build up through the generations. The problem is that as they build up, those mutations cause gradual decline in health, or decline in fitness. That could eventually lead humans to become extinct, as individuals gradually lose the ability to live long, or to reproduce.

I read a paper by a secular geneticist Alexey Kondrashov (who believes in evolution) on this topic. He argued that for vertebrates, which includes humans, decline in fitness occurs due to an excessive mutational load.

Assuming a perfect genome to start with, he calculated



a rate of 100 lethal (meaning harmful) mutations per genome, which led to his question in the title of his paper: "Why have we not died 100 times over?"

If humans have been on earth for the few thousand years indicated in the Bible, and started with perfect DNA, then there has not been enough time for decline in fitness to become lethal. So we should still be here. But if, as evolutionists claim, humans have been on earth for over 1,000,000 years, we should surely have become extinct a long long time ago!

It should be easy to work out whether we are here or extinct, and thus whether the Bible account or the evolution account is true. Our real challenge is to accept the answer.

I hope these words help you, as they have me, in your journey to surely trust the Bible.

I gratefully acknowledge the below references for background information for this article.

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

Believe it or not

BY CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

How do ants find their way home?

CONSIDER the ant's weekly grocery run. It has to find a new source of food every day – how does it find its way back to its nest without getting lost?

Like Pacific salmon¹ and monarch butterflies², who find their way back to their original nesting grounds to mate years after leaving them, the navigation abilities of ants amaze scientists.

Researchers from universities in the UK and Australia who have studied the ant's homing abilities reported their findings in a 2022 paper.³

The scientists studied a colony of desert ants travelling between their nest and a regular food source and discovered they use something called 'path integration' to compute the distance and direction from home. This programmed behaviour helps the insect to keep track of compass heading and distance travelled so it can compute a direct path home.⁴

Navigation systems expert Eric Cassell explains: They use "visual landmarks, vector memories of route segments, and path integration." They also detect odours and use a combination of "sensor information sources for path integration, including a sun compass, biological clock, and two forms of odometers."⁵

"Path integration affords the ants surprisingly accurate information about the nest position even after wide-ranging foraging runs," he adds.

"This is a further indication of the advanced engineering of their navigation system. And keep in mind, this is all managed in a brain that is only about one-fourth the size of a honey-bee brain, and the skills are largely innate, not learned or taught."⁶

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example.

As Dubby puts it: "The project required years of planned effort to develop the pure breeds for only two existing genes and to breed out the many undesirable genes that inevitably came to light in the process. It was plain hard work, even though we knew what to do!"

"Yet Darwinian evolutionists believe that 'blind' natural selection and random mutations produced all life on earth starting from a single cell!"

"They claim that 'somehow' new genetic information, coding for and regulating new functions, 'arose'."

"Then natural selection produced ever more complex organisms, through unguided processes, over billions of years."

"In reality, they have no idea how all this is supposed to have happened!"

"Our practical experience demonstrates clearly that 'evolution' is really a fairy tale, and has nothing to do with real, practical science! So why believe it?"

Duby's passion is for evangelism and to challenge the church to return to the authority of God's Word.

He recognises that evolution with its millions of years represents an obstacle, blinding the eyes of unbelievers and Christians alike.

He says: "I am fully confident, on the basis of all the genetic evidence I have seen, that every living organism is descended from a Genesis kind, created originally perfect a relatively short time ago. This is exactly what the Bible teaches!"

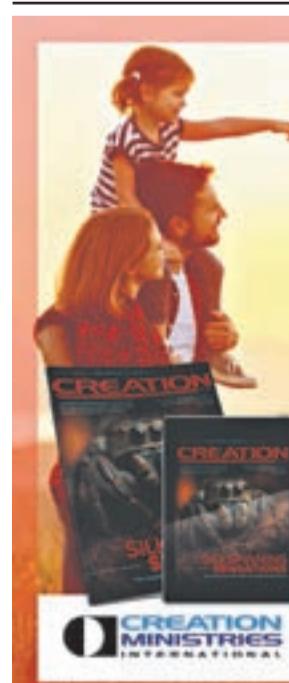
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David "Duby" Rodda graduated in agricultural science from Reading University in the UK, which also granted him a master's degree in poultry science. He earned a PhD in animal science and genetics from Guelph, Canada, specialising in statistical approaches to genetics and animal breeding. Later he had practical experience in guiding a successful turkey-breeding program on the family farm.



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YOUTH TRUTH

“Harmless fun” led me down a dangerous path

It began with the horoscope pages in teen magazines. Tailah Scroggins was nine when she discovered them – and was instantly hooked.

“I didn’t know any better and it became really important to me,” says the 25-year-old singer and musician, who has a following in the hundreds of thousands on TikTok and Instagram.

Following her star sign and tracking her friends’ Zodiac calendar seemed like harmless fun, but actually opened the door to the occult.

Tailah became an astrologer and New Age believer who used crystals and tarot cards to connect with the dark realms.

Her involvement with witchcraft came about, she says, because although her family were Christians, nobody ever explained to her why witchcraft was bad.

“I was just told not to get involved with that – but that made me even more curious because it became forbidden fruit,” she says. While she was in college Tailah pursued a life of pleasure – drinks, parties and men.

“I lived for the world, but no amount of friends, romantic relationships, parties, yoga, or meditation could fill the emptiness I felt. It was a dark two years and I struggled with depression and anxiety,” she confesses.

She fell into deep depression which might have led to something tragic, but says that when she hit her lowest point, “I cried out to Jesus and He met me in my tiny college apartment.



Tailah Scroggins now makes TikTok and Instagram videos about her how to walk out of darkness and into light. Photo: facebook.com/Tailahj

“I rededicated my life to Him then and there. He delivered me from depression and anxiety and filled me with peace and hope.

“The pain and healing process that I went through during that time has equipped me with the tools necessary to walk others out of darkness and into His light.”

Those tools are the videos Tailah posts on TikTok and Instagram which have drawn more than 30 million views.

She began creating the videos in 2021 and says that to her surprise “they went viral” to the extent that thousands threw out their crystals and tarot cards and became Christians.

“I have been creating faith-based content, speaking, and sharing my worship music since then.

“I’m so passionate about deliverance ministry. That’s what I do online and in person,” she explains.

The videos draw attention to the spiritual underpinnings of practices like yoga, which Tailah says is steeped in the demonic.

“Don’t believe horoscopes are harmless fun. They are not. They were my introduction to the occult. Astrology attacks your identity and gets you to accept your Zodiac sign as who you are.”

And there’s nothing new about the New Age.

“It’s just repackaged witchcraft,” she asserts.

Our true identities, Tailah declares, are to be found only in Christ. “He will take our mess-timony and turn it into a testimony!

“Everyone has obstacles and challenges. I always try to embrace struggles.

“God used [the giant] Goliath to get [the lowly shepherd boy] David on the throne. Your giants aren’t meant to defeat you, they are meant to promote you.

“My message to young people is to throw all that occult stuff away and let God free them. He is what they’re searching for.”

nudge

WITH KARL FAASE

Trashy magazines

HAVE you ever wondered why so many people read trashy magazines? These magazines focus most of their articles on celebrity gossip.

Critics say that this focus on celebrity lifestyles is damaging in everything from body image to the general dumbing down of our community.

Those who endorse these magazines believe that they give us something to talk about other than the weather and give us the opportunity to discuss social issues like divorce, drug use and parenthood.

The danger is that these celebrities become our role models.

We get our entertainment from watching their lives and our values from their behaviour.

We can be fooled into thinking that a revolving door of relationships, endless partying and self-obsessed living is justified, even ideal.

We need a role model who gives us positive values and encourages life-enhancing behaviour. For 2000 years Jesus has done this and still does.

Why not take some time to read in the Bible how Jesus is a role model for you?

Where is God in tragedy?

BY MARILYN ADAMSON

GOD is the Creator of the universe who yearns for us to know Him. That is why we are all here. It is His desire that we rely on and experience His strength, love, justice, holiness and compassion. So He says to all who are willing, “Come to Me.”

Unlike us, God knows what will happen tomorrow, next week, next year, the next decade. He says, “*I am God, and there is no one like me, declaring the end from the beginning.*”¹ He knows what will occur in your life and can be there for you, if you’ve chosen to include Him in your life. He tells us that He can be “*our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble.*”² But we must make a sincere effort to seek Him. He says, “*You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.*”³

That doesn’t mean that those who know God will escape difficult times. When wars or rampant disease cause suffering and death, those who know God will be involved in that suffering also. But there is a peace and a strength that God’s presence gives. Reality tells us that we will experience problems in life. However, if we go through them while knowing God, we can react to them with a different perspective and with a strength that is not our own. He is bigger than all the problems that can hit us, and we are not left alone to deal with them.

God has created humanity with the ability to choose. This means that we are not forced into a relationship with Him. He allows us to reject Him and to commit other evil acts as well. He could force us to be loving. He could force us to be good. But then we would be robots. Instead He gave us the human dignity of free will.

We have, by our lives and actions, distanced ourselves from God. The Bible says that “*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way.*”⁴

The consequences? Our sin has separated us from God, and it affects more than this life. The penalty for our sin is death, or eternal separation from God. However, God has provided a way for us to be

forgiven and know Him.

God came to earth to rescue us.

“*For God so loved the world that He sent His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.*”⁵

Jesus left the safety and security of His home, and entered the hard environment we live in. Jesus got tired, knew hunger and thirst, battled accusations from others and was ostracised by family and friends. But Jesus experienced far more than daily hardships. Jesus, the Son of God in human form, willingly took all of our sin on Himself and paid our penalty of death. “*In this is love, that he laid down his life for us.*”⁶ He went through torture, dying a slow, humiliating death of suffocation on a cross, so that we could be forgiven.

Jesus told others ahead of time that He would be crucified. He said three days after being buried He would show Himself physically alive to those who saw His crucifixion. On that third day, Jesus’ tomb was found empty and many people testified to seeing Him alive.

He now offers us eternal life. We don’t earn this. It is a gift from God offered to us, which we receive by faith when we ask Him to enter our lives. If we turn away from our sin and turn back to God, we can have the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ.⁷ What about heaven? God

does have a better place He offers us. In this world, God will wipe every tear from people’s eyes. There will be no more mourning, crying, death or pain.⁸ Right now you can ask God to enter your life. You can do this through prayer. Prayer means talking honestly with God. At this moment you can call out to God by telling Him something like this in sincerity: “God, I want to know You. I want to receive Jesus Christ and His forgiveness into my life. I don’t want to be separated from You anymore. Please forgive my sin. Be the God of my life from this day onward. Thank you God.”

Footnotes: (1) Isaiah 46:9 (2) Psalm 46:1 (3) Jeremiah 29:13 (4) Isaiah 53:6 (5) John 3:16-17 (6) 1 John 3:16 (7) Romans 6:23 (8) Revelation 21:4 This article was first published on EveryStudent.com and is used with kind permission

“
There will be
no more crying,
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”

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YOUTH TRUTH

BACK IN PRISON BUT THIS TIME IT'S FOR GOOD

When Californian Johnny Chang was 10, he was beaten up and robbed on the street. When he told his father what happened, his father thought he was lying and gave him yet another whipping.

Johnny was a child of poor immigrant parents from China. His father was abusive and an atheist who never said "I love you" or apologised.

His mother was a Buddhist who played by the traditional rules of her culture – she was submissive and never stood up for her son.

At 12, Johnny was an explosive mixture of pain, rejection, hurt and anger. But more than anything he was lonely for a family and emotional connection – so he joined the one place that promised him that – a notorious street gang.

Speaking to the Delafe channel on YouTube, Johnny says: "I took to the streets; if I went home I would get beaten and have to deal with my dad in a drunken rage."

Joining a gang, he says, was the "lesser of two evils."

"When I hit the streets I volunteered to do a lot of things – shooting people, stabbing people – because I

wanted to unload my rage and my anger."

Within a year, he was arrested and sentenced to four "really, really traumatic" years in the California Youth Authority.

Sixty-seven days after his release from the CYA, he was convicted again – this time for assault with a deadly weapon in an attempted robbery. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison and had to serve eight.

Life when Johnny was released from prison was no

joy ride. As a convicted felon he couldn't find any work and went back to the extremely profitable trade of selling drugs.

He had money – "like \$30,000 to \$40,000 a

month" – and he had freedom but he couldn't shake the loneliness and depression. "I always had this emptiness, this void inside me," he says.

One day, his mother asked him for a lift. In the car he told her he noticed she was happier and more peaceful than before, even though the situation at home had not changed.

She told him it was because of church. Johnny rolled his eyes. "I said, 'Mom you're crazy. You've been a Buddhist your whole life and now you're telling me about this Jesus. I don't believe in God. We were

raised Buddhist.'"

His mother smiled knowingly and said, "Fair enough."

At his mother's church, Johnny met the pastor, who took him out for a meal and shared the gospel (the good news of Jesus Christ). In two hours, over a bowl of black bean noodles, the young man's life was changed forever.

"Johnny," the pastor began, "are you a sinner?"

"Yes," Johnny replied. "Lying and stealing and stuff."

The pastor replied, "Sin isn't just about lying or stealing. Sin is not believing in Jesus Christ."

"What he said captivated me," Johnny shares.

Sin, the pastor explained, was putting yourself and not Christ, in the driver's seat.

"When you do that you stand in the position of God," he added. "You're putting your thoughts above the Word of God."

"That's why you feel so empty all the time. The emptiness is the by-product of how you've been living your life."

The pastor told Johnny he had a choice – he could run his own life, with its ever-changing feelings and thoughts, or he could trust in God's Word, which never changes and would never lead



Once a big-time gangster, Johnny Chang now counsels prisoners who are struggling with depression and loneliness. Photo: youtube.com/@vladtv

I always had this emptiness, this void inside of me.

him the wrong way.

Then he told Johnny how much God loved him. "No matter what, God died for you," the pastor added.

"That was the first time I met Jesus," says Johnny. "I knew about Him theoretically but that day I accepted Him into my heart and that's what changed my life."

Encouraged by his pastor, Johnny saw himself as a "messenger" to his gang mates and was able to share with them his newfound hope in Christ.

One of the hardest things he had to do was reconcile with his father. "But I knew God wanted me to do this."

Father and son met at a cafe and again over a bowl of noodle soup, Johnny's life was changed.

"Dad," he said, "I'm sorry for not being a good son. I'm sorry I brought shame to our family." He had been afraid his father would throw it back at him and say, "That's right! You should be sorry."

Instead, he burst into tears and apologised for his drinking, and his abuse. "I should have been a better dad," he said.

Father and son reconciled and now share a relationship that includes regular fishing trips and, of course, noodle

soup.

"It's amazing. And it was only possible because of God," Johnny says.

All this happened eight years ago. Today the one-time, big-time gangster has done a complete turnaround and is now a prison counsellor.

He shares the gospel on many social media platforms and his story has sparked conversations even among people in rival gangs.

"Now I'm doing prison ministry – counselling people who are suffering from depression, loneliness, emptiness, void – and I just want to advance the kingdom of God." •

I reached the top and it was empty

t wasn't the struggle that made me surrender to God.

It wasn't when I was going through college and was poor. It was reaching the top and realising that it all was like Paul said in the Bible... it was like dung. Literally poop. It was worth nothing. It was empty and it did not fully fulfil.

It was then that I realised, "Lord, I've been trying to figure out my life in my own strength, leaning on my own understanding, not acknowledging You in all of my ways, not following Your leadership. And it's never led me anywhere good."

It was that moment of being in complete wealth that I realised I needed to surrender.

I just said, "God, I don't care if I have to live in a cardboard box. I don't care if I lose everything. I just want to be in Your will. Because I don't know what I'm doing. I don't know how to figure any of this out."

And I went into this God cave where I just obsessively consumed the Word of God. I read the whole Bible through. And I was actually having these beautiful encounters with Him as I read His Word.

As I read, He would show me what He



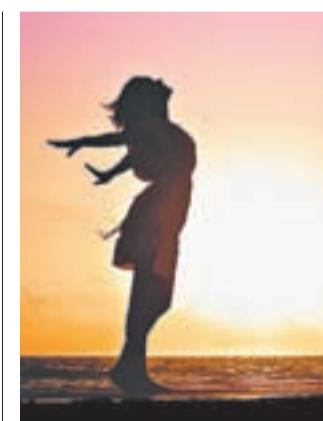
Sula Lael

meant. He would allow me to feel His love and His peace and His joy.

I truly experienced the reality of His Word! It was no longer something that I could never attain or live up to because of legalistic religious expectations.

His Word was ALIVE. •

This is an excerpt from ThenGodMoved Podcast's interview with Sula Lael in the episode entitled: Escaping the Sex Trade, Entering Hollywood, Choosing Jesus (Episode 32).



At my lowest: God is my hope.

At my darkest: God is my light.

At my weakest: God is my strength.

At my saddest: God is my comforter.
- Unknown

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BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

Being present for real connection

BY ROB FURLONG

MARTIN Buber was a renowned Jewish philosopher who developed the "I – Thou" concept in relationships between people. His main idea was that when we take the time to see each other as persons not objects, the personal interactions between us are remarkably changed. We begin to listen and show genuine interest in each other, rather than using the relationship (or the person) for what we can gain from it.

His path to this idea was a painful one however. Just before the commencement of World War I he was visited by a young man he didn't know. Martin was kind to him and chatted with him in a friendly manner, but as he later told the story, he failed to perceive and draw out from him the real questions he was struggling with. Not long after the visit, Martin learned from a friend of the young man that he had tragically taken his own life.

The impact this had on Martin was profound, as one author notes:

"The guilt Buber felt was not that he had somehow failed to remove the young man's despair, but that he was not fully present to him. He was so preoccupied by his religious experience earlier that morning, that he failed to bring the full resources of his attention to their conversation. He did not turn to the young man with his whole being to actually feel with him. Instead of genuinely listening, he brought leftovers, a courteous but partial engagement."

Martin's story is not unique because we have all indulged in similar patterns of behaviour in our relationships, bringing only "leftovers, a courteous but partial engagement." This is especially true in today's culture. People no longer look each other in the eye when they are talking – if they even are talking – but remained glued to their phones or tablets.

Opposite our home is a beautiful park and Karen and I frequently sit out the front at the end of the day, catching up with each other and watching people taking their dogs



Stock photo

for a walk. We are often amazed – and amused – by those dog owners who are obviously just "doing their duty" by taking the dog for a walk.

The dog is fully engaged, straining on its leash to go faster, while the owner is obviously angry with this behaviour, head bent over the phone, texting or reading furiously and fighting a losing battle to keep the dog in check! (The same can be said for a lot of parents taking their kids for a walk, but giving all their attention to the phone.) We often comment on how sad this is and what wonderful opportunities for real connection are being missed.

How can we do better?

How can we be more present with each other?

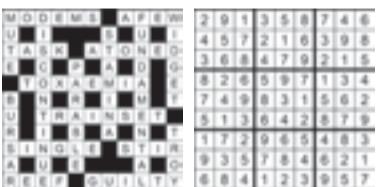
I have thought a lot about this over the years and I am convinced that it can only happen when we choose to see every person as a unique individual,

created in the image of God. This is not "pie in the sky" advice, but a reality. Being created in His image is taken so seriously by God that He says to strike out violently against another human being, whether by our actions, words, or neglect, is to strike out violently against Himself. James' warning of the danger of "cursing people who have been made in the likeness of God" is a powerful example of the sacredness of being created in God's image.

Martin Buber described the "I – Thou" relationship as one which recognises we are all created in the image of God and even though we are all different, we still respect, value, and love each other.

We no longer treat others as objects or as a "means to an end" but with "dignity and worth, affirming their uniqueness." In other words, we truly see each other.

Who can you see today? •



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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

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 - Edify 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 - the Bible Project on YouTube .	
Alpha Film Series on YouTube - an online introduction to Christianity.	
For kids - Superbook Kids Bible, videos and games app	
Comic book Bible online- goodandevilbook.com	
More inspiring faith stories - back issues of Challenge News at challengenews.online	

Finding contentment

NICO BOUGAS

CHARLES Swindoll tells the story of a woman in West Palm Beach, Florida, who died alone at the age of 71. The coroner's report was tragic. "Cause of death: malnutrition."

The dear old lady wasted away to 50 pounds. Investigators who found her said the place where she lived was a veritable pigpen, the biggest mess you can imagine. One seasoned inspector declared he'd never seen a residence in greater disarray.

The woman had begged food at her neighbours' back doors and gotten what clothes she had from the Salvation Army. From all outward appearances, she was a penniless recluse, a pitiful and forgotten widow. But amid the jumble of her unclean, dishevelled belongings, two keys were found which led the officials to safe deposit boxes at two different local banks. What they found was absolutely unbelievable.

The first contained hundreds of valuable certificates, bonds, and solid financial securities . . . not to mention a stack of cash amounting to nearly \$200,000. The second box had no certificates, only more currency – lots of it – \$600,000 to be exact. Adding the net worth of both boxes, they found that the woman had in her possession well over a million dollars! She was a millionaire who died a victim of starvation in a humble home. Admittedly this was an extreme case but many people imagine themselves to be poor and needy when they should be content with what they have got. Many do not really appreciate how good they have got things.

The multi-millionaire Rockefeller was asked how much it took to be satisfied, he replied, "Just a little more..."

It is a funny trait in mankind that the more we get the more we want. We hear stories of the rich and famous and we envy them as though they had all that life has to offer. But are they really satisfied with all they have got?

Enough is never enough. No matter how much some people have they will always want more. There are millions of examples to which we could point to prove that wealth, prosperity and material things do not satisfy, they only create a desire in us for more. Just take a look at the stars of television and movie fame. It is amazing how many of them are addicted to alcohol and/or drugs and anti-depressants. They have it all, yet there is emptiness deep down inside of them that they are still trying to fill. There is a hunger they cannot satisfy, and a thirst they cannot quench.

Paul's life was filled with many difficulties, which he could have complained about. He faced constant stress, confusion, persecution, and beatings that left deep scars and permanent injuries. But Paul had learned an important secret to life. He said, "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:11-13).

His happiness was not based on situations, it was based on his relationship with Christ. He knew he had all he needed, for it was Christ that gave him the strength for life. •



Following a 20-year professional career as a soccer player, coach, and executive, Aaron Tredway is now the vice president of Ambassadors Football International and has travelled to more than 140 countries and trained 5000 soccer coaches in developing nations. Photos from facebook.com/aarontredwayauthor.

CHANGING THE GOAL POSTS



Aaron Tredway wanted to be a professional soccer player since he was five years old. He went on to have a 20-year professional career as a player, coach, and executive. But then his goal posts changed and his life looks very different to what he imagined as a child.

In an interview with *Risen Magazine*, Aaron says he had a normal childhood, growing up outside of San Francisco.

His father introduced him to soccer at the age of five and he was obsessed immediately. By the age of 13, Aaron was travelling internationally with the youth national team.

"[Soccer] was the only thing I thought about; it was the only thing that I really applied myself to," Aaron admits. "So, growing up

I didn't do too well in school and I think my mom thought I wasn't very bright because my grades were never good."

When Aaron started college he struggled to understand his purpose in life.

When he won a significant playing award, he felt validated.

"But when the buzz wore off, that feeling of satisfaction and contentment went away."

When Aaron was 19 he began to question whether there was more to life than just soccer.

"There had to be something more," he says. "For the first time in my life I opened my mind and heart to examining the claims of Jesus. I grew up thinking I was a Christian. I went to church and I generally tried to be a good person, but in retrospect my life was all about me until I met Jesus my freshman year of college through reading a book called *Mere Christianity*, by C.S Lewis. That was the first time I started to understand who Jesus was, what He came to do, and what He wanted to be in my life."

In an interview with CBN, Aaron says he prayed the sinner's prayer [like the one on page 11] and dedicated his life to God.

"That radically changed everything that I believed about who I was, and everything that I aspired to be in the future. It didn't take away my desire to play soccer, but it definitely changed the objectives

that I would one day have as a professional player."

Aaron graduated with a degree in Wellness Management in 1998. After a two-week playing tour in Africa with Athletes in Action, Aaron signed a contract to play for the Black Aces of the Zimbabwe Premier Soccer League.

"I wanted to play there because I felt I could have a big impact in a country that absolutely idolised the game of soccer," Aaron explains. "Those were two crazy and amazing years in Zimbabwe; I was then sold to a team called Hellenic in South Africa, in their top league. I played there for three seasons. I saw God do some amazing things, not because I was anything special or had life figured out. I really believe that God will use whatever we offer for His glory. Early on I remember saying to God, 'If you can use soccer to glorify your name, then use me.'"

In 2006, Aaron was the founder and executive director of American professional soccer team, the Cleveland City Stars.

"The Lord granted us some success on the field, we actually won the Division II National Championship our second season, but really our objective was to use the team to train Christian players to glorify God through soccer; winning was just an added bonus."

After a twenty-year professional soccer career, Aaron moved back to the USA with his wife, Ginny. They

Don't miss your life

EXCERPTS from Aaron Tredway's book *Don't Miss Your Life*:

"I thought life was all about me – my wants, my needs, my desires, my pursuits. I thought life was all about success."

"That was my metric. Success was my goal."

"Success was the measuring stick of my life. It's how I charted my progress."

"But what if success is the wrong target? What if I aim at success and I'm successful but I miss my life?..."

"I don't know about you, but I don't want to just get by. I don't want to just make it through, keep my fingers crossed, grit my teeth, work super hard to hopefully someday, somehow, with some luck, limp across the finish line of life."

"That's not actually life. At least, not the life Jesus describes."

"Jesus says, 'The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full' (John 10:10)."



Aaron Tredway

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