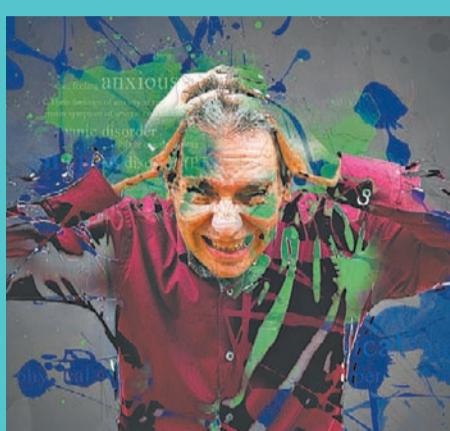


# challenge

THE GOOD NEWS PAPER

No. 467

au.challenge.news



## Finding rest in a chaotic world

BY RUSTY WRIGHT

**WHAT** makes you feel anxious? Being late or unprepared for work or appointments? Maybe unresolved interpersonal conflict. Airline travel? Public speaking? Fears of losing love? Serious illness or a friend's death?

Pressures from the trivial to the traumatic can prompt feelings of fearfulness or apprehension.

Once at a bookseller's convention my wife and I spent an exhausting day on our feet promoting a new book. Late that night, after a reception crowd had thinned down to mostly authors and our publisher, we stood in a circle engaged in conversation. I had to leave my wife's side momentarily to attend to a matter.

Upon returning to the circle, I walked up behind her and began gently to massage her shoulders. She seemed to enjoy this, so I started to put my arms around her waist to give her a little hug. Just then, I looked up at the opposite side of the circle and saw ... my wife.

I had my hands on the wrong woman!

In that instant, I knew the true meaning of fear. Fear of circumstances. Even fear of death! Confusion clouded my mind. Heat enveloped my back, shoulders, neck and head. My face reddened; my stomach knotted.

You've probably had embarrassing moments that generate anxiety. What about more serious causes?

### Your greatest fear?

Fear of death is perhaps humans' greatest fear. In college, the student living next door to me was struck and killed instantly by lightning on a golf course one springtime afternoon. Shock gripped our fraternity house.

"What does it mean if life can be snuffed out in an instant?" my friends asked. "Is there a life after death and, if so, how can we experience it?" Confusion and anxiety reigned.

If you can't answer the question "What will happen when you die?" you may become anxious.

How can you find real peace in a chaotic world? Consider a possible solution. It involves the spiritual realm.

• Turn to page 2

# PEACE AT LAST

BY JANICE TEO

It had been a good dinner – and for Hermina Edwards it got even better when her new friend Kirsten invited her into her caravan for a drink.

After a hot and tiring day of camping at Shark Bay in Western Australia a cold beer would be bliss.

Instead, Kirsten told Hermina she was a Christian and didn't have any beer.\* "Can I get you a Milo instead?" she asked. Hermina froze. "What new hell is this?" she mumbled to herself. She had nothing against Milo but she did have a complicated relationship with Christianity.

Born into poverty in Guyana, Hermina was one of 14 children, of which only one sister was a full sibling.

Her father left when she was very young, leaving her with "a clueless mother" and an abusive and alcoholic grandmother.

Growing up was a nightmare cocktail of neglect, abuse (both physical and sexual) and harsh beatings.

"I grew up without any moral compass or discipline," Hermina, 46, tells *Challenge News*. "Sexual predators were everywhere. To survive I became very hard on the inside. Life was very dark."

The one ray of light was Sunday School, which she and her sister enjoyed for several years.

The times spent in church were a welcome respite from the horrors of home – of chilli being smeared into an open wound by her grandmother, of her sister's wrist being sliced open, again by her grandmother.

When she was 13 Hermina says she had an uncanny experience at church – "I had this incredible sense of a Presence and I felt all my oppression lift. I felt at peace, bold and happy."

She went home, knelt down and prayed: "God if this peace is from You then I want You."

"I really didn't know what I was doing and I continued making bad decisions, but I believe that from that day, God committed Himself to me," she says.

"There is no other explanation for how my life has turned around so completely."

Hermina continued her promiscuous lifestyle, partly because she knew no better and partly to survive. Alcohol, drugs, suicide attempts and several abortions followed.

"I was so messed up it took me a very long time to mature. Yet God never abandoned me; He always intervened at just the right moment."

She was 17 when she had her first son; 19



when she had her second, both to the same man but out of wedlock.

She moved in with her partner's family but the relationship became so toxic she ran away without her sons, who at that time were under five, but vowed she would return for them.

Her partner's parting words to her were: "Go back to the gutter."

That night Hermina almost killed herself, but just before slitting her wrists she paused for a desperate prayer.

"I said 'God I give you three months to find me a good husband, someone who will love me and my boys.'

Suddenly feeling hopeful, Hermina put the razor blade away.

Three months to the day of that prayer, she met Damon, an Australian geologist. They married the following year and now live in Perth.

Damon has adopted Hermina's two boys and together they have another son and daughter.

The next stop in her uneven road of faith was her meeting with the Milo-making Kirsten, who asked Hermina about her thoughts on God.

Hermina replied that she'd only ever known Christians to be judgemental.

"I understand your negative feelings about the church, but do you know you can have a personal relationship with Jesus?" Kirsten asked.

Hermina Edwards suffered years of abuse and neglect as a child but, over a cup of Milo with a new friend, she discovered something that would change her life completely.

## Fun for kids

Pages 5,6,7



BACK PAGE



• Turn to page 2

## Finding rest in a chaotic world

### From page 1

As a university student, I wrote a paper for an abnormal psychology class investigating a biblical therapy for anxiety.

I had come to faith as a freshman and found it brought me peace of mind. Complex psychological disorders often stem from more basic problems like anxiety; problems for which faith offers practical solutions.

I sent a copy of my paper to the author of our textbook, a prominent UCLA psychologist. Later, this professor told me he lacked personal peace and wanted to know God personally.

I showed him a simple four-point outline based on one of Jesus' statements: "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

We discussed God's unconditional love for us, our dilemma of being unplugged from Him and the flaws (selfishness and "sins") that result. I noted that Jesus, through His death in our place and return to life, came to plug us back into God by paying the penalty we owed for our sins.

#### Finding real peace

This professor decided to place his faith in God and asked Jesus to forgive him and enter his life. We kept in touch.

Later, over the phone, he told me that as he looked out over the ocean and saw the setting sun, "I really believe I'm a part of all this. Before I didn't, but now I do." He was seeing how he fitted into God's universe.

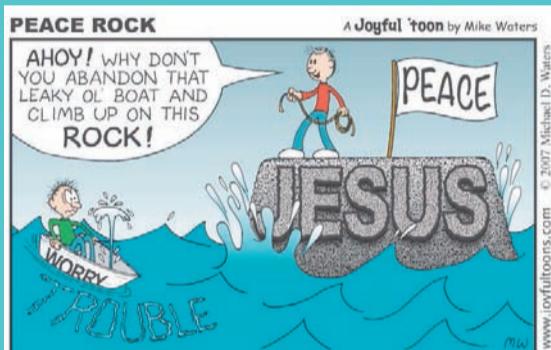
One of Jesus' earlier followers wrote to some friends about a divine aid for anxiety: "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything."

"Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. If you do this, you will experience God's peace, which is far more wonderful than the human mind can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7)

Faith in God does not make life perfect and is no automatic solution to anxiety. Illness, chemical imbalance, emotional wounds and more can hamper coping. But a good starting place is to become linked with the One

who loves us and knows best what makes us fulfilled.  
Might it be time for you to consider Him?

Rusty Wright is an author and lecturer. He holds BSc (psychology) and Master of Theology degrees. [www.Rusty-Wright.com](http://www.Rusty-Wright.com)



## Coffee Break CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

### ACROSS

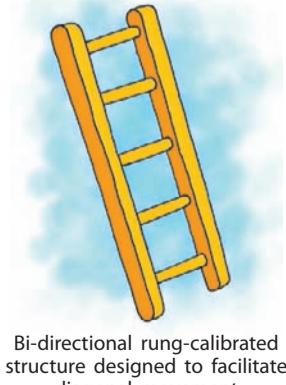
- 1 Diamond measure
- 5 New moon, e.g.
- 9 Person with a cause
- 10 Sharpen optically
- 12 Fire residue
- 13 End early
- 14 Salon goo
- 15 Web clip gone viral
- 16 Pecan dessert
- 18 Printer's unit
- 20 The Devil, by another name
- 22 Killer whales
- 23 Young newt
- 24 Foundation
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- 26 Way in
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- 2 Clay brick structure
- 3 Blue hue
- 4 Reason to cram
- 5 Wide reaching disease
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- 7 Track events (9)
- 8 Way out
- 10 Renown
- 11 Sufficiently skilful (9)
- 12 Stuffing herb
- 16 Place to store food
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Bi-directional rung-calibrated structure designed to facilitate diagonal movement

# MY LIFE IS A MIRACLE

BY LISA BAST (AMENDED)  
[WWW.LIVEACTION.ORG](http://WWW.LIVEACTION.ORG)

The fact that author and recording artist Steventhen Holland is alive, is a miracle. He was born to an 18-year-old mentally challenged mother who became pregnant with him when she was gang raped by five men while walking to her job from the Tennessee mental institution where she lived.

His mother kept quiet about the rape until she was visibly pregnant, but no police report was ever filed. Despite mounting pressure to abort her child, the woman with the mental capacity of an 11-year-old fought to give him life.

Steventhen told Live Action News, "My mother, Glenda Sue, faced unsurmountable obstacles. She knew my life had purpose, but she had no access to resources and no support. So, she travelled alone to Chattanooga to get assistance from a woman's home but eventually ran away and ended up living in a cardboard box, nine months pregnant and homeless. But she didn't give up."

One day, a 16-year-old boy wandered by the dilapidated cardboard box and saw it move. Peeking inside, he discovered a frightened woman in advanced stages of pregnancy. He took her home where he and his parents nurtured her.

"That young man was a God-send," Steventhen said. "He tried to help my mother care for me when she came home from the hospital, but his family was impoverished and couldn't afford to feed me adequately. So, with my mother's permission, this 16-year-old boy took me to Human Services where I could get the assistance I needed."

#### Nursed back to health

Human Services eventually placed the malnourished baby with a foster family who had to squeeze milk into his mouth to nurse him. When they

later expressed interest in adopting him, Human Services resisted, telling them that because Steventhen was biracial and they were Caucasian, he needed to be placed with an African-American family. But the family's community sent more than 200 petitions to Human Services requesting the adoption be allowed.

"The whole community fought hard to keep me in the only home I had ever known," Steventhen said.

Steventhen found out he was adopted when he was eight years old. He started questioning why a mother would not want her son.

"That was the first time in my life - as an eight-year-old child - that I remember being broken. Nobody could reach into that pain into that brokenness except for God Himself." A few months later he was at church service when he started sobbing and crying out to God. "I said, 'Lord I need you. I'm hurting, I'm broken and I have nowhere else to go.' I walked out of the aisle and fell on my knees and [said], 'Lord, take this. I need You, take this.' So in that moment Jesus became not just a name that I knew but a relationship that I had."

#### A search for his mother

When Steventhen was 27, he was serving as a youth pastor and had founded his ministry, Broken Not Dead. But something was missing from his life. He wanted some closure regarding his mother. Steventhen said, "One day, [God] the Holy Spirit



Author and recording artist Steventhen Holland says the fact he is alive is a miracle.

told me it was time to look for my mother. I was married and my wife had lost two babies. I just wanted to get information on my medical history, at least.

"Maybe it would give me the answers as to why my wife had so many miscarriages. But most importantly, I just wanted to tell her I loved her and thank her for giving me life."

The long-anticipated meeting with Glenda Sue was poignant. Steventhen recalls singing *Amazing Grace* with her. As he learned the amazing story of his mother's courage and love, Steventhen's heart filled with compassion and gratitude.

Holland told Live Action News, "The realisation hit me that it was a miracle I was alive. My mother chose life despite not being able to care for me. It was a great act of love to let me go so I had the chance to thrive."

Glenda Sue passed away a few years after the reunion.

Now a father of three daughters, Steventhen says: "I can never be silent. I must be faithful and share my testimony even to the doubters and especially to those who believe abortion is acceptable in cases of incest and rape.

"I wasn't supposed to be here but a woman who was homeless, unemployed, and mentally challenged chose life. If she can overcome the most challenging of circumstances, then I believe so, too, can others."

Steventhen's has seen firsthand how God has used his life story to make an impact.

He recalls meeting a 12-year-old Hispanic girl at a youth camp who was raped by her uncle living in the home with her parents.

She was being pressured by her parents to abort her child but instead, she went to a pregnancy center and chose life for her baby after being inspired by Steventhen's story.

The girl was eventually adopted by a Christian family after her parents refused to evict the uncle.

Her baby was placed with an adoptive family. Life had come full circle for Steventhen in that moment — a young girl, the same age in physical years as his mother was in mental capacity, had also understood how precious and valuable life was, and another life, like his own, had been saved.

## PEACE AT LAST

### From page 1

Hermina stopped mid-Milo. That was her light bulb moment. "I'd never heard of that before and I asked her how to do that."

"You just invite Him," Kirsten replied.

Later, Kristen sent Hermina a gift - the *Women's Devotional Bible*, which features hundreds of meditations and experiences written by women for women. "That Bible was the turning point," Hermina says. "Those stories really spoke to me; one of them was by a lady who just like me had had abortions before she came to Christ. The readings from the Psalms were so meaningful. They pointed to a genuine relationship with Christ that was lived from the inside out. I began to see that was possible."

Hermina began attending church regularly but says it took her a year – and a dream about Jesus – to fully commit to God.

"In my dream I was carrying a pile of sticks which Jesus asked me to give to Him. Initially I was afraid of letting them go but when I finally did I experienced a peace I never had before. That feeling stayed with me when I woke up; I felt like I had never sinned in my life. He just washed me completely."

She stopped and broke down. "This is Jesus; He takes away your baggage and gives you His peace."

Hermina is now fully committed to God. Her pastor in Perth describes her life as being "completely transformed. She is a real pillar in our church."

"I don't want my story to come across as some kind of sob story," Hermina says. "Yes my life was difficult and there was abuse, but I want to give glory to God that He has brought me through it all – and I feel His strength." •

\* Some Christians choose not to drink alcohol.

# I found a faith of my own

BY HARRIET COOMBE

Milly Christie vividly recalls the first time she ever felt afraid. She was about 11 and watching *The Lord of the Rings* with her family when fear overwhelmed her during a scene depicting a battle between good and evil.

"It just goes to show that I had a happy childhood with loving parents to not really have ever felt fear before then," Milly says. "I ran upstairs to mum and dad's bedroom and they followed, confused. I just remember feeling so afraid and all of a sudden understanding that there is good and evil."

She worried that she was not good enough for the good side.

Milly was raised in a Christian home and at that moment, everything she had been taught by her parents and in church about Jesus and His sacrifice for her sins (wrongdoing against God) became clear to her.

"I think that was a revelation of sin. And that sin is death. My parents encouraged me to say sorry to God for the things that I'd done wrong, and assured me that I was loved and saved by Jesus' sacrifice for my sins. I remember I came away from the conversation feeling like I was okay."

Despite this, Milly's faith wouldn't become real to her for a few more years.

As the youngest child in her family, she was used to being known as "TJ and Sarah's daughter" or "Harri or Tom's little sister". But by the age of 18, Milly wanted to step out of their shadows and discover who she was on her own.

She decided to fly 14,750km away to the U.S., where she would intern at a church. Secretly though, this was also a make or break trip when it came to her faith. Most of her millennial peers had walked away from church and God, and Milly wondered if she should too.

"I remember thinking to myself, 'I'm gonna give this Christian thing a go because it's obviously important to Mum and Dad. I owe that to my family. But if I don't feel like I find God over there then I'm not going to keep doing it.'"

While Milly was in the States, a group of people from the church prayed for her and she experienced the tangible presence of God.

"I felt different," Milly remembers. "Having that year in America with my own revelations made me feel like my faith was mine now, not just something we did as a family. I discovered my identity in God."

When it came time for her to return to Australia, the founder of the church Milly was working with shared that he felt that when she was back in Perth she was going to be a part of something new that was starting up. He told her not to "despise small beginnings".

Back in Perth, Milly prayed about what God wanted her to do. When some family friends invited her to be a part of a new church they were starting, she wondered if this is where God was leading her. At the first information session about the church, a Bible verse was shared: "Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin" (Zechariah 4:10).

"Then when they explained what

the church was going to be about, I realised this was an opportunity for me to put into practice all the things that I'd learnt over the past year."

Thirteen years on, Milly is now a leader in the same church, is married to Dan and mum to two-year-old Henry and baby Grace. And her relationship with God continues to grow.

In 2019 her father tragically died after a short battle with cancer.

"My parents were my security, especially my dad," Milly says. "He helped me financially and he knew me better than anybody and could handle me better than anybody. After he died, I just wanted comfort from him. But I realised I could find comfort and security in God. I think my relationship with God changed a lot after dad died because I had to rely on God in a Fatherly way, which I'd never really had to before."

Now as a mother, Milly finds she is relying on God in new ways again.

"Raising children is a big responsibility and I have to rely on God throughout the day. There are so

many times where I think, 'I don't know how to tackle this.' My husband Dan and I ask God for wisdom so much for how to discipline and how to manage our son's emotions."

Milly says when fear threatens to creep in she holds onto key Bible verses such as: "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7); "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18); and "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

"If I didn't have faith in God, I would be way more anxious," she attests.

One of her favourite things about being a mother is just being with her children.

"When Henry comes and sits next to me and he's just with me, that's the best. It's the same thing that God wants from us – to just sit with Him and be with Him."



Milly Christie with her husband, Dan, and children, Grace and Henry.

**“**  
**My faith  
was mine  
now, not just  
something  
we did as  
a family.**  
”

## Close call takes hippie on hunt for truth

When Mike Shreve had a near death experience at 18 years old he felt like his soul was leaving his body. Although he didn't quite understand what was happening to him, he knew he wasn't ready for whatever was to come.

In a video on his YouTube channel, Mike says that for some reason he got a second chance at life and that set him on a search for why he was alive and what his purpose was.

He was in college at the time, pursuing a double major in oceanography and orchestration. But over time he found the search for the meaning of life became more important to him than his studies.

So Mike left college with the aim to search for God.

As a teenager he had walked away from the strict religion he had been raised in. He resolved to wipe the slate clean and start his search from an unbiased beginning point. He read every book on different religious ideas and concepts he could find. It was 1969 – the height of the hippie movement.

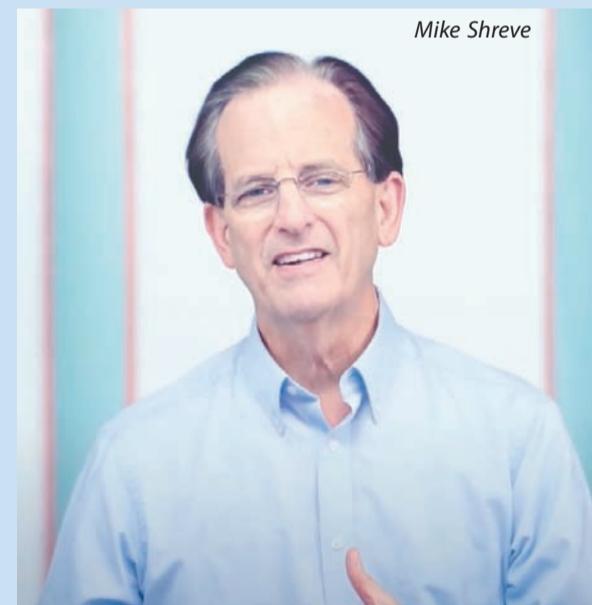
"During that time a friend of mine met an Indian guru [spiritual teacher] named Yogi Bhajan, who came to the United States to introduce something he called kundalini yoga to the flower child generation," Mike recalls. He was captivated. He became a devoted follower of the guru and helped set up an ashrams in Florida and started teaching kundalini yoga at four universities.

"I had about 300 students who considered me their guru," Mike explains.

A local newspaper caught wind of the fact Mike had set up ashrams and was teaching yoga and they printed an article about him – something Mike thought might increase his class attendance.

"Little did I know it would alert a Christian prayer group in town to start praying for me," Mike says. "They had a 24-hour prayer chain where they assigned somebody to be praying and seeking God on my behalf every hour of every day. Every hour somebody was on his knees or her knees asking God to reveal Himself to me."

He had also received a letter from a friend, who



Mike Shreve

encouraged Mike to be born again in Jesus and that he wouldn't find what he was searching for through eastern religion, yoga and meditation. Mike didn't agree with his friend as he couldn't believe there was just one path to God. But he was a truth-seeker and had an open mind. He could ask Jesus to reveal Himself to him. So he decided to dedicate a day to Jesus and ask Him to give him a sign that He really is the Messiah, the Saviour and the Lord of all. That day, instead of his normal meditation and yoga practice, he read the Bible and prayed to Jesus.

By the afternoon, nothing had happened. So he went to the road to hitch a ride so he could teach his yoga class. When a car finally picked him up, he opened to the door to see a picture of Jesus on the ceiling of the van.

The driver, Kent, was one of the members of the prayer group that had been praying for Mike. Kent felt that God wanted him to go for a drive

and, when he saw Mike on the side of the road, he felt he should pick him up. When Mike saw the picture of Jesus, he knew he had his sign.

Kent asked Mike, "Have you ever experienced Jesus Christ coming into your heart?"

"No, but can I?" Mike replied. Kent pulled his van over to the side of the road and they knelt down in the back of the van and began to pray.

"I said something like, 'Lord Jesus, I repent (turn away) of my sins. Come into my heart. I make You Lord of my life. I believe You died on the cross for the sins of humanity and I believe that You rose from the dead. I surrender my life to You and by faith I receive the gift of eternal life.' When I said those words I felt this warmth in my heart... I could sense the presence of God within me and all of a sudden I had this radical change of mindset and I knew without a doubt that Jesus' death on the cross really was for the sins of the human race and that my sins had just been washed clean."

Mike then asked Kent to take him to the yoga class he was about to teach.

"I explained to the people that I would no longer be conducting yoga classes, that I was shutting down my ashram and that Jesus was the only way," Mike shares. "They were quite shocked that their guru had become what they might term a 'Jesus freak' overnight... I burned the books that I had spent years studying and kept just the Bible as my road map to eternity and began seeking God for my life."

After becoming a Christian, Mike began preaching the Gospel on college campuses and street corners. Eventually this led to speaking engagements in churches, then tent meetings, auditoriums and open-air crusades around the world.

Mike is married to Elizabeth and together they run Shreve Ministries.

# TRANSLATING HOPE

BY JANICE TEO

**O**bang Girma knows about loss and terror firsthand. He was only 19 when the Ethiopian government committed genocide against his tribe, the Anuak, and killed thousands, many of whom were his friends.

Convinced that staying meant certain death, the teen left his home and family and fled on foot for the safety of Kenya in 2005, with only the clothes on his back.

"It was very hard to leave my family behind because I didn't know if I would ever see them again, but I really thought there was no other way to save my life," Obang, now 37, tells *Challenge News*.

On the way to Kenya, he was picked up by a truck carrying humanitarian supplies and was dropped off at the Kakuma refugee camp. To his delight, his sister joined him a year later. A few months later, Obang was relocated to the Dadaab Refugee Camp, where he stayed for the next 11 years.

Life at the camps could be brutal. Obang recalls there was violence and numerous suicides as hope faded, tension grew, and tempers frayed.

There was, however, one positive feature of camp life — local churches held regular services there.

Obang, who had attended church off and on as a child, was asked to interpret sermons from English to the Anuak language every Sunday.

He was happy to do this, he says, because his memory of Christianity as a child was that it offered hope, encouragement, and happiness. What he didn't expect was to be profoundly touched by the messages he was interpreting.

"The pastor said God brought hope and peace. That was exactly what I needed to hear; in the camp I felt hope-



Obang Girma

less because I had no future.

"The words I was interpreting sank into my heart and soon I was preaching to myself.

"That's how I got to hear the word of God and that's how I became a Christian," he smiles.

He says one message in particular impacted him.

"The pastor said he understood the terrible circumstances and crimes done to us, but he asked us to forgive our oppressors and tormentors. I was convicted to forgive my father."

Obang's father, tragically killed in

**The words I was interpreting sank into my heart.**



Obang with his wife and children.

2003 in Ethiopia, was an alcoholic who habitually spent all his money on alcohol, leaving nothing for his family.

"We fought a lot," Obang reveals.

"I hated him. But during the sermon, I was so convicted I wanted to give my life there-and-then on the stage but I couldn't because I was interpreting!

"Later that evening I quietly asked Jesus to come into my heart. I felt a big burden leaving me and I had peace about my father."

Obang says his life changed for the better after becoming a Christian.

"I got involved with the programs and I became a leader. My life improved because now I had a purpose and I had hope in God."

In October 2016, the Australian government granted him a humanitarian visa and he landed in Perth.

By this time, Obang was already married. He met his wife Bongire Omot at the refugee camp, and they had a child.

Within a month of settling in his new home in Perth, Obang wanted to go to church. He asked a neighbor he had never met before if there was one close by.

His neighbor smiled. "Let me bring you to my pastor," he said. "You'll get on with his wife — she's Ethiopian too!"

Obang grinned. "I couldn't believe it! What were the chances of that? God really was journeying with me every step of the way."

On his pastor's recommendation, Obang enrolled at Perth Bible College, graduating with a Diploma of Ministry in 2019 and then a Bachelor of Ministry in March 2022.

"I always felt I never had a father because of how my father neglected my family, but Psalm 68:5 says God is a Father to the fatherless," says a smiling Obang, now himself the proud father of four.

In 2019, just before the Covid-19 pandemic hit, Obang returned to Kakuma camp with a Perth Bible College missionary team — where to his astonishment and joy, he was reunited with his mother 15 years after leaving home.

Unbeknownst to him, she had been resettled at Kakuma.

Obang says getting his mother to Perth is the one thing that would make his happy new life complete.

To do this, he has collaborated with a filmmaker who was on the team. The result, a movie called *The Third Son*, chronicles Obang's odyssey from war-torn Ethiopia to the refugee camp and finally to the emotional reunion with his mother at Kakuma.

The movie will be shown in various churches as a fundraiser to bring his mother to Perth.

His sister joined him in Perth two years after he arrived.

"My passion is to serve God," says Obang, who is working with his church in Perth on a literacy project in the Anuak language, continues to interpret sermons for the Anuak community in Perth and hopes to get involved with mission work, particularly with refugees.

"There is life, power, and restoration in the word of God to the hopeless and desperate people in the world. God's word gives human life beyond earthly living."

## Not always easy ... but always worth it

BY JODY BENNETT

PEOPLE might think that being a Christian is easy, a crutch that gets you through your traumas, a Father Christmas in the sky to pray to, a list of dos and don'ts that you do your best to follow but get forgiveness for when you fail.

However, as a Christian of several decades, I can tell you Christianity is not for cowards; being a Christian requires you to do some very, very hard stuff.

Some of the things I find hardest are: forgiving over and over again, submitting to authority, waiting with patience and coping with suffering.

### Forgiving

When someone continually hurts you in the same way it seems fair not to forgive them, to want them to pay.

However, Jesus told His followers to forgive those who offended them — not just seven times, but 70 times seven times. He wasn't giving a formula; He was saying we have to keep forgiving over and over and over. It makes me feel like my goodwill is being abused, but God says, "vengeance is Mine". It is His job to punish or avenge and Christians are called to forgive. Lovely in theory, excruciatingly hard in practice.

### Submitting

Whether it is as a child submitting to their parents, a wife submitting her husband, a worker submitting to their boss, a citizen submitting to the government, or as a Christian submitting to God; submission does not come easy. We are all rebels at heart. Submission is hard, especially if we think our authority is making a mistake.

The Christian teaching is that it is safer to continue to submit to an authority in the wrong, than to rebel, even if you are correct on the issue. This goes hard against the grain and probably sounds like foolishness to some. However, the Bible is clear that rebellion is as witchcraft and submission is a protection to those under it. Even in the Trinity, Jesus, in His humanity, was subject to God the Father, praying in Gethsemane, 'not My will, but Thine.'

### Patience

One of the things you learn as a Christian is that God is never in a hurry and His timeline seldom aligns with ours. Often His answer to a request is, 'wait'. Wait for your healing, wait for your future spouse, wait to fall pregnant, wait for that job, wait for justice, and, ultimately, wait for the second coming of Jesus Christ. Throughout the Bible we read stories of people patiently waiting for God's promises to be fulfilled.

Patience, hope, faith, these are not glamorous, obvious virtues but they are absolutely essential to the Christian who is planning to make it through the long haul of life.

### Suffering

Contrary to what some televangelists preach, Christians are not promised health, wealth and an easy life. In fact, Jesus plainly told His disciples 'in this world you will have trouble'. Then He went on to reassure them, 'but fear not, I have overcome the world'. He promises to help His followers endure, He promises His presence in the midst of the storm, but He warned that the road would be narrow and difficult. Everyone suffers.

We all suffer loss at some stage, we all suffer health problems, we all suffer loneliness and injustice and sadness and disappointment. Only those who die young don't. Life is tough — much tougher for some, but every life has its challenges. And, arguably, Christians suffer more than most because they are attuned to the suffering of others and, if they emulate Christ, care deeply about the poor, the sick and the downtrodden. Not only that but they endure extra suffering through persecution for their faith, which is often opposed to the spirit of the age.

On top of that, Christians are commanded to suffer well — to rejoice in their trials, to give thanks in all circumstances and emulate Christ in their patient endurance. They are told to keep their eyes on the prize — the end of the age when Jesus will return and put all things right. That is not easy to do through the tears and the years.

No, if you want an easy life, don't become a Christian.

If you want a meaningful, satisfying, rewarding, joyful life, then yes, Christianity is for you. But if you want sunshine and roses, wealth, self-indulgence and excess, then look elsewhere.

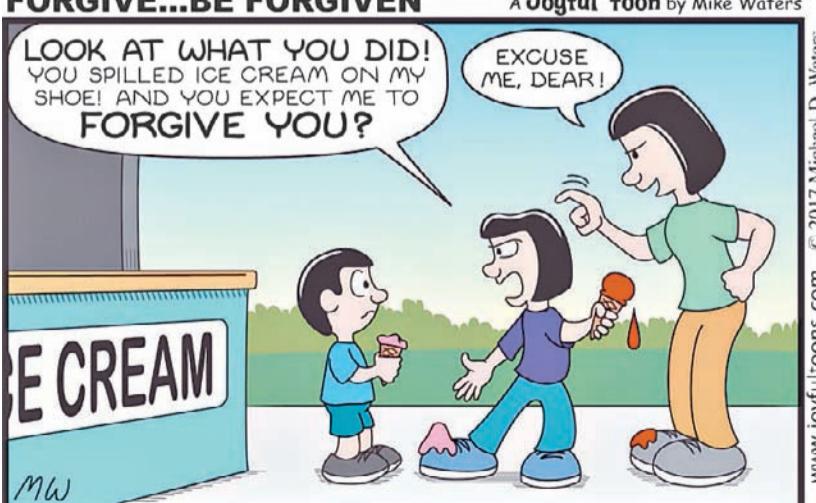
Jesus never sugar-coated what His disciples were getting into, but sometimes well-meaning preachers try to make out that your life needs Jesus like it needs a better appliance or a self-help book. However, an invitation to Christianity is an invitation to war; an invitation to die; an invitation to making it all about God instead of all about you; an invitation to more than you could have hoped for or dreamed of.

As I said, I've been on this journey for decades and it doesn't get easier. All our lives God is refining us like gold, developing our characters and dealing with our sinful habits. It hurts, but every bit of pain and suffering is worth it to know Jesus Christ as your Master and Friend.

I dare you — pray the prayer on page 11 and come and die to yourself too.

### FORGIVE...BE FORGIVEN

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

— LUKE 6:37 NIV

# YOUTH TRUTH

## From deep depression to complete joy

BY KERI YANG

**M**y struggle began in middle school. My friend group was predominantly white and this led to bullying by a group of black girls. Again and again, I was told that I wasn't "black enough." This left me so confused about my identity. I thought that the bullying would end after middle school, but it continued into high school. My confusion eventually led to me disliking myself, which led to a very deep, very dark depression.

This depression was tied to anxiety, which together resulted in a life of partying.

Whenever I could drink away my dislike of myself, I did.

When it was time to pick a college, I chose a party school. But, being away from home fuelled the depression, anxiety, and lack of identity, which, in turn, amped up my need for parties, boys, sex, and fake friends.

It sucked. That life was absolutely draining, but I kept doing it, thinking that maybe if I learned how to do it right, I would eventually get something out of it.

Around this time, I made

friends with this super-friendly girl from my English class. She always wanted to talk to me and always asked me to get breakfast after class.

I could see that she was completely different from any other friend I had, but I didn't know what the difference was. After a while, she invited me to a Christian campus ministry called CRU. I knew about Jesus and thought He was cool enough, so I said, "Sure... why not?"

I was raised to believe that Jesus was and is God. But, along the way, something got lost in translation; I thought that as long as I believed in Jesus, I could do whatever I wanted without consequence.

I'd fit CRU into my schedule. I'd go to CRU, sing a song or two, listen to the message, and then go straight out to a party.

Again, this was where my head was at: Jesus was cool and He didn't care what I did, so as long as I believed in him.

Then, I met a guy. We actually met in an elevator and it was all romantic and I thought it was meant to be.

But, the romance quickly crumbled into something dangerous and ugly — an emotionally, mentally, and

physically abusive relationship. That was the lowest point of my life. By the time the relationship ended, I was at the bottom of a pit.

But, I knew that I could get out; see, I was still going to CRU and I did believe that Jesus loved me.

So, I called up the friendly, weird girl from my English class and asked how to get more involved with the ministry. I started taking the ministry more seriously and going to Bible study.

As my understanding grew, I realised that, though being a follower of Christ requires believing, following is about removing yourself from the throne of your life and placing Jesus there. It's about allowing your life to reflect the daily relationship you have with Him. And most importantly, I finally understood the reality of God's grace (undeserved love): as an imperfect, fallen being, the only thing I deserved was death, yet, because of Jesus, I — and the rest of humanity — could have life.

The turning point came on October 14, 2012. It was my second year at University and I was away on the ministry's off-campus retreat.

While sitting out on the river dock, I was struck by a verse in the Bible which was 2 Corinthians 13:5: "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realise that Christ Jesus is in you — unless, of course, you fail the test?"

Following these instructions, I examined myself thoroughly.

At this point, I recognised who Jesus was.

I knew that He came to Earth as the Son of God — that He was God taking on flesh.



Stock photo

As a human, He was tempted in every way, yet He lived a perfect, sinless life. In his death, He took on the sins of His fallen creation.

And after three days, He rose, conquering sin and death. In doing so, He defeated Satan, the enemy that damaged the relationship between man and God.

The missing piece, the piece that I gained that day, was this: by accepting Jesus as my Saviour and allowing Jesus to rule my life, I could have a relationship with God.

In that moment, I realised that I wanted nothing more than that. So, I turned away from my sins, decided to live for God, and invited the Holy Spirit to reside within me.

As I prayed this I had an overwhelming feeling of peace and love. In a single, supernatural moment, my depression and the trauma of my past relationship were given to God. God took care of it all. My identity issues were solved. In a split second, I was found in Christ.

From that day, I have made an effort to develop my relationship with God. From my conversations with others to my spending, there is nothing I do without God in mind.

It's requires daily effort to turn from sin and towards God. Sometimes, I mess up; but, because of the Cross, I have grace (God's undeserved love). Grace is so amazing.

My life will never be the same. God has impacted me in ways that I never knew were possible.

My relationship with Him is my primary focus; He's my world — and He hasn't failed me yet.

As told to and edited by Adira Polite and originally published on Then God Moved

## Remedy to bullying

BY TAYLOR PERKINS

I STARTED public school in seventh grade after being homeschooled for the majority of my life. I had a vision of what public school would look like for me. It involved me making as many friends as I wanted, spending my weekends at the movies and walking down the hallways earning the admiring glances from all my peers. It only took a little while for this vision, along with my self-esteem, to be shipwrecked and for my identity to become lost at sea. To my great pain, I found that I was not admired, but hated. Not envied, but mocked.

Bullying is a constant reality, a dark companion, telling you to not even bother trying to talk to that guy. It's the whisper that warns you to stop passing by mirrors, because there's nothing good to see there. It's the darkness that urges you to take the pain into your own hands to hurt yourself because you deserve it. I held these thoughts in my heart for years.

I dropped out of public school and started hiding from the world. But I learned that you can't outrun your demons. The roots of unforgiveness and resentment were firmly embedded into my spirit. In fact, I think the best word to describe my entire being at that time was hate. I was so consumed with insecurity and bitterness from the past that I was completely missing out on the life right in front of me. In fact, the darkness surrounding me was so strong that it seemed as if I would never find the light again. Never feel confident again.

But there is One who is stronger and His eyes never stopped watching over me through it all.

One day, during my senior year of high school, I heard an inspirational speaker on the TV as I sat in my living room. He talked about the importance of forgiving your enemies and letting go of hatred. That caught my attention. What a weird thing to say!

That's completely ridiculous, I thought. But as any child of the modern technological era would do, I followed my obsessive need to Google everything. I discovered that in the Bible one of Jesus' followers asked Him how many times we are expected to forgive our enemies. He wondered if seven times would be enough. Jesus told him to forgive people "70 times seven" meaning infinitely. I didn't really like the idea of that, so I dismissed it and went on my way. The next day I was riding in the car and when I looked up for a second, I saw the number "7x70" flash on our radio screen showing which songs are playing.

I went home that night and obeyed God for the first time in years. That night I made a choice to consciously forgive everyone who I held grudges against in my heart. At first, it was just a robotic, going-down-the-list chore. But then God started moving powerfully and actively in my heart, and by the end of the list I was a new person. I felt the unbearably heavy chains being lifted off of my spirit, replaced with a weightlessness that brought me to my knees. In that moment, God did for me what I could never do for myself. That night, God set me free.

He can do the same for you. At the bottom of the pit is where He finds you. Standing alone in the middle of the crowd is where He sees you. In the bathroom with the blade in your hands is where He holds you. In the deepest aches of your heart is where He heals you. And in the restless part of your soul, where so many lies have shut out the light, is where He whispers the truth about who you are.

On that day when God found me and spoke to me, I realised that Jesus was the cure my soul had been searching for all that time. By His gentle urging and help, I was able to forgive my bullies.

No longer am I anxious about what others think about me, because I know how the God of the universe feels about me. No longer am I bitter about what has been done to me, because I have a strong defender who fights my battles for me. And no longer am I a slave to hate, both of myself and others, because I have been pursued by a love that changes everything.

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# YOUTH TRUTH

## SET FREE FROM PORN AND DEPRESSION

BY DANTE LEE GRADY

I grew up in a deeply religious, broken home. When we misbehaved, we were forced to sit and read Scripture. Because of this, I knew the stories, but I was never taught the love of God — and I surely never saw it within our home. My parents fought constantly, often until the cops showed up.

Things escalated when my dad found out about my mum's affair. Threats were made and, in eighth grade, my parents split up. I was still grieving the split when my mum began dating a new man.

Hurt and angry, I rebelled.

I started partying and taking drugs and there even came a point where I couldn't go a day without smoking weed.

In 10th grade, my sister and I both developed depression and anxiety. She developed it first.

I remember being unable to understand what was happening to her, until a few weeks later, when it hit me like a ton of bricks. It felt like my life was crumbling in on me... I felt that I was living within a box.

I cut off all of my friends and dropped out of school. My long-standing porn addiction worsened. I was stuck — immobilised by a purposelessness.

Just as I was preparing to end my life, my dad invited me to church. He really wanted me to hear the visiting pastor, a man named James Lee Grady (though no relation of mine).

Up until that point, I'd only visited church to hang out with my friends or talk to girls. But, my dad kept hyping the pastor up, so I gave in.

During his sermon, the pastor spoke against pornography.

He mentioned porn again later in the service and also touched upon every single other issue in my life. I immediately knew that God was speaking directly to me.

It was like He dropped down a screen and presented me with my entire life story.

Without warning, I found myself moving towards the altar. I felt that the hand of God grabbed me by the heart and pulled me up there.

There was nothing that I could possibly have done to stay in that seat! When I got to the altar, Pastor Grady spoke to me.

I felt love for the very first time. The heavy blanket of darkness was gone; in its place was none other than the Holy Spirit.

I'd been saved and it was obvious to me and everyone around me. People said they'd never seen me smile like that!

I went home and tossed out all of my drug paraphernalia. I threw away all of my secular music. During this time, God even freed me from my seven-year porn addiction. I was on fire!

But, like many new believers, I thought that the fire would remain aflame on its own. As 2 Timothy 1:6



Dante Lee Grady. INSET:  
Dante with  
Pastor James  
Lee Grady,  
who is now his  
mentor.

reads, "For this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you by the laying on of my hands." I didn't know that I needed to fan the flame, so it gradually went out.

Fortunately, God has since shown me the key to keeping my fire lit: spending my idle time in Scripture, worship, and prayer.

I now see that the world — in other words, society apart from God — is always, always feeding us. There's never a time when the surrounding culture isn't feeding us.

But a heavenly, God-prepared feast is also readily available. So, we have a choice.

If you choose to eat junk, you can't be surprised when that junk comes out in your thoughts and actions. Neglecting prayer and worship leads to spiritual starvation; and it's like an iPhone charger — if you're at 1%, you're basically dead.

If you feel your fire weakening, reach for God. He's right there waiting. Even if you've neglected Him, He is never far from you.

The distractions of this world add static to our connection with Him, but if you're in Christ, you cannot be separated from Him. God never hangs up on us.

As told to and edited by Adira Polite and originally published on Then God Moved

“  
**People said  
they'd never  
seen me smile  
like that!**  
”

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Do you have a story to tell, a tricky question to ask or want to let us know how Challenge has impacted you?  
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Rachel looked to New Age practices such as crystals and energy healing to help her depression and anxiety.

## NO JOY IN NEW AGE

BY RACHEL FATYANOV

I struggled with a lot of loneliness, depression, anxiety, and moodiness during and immediately after my college years.

When I felt I had reached my threshold of emotional suffering, I dove into countless self-help articles on happiness, Buddhism/Zen, yoga, and I dabbled in New Age and occult practices — reading books, daily horoscopes, visiting psychics, palm-readers, exploring meditation, and crystal/energy healing.

I just wanted to know, like many do, "What do I do with my life?"

All the while I believed God existed, but replacing the name of God with "Universe" felt so much easier.

The last straw was when I paid nearly \$200 for an online chakra healing program that PROMISED happiness, forever. I was alone in my room on the computer, desperately awaiting the live introductory seminar that I "couldn't miss". A 10-second countdown began, and suddenly, so clearly in my heart I heard, "You don't need this, turn off the computer." And I closed the laptop within the last few seconds.

"So now what?" I asked myself. Over the next couple of days came a lot of revelation — I was not going to find the happiness and healing I needed in any man-made program. Such things come from God, and they are free and everlasting!

I came across [everystudent.com](#) through a Google search on Jesus. His name was not new to me, but I was ready to know who He was/is, and what makes Him the cornerstone of the Christian faith. For the first time, I understood what Jesus was offering me and felt invited

“  
**My desperate  
search for  
healing and  
happiness  
was over.**  
”

same question I was, "What do I do with my life?", the answer is simple. There is nothing to do but to seek after and follow Jesus. Everything else falls into place.

I cannot imagine my life without God — He is my Heavenly Father who meets my needs, a Comforter who hears my every cry, an Advocate who fights my battles, a wise Friend who guides my every step, and so much more.

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

If you can't see the sun you will be impressed with a street light. If you've never known thunder and lightning you'll be impressed with fireworks.  
And if you turn your back on the greatness and majesty of God you'll fall in love with a world of shadows and short-lived pleasures.

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# MINING FOR THE TRUTH

BY CARL WIELAND

**J**im Farquhar, B.Sc., M.Sc., is a geologist who has worked in the mining industry, in Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Australia, for some 35 years. He has been employed by companies exploring for, and mining, gold, platinum, zinc, lead, copper and iron ore.

Jim was raised in a strong Christian home, but to him it was just a lot of formality.

"I first realised that there was a bit more to this Christianity thing when I was about 14, at a Billy Graham Crusade in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia)," Jim recalls.

"I put my hand up [to pray the salvation prayer] with all the others, but that was it. Nothing much really happened after that, until I was about 26, living in South Africa."

"My wife and I went to a traditional church, and the elderly preacher (he couldn't preach well at all, but he was a lovely guy) started Bible studies with us. Then I realised again what being a Christian was all about, and he led me through that."

Jim went home and shared his newfound faith with his wife, Hilary, who then also became a Christian.

Jim had already been working in the mining industry for some time, and just accepted the "standard view" about the earth being millions of years old.

He happened to pick up and read the classic *The Genesis Flood*, by John Whitcomb and Henry Morris.

"I realised that there was more to it than I had thought, possibly the Earth was a lot younger than I had been taught," Jim explains.

"But that was all there was available, and these American creationists seemed so far away, so for many years I just lived in a world that was sort of split; where there was a church thing and another life – a scientific life, a mining life."

"But then years later, when we were living in Australia, I came across the work of Creation Ministries International. They were putting on a weekend seminar."

Jim decided to attend the seminar.

"I remember asking CMI's Don Batten at one of the breaks, 'So what



Jim and Hilary Farquhar

about this classification scheme of living things? We're all linked together; isn't the tree of evolution obvious?" His brief answer showed me that there might be another way of seeing things, so I thought I'd better have another look."

Jim was stunned by the tables full of books available at that seminar.

"Seeing all the materials makes one realise that it's not just three or four people somewhere in the world, it's hundreds and hundreds of scientists that are believing it."

"Can they all be wrong? We bought a whole bunch of stuff then, and haven't looked back."

Knowing what the materials did in his life, Jim well understands the reason why the CMI ministry has such an emphasis on books and materials.

Jim says the truth and authority of the Bible is ultimately the major issue in Christianity, and that the major Christian doctrines are logically grounded in a literal, historical Genesis.

**“Christian doctrines are logically grounded in a literal, historical Genesis.”**

about seeing heaps of evidence for Noah's Flood "everywhere".

"If we look at what happens today in even small localised flooding, then read the Bible and what it says about the flood and its immensity, it's more than feasible for that flood to have caused all these huge deposits of sediments we see."

"Once we realise that fossils are not millions of years old, but mainly a record of God's judgment on sin, then there is no record of death and bloodshed before Adam's fall. Suddenly it makes sense when the Bible talks of a once-perfect world, ruined by sin."

Taking the Bible at face value also means a 6–7,000 year timespan since creation. To Jim, realising this truth has been immensely exciting. He says this means one's own potential lifespan of 70 years

was about 1% of the lifetime of the whole universe, which brings God that much closer.

"It makes life more meaningful," he says.

"Because prior to that, your life is

just a spot, and it's insignificant. But since the world's age is that much shorter, then each person's life has more value."

## No need for millions of years

It has been said that unless the Earth was millions of years old, mining companies couldn't find ore bodies.

"The only reason that these presumed 'ages' are used in the industry is to give a correlation of rocks, to be able to say these rocks belong to a certain group, which is more, or less, likely to contain a particular type of ore," Jim explains.

"But this classification can be done in other ways, without any 'millions of years' tag to it. For instance, calling a rock system 'Jurassic' can be done based on the sorts of fossils generally buried in it, quite independent of the ages. For instance, where our firm is now mining, the sedimentary rocks labelled as 'Precambrian' are highly likely to contain iron ore. So that's where we look for it. But you could just as easily classify these as 'preflood' or 'early flood' deposits. They could be classified by their position relative to other sedimentary layers, and the types of fossils they do or don't contain. Such a classification would be just as useful to the mining industry, without any 'millions of years' attached."

Jim says 99% of his work as a geologist has nothing to do with the millions-of-years belief at all, but this minor part has a major emotional impact. He thinks this could be why some of his colleagues have reacted strongly at first to his belief in Genesis Creation.

## Rocks don't speak for themselves

"When we geologists try to interpret what happened to form a particular set of rocks, it is not some hard science, like testing the laws of gravity," Jim explains. "It involves deduction, speculation, all sorts of fallible human opinions. The point is that the facts in the rocks don't just 'speak for themselves.'"

Jim says there are several instances relating to ore deposits with which he is familiar, where dogmas about how they formed, once strongly held, have now changed completely. In the absence of being able to examine or repeat the past in the same way that experimental science functions, theories often compete on the basis of strong personalities and vehement arguments.

# That's an egg-cellent question!

BY LUCIEN TUINSTRA (CMI)

**H**OW does the mother hen know to sit on her freshly laid eggs? There is no apparent indication that the egg contains her offspring in need of care. It seems to be a created instinct, since many modern commercial breeds have had this instinct 'bred out' of them.

The eggshell's design itself shows the Designer's care for the chick inside. Its features include:

- A porous shell that allows exchange of gases while conserving moisture.
- A mechanism to dissolve it from the inside, providing calcium for the embryo's bones.
- Sufficient strength for protection, but still breakable when hatching time arrives.
- A coating called 'bloom' preventing pathogens from entering.

Various internal features of chicken eggs are equally vital; for instance, its membrane compartments (yolk sac, amnion, and allantois). Could such a marvellous package, with so many 'eggsacting' requirements, possibly have originated by evolutionary 'chance and necessity'?

Some of these features are essential for survival of the chick; if they weren't implemented together from the beginning it would mean the end of the chick (likewise for all other species of birds).

I marvel at how chickens laying such sizeable nutritious eggs, sometimes numerous days in a row, but for their Creator, God, nothing is too complicated.



## The world's oldest colour?

### PETER'S CORNER

**T**HE world's oldest biological colour is pink. Bright neon pink. Or so the scientists announced in 2018, describing research done at the ANU in Canberra. They had extracted organic molecules called porphyrins from marine black shale rocks from Mauritania in Africa — shales that were well known as containing microbial fossil cyanobacteria. Porphyrins are ring molecules important for the colour of biological substances such as hemoglobin and chlorophyll. On this occasion the porphyrins had a purple colour, which becomes pink if diluted.

The scientists were awestruck thinking that these colour molecules could survive for such a long time. How long? 1,100,000,000 years. That is the alleged evolutionary age of the Precambrian strata in which the shales with the fossils were positioned.

But that age is impossible for any organic substance. The laws of chemistry dictate that organic substances will gradually decompose — even in the fridge, that KFC chicken left over from the party last week is going to break down quite soon.

Under ideal conditions, some organics may last up

to 20,000 years. That is way too short, at best 0.002% of the alleged age. The difference is like comparing an ant making an 11 metre walk to your letterbox, to the ant making a 600 km walk from Kalgoorlie to Perth! Impossible.

Question: Which is correct, the laws of chemistry, or the enormous age of the colour molecules? Answer: The law — it always wins, every time. The evolutionary age is very wrong, but a short Biblical age fits the evidence perfectly. Sorry to disappoint, but pink may not in fact be the oldest colour after all.

Again, time after time, the real credit goes to God, not man.

There are many examples of how creation makes very good scientific sense. I hope these words help you, as they have me, in your journey to surely trust the Creator. I gratefully acknowledge the below references for background information for this article.

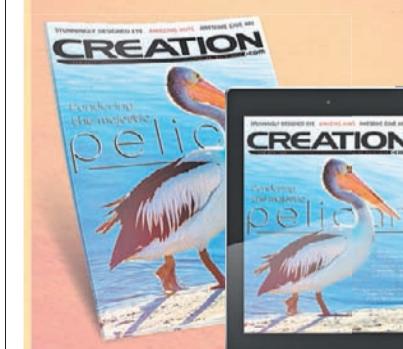
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Peter Mikula is a mining engineer in Kalgoorlie who loves stargazing and talking with others about Jesus.

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# BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

## Steps to peace with God and others

BY ROB FURLONG

*"God's peace is like a spring of pure water."* – Billy Graham

One of the great experiences of my Christian life occurred in 1979 when Billy Graham and his team came to Sydney for a three-week evangelistic crusade. As a young man it had a tremendous impact on me — I rededicated my life to Jesus at one of the evening meetings — and four months later, I received a very clear call from God into pastoral ministry.

Billy Graham's preaching was straightforward and direct, clearly explaining to people how they could have peace with God. Many criticised his style and content, but I loved it, and he had a way of saying things that stuck in your mind. I can still hear him declaring to the crowd on many nights, with great conviction and in his classic southern US drawl, "You are not here by accident, you are here for a purpose!"

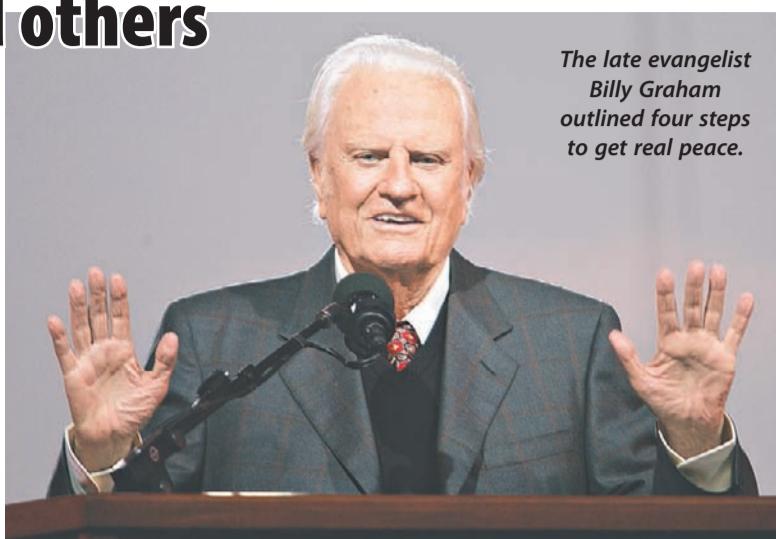
Boy did that grab my attention!

Over the course of his long life, God used Billy Graham to preach the Gospel to millions of people around the world. His message of hope and peace in Jesus was heard by over two billion people in more than 185 countries, with over 3.2 million of them responding to his invitation to "accept Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour."

He met with and influenced kings, queens, presidents, and numerous other world leaders, but never lost his ability to relate to the average person.

Graham's call to people to make peace with God was a reality in his own life. As one of God's Beatitude People — being at peace with God himself and making peace with others — he lived what he preached. Rejecting the system of racial segregation which existed in the USA at the time, from 1953 onwards Graham insisted on racial integration at all his crusades.

He died in 2018 at the age of 99, having personally preached the Gospel to more people than any other



The late evangelist  
Billy Graham  
outlined four steps  
to get real peace.

person in the history of Christianity and being widely respected for his humility, grace, and genuine love for people.

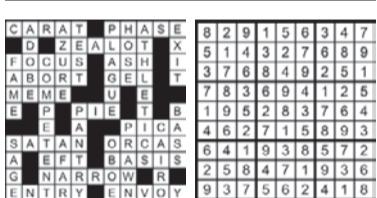
As we have been exploring the idea of experiencing greater peace in our relationships, we keep returning to the truth that we must first know what it means to have peace with God. One of Billy Graham's most popular books was *Peace with God* where he outlined the steps required for this:

- Understand that God's original purpose for all of us was peace and life! Jesus said He came to "give a rich and satisfying life." This doesn't mean a life free of problems, but it does mean we can know His peace in the middle of them.
- Understand why we do not experience this peace now. The Bible

explains this is because, "*Everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.*" Sin is a heart attitude that says, "I will live my life my own way – I believe in You God, but I want to run my own life!" This attitude has been with us through all of history and is the reason why there is so much chaos and lack of peace in the world.

- Understand that Jesus' death makes it possible to have peace with God. As Peter said, "*Christ suffered for our sins once for all time ... He died for sinners to bring them safely home to God.*" Jesus has paid my penalty for sin — death — by dying for me.
- Understand that when I trust in Jesus' death then I can have peace with God. "*We have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" When we turn away from our sin and place our faith in what Jesus has done for us, God forgives us, and we are at now at peace with Him.

By following these steps, as Billy Graham says, you will experience God's peace as "a spring of pure water."



## HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth,  
I acknowledge that I am a sinner. Please forgive me for all the ways I have disobeyed and defied You.

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

### What now?

1. Tell someone – either a Christian that you know or email us at [info@challengenews.org](mailto: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  this prayer.

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](mailto:info@challengenews.org)

All overseas enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country

## Facing up to the real you

BY JODY BENNETT

I DON'T watch horror movies but I do find the concept of the 2019 horror flick *Us* very intriguing.

In the movie, a family encounters their evil doppelgängers and spends the entire film trying to escape their deadly grasp. These are not just lookalikes but their own evil incarnations.



Poster picture from the movie *Us* released in 2019.

The movie highlights the little-acknowledged fact that our greatest enemy and the most confronting thing we can encounter is our own worst selves. It frightens me even to contemplate what my own worst self looks like.

My kids have seen glimpses of her when I really lose my cool. Sometimes I see her in the rear view mirror in my car when other drivers are being particularly frustrating. My parents certainly met her during my teens. And I hear her voice in my thoughts often, before I censor myself.

The truth is the depth of anger, callousness, pride and selfishness I see in myself even now does scare me sometimes, but it is nothing to who I used to be or what I would have been if Jesus hadn't saved me when I was six years old and His Holy Spirit hadn't been at work refining me ever since. I thank the Lord for that!

I think we all have the potential to be killers and abusers in the right circumstances. Just as none of us really know whether we would eat human flesh if we were in *extremis* and starving, so none of us knows the depths of depravity we would go to without societal restraints.

However, turning to Jesus defeats the power our shadowy evil doppelgänger (sinful nature) has over us and gives us the power to change. And the Bible gives us the instructions to live as our best, most loving selves, following the only human being who never had an evil doppelgänger, Jesus Christ.



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

Jamie Jones-Buchanan of Leeds Rhinos tackled by Rémi Casty of Catalans Dragons during Betfred Super League regular season match. (Photo by Tim Clayton/Corbis via Getty Images)



# A SOLID FOUNDATION

With a string of accomplishments under his belt — and the physical and mental scars that go with it — rugby union player Jamie Jones-Buchanan is every bit the tough go-getter you would imagine.

The imposing 41-year-old, who was born in Leeds, has won seven Super League Grand Finals, three World Cup Challenges and has played at international level for England and Great Britain.

In 2022 he was awarded a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to rugby league football and the community in Leeds.

Not bad for the lad who dreamt of becoming a professional rugby player while growing up in

working-class Leeds.

Yet there is much more to him than meets the eye.

He may hold aloft his cups and trophies with undisguised glee, but just as quickly he points to them and says “these things are perishable; they don’t last. Don’t build your life on these.”

So what then does Jamie build his life on? It turns out he builds his life on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

He spends much of his down time at his local church and various speaking engagements for organisations such as the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Association.

“I always believed in something when I was younger, but I didn’t really know what it was,” he shares.

“How could I really? I’m just a lad from Bramley who wanted to make it and realise his dreams as a rugby player.”

His involvement with church was only at funerals and weddings — and a short stint trying to make head or tail of the book of Revelation in the New Testament section of the Bible when he was about 10.

“As you can imagine, I didn’t get very far! Yet sometimes when I was younger I would go numb with fear at the thought of dying, wonder-

ing ‘is this all there is?’”

Then in 2004, his club signed on Samoan Ali Lauiti’iti. Jamie describes him as someone who had a “different feel about him.”

“He was this burly bloke who carried the ball like a peanut — but he was different away from the game.”

Ali was a committed Christian so Jamie asked him about death.

Ali invited him to a service and Jamie jumped at the chance — even though at that time he thought people who attended church were like Ned Flanders, the flaky Christian character in the Simpsons cartoons.

But he found out “nothing is further from the truth. Churches are made up of people all just trying to love Jesus and live like Him as best they can.”

“I didn’t know at the time, but it was a life-changing opportunity when Ali offered to take me to church for the first time.

“I always had Christianity close to me; my nana would say her prayers on a night and I’d do school Nativities and things like that, but theologically speaking, I had no idea what the Bible stood for until that day.”

“Ali took me under his wing and we started to go through the gospels. Before long I had accepted Christ. The day I got baptised in

2009 was the most emotional day of my life.”

It is not an easy life though, being a professional rugby player.

The sheer physicality of the game as well as the mental strain of having to be at peak fitness puts a tremendous pressure on Jamie. He has also struggled with injuries.

However, he says “when I go through adverse periods, that trust and belief in Christ is truly what keeps me believing and gets me ready to go again.”

“You can draw meaningful links to biblical figures who have endured hardships and times of toughness.”

At a talk Jamie gave to a meeting in Ireland, he held up one of his many trophies then said: “I’ve won countless trophies and achieved a lot, but it counts for nothing really, does it? Nothing lasts forever, eve-

rything is finite, and that directly relates to sport. Whatever I achieve in sport is limited and I refer often to building treasure in heaven. Only that lasts eternally.”

Sharing his life story is high on Jamie’s list of pursuits for the church.

“I’ve done testimonies everywhere,” he says, “even on a barge in Canary Wharf once.”

His singular message in all his addresses is this: “All the accolades in the world aren’t enough to fill that God-shaped space at the centre of our hearts and minds.”

“We can chase things in life and even when you achieve them, it’s meaningless without God at the centre of it. That’s what I want to try and really impress upon people I speak to. God has to be at the centre of everything.”



Jamie Jones-Buchanan poses with his MBE, awarded by the Princess Royal during an investiture ceremony at Buckingham Palace on October 12, 2022. (Photo by Kirsty O'Connor-Pool/Getty Images)

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