

# DR'S EASTER PROOF

## Hunting for the sweetest treasure



BEIRUT, LEBANON: A child shows a coloured Easter egg to the other outside a church holding an Easter service. (Photo by Bilal Jawich/Xinhua via Getty Images)



Doctor Greg Viehman was convinced he had everything to find happiness – the successful career, the lifestyle, but it never seemed to be enough.

“I would buy a new car. Or clothes. Or take a trip. I tried hobbies – triathlon, running, wine collecting. I was sad and empty, yet also angry and frustrated because I couldn’t understand why all these things weren’t fulfilling me. Why don’t I feel like I have achieved what I have worked my whole life for?”

He didn’t tell anyone that’s how he felt, because he was embarrassed.

“You keep it inside and then what happens is that you start taking that frustration out on other people.”

His wife, Ruth, says: “He had a short fuse, he was arrogant. He was always right. He was always number one at everything. He did well his whole life.”

He was quick to take issue with others, including his Christian neighbours whom he thought were giving his family the cold shoulder.

Greg decided to get a Bible and prove to his Christian neighbours that they were not practising what they preached. He started reading the Bible and was shocked to learn that Jesus was claiming to be God in the flesh. The God-man on earth.

“I had never heard that before!”

“That quickly got my attention because I realised that if it did happen it was the most important event in human history. If it didn’t happen it was just a religious fairytale that someone made up.”

He really got interested when he read Luke’s prologue, because Luke was a doctor, and doctors would usually disprove miracles, not authenticate them.

His wife, Ruth, in the meantime had come to faith. She told her husband about hell, a real place that he could end up in if he didn’t come to believe the truth about Jesus.

All Greg’s research led him to the conclusion that Christianity hinged on one event – the resurrection. If he could disprove that, the whole thing fell apart. But every argument against the resurrection fell flat. None of the theories were credible, none of them made sense.

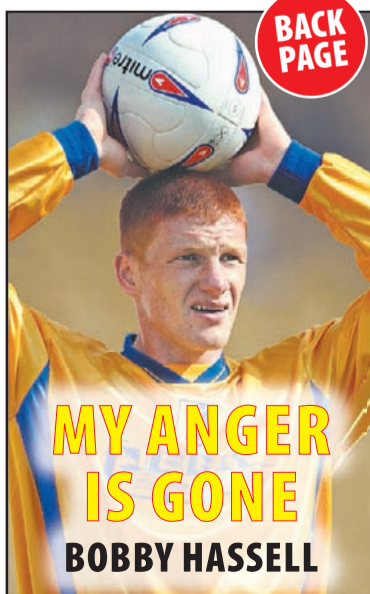
• Turn to page 2



Dr Greg Viehman

### Fun for kids

Pages 5,6,7



MY ANGER IS GONE  
BOBBY HASSELL

## WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT?

BY RUSTY WRIGHT

AT EASTER, some might wonder what all the fuss is about. Who cares? What difference does it make if Jesus rose from the dead?

It makes all the difference in the world. If Christ did not rise, then thousands of believers have died as martyrs for a hoax. If he did rise, then he is still alive and can offer peace to troubled, hurting lives.

Countless scholars – among them the apostle Paul, Augustine, Sir Isaac Newton and C.S. Lewis – believed in the resurrection. We need not fear committing intellectual suicide by believing it also. Where do the facts lead?

Paul, a first-century skeptic-turned-believer, wrote that “Christ died for our sins...he was buried...he was raised on the third day...he appeared to Cephas [Peter], and then to the Twelve [Disciples]. After that, he appeared to more than 500 ... at

the same time, most of whom are still living.” Consider four pieces of evidence:

### 1. The explosive growth of the Christian movement.

Within a few weeks after Jesus was crucified, a movement arose which, by the later admission of its enemies, “upset the world.” What happened to ignite this movement shortly after its leader had been executed?

### 2. The disciples’ changed lives.

After Jesus’ arrest and crucifixion, most of the disciples fled in fear. Peter denied three times that he was a follower of Jesus. (The women were braver and stayed to the end.) Yet 10 of the 11 disciples (Judas committed suicide) were martyred for their faith. According to traditions, Peter was crucified upside down; Thomas was skewered; John was boiled in oil but survived. What turned these cowards into heroes? Each believed he had seen Jesus alive again.

• Turn to page 2

# DOCTOR FINDS EASTER PROOF

• From page 1

The only explanation according to the historical facts was that the tomb was empty and Jesus actually rose to life again.

"The real thing that got me was the Apostle Paul because here was a guy who was Jewish, he's killing Chris-

tians; he has nothing to gain by changing his beliefs. What in the world could make this guy go and be the greatest evangelist ever? There was only one explanation and that was that he saw the risen Lord Jesus Christ.

"When I looked at the evidence of the changed lives of the apostles, I had to believe it."

Greg thought he had it now. Christianity is true and if you go to church and do the right thing then you'll go to heaven. What more could there be?

Until a walk-in patient at work asked him: "Have you accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour?"

Greg says he nearly passed out and wondered how this guy could know what he was looking into and what was going on in his life.

A few nights later Greg started to think about his life and the things that he wanted to change (the anger and frustration) but he didn't have the power to change.

He broke down crying, asking God to forgive him and asking Jesus to be in charge of his life. He repented (turned away from) of his sins

and asked Jesus to change him. "I wanted to live a new life," he said.

The next morning Greg felt, "Completely peaceful. I wasn't feeling frustrated or angry. I felt content."

He thought it would wear off but throughout the day the feeling persisted and he knew he had been changed. Initially he thought his antihistamine got switched out for something like Valium!

Greg was feeling the truth of 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

Ruth hadn't thought her husband could ever change and was shocked by his new concern for others.

As for the patient who had challenged him about Jesus,

Greg couldn't find his name anywhere.

"There was no evidence he ever came in the office."

Greg says although there are lots of factual evidence for the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the real proof is in his own changed life.

"Since the day I was saved, I have never felt alone, I have never felt empty, I've never felt all that discontentment and stuff."

Ruth says: "I feel like I'm married to a different person. My old husband is not around anymore and I've got this new husband who's awesome!"

Greg concludes: "Every other religion is man seeking God, Christianity is God seeking man. The real test for Christianity is you can call on Christ and He can change you so that you KNOW that it is true." •



Ruth and Greg Viehman

## A fantastic downward step



Stock photo

BY ALAN BAILEY

ONE of the many effects of the virus pandemic has been its levelling of society. It is no respecter of persons. Even leaders of nations have been laid low with it. So a Prime Minister or a President has been lying in bed in the same way as all the infected rank and file. It has been indiscriminatory in taking lives. Celebrities have died. Young and old have passed away. No matter one's station in life, wearing a face mask became mandatory.

Stepping down is not something we do if we can avoid it. Stepping up is most desirable. But at this time we think of someone who took a step downward quite deliberately.

### A very different story

It was because of a different virus that it happened. The virus of sin, so invasive and universal. Right across the globe people are affected. The law of God is being broken every moment of every day. Sins' consequences are vastly more extensive than those of COVID 19.

The greatest step down was taken by the one who had the farthest to step down. Christ, the Son of God, stepped from a position of total perfection, of great glory, and came into a world of trouble and pain.

The poor countries of today are probably not all that different to the one he came and lived in.

He saw the deformed, the hungry, the outcasts on the street. No doubt he smelled the smells of drains and sewers and heard the crying of distressed children.

He felt the cold and heat and experienced homelessness and fatigue.

Yet he identified with the needy. He didn't remove himself and yearn for his rightful home. He was with the people, loving them, showing compassion.

### Even further down

It seems harder to go further down than rock bottom.

But Jesus did, quite deliberately. He lost his reputation through false accusation and slander. He was stripped of his robe and abused verbally and physically. People treated him worse than they would an animal. After lashing his back and opening up the flesh, they spiked him to a cross and stood back, hurling even more abuse. It was the kind of death everyone despised, both Roman and Jew.

It was reserved for the worst and yet in this case it happened to the best. After six hours, Jesus breathed out his last breath.

This Easter, think of what he did and ask the question *Why?* He explained that it was for us. He loved people despite their evil doing.

He stepped down in order to give us the opportunity to step up. Not socially, but spiritually. We may now step up from our lowly place as sinners to sit with Christ and reign with him. Forgiven, and set for an eternity with him. No wonder we think Christmas and Easter are special. No wonder we want to tell the good news.

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10: 13). •

## What is all the fuss about Easter?

• From page 1

### 3. The empty tomb.

Jesus' corpse was removed from the cross, wrapped like a mummy and placed in a solid-rock tomb. A one-and-a-half to two-ton stone was rolled into a slightly depressed groove to seal the tomb's entrance. A "Green Beret"-like unit of Roman soldiers guarded the grave. On

Sunday morning, the stone was found rolled away, the body was gone but the graveclothes were still in place. What happened? Did Christ's friends steal the body? Perhaps one of the women sweet-talked (karate-chopped?) the guards while the others moved the stone and tiptoed off with the body. Or maybe Peter (remember his bravery) or Thomas (Doubting Thomas) overpowered the guards, stole the body, then fabricated – and died for – a resurrection myth.

These theories hardly seem plausible. The guard was too powerful, the stone too heavy and the disciples too timid to attempt such a feat.

Did Christ's enemies steal the body? If Romans or Jewish religious leaders had the body, surely they would have exposed it publicly and Christianity would have died out. They didn't, and it didn't.

The "Swoon Theory" supposes that Jesus didn't really die but was only unconscious. The expert Roman executioners merely thought he was dead. After a few days in the tomb without food or medicine, the cool air revived him.

He burst from the 100 pounds of graveclothes, rolled away the stone with his nail-pierced hands, scared the daylight out of the Roman soldiers, walked miles on wounded feet and convinced his disciples he'd been raised from the dead. This one is harder to believe than the resurrection itself.

### 4. The appearances of the risen Christ.

For 40 days after his death, many different people said they saw Jesus alive. Witnesses included a woman, a shrewd tax collector, several fishermen and over 500 people at once. These claims provide further eyewitness testimony for the resurrection.

As a sceptic, I realised that attempts to explain away the evidences run into a brick wall of facts that point to one conclusion: Christ is risen.

The above does not constitute an exhaustive proof, rather a reasoned examination of the evidence.

Each interested person should evaluate the evidence and decide if it makes sense. Of course, the truth or falsity of the resurrection is a matter of historical fact and is not dependent on anyone's belief. If the facts support the claim, one can conclude that he arose. In any case, mere intellectual assent to the facts does little for one's life.

A major evidence comes experientially, in personally receiving Jesus' free gift of forgiveness. He said, "I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him [or her]"

Worth considering? •

Rusty Wright is an author and lecturer who has spoken on six continents. He holds Bachelor of Science (psychology) and Master of Theology degrees from Duke and Oxford universities, respectively. [www.RustyWright.com](http://www.RustyWright.com)



## Coffee Break CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

### ACROSS

- 1 Proper \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 US stock market index
- 8 Worry, distress
- 9 Colon cleanser
- 10 The B in NBA
- 12 Poison for weeds (4,6)
- 16 Workers' collective
- 17 Inundated
- 18 Bear witness
- 19 Joint in metal

### DOWN

- 1 Close at hand
- 2 Powerful impulses
- 4 Baku's country
- 5 Abide as a resident

1	2		3	4	5	6
			7			
8				9		
10						
						11
	12	13			14	
15						
16				17		
18					19	

- 6 Four-channel sound
- 7 Personal maids etc.
- 11 Corsage flower perhaps
- 13 Put out
- 14 Renter's paper
- 15 Mountain lion

### SOLUTIONS PAGE 11



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

# THE MOST DANGEROUS EVENT IN HISTORY

BY AKOS BALOUGH

**FOR** most people today, Easter is a long weekend spent with friends and family. But as British Journalist Peter Hitchens once pointed out, the first Easter contains the most dangerous ideas in human history. Here are 10 of them:

**1) The first Easter shows that we are worse than we imagined...**

We, modern people, love to think of ourselves as "good people", especially when comparing ourselves to rapists, robbers, and dictators. But on that first Easter, Jesus Christ died on a Roman cross. He did it because it was the only way to reconcile sinful, rebellious humanity to a Holy God (Matthew 26:39). All our self-esteem training can't change this awful reality: we all fall short of God's perfect standards (Romans 3:23).

**2) ...But we are more loved than we could ever hope**

Despite being worse than we imagined, that first Easter proved God's love for us.

A love that doesn't paper over our worst features: but a love that sees us at our worst, and gives us His best.

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

**3) Our identity is ultimately given to us, not something we invent**

We live in the age of authenticity, where our inner feelings determine our identity. But in the final analysis, our inner feelings are not who we really are. Our ultimate identity is that of God's image-bearers, albeit fallen and rebellious. But on that first Easter, Jesus opened up the door to a mind-blowing new identity: sons and daughters of the living God (Galatians 4:4-7).

**4) Judgement Day is coming (and has already begun)**

On that first Easter, Jesus' tomb was empty.

He rose from the dead, just as He promised. He's now at God's right hand, ruling the universe, and will one day return to Judge everyone in it (Acts 17:31). Including us.

But for those in Christ Jesus, we've already passed through judgement, from death to life (Colossians 3:1-4).

**5) The universe is not meaningless chaos**

Jesus' resurrection proves that He is who He says He is:

God's appointed King, who made the world, and rules the world (Matthew 28:18). Thus, our universe is not random chaos (and never was). It's under Jesus' rule.

**6) Life is about God's Story, not our story**

Disney is wrong: life is not ultimately about following our dreams, and doing whatever turns us on.

God is unfolding His story for the universe. He's the Hero. And our job is to get on board with Him.

After all, it's the best story ever told.

**7) Life has intrinsic meaning**

Modern people believe that we make up our own meaning.

That might work in the short term, as long as you don't think too deeply about life and your upcoming death. But Jesus' resurrection shows that

life has purpose: a purpose that can see you through the darkest valleys of depression and despair.

**8) Death is not the end**

Death is not an impenetrable brick wall that ends our existence. Yes, it's awful, but for those in Christ, it's a mere speed hump to eternal glory. And yet,

for those who reject Christ, it's the doorway to despair unending.

**9) Justice will prevail...but only at the end**

The arc of human history doesn't bend toward justice (with apologies to MLK).

Rather, it's the story of man's inhumanity toward man. And yet, the first Easter proves that justice will prevail - but only at the end, when Jesus returns to Judge.

**10) Morality is not something we make up, but something we're accountable to**

Many in the West think that morality is arbitrary, like road rules.

We make it up, because at the end of the day, the universe has no moral order (or so we're told). But Jesus' resurrection proves there's a moral order to the universe, to which we're all accountable.

This leaves us with a question: how are we going to respond to history's most dangerous event? •

“**How are we going to respond to history's most dangerous event?**”

# Journalist cracks the case

Mike Vogel as Chicago Tribune reporter Lee Strobel in the movie based on his most important story to date: *The Case for Christ*.

BY RUSTY WRIGHT

If you're a committed atheist and your spouse becomes a follower of Jesus, it might just rock your world. That's what happened to hardnosed *Chicago Tribune* legal affairs editor Lee Strobel, who marshalled his skills in journalism and law to find out what had happened to his wife, Leslie.

Strobel's quest became a bestselling book, *The Case for Christ*, and now a movie. He writes that Leslie's 1979 announcement stunned him. He felt "like the victim of a bait-and-switch scam. I had married one Leslie - fun... carefree...risk-taking - and now I feared she was going to turn into some sort of sexually repressed prude who would trade our upwardly mobile lifestyle for all-night prayer vigils and volunteer work in grimy soup kitchens."

"Instead," he continues, "I was pleasantly surprised - even fascinated - by the fundamental changes in her character, her integrity, and her personal confidence." He aimed to investigate faith from top to bottom to see if it made sense.

The film stars Mike Vogel (*The Help*), Erika Christensen (*Frasier*, *Traffic*) and Oscar-winner Faye Dunaway (*Bonnie and Clyde*, *Network*). (Spoilers ahead.)

**Rigorous methods; avoiding pitfalls**

Educated at the University of Missouri School of Journalism and Yale Law School, Lee determined to use the rigorous methods a veteran journalist and legal analyst would about a court case: sifting evidence, evaluating reliability, considering alternatives. He studied history, archaeology, and ancient literature and interviewed experts.

Lee wanted to avoid pitfalls he had experienced earlier in his career when an apparently clear-cut court case he was covering had its guilty verdict reversed.

In retrospect, he realised he had been viewing the facts through preconceived biases that blinded him from objective evaluation.

He determined to study from a fresh perspective the faith he had thought was a fairy tale.

For nearly two years he asked hard questions about source reliability, about Jesus' life, death and alleged Resurrection, and more.

The book and the film present what he discovered, not as academic treatises - though the book is well written for thinking readers, and extensively documented - but in the context of colourful, touching stories about how he wrestled with his findings.

**Sceptical, analytical questions**

The movie skillfully weaves his

sceptical, analytical questions into the fabric of love, pain, sorrow and joy that composed his marriage and family life. A glimpse of what he encountered:

Regarding the source material, he found scholarly support for "the essential reliability of the New Testament documents...their accurate transmittal through history... extensive corroboration by ancient historians and others," and for the assertion that "archaeology underscores their trustworthiness."

Regarding Jesus, he found multiple attestations that Jesus claimed deity. Jesus' "I and the Father are one" New Testament claim is echoed by contemporary friends... and even enemies, who accused Him of blasphemy for an assertion they considered outrageous.

Lots of mentally disturbed people believe they are God. Was Jesus one of them?

Lee says Jesus' discourses display "no sign of dementia, delusions, or paranoia." Rather they evidence "profound wisdom...uncanny insights...poetic eloquence, and...deep compassion."

Jesus fulfilled many Hebrew prophecies regarding the Jewish Messiah. Lee cites Peter Stoner, a mathematician who calculated the probability of just eight of these coming true in one person as one chance in 1017.

**Empty tomb; a little girl's wish**

And Lee found convincing evidence that Jesus was executed, buried, and returned to life. The tomb was empty and many eyewitnesses said they saw Him alive again, some at the cost of their lives.

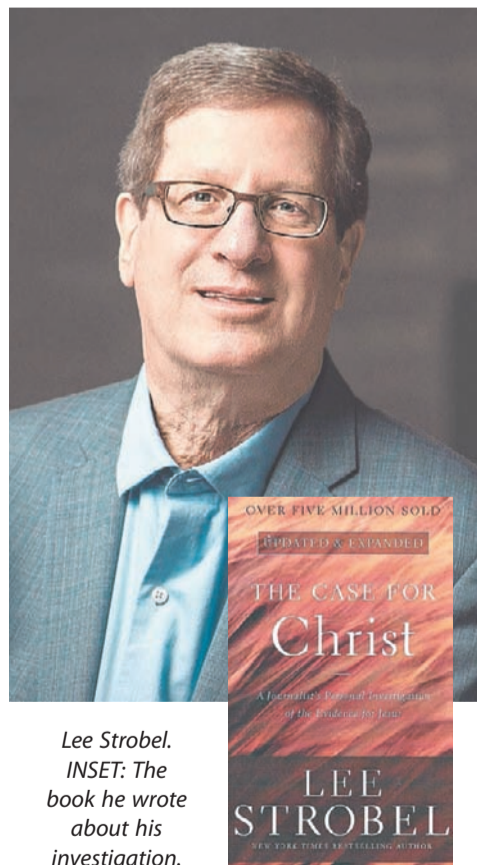
He concluded, "The atheism I had embraced for so long buckled under the weight of historical truth... It would require much more faith for me to maintain my atheism than to trust in Jesus of Nazareth!"

He asked Jesus to forgive him and become his personal friend in 1981.

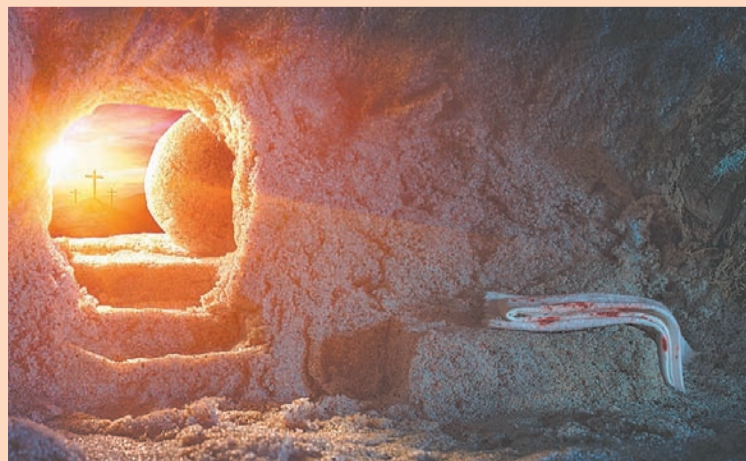
The change in his formerly self-absorbed life was so radical that a few months later, his five-year-old daughter said, "Mommy, I want God to do for me what he's done for Daddy."

*The Case for Christ* is a compelling film that is sensitive toward those who disagree and aims to get viewers thinking about matters that can make a world of difference in their lives and families. Well worth seeing. •

Rusty Wright is an author and lecturer who has spoken on six continents. He holds Bachelor of Science (psychology) and Master of Theology degrees from Duke and Oxford universities, respectively. This article is from RustyWright.com and is used with kind permission.



Lee Strobel. INSET: The book he wrote about his investigation.



The tomb was empty on that first Easter. He is risen!

**"To continue in atheism, I would need to believe that nothing produces everything, non-life produces life, randomness produces fine-tuning, chaos produces information, unconsciousness produces consciousness, and non-reason produces reason. I simply didn't have that much faith."  
- Lee Strobel**

# My secret shame was healed by love

BY AMANDA DURHAM

At age 12, I was sexually abused by a 20-year-old man. By the time I realised that something wasn't right, it was too late. It was horrifying.

The abuse stripped me of my childhood and dreams; leaving me with a deep distrust of men, and with depression and suicidal thoughts. For 18 years, this was my secret.

Shame plagued me, even when I finally began telling people. There was a massive void in me. In an attempt to fill it, I went in search of money and fame.

From 2013 to 2016, I worked as an actress in Rio de Janeiro. I hoped that external validation would feel like love and enable me to finally love myself... of course, it didn't.

As my career and profile grew, my state of mind remained the same.

I wasn't happy at all; I was on TV and in films, but I still had the same sense of purposelessness.

Fortunately, God had a plan. From the foundation of the world, He knew



Amanda Durham

that He would bring me out of darkness and into His light.

It began in 2013, when I "randomly" asked my boyfriend if I could visit his church. I was surprised by my own request; at the time, I didn't even believe in a higher power, let alone the God of the Bible. In hindsight, it's clear that God's hand was in it!

At church that Sunday, the pastor presented the entire story of humanity's salvation, from the Fall to redemption through Jesus Christ.

When I heard John 3:16 — "For 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" — I wept. There in that church, the Holy Spirit opened my eyes. The weight and consequences of my sins were apparent.

In tears, I asked God for forgiveness and confessed Jesus as my Saviour. I was then overcome by a supernatural outpouring of love. His love is the greatest love

that I've ever felt! What an irresistible grace!

In the following years, I got very ill. After undergoing lung surgery in 2016, God very clearly instructed me to quit my career, break up with my boyfriend, and leave Rio de Janeiro. I obeyed.

I left Rio for the small town where my mother and grandma lived. I

spent that time serving at a local church, growing spiritually, and waiting on God. I eventually decided to sign up for a 10-day trial of a Christian dating site. Within only a few days, I'd met my now-husband, Brandon. After three months, we got married and I moved to America. My husband is a godly, loving man and caring pastor.

Before Christ, I maintained the image of a proud, independent woman, though I was battling profound hurts and wounds on the inside.

When I met Jesus, I met a different kind of Man — a Man I could trust. His love is faithful, freely given, sacrificial, and restorative.

Knowing Jesus as my Saviour and Lord has radically changed me, and His love continues to bring healing and wholeness into my life.

I still struggle a lot with my health, but I have peace in knowing that my Heavenly Father is in control; moreover, His power is made perfect in my weakness!

Christ is the living water... the peace, joy, and love we're all so thirsty for is found only in Him.

I am deeply loved by a Heavenly Father. His tender, divine love rescued me — and it's available to you, too.

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

“ I met a different kind of Man — a Man I could trust. ”

“The only love that won't disappoint you is one that can't change, that can't be lost, that is not based on the ups and downs of life — or of how well you live. It is something that not even death can take away from you. God's love is the only thing like that.” — Tim Keller

## It's a 'Yes' from me

BY JOHN HUTCHINSON

HOW exciting for Australia's Got Talent contestants to hear from adjudicators, "It's a 'yes' from me."



How their faces light up when the fourth judge says, "And, it's a 'yes' from me too — you now have four yeses!"

The "Yes" word is a powerful word of approval! — a real morale booster — whereas its opposite, "No," can shatter you.

I remember a young fellow who desperately hoped for a "yes". He was keen on a nice looking girl. He took a mate with him into the phone box in case she said "no" and he needed someone to hold him up.

"No," it was, which deflated him like a flat bike tyre.

But, when God says, "YES" it's "yes" indeed.

Listen to these exciting words: "But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not 'Yes' and 'No'. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not 'Yes' and 'No', but in him it has always been 'Yes'. For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ." (2 Corinthians 1:18-20)

"And this is what He promised us — even eternal life." (1 John 2:25)

What a promise!! — "even eternal life!"

And this is where we need to say "Yes."

"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 John 5:11-13)

It's all about saying "yes" to Jesus and accepting Him as our Saviour and Lord.

To those who sincerely turn away from their sins — no matter how bad or depraved — and accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, His response will be, "It's a yes from me." •

## ATHEIST CONFRONTS THE FACTS

BY JAMES BISHOP

Former atheist, Guillaume Bignon "grew up in a wonderfully loving family in France, near Paris." His family "were nominally Roman Catholic, and would regularly attend mass, but this religious expression seemed to be more out of a tradition and maybe superstition than a true life conviction."

At the age of 12 he stopped "going through the motions of religious rituals and meaningless recitations".

Guillaume says that he "grew up to be a pretty happy young adult." After studying at university, he landed a job as a computer scientist for a large investment bank and, at 6 feet 4 inches, played volleyball in the national

league, travelling across France every weekend for games. "All in all, I was pretty happy with my life, and in a thoroughly secular culture, the chances of ever hearing (let alone believing) the Gospel were incredibly slim."

Then one holiday he became romantically involved with an American woman who believed in God.

Even worse "she believed that sex belonged only in marriage (an even more problematic belief than theism, if it was at all possible)." This relationship got Guillaume "thinking about [faith]. What good reason was there to think God exists, and what good reason was there to think atheism was true instead?"

"My own unbelief ... was more a reasonable life assumption than the conclusion of a solid argument ... So I started to take the question seriously, to objectively assess its credibility."

In order to do so, he began reading the Bible and prayed to God as an "experiment".

"If there is a God, then here I am, I'm looking into this, why don't You go ahead and reveal Yourself to me? I'm open." I wasn't

(open), really, but I figured that shouldn't stop God if He existed. So I read in the gospels about this Jesus of Nazareth.

"I was rather impressed by the way He manoeuvred in conversation, and the wisdom of some of His retorts ... this man knew what He was doing, He spoke with authority, and it made me somewhat uncomfortable."

"It seemed clear Jesus was at least a person of history who walked the roads of Palestine in the first century, and apparently His story was compelling enough that these ancient followers of His believed it, and even suffered for preaching His death and resurrection. ... I knew that at some point I would need to give a coherent account of who I thought Jesus in fact was. But all of this was nowhere near changing my view or my life habits."

Guillaume couldn't visit a church because he was travelling every weekend for volleyball.

However, two weeks later his shoulder became so inflamed he couldn't play, so he decided to go to church "to see what those Christians do when they get together ... Frankly, I went to that church like I would go to the zoo: to see some weird exotic animals that I had read about in books ... I remember thinking that if any of my friends or family could see me there in the building (a church!) I would die of shame."

At the end of the service Guillaume spoke to the pastor and this opened up a series of dialogues between the two.

"He gave me a study guide he had written, which laid out the basics of the Christian faith ... I went through this thoroughly at home." But although Christianity began to make sense, Guillaume still wondered "why did Jesus have to die?"

In response to his question, "God reactivated my conscience. That was not a pleasant experience. I suddenly

realized a truth I knew but had worked very hard to suppress ... me, that is why Jesus had to die: ... me ... He took upon Himself the penalty that I deserved, so that in God's justice, my sins would be forgiven freely, by grace as a gift, rather than by my righteous deeds or religious rituals ... So I accepted the whole thing: I placed my trust in Jesus, and asked Him to forgive me in the way the New Testament promised He would."

This massive step had a significant impact on Guillaume's life. "The guilt was gone, and I received the freedom and forgiveness Jesus promised. This whole story of mine started to make sense and exhibit purpose: I had experienced the living God, who revealed Himself to me in the person of Jesus Christ. I was all in."

Guillaume has since earned a PhD in systematic and philosophical theology, got married, and now has children.

He concludes: "I was not looking for God; I did not seek Him, and I didn't want Him. He reached out to me, loved me while I was still a sinner, broke down my defences, and decided to pour out His undeserved grace (love), that His Son might be glorified, and that, from my sin I may be saved

by grace through faith, and not by works; it is the gift of God, so that no one may boast (Eph. 2:8-9). That's the Gospel, and it's good news worth believing." •

This article is from jamesbishopblog.com. It is used with kind permission.



# YOUTH TRUTH

## HOPE RISES OUT OF STRUGGLE

From homelessness to drug addiction, getting arrested and going to jail, death and loss, and a brain tumour diagnosis, TikTok star Cristina Baker has faced more than her fair share of struggles and pain. But along the way she discovered hope and now she shares the reason for that hope in 60-second TikTok videos for her 1 million followers.

Cristina's rocky childhood began when her parents divorced when she was seven. Her mother remarried and they moved to Bolivia. She says her stepfather was abusive and as a teenager, she turned to self-harm, alcohol and drugs for comfort.

At 15 her mother and stepfather sent Cristina to live with her father in Hawaii. Her father had been an oil company executive but when she arrived, she discovered that he was now addicted to cocaine and living in a tent on the beach. She lived with other family members for a while before being taken in by a family in Pennsylvania.

After she graduated high school, Cristina delved deeper into drugs.

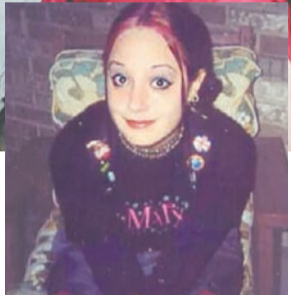
"Things started getting really bad when I started doing cocaine," Cristina told Fox News.

"I started doing ecstasy and really heavy drugs. I came so close to overdosing and just being on the brink of losing my life so many times. But when you're entangled in addiction, you just don't care about your life. You're already in so much pain at that point that you start to not even care if you lose it."

She recalls throwing rocks at her drug dealer's window one night when she had run



Cristina Baker with her husband Ryan and son Evan. INSET: Cristina in her gothic days.



out of drugs. "He opened his window and yelled at me to go home," she writes on her blog. "I was getting 'out of control.' When your drug dealer tells you that you're getting out of hand, you know you've got a major problem."

When Cristina discovered she was pregnant, she planned to abort the baby, but was talked out of it by her drug dealer's girlfriend.

She found a job working in a call centre and was able to provide for her new baby, Evan. When Evan was two, Cristina was pulled over by police for expired tags. They found drugs in her

car and she was arrested. She recalls crying out to God in the back of the police car, "God, if You're real, why are You doing this to me?"

While waiting for her arraignment, Cristina continued to work in the call centre and use drugs at night. She also started planning her suicide.

Enter Hilroy. Cristina's call centre co-worker Hilroy tapped her on the shoulder and told her he had a word from God for her and invited her to a prayer meeting. At the meeting, Hilroy read from the Bible and Cristina knew she was hearing the truth. With Hilroy and others gathered around her praying for her, Cristina put her faith and trust in Jesus for her salvation.

"At that moment, it was like the weight I had been carrying for over 20 years of my life was lifted," Cristina told Fox News. "I came in one way and left that room a completely different person. My heart was set on fire. I felt free. I wanted to turn my life around. From there, I went through a process of healing. It took a few months to get off the drugs, but I was ready to be free from it all – the drugs, the alcohol, all the things I was doing that were hurting

me and others. I just felt like God was breaking the chains one by one."

In court at her arraignment, Cristina's lawyer said she would likely do time in prison. Cristina felt that God wanted her to speak to the District Attorney. Cristina spoke with him and at the end of their conversation, the DA told her: "We all make mistakes, have a good day." The charges against her were dropped.

Cristina continued attending prayer meetings at work and her relationship with God deepened. When her ex-boyfriend and son's father Aaron reached out to her, she asked for his forgiveness for things she did wrong and told him she forgave him too. She shared about her newfound faith and led him to Jesus over the phone. He sadly died in a car crash just two days later.

When Cristina discovered she had a brain tumour, Hilroy told her that God uses "the trials we go through to minister to others to be a witness of His glory and power in and through us".

After her surgery, Cristina saw how God had used her trial. "My dad was an atheist, my mom was a non-practicing Catholic, and through my brain surgery, they both gave their lives to the Jesus," Cristina told JubileeCast.

During her ordeal, Cristina drew strength from her relationship with God.

"Going through brain surgery taught me to get my eyes off of the problem and set my eyes on Jesus. When the valleys of life come, they are an invitation to know the heart of the Father in a way we have never known Him before."

Now 37, Cristina is married to Ryan, who has adopted Evan as his son. When the Covid-19 pandemic began, Cristina began sharing prayers on social media.

"My heart behind these prayers was to share the Good News of the Gospel with people. That hope wasn't an idea or a circumstance, but that Hope was a person, and that all of our hope in this life is only found in Jesus."

Cristina's one-minute prayer videos, which can be found on TikTok at Cristina.baker, have racked up more than 9.7 million likes. She has now written a book called *Hope in 60 Seconds: Encountering the God of the Impossible*. •



Cristina with her new book, *Hope in 60 Seconds*.

## The best decision I ever made

Joe Henkel

BY JOE HENKEL

I grew up in the church, but for a long time, I didn't understand the importance of church, let alone the Bible. I went through the motions. I tried to keep the traditions and rituals that I had been taught, but I felt lost and hopeless. I was a sinner... I was angry, I disobeyed, and I lied. I knew God was displeased with these sins. I was only eight, but I was already beginning to wonder about death and eternity. I knew I wasn't good enough to get into Heaven on my own. I figured I needed something more.

My parents encouraged me to read the Bible, so I tried, but it didn't really make much sense to me. I was fascinated by the stories I read about Jesus, but I didn't understand what it meant to "believe in Jesus." I also wondered whether my prayers were being heard. Still, every night, I thought about Hell, God, and salvation. One night, confused and worried, I got out of bed, found a Bible, and turned to John chapter 3.

When I read verse 16, something in me shifted. The verse reads, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." In that moment, I understood that salvation comes through believing in Jesus. I turned from my sin and put my trust in Jesus Christ. In that moment, I had certainty that God had forgiven me and saved me from the wages of sin, which is death. In place of the worry and restlessness I felt, God gave me peace, purpose, and joy. All fear was replaced by the knowledge of His promises.

Though I now believed in Christ, I didn't dedicate my life to Him; so, life was pretty much the same. Then, at age 13, I realised that God wanted more from me. So, I began to read the Bible and actually obey what it said. From ages 13 to 18, God matured me and I became determined to give as much of me as possible to Jesus. I started telling my friends and family about Jesus. My prayer life deepened and my mind began to more closely resemble that of Christ.

The last few years has been an incredible journey. I now serve as a pastor in a church in Dallas, Texas. I'm also working on a masters in theology. God has also granted me opportunities to travel to speak across the country. Along with working in my church, I create videos on Instagram and YouTube.

Following Jesus is the best decision I ever made. To those who don't know Jesus, I encourage you to explore Scripture and ask God to reveal Himself to you. "Ask and it shall be given to you, seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). We don't have to strive in this life; as we seek and follow after God, He provides for us and blesses us.

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

“Hope was a person.”

“I wondered whether my prayers were being heard.”



Let PSSM introduce you to God through FREE Bible lessons! [pssm.com.au](http://pssm.com.au)

Complete your details below and PSSM will send you your first lesson or visit our website for online lessons!

Name

DOB / /  Male  Female

Street  Suburb

State  Postcode

Parent/Guardian Signature (if under 18 years)

Delivery Address:  
PSSM Mailbox Club  
PO Box 357  
Morayfield 4506  
Queensland

We are looking forward to hearing from you!  
0483 326 522  
[info@pssm.com.au](mailto:info@pssm.com.au)  
[pssm.com.au](http://pssm.com.au)



## Contact Challenge!

Do you have a story to tell, a tricky question to ask or want to let us know how *Challenge* has impacted you? Email [harriet@challengenews.org](mailto:harriet@challengenews.org)

# YOUTH TRUTH

## MY ANXIETIES VANISHED

BY MICHAEL ASHCRAFT

For Mia Dinoto, the crippling anxiety attacks started when she was 8.

“I was diagnosed with OCD and anxiety. I got really, really depressed,” Mia says on her YouTube channel. “I got panic attacks every single day. I would not leave my house. I was terrified to leave my house. I felt stuck inside myself. I was trapped inside myself.”

Although raised in a Christian home, Mia didn’t know Jesus and found praying difficult, so she gave up trying. “Is my life going to be like this?” she asked her parents, who signed her up with a therapist three times a week.

“I got put on medication,” Mia says.

She wavered between being able to function “like a normal person” and relapsing. In her teens, Mia was diagnosed with anorexia. “It consumed my life,” she relates. “I no longer cared about anything other than what I ate, what I looked like, working out. All my goals, priorities and values got thrown away. I didn’t care about anything else. I would do anything to get skinny and have the perfect body.”

Mia argued with her family members and treated them rudely. “I got in fights with them every day,” she says. “I pushed all my friends away.”

“I got to a really unhealthy point where I was starving myself. I was malnourished. I still looked into the mirror and thought I was fat. It consumed my thoughts. My anxiety and depression came back worse this time.”

Under the crushing weight of depression, Mia was exhausted and slept 16 hours every night. She would be outside in 90-degree weather with a jacket and comforter because her malnourished body felt cold; it didn’t have the nutrients to produce heat to warm itself.

Her regular menstrual cycle stopped for a year. “My body was shutting down,” she admits. “I didn’t care about my health. I just wanted to be skinny.”

“I got to the point where I was starving myself.”

“Saying it seems so stupid. Anorexia isn’t just a health problem; it is a mental health problem,” she now realises. “It consumed me.”

Her parents enrolled her in a strict, in-house treatment center, but it didn’t work. Hearing a podcast about overcoming anxiety through chakra meditation and manifesting, she fell into New Age practices trying to get more balanced and “control her destiny.”

Then she stumbled across a video that challenged chakra ideas from the Christian perspective. She considered herself a Christian and was

startled to hear, for the first time, that chakra was anti-Christian. Mia found out she was drifting ever farther from God.

“I didn’t want to do anything against Christianity,” she says. “I watched a lot of videos, and I realised I was being pulled away from God because I was depending on myself to fix things and not the Lord.”

Mia’s brother started reading the Bible and this prompted her to do the same. “I had never read the Bible” before, she says. She read Genesis and Exodus. But it never progressed beyond being “a chore.”

Finally, she stumbled across some videos about salvation and she was challenged to read the first four books of the New Testament called collectively “The Gospels”.

“It completely changed my view of the world, my view of myself, my view of others and how I treat people, and just my purpose,” Mia says. “For so long I was focused on myself and what people think of me. But I now know that none of that matters. The only thing that matters is what God thinks of you. We are His children.”

As she applied the Golden Rule (to treat others as you want to be treated, which Jesus was first to teach), and as she learned about the command to love others, her interpersonal relations improved immediately and drastically. Her anxieties about the future disappeared when she read Jesus’ preaching against worry. “God doesn’t want us to worry about our future,” she says. “He wants us to depend on Him. Once we trust Him with all our heart, He will lead our path. We can’t do this alone.”

“I used to be afraid of death,” she says. “I’m not afraid of it anymore. I’m looking forward to that day to meet Jesus and live with Him spending eternity in the Kingdom of Heaven. That will be the best day of our lives, the day we meet Him. This life is not even a blink of an eye compared to Him.”



Mia Dinoto

## I told a lie and found the truth

BY MARC PAMPLONA

I rejected Christ at a young age. I grew up in the Philippines, in a very legalistic, hypocritical religious family. My parents followed the Bible, but never lived it out. The love and selflessness just wasn’t there. When I recognised my family’s hypocrisy, I began doubting their faith. In middle school, when my parents divorced, I turned from God altogether.

Around this time, I noticed that I was attracted to other boys. When I acted on my desires, I felt a conviction of sorts — but, because of my family’s hypocrisy and my own distance from God, I was able to ignore it. As I rebelled, I fell deeper and deeper into a dark spiritual and mental place.

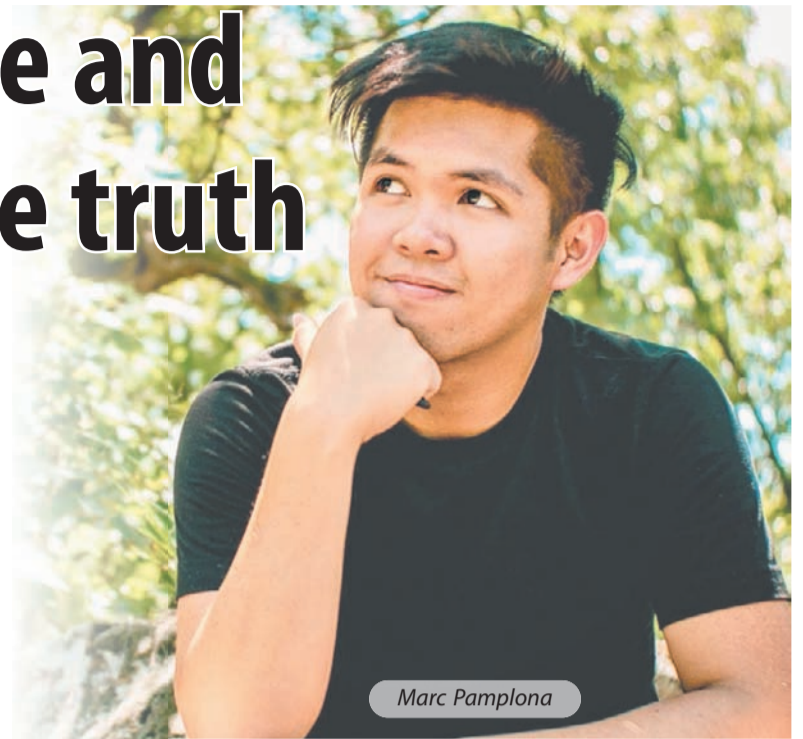
In ninth grade, my mom left for America. I eventually obtained a visa and followed her to the middle of nowhere in Oklahoma, where my mother met and married a drunkard. I witnessed his verbal abuse of her regularly. I’d already been in a dark place, but now that I’d left my comfortable life in the Philippines for a horrible life in America, I was totally depressed.

The peak of my depression came during the last two years of high school. To cope, I sought satisfaction wherever I thought I could find it; I was consumed by lust. When I wasn’t involved in sexual sin, I was gossiping. I didn’t merely engage with rumours — I started them. As a result, I gradually began losing friends one-by-one, and then senior year, I lost them all. This loss came alongside the expiration of my visa, which prohibited me from getting a driver’s license, a job, or doing much of anything else. In my eyes, I had nothing to live for. I wanted to end my life, but for my mom’s sake, I didn’t. Instead, I graduated and left for college.

On the first day of college, a pretty girl named Savannah sat next to me. When I later found her on Instagram, I learned that she was a Christian. I quickly came up with a plan: I’d pretend to be one, too. I followed a bunch of Christian accounts on Instagram and made up stories about my “faith.” I told so many lies to grow close to her, while secretly thinking her faith was foolish.

Then, in 2018, I came across a Bible verse on Instagram that struck me as true. I was so moved by the words; it freaked me out. I remember trying to backtrack and remind myself that God wasn’t real and that the words were just words. But, as much as I tried, something stuck with me. Soon after, one of my new Christian friends played me the song *One Thing Remains* by Passion. Again, I was struck. I’d only ever heard traditional hymns; it had never occurred to me that worship music could be so enjoyable.

Thereafter, my friend invited me to a fellowship meeting at a large



Marc Pamplona

church. I’ll never forget the day. As soon as I stepped into the auditorium, I was overwhelmed by the presence of the Holy Spirit. I don’t know how I knew it was the Holy Spirit, but I knew. Midway through the service, the leader invited anyone who wanted to surrender their life to Christ to stand up. Distracted, I only heard the “stand up” part. As everyone turned to look at me, I realised what I’d done — and I also knew I meant it. God had been chasing me down and, in that moment, He finally caught me.

When I heard the song *Reckless Love* at service a week later, I was moved to tears. The lyrics rang true: “There’s no shadow you won’t light up, mountain you won’t climb up coming after me” — God was doing exactly that. The Lord had never left my side. He’d been with me through all of my sin and had even used my lust — and my deception — to bring me back to Him. He left the 99 to find the one (Matthew 18:12).

I went home that night and shared my new faith to my mother. Overjoyed, she exclaimed that she’d spent years earnestly praying for the Lord to touch my heart and lead me back to Him. Clearly, He heard her!

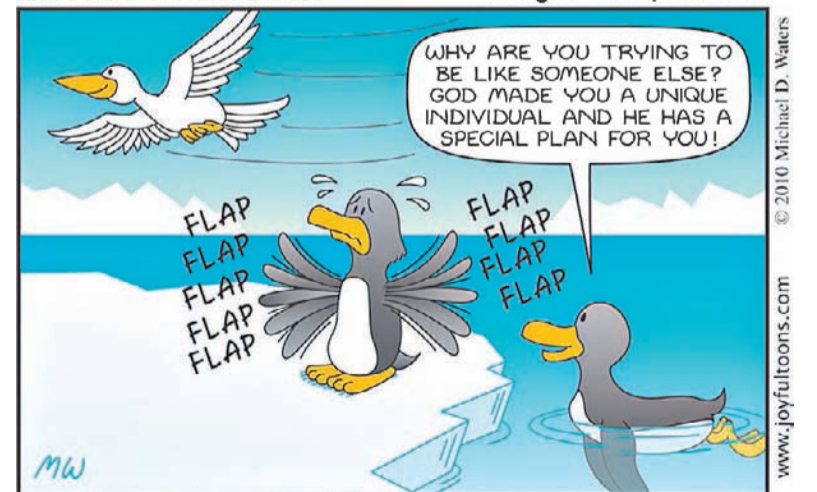
Shortly after, I was baptised. When I stepped into the water, I knew my life would never be the same. Sure enough, when I came up out of the water, I felt totally new. Transformed. My faith in the freedom bought by Christ on the cross was solidified. The pain, the depression, and the anxiety was gone and in their place was the unexplainable peace of God. Later on, I felt Him embrace me and I so clearly heard Him say, “Thank you for coming back. I’m never ever going to let you go.” I remember just sobbing; in Him, I had finally found the satisfaction that I’d been seeking for so long. Nothing — no boy or girl — could ever take His place.

I’m now walking in my purpose with full confidence that God is with me. Even in the middle of storms like the one we’re in right now, we as believers can find total peace. God is sovereign and His love for us is unchanging. From the beginning of the world, He knew the troubles that would befall us. We should never lose hope, for Christ has said, “*In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*” (John 16:33).

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

### ENVIOUS PENGUIN

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.

— PROVERBS 14:30 NIV

**Challenge**  
THE GOOD NEWS PAPER  
AU.CHALLENGE.NEWS

• Testimonies • Children’s pages  
• Lifestyle articles • Sports

Published 11 months of the year by Challenge Literature Fellowship (ABN 98 206 125 814).  
Editor: Carl Carmody.

Staff writers: Jody Bennett, Janice Teo, Harriet Coombe  
PRICING: [au.challenge.news/pricing/](http://au.challenge.news/pricing/)

Challenge Literature Fellowship, PO Box 978 Cloverdale WA 6985  
08 9453 3311 Email: [accounts@challengenews.org](mailto:accounts@challengenews.org)



# BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

## Peace begins with me

Last year was another challenging year in so many ways, with the War in Ukraine having created enormous instability among the nations – people do not feel secure. In many places around the world, millions of people do not truly experience peace, but live in a constant state of fear, war, and injustice.

And saddest of all, 2023 is not going to be any different.

We are blessed to live in a country free from war, but so many of us are “at war” in other ways. Families and friends are torn apart by bitterness and hurt, refusing to speak to each other. I remember my Nana and Dad had an argument which they both refused to resolve and resulted in all of us not speaking with her for a period of about three years.

What about you?

Is there someone you love who you are no longer talking to because one (or both) of you were offended or wounded by what you or another has said or some other relational issue?

More personally, you may be “at

war” with yourself over being rejected – or rejecting someone – again. Your personal war could even be a secret inner battle or habit which constantly robs you of peace.

Last month I wrote about the fact that people who have peace with God also experience peace in other areas of their lives. Peace in our personal life is a natural by-product of having peace with God.

And I am absolutely convinced that people who have peace with God extend that peace to others.

**A peacemaker is someone who has received mercy and gives mercy to others.**

*“Blessed are the merciful.”*

In other words, peacemakers forgive. This is not to say they are perfect because forgiveness is a struggle for all of us, but there is a genuine desire



enced God’s peace in their lives, they want others to know this same peace and, they promote peace in their local communities and the wider world.

You (and your family) could demonstrate your desire to be a peacemaker by committing to the peace declaration I mentioned I had written a couple of months back:

“We the people of this community

declare ourselves to be people of peace.

“We believe peace begins with each one of us and that peace in our world and communities is achieved through multiple acts of love, courage, and kindness.

“Peace can be expressed through a friendly smile to a stranger, by helping a neighbour in need, standing up bravely for truth and justice, and respecting each other, regardless of culture or faith.

“Jesus said, ‘Blessed are the peacemakers.’

“Therefore, we commit ourselves to being peacemakers in our community.”

Why not write it out and have everyone place their thumbprints beside it, as a sign of your commitment to being a peacemaker?

And let’s not forget the reason we can have peace in our lives – with God and others – is because Jesus, God’s Son, died for our sin and rose again on the first Easter.

*“Therefore...we have peace with God...because of what Jesus has done for us.” (Romans 5:1)*

No God – no peace.

Know God – know peace.

in the peacemaker’s heart to forgive those who have wronged them. They understand they have no right to ask God to forgive them if they refuse to forgive others.

**A peacemaker is someone who is becoming “pure in heart.”**

*“Blessed are the pure in heart.”*

Peacemakers don’t believe they are perfect. They are aware of their shortcomings and look to God to make them more like Him – they understand that peacemaking is a growing process.

This means they will approach their relationships with real humility by taking responsibility for their own failings and apologising.

**A peacemaker actively works to bring God’s peace to others.**

*“Blessed are the peacemakers.”*

This is why Jesus says they are blessed: because they have experi-



## 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 \**

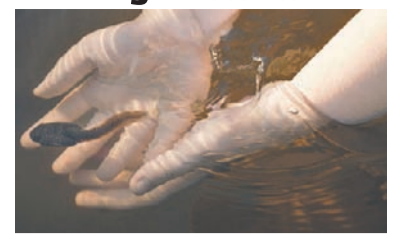
Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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



## Rescue channel

BY MARGARET CURRAN

**MY HUSBAND** was fishing and I decided to wander further along the beach. As I rounded the corner I came upon a small stream which meandered through the coasthills and finally flowed into the sea. The water was brown and appeared devoid of life but as I watched I began to see that there was much activity.

Various bugs were busy on the surface and several dragonflies, with a blue streak down their backs, were resting on a reed or flitting to the next spot. Suddenly I noticed a moving shadow on the bottom of the stream, as a yabbie slowly wended his way along, daintily tucking morsels of food into his mouth as he went. Yes, it certainly was a stream of life and the day all around was full of life with bird calls filling the ear and sunshine and flowers delighting the eye.

But to my right, a disturbance was distracting my attention. Separated from the stream was a shallow pool and as I moved closer I saw it was filled with a frantic, heaving mass of tiny tadpoles. There they were, cut off from the life giving stream, with their water supply getting hotter and shallower every minute as it evaporated in the warm sun. Their doom was certain unless they could be re-connected somehow to the cool waters of the main stream.

I began to burrow in the sand and before long had created a channel between the pool and the stream. As I cut deeper and deeper into the sand, the stream water rushed in and formed a passage between the two, enabling the desperate tadpoles to cross to the safety of the stream. The channel had rescued them from certain death and opened up the way for them to their source of life.

In the Bible God explains to us that the troubles of mankind are caused by the fact that we are living lives that are cut off from our main source of life. Our source of real life – which the Bible calls eternal life – is God Himself. Man became separated from God because of disobedience to Him. The story of Adam and Eve tells us about that and every soul has disobeyed God in some way or another since; except one.

That one perfect person was Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Because He was the perfect Son of God, He was able to offer Himself to God as a substitute for every helpless sinner. He became our channel to God when He died on the cross for us. He took the penalty for mankind’s sin and died in our place. Now no man need live in a state of separation from God. Christ’s sacrifice for us has been accepted by God, who raised Him from the dead to prove it. Now through Him we can return to God.

We are already forgiven. The channel is already open. We just have to cross over and join that life giving stream of fellowship with God. Let us thank Him for the wonderful channel He provided in our Lord Jesus Christ and make known to those who still remain separated from, and unaware of it, the life giving love and grace of our great God, and Saviour in Jesus Christ our Lord.

## Want to explore more?

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

Online Bible - <b>Olive Tree app</b> (we recommend that you start with an easy-to-read version like the ESV)	
Audio Bible - <b>Bible.is app</b> , or <b>Youversion Bible app</b>	
Christian radio station - <b>CBN radio app</b> (different channels for all genres of music)	
Christian podcasts and sermons - <b>Edifi app</b>	
Christian movies, serials and kids' shows - <b>Good. app</b>	
Daily thoughts and inspiration - <b>Our Daily Bread app</b>	
Advice on specific issues, Bible reading plans and studies for new believers - <b>Youversion Bible app</b> .	
The Bible explained with visual aides - <b>the Bible Project on YouTube</b> .	
<b>Alpha Film Series on Youtube</b> - an online introduction to Christianity.	
For kids - <b>Superbook Kids Bible, videos and games app</b>	
Comic book Bible online- <b>goodandevilbook.com</b>	
More inspiring faith stories - <b>back issues of Challenge News at <a href="http://challengenews.online">challengenews.online</a></b>	





Bobby Hassell of Barnsley and Brian Hughes of Hull City race for the ball during the Coca-Cola Championship match between Barnsley and Hull City. (Photo by Clive Brunskill/Getty Images)

# MY ANGER IS GONE

**F**ormer English footballer Bobby Hassell used to have a horrendous temper.

“It was so bad that everyone thought I would end up in prison when I was younger,” he told UK magazine *Inspire*.

Yet in 2013 he won an award for his community and charity work and earned himself the nickname “Sir Bobby”. No sign of any temper anywhere.

It wasn’t just that he swept his temper under the carpet, or learned to control it or grew out of it. He says his temper disappeared overnight and he puts it down to a decision he made in 2010.

“That was the year I became a Christian,” he explains. “My aggression went instantly – it had to have been God,” he shares.

Bobby’s journey to faith began when he joined the Barnsley Football Club in 2004 and received a Bible from the chaplain.

He began reading the Gospel of Luke, but the more he read, the more questions he had and he ended up shelving all thoughts of spirituality for the next five years - a decision he now says was “foolish” of him.

His career was thriving and he was happily married with two children.

He played more than 300 professional games, including an FA Cup semi-final in Wembley Stadium.

Life was good - or it should have been. Yet he felt curiously unfulfilled. Unable to shake the feeling off, he decided to pray one night before

going to bed. He did it again the next day and the next.

Before long he was praying regularly and reading the Bible again. “Six weeks later I told God that if He was real I wanted him to be a part of my life. Two days later the chaplain came into the club and said he was doing a Bible study and I went.

“I began to understand Jesus and realised that being a Christian isn’t about having a boring life but about living life and living it abundantly, as Jesus said. I had sudden peace come over me and I can’t explain the joy and freedom I felt.”

Bobby, who is now the Academy Manager at the Barnsley FC, says things have changed dramatically since becoming a Christian.

His life since then “has been amazing” and went on to even greater heights in his career.

“I have had a wonderful football career and I truly do thank God for a wonderful life in football. I am still very active at Barnsley, being named club captain earlier this summer and thank God, I remain

popular amongst the fans. I always try to work hard on the pitch, give my all and give the fans something to cheer about.

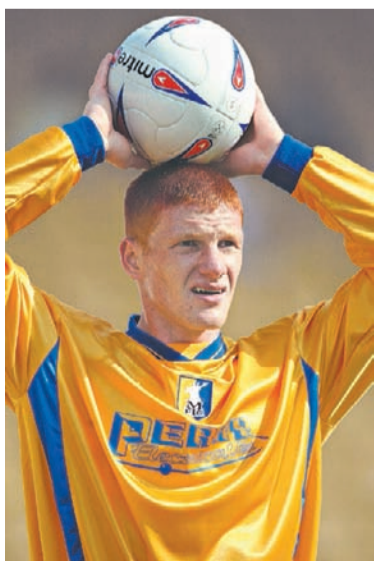
“But nothing is better than knowing Jesus Christ as Saviour.”

And while he has rubbed shoulders with some of the greats of English soccer such as Steven Gerrard and Frank Lampard “the most important moment for me came when I realised I needed a Saviour – that was when I gave my life to Jesus and became a Christian.

“I can’t prove to anyone that God

exists; they need to experience it themselves. If you want to become a Christian you have to have an open mind.

“I have atheist friends who won’t give God a second thought and think that science is everything. The only way to prove God is to ask him into your life. You have to experience him for yourself. Repentance (turning away from sin) must be genuine and you must know you need a Saviour. It can’t be a trick to see if God is real. Jesus died on a cross for everyone – so give Him a chance!”



Bobby Hassell, Mansfield Town. (Photo Barrington Coombs/EMPICS via Getty Images)

“**I can’t explain the joy and freedom I felt.**”

**DISTRIBUTED BY:**