

FROM HARD CORE TO SOFT SERVE

Keith Repult was one of those people who could sell solar panels in a Russian winter. He was a really good businessman and when someone offered him a job distributing pornography and sex toys, he took to it like a duck to water and built it into a multi-million-dollar empire. And his wife helped him!

For him it was no big deal. In his book *Just Breathe* he explains that his thinking was: "I'm not a bad man, I'm a businessman. It's just that my area of business is a little 'controversial'."

He was embarrassed and ashamed enough though to try to sugarcoat it when people asked what the couple did. "We're in the film industry. We buy and sell products. We make instructional videos to help people's marriages."

And he knew that it meant that, despite the wealth, cars, houses and vacations, he couldn't discuss his job with his daughters and could never

go to talk at their school's career day.

"We were making \$3 million a year, and I held the respect of my peers and colleagues. I had arrived. We had all we ever wanted, except that once we got it, we realised it wasn't what we wanted. And we were tired and empty."

"Tired of lying. Tired of hiding. Tired of games. We wanted our newly adopted son to have a different life than we had given our daughters."

So they bought a little frozen yoghurt shop in the seaside town of Ventura and tried to start something new.

"Little did I know that little yoghurt shop was going to be God's salvation for my family," Keith writes. "It was the tool for His perfect plan to change my life."

"I was lost, filthy and broken, but there was a God who loved me anyway. I was lost in the darkness of the porn industry. I was isolated, angry and addicted, until somebody showed me the light ... God was pursuing me."

Keith's innocence had been lost very young. When he was three, his sister was abused by their stepfather, and she in turn did things to Keith. His real father was a ladies' man who displayed porn on the coffee table, and his mother had five husbands in 12 years. The only stability the siblings had were grandparents who were kind but strict and never told them they loved them.

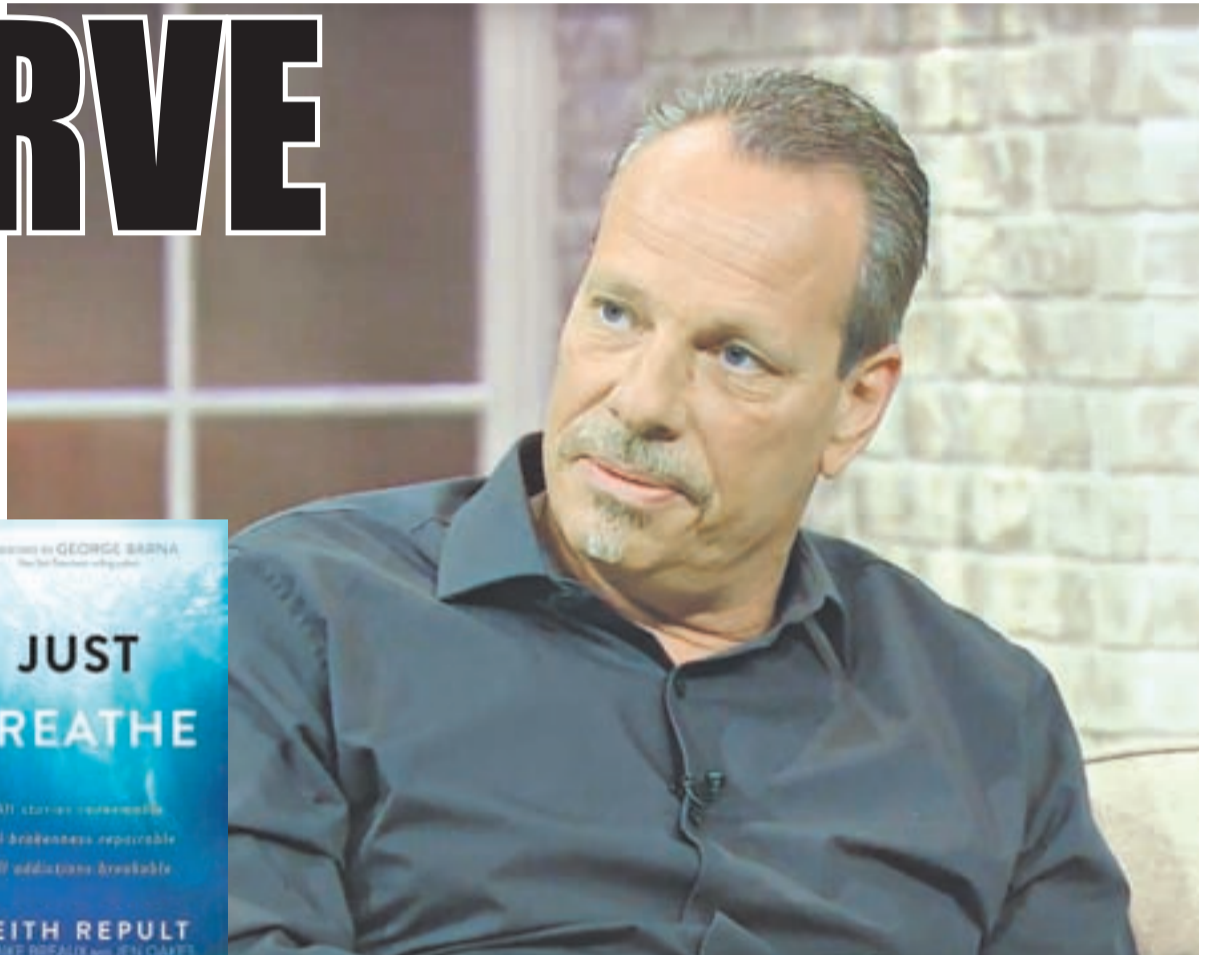
Keith was first exposed to religion by his mother's fifth husband. He claimed to be a genuine Christian but "this God my stepfather knew was demanding and legalistic – like an angry cop waiting for me to fail."

In that house there was church three times a week, fasting every Monday, no TV, no secular music, no makeup and no jewellery. There was no love in that home and the five stepsiblings were vicious to each other.

The message Keith got was "God wants nothing good for me."

Needless to say, he became isolated, depressed, socially awkward and a failure at school.

After a straight F report card, his



stepfather beat him so badly that Keith couldn't sit down and the school nurse called in child services. Keith was removed to foster care.

From there he moved in with his mother's parents, and here his

"Grand-mugie" finally told Keith, over and over again, how much she loved him. "I felt like ice was melting inside me," he remembers. "I didn't know how to respond. I didn't know how she could love me when I didn't even love myself!"

This couple also attended church but the atmosphere in the home could not have been more different from the 'angry cop' environment of his stepfather's house.

● Turn to page 2

Fun for Kids
Pages 5,6,7

Coping with Covid PAGE 9

BACK PAGE

FREE TO EXHALE
CANDICE WIGGINS

Who decides what's 'bad'?

BY JOHN HUTCHINSON

GEOFFREY Robinson, QC, is campaigning to rid us of bad people. (*Weekend Magazine* 22/5/2021)

When asked about which ones he is targeting he said, 'by "bad people" I mean individuals who have been involved in human rights abuses or serious corruption. We should keep them out of our country, and out of our banks, our universities, our hospitals and out of our beaches.'

Robinson was asked, 'How do we decide who is bad, and is that changing?'

That's the big question – 'How do we decide who is bad?'

We all have ideas about bad people. And, there are degrees of badness. How bad does a person need to be? And, who decides what that level of badness is?

Another question which comes to my mind is 'how bad can anyone be?'

James Truslow Adams once said, 'There is so much good in the worst of us, and so much bad in the best of us, that it ill behooves any of us to find fault with the rest of us.'

Consider the question from God's point of view and prepare for a surprise. The Bible says, 'There is no difference,

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.' Romans 3:22-24

The other question arising from Robinson's quest is, 'What do we do with bad people?'

I remember a day at school when, at 10:55 am, the teacher stopped our lesson and let us watch the clock. At 11:00 am a murderer would be hung.

For primary school children, watching the clock hands reach 11:00 am jolted us as we pictured the man falling to the end of the rope. Nowadays we simply lock them up.

What we do with bad people is an ongoing question. What do we do with those who light fires on hot and windy days? What do we do with those who abuse little children? What do we do with those who peddle dangerous drugs – and those who murder?

There is however, a better way. It's to make bad people good people.

Like the guy in the story on this page.

On a brief trip to Jerusalem I met Tommy Tarrants. I had never heard of him before. He asked me to join him and several others on excursions to special places in Israel. He drove us around in a hired mini bus.

● Turn to page 2

From hard core to soft serve

From page 1

Keith started going to a Christian school, finding things he was good at – like selling candy – and finally made a good friend.

Unfortunately, friend Donny was not a good influence on Keith – teaching him to do drugs, sleep around and steal. After Keith decided at 17 years old to leave his grandmother's house to be fostered by Donny's parents, his life began to spiral out of control, fuelled by his mother's sudden death from a brain aneurysm.

Keith's book details his many years of brokenness, homelessness, drug and alcohol abuse, promiscuity, pornography and crime. He admits: "I was thoughtless and inconsiderate and mean. I stopped feeling anything for anybody. I was like a tornado devastating the lives around me."

The book also details how he kicked drugs the first time and how he met his second wife in a recovery program and married her on a whim a year later in Las Vegas.

Fast forward to 12 years sober and the yoghurt shop in Ventura.

The day before they opened Keith was handing out free tasters when he met a man and his son, "the father stood out to me in the crowd

because he seemed like an alien. Like he was inhumanly happy!" His name was Jude and Keith found out later he was a church pastor. Keith sat down and had a coffee with him one day and told him his life story, then asked "Do you still like me?"

Jude said, "Your story doesn't change how I feel about you, but would you mind if I prayed for you?"

Sitting in Keith's car, Jude led him in a prayer giving his life over to God. "It was like a door cracked open letting light into a dark room," Keith recalls.

After so many years of brokenness, Keith's habits did not change overnight but "suddenly life was exciting. Suddenly it felt like it had meaning, purpose. There was life in my life!"

As the darkness lifted, Keith knew he had to get rid of the porn businesses. He didn't want to just close them because he felt responsible for all the people who worked for him, so two years after he became a Christian, he sold up cheaply. He admits that it was very hard to walk away from all that easy money but he felt such peace when he did.



One of the Reput's mobile frozen yoghurt trucks.

There was still a long road to getting sober again after falling off the wagon, dealing with his own pornography addiction and trying to make restitution to some of the people he had hurt, including three children from previous relationships, and his ex-wife, but Keith bravely faced his past failings, owned up to his mistakes and even reconciled with his strict stepfather.

Now, 18 years later, Keith is proud to be able to hand out yoghurt cups at his son's career day and be the dad he always dreamed of having.

"Sometimes people talk about how God has a big old eraser, and He just erases your past, but I think He does one better. I think, since He's a carpenter, he actually takes all those broken pieces and makes something new. He takes your past and then uses it to create something better, something usable, actually. In fact, I don't just think that, I know it because this what he has done with me."

Shortly afterwards he was baptised [immersed in water as a sign of death to his old life].

I WAS LIKE A TORNADO DEVASTATING THE LIVES AROUND ME



Coffee Break

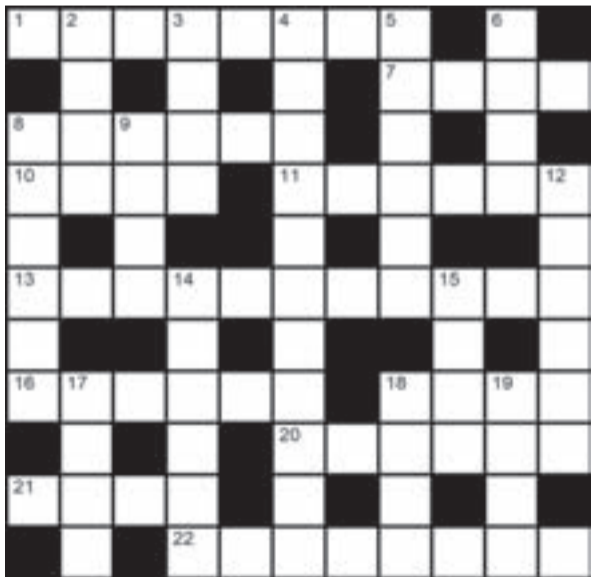
CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

ACROSS

- 1 Keyboard symbol
- 7 Horned mountain goat
- 8 Outstanding, owing
- 10 Gas used in advertising lighting
- 11 Set aflame
- 13 Realm first led by Augustus (5,6)
- 16 Water-ice dessert
- 18 Big first for a baby
- 20 Bring in to sell
- 21 Low voice
- 22 Buzzer in the garden

DOWN

- 2 Of sound mind
- 3 Flair, style
- 4 Stomach upset
- 5 Abduct
- 6 Water lizard
- 8 Deprives of weapons
- 9 Verse



- 12 Not liable to tax
- 14 Attack from cover
- 15 "O.K., I'll look ___ it."
- 17 Australian gem
- 18 Light on one's feet
- 19 Canadian border lake

SOLUTIONS PAGE 11



"You rest now. Just to have you lift a finger was a big step forward."

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SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE



Richard Davies of Australian Indigenous Ministries came upon Harry (left) and Jessie reading Challenge News with some interest, in Canteen Creek, Northern Territory. Perhaps Jessie had found the "Lessons from a Sausage Dog" on page 11? Has Challenge impacted your life? Please tell us how at jodyb@challengenews.org

Who decides what's 'bad'?

From page 1

On the last day we were with him we learned that he had been one of America's most notorious terrorists – a man who had machined-gunned down police and planted bombs – a man motivated by undiluted hatred for black people and Jews.

But, everything changed for Tommy. When locked away in solitary confinement he asked for a New Testament of the Bible to read. He read about Jesus. He read about love. He read about forgiveness and how Jesus, the best man who ever lived was crucified as a bad man.

Tommy turned away from all the sin he had committed and asked Jesus to be his Saviour and Lord.

He was released and studied to become a Christian pastor. He was one of the kindest men I had ever met.

There's a verse in the Bible which says: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has



come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ..." (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)

Keith Reput quotes:

But do you know what's so amazing about grace? Grace is free, I didn't earn it, and there's nothing I could do to lose it. ... But here's what else is amazing about grace. Grace is that God loves us right where we are, but way too much to leave us there. Grace? Grace is free. But growth? Growth takes participation.

"You've only got to change one thing," they said. "Everything". They were right, but changing everything has meant everything to me. I thought it would leave me empty; rather, it has made me whole. I thought it would leave me lonely; it has given me community. I thought it would kill me, but it has given me life.

I've never been very good at math, but I've finally learned the power of this equation: Self-deception + Self-reliance = Self-destruction. That math works every time, but I'm learning that freedom starts to come when you stop kidding yourself and stop looking to your own strength to fix yourself.

When we walk away from our self-centeredness, our self-importance, and our self-reliance; when we stop trying to control everything, fix everything, and run everything; and when we begin to see ourselves with appropriate smallness and the God of the universe with appropriate hugeness, and realize He loves us anyway, it makes us more willing to ask for help.

If I am feeding my mind pornographic images, it does something to the way I view other people, and the way I see relationships.

If I'm always thumbing through magazines looking at celebrities and those perfect bodies who live rich and famous lifestyles, it messes with my contentment factor, makes me insecure in my own skin, and skews my perspective on the importance of stuff.

If I am feeding my mind with all the political nastiness on social media, it turns me into a cynical, joyless, and even hate-filled person.

I'm learning that whether it's movies, books, music, conversations, or jokes; I have to be careful what I am constantly feeding my mind. My mind and your mind will be shaped by what we feed it.

- from Keith Reput's book *Just breathe*

I faced down anxiety and I won

BY HARRIET COOMBE

My story starts with a dramatic, tragic beginning.

A month after I was born in England, my two-year-old brother drowned in a swimming pool.

My family's world completely crumbled and my foundational years were marked with grief, fear and despair.

Despite not being people of faith, my parents took strength from each other and chose to create a loving and supportive environment for me and my younger brother and sister.

When I was six, we emigrated to Australia - a new beginning for our family. We were settling into a new normal but I remember my mum was always searching for something. I remember her "activating" crystals that we were forbidden to touch and reading New Age books in an aim to find hope, peace and strength.

When I was 10 I met a girl at school who invited me to her church's pancake day. I didn't know much about church, but I knew I loved pancakes, so I was excited to attend.

The following Sunday, the family again offered to take me to church, and it wasn't long before my brother started coming along too - giving my parents the morning off to have a sleep-in.

At some point my parents decided they should check out this church to make sure my brother and I were being looked after and not being taught things they didn't agree with. There they met Jesus, and found the hope, strength and peace they were looking for.

Life in my house looked different after that. The crystals and New Age books were gone - my parents knew they had found the truth, they had new strength, and they raised my siblings and me to know and love the Lord.

I put my faith and trust in Jesus around this same time. I was a very diligent child and loved to study my Bible and pray. I have always been bubbly and happy, but I also had a lot of worries, which I poured out to the Lord. I was scared something bad would happen to my siblings, afraid of more tragedy hitting my family. Despite my love for God, I could not seem to get my fears under control and they continued to plague me.

When I was about 17, I had my first panic attack. It came out of nowhere - my heart was racing, my vision was blurry and my body was shaking. I felt out of control. This was the start of what would become an almost daily occurrence, and I was soon diagnosed with panic disorder.

I begged the Lord to take away these attacks, to be freed from fear and be able to live a confident, peaceful life. I wish I could say He took my anxiety in a flash and I was healed. But my journey was not like that. I continued to battle anxiety. And it was a 'battle'.

Not long after I married my wonderful husband Josh, I felt caught in an anxiety spiral. I poured my heart out to the Lord and He gave me a picture. I was on a battlefield and I was cowering in fear while the battle raged on around me. I looked

around for something to fight with and in front of me was my Bible and my prayer journal. I felt God showed me that I had all I needed to fight the anxiety.

So I continued to fight. I was determined not to let it hold me back and, with God's strength, I chose to live my life in spite of the attacks, even when my voice shook or my heart raced.

They slowed me down at points, but they didn't stop me. I worked as a journalist in a busy newsroom. I spent time

as a missionary, singing and preaching God's Word in front of crowds of people. And more recently I have worked as a school chaplain, helping children facing similar battles to what I did. As a child, I didn't think I'd be able to do any of these things, but in God's strength I can.

In 2019 I attended a conference that God used to transform my life and prepare me for a big storm that was about to break on our family. At this conference I learned that there is something better than healing and that is God's presence. Instead of focusing on receiving God's healing from fear, I started focusing on seeking God's presence. God's presence casts out fear and brings peace.

A week after this conference, my generous, loving, godly dad was diagnosed with cancer. He passed away six weeks later. During this time, I cried out for God to heal my dad. Instead, he took him into His presence - the place of ultimate healing.

I now no longer battle panic attacks. There are times I still feel worried or afraid, but I've learned where I find peace - in the presence of God. My life is no longer marked by fear, but by God's peace and joy. •

Harriet now works as a journalist for Challenge News.



Harriet Coombe and her husband Joshua.

I CHOSE TO LIVE MY LIFE IN SPITE OF THE PANIC ATTACKS



Where the rubber hits the road

At the end of September 2018 after six months of pain and discomfort, Con Despinidic was surprised to find out that what the doctors thought was firstly, adhesions, then a broken rib, and then arthritis, was in fact a tumour that engulfed his spleen. What followed were many blood tests and a diagnosis of an aggressive form of B Cell Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

This was not the first time that the ordained minister had been diagnosed with cancer. In 2013 he had a third of his large colon removed due to bowel cancer.

The haematologist told Con that, untreated, he had eight weeks to live!

"Now I was not scared of death, I am not scared of death," Con reveals. "From the Christian perspective it is a win-win situation. Living is good, dying is better because I go to be with Jesus, where there is no more suffering and only joy."

Con had given his life to the Lord in 1969 as a teenager, and served Him ever since.

"What did cause deep grief was the thought of leaving my wife, children, and grandchildren. I also feared the anticipated pain and agony, and the prospect of surgery and chemotherapy. Everything inside of me was screaming, 'No, you got to be kidding!' Yet there I was, this was the situation, it was what it was and I could not change it. I could pray - and we did."

Far from questioning, "Why did God do this to me?" Con thought, "Why not me?" He realised good and bad things happen to all people, as the Bible says: "For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matthew 5:45)

The haematologist wanted Con's spleen removed ASAP. He was told the splenectomy would be a simple operation, about an hour, and a few days in hospital.

"It was not that straight forward," he explains. "There were complications and the operation ended up



Con Despinidic in hospital before his chemo and (below) now, restored to health by God's grace.

taking over four hours, with an urgent call to a gastroenterologist to assist. The next day I woke up in hospital with tubes in my mouth and side."

Because of his previous bowel operation, things internally were a mess and there was now a hole in Con's stomach and a nick where his pancreas had fused with his spleen.

What was to be a short hospital stay ended up a 31-day marathon. For most of this time Con was fed intravenously.

"I would like to say that I was brave, and it was an easy ride - I was not brave and it was a horrible experience, so much so that I almost lost the plot. Woe is me I thought!" he admits candidly.

But a passage of Scripture echoed in Con's mind for the whole duration: "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ... And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'" Matthew 28:18, 20.

"Everything was in the Lord's hands. I took comfort in this message, I knew it intellectually, I had

experienced it before, but there was an internal struggle; my head was saying one thing and my body another.

"It was not till a month later that the surgeon told me that he hadn't thought I would pull through."

Con was sent home. Eventually the leaking healed, but not before he had lost over 15 kilograms.

Then Con began chemotherapy every two weeks.

"This is hard to describe for me. It all seems a blur now. I felt fearful, anxious, weak, tired and found it a general struggle to live.

My hair and beard fell out."

Early in the peace a friend asked Con: "How should I pray?"

"A good question indeed, I hesitated in my answer, and then said, as I have said in many situations: 'Please pray that I will find myself in the centre of God's will.'"

"Is there a difference between being in the centre of God's will and

being healed? I believe that there is. Sometimes it is God's will to heal and to glorify His name that way. Sometimes it is God's will not to heal but to grow our character and our relationship with Him through the trial. Sometimes it is God's time for us to die.

"The Bible says: 'And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.'" (Romans 8:28). We need to underline according to His purpose. This is a powerful truth -

all things work together for good, as I live according to His purpose, and to do that I must first seek to be in the centre of His will!" Con emphasises.

During that time the couple experienced many small blessings, including support from friends, neighbours and family, and especially their home church, in the form of finances, practical help, lifts, kind words and encouragement.

On the 17th May 2019 they got the good news - all the cancer was eradicated. "We were so excited!"

Con was able to get back into the pulpit to preach in June 2019 but retired at the end of 2020 after 45 years preaching God's Word.

"For the next five years I will need to go back for tests regularly. I still suffer from tiredness and pain, and I need to learn to pace myself, but we are ever thankful to God for all His provisions," Con says.

He reminds those going through hard times to turn to God because Christians "are not alone, we have a Comforter Who goes before us, is with us and in us. Sure, it hurts, sure it is tough, and we may experience suffering and pain and believe me that stinks! The one defining factor, the one positive thing is the fact that He is there!" Con concludes. •



Son's drug habit helps clairvoyant see clearly



Elaine Murphy (above) has the joy and peace of knowing that her late son Daniel is safe in heaven; (right) Elaine and Daniel shortly before his death.

BY JANICE TEO

It was around noon on March 22, 2017 when Elaine Murphy got a call from her son Daniel asking for a lift to the station. After years of struggle, Daniel had finally kicked his 20-year addiction to drugs and reconciled with his mother. The two now had a relationship neither ever thought possible.

So even though Elaine had a very busy day there was no question she would help Daniel.

She dropped him off at the station in Hervey Bay, Queensland. He got out of the car and planted a kiss on his mother's shoulder. "Love ya mum," he said. "Love you too," Elaine said hurriedly. "Quick, son, you'll miss the bus and I have to go."

She stepped on the accelerator when she heard a voice telling her to stop, take a picture and send

him a proper message of love. She jumped out of the car, took the picture and texted "love you son". He replied with a thumbs-up emoji.

Elaine had raised Daniel alone. Pregnant and literally left at the altar, she took care of him as best she could. One way she put food on the table was by working as a clairvoyant.

The now 65-year-old tells *Challenge News* she was always "somehow able to tap into the psychic realm."

When Daniel was about 13 he met a man who introduced him to drugs and the occult. "I didn't know at the time the damage it was doing," Elaine admits. "That was the beginning of Daniel's dark journey. Drugs and the occult changed our lives and we became estranged."

Finally Daniel was arrested and sent to prison in Queensland on drug-related offences. Reluctant to live apart from him even though

they were at odds with each other, Elaine moved there too. "He was my only child and I loved him," she says simply. "I didn't want him to be alone."

While Daniel was in prison, she wondered how they would pick up the pieces of their strained relationship when he was released. Then something miraculous happened.

Daniel joined a Christian-based rehabilitation program called Transformations and committed his life to Jesus Christ. He overcame his addictions and renounced his links to the occult.

He invited Elaine to church and she accepted without hesitation. "I wasn't too concerned about God or anything; I only said yes because it was the only way to see him - the treatment centre only allowed

residents visitors during Sunday service," she shares.

At the end of the service, when the pastor asked if anyone would like to accept Jesus as their personal Saviour, Elaine raised her hand. Daniel was by her side at the altar when she committed her life to God.

"Our relationship was completely restored," Elaine says with a smile. "It was amazing how God turned everything around. We shared his birthday together for the first time in over 20 years and I celebrated Mothers' Day with him in our church. I am forever grateful to God for reconciling us."

When Daniel called on March 22, 2017 asking Elaine for the lift to the station, it was a day like any other. Elaine didn't get home till 9 pm. At 9.30pm there was a knock on the door. Daniel must have forgotten his keys, she thought, as she went to open it.

But it wasn't Daniel. It was the

police, there to tell Elaine her son had been found by the side of the road and could not be revived by paramedics. Daniel, who was severely asthmatic, died at 42.

In the police car on the way to the hospital, Elaine says the only thing she was able to focus on was the name of Jesus.

"The third time I called out His name, an amazing light filled the car and rushed through me," she explains. "I saw His hands and heard Him say: 'I've got him' and I suddenly went from desperation and dread to having God's great peace, joy and comfort. I knew Daniel was in heaven."

She stops speaking and starts to cry. "I do believe it was my dabbling in clairvoyance that opened the door to the evil influences that almost ruined Daniel's life," she says sadly.

"I was completely unaware of the ramifications until recently. I didn't know it left Daniel open to attack from satanic forces."

"People think it is innocent fun to play with tarot cards or an ouija board. They don't realize what they're opening up on themselves and the people they love."

Elaine moved back to Perth in 2017. She is now a chaplain and volunteers with Prison Fellowship Australia.

"It is vital for Christians to stop, listen and obey God," she says. "We need to follow His voice no matter how strange or unusual. If I hadn't stopped and obeyed His voice to send Daniel that last text and take that photo, my final memory of us would have been how I rushed him out of the car with just a cursory goodbye."

"Instead I praise God because I know Daniel knew how much I loved him when he took his final breath."



Paul E. Momoh and his wife Elisheba Momoh, who have been married for 32 years.

Divine meeting at the family shop

Eleven-year-old Paul E. Momoh was lying flat on the floor of his mother's shop crying. To any customers and passers-by he may have looked a little crazy, but the truth was he was going through a huge life transformation and he didn't care who saw it.

The now 56-year-old remembers that moment, "Something dramatic was happening. I was having an encounter with the living Christ."

Paul was raised in a church-going family in Nigeria and learned "a basic knowledge of God." He and his twin brother, Peter, were often seen together sitting in the pew. The regular habits of church-going and Bible-reading were instilled in them as young boys.

"Two little dicky birds sitting on the wall, one named Peter, one named Paul" was a nursery rhyme we heard often as people exchanged greetings with us at church," he says with a smile.

"Little by little, the Lord was drawing our little hearts towards Him."

A Hunger For God

This desire to know more about God increased as the years rolled by. On his own initiative, Paul would spend his school nights reading a Gideon's New Testament Bible, cover to cover, and searching hungrily for the truth.

"Although my local church did not teach salvation (Jesus saving us from our sins) or make any altar calls," he says. "To their credit, they taught that there is a God out there who draws close to those who would draw close to Him." Paul's habit of reading the Bible so regularly was about to bear fruit.

The Encounter

In November of 1975, Paul was

alone looking after his mother's shop. As usual, he was reading the Bible. That, he says, was the last thing he remembered doing before a revelation dawned on him.

"I suddenly became very aware of my sins and that I was a sinner," he says. "I became conscious of the truth that my sins made Christ suffer and die for me. This filled me with great anguish as I had never before understood it in that way. The awareness of this truth was just so strong."

The next thing he knew, he had fallen

flat on his face on the shop floor, crying and pleading with God to forgive all of his sins. "I was just lying there and praying out my heart on the floor, for how long ... I have no idea," he recalls. "Then, I felt a heavy weight lifted off me. I found myself on my feet again, but this time I was rejoicing and praising

God for removing my sins. I knew that weight was gone!

"I arose to my feet a new person, singing, rejoicing, thanking and praising God!" he beams.

Paul has now been in a relationship with Jesus for 45 years.

"Any time I share this story, I can't help but sing my own version of that old hymn: 'At the shop (at the shop), where I first saw the light and the burden of my sin rolled away; It was there by faith, I received my sight and now I am happy all the day!'"

Paul, his wife and three adult children now live in Queensland. He is an ordained church minister in full-time ministry since April 1988. He continues to be passionate about sharing the good news of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, including through the printed word and crusade meetings.



Paul E. Momoh

Coping with my son's suicide

BY JANICE TEO

Heartbreak tastes like dust. For weeks after the suicide of her son Zen in September 2018 - a month before his 18th birthday - Elaine Lek says everything she put in her mouth felt like ash.

Heartbreak feels like an Arctic wind. Elaine was constantly cold and needed jackets even in sunny Singapore to stop shivering. Heartbreak is an angry rash, panic attacks and heart palpitations. Elaine had them all - a condition medically recognised as Broken Heart Syndrome.

It has been almost three years since Zen took his own life in Melbourne, where he was studying. That fateful night, Elaine - the Chief Operating Officer of a luxury tableware company in Singapore - had flown in to visit him.

Zen seemed in good spirits as he kissed his mum goodnight at 9pm on September 27. Five hours later, he was in hospital fighting for his life. Three days later, he was dead.

The teenager had not had any history of mental challenges, but midway through college, when he was 17, he became distressed by persistent bullying at school.

His parents found scalpel blades in his room and discovered he had been cutting himself. Callous schoolmates nicknamed him 'barcode boy' because of the cut lines on his arms.

His parents took him out of

that toxic environment and sent him to Trinity College in Melbourne, where he settled in well.

But his mental health challenges lingered and he was prescribed an anti-depressant during a holiday in Singapore in September 2018. When the doctor quadrupled his dosage after only a week, Elaine was alarmed but was told insomnia and loss of appetite were the only side effects.

However, according to health authorities in the US, the drug Zen was prescribed had 'a possible increased risk of suicidal thoughts in some children, adolescents and young adults'.

Elaine believes it was this new drug that sent Zen over the edge. He began behaving erratically when he returned



Above: The Koh family: Max, Say Kiong, Elaine and Zen.
Left: Zen Dylan with the cheeky grin his family remembers well.
Inset: Some of the final sad text messages that Zen sent to his friends.



Above: A painting given to the family to comfort them, depicting Jesus now standing between the living and the dead.

Together with other mothers who have lost children to suicide, she co-founded PleaseStay. Movement, which

works to raise awareness about and prevent youth suicide in Singapore.

In 2019, Elaine and her husband Say Kiong Koh established The Zen Dylan

Koh Fund to support youth who need therapy, especially those who struggle to find help or cannot afford private therapy.

The fund has already helped more than 20 youths. Case-workers have stopped several from attempting suicide.

The wounds of her loss, while not as raw as they used to be, still ache. It is at those times she says she clings to these verses:

"Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you" - 1 Peter 5: 7; and "Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted." - Matthew 5: 4.

to Melbourne, ignored his parents' texts and bought a rope from a hardware store.

At the hospital, Elaine cradled her son as she said goodbye. Choking back her tears, she tells *Challenge*: "Tears were rolling down his cheeks and that night, he was brain dead."

Grief-stricken as they were, the family decided to donate Zen's organs - seven people in Melbourne were given a new lease of life.

After that terrible night, Elaine tried to find solace in her Buddhist upbringing but says the temple monk offered scant comfort.

"I had so many questions but the monk couldn't answer any of them," she shares. "He only told me Zen will be reincarnated if he lived a good life. I couldn't fathom that. Did that mean I would never see him again? Never be reunited with my family?"

"I followed the Buddhist last rites. I chanted for 49 days to give him a better rebirth, I went vegetarian to gain more merit for him, but none of that comforted me."

Then one day she found a Bible in Zen's room. She began reading it out of curiosity and found it offered exactly what she needed. "The more I learned about the Christian faith the more I wanted to know," she enthuses. "It gave me the comfort I craved."

She began going to church, where she says she learned "we have a loving, compassionate and forgiving God who loves us so much that He died for us on the cross to offer us the hope of eternal life."

"I know now we have a definite hope of a beautiful afterlife where Jesus will wipe away our pain, sorrows and tears and we can look forward to being reunited with our dear ones. I'm not afraid of death anymore because I know it's not the end."

Told by well-meaning friends suicide is the "unforgivable sin", Elaine's response is that it is in fact the result of mental illness. "It's like any other critical illness," she maintains. "Why would Jesus, who has forgiven us of all sin, not be compassionate to people who are in so much emotional pain?"

She committed her life to Christ and was baptised last year. "In Jesus I have found peace and hope and meaning. I no longer chase secular goals. I've surrendered my

anxieties to Jesus and trust He will provide. I no longer have to worry.

"My paradigm has shifted. I used to be very impatient and found it hard to forgive, but now I have peace."

Although she believes the psychiatrist was at fault - "he quadrupled his dosage within 10 days and I lost Zen within three weeks" - she has forgiven him.

"I was advised to take action, but preferred to put my resources into saving another child."



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Singer's strong stance rewarded

BY AMBER VARELA

The voice was good, the look was good, but *American Idol* judges summarily dismissed Moriah Peters' performance because she wrote on her bio that she was reserving her first kiss for marriage.

"You need to go out into the world and make some mistakes and get some life experience and come back," one of the judges said. "You need to go out and kiss somebody and that'll make you feel sexier and then come back after for a hearing."

Moriah had given up her high school prom and cut back on studies so she could participate in multiple auditions. Their response was crushing, but she believed God has a purpose in it.

"I was fighting the tears," Moriah recounts on an I Am Second video.

Moriah got her start in music at a church camp in the sixth grade. Soon, she was leading music in her church. After a sensational Easter performance, people encouraged her to try out for *American Idol*.

But judges Simon Cowell, Randy Jackson and Avril Lavigne were

harsh with her and sent her down the elevator.

At the moment of crushing disappointment, however, a new door opened. As she walked out of the building, a random stranger congratulated Moriah and introduced her to Wendi Foy, who helped her put together a demo for record labels in Nashville.

Since then, Moriah has signed with Reunion Records, releasing her first album in 2012.

She also got engaged to Christian music legend Australian Joel Smallbone of For King and Country.

How they met was the stuff of a Hallmark Channel movie.

The woman who invited her to a wedding that Joel also attended raved about him in the car, which made Moriah feel awkward. Then there was the line of women waiting to talk with him. She felt uncomfortable joining the line.

"This is not Disneyland, and you are not Pocahontas," she was thinking. "I'm not standing in line. This is ridiculous."

Joel Smallbone, on the other hand, was smitten at first sight.

"I will never forget turning around and seeing her for the first time," Joel says. "I was a bit of a bumbling idiot for the rest of the night. I just knew I had to figure out who this woman is and get to know her. The next morning, we were at church and I managed to persuade her to write a song with me."

They became friends for two and a half years, but Moriah was constantly guarded.

"I was coming from a place of fear," she says. "I worried that I could give so much of my heart to this person and then it might not work out. It was so scary. There's always this feeling of 'Am I good enough? Is this going to work? Am I able to handle this?'"

They were married July 7, 2013 and now reside in Nashville.

"When I had my first kiss on my wedding day, you can't imagine how good it felt," she says. "It was happiness, gladness, joy, and peace rushing through me."

"Happiness because God ignored my teenage prayers asking for a boyfriend when I was 12, and happiness because He answered my prayers for a man who would love Him more than he would love me. I felt gladness because I saved myself for the one I would spend the rest of my days with, and gladness because I didn't give in to [sexual] temptation."

This article is from godreports.com and is used with kind permission.



Moriah Peters (top) and at her wedding to Aussie Joel Smallbone of For King and Country. Inset: The happy couple fooling around.

FAITH + NUDGE

Is your hope in hope?

WE can hope in hope—hope that the pandemic will end soon; hope that the vaccines and treatments will work; hope that even worse mutations won't occur. Or we can hope in God.

In *With Open Hands*, Henri Nouwen noted: "A person with hope does not get tangled up with concerns for how his wishes will be fulfilled. So, too, his prayer is not directed toward the gift, but toward the one who gives it. His prayer might still contain just as many desires, but ultimately it is not a question of having a wish come true but of expressing an unlimited faith in the Giver of all good things . . ."

"For the prayer of hope it is essential that there are no guarantees asked, no conditions posed, and no proofs demanded, only that you expect everything from the other without binding Him. Hope is based on the premise that the Other gives only what is good. Hope includes an openness by which you wait for the other to make His loving promise come true, even though you never know when, where or how this might happen."

Is your hope in hope, or is your hope in God today?

Coping with Covid ...Coping with Covid ... Coping with Covid...

Day 18 of lockdown. I filled the dog with helium.

Laugh

"Worry is concern gone haywire. God does not expect us not to deal with reality. If you're sick, you're sick. If you're struggling, you're struggling. But that's different than worry. Concern you own; worry owns you."

- Tony Evans, founder of Urban Alternative



Someone on Reddit built a backyard treehouse as a quarantine project.

What precautions are you all taking during the global pandemic? My mum is bathing the Tesco delivery



50-year-old Gaurav Rai, of Patna, India, had a close encounter with Covid-19 last year. Now he goes around in his own vehicle providing free oxygen to critically ill patients in home isolation. So far he has saved 1,400 Covid patients in 10 months, becoming known as Bihar's Oxygen Man.

Be creative



"After being laid off in April I spent the last two and a half months building this playhouse for my kids. I have no construction experience, just a lot of YouTube tutorials. I'm very happy with how it turned out!"

Ponder

A YOUNG Christian doctor in a central Indian state has been suspended from a government program to help combat the second wave of COVID-19 and is facing criminal charges for telling families to pray to Jesus if they get infected with the virus.

Activists from India's chief Hindu nationalist umbrella organization objected to Dr. Sandhya Tiwari distributing Christian material together with health information. One of the men there made a short video of himself interrogating the doctor.

In the video, shared on social media, Dr. Tiwari can be seen defending her actions, saying, "What is wrong in telling them that God heals? I did not tell anybody to convert or forced anybody to pray to Jesus, I am being a Christian, I told them that Jesus heals."

It's possible, too, our prayers aren't about immediate outward changes (though sometimes they are) but inward restorations. Rather than asking God why He's allowed something, perhaps our job is to determine what we can do in the midst of it.

- Tré Goins-Phillips Editor of Faithit

The last time i went to urgent care i checked off "excessive crying" on the symptom list and the nurse got really confused and told me that was meant for babies.

Be kind

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Faith for astrophysicists

American astronomer and astrophysicist Professor Don Winget once referred to himself as a “fire-breathing atheist”. Raised as a Christian, his knowledge of the Bible made him dangerous in debates with the naive faithful.

Don knew he wanted to be an astronomer from a young age, which led him to pursue science academically when he started college at age 16.

While studying anthropology he was exposed to the world’s religions. He decided the fact he was raised Christian was just an accident – due to where he was born.

“If I had been born in Japan or China or anywhere else – I thought – whatever my family there would have believed, would have been what I would have believed, too,” Don wrote in an article for *cru.org*.

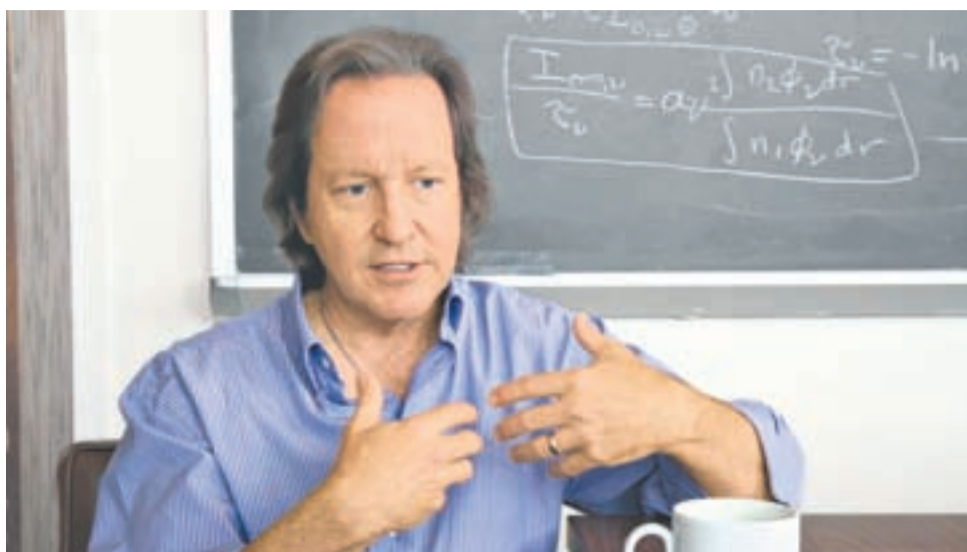
Don attended church with his family as a child but as he grew older, he began to resent it.

“Reluctantly, my loving and devout parents stopped insisting that I go,” he says. “I began to drift away from the church. I only continued to drift further and further away from my ‘Christian’ upbringing.”

Then in college he started to question his understanding of what Christianity was really about and looked further at the world’s religions.

“They all claimed to be correct,” he says. “I thought, Christianity can’t be the only truth. Or maybe it’s not true at all... All these different ‘truths’ that people hold are contradictory to each other, so this can’t be the one truth. Over time, I eventually landed at atheism.”

As he had studied the Bible as a child, Don’s used his knowledge of



Don Winget went from vehemently opposing Christianity to being thoroughly convinced its true.

Scripture in debates with Christians.

“I had a list of 50 examples where I thought the Bible was contradictory that I would use,” he remembers. “I would often bring these up and considered myself a ‘fire-breathing atheist’.”

Don even challenged his wife’s faith. He described her as a ‘cultural Christian’ but, after hearing his arguments, she too became an atheist.

The couple had five children and as time went on Don realised their oldest boys were lacking a spiritual or moral compass. This was something that deeply concerned Don and his wife and they realised their own spiritual or moral compasses came about by attending church when they were children.

“We decided that we needed to find some religion of the world and

use that to guide our kids and get involved,” Don explains. “We didn’t want to just dump them and drive off.”

Don and his wife began to look at different world religions, in an aim to find something that was at least plausible.

“With my background in anthropology, what we were looking for was a religion that wasn’t archeologically falsifiable,” Don says.

At the same time, Don and his wife were searching for a day-care centre for their youngest son. The only one available was a Christian church.

“When we ran into the pastor, we realised that this is someone we could talk to about Christianity,” Don says. “He began to meet us for coffee, and each time we met he encour-

aged us to go a step further. He recommended a few books to read: *Mere Christianity* by CS Lewis and Lee Strobel’s *The Case for Christ*. What was interesting to me in Lee Strobel’s book was that he dealt with archaeological and extra-biblical evidence for Christ. One by one, all the objections I raised debating as an atheist for many years fell away.”

Don, who is the Harlan J. Smith Centennial Professor in Astronomy and a University Distinguished Teaching Professor at the University of Texas at Austin, visited a former student to discuss their scientific collaboration.

The former student saw books by Christian authors CS Lewis and Philip Yancey in Don’s car.

“(He) suddenly asked me in an uncharacteristically aggressive tone, ‘Are you a Christian?’” Don recalls. “I steeled myself for an intellectual attack, the kind I had dealt out so many times myself, but I found myself compelled by the example of Peter to say, ‘Yes, I am a Christian.’ He was shocked I was a Christian, but the attack never came. He, too, was a Christian.”

Don was shocked at his own response to the student’s question.

“I was more shocked than him, however, because I had reached a decision,” he explains. “I knew that I believed in Christ as my Saviour.

In that instant, I discovered that it took more faith to disbelieve than to believe. If I were to deny Christ, I might as well argue that gravity didn’t exist, or that the Earth was flat. But Jesus did exist – and He still does. To place my faith in Him used to seem like the dumbest thing I could do, but now I know the truth – I would be a fool not to.”

Believe It or Not

BY CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Fast fuel

SCIENTISTS in the US have worked out how to convert algae into crude oil in less than 60 minutes.

A mixture of green algae and water is subjected to a temperature of 350 degrees C and pressure of 3000 psi, which breaks the algae down into oil and gas.

It has been widely believed for decades that ‘fossil fuel’ oil and gas took millions of years to form from algae and plants after being slowly trapped in rocks and subjected to the earth’s heat and pressure over eons.

We now know that millions of years are unnecessary. This industrial process (which does not involve chemical reagents) shows that heat and pressure suffice to form oil in ultrashort periods of time. And both of these are ‘naturally’ available when organic material is buried deep within the earth, which would have happened on a vast scale at the time of the Genesis flood.

The thousands of years since then are thus far more than enough to generate the huge fossil fuel deposits of today.

Ironically, whenever evidence such as this shows conclusively that fossil fuels would not require vast ages, reports often feature phrases like, ‘Process does in minutes what nature takes millions of years to do’.

IT TOOK MORE FAITH TO DISBELIEVE THAN TO BELIEVE.



THE KNIGHT & THE KETTLE

SIR John Polkinghorne, knighted in 1997 for services to science, religion, learning and medical ethics, was a Professor of Mathematical Physics at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of the Royal Society – one of the highest honours that can be bestowed on a scientist.

Yet Sir John resigned in 1979 and was ordained as a Church of England minister in 1982.

In 2011 he told the *Saturday Evening Post*: “When you say that you’re a scientist and a Christian, people sometimes give you a funny look, as if you’d said, ‘I’m a vegetarian butcher.’ Many people out there think science and religion are actually at war with each other, but I believe that science and religion are friends, not foes...”

“Science asks how things happen. But there are questions of meaning and value and purpose which science does not address. Religion asks why. And we can and should ask both questions about the same event.”

Sir John often quoted the boiling kettle as an example: “Science tells us that burning gas heats the water and makes the kettle boil. But science doesn’t explain the ‘why’ question. The kettle is boiling because I want to make a cup of tea... I don’t have to choose between the answers to those questions.

“In fact, in order to understand the mysterious event of the boiling kettle, I need both those kinds of answers to tell me what’s going on. So I need the insights of science and the insights of religion if I’m to understand the rich and many layered world in which we live.”

Sir John died in Cambridge in March 2021 aged 90.

DINO DUNG

Evolutionists claim that dinosaurs evolved about 65 or more million years ago, and then died out, and then a few million years later grass evolved – so dinosaurs never ate grass.

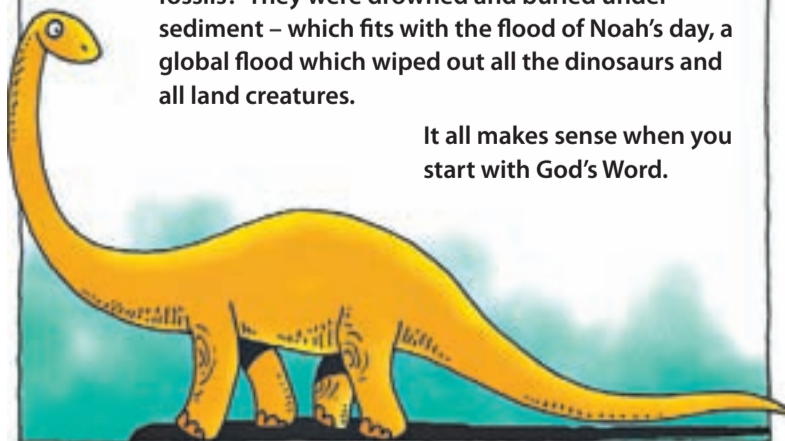
If evolutionists were correct, this would be true, but what if some fossilized dino-dung was discovered, which contained grass? That would mean evolutionists were wrong. It would prove beyond any doubt, that dinosaurs ate grass.

The fact is, dino-dung HAS been found WITH GRASS IN IT. Scientists in India found the remains of a titanosaur sauropod, and some dino-dung nearby which had fossilised grass in it.

There goes yet another claim by evolutionists.

But further to this, how did dinosaurs become fossils? They were drowned and buried under sediment – which fits with the flood of Noah’s day, a global flood which wiped out all the dinosaurs and all land creatures.

It all makes sense when you start with God’s Word.



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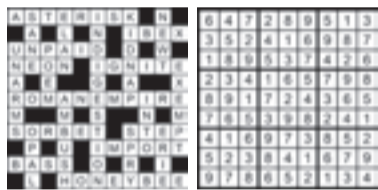
BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

When a conversation is crucial

BY ROB FURLONG

Conversation is a part of life. We talk about all sorts of things and ideas; we talk to people and yes, we talk about people - conversation has a huge impact on our relationships. And so does a lack of it. Have you ever regretted not having a conversation with someone? Perhaps you feel you are being given the "cold shoulder" by a work colleague or your partner is upset with you about something. You know something is wrong between the two of you, but the other person isn't saying what (apart from a few unobvious hints) and you are too afraid to ask.

What needs to happen in situations



like these is what some have described as a "crucial conversation."

A crucial conversation takes place when two people address privately and with loving honesty whatever the problem is that is affecting their relationship at that moment and then work toward genuine reconciliation.

A crucial conversation contains within it the seeds of loving, open communication, and restoration, so it is surprising we do not have them more often!

One reason for this is we do not know how to go about conversations like these, which is why I am sharing a couple of principles that have helped me in my own crucial conversations over the years.

These principals are also the ones Jesus taught in Matthew 18:15-16 about resolving disputes.

"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'"

A crucial conversation must be done privately with the other person.

If you feel the person has been ignoring you, then a good way to bring this up is to say something along the lines of, "When we catch up lately it feels like you do not want to be around me or that I have done something to offend you. I want you to know I am not accusing you of anything - I could be misreading this completely - but if there is a problem between us, then I would like to talk about it and clear the air."

An approach like this makes no assumptions or accusations about the other person but it also seeks to be straightforward in as loving a way as possible.

And it is done privately, just between the two of you - you do not talk or complain about the person to others.

If you are unable to resolve the situation then seek mediation.

This is a serious step and should not be taken lightly, but if the problem cannot be resolved, a mediator can be of enormous help to both of you in getting the problem sorted out.

Mediators bring many benefits to a crucial conversation:

1. They can help both of you see how serious the situation is and how the relationship can be restored.
2. They can bring added wisdom by providing fresh insights and perspectives that may have been missed.
3. They bring an objectivity which identifies where both of you may be at fault, thus leading to reconciliation.
4. They are also able to affirm what was and wasn't said because they witnessed the conversation between the two of you.



3. They bring an objectivity which identifies where both of you may be at fault, thus leading to reconciliation.
4. They are also able to affirm what was and wasn't said because they witnessed the conversation between the two of you.

The important thing to remember about a crucial conversation is that the goal is always reconciliation and restoration between people. It is not about trying to win an argument, pointing out how bad the other person is or proving you are so much better than they are.

Rather, we approach the conversation:

- Without making assumptions - we come prepared to listen, not to blame.
 - Without arrogance - thinking we are "in the right!"
 - With humility - a readiness to admit we might be wrong.
 - With courage - to be open and honest with each other.
 - With grace - being ready to offer forgiveness where it is needed.
 - With hope - that the relationship will be far better for having had this conversation!
- Crucial conversations are, well, crucial to our relationships: but there are barriers that prevent them from taking place. We will consider these next month.

Lessons from a sausage dog (Part 15)

BY JODY BENNETT

I READ an article recently about a dog that has sat for four months outside a hospital in Brazil, waiting for its owner, who died there. Apparently, another dog in Japan waited similarly for 10 years on a



train station! I reckon my sausage dog, Carrie, would only wait for me until someone walked past with food!

We find such patience and loyalty endearing. The dog doesn't understand the circumstances, doesn't really know where his master is or how long he will have to wait - he just does.

Christians are in a similar situation. After Jesus rose from the dead, He spent 40 days with His followers and friends before being taken up into heaven in the clouds. When He was gone, angels told His friends that in the same way Jesus had gone, He would come back again one day.

Christians have been waiting for that event for more than 2000 years and many people believe it is now very close. But patience and waiting is hard, especially when the world is so full of scary events, violent people and injustice.

The temptation is always to forget about the future and just follow something fun and pleasurable. "Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die" as the saying goes.

That seems to be the prevailing mood in society - buy that expensive item, eat that doughnut, sleep with that person, experiment with that drug because life is short and you need to suck all the goodness out of it while you can.

However, what if this life is but a millimetre in the endless kilometres of eternity? What if what we do in this millimetre determines where we spend all those kilometres?

What if, if we choose to wait faithfully and deny ourselves a few pleasures now, we will experience more joy, goodness and abundance than we could ever have imagined?

I don't know about you but I choose to sit and wait for my Master because "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18).

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
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

All overseas enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country

Want to explore more?

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

Online Bible - Olive Tree app (we recommend that you start with an easy-to-read version like the ESV)	
Audio Bible - Bible.is app , or Youversion Bible app	
Christian radio station - CBN radio app (different channels for all genres of music)	
Christian podcasts and sermons - Edifi app	
Christian movies - New Faith Network app (7-day free trial)	
Daily thoughts and inspiration - Our Daily Bread app	
Advice on specific issues, Bible reading plans and studies for new believers - Youversion Bible app .	
The Bible explained with visual aides - the Bible Project on YouTube .	
Alpha Film Series on Youtube - an online introduction to Christianity.	
For kids - Superbook Kids Bible, videos and games app	
Comic book Bible online- goodandevilbook.com	
More inspiring faith stories - back issues of Challenge News at challengenews.online	

I will wait for You, I will wait for You/
Through the storm and through the night/
I will wait for You, surely wait for You/
For Your love is my delight.
- chorus from *I will wait for You* by Shane & Shane

DAD'S LEGACY BECAME A BURDEN



Los Angeles Sparks Guard Candice Wiggins (2) during in game action, in June, 2015. The Connecticut Suns defeated the Los Angeles Sparks in that encounter at the Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville, Connecticut, 80-76 in overtime. (Photo by Williams Paul/Icon Sportswire/Corbis/Icon Sportswire via Getty Images)

Continuing her father's legacy of success has always been a driving force for former Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) player Candice Wiggins.

Her father, major league baseball player Alan Wiggins, passed away from AIDS after battling depression and drug abuse when Candice was four years old.

In an interview with Christian Broadcasting Network, Candice said she was often compared to her father.

"I ran like him, I looked like him, and so that became like my blueprint of how I was going to succeed," she says.

Her success in basketball in high school earned her a scholarship to Stanford University where she felt the weight of the team's success.

"Even my senior year at Stanford my coach, Tara Vanderveer said, 'You're carrying us, you know, it's on you,'" Candice says.

Although Candice had accepted

Jesus as her Lord and Saviour as a young child, she said she lost sight of the importance of her relationship with Him as her focus shifted to succeeding in basketball.

In a blog post on her website, she writes, "I never read the Bible growing up. Mainly because I felt that it was too cumbersome in length and it was hard for me to tackle it, from one end or the other."

Despite her own basketball achievements, Candice's father's legacy of success was heavy on her shoulders.

Just before a major college basketball game, she read an article online that she expected to be about her and the upcoming biggest game of her life. But it was all about her dad.

She says she felt that instead of caring about her as a person, people cared more about her performance.

"I felt defeated," Candice says. "I felt like no one

cared for my soul. That's what I felt. For the first time I felt like I was born into terrible circumstances and I started questioning. This is the biggest game of my entire life. Our family legacy is on the line, my legacy is on the line, my WNBA dreams are on the line."

She says she couldn't go to her coach or her friends with her feelings.

"I knew they didn't have the answers," she says. "I knew there was only one source and I just said, I'm going to go straight to the source."

Candice knew the only One she could turn to was God. She begged God to erase her pain and she experienced a sense of calm and an incredible peace.

That night she went on to lead her team to victory and a spot in the final four, as well as scoring a career high of 41 points.

"I broke a record that no male nor female has broken yet, but the crazy part about the game was that it wasn't me," Candice remembers.

"There must have been angels or someone, something, around me because every shot I would take, I'd be like, 'Why would you shoot that, that's terrible?' I would just throw it up, and it would go in."

Although her team lost their final four matchup against University of Tennessee and Candice's college career finished, she no longer found her identity in her basketball success or her father's legacy.

Her identity now comes from her relationship with Jesus Christ.

"For me, Jesus was a path, a leader," she explains. "He gave me an outlet, a way where I didn't have to be perfect. My life didn't have to be perfect. He gave me a way out of all of the guilt that I had held on to, all of the people-pleasing. I finally could just exhale."

I FINALLY COULD JUST EXHALE.



WNBA Basketball Player Candice Wiggins attends a Runway Wonderland Children's Benefit By Trina's Kids Foundation on December 10, 2014 in Los Angeles, California. (Photo by Michael Bezjian/WireImage)

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