

# HOLLOW OR HOLY?

BY JODY BENNETT

On TV recently was a show where a family who live in a chateau in France celebrated Christmas in the most elaborate and beautiful way.

Homemade decorations, sumptuous food, loving extended family, huge sacks full of presents and lots of laughter and candlelight. It looked idyllic.

And yet, I wondered if, when they were washing up the dishes in the cold light of day with a food hangover the next morning, whether they thought, "What was the point? Why did we do it?"

Was it just to celebrate family and snow, and have an excuse to give the kids gifts? Was it to celebrate an imaginary man in a red suit? Why make such a fuss over one day in the year? Why the elaborate preparations and decorations?

It felt to me like the castle in Disneyland, impressive and attractive on the outside but when you get close it is so disappointing because it is completely hollow and empty!

You see that French Christmas had not one manger scene, not one carol or reference to Jesus. And if Christmas is not a celebration of God's great love in coming down to earth to live as a gentle carpenter, who shared a life-changing message, performed science-defying miracles and died a debt-paying death for each one of us, then what pray tell is the point?!

Without Jesus the whole season is meaningless over-expenditure and over-indulgence. What is the party all about if you exclude the guest of honour?!

Then Christmas is like the dogs



Two dogs dressed in Christmas costumes watch swimmers at the "Bold and the Beautiful" Swim squad, Manly on December 25, 2019 in Sydney. (Photo James D. Morgan/Getty Images)

in the photo on this page, a fun but purposeless spectacle. It can make us laugh, but with no real joy. It can fill our bellies but not the ache in our hearts. It can distract us from our problems for a few hours but solves nothing. It is pretty but temporary.

In contrast, the Bible story of Christmas – the birth of Jesus Christ – offers Immanuel, the very presence

of the all-powerful Creator Himself in our lives. Joy to the world because Our Saviour reigns, defeating sin, death, sickness, and darkness. And peace on Earth because the door is opened for us to be reconciled to all that is good and true.

It gives us hope that despite our on-going problems after the holiday season, there will come a season

where every tear will be wiped away and all sorrow and sighing will cease.

Rather than Santa bearing toys, Christians believe in Jesus offering wholeness in our living, rest in our daily life and eternity with God. Their faith infuses every symbol with meaning: the Christmas tree speaks of the cross of wood, the candy canes of the blood and white purity

of Jesus, the holly of the crown of thorns, the star of the Bethlehem miracle, the angel of heavenly choir, the presents of the gift of God Himself. Each carol reminds us of the gospel, literally the good news, that God loves us, came to earth for us, died for us and offers us paradise for eternity.

Why would you want the shell, the empty façade, the hollow mask of Christmas, without the sweet and satisfying truth inside?

## Heart attack at 17, wealth at 27, homeless at 28



BY NAOMI REED (ETERNITY NEWS)

**Scott Windus's story:** "I had a heart attack when I was 17. I'd been playing tennis at a high level ... and I was in the Queensland Championships. After the match, I went home and I jumped into our backyard pool. My heart went into spasm and I woke up in the cardiac ward at Brisbane Hospital. It was full of old guys who were about to die. One of them said to me, 'What are you doing here?'"

"It gave me a new perspective on life. After 12 months, I was allowed to play tennis again ... and I threw myself into everything. For the next ten years, I tried to be the best I could possibly be, in every part of life – in tennis, and in work. I got involved in a really successful company doing building design. I bought a house and an MG. I moved to Sydney to start up a Sydney branch. We were turning

over six million dollars a year. It was ridiculous. I was only 27 years old and I had all that responsibility and stress. Eventually, it led to a mental and physical breakdown. I lost everything and I became homeless at age 28. I moved on to my mate's lounge.

"I now think that God was trying to show me about certainty – that I was never in control, and I never had been, no matter how high I'd climbed the tree.

"A few months later, I started asking everyone I knew about the meaning of life. What did they believe in? Where was the book? How did they know? I was hungry for meaning.

"Then I met Janelle, through a friend. We went on a date, and I told her I was trying to figure out the meaning of life. She told me that she was a Christian and she invited me to church.

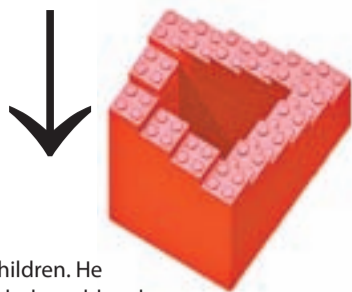
● Turn to page 3

**BACK PAGE**

**CRUSHING CRASH**  
**DAVEY HAMILTON**



# STEPPING TO GO UP



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 greater 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 garbage 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 Christmastime, 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 is 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).



# Living in the best and worst of times

Chances are, if you go to a more contemporary church this Christmas, you will find yourself singing one of the beautiful compositions of this talented couple.

Keith Getty grew up wishing he wasn't classically trained as a musician, wishing he wasn't from Ireland, and wishing he was cooler, but now he has over 100 million people singing his very unique brand of Irish church music.

Born in Lisburn, Northern Ireland to a piano teacher mum and a church musician dad, Keith jokes that he "wanted to be a rugby player! But it ends up I wasn't very good at sport." Which was very fortunate for Christianity worldwide, as it turns out.

Keith began making music at age 10, learning to play the classical guitar; then, reluctantly according to him, the piano. At 12 he began playing the flute and later got into conducting.

As a young adult, he studied Music at St Chad's College, Durham University, graduating with his Bachelor of Arts in 1995. As a student, Keith completed special conducting opportunities and participated in a summer master class under Irish flautist Sir James Galway.

Although Keith felt a failure as a music student, a flutist and a conductor, each of those three aspects of his education conspired together to help him to succeed in his eventual career of writing church music and hymns.

"In God's providence, I believe, all those parts of my makeup and heritage have been used to give my music definition and uniqueness," he shared in an interview on Youtube with Mitch Gallagher.

"All of our experiences, both in music and in life can feed into the unique creativity that gives us our expression as songwriters," Keith believes. His aim, together with co-writer Stuart Townsend and his wife Kristyn is to "try to give Christians around the world an artistic grammar for what they believe, a singable theology."

And the strong Christian content of his songs comes from his upbringing in the church and the Christian faith he embraced as a child.

Keith believes this is both the best of times and the worst of times for the Christian church. "Christianity is growing faster in the world than at any other point in history. I can demo a song on Friday and have it sung on six continents that Sunday, but at the same time I think the challenge to Christianity is deeper and darker and more intense than ever before, so for my generation and for my children, I want them to grow up with a deep, grounded faith. And part of how we get a deep faith is the depth of

the songs we sing."

According to him, much contemporary Christian music used in churches is theologically shallow. The focus of most is on emotion and present satisfaction, not on eternity. It often has a few insipid lyrics sung repeatedly.

In the past, hymns served as a kind of musical catechism that taught singers about the Bible, about God, about Jesus Christ, about salvation, about the future.

Apparently many Christians had felt this lack, because Keith's theologically dense 2001 release *In Christ Alone* was the top hymn in the UK for nine years, according to the BBC. The lyrics of that song, by Stuart Townend,

were written to encapsulate the life of Christ and the main points of the Christian creed.

The careful selection of the hymn's lyrics was highlighted in 2012, when the Presbyterian Church (USA) hymnal committee wanted to change a phrase in it from "Till on that cross as Jesus died/the wrath of God was satisfied", to "the love of God was magnified."

Getty and Townsend rejected the lyric change saying: "We believe altering the lyrics would remove an essential part of

the gospel story as explained throughout Scripture. The main thread of what we see revealed throughout the Old and New Testament is the need for man to be made right with God. The provided path toward reconciliation came through Christ's predetermined and perfect sacrifice on the cross, satisfying God's wrath once and for all."

Keith met singer/song-writer Kristyn Lennox, then aged 18, in 2002, when he was 24. They were introduced by his friend, John Lennox, a world-renowned mathematician, Christian apologist, and Kristyn's uncle. The teen was attending a nearby university and Keith asked her to help him write a song for a children's choir.

Kristyn also comes from a Christian home and heritage. She told her Facebook followers recently, "I never knew my grandfather but his Christian faith was strong and vibrant and it has cast a long, beautiful light for our family."

After dating for two years, the couple married on 16 June 2004. In 2011, the Gettys welcomed their first child Eliza Joy, followed in the next few years by three more daughters. The couple now share their time between Port Stewart, Northern Ireland and Nashville, Tennessee.

If you want to hear their beautiful blend of inspirational words and Celtic or blue grass music, check out their Facebook site or Youtube channel.

## Crossword

<b>ACROSS</b>	10 Come into view	17 Kidney enzyme	<b>DOWN</b>
1 Shorten (of words)	12 New Zealander	18 They pop into your head	2 Horse's mouthpiece
8 Many times	14 Peak or summit	20 NZ Capital	3 Weasel out
9 A banished person	15 National tree of India		4 Vista
			5 Corrosive quality
			6 Observer of an event
			7 Producer of blood cells (4,6)
			11 Everlasting
			13 Putting money away
			16 Nay sayer
			19 Olden Tokyo
			<b>SOLUTION PAGE 11</b>

## Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9.

Puzzle Level: Medium

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

**SOLUTION PAGE 11**



# Life after the Bali bombing

BY JANICE TEO

Phil Britten lay on the floor of the Sari Bar in Bali, his body scorched, his face a bloody mess. It was October 12, 2002. A terrorist's bomb had exploded in the nightclub killing 202 people – including 88 Australians – and almost ripped the West Aussie apart.

Phil, then 22 and the captain of the Kingsley Football Club, was in Bali with his teammates. "I lost seven friends, I got burns to 60 per cent of my body, and life was turned upside down," Phil said in a 2018 ABC Radio interview. "I went into a shell."

The pain was agonising. Healing – physical, mental and emotional – was slow. He slipped into a dark place for many years and used alcohol and drugs to help him cope.

It is said the road to recovery begins with the first step – or tough love from your grandmother. "It wasn't until my grandmother forced me to share my story that I turned," Phil laughed.

"I spoke to 12 people in a Rotary Club and something really amazing happened. The 12 wrinkly old people rose and clapped louder than 1000. I remember thinking maybe I'd survived to share my experience."

That put Phil, who is also a martial arts expert and runs several martial arts studios in Perth, on the path to doing what he does now – he is a successful motivational speaker and an entrepreneur who has won several business awards.

You will also see him making coffee at his church in Joondalup, Perth, because several months ago, Phil became a Christian. Most people associate Phil with the Bali bombing, but not many are aware of the story of how he and his whole family came to faith in Jesus Christ.

In November 2018, his second son Riley was involved in a terrible accident at school – a schoolmate fell on him and snapped his femur in



The extensive scarring that Phil suffered as a result of the Bali bombing in 2002. **RIGHT:** Phil, with his wife Rebecca and their sons, Ben and Riley. **BELOW:** Phil and Riley celebrate Christmas in 2018.



half. Month after traumatic month of pain and operations followed as the family battled physical and emotional exhaustion.

"Riley was completely bedridden for the first few months," Phil's wife Rebecca told *Challenge*.

Riley had five operations in all. After each one he would be in excruciating pain, which might have been worth it if he was getting better. Instead the Brittens were told he may never walk the same way again.

By this time, the family had begun attending church after being invited by friends. "The first time we went to church, Rebecca asked me: 'What's going on here? Everyone is so happy!'" Phil said. "Our lives were in such turmoil at the time that the joy at church really impacted us."

Rebecca admitted that initially they went because they could 'dump' the children in Sunday School and relax for two hours. "But then the sermons began to touch my heart because when you have no hope, all you have is faith," she said.

As Riley's prognosis grew ever more grim, Rebecca said she asked God to come into

## I REALISED I HAD TO STOP SITTING ON THE FENCE



her life. "It was so freeing to hand it over to God," she said.

It took Phil eight months more before he did the same. He came from a history of rejecting God and though he enjoyed the new friendships and sermons, he was happy just cruising. What finally prompted him to step over the faith line was a sermon that echoed almost word for word what he taught.

"The pastor said we needed to make a commitment to stop sitting on the fence," Phil said. "It was like he was speaking directly to me! This was what I taught in my own talks. I realised I had to walk the talk and I accepted Christ there and then; I cried on the inside. And then I felt at last I could relax. I felt peace."

Rebecca told *Challenge* it was Riley's situation that was the main catalyst for the family's walk into faith.

Phil added: "While Riley was healing, we really suffered as a family; the church wrapped us up and carried us through when it became too much."

Then came the miracle. Rebecca had accepted the Lord on a Sunday in March 2019. A few days later, she saw movement out of the corner of her eye. Riley was walking. "There was a limp but he was walking," she exclaimed. "Not hobbling as he had been."

Not long after that, the family returned the wheelchair. In November 2019, after his final surgery, Riley was allowed to start physical activity again and begin his rehabilitation. Next month, he will graduate with a blue belt in martial arts.

Phil feels he has become a more loving father and husband, something

Rebecca confirms.

"We pray as a family," he said. "I'm being drawn to the light, not the dark any more."

On August 2, 2020 Phil, Rebecca and Ben, their eldest child, were baptised. "My baptism is another step away from my old life and into the new, just like the verse says – 'If any-

one is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come' (2 Corinthians 5:17)," Phil said.

"I honestly don't know how we would have survived everything – Riley's accident, the Covid business shutdown, our family's struggles – if not for God."

## Heart attack at 17, wealth at 27, homeless at 28

● From page 1

"I said, 'No way, I'd never go to church. They're a bunch of hypocrites.' "We were very honest with each other. A few months later, she invited me to a carol sing-a-long. I went and afterwards, I talked to the minister ... for two hours. I was getting all the answers I'd been hassling people for. He invited me to have lunch with him and we kept meeting, weekly. We became friends. Janelle went overseas. After a while, the minister and I started reading the Gospel of Mark together. But it didn't really click. Then he asked me to do [evangelistic course] 'Christianity Explained'. I said I wasn't ready to make a commitment, but I went anyway.

"We got up to the page on condemnation. I can still remember it. There was a black and white line drawing of a group of people shunning their faces from the glory of God.

"Suddenly, I was an absolute, blubbing, out-of-control mess, on the floor. It happened in a split second. I was stripped bare before a holy God. It was an absolutely powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit [invisible presence of God]. I became aware of my sin for the first time, and I totally understood the grace of God – the incredible mercy of God – that He should forgive me and save me, through Jesus. It was beautiful!

"Everything changed in an instant. The first verse I memorised was Philippians 4:6-7, 'Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.'

"Before that, I'd always been anxious and striving. I couldn't cope with uncertainty. But I read that verse and I prayed and I read the Bible (all the way through, twice!) And I felt peace, every time I prayed. It transcended understanding! And now, I love uncertainty. I can't tell you what God has done since then. It's been exponentially better than anything I could have imagined.

"Janelle and I got married. We had two kids and we went off to Cambodia, as missionaries. And now, even in tough times, uncertainty doesn't faze me. I know that God is sovereign. And He's got it!"

This article is part of Eternity's Faith Stories series, compiled by Naomi Reed. See [www.ETERNITYNEWS.COM.AU/FAITH-STORIES](http://www.ETERNITYNEWS.COM.AU/FAITH-STORIES) for more Faith Stories. It is used with kind permission.





# FROM WILD CHILD TO AMWAY TO SALVATION

BY REBECCA ABBOTT  
(ETERNITY NEWS)

It's unusual to hear people claim that Amway led them to Jesus Christ.

But this is the crux of the Christian journey for journalist Anne Lim.

"I was brought up in the church. I could recite the Apostles' Creed by heart. I was confirmed. But somehow it didn't stick," Anne begins.

"When I got to university, I had the choice to go to church or not to go to church. I fell away and got involved in student politics and feminism, or women's lib as we used to call it in those days, and I became quite politicised.

"I was part of the sexual revolution. I was convinced that my parents were very old-fashioned in believing that sex was only for marriage. I thought that

was ridiculous! So I lived as a wild child – sex, drugs and rock & roll – for a while there."

And yet, Anne says she never quite let go of her sense of God.

"I found another religion in uni. I remember saying at the time that I was a 'floating pilgrim'. I had a sense of spirituality, but I didn't quite know where I was going to land it. So I was a seeker.

"I think I always believed in God and would turn to God in a crisis, but I didn't live God's way."

When Anne met the love of her life – her now husband Michael – at age 36, she decided it was time to settle down and have a family. Michael had also grown up in a Christian household, but was not a practising Christian either.

However, when Anne gave birth to their first son, Harry, her spiritual eyes were opened.

"I was absolutely overwhelmed by God's grace," she says. "I thought, 'How can God be so loving and so good to give me this precious child when I don't deserve it at all?'"

"I just felt such gratitude that I started to talk about it with Michael and we decided we'd like to get Harry baptised."

At the time, the couple didn't know any Christians – until they joined Amway. For the uninitiated, Amway is a network-marketing business for selling household cleaners and pharmaceuticals.

One of the members in their Amway network was a Uniting Church minister, who offered to baptise baby Harry.

After the baptism, the Lims began

attending his Sydney-based church.

"I think we responded to the gospel to some extent there. I certainly remember feeling that this Jesus that the minister was preaching about was an incredibly vivid character that I didn't know, and who I wanted to know," Anne explains.

A few years later, they changed churches and heard a sermon by their new pastor on the Biblical book of 1 Timothy – "the passage about women having to learn in quietness and submission" – Anne says it nearly "blew me out of the water".

While her feminist values made her want to reject this outright, she decided to look at the evidence. "I thought, 'Well, I need to know what's in the Bible.' So I finally succumbed to invitations to join a Bible study and began to try and make up my mind myself."

In her search to find answers on this particular

teaching, Anne became a Christian.

"That was just one thread that I struggled with in Christianity – and continue to struggle with in a way – but I was just amazed to think that God had made Himself vulnerable and came down to earth in the form of Jesus to save me from all the sinful things I've done.

"That really was incredible to me – when I realised I could be assured of going to heaven, despite everything I've done, because of what Jesus has done."

Over the past 28 years, she has stood her ground as a Christian in the rough-and-tumble of mainstream journalism, notably at The Australian for 23 years. And then her faith and writing skills coalesced at Eternity News, the publication of The Bible Society, for five more years.

Alongside her career, Anne has nurtured her family (Michael and her two sons, Harry and Gabriel) and been a devoted member of her church. She's also a budding Bible storyteller and evangelist – a skill that will no doubt continue to blossom in her retirement.

Yet, with trademark humility, Anne still describes herself as "a work in progress" in terms of Christian growth. "I think I've been very unmalleable material [for God] in some respects, but I can definitely see the changes in me over the years.

"I'm not one of these people who becomes instantly transformed. It's been slow but definitely noticeable change."

This article first appeared in Eternity News and is used with kind permission.



Anne Lim



The cast of Agatha Christie's Poirot TV series: from left, Miss Lemon (Pauline Moran), Inspector Japp (Philip Jackson), Hercule Poirot (David Suchet) and Captain Hastings (Hugh Fraser). Photo: ITV Studios for Masterpiece

## Revelation in a bathtub

English actor David Suchet is best known as renowned Belgian sleuth Hercule Poirot of the Agatha Christie mystery stories. Twirling his magnificent moustache, Poirot has little time for anything more than what the facts can prove, or what his infallible instincts and brilliant intellect tell him.

In real life, David's little grey cells are far more open to faith and the unseen world. It all began more than 30 years ago, when the actor, now 74, had a defining moment while sitting in the bathtub of a hotel room in Seattle, Washington.

"I was in the bath, thinking about my late grandfather, with whom I had an extraordinarily close relationship," says David, referring to his maternal grandfather who died when David was 18.

"I always felt that he was with me as my spiritual guide," David says. "I felt him sitting on my shoulder. Then I thought to myself, 'Why do I believe that and not believe in life after death?' That got me thinking about Jesus, the most famous person who they say had a life after death."

Climbing out of the tub, David found a Bible, flipped the pages and landed in chapter 8 of the book of Romans.

The book of Romans, written by the apostle Paul, teaches that sinful man can be saved and reconciled to a holy God by believing in Jesus Christ and confessing He is Lord; that the power of salvation is available to all who believe.

The words in Chapter 8 delivered David's conversion moment. The chapter teaches that there is no condemnation for anyone who believes in Jesus Christ and that nothing, absolutely nothing can separate the



The real David Suchet and his wife Sheila Ferris on a night out at the Garrick Theatre, Charing Cross Road, London. (Photo by Keith Mayhew/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images)

Christian from the love of God.

It was when David read Paul's words in verse 31: "if God be for us, who can be against us?" that, the lightbulb came on, Poirot-like, in his head. "By the end of the letter, certainly by the end of the book, I was reading about a way of being and a way of life that I had been looking for all those years," he remembers.

David is an eminent actor, and is a CBE, which is a British award that recognises the recipient's chivalry, contributions to the arts and sciences, work with charitable and welfare organisations, and public service.

Usually only breaking away from filming the Poirot series to star in carefully-chosen dramas, tours and theatre productions, David recorded the entire Bible from Genesis to the Book of Revelation – 752,702 words, in his deep, melodic, unrushed voice.

Publisher Hodder Stoughton says it is the first time a single British actor of David's stature has tackled a project like that. The actor donated his fee for his 200 hours of work to charity.

He says his favourite passage in the

Bible is in the book of John, "when Jesus is speaking to His disciples in a very quiet, very intimate way about the Holy Spirit."

Asked if he hears from God through the Bible, David answered: "Yes. If you read the Bible with a very open mind, a non-judging mind, God's word speaks to you.

"We have to read the Bible quietly, to listen to His word, to pray for the Holy Spirit to guide the word to us, to let the Holy Spirit teach you. The Holy Spirit is there to help, to comfort, to teach, and yes to convict us of sin. Let it speak to you."

David has also filmed two documentaries - In the Footsteps of St Paul and In the Footsteps of St Peter - in which he takes epic journeys across the Mediterranean inspired by the life and travels of the two apostles.

He and his two brothers had been brought up largely without religion in a family of Lithuanian Jewish heritage. David says he had been "searching for something" all his life.

"I was a typical teen growing up in the 1960s, when everybody was into gurus and meditation," he explains. He says he then just "forgot about it" until he was making the movie Harry And The Hendersons in the US in 1986. He went to take a bath - and the rest is history.

Warm and friendly, David says his faith is a personal matter.

"My faith has given me such an appreciation of people and meaningful relationships, and a world view which I didn't have before," he says. "And although I will fail every day, it gives me something to aspire to."

He says he is not an 'evangelist Christian' and seems to prefer the softer, subtler approach of education and personal encounters.

David feels today's generation has lost reverence for the word of God. "They're not hearing God speak to them," he sighs. "The Bible is God revealing Himself.

"Society has become too familiar with the Bible. People died to get this book into our language. We forget that the English Bible - which we can pull off a bookshelf, throw in our bag and walk away with - is a book for which people gave their lives."



# TEENTALK

# Autoimmune disease changes influencer

BY AINSLEY GAEBLER

Tara Sun was thriving in school and had a promising future in dance until one day she woke up in agonising pain, unable to move. She was only about 14.

“My muscles were in seizing pain and my head felt like it was going to rip off my body,” she says in a YouTube video on her channel. “Turns out I have a condition called fibromyalgia. It’s an autoimmune disease that attacks your muscles and nerves and causes major muscle fatigue and migraines.”

This devastating diagnosis completely changed Tara’s life. She describes herself as a fit, energetic girl who loved sports and dance. Now, she could barely move a muscle without pain and had to protect her eyes from light to avoid pounding headaches. She withdrew into a place

of isolation, loneliness, and insecurity.

“It was a real struggle for me,” she candidly admits. “I did not want anyone to see me or ask me how I’d been. I felt so anxious.”

**I WANTED TO FEEL LOVED. ... I WANTED TO FEEL BEAUTIFUL.**



As Tara speaks during the video, her viewers can see her optimistic, positive attitude and warm, cheerful smile. Tara’s answer to the reason behind this permeating joy is simple: Jesus Christ

Tara was adopted into a loving, Christian home at a young age. “I grew up in a really awesome household,” she says. “I went to a Christian school. I went to church and youth group. I did sports and ballet. Everything was very easy for me.”

Tara was only four when she made a major decision. “We had this little book that my parents would read every night. It talked about what

Jesus had done for us on the cross and had an option at the end if you wanted to receive Christ into your heart.

“I accepted Jesus into my heart and declared that I loved Him. I believe this was the point where I put my faith in Jesus but at the same time when you’re so young it’s really hard to grasp everything that He’s done for you.”

After finishing eighth grade Tara’s life as she knew it ended: “God took me through the fire for the first time and my faith was really made my own.”

She was holidaying with family and friends over the summer break when she woke up that dreadful morning unable to move. The family was forced to return home so she could rest but the intense pain would not go away.

Tara had to miss school when it started again because she was in too much pain to attend classes. She would constantly throw up and was unable to do the simplest of tasks. “It felt like my muscles had just shrivelled up,” she recalls. “I was just laying at home, doing therapy, eating, sleeping, and then repeating.”

As she slowly recovered, Tara found herself getting back into a normal routine. Yet she still struggled. “I didn’t want people to see how I looked because I had gained weight and never put makeup on,” she says. “I had so much social anxiety that I didn’t have any friends. I was really far behind on my schoolwork.”

Thankfully, after leaning on encouragement and support from God and her parents, Tara bounced back. Her health continued to get better and she made some new friends.

One of those new friends was a guy that Tara immediately hit it off with.

The guy was not a Christian and friends and family soon flagged him as bad news. Tara was not willing to listen though.

“I ended up running around and lying and telling my parents that I was at a friend’s or at my cousin’s when I was actually at this guy’s house. The deceit got so bad. He was not a good influence on me.”

Over the next six months, Tara kept running back to



Michael asking Tara to marry him in a romantic ceremony.

him instead of running back to God.

“This was a time when I was so far away from God,” she says sadly. “I was still going to church and to youth group but I didn’t really care to be there. I never picked up my Bible. I was so deep in sin. I knew I was in rebellion against God but I ignored it. I wanted to feel loved. I wanted to be in a relationship with someone. I wanted to feel beautiful.”

Finally, Tara realised how bad things had got.

“I remember sobbing in my room. I felt like this was the breaking point. I realised how deeply I had hurt everyone around me – including Jesus. I claimed to live for Him, yet I was living in sin and ignoring Him. That’s what broke me. That was a really painful summer.

“I had to cut off all communication with the guy. I had to earn back the trust that was broken with my parents. I had to get back into communication with God. I started reading my Bible, praying and getting to know God again. I knew He forgave my sin but I had to get back into a stronger relationship with Him.”

Later, 17-year-old Tara met Michael, whom she dated for four years prior to their recent engagement. On August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, Michael got down on one knee and asked Tara to marry him with a large beautiful waterfall as their backdrop. “He’s such a blessing from

God,” she smiles. “Looking back on that day, I can see God’s faithfulness and provision written all over it.”

Tara graduated high school and God opened doors for her to be accepted into a major university and pursue her dream of becoming a surgeon. However, one day, as she was sitting in a class with 200 other students, a weird feeling came over her and a thought entered her mind: “This is not what I want to do.”

Tara dropped out of university and moved back home but

“all of this was leading me to where I was supposed to be.”

Now, amongst the flurry of wedding planning, Tara is pursuing ministry in Biblical counselling – something she is passionate about.

“My story is so unconventional. I thought it was going to be this cookie cutter mould but God showed up time and again. No matter the hurt, the pain, or the uncertainty, He has our best in mind and that pain and uncertainty and anxiety is a way to push us closer to Him.”



Faith and fashion blogger Tara Sun shares about purity on Youtube.

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Published 11 months of the year by Challenge Literature Fellowship (ABN 98 206 125 814) in association with the international family of Challenge newspapers.

Editor: Carl Carmody.  
Staff writers: Jody Bennett, Janice Teo, Ainsley Gaebler.

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nudge

## Information and life

**WHAT** is something computers and humans have in common which constantly needs upgrading in computers but not in humans? The answer is software. You might not have realized that you have software but inside the nucleus of each of your cells a program is written in the form of three billion DNA letters.

Intelligent programmers write computer software but what about living things? Evolutionists tell us that the information in the first living cell just appeared by itself, with no intelligent input required. But is that possible? The answer is a resounding no.

Even one of Australia’s best known scientists, Paul Davies, conceded that, “There is no known law of physics able to create information from nothing.” And perhaps that’s why, in a *New Scientist* article, he lamented, “How did stupid atoms spontaneously write their own software? Nobody knows.”

Those who believe in divine creation however, know that God wrote our genetic code in His own image – which is why we have the ability to write code ourselves!



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

# A Covid cure for Christmas?

Laugh



LET us imagine that this Christmas a Covid vaccine was released that was not only free but that those that took it said was 100% effective and lasted your whole lifetime. If you took it, you would never test positive and you would never sicken or die of Covid-19. You might get a few symptoms – a cough or a bit of chest pain – but you would never get the disease.

Would you take it?  
I saw a survey recently that said only 46% of people would take a vaccine that the US hope to release before the end of the year. Now although that is different from our imaginary scenario, the results highlight at least two things.

Firstly, that even if a remedy is available, you have to choose to take it. Just the fact that it exists is not enough to cure you.

Secondly, that taking it requires an act of faith on your part – that you believe the vaccine will do what it says it will and not do other things that might harm you.

So, you have to believe and you have to act on that belief.

Sin is a much more deadly disease than Covid-19. It will destroy your life much more comprehensively and will definitely kill you, even if it takes 80 or 90 years. The Bible says “the wages of sin is death” – physical death and, even more terrifyingly, the second, spiritual death in hell.

That verse goes on to say, “but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23). Jesus has made

available a remedy – salvation through belief in His debt-paying death on the cross and death-defying resurrection from the grave.

But...

We have to choose to take the bitter pill of repentance – admitting we do, think and believe wrongly and want God to wash that away and help us to do, think and believe correctly.

And that takes faith – we have to believe that Jesus can save us from sin and hell, and that giving our lives over to Him will not harm us but heal us.

Those who have taken the salvation cure for sin testify that it is life-changingly effective. Their lives go from dark to light, the weight of their burdens falls away, joy floods their beings and they experience a deep peace. Their problems don't all melt away but they do have new strength to deal with them.

Christmas 2020 may be very strange, with perhaps travel disruptions, separated family and financial constraints like never before, but it could also be the richest and best of your whole life, if you embrace the sin-cure represented by the baby in the nativity and have faith for the eternal inoculation from hell that He offers.

See how in the text box on page 11. •

**Ponder**

# What if it is worse than we thought?

BY JODY BENNETT

I READ the other day that doctors suspect a link between Covid-19 and Parkinson's disease. Apparently the inflammation caused by Covid could have long-term effects on the body and lead to more serious repercussions later in life.

The longer the pandemic progresses, I imagine that may prove to be only the tip of the iceberg in terms of the ripple-effects of the scourge. Who knows what else one might be susceptible to after surviving Covid-19?

As I read that I wondered whether those people who believe Covid is only like the flu and have been so flippant about wearing masks and quarantining properly, would have thought differently if they realised that their actions could cause them to end up with Parkinson's?

It is a bit like people who think they can disregard God's moral laws as confining and restricting and live as they please. They might think they are only risking a short term consequence that they are prepared to wear, when in fact the long term implications of what they are doing are many times more serious.

The truth is that we know so little about Covid-19 and how it affects our

bodies, how long it stays in our systems and what it can do to us long term, that it makes sense to take precautions to never get it. Even if it is unlikely to kill us outright, it is going to affect our quality of life, perhaps considerably.

The same is true of sin. We humans think that our wrongdoings only have little consequences that affect us – our STD, our hangover, our bad high, our broken heart or jail stint; but our sins have long shadows that have knock-on consequences for those we love and invisible repercussions in our psyches and souls.

God knows. He made us and He told us how to live, not in order to curb our fun or limit our joy, but in order for us to have the most whole and fulfilling lives we could, because that is how He designed us to function.

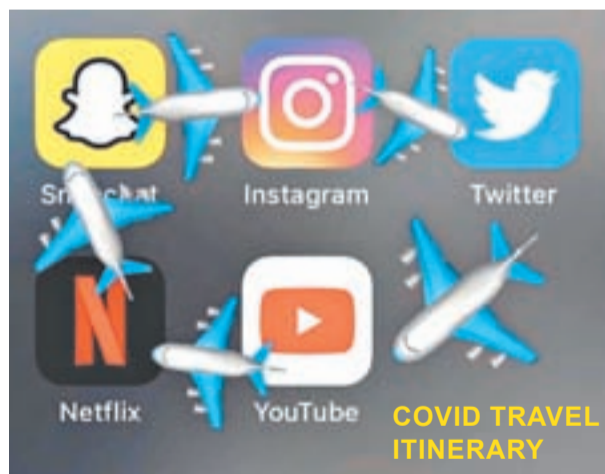
*Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper. Psalm 1:1*



This is Wilson. He is now working from home 😊



I don't want to adult today. I don't even want to be human today. Today I want to be a dog. I'll be lying on the ground in the sun. Please pet me and bring me snacks.



Travel plans in 2020 be like



**Be kind**



Policeman Jim Barrett of Hartford, Connecticut, converted a bomb squad truck into a mobile supply station stocked with food, clothing, and other essentials to help the homeless and needy during the pandemic.



Back in March, Brian Murphy contracted Covid-19, followed by his wife Dina. Despite how sick they were, both of them eventually made a full recovery and are now donating their antibodies to help others fight off the virus a little more easily. Combined they have donated at least 19 times.



# Engineer: design proves intelligence

Professor of Engineering Design Stuart Burgess talks to Philip Bell of Creation Ministries International

Prof. Stuart Burgess is an experienced engineer, turning his design eye on the biological wonders of the natural world in his book *Hallmarks of Design*.<sup>1</sup> He has also authored books on topics as diverse as the stars and human origins.

Stuart has published widely in his field, and co-edits a scholarly journal. His contributions to the field have been recognised by various prestigious awards over the years, most recently the 2019 James Clayton Prize - Britain's premier mechanical engineering award for his "exceptional contribution to mechanical engineering and related science, technology and invention".

Stuart has loved engineering since he was small.

"When I was a child I was always building cars and houses with Lego and this got me interested in designing for a job rather than just for fun. I feel very privileged to have worked for the European Space Agency on several big space projects and I now really enjoy my teaching job and researching engineering design at Bristol University."

Stuart is also a Christian who believes God created the world in six days.

So is it more difficult for engineers—who spend so much time considering designed objects—to embrace Darwinian evolution than it is for biologists? Stuart explains:

"Yes, for two reasons. Firstly, since the design by human beings is not

limited by the step-by-step change that evolution is limited by, human engineers *should* produce designs which are far more sophisticated than those found in nature. Yet the opposite is true. Nature has by far the most sophisticated designs. A second reason is that engineers know that you cannot design by making random mistakes. If you randomly change a single parameter in a car engine it will always result in a retrograde step. Design improvements always require careful planning and careful changing of many parameters at the same time."

Stuart has ample experience of this, including working on the design of a solar array for the Envisat ESA satellite, as he explains:

"The Envisat satellite cost £1.6 billion and has hundreds of thousands of components and several million separate pieces of design information, like dimensions and material properties. It would only have taken one or two errors in the design information and the whole mission would have failed. This kind of project illustrates how difficult design is and how design does not happen by chance."

Dr Burgess is impressed with many designs in the natural world, but one stands out to him:

"My favourite evidence is the peacock tail feather. It has beautiful iridescent colours produced by thin film interference. The feather has layers of keratin with precision thicknesses comparable to the wavelengths of the



The peacock is a brilliant feat of design. **INSET:** Professor Stuart Burgess speaks on YouTube.

individual colours of white light. The feather barbs are also incredibly well aligned to produce mathematical patterns.<sup>2</sup> The design of peacock feathers is so precise that engineers cannot replicate it. Yet the feathers seem to exist purely for decoration! I think that the peacock feather shows not only that there is a Creator but that the Creator is supremely wise and very caring. I have no doubt that God wanted humans to enjoy the beauty of the peacock feather."

Dr Jonathan Sarfati discusses many more amazing examples of such exquisite structures in his book *By Design*.<sup>3</sup> A recurring theme in the book is the way in which today's biologists are mimicking things they observe in the natural world. Stuart explains:

"Biomimetics involves copying or being inspired by design solutions from nature. Engineers are very interested in biomimetics because the natural world contains supremely optimized design. For example, birds and insects are supremely well designed for flight. Birds have inspired aeroplane designers for many years, including the Wright brothers who invented aircraft turning mechanisms after studying how birds turned in the air.

"Flying insects like dragonflies are another strong evidence for design because their flight mechanisms (and navigation systems<sup>4</sup>) are incredibly sophisticated. My own research group at Bristol University is developing micro air vehicles based on the wings of dragonflies. We have filmed dragonflies with high speed cameras

and recorded the exact flapping and twisting motion of their wings. We have then produced linkage mechanisms that can copy that motion in man-made micro air vehicles."

So God's designs set the standard to which engineers aspire in their work, even if they don't always acknowledge this.

"Sadly, I find that many scientists do not want to discuss "Intelligent Design" ID. One reason for this is that they are worried by the implications of there being a Creator, that they are then accountable to that Creator. Another implication is that they have a responsibility to give credit and glory to the Creator. But there are serious implications to every theory, including the big bang and evolution.

"If the big bang theory were true, then the Earth and man would be unimportant because we are lost in eons of time and megaparsecs of space. If evolution were true, then it would mean that the world had been created via a process of violence and death. So the fact that ID and creation have serious implications is not in itself a reason to avoid debating ID and creation."

Stuart explains how his Christian faith connects with the work he has

been involved in all these years.

"Engineering is a great profession for a Christian because it involves creativity. Man's ability to create is one aspect of our being made in the image of God. The difficulty of designing and building things that are relatively simple makes you realize how great is the wisdom and power of God who has made all things.

"I think the key to accepting Genesis as a literal account is to remember that God is infinite in wisdom and power. When you really grasp this, then you realize that creating the world in six days was never a problem for God."

#### References and Notes

1. *Hallmarks of Design*, Day One Publications, 2000—available from [www.creation.com/store](http://www.creation.com/store)
2. For a fascinating and detailed account, see Stuart's article, The beauty of the peacock tail and the problems with the theory of sexual selection, *Journal of Creation* 15(2):94-102, 2001; [creation.com/peacock](http://creation.com/peacock).
3. Available from [www.creation.com/store](http://www.creation.com/store) see p. 2. For examples of biomimetics, see [creation.com/biomimetics](http://creation.com/biomimetics).
4. Sarfati, J., Astonishing acrobatics dragonflies, *Creation* 25(4):56, 2003; [creation.com/dragonfly](http://creation.com/dragonfly).

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## HOW LONG WOULD A PIG LAST?

If a pig fell into the ocean, and floated about for a while, and decayed, and sank, how long would it be before the pig was just a scattered skeleton?

**Some scientists have actually TESTED this!**

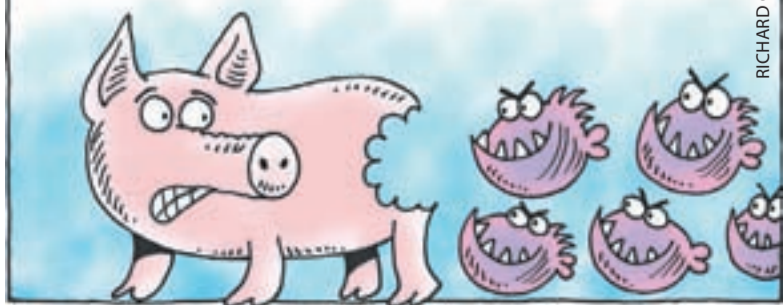
A science team chose a patch of ocean, then they got two dead pigs and lowered them about 1000 ft down. In came small shrimp-like creatures. Sharks took a bite or two and went away. The shrimps finished the pigs off, after a few days.

Evolutionists claim that fossils come from dead animals (and plants) which sank to the ocean floor and lay there for a long time, while they were gradually covered by silt. The science experiment with the pigs showed that evolutionists are completely wrong.

Decay is rapid. Scavengers move in quickly. There is no time for gradual covering by silt. Fossils are the result of – they **MUST BE** – the result of, **RAPID BURIAL**. The burial must be almost **INSTANT**, before any decay, or scavengers, can move in.

Fossils are evidence for the global flood, as described in the Bible.

RICHARD GUNTHER



Prof. Stuart Burgess, BSc, PhD(Brun), CEng, FIMechE, is Professor of Engineering Design, Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Bristol (UK). He is a world expert on biomimetics, and leads the Design Engineering Research Group at his university. Dr Burgess is the author of over 40 papers published in secular science journals, and another 50 conference proceedings. He has also registered seven patents.

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# BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

## HOW CHRISTMAS CHANGED MARRIAGE FOREVER

BY ROB FURLONG

**HAVE** you ever wondered how different our world might be if Jesus had never been born?

For example, as a direct result of His emphasis on love, mercy and compassion, Christians set up organizations such as hospitals, universities, a just and fair judicial system, orphanages and centres caring for the poor.

All because a baby was born in a stable two thousand years ago.

One of the most profound impacts Jesus has had upon our world is in the area of our relationships, especially those between husbands, wives and the family unit.

When Jesus was born, the marriage relationship was at a very low ebb in the Roman Empire.

In fact, marriage was regarded

by many as nothing more than an institution for the birth and raising of children.

The men of Ancient Rome had a saying that went something like this, *"We have wives for the bearing of legitimate children, courtesans for pleasure and mistresses for love."*

Divorce was rampant. One historical source recounts the fact of a husband and wife being on their 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> marriage respectively!

Historians have demonstrated that adultery was so common in Roman society it caused very little concern for people and prostitution was widespread.

The issue of divorce was also a problem in Judea. The debate over what was considered as legitimate grounds for divorce was a hot topic among the Jews in Jesus' day, with one Rabbi going so far as to say that if a wife burned her husband's breakfast bagels or he no longer considered her to be pretty enough, then he was free to divorce her!

Into such a world, Jesus was born. And what a radical transformation to the relationships between wives,

husbands and families His teaching brought.

In place of adultery and sexual immorality, Jesus promoted and encouraged sexual faithfulness between married couples.

Instead of easy divorce, Jesus advocated lifelong commitment for married couples, speaking directly to the principle of permanence in marriage when He said, *"Let no one split apart what God has joined together."*

As the message of Jesus spread across the world, countless lives were transformed and released from the bondage, pain and hurt caused by sexual promiscuity and the easy breakup of marriages and families.

Men and women discovered the joy of loving one person *for life* and the family unit grew more stable and secure.

The impact of Jesus and Christianity on marriages and families was so great that in 125AD an Athenian philosopher wrote the following defense of Christianity to the Emperor Hadrian:

"They (Christians) do not commit adultery or immorality ... Their wives, O king, are as pure as virgins, and their daughters are modest. Their men abstain from unlawful sexual contact and from impurity, in the hopes of

recompense that is to come in another world."

At an even more practical level, because countless numbers of people committed themselves to Jesus and His teachings on marriage and the family, literally millions of people throughout history have been spared the pain caused by sexually transmitted diseases.

As one author said:

"Had Jesus not come, far more people would continue to act like the people of the ancient world – many of whom had no control over their urges. What would have happened to the human race if sexual diseases had been left unchecked to wipe out a large segment of the population? In short, if Jesus Christ had not been born, you might not have been born either!"

What if Jesus had never been born? Take time to thank God this Christmas for the birth of His Son because His life has transformed our relationships in so many ways!



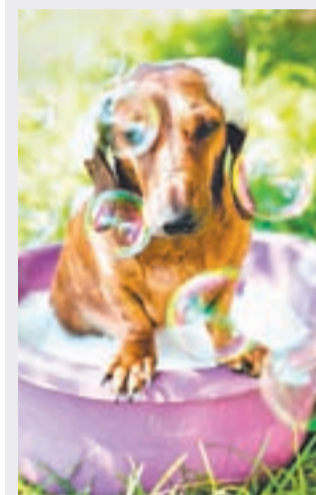
## Lessons from a sausage dog (Part 8)

BY JODY BENNETT

IT never ceases to amaze me how our sausage dog is attracted to the most revolting things!

I mash up old vegetable off-cuts for our worm farm and Carrie loves to put her nose in the bucket and get a good few licks of the green, soupy mess.

She also likes bird carcasses that she finds on our walks, cat faeces and any empty food wrappers.



We are often saying, "Yuck, Carrie! Leave that alone, you disgusting dog!"

What we think smells and looks awful, she finds enticing. Sometimes she even takes perfectly clean, fresh bones that we give her and buries them in the garden until they smell really bad before she eats them.

Aren't people just the same? There is something in us attracted to darkness, evil, shameful deeds and dirt.

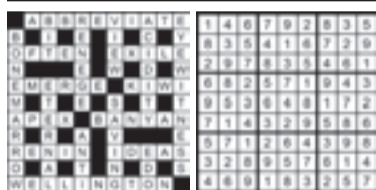
We often enjoy gossip, horror stories, tales of murder and mayhem, and things that are occult and mysterious.

Look at T-shirt designs, children's toys, movies or even our language – wicked and sick are the modern slang for things we like!

I think God must sometimes look at me, the way I look at my dog and say, "Yuck, Jody, that's filthy! Leave it alone! It will make you sick!"

Sometimes the things we are drawn to must make God sick to His stomach, so to speak, the way the worm food nauseates me.

That is why we need to read the Bible. So that we start to develop spiritual senses to see, smell and taste like God does. So that we will approve of what is holy and righteous, instead of what is tainted by sin. As Romans 12:2 says, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will."



## How can I become a Christian?

**Anyone can gain the eternal life offered though Jesus Christ**

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

<b>OUR PROBLEM:</b>	<b>Separation from God</b> <i>"Everyone has sinned. Nobody is good enough because God's standards are perfect"</i> (Romans 3:23)	<b>ADMIT</b>
<b>GOD'S REMEDY / SOLUTION:</b>	<b>Jesus died on the cross</b> <i>"God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"</i> (Romans 5:8)	<b>BELIEVE</b>
<b>OUR RESPONSE:</b>	<b>Trust Jesus by receiving Him</b> <i>"To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God"</i> (John 1:12)	<b>COMMIT</b>

Here is an example of how you can pray.

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

The Lord Jesus says: *"I tell you the truth. Everyone who believes in me has eternal life."* (John 6:47). He gives life of a wonderful quality that continues forever.

**AS A NEXT STEP:**

<p><b>If you prayed the above prayer, tick this box</b> </p> <p><b>I have prayed this prayer.</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please send me:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bible</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Some 'starting off' literature</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Information on a helpful church</p>	<p><b>If you have NOT prayed the prayer at this stage, tick this box</b> </p> <p><b>I would like to think about this.</b> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please send me:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> More information as I am inquiring about being a Christian.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have a problem (see attached letter)</p>
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\* Please tick and write clearly \*

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## Take a breather

IN 1983, *Time* magazine ran a cover story titled, "The Epidemic of the Eighties," an article that described stress as the leading health problem in the United States. More than 35 years later, not much has changed: an estimated 75 to 90 percent of doctor visits today are, at least to some degree, believed to be stress related. In addition, chronic stress is linked to the six leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver, and suicide.

Maybe that's partly why the four-day workweek has gotten a lot of airtime recently: when a Microsoft subsidiary gave it a shot in 2019, productivity spiked 40 percent.

Studies have also found that employees who regularly take their holiday entitlements are happier and more productive than those who work harder.

Now a book by a Texas pastor explains how rest was always built into God's design for us and our world. Sabbath rest is not only one of the ancient 10 commandments but a way to express a belief in God's provision and our dependence on Him.

It reminds us that we are not invincible or essential. We are human, needy and weak. Just an imbalance in one of our hormones or a few hours lack of sleep, just a tiny splinter or a missed meal can throw us off our game. When we rest we acknowledge that we can't do it all and that we are not God.

Robert Morris's book called *Take the Day Off*, came out of an episode he now jokingly calls "the great underwear crisis of 2004."

He had just returned home from an overseas trip when he opened his underwear draw to find a single pair of clean underwear and no washed socks. Looking back, Robert sees now how silly his so-called "crisis" was, but at the time,

it left him distraught and in tears.

Overtired, overworked, and over-extended, he was having a breakdown. "That was when I began praying and reading the Bible about the issue and God showed me the principle of resting one day a week: what to do, and what not to do, and how to actually rest," he says.

Because God made us, He knows how we function best. "If we will follow God's principles in Scripture," he said, "then He'll provide for us. ... If we live by the principles [in the Bible], there are blessings and there are benefits, and there are consequences if we don't."

According to Robert, following the Biblical command to rest is one of the best ways to reduce the dangerous levels of stress plaguing our society.

In his book, the pastor explains every person has four tanks: a mental tank, a physical tank, a spiritual tank, and an emotional tank. Each "tank" gets emptied into those around us, and needs to be regularly refilled. He likens it to "these big fuel tankers that drive down the road and fill up gas stations." They have to refuel in order to have something to give.

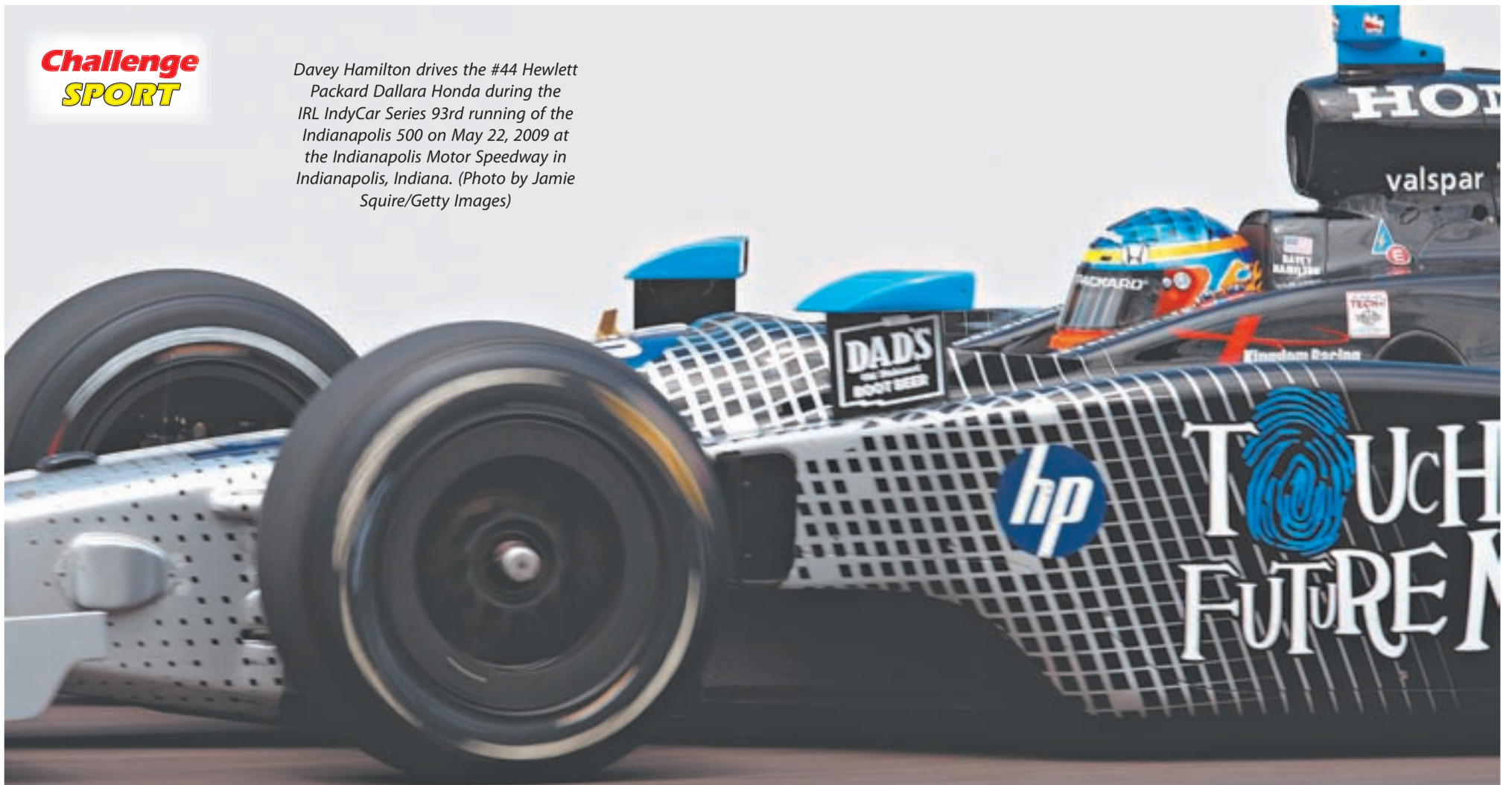
"I felt God say to me, 'You don't like to just sit around and do nothing, so you just keep on driving. But what you don't realize, Robert, is you're just running on fumes, and I really need you to go back to the 'refinery', and just sit down, and relax and rest, so you will be able to refuel others,'" Robert shared.

If people started to get this right, many of the problems impacting our culture - anger, anxiety, and certain mental health issues - could be reduced.

"Everyone who implements this principle comes back and tells me, 'Thank you. That's one of the best practices I've ever implemented in my life.'" To learn more read Robert Morris' book *Take the Day Off*, available online. ●



Davey Hamilton drives the #44 Hewlett Packard Dallara Honda during the IRL IndyCar Series 93rd running of the Indianapolis 500 on May 22, 2009 at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in Indianapolis, Indiana. (Photo by Jamie Squire/Getty Images)



# LEG CRUSHING CRASH

For many years, Davey Hamilton worshipped the sport of auto racing. "Racing really was my god. Racing was what I strived for, what I lived for," he says. "If it wasn't on my mind, thinking about what my next step was, or what my next ride was, dominated my thinking or, 'What do I want my next uniform to look like?' or 'Who is my next sponsor?'"

"When I was two years old, my dad started racing and I kind of followed in his footsteps from that point," he says.

Like many young drivers, Davey set his sights on the Indianapolis 500 early in life.

"That was my goal, knowing that only 33 drivers a year make that race," he says.

When Davey was a young man, a co-worker led him to faith in Jesus Christ. "A guy that I worked with at my dad's company was a believer, and you know, you talk all day at work. I would just listen every day, and it just really opened my eyes. So I went to church, made a commitment of my life to Jesus Christ and got baptised."

For much of his adult life, though, racing took priority over his faith. Davey found it more and more difficult to commit to both. He also watched several of his friends die on the track, including his best friend, Billy Yukovich. Billy was killed during a sprint car race in 1990.

"That was a very trying time, when Billy passed away," Davey recalls. "I'll never forget how alone I felt, because he was my best buddy."

Billy's death haunted Davey for the next 11 years. Then, on June 9, 2001, at the Texas 500, Davey's own career came to a skidding halt.

"The guy I was passing got oil on

his tyres. He lost control, and I just happened to be on the side of him, at the wrong place at the wrong time," he says. "He caught the back of my car. It turned me around and it flung the car upside down. The poles just sheared off the front of my car, and it left my legs completely exposed to the race track."

Davey's legs were dragged underneath the car for several hundred yards. When he finally came to a stop, the track paramedics treated him and put him on a life-flight to a local hospital. For the next several hours, it looked as though Davey would lose both of his legs.

Davey's doctors were eventually able to save his legs.

"I knew I needed God more than ever before. I was relying on Him like never before," Davey says. "The first few months were pretty intense. A lot of intensive care units, a lot of transplant units. They took muscles and bones out of my hips and knees. There were 21 surgeries within two years' time, and a lot of rehab time. But the doctors were really amazing, what they were able to do with my legs."

During his lengthy recovery, he had plenty of time to think about his life, his faith, and his future in racing. Davey says he also asked God a lot of questions during this time.

"Lying in that hospital, and praying like I did, every day I asked 'Why? You know, 'Why me?'" Davey says. "I felt like I was living a clean life and my life was in His hands, and I was a believer, and I just couldn't

understand it.

"But what I found out was that, everything gets answered. It just may not get answered right then."

Davey did not want to give up racing. But he also knew it could no longer be his god. "I said, 'You know what? I'm not finished with this game. I'm down and out, but I'm not finished.' That was part of my drive, and my determination was getting back in a race car. I didn't want my career to end that way," he says.

After his recovery, Davey partnered with George del Canto's organization, Kingdom Racing, which helps racing families going through hardships, hosts music events at racetracks and sends groups to speak about Jesus to individuals during races.

In 2008, Kingdom Racing made history as the first faith-oriented team to compete in the Indy 500, with Davey in the driver's seat. Today, he is their Managing Director.

Davey says God has answered the questions he had about his crash. "There are so many things [like speaking engagements] I wouldn't have the opportunity to do, to reach out and enlighten that one person, or help make somebody a believer. I don't know that I would have had the strength or the opportunities or the know-how to do that if I didn't go through what I went through."

The crash also saved Davey's marriage. "The day of the accident was the day my wife, Tracey, and I had decided to get divorced ... I now know if I did not have that

accident and if I hadn't gone through those tough times, my family and I wouldn't be together today."

Davey says now his passion is to share the love of Christ through motorsports. "Wherever we race, we bring underprivileged kids to the event, and show them behind the scenes, and just give a little bit of love, a little bit of direction, and sit down and talk to the kids and their parents and show them what prayer does," he says. "We've all had tough times in our lives that we were able to overcome through Jesus Christ, and we just want to pass that on." •



Racecar driver Davey Hamilton attends Macy's and IZOD's celebration of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and the Indy 500 at Macy's Herald Square on May 25, 2010 in New York City. (Photo by Ben Hider/Getty Images)

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