

BROKEN OUTSIDE BUT WHOLE WITHIN

Nick Vujicic knows intimately what it is to feel different and rejected. He was born with tetra-amelia syndrome, an extremely rare disorder that leaves a person without fully formed limbs. Nick has no legs just, what he calls, a “chicken foot”, and no arms.

“It was so hard to be strong when people constantly told me, ‘You are not good enough. Go away. We do not want anything to do with you,’” Nick remembers sadly.

Nick was born in Melbourne, Australia, to two Christian Serbian immigrants from Yugoslavia.

“My dad said that his head was next to my mum’s as I was being born,” Nick told The 700 Club. “He saw my shoulder and that I had no right arm. He had to leave the room because he could not believe what he had seen. The doctor came in, and my dad said, ‘My son has no right arm.’ [The doctor] replied, ‘No, your son has no arms or legs.’ My Dad nearly fell on the floor.

“At first, my mum did not want to hold me or breastfeed me. She just felt very uncomfortable for the

first four months. It took her and Dad quite a while before they could trust in God that He did not make a mistake; that He did not forget them or me.”

Nick’s parents handed their fear about their son’s disability over to the Lord Jesus, choosing to trust Him and His promise that He had a plan and a purpose. However, as the years passed, Nick, on the other hand, had difficulty trusting in a God that he felt had given him less.

“I challenged God,” Nick recalls. “I said, ‘God, I know that I am a sinner. I know that I will not have peace until You are in my heart. But I will not let You into my heart until You answer me, why? Why did you take my arms and legs? Why didn’t You give me what everybody else has? God, until You answer that question, I will not serve You.’”

One day, at the age of eight, Nick decided to end it all. “If God was not going to end my pain, I was going to end it myself,” he says.

Nick tried to drown himself in a bathtub filled with four inches of water, but he couldn’t do it. “The

thought that stopped me from going through with it was the love I had for my parents. I loved them so much, and all they did was love me. I pictured my funeral. I pictured my parents, and all I saw was guilt on their shoulders that they could not have done more.”

One day, when he was 15, Nick’s mother had him read an article about a severely disabled man, which had a great impact on his life. She told him, “Nick, God’s going to use you. I do not know how. I do not know when, but God’s going to use you.”

“I have a choice,” Nick says, “to either be angry at God for what I do not have or be thankful for what I do have. That’s when I started seeing that there is no point in being complete on the outside when you are broken on the inside. I found out that God can heal you without changing your circumstance.

“So I gave my life to Jesus Christ. In the Bible, I read through the ninth chapter of the Gospel of John. It was about this man who was blind from birth. People asked Jesus, when He saw him, ‘Why was this man born that way?’ Jesus answered, ‘It was done so that the works of God may be revealed through him.’”

“WHY DIDN’T GOD GIVE ME WHAT EVERYBODY ELSE HAS?”



Australian preacher and motivational speaker Nick Vujicic displays his “chicken foot” and his humour to an audience during his public lecture at Zhengzhou International Convention and Exhibition Center in 2012 in China. (Photo VCG/VCG via Getty Images)

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Mark Cox has done more in his life than he ever could have imagined.

Off drink into dream life

I grew up in an Aboriginal community at One Arm Point, about 210 km north of Broome in the West Kimberley region in Western Australia. My grandmother and my dad raised me. My dad and mum separated when I was about two years old, and I was left with my dad and grandmother to take care of me. My dad came from a Catholic Mission, Beagle Bay, and Mum from Sunday Island, in the King Sound area.

One Arm Point to many

white folks, who visited, was known as paradise, with its clear blue waters and white sandy beach. Sometimes I wonder why God took me away from paradise, but I believe He had His reasons, because I used to go to Sunday School at the community. My Sunday School teacher convinced my dad and my grandmother and the rest of the family that I should go to a Christian boarding school down south. In 1982, I was sent to Roelands Christian Mission, which was situated between Bunbury and Harvey.

I spent every Sunday going to Church and Bible study on the mission. One night a friend asked me if I wanted to ask Jesus into my life and I said, “OK”, so he prayed for me by

placing his hand on my head and asking Jesus and the Holy Spirit to come into my life. While on the mission I heard about my dad’s passing.

After a year at Roelands Mission, I was sent to Perth, to a boys’ hostel in Mt Lawley, and I attended Cyril Jackson High School. I used to spend weekends going to Christian youth groups on Saturday night, and Sunday night church service, on Sundays. That was in 1983. I joined the East Perth Sports Club, playing basketball and football. I was all around State Champion in Basketball for the under 16s, representing the East Perth Club.

After a year in Perth, I went back to the Kimberleys.

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Fun for Kids

Pages 5,6,7



GOD’S GOLFER

ANDREW GEORGIU

Is there a light at the end of the tunnel?

BY ALAN BAILEY

DO you ever wonder where the human race is heading? Is it flat out going downhill to its own destruction or is there a bright peaceful future on the way? Opinions will range between these poles but I fancy pessimism is in the majority. There are so many signs of civilization coming apart at the seams. Acts of cruelty, oppression and war are on the increase. Weapons are becoming more frightening as technology advances. We look to national leaders to navigate the way forward, but agreement is hard to find. Hatreds, prejudices and cruel ideologies keep getting in the way.

Do you wonder if anyone is in charge, in a sovereign way, ruling over everything? The reports we see and hear from the media day after day don't encourage the idea. All seems so random, outcomes seem so unsatisfactory, human wisdom and human nature disappoint—let's face it. We are not able to rescue ourselves.

Does the Bible reveal some light at the end of the tunnel? Is there any sense in history's long line of events? Yes there is. The world looks



like a mighty maze, but it is not without a plan.

The main reason why it looks so ugly in places is that there is such a thing as evil. You see evidences of it every day. God is holy in an absolute sense and is utterly opposed to it.

Rather than come down on all evil with the heavy hand of a despot, God has allowed Satan a certain measure of freedom. Evil needs to run its course. As part of His great plan He gave the beloved Son Jesus to die for sinners on a cross. His rising from the dead heralds the final victory of God. He doesn't want angry conscripts in His kingdom, He wants those who will love and serve Him willingly and gladly.

Today we see the nations gathering in the Middle East in a way that the Bible forecast many years ago. Final scenes of battle lie ahead. The prophets have so far been spot on. God's great program is nearing its consummation.

Which calls for the question, "Whose side are you on?" It's all-important that we bow the knee to the one and only Saviour, Jesus. He said "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Broken outside, but whole within

From page 1

"I believe God breathed life and faith into me," Nick shares excitedly. "This peace came over me. I felt like God answered my question that I had been waiting for. The question I had asked was: 'Why did you make me this way?' The answer was: 'Do you trust Me?' When you say yes to that question, nothing else matters. There was nothing else I could find. There was nothing else that could give me peace. I knew arms and legs would not give me peace anyway. I need to know the truth of who I am, why I am here and where I am going when I am not here. I have not found that truth anywhere else but in Jesus Christ."

By the age of 19, Nick started reaching out to others and bringing them the Gospel of Jesus, through sharing his own story about how God has changed his life and given him a hope and a future.

In the last decade, Nick has shared his testimony [personal story] in 24 countries to over three million people. He is the founding president and CEO of the non-profit organisation and ministry, Life Without Limbs. He has also written an autobiographical book, Life Without Limits, on how his faith in God has helped him to find



Nick Vujicic and his wife Kanae, with their eldest two children.

his own sense of purpose.

Nick is married to Kanae and together they've had four children, Kiyoshi, Dejan and identical twins, Olivia and Ellie.

"I want to look right at you and tell you that God loves you," Nick concludes. "He has not forgotten your pain. He has not forgotten your family. Maybe you're comparing your sufferings to my suffering, but that is not where hope is. Hope is in the name of God, the name of our Lord

Jesus Christ. Hope is when you compare your suffering to the infinite, immeasurable love and grace of God!

"Isaiah 40, verse 31 says, 'Those who wait upon the Lord, who renew their strength, shall mount up on wings as eagles.' I do not need my circumstance to change. I do not need arms and legs. I need the wings of the Holy Spirit. I am flying, because I know Jesus is holding me up.

"Don't give up on God, because God will not give up on you."

Off drink into dream life

From page 1

My mum was living in Kununurra, with her second husband and two kids. My two older brothers were also in Kununurra. I went to Kununurra to visit and stay with my mum. In Kununurra I mixed with the wrong teenage crowd, and ended up drinking alcohol and smoking. I started drinking alcohol at 16, in 1985. I drifted away from God and the church.

Alcohol ruined my life. I drank from 1985 to 1996. There were a lot of broken relationships that I went through. I played football and was good at it but alcohol got the better

of me. There were only three things in my life of drinking: fighting, jail and hospital for alcohol poisoning.

In 1994 God came back into my life. I had a very bad hangover from drinking for two weeks in town. One Saturday night a cloud of blackness shadowed my mind. I could not see a thing. I was afraid and called out to God to forgive me for every wrong thing in my life and take away all the darkness. The blackness left me and I could see again. I felt the Holy Spirit come over me and felt peace in my heart. I felt the love of God and tears started running down my face. In that instant God took away my desire to drink and smoke. I knew God had forgiven me, and that He was real.

In Jeremiah 33:3 God says: "Call to me and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know." In my new-found faith in Christ, I wanted to follow Him and so I got baptized in Kununurra in the Order River, during a big Christian convention in 1997.

Since giving my life to Jesus Christ, God has blessed me in taking me to places that I used to only dream about going, and helping me to do things I never thought I'd do. God helped me in getting a driver's licence, and to study at a training centre in Derby for two years, in 1996-1997.

In 1998 - 1999 I did a mission training course with Youth With A Mission (YWAM) in Darwin. That led to doing mission outreach through outback Australia (from Darwin to Coober Pedy in South Australia) and on an outreach mission trip to Indonesia - to Bali and Lombok Island.

"JESUS CAME TO GIVE ME LIFE TO THE FULL"



In Acts 1-8, Jesus said, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

In 2003 I did a two-year course at Perth Bible College.

After returning to the Kimberleys, I enrolled in Notre Dame University in Broome to do a two-year Education course, graduating in 2006. I was cast as an extra in the award-winning movie Bran Nue Dae in 2008.

In 2011, I needed to refresh my spirit so I went to Brisbane to study at the Nazarene University. I spent two years there. Since returning from Brisbane I have worked in different jobs in Broome. In July 2015 God called me to work with Aboriginal students from the Kimberleys and around Western Australia, at the Christian Aboriginal Parent School (CAPS) in Coolgardie, in the gold-fields. I now live in Broome and fellowship in the Peoples Church, helping out in leading the Sunday night service.

In John 10:10, Jesus said: "I have come that you may have life and have it to the full."



Mark Cox

Crossword

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| ACROSS | 8 Choice part of a group | 14 With few storeys (3-4) | DOWN |
| 7 Acquired relative (2-3) | 9 Foot part | 17 Short snooze | 1 Money manufacturer |
| | 10 Rubbish, trash | 19 Hold tight | 2 Toolbox item |
| | 11 Cancel a subscription | 20 Role player | 3 Gulp of drink |

1		2		3		4		5		6
7						8				
9				10						
11				12				13		
14		15				16		17		18
19						20				

SOLUTION PAGE 11

Sudoku

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

Puzzle Level: Medium

6	3	8
4	2	9
7	5	1

SOLUTION PAGE 11

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

Baby-faced Selena already wise about life

Actress and popstar Selena Gomez opened up recently about her lifelong journey with God at last year's Hillsong Conference in Los Angeles, attended by thousands of people.

She surprised worshippers at the concert with a performance of her song "Nobody", which alludes to how no one can love her like God does and is included in her *Revival* album.

The 25-year-old singer also shared her testimony in the form of a letter, which details her life from a child until now.

"You already have faith, but you have no idea what you have faith in," Selena says of her 15 year old self. "You are already being pursued by God who knit you together and called you His, but you still do not know that this can be more than a nightly prayer, you do not know that this will become the most important relationship."

Selena was born to teenage parents in Texas and suffered emotionally as a child. She blamed her mother for her parents' separation when she was five years old. Without her dad, the family struggled financially. They scrounged up quarters to put petrol in the car and frequently fed on spaghetti from the Dollar Store.

"I was frustrated that my parents weren't together and never saw the light at the end of the tunnel where my mom was working hard to provide a better life for me," she shares. "My mom was really strong around me. Having me at 16 had to have been a big responsibility. She gave up everything for me, had three jobs, supported me and sacrificed her life for me."

Selena got her start in acting with a childhood role as Gianna on *Barney and Friends*. Later, she landed the starring role of Alex Russo on the Disney Channel's *Wizards of Waverly Place* from 2007-12. She was following in the footsteps of fellow Disney stars Miley Cyrus, Nick Jonas and Demi Lovato, who kept squeaky clean images as Disney teens only to go off the rails when they branched out on their own.

Selena too seemed to be falling into the post-Disney struggles. She cultivated a sultry songstress image and ran with the Hollywood A-listers, including BFF Taylor Swift. Song after song topped the charts, and she became the girlfriend of a troubled Justin Bieber for a year, only to stumble through another year of on-and-off-again rumours.

Selena admits that her life in Hollywood was confusing and painful.

"I lived out my mistakes in front of the world, I was picked apart completely," she shares tearfully. "I wish I could tell you that it goes away, but it just gets bigger and bigger and you start feeling smaller and smaller."

Selena sought for peace and security to fill the void in her heart.

"I would show up and give my

heart, my every last ounce of energy on stage," she says. "I would think that these loud screams from thousands of people will be the very thing that saves me ... but it wasn't."

In 2015, Selena was diagnosed with an auto-immune disease, Lupus. She received chemotherapy to treat it and in August 2016, shrank from the spotlight due to symptoms associated with the disease.

In the summer of 2017, Selena underwent a kidney transplant, a kidney being donated to her by her good friend, actress Francia Raisa.

"There aren't the words to describe how I can possibly thank my beautiful friend," Selena captioned an Instagram post of her and Francia recovering from surgery, holding hands in side-by-side hospital beds. "She gave me the ultimate gift and sacrifice ... I am incredibly blessed."

Selena ended her post with the phrase, "Grace through faith" which is a reference to Ephesians 2:8, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God."



Selena Gomez attends Harper's BAZAAR Celebration of 'ICONS By Carine Roitfeld' at The Plaza Hotel on September 8, 2017 in New York City. (Photo: ANGELA WEISS/AFP/Getty Images)

When she was 23, her fame growing, Selena shared that she was "sitting in a church service and everything within me just shifted."

"The God that had been pursuing me all along felt tangible," she states. "The Holy Spirit spoke louder than anything that has called for my attention."

"On my 23rd birthday, Jesus became real to me. He was more than a nightly prayer, more than the strength of friends, more than the Name in a devotional, He became real."

"I am a Christian," the 25-year-old states unabashedly in a YouTube interview.

Selena has gone through many ups

and downs in her life and experienced pain and heartbreak, but her bold declaration of faith in Jesus has set the course for the well-known model and singer to begin a new path in life.

"Selena, you are enough!" she concludes her testimony. "Not because you have tried hard, not because you have loved hard or put on your best face. Not because you have been given a large platform and not because others tell you 'you are enough'. You are enough because you are a child of God who has been pursued from the very beginning. You are enough because His grace [undeserved love] has saved you and covered you."

nudge
WITH KARL FAASE

We are richer than we think

AUSTRALIANS are like most people in other western nations, in that we all think we are worse off than we actually are. Australian newspaper the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 2017 reported on one study.

The interactive calculator asked readers to guess how their household income compared with the rest of Australia.

About 80 per cent of users ranked their incomes somewhere in the middle three bands; less than half actually belonged here.

The majority of Australians believe they worse off financially than they actually are.

This is not surprising as people seek to give



the impression of wealth via the status symbols, which leaves everyone around them feeling poor.

It is another reminder that we would all do well to learn the great Apostle Paul's secret of a good life, learn to be content with whatever you have.

"Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, 'Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.'" (Hebrews 13:5)

Nashville Darling has all she needs

In 2012, people fell in love with TV drama *Nashville*, about country singers in America's country capital.

Well, Sarah Darling's story is a real-life *Nashville* plotline. In 2003, Sarah made her name known when she became a top-three finalist on E! Entertainment's *The Entertainer*, hosted by Wayne Newton.

Sarah came just short of winning, however, because Newton did not see her as a good fit for the Las Vegas crowd. He advised her to go to Nashville, Tennessee, to focus on her country music.

By 2009, her debut *Jack of Hearts* had made Country Music Television's top 20 countdown.

Her second album, *Angels & Devils*, was released in 2011.

In late 2012, her single *Home to Me* sold over 8000 copies in the first week of release and became the top-selling single from a new female artist since May 2011. It landed on US Billboard Hot Country Songs chart.

With a bright, clear voice, flowing blonde waves, and a collection of statement earrings, Sarah is the embodiment of country.

Only one thing sets her apart.

In 2009, as part of her debut album *Every Monday Morning*, Sarah released *Knowing What I Know*

About Heaven, the chorus of which goes: *Knowing what I know about heaven/ Believing that you're all the way home/ Knowing that you're somewhere better/ Is all I need to let you go*

She wrote that song, Sarah explains to *The Christian Post*, about her grandfather.

"When I was six, my grandpa went in for heart surgery," the singer says. "He died and they revived him and they said he had a year to live."

Her grandfather was still alive when she wrote the song, and still alive in 2013 when she told the story, 26 years after his attack. Sarah says she wanted to write a song that painted a picture.

"Why on earth would we want someone back here when they're going to heaven? [Heaven] is our home – our real home."

"It's a song that really helps people deal with death, which is a very difficult thing," she adds. "Doctors can tell you, 'You've got a year to live', but it's really up to God. He knows the day and the hour when you are meant to leave this earth."

Sarah has always been very open about her Christian faith and regularly credits God for the strength and perseverance it took her to make it in the industry.



Sarah Darling performs in Nashville, Texas. (Photo Getty Images).

"You can easily get lost in the music business if you don't have God as your centre, Christ as your centre," she says.

"Faith has always been the centre of what I do. Singing, life, everything – it gets me through and keeps me grounded."

"God gave me this gift and I want to use it in the right ways, but I can't let my head get too big. That would be my biggest struggle."

Once again, Sarah's grandfather comes into her story, because he is "a big part of [her] faith."

"I wouldn't call him a preacher,"

she says, "but he is probably the wisest person I've known on this planet. He loves the Lord and I ended up having an amazing childhood of having God centred in my life."

"I think that if I did not have my faith in Christ," she adds, "I could not do this career or have the patience or perseverance to go on with it. Faith keeps me in the right place and everything in perspective."

Sarah recognises the gift God has given her and she praises Him with it. As she sings in *All You've Got*, "You don't know God is all you need until God is all you've got."

“Jesus, take the controls”

The recent response of a Southwest Airlines pilot to imminent disaster, is a lesson to us all.

BY AINSLEY GAEBLER

Recently, the story of a Southwest pilot having to make an emergency landing amid engine failure has made world headlines.

On April 17th, Tammie Jo Shults, an ex-military pilot, safely guided the damaged aircraft to the ground after one of the plane’s engines blew up, sending shrapnel straight through a window. One passenger was partially sucked out of the broken window but was rescued and pulled back in, unfortunately dying later that day, while seven others sustained minor injuries.

Tammie Jo was hailed a hero by surviving passengers for her calm and level-headed response to the situation, which resulted in her saving the lives of the 149 people who were on board.



Southwest Airlines Captain Tammie Jo Shults, who was the pilot of Southwest Airlines Flight 1380 which experienced engine failure between New York and Dallas in April, during a meeting with US President Donald Trump and crew members and passengers of the flight in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC, May 1, 2018. (Photo Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty Images)



Investigators examine damage to the engine belonging to Southwest Airlines Flight 1380 that separated during flight on April 17, 2018 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Investigators can't explain with certainty why the engine malfunctioned but are directing their attention to metal fatigue on fan blades. One woman died due to the incident. (Photo Keith Holloway/National Transportation Safety Board via Getty Images)

However, the former Navy fighter pilot shares that she was not alone in that moment of crisis.

“My biggest goal amid the emergency landing and subsequent media coverage is that I can share my faith and it

can resonate and awaken people’s eyes to how great a God we have,” Tammie Jo shares. “I just want people to know that, the entire time, He was there with me, that He helped me to get in control of that plane.”

Tammie Jo is a Christian, active in her church and married to a fellow pilot with whom she has two children. She says that sitting in the captain’s chair gives her “the opportunity to share about Christ on almost every flight.”

Her journey into aviation was not easy and she had to overcome many obstacles in a male-dominated environment, eventually becoming one of the first women fighter pilots in the US military. But Tammie Jo’s commitment to excel in what she does has granted her a national platform by which she can share her faith in Jesus.

“[That safe landing] was because of God, not me. I was just a teammate and a co-captain. God was the captain,” she stated later.

This story made me stop and think about how many people are really willing to let God be the “captain” of their lives. We feel like we have a right to govern and dictate the course of our own lives, especially in modern society where ideas of independence and equal rights are strongly promoted. We want to live how we please, regardless of the consequences, because we think there is no one to answer to.

But the fact is, even when we think we are calling the shots in

our lives, we are really powerless to control situations, other people, the weather or even, many times, our own emotions. We pretend we are self-determining but really we are dependent on God for our every breath and every heartbeat.

Many people can testify to the relief and honesty there is in acknowledging their dependency on God and placing the reins of their life in His hands.

“THE ENTIRE TIME, JESUS WAS THERE WITH ME”

When a person first becomes a Christian, they have to be willing to turn everything over to God and make Him their Lord. When they do that, they can enjoy the peace and security of knowing that God is with them always and that He has everything

under control. Of course, becoming a believer in Jesus does not mean that you no longer make mistakes. We are all sinners, but turning away from our sin is the best thing about being a Christian. You can ask the Lord and others that you may have hurt for forgiveness and know that once you have been forgiven, your slate is wiped clean and you can start afresh.

Many a life has gone awry because it was not lived in submission and obedience to God. So, just as Tammie Jo turned over the controls of that plane to Him, let us, also, turn over the steering wheel of our lives to God. It is a great comfort to know that, in times of trouble, we don’t have to be brave or invincible, because our God is mighty to save.

Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign Lord comes escape from death. Psalm 68:20
“Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.” Psalm 91:14

1 min after you die

The third part in a short series that explores the ultimate end of us all.

BY RICK LEWERS

THE idea and hope of immortality beyond the grave is not new to any generation. An Egyptian corpse, for example, considered worthy of immortality was mummified and items useful for the afterlife buried with them. A Greek corpse had a coin placed between the corpse’s teeth so that the dead person would have the fare to pay the way across the mystic sea. American Indians were buried with their bow, arrows and pony for when they entered the happy hunting ground. Cryonics, cloning may be our 21st century equivalents.

Afterlife questions can only be answered with certainty from beyond the grave making Jesus Christ crucial. When Jesus was alive He pulled back the curtain on death and gave to a group of people, who loved money, a sneak peek into the afterlife. The story is not introduced as a parable. Jesus paints the reality, wanting to offer people an opportunity to understand death’s dual destinies. The story is found in Luke’s Gospel in the sixteenth chapter beginning in the 19th verse.

Two men, a rich man and a very poor bloke called Lazarus die and the distinctives around their deaths are remarkable, if not disturbing. For Lazarus there is no mention of a burial but there is of angels that carry him to his rest. The rich man is buried but there are no angels and his destination one minute after he dies is dreadful. One finds himself at Abraham’s side which is short hand for enjoying the promises of God’s heaven while the other finds himself in Hades, the place of the dead.

One minute after these men die four things are observable from what Jesus says. **Firstly the men are fully conscious.** While Lazarus is consciously at peace, the rich man knows thirst that can’t be quenched, requests that can’t be answered, and worry for his loved ones that can’t be satisfied.

Secondly, the men realise that their destinations are irrevocably fixed. A chasm lies between the two men such that nothing can cross to damage the peace of Lazarus but equally nothing can cross to satisfy the frustrations of the rich man.

Thirdly, both men recognise the rightness of their destinations. Lazarus rests thankfully while the rich man doesn’t rail against God about the unfairness of His justice, but recognises how wrong he has been about God.

Finally, with the focus particularly on the rich man, the rich man becomes committed to God’s mission to save people, not wanting anyone to come where he is.

Why the different destinations? Well it’s got nothing to do with rich or poor. Jesus says it’s got to do with Moses and the Prophets. That is to say it has got to do with living and trusting God’s word. God’s word was not enough for the rich man but he thought if someone came back from the dead then people would listen to God. He neither knew God or people because since Jesus rose from the dead, amazingly, people have kept trying to bury Him.

Pulling back the curtain on death, one minute after you die the future is one of two destinations. What’s at stake if you are unforgiven? Well relationally you are shot and unforgiven people are unwelcome people. So what happens one minute after you die if you meet God unforgiven? A right response to Jesus Christ who has risen from the dead and acceptance of the forgiveness He offers means you will never have to worry about the answer. Others will.

Lifeboat

BY JODY BENNETT

MY teenager was asked by a boy at school this week: “I’m an atheist does that mean that I am condemned to hell?”

She wasn’t sure what to say – as a Christian she knows that the Bible teaches that apart from belief in the atoning death of Jesus on the cross we all go to hell, but how to say that in a way that doesn’t sound harsh and judgemental?

It made me think of the analogy of a shipwreck. Imagine we are all in the water, we are all going to drown. Some of us don’t realise it because we are such good swimmers that we can’t yet see we are in trouble. Some of us are holding on to bits of the wreckage and think that that will save us. But like the survivors of the Titanic found out, the water is too cold, we can’t stay in it, we have to get out if we are going to live.

Those of us who are Christians have found the lifeboat, we are standing in it calling to those who are drowning, “You’re going to drown, come here, this lifeboat is



the only thing that can save you!”

How silly for the drowning to reply “How dare you say I’m drowning! I’m not drowning, I’m swimming just fine thanks. You think you are so special in that lifeboat, who do think you are? You’re no better than me!”

Christians know we are no better. But we also know that we have found out how to escape drowning, and from our perspective on the lifeboat we can see how those in the water are struggling, how cold and tired they are and how some of them are swimming in the wrong direction and getting further and further from help.

Christians are not arrogant and self-righteous when they say Jesus is the only way to salvation – they are rescued and dry and safe, and they want to share that hope with you. ●

MIRACLE PIANO PLAYER HIT THE RIGHT NOTE

Do you believe in miracles? Do you think God can perform inexplicable, supernatural feats in our modern era? How about an 11-year-old boy who can suddenly play the piano overnight? Impossible?

Grammy Award winning American Gospel singer Andraé Crouch spent over 40 years writing, recording and arranging music, yet never learned to read it, and played the piano at 11 without any lessons or practice.

Andraé was a singer, songwriter, arranger, record producer and pastor during the 1960s and 70s. He is referred to as “the father of modern Gospel music” by music professionals, for his talent at incorporating contemporary music styles into the church music he grew up with.

He was born in Compton, Los Angeles, along with his twin sister, Sandra, in 1942. His parents owned

a dry cleaning business and a restaurant in L.A., but they also preached on the streets and visited hospitals and prisons to tell others the Good News of Jesus Christ’s life, death and resurrection to save us from our sins.

According to his biography, *Through It all*, when

Andraé was nine years old, his father was invited to preach at a little church in Val Verde, California. There was only five people in the service, but he got behind that pulpit and he preached like there were a thousand people out there.

“We had never heard our father preach before, but here he preached on salvation,” Andraé remembered. “I went forward. I never experienced anything so great in my life. I accepted Jesus as my Saviour and my mother was right there with me. My father said, ‘repeat the sinner’s prayer’. I prayed it and I knew Jesus had come into my life.”

The church did not have a pastor so they invited Andraé’s father to become their pastor. It was there, two years later,

that Andraé’s miracle occurred.

“At the time, I was 11 and I stuttered really badly, I couldn’t say one sentence,” he wrote. “I could never testify to

anybody about my conversion because I stuttered. I wanted so bad to talk properly. So as a way of escape I would always just listen to music - gospel music.

“When it came time for my father to preach that Sunday morning, he said, ‘Andraé come up here.’ And I thought, ‘What does he want with me because he knows I can’t talk?’ He said to me, ‘Andraé, if God gave you the gift of music to play and sing for Him would you do it for His glory all your life?’ I said, ‘Yeah Daddy.’ My father laid his hands on my head and said, ‘God if you want me to preach, I’ll do anything you want me to do. If it’s your will for me to preach and give up my business then enable this boy to play music.’ I went back to my seat. The next day my mother went and

Andraé Crouch
in 2006 at
a Franklin
Graham
Festival at
Oriole Park at
Camden Yards.



got a cardboard keyboard. I thought, ‘What is this?’ But anyway, I got on it and pretended to play.”

He continued, “So to make a long story short, my father called me up to the front the next Sunday. They had started singing a song called ‘What A Friend We Have in Jesus’ and he called me up while they were singing it and I go, ‘What does he want now?’ I knew he wasn’t calling me up to play because I had never touched a real piano before.

“So I went up there and he said, ‘If you’re gonna play, play.’ He pointed down at the sustain pedal and said, ‘This holds your notes.’ And I said, ‘Okay’. And then my ears popped. I heard something go ‘pop’ and I found the tonic note, ‘What a Friend We Have in Jesus.’ I knew that was the key. It was the Holy Spirit. And I just started playing.”

Although Andraé studied elementary education in college and worked as a counselor for recovering drug abusers,

he was driven towards a music career.

He formed his first serious Gospel group during the early 1960s, *Andraé Crouch and the Disciples*. In 1977, the group released their first album, *This is Another Day*. Eventually the ‘Disciples’ name was dropped, as the albums were credited solely to Andraé.

His career quickly began to soar as he continued to release albums. His most well-known songs include the modern Gospel classics, “My

Tribute (To God be the Glory)” and “The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power”. In addition, Andraé, toured extensively and collaborated with pop artists such as Elvis Presley and Michael Jackson. He received nine Grammy awards and an Academy Award nomination.

After his father’s death, Andraé and Sandra spent a lot of time pastoring the church that their father pioneered. Even so, he was still in demand for his music.

“I give all the glory to God because it’s amazing!” Andraé said at the time. “Probably three-fourths of the songs [on my latest album] have come to me when I’m standing in the pulpit in the middle of a sermon - bam! Like a laser beam. And out of all the millions of people in this world, God gives ME a song.”

In early December 2014, Andraé was hospitalized for pneumonia and congestive heart failure.

A month later, he died in hospital of a heart attack at the age of 72.

His sister released the following statement, “Today my twin brother, womb-mate and best friend went home to be with the Lord. I tried to keep him here but God loved him best.”

‘Even worse than the Somme’

Walter Young was a British soldier in three of the greatest battles of World War One: the Somme, Ypres and Passchendaele – it is incredible that he lived through all three horrors.

Yet he would later describe his time as a POW (prisoner of war) as “the most miserable time of my life”.

Walter signed up in 1915, serving in the London Regiment (Post Office Rifles) for three years.

His last month in action was spent as a stretcher bearer, saving many lives. He was awarded the Military Medal for bravery under fire, but was shot and captured in March 1918 after enduring the horrors of trench life for three years.

Long after his death in 1957, his family discovered that Walter had written down his memories of the war.

Among those memoirs was the story of his time as a POW in a coal mine in East Prussia, where he and many others were put to work until their release in November 1918.

Despite being extremely shy and reserved, Walter arranged to hold a Christian service in the washroom where the men washed after working in the mine. As a Christian, he just felt he had to help his fellow prisoners, who were all suffering in the harsh conditions.

Using a New Testament (second half of the Bible) given to him by his church when he enlisted, it was the first of several services he led.

Even today, Walter’s New Testament falls open at Romans 12, so it’s highly likely that he would have read this chapter to his colleagues. It says: “Hate what is evil, hold onto what is good. Love one



WWI soldier Walter Young

another warmly as Christian brothers and be eager to show respect for one another.

“Work hard and do not be lazy. Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles and pray at all times... Ask God to bless those who persecute you – yes, ask Him to bless, not to curse.”

These words would have held particular relevance in the prisoner of war camp, but they were clearly precious to the 25-year-old former post office sorter from London. He read them repeatedly, not just through the War, but every week of his life.

Despite the horrors of battle, Walter wrote that his time as a prisoner was his worst in the war: “This was about the most miserable period of my life. True, life in the dirtiest and most dangerous trenches was worse while it lasted, but there was always the relief to look forward to if one

survived. But life for me at this time seemed one long round of almost unbroken misery with hardly anything to relieve it.”

Yet it was here that Walter felt that God was saying to him that his fellow prisoners were ‘sheep without a shepherd’. And so he asked a German officer for permission to hold a service. It was granted, and the series of services began.

At the first service, “all the accommodation was occupied and some were standing, and the congregation included not only British but Frenchmen and Russians as well. I suppose we numbered about 40 in all.

“It was a strange scene for a service. There was only one light and that was partially obscured by the steam from some boiler, which made a fairly loud hissing noise all the time. Nobody had a hymn book and it was obvious that only a very few well-known hymns could be chosen.

“So from my hymn book I read out the words, verse by verse, and most of them joined in the singing, which was led by a violin player. It was a very simple Gospel service.

“If anything was attempted with a feeling of unfitness and inadequacy surely it was these few services. But possibly that very feeling of weakness was my greatest strength, for I could place no dependence on myself or on others.”

He depended on God to help him serve his comrades, just as he had kept his trust in God on the frontline.

Returning home after the war, Walter married in 1922 and was a deacon at his church in North Islington for many years.

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Jesus's compassion for those who love porn

BY MO ISOM

For more than a decade I silently wrestled with a fixation on pornography and sexual exposure. From 8 to 18 I quietly sought out and filled my eyes, my mind, and my heart with shameful things. I learned to please my own body, sought out others to please it for me, and ultimately worshiped lust and lonely pleasure at a shadowy and anonymous altar.

But at the root, I knew it was empty. I knew it was debasing, I knew it was temporary and unfulfilling and demoralising. I felt void of actual love. I didn't think I was worth much to any man unless he first knew I was valuable sexually.

What my eyes had taken in for years and years, my heart had translated into feelings of insufficiency, into dependence on affirmation from others consuming the same perspective-warping things.

But then Jesus collided with my story.

HIS COMPASSION

At 19 I met a King who stared right at my sexual brokenness, filth, and defiled body, and then picked up my heart and called me redeemed. It was radical love, radical grace that changed everything. Just as Jesus met the woman at the well and offered her living water. Just as He cast no stone at the guilty adulteress.

Just as He used Rahab, the prostitute, in the lineage of the Messiah—He met me in my wandering. The fact

that He stood amid my filth—mercy outstretched and immovable—began to peel back the scales from my eyes in understanding how God responds to sexual sin.

All throughout Scripture we see Jesus traveling from town to town, place to place, having compassion on the afflicted, the sick, the lame, the suffering. And all throughout Scripture we see His love and mercy colliding with their trust in Him to bring about miraculous and life-changing healing.

Jesus saw the desperation of impure hearts that didn't even know the depth of their own depravity, and He was overwhelmed with compassionate pity. His love for them revealed the deep mercy of God—and if that was Jesus's heart toward the people then, I must believe it remains His heart toward people now.

We're living in a society that is feeding off our sin inclinations, our easily addicted natures, and our naïveté. We, the masses, are harassed by overexposure to sexual material. We're drowned in constant visual content that battles for allegiance and infatuation in our hearts. And we're blinded by images that muddy the clear vision of God's desire for purity. We're sheep without a shepherd, addicted to our lost wandering.

But even here Jesus meets us with compassion. His grace extends salvation to us and, in the same breath, refuses to leave us the same. The compassion of a God who sees us in our filth and washes us clean has

the power to alter our perspective. Because when we invite His Holy Spirit to censor our lives and make sensitive our eyes, His response changes our vision.

RECLAIM YOUR SIGHT

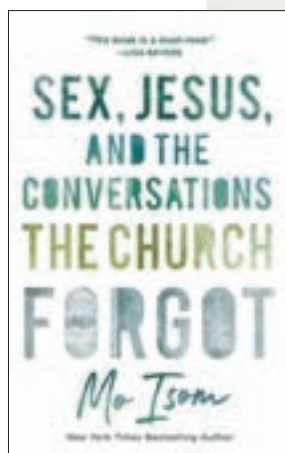
One of the most detrimental effects of sexual overexposure is that it changes the way we think about people—far more than we even realise. Humans become objects; humans become body parts. Individuals made in the image of a holy God ultimately become things to be used rather than people to be loved, valued, and seen. And when we reach a place where we're capable of dehumanizing others for our own sexual fulfilment, we're not only harming others but also draining our own soul of vitality.

If we want to understand the root of so many of our sexual issues, we'd be wise to pay attention to what we see and watch and read and how we're being desensitized. Our prayer must become, "God, give me eyes to see the world as You do". Then we will actually think about what we're consuming.

When the naked man on your screen is seen as an image-bearer of



Former All-American soccer goalkeeper Mo Isom is open about her past struggle with pornographic addiction.



the King being exploited for sexual reasons, your vision is renewed.

When the sex scene in the movie is seen as another cheap attempt by the box office to make money, your vision is renewed.

When you realize the reality TV show about singles willing to compromise just about anything to get a rose and a ring looks nothing like a pure and holy and God-honouring reality, your vision is renewed.

But most notably, when you begin to see the beauty of God's design for sex, you begin to understand why sexual sin breaks His heart.

We're called in Scripture to guard our eyes and guard our hearts fiercely. May we have the commitment of David, who promised, "I

will set no worthless thing before my eyes" (Psalm 101:3).

If we are what we see, may we fight to reclaim our sight and set our gaze on things that are true and holy (Philippians 4:8). May we fix our eyes on Jesus—the One whose love has the power to give us new eyes, new hearts, and new vision toward a world that is hurting.

This is an adapted excerpt from *Sex, Jesus, and the Conversations the Church Forgot* (Baker).

Mo Isom is the bestselling author of *Sex, Jesus, and the Conversations the Church Forgot* and *Wreck My Life*. She maintains a US speaking ministry and facilitates a faith-centred blog (moisom.com). Isom is a former All-American goalkeeper for the Louisiana State University soccer team and holds the LSU all-time goalkeeper record. She and her husband, Jeremiah Aiken, live with their two children in Atlanta, Georgia.

Betrayed and tortured, yet forgives

Jean-Louis Kassis works as a minister of religion, becoming a caring face for the abused, drug addicts, and alcoholics. Why? Because he knows exactly how it feels to be unwanted and unloved.

"I was born in Beirut, Lebanon. When I was growing up, my childhood wasn't very good," Jean shares sadly. "My dad was always saying things like, 'When you came along, you just made us poorer' and 'I wish I had brought a donkey or even a dog instead of you.'

"As a little boy, I felt like I was not accepted, that I was rejected, that I was just a number, that I was a mistake in life."

Things grew worse when Jean's godfather, who was supposed to teach him about the Christian life, began sexually abusing him.

"I didn't trust anybody," Jean admits. "I was afraid to tell anyone what was going on because I thought they wouldn't believe me, that they'd look at me in a different way. I thought, 'No one will help me. I can only trust myself.'"

Jean started smoking. His habit grew until it peaked at 60 cigarettes a day.

"I was like a chimney," he remembers. "I just smoked one after the other after the other."

Jean got into black magic, still searching to find real love and acceptance. He called himself a rebellious "pastor's kid."

"I was like someone searching in the sand for something precious," he states. "I was searching for that moment, searching for somebody to love me ... without any motive, without them wanting something from me. It was really hard. It was not pleasant at all."



ABOVE: Jean-Louis Kassis has known torture, abuse and betrayal, but with God's power, he has learnt to forgive. INSET: Jean-Louis as an unhappy child.

Soon afterwards, Jean joined the army and became a sergeant responsible for 300 soldiers.

"One of my colleges filed a report about me," he says. "He said I was giving information to the enemy. The secret police came and took me to a secure prison, which I stayed in for 45 days."

It was often circulated around the army that whoever went inside this particular prison would die.

"I was tortured for that amount of time," Jean recalls. "I still have the marks on my

body. They broke my nose by kicking my face with their boots. I was tortured every morning, lunch and evening. It was very hard."

While he was in there, Jean practised his old religion, praying 10 times a day for his god to save him.

"But then I remembered a story from the Christian Bible," Jean recalls. "It was about a prodigal son who took his father's inheritance and spent all the money. When he had hit rock-bottom, he said, 'Let me go back to my dad and ask him to be his servant.' [Luke 15:11-32]

"So I prayed a prayer: 'Lord, save me from this prison and I will follow You.'"

In the fall of April, one early morning, Jean's door was opened and he was told that he could return home.

"I went through gate after gate to get out of prison, all the time thinking they would shoot me in the back," he remembers.

As soon as he was able, Jean went to a bookshop and bought his first Lebanese Bible.

"It was like God had opened the window of heaven and poured His love on me!" Jean exclaims. "He started convicting me to go and release forgiveness for the man responsible for landing me in prison. I drove more than four hours to go and see him."

Afterwards, Jean went to his father and asked him for forgiveness. However, he says that the hardest thing for him to do was to go to the graveyard where his godfather was buried.

"To just stand there and release forgiveness on him, after all that he had done to me in the past, was very hard," Jean says. "But with God's mercy and grace and love, I was able to stand up and go forward. I am no longer sitting down, lingering on the past. Everything's changed."

"I think in Jesus' way, I see through His eyes, I listen to His voice. He's changed me, not because of me, but because of Him! He's transformed me 180 degrees!

"Without Christ," he concludes. "I am not here. Without Christ, I may have died a long time ago. But I am here now and I will rise up with Christ."

Can death be abolished?¹

BY GEOFF CHAPMAN

There is no doubt that life expectancy is higher than a century ago.² There are now 14,000 centenarians in Britain, and according to the Office of National Statistics, one in three of today's babies will live to see their 100th birthday. Some scientists and medical experts are even claiming that ageing could be delayed indefinitely.

POSTPONING DEATH?

British doctor Dr Aubrey de Grey believes people who have already been born could live for ten centuries because of ongoing research being done into "repairing the effects of ageing".³ He hopes ultimately to create treatments that mean death could be postponed by constantly repairing our bodies, so that we can live as long as 1,000 years or possibly even forever. Dr de Grey founded the aptly-named Methuselah Foundation. Its website states that, "By advancing tissue engineering and regenerative medicine, we want to create a world where 90-year olds can be as healthy as 50-year olds—by 2030."⁴

Helping people to live a long, healthy life is a laudable aim, but for Christians, the idea of living forever in our fallen world is not very attractive—we look forward instead to the perfections of a new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:1–5).

Plus, it doesn't solve all forms of death—anti-ageing treatments could forestall (not cure) some types of death but could never prevent death by such things as explosion or plane crash.⁵

MOST SCIENTISTS SKEPTICAL

Others have pinned their hopes on a process called cryonics, which involves preserving people's bodies by immersing them in liquid nitrogen at the super-low temperature of -196°C (-321°F). This is done in the belief that, in the future, cures will be found for whatever caused death, and that the bodies can be brought back to life. Cryopreservation can cost anything from US\$28,000 to US\$200,000, and has to be started immediately after death.⁶ There are currently four facilities where bodies are stored, three in the USA and one in Russia. Most mainstream scientists are skeptical, insisting that there is no feasible way a human body can be brought back to life. Even if it were feasible, how could someone who was revived, perhaps centuries later,

sensibly survive the huge culture shock and interact with the world as it would then be?

THE ORIGIN OF DEATH

Although death is a physical thing, the reason for death is spiritual, as the Bible makes clear. Referring back to the Fall in Genesis 3, Paul wrote, "sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned" (Romans 5:12). Paul also described death as an "enemy" (1 Corinthians 15:26). It was never God's intention that we should die. Death was an intruder into His "very good" creation (Genesis 1:31). That's why He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die and rise again so that the sin which brought death can be forgiven and we can receive the gift of eternal life. "For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:21–22).

THE DESTRUCTION OF DEATH!

Those who are attempting to conquer death are 2,000 years behind! As Paul again wrote, "our Saviour Christ Jesus [has] abolished death

and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10). This includes new resurrection bodies for all believers in the future (1 Corinthians 15:42–44; Philippians 3:20–21)—how much better than the vain hope of 'conquering' death by science!

A final thought: 'Theistic evolution', which accepts the theory that humans evolved from non-human ape-like creatures, cannot be reconciled with the biblical view of the origin of death, as it implies that we evolved from ancestors who later died. Rather than being an "enemy" to be conquered, death is seen as part of a process which God supposedly set up as part of His method of creating life. The secularists (who hope to conquer death by scientific means) and the theistic evolutionists (who believe God used evolution) have both got it wrong!

1. First published in *Creation Update* 108, Creation Resources Trust (UK), Spring 2018. See their website www.crt.org.uk. Used with permission.
2. The reason for this is largely because more people are surviving childhood (due to advances in nutrition, hygiene, and medicine; see Genetic entropy and human lifespans).
3. Austin, J., Key to eternal life? Someone already born 'live to 1,000 and immortality IS possible', www.express.co.uk, 1 May 2016.
4. See mfoundation.org.
5. A true cure for death (as only the Gospel can provide) would have to cover all forms of death.
6. Hastings, R. and Ballard, M., *Cryonics: The chilling facts*, www.independent.co.uk, 26 July 2011.



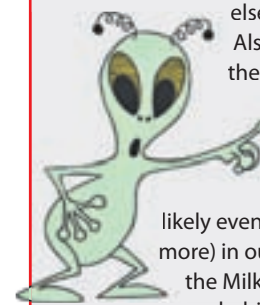
Believe it or not

And the answer is: 26

BY CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

IN an article titled 'Questions we thought had no answers', *Time* magazine confidently declares that they now have the answer to how long until intelligent alien life is discovered. The answer, they say, is 26 years, or perhaps even sooner!

This 'certainty' is based on the 'fact' that life evolved on earth—so it must have done so elsewhere. Also, because there are an estimated 100 billion stars (and likely even many more) in our galaxy, the Milky Way, the probability of alien life is high.



Time writes: "Estimates of the number of active alien civilizations [in the Galaxy] range from 10,000 to 1 million. So far we have examined only a few thousand star systems. But the rate at which we're doing so doubles about every two years. At that rate, we will have examined 1 million systems by the mid-2030s and 10 million by 2040, making it highly probable we will find someone or something."

Real science reinforces the impossibility of life evolving by itself from chemicals anywhere, not just on earth. And the Bible makes it clear that the idea of intelligent extra-terrestrial civilizations (evolved or created) is a non-starter (see www.creation.com/life-planets).

So it is hardly going out on a limb for us to confidently predict that the number of alien civilizations discovered will continue to be the same as at present: zero.

When will we discover alien life? *Time*, p. 69, 8–15 September 2014, time.com/alien-life.

UFO researcher finds answers

BY GARY BATES

Joe Jordan used to describe himself as a 'crystal-ball-rolling new-ager' with an interest in science fiction, which he saw as merely escapism. Although an evolutionist due to his public school education, it was not immediately obvious to him that most sci-fi and its depiction of alien life has evolutionism at its core (if life evolved on Earth it must have evolved elsewhere in a 14-billion-year-old universe).

Initially, Joe did not know much about the phenomenon. A book called *UFO Crash at Roswell* piqued his interest.¹ It claimed to be a scientific investigation of the alleged crash of a flying saucer at Roswell, New Mexico, in July 1947, and convinced many readers that the government was complicit in hiding the truth about aliens.

Now 'hooked', Joe wanted to know more. He visited a local UFO museum, talked with UFO researchers and read up. He was surprised to see a large array of 'spiritual' UFO books dealing with events like the Fatima sightings.²

Joe quickly qualified to be a state section director and investigator with the highly respected Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), investigating claims of UFO sightings and experiences of those who claim encounters with 'alien' beings. At

monthly MUFON meetings, Joe was strongly confronted by the spiritual paradigm of the UFO-believers. He realized that, for many, it is a full-blown religion.

Although Joe was brought up in the church, like many youth he abandoned the idea of a biblical creator. This 'new religion' gave Joe a sense of spirituality, but without the accountability that the Bible demands. With no supreme creator, man can make up his own rules. Each experience

is just part of one's spiritual growth into the new age.

Around this time Joe and fellow MUFON investigator, Wes Clark, started their own research group called CE4³ specifically to deal with alleged alien abductions or 'Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind'⁴ experiences. They attempted to unravel the more bizarre aspects of this phenomenon that defy scientific explanation. Experiencers record huge chunks of 'missing time'; allegedly physical aliens are claimed to walk through walls; and the experiencers themselves are often taken up to the spaceship through the ceiling. MUFON and other researchers had enormous problems trying to explain the physics-defying aspects of these experiences, which were escalating.

Joe saw the damage these were causing in the lives of the experiencers. In the fall of 1996, he was working on two particularly disturbing accounts which seemed especially sinister. A Christian friend told him

he was dealing in the spiritual realm and thus needed protection. "So, I pulled out my crystals", Joe said. "But she shared the Bible with me instead. It was the first time I'd ever heard a true gospel presentation and understood what Christianity was really all about. I confessed my sins and became a Christian."

Now Joe wanted to reconcile the UFO phenomenon with his faith. In 2005, after reading the first edition of Gary Bates' book *Alien Intrusion*, Joe said, "That book has helped me shut the door on the idea of ET life. Despite what most Christians think, it showed me that the Bible clearly does not allow for such things."

One of Joe's cases involved a brand-new Christian called Bill D. During an alleged alien abduction he cried out "Jesus, help me!" and the encounter immediately stopped.

When Joe contacted other MUFON investigators to see if they had had similar cases, they would only agree to talk to Joe if it was 'off the record' for fear of their careers.

The truth was they all knew of similar accounts of abductions being stopped by people praying, singing hymns or calling on the name of Jesus. But because it was 'religious in nature' and not 'scientific', the evidence was being deliberately ignored and actually hidden. A local newspaper, *Florida Today*, reported on CE4's initial findings. The story went viral via the press and internet, and suddenly, lots of people were contacting CE4 sharing similar testimonies.

Joe currently counsels many experiencers with the aim of leading them to Christ. To date, he has worked with over 400 people who have had their 'abduction' episodes halted in



Joe Jordan and Gary Bates at Roswell.

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ARE YOU REALLY LISTENING TO ME?

I was asked recently to speak at a seminar on *The Five Love Languages* and my topic was *Quality Time*.

Gary Chapman, author of *The Five Love Languages* describes *Quality Time* as “giving someone your undivided attention” and that it is a “powerful emotional communicator of love.”

Giving people our attention communicates that we are interested in them and that we are also treating them with respect. But for some people, it is the primary way in which they both *show* and *receive* love.

This idea is borne out by the following two quotes, the first by Douglas Steere and the second by well-known counselor, David Augsburger:

“To listen to another’s soul... may

be almost the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another.”

“Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person they are almost indistinguishable.”

The similarity between the quotes is obvious because they both identify *listening to another person* as a key concept in giving someone quality time.

An ancient proverb also illustrates this by stating, *“The purposes of a person’s heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out.” (Prov. 20:5).*

I have found in my own experience that the development of good listening skills is a journey that takes a lifetime.

So what are some simple skills that can assist us along the way?

Good listeners make good eye contact. When they listen to you, they look you in the eye.

They do not constantly glance at their watch, look over the top of your head when you are speaking, text on their phone or look disinterestedly around the room.

Good listeners engage with you by making eye contact with you, seeking to connect with you personally.

Looking someone in the eyes is risky because it makes both you and the other person vulnerable to each other’s emotions. When you look into another’s eyes you see their pain, sorrow, laughter and joy.

When we look into each other’s eyes when listening we develop empathy for and with the other person and this naturally progresses to greater intimacy.

Looking a person in the eyes also conveys acceptance. It’s a powerful, non-verbal way of saying, “I see you and I accept you!”

A word of warning however - eye contact does not mean boring a hole into the person’s eyes! Good eye contact is done naturally and from time to time it needs to be broken otherwise you run the risk of looking like an unblinking robot, completely oblivious of everything else!

Good listeners repeat back what they have heard. It need not be a verbatim report, but reflecting back at appropriate times in the conversation what you have heard the other person say is an excellent way to communicate that you are listening to them.

Good listeners do not interrupt. This one needs no explanation – it is pretty straightforward. Prov-



erbs declares that the wise person “uses words with restraint.”

Good listeners do not make quick assumptions or judgements about the other person.

How easy it is to fall into the trap of assuming that we know precisely why a person is feeling a certain way without listening to them fully.

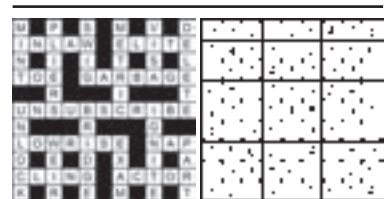
Equally damaging is our propensity to judge a person’s motives without fully listening to their story.

Wrong assumptions and unfair judgements have led to the breakdown of many a relationship when a simple, well thought out question would have clarified the matter and most likely have preserved the marriage or friendship.

These skills are simple and straightforward, but as I said earlier, they take a lifetime to develop and master.

Giving someone your undivided attention is a great way to communicate love and value to them.

We all love to be heard – but what a priceless gift we bestow when we truly listen to the heart of another!



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)

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

Here is an example of how you can pray.

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

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

AS A NEXT STEP:

<p>If you prayed the above prayer, tick this box </p> <p>I have prayed this prayer. <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>If you have NOT prayed the prayer at this stage, tick this box </p> <p>I would like to think about this. <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 *

Name _____

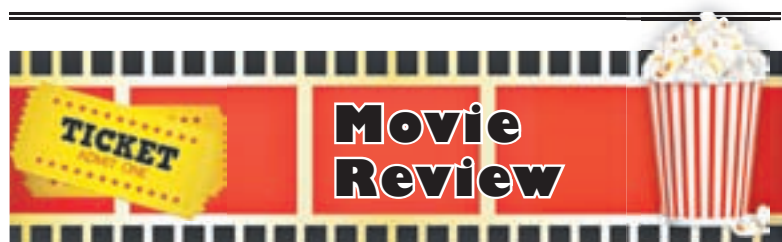
Address _____

Phone _____

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MARY MAGDALENE

WHAT might it have been like to walk alongside Jesus, back when He was alive in the First Century? Before most people had even heard of Him – before there was even a religion called ‘Christianity’?

The new film, *Mary Magdalene*, imagines exactly this, through the eyes of one of the Bible’s most misunderstood and neglected figures.

The story portrays Mary of Magdala (Rooney Mara) as an independent young woman who is troubled by the path that her family expects her to follow. Women in her society are supposed to marry, have children and look up to their husbands for spiritual guidance; but Mary feels a deep calling to a different kind of life, and a closer relationship with God.

After facing abuse from her family, who think that she’s possessed by a demon, Mary finds what she’s looking for. She leaves everything behind to follow Jesus (Joaquin Phoenix), a wandering Jewish teacher who performs many miracles and talks about a new way of living.

Unlike the other men in her life, Jesus treats Mary like an equal, listening to her questions and encouraging her. She begins to understand what none of His other followers have yet grasped: that His message is not about political power and destroying enemies, but about love, compassion and sacrifice.

Mary Magdalene is a surprising and powerful drama, transporting us to a time and place very different from our own, and inviting us to imagine some familiar stories through fresh eyes.

The film reminds us of the incredible mark which Jesus made on history, challenging us to look again at our personal response to Him. Even if, like Mary, we are not the kind of person who is ‘supposed’ to follow Jesus, He accepts and welcomes us, seeing us for who we really are.

Just like the very first people who heard Him speak, we can make up our own minds about what His teachings and actions really meant. Do we really believe the report – first made by Mary herself – that He rose from the dead? If we do, then it changes everything.



Review by Damaris Media

Ask Y

Peter Meadows answers your questions about God.

“I want a new start – but following Jesus looks too hard.”

TRUE, it is a big step to launch out on a new relationship with Jesus. It makes sense to seriously ask yourself, “Am I going to make it?”

But there is a huge difference between deciding to follow Jesus and a New Year resolution to run a marathon or swim the Channel. That’s because, unlike such physical challenges, living as a Christian is not a feat of endurance that can only be achieved by the sweat of your brow.

Instead, it is a wonderful journey of adventure – with a guide to help you and an endless supply of forgiveness when you get it wrong.

All Jesus asks is for you to turn from your past and a life centred on you, and to start walking in His direction with a life centred on Him.

What if you severely mess up? Well, it’s not a case of ‘if’ but ‘when’!

Like a child learning to walk, there are times when you will graze your spiritual knees as you take your first tottering steps in following Jesus. That’s how it is for all of us who put our hand in His. And the reason is simple – those who follow Jesus are not perfect but forgiven.

God is on your side. He will help you make it, and forgive you when you don’t. God’s a loving father, not a manic personal trainer.

In fact, it is your understanding of what following Jesus truly means that matters most.

Imagine you arrive at the gates of heaven and there you are asked, “Why should God let you in?”

Your answer will show if you have really understood Christ’s message. If it’s along the lines of “I’ve tried my best, been nice, and never done anything really bad”, or “I’ve gone to church a lot, read your book and prayed a bit” then you’ve missed the whole point.

Following Jesus is not about what we try to do but what He has already done for us. Entering heaven is not for those who have ‘tried hard’, ‘been sincere’, ‘done my best’ or even ‘been religious’.

Heaven is not something we can earn by our own effort. It’s filled with those who do not deserve it, but Jesus paid the price to let them in.

That’s why, as you set out on this great adventure, all Jesus asks of you is to put your hand in His and trust Him to help you live life His way.

Peter Meadows is co-author of The Book of Y, the basics for the Y Course that explores life’s biggest questions.

If you have a question about faith or God, write to: goodnewseditor@ntlworld.com with ASK Y in the subject line, or to: Good News Editor, PO Box 9831, Nottingham NG2 9JN.

After the Sunshine

After eight years as a professional golfer, 32-year-old South African Andrew Georgiou has decided to retire from the South African Sunshine Tour and focus on business opportunities, in particular his new golfing app.

Andrew, who played in the 2012 British Open, 2014 Canadian Open and on several other tours in South Africa and Europe, debuted in 2009, after growing up on the Erinvale Golf Course in Somerset West (where he holds the course record of 62). He now spends half his time there and half in Atlanta, Georgia, having moved to the States originally on a full-ride golf scholarship to Columbus State University in 2005.

The home Andrew grew up in was not only surrounded by golfing greens and beautiful mountains, but also by a very strong faith in the God of the Bible and His Son Jesus.

YOU ARE A WINNER IN JESUS' EYES, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS



His mother, Erin, is the editor and publisher of Joy!, Africa's leading evangelical Christian magazine. Andrew attended Sunday School from an early age and later the church youth group. He was nine when he prayed to ask Jesus to forgive his sins and rule his life.

"I was young and didn't fully understand the commitment I was making but the Holy Spirit [invisible power of God] guided me through my teens," he remembers, and the difference God has made in his life is evident. "There were many times in my teens where I could have tried drugs and gone down the wrong path but I can happily say that I have never tried any type of drug in my life. There was and is still the pressure of sexual immorality but fortunately I can also say that I am waiting for marriage."

His faith also informs his approach to sport. "Before every round of golf, I commit it to Jesus, then go out and compete as hard as I can," Andrew says. "I know my Lord wants me to be a winner. He wants me to give 100 percent of everything I have - in my practice, in using my mind, and in playing the best I know how - and then thank Him for the results, whatever they are. That takes a lot of pressure off because if you do that, you are a winner in Jesus' eyes, no matter what happens."

However, just because someone is serving God does not mean there won't be challenges and disappointments in life.

At 17 Andrew learnt a valuable lesson about how God does not always work in the way we expect or always answer our prayers as we'd like, when he failed to qualify for the SA Amateur Championship. He was really angry with himself and God

because qualification would have greatly expanded his opportunities in the sport.

"The problem was that I wanted it so badly, that God was not my first priority. He taught me the lesson that He does indeed work in mysterious ways and that He always needs to be number one in my life," Andrew learnt.

As Philippians 4, verse 9 in the Bible tells us, God's ways are higher than our ways, though, and His plans for those who love Him are always ultimately for their good; which Andrew found out when those who were chosen ended up doing poorly in very bad conditions, leaving him higher in the rankings for NOT going. He went on to play well in

the South African Boys tournament the following week and got a spot on the four-man Junior World Cup team that travelled to Japan. There Andrew finished 12 in the world, which led to his scholarship to Columbus!

Andrew had an exceptional college career and was a four-time All American and the only player in CSU history to compete in every single event for four years.

In college, he made friends with other Christian golfers who met regularly for prayer, and, when playing on the South African Sunshine Tour, he joined several prominent golfers who met in a Bible study group called 'Golfers for God'.

As he tweeted recently, "having one Lord worldwide makes me at peace no matter where I am!"

Andrew shares that the toughest part of being a Christian pro golfer is "being in a different city every week can be very tempting" because "we're surrounded by non-believers in a very no-accountability situation".

"I'm so glad that I have been able to be strong in my faith," he says, "And it really helps to surround yourself with other believers!"

The Bible offers him this encouragement: "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can endure it." (1 Corinthians 10:12-13)

Andrew says he has found transitioning from the status and prestige of the Sunshine Tour difficult, as there are some who only respected



ABOVE: Andrew Georgiou hits his tee shot on the 2nd during day one of the Joburg Open at the Royal Johannesburg and Kensington Golf Club on February 23, 2017 in South Africa. (Photo Warren Little/Getty Images).

INSET: A relaxed Andrew in a photo from Facebook.

him based on his fame, rather than his character.

"Now that I'm not on tour anymore I'm just Andrew and a lot of people who used to look up to me now don't," he says wryly.

That is when he remembers that his identity is grounded in God's love for him, not in how much money he makes or what his golfing handicap is.

God has gifted Andrew not only in sport but with creativity and a good head for business. With the input of his father, the entrepreneur has been developing a niche golfing app for the last few years. This year Golfplayed was launched globally at the annual PGA Merchandise Show in Florida, USA. Andrew also got an opportunity to promote the app to The Shark Tank in Atlanta, Georgia in order to get development funding.

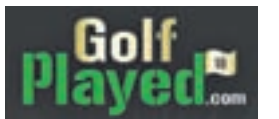
The idea was conceived from scratch after Andrew was once asked how many courses he had played and he had no idea, and couldn't find an app to help him capture his golfing memories. He calls his free app the "The LinkedIn of golf!" and hopes it will open up the world's

greens to all sorts of golfers, through the connections made.

The app allows golfers to keep track of and share with others, where, how, in what conditions and with whom they played. It is available free on iOS and Android.

"I can truly say that without Jesus in my life I wouldn't have ended up where I am today," Andrew declares. "I still have my ups and downs,

however I now know that the Lord has a greater purpose and plan and He provides me with an inner peace whatever situation I find myself in. I look forward to what He has in store for my journey and I will glorify Him all the way."



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