

RADIO HOST'S LEAP OF FAITH

South African expat Clint Davis swapped celebrity status for a message that changed his life

Speaking on-air for Radio Jacaranda to an audience of 3.5 million listeners every day was once a complete thrill for Clint Davis.

"If anybody is to know what commercial radio is like, look at the celebrities of today, and you will know how easy it is to be caught up in that world," Clint shares about the six years he devoted to it.

He admits being drawn in to "celebrity-ism" and the pursuit of pleasure, fame and popularity that comes with it. Yet true peace in life seemed somehow elusive.

"Some seek peace in yoga [or other things], but whatever it is – we are seeking peace – about this life, about our circumstances, the direction of our lives and what comes after this life," Clint explains.

Part of the problem stemmed from the hurt he continued to carry from his upbringing after his father left.

"My parents were church goers but my stepfather was quite abu-

sive physically and emotionally," he remembers.

His family took him to church from a young age, where Clint recalls committing his life to Jesus at age six, but he became disillusioned with Christianity from the hypocrisy he witnessed around him.

"What I had seen on stage was not what I had seen behind the scenes," he explains.

"It was easy for me to hold very loosely to what a Christian life looked like."

As an adult Clint had all but left his faith in God, embracing his success as a Johannesburg radio presenter.

Then, upon meeting the love of his life, his life was turned upside down.

"I met my wife in the celebrity world. We felt that if we were heading towards marriage for real then we had to get back into church," he explains.

Together they decided to "rediscover" and pursue God wholeheartedly due to the many broken lives and marriages they had witnessed where God was absent.

After this recommitment they both felt God prompting them to move to Dubai in 2009, where they became involved in ministry at a church there for two years.

During this time Clint counselled many people about fatherhood and says God challenged him with a question he had never properly dealt with: "How do I relate to God as Father?"

With this came the desire to share with his earthly father how Jesus had changed his life so Clint connected with him over social media.

"The months of difficult discussion were tough and emotionally draining. I met up with him when I was last in South Africa," he shares.

Through this experience Clint realised that the way people experience fatherhood often taints their view of God as a good heavenly Father.

In those years where he believed God was absent because of his father's example, Clint affirms that God had in fact never left his side.



THRILL-A-MINUTE RADIO HOST: True peace seemed elusive for Clint Davis as he pursued pleasure, fame and popularity

"Without dishonouring my father in any way, I felt God saying to me, 'You see now that I've been your Dad the whole time – I've guided and led you'."

With this newfound understanding, Clint now works in community radio in Australia and guest lectures at an Australian Bible college.

"God has given me a gift to explain complicated things in a simple way.

I never used that when I was on commercial radio, but God did a 180 degree switch on these things when I gave it to Him," he says.

Clint uses a simple analogy to explain what it is like to have salvation and a relationship with Jesus.

"Imagine I gave you a million dollars but until you go and draw that money out of the ATM you don't have it," he explains.

"In the same way, Christ died for all, but until you accept that free gift you don't have it.

"Now we live in a broken world because we chose to be separated from God's perfection [through our wrongdoing], but once you give Jesus control over your life you will have His real and lasting peace about where you'll be for eternity in heaven in God's Kingdom." •

Delayed consequences

BY JIM DENISON (ABRIDGED)

IN recent news, officials have determined that a sinkhole in the States that cost \$75 million to fix was caused by human error.

Water was released too quickly into sewage pipes, eventually causing the ground to collapse into a sinkhole that grew to 100 feet wide and 250 feet long. Nearly two dozen homes in a neighborhood north of Detroit were evacuated; a major roadway was closed for almost a year for repairs.

We may not see the consequences of our sins or mistakes today, but that makes them no less dangerous.

WE MUST NOT BE "OUTWITTED"

God warned Adam that he must not eat of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" for "in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:17).

However, Adam did not die on the day he ate from the forbidden fruit. In fact, he lived for a total of 930 years (Genesis 5:5). For many centuries, he might have wondered if God's warning would come to pass.

A delay in the consequences of sin can tempt us to sin

further. Many of our sins are committed in the belief that no one will know, that we will get away with this. The longer we sin without apparent consequences, the more emboldened we become.



This is because we misunderstand the nature of sin and its results.

The Hebrew word translated "die" in Genesis 2 refers to physical and spiritual death. Such death began for Adam the day of his sin. It led to his separation from God (Genesis 3:22-24) and a life of suffering in a fallen world (vv. 17-19) before culminating in his physical death.

Sin can harm the sinner in ways we don't see. If I slowly turn down the lights in your room, your eyes will adjust to the darkness. In the same way it is very hard to see how sin is blinding us to its destructive power and addictive effects.

In addition, God delays His judgment to give us more time to repent (2 Peter 3:9). However, the enemy wants to use our Father's grace to entice us to sin further. We must not be "outwitted by Satan" (2 Corinthians 2:11)—sin is a spiritual malignancy that must be removed today.

• Turn to page 3

Fun for Kids

Pages 5,6,7



Lessons from a sausage dog returns! Page 11





BY ALAN BAILEY

THE JOYS OF DREAMING



HAVE you had any good dreams lately? I mean the sort where something good happens. The other kind are best forgotten with all their twisted story lines and bad emotions. But we also dream when we are wide awake, don't we? Different because we have some control over the content.

What about this one for a day-dream? I am so rich that I can design a home just as I would like it to be. Two-storied of course, with everything that opens and shuts. Outside, a tennis court and a swimming pool—nothing spared. Of course, it is all overlooking a beautiful view.

Or what about a sporting victory? Winning a Wimbledon, hitting the winning run or kicking the winning goal, all make good day-dreams.

Others see themselves as great performers on a stage or screen.

But like a bubble, all dreams burst and reality sets in again.

Fantasy or reality? It seems that many people live on the edge of fantasy. They think in wishes. "If only I had...." is the way the thought begins. If only I was born good-looking; if only I'd married into money; if only I could win the lottery or I had heaps of talent. So the list goes on, and, let's face it, we all indulge to some extent in this kind of wishing.

When reality sets in we realize there are many gains and achievements in life that only a comparative few can have. Not many in all of history are going to be fabulously rich or are going to be the world's number one in a particular field.

If we go through life doing little more than wishing, which of course changes nothing, life

can be a dreary and disappointing thing. We will always be looking at better things from a distance, always hoping our ship will come in, putting up with the present in anticipation of a better tomorrow—a tomorrow which never comes.

The world of reality is the place to live rather than the world of fantasy. If we are real, we will have the chance to know who we are, why we are here in this world and where we are going. And we have the opportunity to know what we can do about the great issues of life rather than standing passively, watching life go by.

The most realistic assessment of life and its meaning and values came from the lips of Jesus. His authority to speak was made very clear by the proof He gave that He was and is God. He made it plain that we are God's creatures with meaning to our existence. He showed that we

are out of touch with God and in great need of Him. In one place He claimed "I came that you may have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

Right here on planet earth, in time and space reality, Christ paid the penalty of our sins, rose from death and left us every good reason why we should believe and trust in Him.

When a person turns from sin and comes to know Christ personally, many, many, blessings become theirs. Yes, ordinary people like you and me can be called "children of God" because God has made it so. Also, we become heirs, not of a fortune on earth but of all that God has prepared for us in heaven. Meanwhile, peace, joy and forgiveness are daily blessings that are more than money can buy.

The choice is there. Fantasy or reality? ●

TRAUMA CLEANING THE SOUL

BY JODY BENNETT

I AM reading a fascinating book at the moment about someone whose job it is to "trauma clean" – she is the cleaner who goes in after a murder, suicide or bad tenant; the person whom the council gets to clean up for hoarders and wash down former methadone labs.

What an interesting, disgusting, daunting and slightly terrifying job!

However, the deeper I get into the book, the more I see how badly traumatised the cleaner herself has been by her abusive upbringing, health issues and poor life choices, and I wish I could introduce her to

the Great Trauma Cleaner of the Soul, Jesus Christ.

The same way this trans woman goes into chaos, rescues what is good and sanitises what is filthy, throws out what is garbage, replaces what is missing and brings order and wholeness, so Jesus can do to her soul, psyche and circumstances.

Big blood stains in your past where you have murdered morality? "Though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." (Isaiah 1:18)

Masses of trashy thinking and garbage ideas that need to be

binned? "As far as the east is from the west, so far have You removed our sins from us." (Psalm 103:12)

Relationships burnt out on the altar of convenience? God promises to give you "beauty for ashes and the oil of joy for mourning." (Isaiah 61:3)

Blind with pain and stumbling in the darkness of your own mind? Jesus says, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." John 8:12

Feel filthy with guilt and shame? You can pray, "Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. ... Create in me a clean heart, O

God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me." (Psalm 51:1,10) "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols." (Ezekiel 36:25)

Past piled high with broken bits of memory and leaking pain? "He heals the broken-hearted, and binds up their wounds." (Psalm 147:3)

Stench of death in your life? "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for You are with me, Your rod and Your staff they comfort me." (Psalm 23:4)

Is the central heating of your emotions cold and atrophied? God says, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." (Ezekiel 36:26)

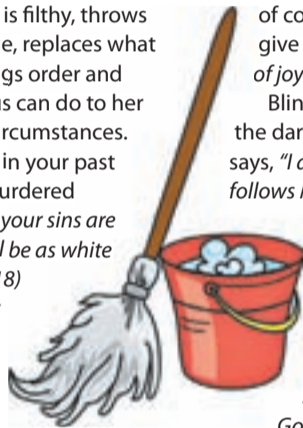
Polluted by foul thoughts and crawling with disease? "Behold, I will bring ... health and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth." (Jeremiah 33:6)

Lost precious things in the stacks of your poor choices? "I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places; that you may know that I, the Lord, Who call you by your name, am the God of Israel." (Isaiah 45:3)

Plagued by the bugs of bad habits that have chewed through your finances and future? "I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, ... I am the Lord your God and there is no other. My people shall never be put to shame." (Joel 2:25,27)

Jesus stands at the door of your life and knocks, open your life-house to Him and like the leper in the Bible kneel down to Him and say to Him, 'If You are willing, You can make me clean.'

"Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I am willing; be cleansed.'" (Mark 1:41) ●



What is the Gospel? in just three minutes



WHAT do Christians mean by 'the Gospel'? What is the big picture of the whole Bible?

Pastor Pete Hughes shares a summary of the Christian message in under three minutes on Youtube. See the clip, as transcribed below, at <https://youtu.be/n6llmNzFMAG>

"When a lot of people pick up the Bible, they freak out," Pete explains in the video for Yesheis UK. "Thinking 'This is massive, it's going to take me ages to read'. But the Bible at its simplest is a love story.

"Like any great love story there is a beginning, a middle and an end.

"The beginning is the story of creation where God creates the world, and as the pinnacle of that part of the story, He creates humanity in His image and likeness and places them in this garden called Eden - this garden of perfection. And there's no sin, there's no sickness, there's no suffering in this part of the story. Humanity are fully alive in perfect relationship with God.

But then sin enters the story and created order begins to unravel. And we descend into what Hughes calls 'decreation'.

Theologian Martin Luther defines sin as a "life turned in on itself," Pete notes. "Where everything revolves around you; your needs, your longings, your goals, your ambitions, your desires are all that really matters. It is all about looking after number one.

"And when you multiply that mindset by almost eight billion people on the planet, it explains some of the pain and the suffering and violence we see all around us.

"So God saw that pain and put a plan into motion to heal and restore

things to how they were meant to be in the beginning. And that plan looked like God wrapping Himself in human flesh in the person of Jesus. The Creator stepping into Creation. And Jesus lived for us, and He died for our sins and He rose to new life to usher in a new order, recreation – a restored creation.

"Now at the end of the story in the book of Revelation, this guy called John has a vision of what the new order will look like. And he says in this new order there'll be no death, there'll be no grief, there'll be no crying and there'll be no pain. Which sounds a lot like the beginning right? Where there is no sin, no sickness and no suffering and humanity are fully alive and in perfect relationship with God.

"This is what our story is all about. And, what God is doing to all of created order, He wants to do in your life. To bring healing and restoration and lead you to the fullness of life you were made for.

"So the Gospel of Jesus is an invitation. Do you want that fullness of life? And if you do it's a free gift that is found in relationship with Him." If you want to become friends with Jesus and know Him personally, Pete offers to lead you in a simple prayer.

"Lord Jesus, thank you that You made me for fullness of life. I'm sorry for where everything became about me and was wrapped up in my own needs and longings. Thank you for the cross, that You forgive me all of my sin. Thank you that You rose to new life to fill me with resurrection life and to lead me towards fullness. I say yes to Your plans. Help me serve You all of my days. Amen." ●

Crossword

ACROSS

1 Urban bird	8 Wooper	16 Liverpool, England, accent
3 Self-satisfied	10 Bureaucratic stuff	17 Rash reaction?
7 Railway track; wrinkle	13 Limb loser by surgery	

DOWN

1 Election predictor	18 Bugler's melody
2 Red (hair)	19 Pepsin or lactase
4 Mattress critter	
5 Elastic corset	
6 Yellow element, stinks	
9 Make a list	
11 Cliched movie ending	
12 Guard	
14 Hula ring	
15 Asian type of butter	

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

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

SOLUTION PAGE 11

Fake news vs. good news

BY CHRIS ELKINS (AMENDED)

RECENTLY two men were set alight and burnt to death in Mexico, by a mob who believed they were child abductors. The crowd had become incensed based on a false Whatsapp story. Apparently similar things have happened in India. But fake news is everywhere.

In an age when pictures are photo-shopped, stories are spun, and anonymous slander is rampant, who or what can you believe?

What persuades you that something is true? Is seeing believing? (Think Photoshop.)

According to Aristotle, we can be persuaded by three different sorts of appeals: ethos, pathos, or logos.

Ethos is based on the trustworthiness of the source or the person telling you.

Pathos is an impassioned plea or convincing story that creates an emotional response that can convince us something is true.

Logos is a way of mounting an appeal based on "evidence", like facts and figures. A lot of us like this kind of proof.

The Bible appeals to us on all three levels. We can believe it because of the One who (inspired those who)wrote it – the all-powerful God of the universe. We can believe it because it moves us emotionally as our spirit recognizes and responds to the over-arching story of God's love for us that satisfies us on a deep level. And it convinces us because of the "facts" it contains – fulfilled prophecies, stories confirmed by archaeology, history and other external sources

FAKE GOOD NEWS

Yet even the gospel of Jesus Christ has been twisted by fake news.

Joseph Smith's *Book of Mormon*, Jehovah's Witnesses' *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, and Sun Myung Moon's *Divine Principle* are all examples of fake news disguising itself as "good news". Unfortunately, hundreds of thousands of people have been taken in by these and other fake gospels.

While there are many markers of fake "good news", the most telling is the question that Jesus asked His disciples in Matthew 16:13: "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

The disciples responded with: "John the Baptist, others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." But none were correct, even though they were all complimentary.

And, while other religions have a significant place for Jesus, they do not afford Him His rightful place.

Jesus then asked the disciples, "But who do you say that I am?"

In verse 16, Peter declares, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." While Jesus is fully man, He is also fully God. A mystery, to be sure. But it's the truth. Anyone or anything that gives Him any lesser place is fake news.

OLD FAKE NEWS

Finally, fake news has been around since the Garden of Eden.

Didn't the serpent deliver fake news to Eve about the results of eating from the forbidden tree? "But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not surely die'" (Genesis 3:4). And, for the first time, mankind fell for fake news. The man and woman died immediately in a spiritual sense, and decay entered the world leading to their eventual physical death.

We all know (and live) the end of that story.

So, we have to accept the reality that seeing is NOT necessarily believing. But, be sure—believing Jesus when He said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life," (John 14:6) is always seeing.

Trying to convince others, he was himself convinced

Micah Wilder went on a two-year mission trip to convert people to his cult but his worldview was turned upside down when he was given a simple challenge along the way.

At nineteen years of age, he went from Utah to Orlando, Florida, which, he says, is a very "evangelical, Bible-based area."

"I was a little naïve [about this] as a young missionary," he laughs. "I was convinced that I was going to convert everyone I saw and be the greatest missionary ever."

From a young age, Micah was taught that Jesus was not the Son of God and only a prophet and that it was through his own religious acts that he was made right with God.

When he was a teenager, his family moved to Alpine, Utah. "My family was very zealous," he shares. "My father was a high priest and my mother was a professor at a religious school."

Micah, too, was very committed to his religion and, during his mission trip, admitted to being "over-zealous in my attempts to convert others".

"I tried to convert a [Bible-believing] minister and his entire congregation, which I was unsuccessful at," he reminisces. "But it did open an opportunity for God to begin an amazing work in my life."

Micah sat down with this minister and told him "that there were works and ordinances and commandments that had to be followed in order to be made right with God".

The minister's response "was that the only way to be made right with God is through Jesus Christ and through the blood that He shed on [the cross]."

However, Micah's response to this "was to completely and utterly reject the Gospel [the Good News of Jesus saving us from our sins]."

"As I was leaving his office, the minister stopped me and said, 'Micah Wilder, I challenge you to go home and read the Bible as a child. And I promise you, that if you do that, He will open your eyes and show you what the true Gospel really is.'"

Micah took up the challenge and started to read the Bible for the first time in his life.

"Every day that I read, God consumed me with this amazing love that I did not know and that my religion could never offer me," he proclaims tearfully. "He unveiled to me a grace (undeserved love)



LEFT: Micah Wilder shares his story on the Adam's Road Ministry website.

INSET: Other earnest young men of Micah's former persuasion, sharing their faith as he used to. (Photo: Getty Images)

that I had never before seen."

With three weeks remaining of Micah's mission trip, he became a born-again believer and accepted Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

"I was not looking to walk away from my religion," he says, "But God pursued my heart relentlessly until I just had to give up because I was so broken in my sin. I came to understand the amazing power of the blood of Jesus Christ and how it had cleansed me of my sins. [I realised] that it was not because

of me and what I had done for God but because of God and what He had done for me!"

Micah soon had the opportunity to stand up in front of his peers and leadership and share the Good News with them when the missionaries gathered to debrief after their trip.

"I remember that it was my turn to get up and share my testimony and I remember...trembling in fear." However, Philippians 4:13, "For I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," came to his mind.

"Through God's grace, I was able to share a very simple testimony and tell them that Jesus Christ was the only thing I needed," he says. "Two days later, I received a phone call from [the leaders] who wanted to chat with me.

"It was the single, most terrifying thing that had happened to me. My parents, my siblings and my girlfriend were all [part of this cult]. It was my entire life and it was everything that I was and wanted to be."

Before the meeting, Micah read the Bible and came across the verse, Matthew 19:29, "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for My Name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit

eternal life."

"I realised that if I lost everything in this world for the sake of gaining Christ that it was worth the cost," he says. "I went into this meeting and sat face to face with my leaders. I told them that there was no church, religion, organization, or works that could save, but Jesus Christ alone was the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6)."

Micah was told that he "was filled with the spirit of the devil and that he was an anti-Christ." He was threatened with excommunication and kicked off the mission field.

Then, he had to return home to Utah to face his family.

"I shared with them the Gospel and invited them to read the Bible

as a child and allow the Lord to work through their lives as He had done in mine," he tells. "One of my brothers, my sister, and both of my parents came to receive Jesus Christ."

Micah's girlfriend also became a Christian through a radical journey of her own and later they got married and had three sons.

Now, Micah lives in Florida and is an evangelical pastor who shares his faith at every opportunity. Having come from a cultic background, he understands the doubts and questions that many have about Christianity and is passionate to share his beliefs.

"But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." [Romans 5:8].

Delayed consequences

● From page 1

MORE THAN A CARTOON IN RED TIGHTS

Satan is glad to be underestimated as a cartoon figure in red tights. Make no mistake: he hates people and wants to harm us in any way he can (cf. Revelation 12:10).



When he tempts us with temporary pleasures, it's because he intends much worse suffering as a consequence.

According to the psalmist, a sinner "says in his heart, 'God has forgotten, he has hidden his face, he will never see it'" (Psalm 10:11). He thinks that because he cannot see God, God cannot see him.

What sin is Satan tempting you

to commit today? Does it seem to offer gain without pain? That's because the devil is "a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44).

For years, I have quoted the proverb: Sin will always take you further than you wanted to go, keep you longer than you wanted to stay, and cost you more than you wanted to pay.

If you're thinking that you're the exception, let me ask: Who is the source of that lie?

Here's what to do with every temptation you face today: "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

Surrender your life and your temptation to God and you will be empowered to defeat your enemy.

BUSTED UP MARRIAGE RESTORED

BY ANNE LIM (ETERNITY NEWS)

A week before Catherine Sharpe went to hear American evangelist Will Graham speak in the NSW town of Orange, she was planning to kill herself and take her 10-month-old daughter with her.

She was in despair over the breakup of her marriage one year earlier, and all the mistakes she had made.

“It was such a shock to everyone that we broke up because you show up to church, you say all the right things, keep that smile going, but you can’t be fake with God – He knows,” says Cat.

When her husband Jeremy, whom everyone calls Sharpey, moved from Bathurst to Orange, Cat decided to follow him so Sofia could see him regularly.

“Once I’d got there, I got my own house with Sofia, but then I was like ‘what am I doing? I am in this new house in this new town, I don’t have any support or know anybody here and I’m still struggling through uni.’ I am not a natural mum.”

Cat decided that the best thing for everybody would be for her to remove herself and Sofia from the picture so they would not be a burden on anyone. After all, to die would be to go to heaven, she thought, which would be better than the life she was living.

At that point, Cat realised she was in serious trouble, so she put a message on Facebook saying “help me”. Sharpey responded by taking her to a local church where her uncle and aunt worshipped.

The next week, a friend invited her to, ‘the ‘Billy Graham thing’.



Jeremy and Cat Sharpe made ‘all the marriage mistakes’ but God still fixed their mess.

“So I went in and Will [Graham] is talking about how Jesus loves us even as we are and Jesus knows everything about us and He cares about what’s going on in our life and we’re important to Him.

“And it’s just like the revelation hit me: of course Jesus loves me! He actually thinks I’m valuable; He actually cares. Even if I feel like nobody else is there for me, He’s there and He’s got my back.

“So I went up for the altar call and rededicated my life and I said, ‘Jesus I am so sorry [that] I don’t want to be here; I want to be doing what you’ve got planned for me.’

“So that was the real turning point

when Sharpey and I started going ‘all right, we’re serious. We cannot do this, but God can do this with us – Sofia deserves a family.’”

With the advantage of hindsight, Sharpey believes the marriage failed because he thought Cat would be better off without him.

“At that stage I was about 170 kilograms. I hated myself because I could see what I was doing to my wife and I basically pushed her out the door,” he says.

“I didn’t know how to relate to her. I didn’t know how to treat her.”

Sharpey had been bullied every day in primary school and even at church copped a lot of mocking from the kids

stressed out, but in my mind Cat was never really a wife. She was more of a friend that just happened to live in the same house. I put that firmly down to me not understanding marriage at all.”

Cat adds: “I used to say he was a slob and I was a nag. That just doesn’t work.”

She tried to do everything she could to fix the marriage – including going to counselling alone – but eventually she felt she’d run out of options.

About six months after he and Cat

in youth group.

Cat explains: “We got married when we were 21, 22, very young and inexperienced, and proceeded to make all of the mistakes in the marriage book – breaking of trust, bad financial decisions, terrible communication.”

“I was an arrogant jerk,” adds Sharpey. “I was so full of myself – everything was about me. I was working 60 to 70 hours a week and getting paid for 40, so I was

separated, Sharpey’s self-hate forced him into his own suicidal crisis. It was at that low point Sharpey encountered Jesus in “one of the most crazy experiences that I’ve ever had”.

“I was on my bedroom floor and closed my eyes. When I opened them I wasn’t in my bedroom. I was sitting underneath a tree in a field on a nice day, and there were these arms wrapped around me from behind. A voice said in my ear quite plainly, ‘This is not what I made you for. I love you and you are so much more than this.’ And that was it. I cried for about 18 hours straight. And then I came out of the room the next morning and said to my housemate that I’d decided to live and he was ecstatic.”

After his dramatic encounter with Jesus, Sharpey was fully committed to learning how to live like a Christian. “I was done with playing church,” he says.

“But the biggest lesson that I learned is that God is a God of restoration, but the restoration has to start with yourself first ... you have to be right with God.

JESUS COMES IN AND SUDDENLY THE JOURNEY IS DOABLE.



“I wasn’t depressed anymore, I saw the self-hatred for what it was, out of the back of years and years of abuse ... it meant that from then on, whenever Cat would say something snide, it didn’t matter anymore. I had forgiven her, so I was free.”

In the meantime, Cat had decided she wanted to learn to be a real wife.

“So I started praying ‘God, change me, make me able to forgive mistakes and not hold on to them, make me able to support people and forgive them for being human.’”

Six months after the pivotal Will Graham rally, Cat and Sharpey felt strong enough to try to be a family again.

“So we officially reunited in November 2012 and then we had a second wedding rededication and we dedicated Sofia at church on the same day,” says Cat.

Even so, this wasn’t an immediate fix. “It took us a further four or five years to work [the issues] through. It’s not a matter of, bang, Jesus comes in and everything’s better. It’s, bang, Jesus comes in and suddenly the journey is doable.”

“I wouldn’t change what we went through at all,” says Sharpey. “I’ve seen the darkest side of myself and I’ve seen the darkest side of where I can go ... If Jesus hadn’t found me, I’d still be a rotten mess, playing church, having the facade.”

“You hear ‘God will be with you always’, but until you put that to the test and go, ‘Are you actually going to stick by me, God?’ You can’t know it unless you experience it yourself,” Cat says.

“I’ve learnt grace. It’s a word that’s become stigmatised, like people think it’s almost like an excuse [to sin], but grace means beautiful – that’s what grace is, it’s God’s beauty on us.

“It’s an honour to be able to live your life for Him, and to be able to tell people about hope – that’s a privilege and it’s exciting,” Cat grins.

A longer version of this story was first published by the Bible Society in Eternity News. Used with kind permission of the author.



Kindness makes you happy

RECENTLY, a group of volunteers gathered outside a Walmart in the US to collect donations for their local food bank. A man approached with his shopping cart full of cereal, soups, noodles, and more. They watched him hopefully, thinking maybe he’d contribute a couple of items to their collection...

They were stunned when he handed over the entire thing.

We don’t know the man’s name or why he was moved to give so much to those less fortunate than him, but we know one thing: We could all learn from his generosity.

Not only does a generous heart make the world a better place, it’s good for you, too! Sociologists Christian Smith and Hilary Davidson tracked the spending habits of 40 families and found lower depression rates in those who donated more than 10% of their income. But it’s not just about money. They also surveyed 2,000 Individuals over a five-year period. The people who described themselves as “very happy” volunteer an average of 5.8 hours per month. The “unhappy”? Just 0.6 hours.

So whether it’s with time, money, or groceries, give generously today.

“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.” - Winston Churchill

From Morning Smile by inspiremore.com

LOVING EVEN JUST ONE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

BY MARK CALLAGHAN

THERE have been many adaptations of the Loren Eiseley story, *The Star Thrower*. An old man and a boy meet on a beach strewn with starfish. As the old man approaches he sees the boy gently throwing a starfish into the water. The old man comments on the thousands of starfish, and that the boy could never hope to throw them all back. The story hinges on his statement that “you won’t really be able to make much of a difference,” and the boy’s response, “It made a difference to that one.”

Some years ago, we were travelling with friends in Rajasthan in Northern India. There are multitudes of poor in India. The world’s problems can seem so overwhelming: disadvantage and poverty, famine and war and disease. What difference can one person make?

Our friends had started a charitable program to assist children living on Agra Train Station – children as young as two. They lived and begged in dangerous conditions, and then slept on those platforms at night. They had touched the hearts of those friends.

Our group was invited to see how the program worked, and we were asked to bring something educational or creative for those children who had come to the centre’s house for the day. We were sitting, busy trying to break the language barrier as there was little English among the children. Someone had brought chalks, some brought puzzles, and someone brought plasticine, a choice I wouldn’t have thought of. The oldest that day was a fifteen year old who had

been on the platforms for over four years. He was a polio victim, crippled from the waist down. Every day he sat on a board on rollers at the base of the stairs, begging small change from people buying merit by almsgiving – the custom in his part of the world. He collected enough to exist.



But his life changed. On the morning I met him, he was moulding some plasticine, and showed me what I assumed was a snake. Then more English letters written by this man who spoke no English. I sounded them out – Shrok (his name) – and his face lit up in a smile. In that moment our relationship had become personal.

Through our host I discovered that our friend had been the first person to stop, squat down and speak to Shrok, person to person. She asked him about himself. No-one had ever done that before. He had felt valued – even loved.

Seven years later, Shrok owns an electric auto rickshaw, earns a living and is married. Love made a difference to him.

One of the Psalms in the Bible reads, “Lord, You are the One who put me together in my mother’s womb, and I praise You because of the wonderful way You created me.”

We are each individually made and valued. It is personal. We are loved by the God who created us and redeemed us. Only in Him do we find our true worth. We can’t fathom it, but when we receive that love through faith in Jesus, it becomes personal – tailored to our needs.

And I know it made a difference to this one.

Which flow are we following?

18-year-old Ainsley Gaebler has gained inspiration from a fellow teen, singer Riley Clemmons, and encourages others to look at where they are headed.

I READ somewhere: “If you decide to just go with the flow, you’ll end up where the flow goes, which is usually downhill, often leading to ... a life of unhappiness.”

Although there is a definite truth in the above quote, making decisions when it comes to going for or against the ‘flow’ is never quite that simple. There are always two parts to every issue and always two sides from which to choose and sometimes it is hard to see clearly when the line between right and wrong becomes blurred.

Nowadays, people think it’s okay to ‘go with the flow’ of our modern-day culture by indulging in alcohol until they pass out, taking drugs until they’re helplessly addicted or sleeping around until they end up with unwanted pregnancies or an STD.

When I see stories about celebrities’ out of control behaviour or substance abuse, it reminds us that no one, not even our heroes, are perfect.

But there is a silver lining to this dark cloud. In the Bible, we find instructions on a different way to live, a different

‘flow’ to follow so to speak.

“Do not love the world [modern culture] or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father [God] is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” 1 John 2: 15-17.

No matter how enticing alcohol, drugs or sex may seem and no matter how many times you get told, “It’s no big deal. Just enjoy yourself. Live your life. You only get one,” in the end, this all leads to a trail of wrong decisions and regrets.

The ‘flow’ of our modern culture involves temporary pleasures that will satisfy you only for the here and now. However, there is another ‘flow’ that we can follow, one that gives us the greater gift of an eternal reward.

Jesus promises to always be with us, to encourage us when we feel down, to be there for us when we are alone and to guide us through the turbulent waters in our lives. He will grant us peace and love and security. He will give us freedom from the sins that shackle our lives.

If we give ourselves to Jesus and ask Him to rescue us from the rough waters of our culture, we will have the assurance of an eternity spent with Him.

But, as teens, it is hard to decide which ‘flow’ to follow in



NASHVILLE - MAY 27, 2018:
Riley Clemmons attends the 6th Annual KLOVE Fan Awards at The Grand Ole Opry. (Photo Terry Wyatt/Getty Images for KLOVE)

she, too, came to a ‘fork-in-the-road’ when she was set to release her debut single.

Would she follow the ‘flow’ of our modern culture and fit into the stereotype of a sultry pop-star? Or would she follow the ‘flow’ of the Bible and stand up for her Christian faith?

So, Riley made a choice, one almost unheard of in our culture. She chose to make a difference. She chose to follow the ‘flow’ that leads to eternal life [heaven]. She chose Jesus.

Her first single, *Broken Prayers*, proved to be a massive breakthrough for her music career, with millions streaming and downloading the song and its music video.

Boldly and unashamedly, Riley decided to ‘go against the flow’ of modern culture so she could ‘get with the flow’ when it came to God.

“I want to use the power of music and words to wake up and encourage the generation I am a part of,” she says.

Her amazing testimony really spoke out to me, as did her beautiful, inspiring song. *Broken Prayers* is an emotional, raw and touching picture of God’s enduring love for us. It shows us that while we are at our lowest points in life and at our most broken, not all hope is lost because He is with us.

While the ‘flow’ that leads us to Jesus and His redemptive [saving] love and forgiveness may be paved with rough patches and narrow paths, the result will be one of greater satisfaction and reward.

The next time you are in a tight spot, not knowing which way to turn or which ‘flow’ to follow, remember that it does not matter how easy or fun our culture’s tide might seem - it eventually leaves its followers empty and hopeless.

For people who are seeking the truth and who want to live a life as good as they can get, the best solution is to go with God’s ‘flow’ because the only real love and joy and peace that you will ever find is in Him.

certain situations, especially when they can come disguised as something they are not.

As I searched for an example that illustrates standing against the prevailing flow

- one name stuck out to me amongst the multitude of growing pop-stars and fashion bloggers: Riley Clemmons.

She was only eighteen years old when, in December 2017,

Movie review: Interview with God

BY RUSTY WRIGHT, ASSIST NEWS SERVICE

SUPPOSE you could interview God and ask any questions you wanted. What would you ask?

Maybe...

Can you get my parents (lover, boss, sibling...) to be more understanding?

Got any good lotto numbers? Will my team win?

Too mundane? How about:

Why did my friend have to die in a car crash when I was 17? Do You even care about domestic violence, bullying or child abuse? If You care, why do You allow it?

This is the opportunity journalist Paul Asher faces in the movie *An Interview with God* as he returns from covering the war in Afghanistan with more questions than answers about life’s troubling complexities. Through curious twists, he gets three sit-downs with an intriguing man claiming to be God. Their interaction – and Paul’s reactions – form the plot of the thought-provoking and entertaining film.

Released on DVD and streaming, this month, the film seeks to stimulate discussion about the divine role in modern life.

The cast includes Oscar nominee David Strathairn (*Good Night, and Good Luck*) and Brenton Thwaites (*Pirates of The Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales*), plus Yael Grobglas (*Jane the Virgin, Supergirl*), Hill Harper (*Concussion*), and Charlbi Dean Kriek (*Black Lightning*).

So, how would God answer your hard questions? Would His answers satisfy you?

My sceptical mind wrestled with a common concern: How can a good, just,



powerful God allow evil and suffering? Is He all good but not all powerful, so He cares but can’t help? Or is He powerful enough but just doesn’t care?

I encountered a partial answer from an unexpected source.

The late William Sloane Coffin served as Yale University’s chaplain in the 1960s and 1970s. Famous for civil rights and anti-Vietnam War activism, he championed many liberal causes.

So it surprised me to see his PBS TV comment on the problem of pain. “Almost every square inch of the Earth’s surface is soaked with the tears and blood of the innocent,” Coffin told *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*, “and it’s not God’s doing. It’s our doing. That’s human malpractice. Don’t chalk it up to God.”

“When [people] see the innocent suffering,” continued Coffin, “every time they lift their eyes to heaven and say, ‘God,

how could you let this happen?’ it’s well to remember that exactly at that moment God is asking exactly the same question of us: ‘How could you let this happen?’”

Oxford scholar C.S. Lewis estimated that 80 percent of human suffering stems from human choice. Lewis called pain “God’s megaphone” that alerts us to our need for Him. This response does not answer all concerns, but suggests that the problem of evil is not as great an intellectual obstacle to trusting God as some imagine.

During a two-week period earlier in my life, my wife of twenty years divorced me, my employer of twenty five years showed me the door, and I had a cancer scare. During those dark days, a good friend reminded me of an important statement by a follower of Jesus: “God causes everything to

work together for the good of those who love [Him].” (Jeremiah 29:11) “That hasn’t been repealed yet!” my friend affirmed. He was right.

Four years later, I married a wonderful woman. We enjoyed each other immensely for sixteen years until cancer took her.

Pain’s emotional impact can remain formidable. It took about ten years after the divorce and firing for my emotions to catch up with the truth of my friend’s reminder. I am still adapting to life’s more recent curve balls.

Interested in exploring more about questions like these? *An Interview with God* could point you in engaging directions. Find it online.

Note: Rusty Wright is an author and lecturer. He holds Bachelor of Science (psychology) and Master of Theology degrees from Duke and Oxford universities, respectively. www.RustyWright.com

Challenge
WWW.CHALLENGENEWS.ORG

Testimonies • Children’s pages
Lifestyle articles • Sports

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, Ainsley Gaebler.

PRICING
<https://au.challenge.news/pricing/>

Order Challenge from
Challenge Literature Fellowship
PO Box 978 Cloverdale WA 6985
Call 08 9453 3311
Email: accounts@challengeneews.org

MAILBOX PSSM CLUB INC.

Let PSSM introduce you to God through FREE Bible lessons!
pssm.com.au

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

Name _____

DOB / / Male Female

Street _____ Suburb _____

State _____ Postcode _____

Parent/Guardian Signature (if under 18 years) _____

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

We are looking forward to hearing from you!
(07) 5433 1628
info@pssm.com.au
pssm.com.au

ESCAPING SEX ABUSE AND VIOLENCE

BY CHRIS EYTE

The horror of childhood, when he was sexually abused hundreds of times by a stranger and tortured by school bullies, no longer haunts Graham Swann.

The tattoo artist is free from the pain of his past, when he turned to gangland violence, alcohol and drugs in a hopeless, angry attempt to



mask what happened. He ended up in prison and then lived on the streets.

Even when he later found his wife Rachel, and had his own children, a successful business, home and a car - he was still angry and dependent on alcohol.

For Graham, change only occurred when he told a man everything that happened, forgave his abusers and asked for forgiveness for his own 'dark and disgusting stuff'. The man who listened to this confession, and helped Graham find freedom, was Jesus Christ.

Graham, aged 53, known as 'Swanny' to his friends, spends his time sharing the good news that has happened in his life through Jesus Christ, in prisons and churches, and he's also written an autobiography, called 'Prison without Bars', telling his story.

That story began when he was brought up on a council estate with his brother and parents.

Graham said: "Both parents loved us. They got by, like everyone else. But my brother got into trouble and was put into the care system (in the 1970s, people were put into care quickly) and

I got it into my head that I wasn't loved anymore.

"When I was 10-years-old, I started being bullied at school.

Older lads tortured me in woodland.

They tied me up, whipped

me, beat me with sticks, cut my penis and pulled my toenails out with pliers."

One day, Graham was running through the estate, trying to escape the school bullies, when a stranger beckoned him towards his house, away from the trouble. The boy went inside the home, the door closed and the paedophile sexually assaulted him for the first time.

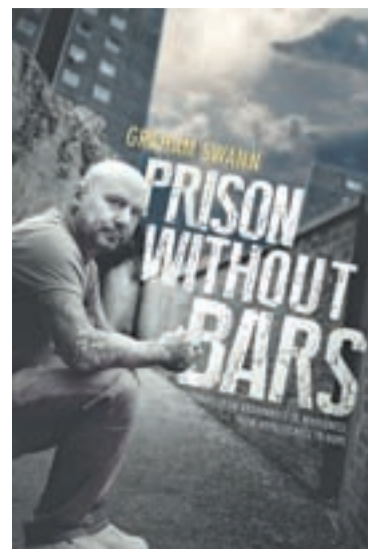
In fact, by the time he was 13, Graham estimates that he was sexually abused some 1,000 times by the man, who is now dead.

His life was wedged between bullying by school boys and sexual abuse by the stranger. "I lost weight, worrying about what would happen to me after school. The teachers called me thick. I was so full of fear."

Things changed when an older boy saw one of the bullies hit Graham. He stepped in to defend the youngster.

Graham was awed by the realisation that it was possible to overcome the torturers. He turned to violence himself as an escape from his inner pain. The teen began hanging out with violent men, taking drugs and drinking alcohol. He went to a young offenders' institution and by the time he was 19, he was in prison.

"When you are broken like that, you try to find a way out. I drank alcohol because it



released me from the pain for a few hours. I was full of shame, guilt and fear and that drove me to the devil more. I was emotionally trapped in an inner prison."

Meeting his future wife Rachel was a big change for Graham, who already had children from a previous relationship. His life changed from hanging out with alcoholics on the streets to having his own wife, kids, home and business - with wealth.

Even so, he was still an angry and depressed man with a weakness for alcohol and lots of self-pity. By the

time he was 40, Graham decided that his wife and children would celebrate if he died. So he began planning his suicide.

Then he met an American man in a pub one day, through a mutual friend. He was struck by how peaceful the man seemed and asked him why. The visitor told him that he was a Christian.

The American also told Graham that God had revealed to him that Graham had been sexually abused and that he was planning suicide. Graham responded by telling the man he was a liar. The American's response was, "My God doesn't lie."

Graham recalls: "I decided to go to church with him. And for the first time in my life I stopped looking at everyone else. I asked forgiveness from God for everything wrong I had done in my life. There was so much pain in me. God showed me I was full of shame, and I was broken and dirty.

"I told my wife Rachel that I had become a Christian. 'What's that?' she asked and I said I didn't know but I am one. Then I told my wife everything about my past. And then my wife told me she loved me more than ever."

Graham has now found an inner freedom by giving his life to Jesus Christ. He understands that God loves him.

"Jesus cleans up the inner mess of the soul. Everybody's a mess inside their souls. We have to reach out to Jesus and He heals us. If the Son makes you free, you are free indeed." (John 8 verse 36)

Graham also has a special message to those in prison:-

"Most people in prison are there because there is so much pain inside them, which drives them to anger.

"A lot of people complain, blaming other people, parents, society. If they truly look inside themselves and see the pain they are causing they would have sorrow that they're not right with God.

"And if they ask God to forgive them, He will forgive them. I have never met anyone who truly asked God to forgive them, who hasn't felt the power of Christ in their life.

"God won't forgive us unless we forgive others. His power, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, now lives in me. 'The

Son has set us free', as the Bible says.

"Troubles don't go but the truth is that when we get serious and ask Jesus to forgive us, then He will. Then we can live in a place of deep joy, and self-control, showing kindness and gentleness to others." •



Graham in Uganda on a mission trip

Murders prod glamour girl towards peace

She should not be alive today. Jozy Pollock should have been at her friend, celebrity actress Sharon Tate's home, on the warm, summer night of August 8th, 1969.

This was the night that four of Charles Manson's cult members broke into the luxury home and brutally murdered Sharon, who was eight and a half months pregnant, and four others who were staying there.

"I knew Sharon Tate when she was a teenager," Jozy says. "I met her in Italy where she was an extra in a film that my then husband, Channing Pollock, was making. She was really beautiful. When she came to Los Angeles, we used to hang out.

"I saw her one night at a club in August 1969," Jozy continues. "Sharon wanted me to come over to her house that weekend and she gave me her number."

When the time came, Jozy couldn't find Sharon's phone number and ended up going out to a show instead.

The next morning, when she decided she would drive over and visit Sharon, she heard on the news about the bodies being found.

Jozy shares that it "was an incredible shock". "I could have been one of the bodies," Jozy recalls soberly. "God used a migraine and a lost phone number to save my life!"

Reeling from her brush with death, it was not until much later that Jozy could come to terms with it. She now believes that God spared her life for future ministry.

Born in England, Jozy became



Jozy Pollock then (above) and now.



the "Hula-Hoop Queen" in her youth. She married American magician, Channing Pollock and moved with him to the United States where they performed in numerous shows.

After divorcing her husband in 1968, Jozy entered a fast-paced world of elite rock and roll musicians and dated a number of famous men. She was the typical glamour gal.

But the Sharon Tate killings caused her to start thinking about why she was alive.

After another failed relationship, Jozy found that she was at the end of her rope. She called a friend named Mike whose life had been transformed by Jesus.

"I told him, 'I have had enough torment,'" Jozy recalls. "He said to me, 'Jozy, what do you really want?'"

"I replied, 'All I want is peace.'

"He said, 'With Jesus, you can have that peace, but you have to

pray the sinner's prayer.'

"I responded, 'Wait a minute ... I am not a sinner, I am a good person. I am always helping people.'

"He stated, 'No Jozy, you're a sinner.'"

So Jozy prayed the sinner's prayer through gritted teeth. For the next six months she rebelled against everything.

Jozy remembers praying, asking the Lord to not "turn her into a Jesus freak because she only wanted to do this a little bit".

But at the end of the six months, she sensed that she was missing something.

"I went to a Chi Coltrane Christian concert," Jozy says. "She was talking about being 'born again' and not feeling it; which was exactly where I was in my walk. [Later] I told her how I was feeling and she prayed with me and laid hands on me. Suddenly, I had a huge hunger and thirst for God.

"It was hard giving up my will,

but after I gave it up, I had peace."

After Jozy's baptism [immersion in water as an outward sign of her inward decision], she says she had a "feeling of falling in love with Jesus."

Jozy's friends in the fast lane openly mocked her new faith. They said, "Jozy used to be so much fun, but now she is the kiss of death - all she talks about is Jesus."

Jozy admits that she "could clear a room".

Several years after the Tate killings, Jozy saw Susan Atkins, one of the main participants in the hideous crime.

"She was the one who actually cut the baby out of Sharon's body," Jozy explains. (The baby did not survive.) "I had all this rage and emotion rise up and I wanted to get in her face, but the Holy Spirit prevented me.

"It was like God said, 'You teach others to forgive. Where is your forgiveness?' I recognized that I had to forgive her and was able to just walk away."

Today, Jozy lives in modest circumstances, far removed from the lifestyle of the rich and famous. She has been involved in prison ministry since 1984, serves at a boys' home and provides counselling to women at a rehab centre.

"I was once a glamour girl, but the fact that I am not now is no big deal. They have all the fame, but I would love for them to have the peace that I have!" she declares. •

Of birds, belief and biology

Margaret Wieland of Creation Ministries International (CMI) interviews bird expert and former renowned evolutionist Dr Jon Ahlquist

It has been said, “If there is one word that makes creative people different from others, it is the word complexity”—a fitting comment on Dr Jon Ahlquist, whose life has so many fascinating details, they far exceeded the available space.

Dr Ahlquist is a molecular biologist, ornithologist and artist who, before his retirement, specialized in molecular phylogenetics (evolutionary history of organisms).

With a B.Sc. from Cornell University, and an M.Sc. and Ph.D. from Yale University (all in biology) he subsequently taught and researched at Yale. He then held several professorships.

In 1991, he and Dr Charles Sibley (1917–1998), formerly of Yale University, published *Phylogeny and Classification of Birds*, which presented a new and subsequently very influential phylogeny (evolutionary history) for birds, known as the Sibley–Ahlquist taxonomy. He is author or co-author of 62 scientific publications.

EARLY LIFE

Born in 1944 to American offspring of Finnish refugees, Jon’s early life was one of stability grounded in a strong Lutheran faith. His parents gave him a King James Bible for his seventh birthday. A prodigious reader, Jon was determined to read it right through, though “it was not easy going for a kid.”

At around eight years old, Jon made a personal commitment to Christ:

It was in the basement Sunday school of our Lutheran Church; we were watching a movie about the life of Christ. I was taught a belief in a literal six days of creation, a real Adam and Eve (as well as a real Job and Jonah), a worldwide flood, and the veracity of the patriarchs. None of the Bible’s history was allegorized.



Dr Jon Ahlquist

DEVELOPING INTERESTS

Thanks to his fifth-grade teacher assigning each of his class of 10-year-olds to “create a bird book”, a budding ornithologist was born. From that grew a life-long interest in watching, listing, drawing/painting, and photographing birds. And a scientific career devoted to birds.

As Jon grew, so did his talent as an artist. At just 15, a mentor organized a one-man show of 30 of his best paintings. Especially

given his age, Jon’s efforts were seen as newsworthy. His now much higher profile helped him sell most of the paintings he produced throughout high school, where he wore his faith on his sleeve.

Editor of the school’s weekly newspaper, he wrote many editorials touching on spiritual matters, and gave a very evangelical valedictorian graduation speech.

UNIVERSITY—AND ALCOHOLISM

Jon began his tertiary education in biology at Cornell University. A large part of him would have simply preferred to take up his first love, painting, full-time. Jon thinks he would have quit by the end of the first semester except for the family pressure to succeed.

Then, amazingly, his studies took a turn for the better. He joined Dr Charles Sibley’s ornithology course in his second semester. Suddenly, birds and biology made sense—albeit in the framework of evolution—and so he ‘hung in there’. A ‘theistic evolutionist’ at this point in his life, Jon moved on to Yale in 1966, following Sibley. The two began a collaboration that would last for many years and produce fame and some fascinating science.²

But Jon wasn’t truly happy and, early in his uni years, he began drinking heavily.

Alcoholism is a sin; it puts something else in the place of God. ... I was cutting off my conscious contact with God and grieving the Holy Spirit. To cut a very long story short, I found Alcoholics Anonymous and, with the help of God, following AA’s 12 steps with a Christian emphasis, and some very fine friends, I found my way back to both sobriety and sanity.

In 1988, during his tenure at Ohio University, Jon and Charles were awarded the Daniel Giraud Elliot Medal from the National Academy of Sciences for their work on the application of DNA hybridization techniques to bird classification.³

FROM THEISTIC EVOLUTION TO CREATION

Despite espousing evolution at the time, Jon says he was not an atheist:

I was a ‘theistic evolutionist’. I thought I could simply place the DNA evidence on a secular time scale. You could reasonably accuse me of ‘fence sitting’ and be correct.

But, he says, he did not think deeply about the ramifications of theistic evolution:

Once it was pointed out to me that it meant the existence of evil and death before Adam and Eve, and was therefore biblically impossible, I felt quite stupid.

He was also challenged on the science by an astute Bible teacher. This man pointed out to Jon that the



Genetic scientist Dr Jon Ahlquist, also a talented artist, with his painting ‘Long Shadows’, depicting a kitten and a young crow.

problem was not with the data, it was the interpretation forced upon it. For example, he said that the evolutionary ‘family trees’ Jon was producing for birds proved nothing, since they were generated by an algorithm (formula) that “is instructed to make a tree. It will produce a tree out of any numbers you give it.”

Jon was immediately convicted and says:

Once I got it into my thick skull that Darwinism is just one more humanistic philosophy from the Enlightenment, designed to write God out of everything, the battle was over. It’s not even science, it’s political ideology and demagoguery—end of story. The Holy Spirit had forced me off the fence. I realized that young-earth creation (YEC) was the only truth.

Today my view is that old-earth ‘creation’ of any sort distorts the first 11 chapters of Genesis and, if taken to the logical conclusion, makes God a liar.

Today my view is that old-earth ‘creation’ of any sort distorts the first 11 chapters of Genesis and, if taken to the logical conclusion, makes God a liar.

HUMAN AND APE SIMILARITY?

Drs Ahlquist and Sibley may well be best known to non-specialists for applying their DNA-DNA hybridization techniques to man,⁴ coming up with the well-known alleged ‘98% chimp-human similarity’. Many scientists, including creationists, have critiqued this,⁵ and the accepted figure these days, with more modern techniques, is in fact much lower.⁶

Dr Ahlquist says that when he was an evolutionist, he would have agreed with creationists who pointed out that even at ‘98% chimp-human similarity’, the genetic differences were still huge; tens of millions of DNA ‘letters’. Also, great similarity of DNA is not surprising, given the similarity in form and function between the two. But that similarity is not evidence for common ancestry any more than it is evidence for having the same Designer:

Molecular evidence of any sort proves nothing about evolution, in fact. All we are doing is measuring genetic similarity or difference.

The fact that our bodies have a Bauplan [body plan] like that of primates is not coincidental, nor does it have anything to do with evolution. To achieve our function we need to be bipedal, have a large cranial capacity, be omnivorous and have opposable thumbs. This produces certain constraints on our DNA, in the same way that the need to fly in certain ways restricts the design of birds, and thus constrains their DNA.

The bottom line, according to Jon today?

It’s all a part of the Lord’s amazing design.

REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. By Hungarian-American social psychologist Mihály Csikszentmihályi (b. 1943).
2. Ahlquist, J. E., “Charles G. Sibley: A commentary on 30 years of collaboration”, *Auk* 116(3):856–860, 1999 | doi:10.2307/4089352.
3. Sibley, C.G. and Ahlquist, J.E., *Phylogeny and Classification of Birds: A study in molecular evolution*, Yale University Press, 1990.
4. Sibley, C.G., Comstock, and Ahlquist, J.E., DNA hybridization evidence of hominoid phylogeny: A reanalysis of the data, *J. Mol. Evol.* 30(3):202–236, 1990 | doi:10.1007/BF02099992.
5. Batten, D., Human/chimp DNA similarity: Evidence for evolutionary relationship? *Creation* 19(1):21–22, 1996; creation.com/chimp-human.
6. The myth of 1%: Human and chimp DNA are very different, *Creation* 36(1):35–37, 2014; creation.com/1-percent-myth. See also Tomkins, J. and Bergman, J., *Creation* 26(1):94–100, 2012; creation.com/chimp.

Believe it or not

Bacteria that do not change

BY CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

IN spite of evolutionary expectations some bacteria have not changed for billions of years.

A formation in Western Australia claimed to be 1.8 billion years (Ga) old contains fossilized sulphur-cycling bacteria.¹ These bacteria metabolically are fuelled by seawater sulphate, meaning they can live in an anoxic zone. Contrary to evolutionary theory the sulphur-cycling bacteria are essentially identical with modern types:

“An ancient deep-sea mud-inhabiting 1,800-million-year-old sulphur-cycling microbial community from Western Australia is essentially identical both to a fossil community 500 million years older and to modern microbial biotas discovered off the coast of South America in 2007.”²

Claims of similarity are based on morphology, community structure, habitat features, and physiology inferred from the characteristics of the mineral deposits. This presents a conundrum for evolution. Why have the bacteria “remained fundamentally unchanged over billions of years?”³ Little or no change has also been noted with Precambrian cyanobacteria supposedly over billions of years.⁴ The researchers suggest that the lack of change is because the environment had remained unchanged.

How likely is it that the environment remained the same for a few billion years? More to the point, how would the researchers know it did not change?

References and notes

1. Schopf, J.W., Kudryavtsev, A.B., Walter, M.R., Van Kranendonk, M.J., Williford, K.H., Kozdon, R., Valley, J.W., Gallardo, V.A., Espinoza, C. and Flannery, D.T., Sulphur-cycling fossil bacteria from the 1.8-Ga Duck Creek Formation provides promising evidence of evolution’s null hypothesis, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* 112(7):2087–2092, 2015.
2. Schopf et al., ref. 1, p. 2087.
3. Schopf et al., ref. 1, p. 2090.
4. Schopf, J.W., Disparate rates, different fates: tempo and mode of evolution changed from the Precambrian to the Phanerozoic, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* 91(15):6735–6742, 1994.

GET ANSWERS FOR YOUR FAMILY

Young people struggle to find purpose in life, believing that ‘science’ has made God irrelevant. **CREATION MAGAZINE** provides answers for your family.

- Affirms the complete reliability of the Bible
- Refutes evolution with real-world evidence
- Helps Christians share and defend their faith

ONLY \$32 A YEAR (4 issues a year)

Subscribe at CREATION.COM/CMAG

CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

WORKING THROUGH GRIEF

BY ROB FURLONG

MY MUM passed away one week before Christmas just gone and as I have been working through the grieving process it has caused me to think of those of you who may also be experiencing your own loss in a relationship with someone.

Loss in relationships comes to us in many forms.

It could be through the death of your husband or wife.

It may be a long term friendship that has ended as the result of a bitter argument.

Or perhaps the person you thought loved you has walked away from the marriage or relationship.

One thing is certain – losses like these cause deep emotional pain and

most, if not all of us, are not equipped to deal with the grief that ensues.

So for the next few months I want to write about grief and discuss some of the practical ways that we might be able to process it.

Let's begin with what I think is a good definition of grief:

"Grief may be called a life-shaking sorrow over loss. Grief tears life to shreds; it shakes one from top to bottom. It pulls a person loose; he or she comes apart at the seams. Grief is truly nothing less than a life-shattering loss."

I begin here because the first place to start is to acknowledge the fact that your grief is real.

This is an important point because our default pattern as human beings is to deny or ignore our grief and when we do this we remain stuck, unable to move forward in healthy ways.

An excellent example of this is found in the fictional book, *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens.

One of the central characters is Miss Haversham, who was left jilted at the altar on her wedding day.

A depiction of Miss Haversham from *Great Expectations*.



Every clock in the house was stopped at the precise moment she received the letter from her fiancé, the table set for the wedding banquet was left as it was and Miss Haversham remained in her wedding dress for the rest of her days, living a solitary and bitter life in a gloomy house that, along with her, descended into decay.

Instead of acknowledging her grief, Miss Haversham denied it, "stuck in it" for the rest of her life and incapable of building meaningful relationships with anyone ever again.

Denial is cited by the experts as the first stage of grief but if we do not move through this stage, then as one author has wisely observed:

"The result of denying or minimizing our wounds over many years is that we become less and less human, empty... shells with painted smiley faces."

As previously mentioned, grief through loss comes to us in many forms. Don Howard, a minister, wrote about this as he processed his own grief when he lost his wife to breast cancer when she was only 46:

"Grief is not confined to the death of a loved one. A move from the 'old family home', loss of possessions, money,

job, health; the death of a pet, the marriage of a member of the family, can be as devastating as death. In divorce, the grief may be even worse because there is not the finality of death."

Whatever your loss may be, the first step to processing it is to acknowledge the fact that it has occurred.

And here is some encouragement for you in your journey through grief.

You need not travel alone! Hopefully you have some good friends or family around you to love and support you through your grief and loss.

God is also with you.

It was said of Jesus that "when He looked out over the crowds, His heart broke (because they were) so confused and aimless..."

Jesus cares about you and your grief.

And He also understands what it is like because He has travelled the same path Himself!

Lessons from a sausage dog (Part 16)

BY JODY BENNETT

OUR sausage dog, Carrie, absolutely hates cats! She has this special mewling growl sound that she makes when she sees them in our front garden. If I let her out the front door, she dashes after them to scare them off our lawn and then sniffs out all the places they have been.

Usually, because she is only a little dog, cats don't take her very seriously. The neighbours' ones run off our property but if Carrie tries to confront them on theirs, they will arch up and hiss, and she generally backs off.



However, Carrie met her match yesterday. While on our walk, she spotted a cat hiding near a car and went for it. The dog didn't take the hissing warning it gave her and when she tried to make it run, the cat pounced instead and dug its claws into her.

Carrie was astonished and yelped in outrage and pain. She quickly ran back to me but wasn't badly hurt – just a scratch or two on her tummy. However, I'm sure she'll think twice before pushing her luck with a cat again!

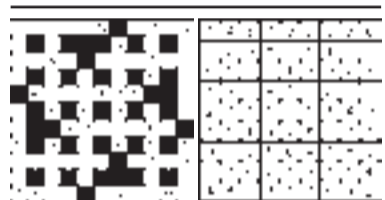
It made me think of how we can get complacent about dangers and temptations in our lives.

We think we have them under control and that they can do us no harm. However, those addictions we think we've mastered, those negative thoughts we are sure we've overcome or those habits we think we've broken, can so easily turn on us in a moment of weakness and attack in our soft underbelly, where we are most vulnerable.

That is why the Bible admonishes us to "flee from sexual immorality" (1 Corinthians 6:18) and to "have nothing to do with fruitless works of darkness" (Ephesians 5:11) and to continually be on our guard against the Devil, who "prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

Don't mess with evil, don't try and pick a fight with it – just run.

Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. 2 Timothy 2:22



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
"Everyone has sinned. Nobody is good enough because God's standards are perfect" (Romans 3:23)

ADMIT

GOD'S REMEDY / SOLUTION: Jesus died on the cross
"God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8)

BELIEVE

OUR RESPONSE: Trust Jesus by receiving Him
"To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12)

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:

If you prayed the above prayer, tick this box

I have prayed this prayer.

- Please send me:
- Bible
 - Some 'starting off' literature
 - Information on a helpful church

If you have NOT prayed the prayer at this stage, tick this box

I would like to think about this.

- Please send me:
- More information as I am inquiring about being a Christian.
 - I have a problem (see attached letter)

* Please tick and write clearly *

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Age and occupation (it helps) _____

Challenge Literature Fellowship PO Box 978, Cloverdale WA 6985 / Fax (08) 9453 3006 or email info@challengenews.org

All overseas enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country

Ask Y: Peter Meadows answers your questions about God

QUESTION: Does the claim that God is 'holy' have anything to do with real life?

A GREAT question. And when it comes to 'real life', to talk about God as being 'holy' has everything to do with it.

The focus Jesus gave was on 'real life' being about knowing – as a friend – the God who made us. And experiencing His help to live the kind of life He has in mind for us. All of which involves taking into account 'what God is like'. Which is where 'holy' comes in.

It is easy to imagine – or hope – that God is much like a puppy dog. Safe, agreeable and OK to take on – no matter what. That's not how Jesus conveyed Him. Not as 'safe' at all. That's not because God is nasty, cruel or vindictive. But because of the very substance of what He is. Let me try to explain this to you.

Day by day you sit within reach of an electric socket and don't give it a second thought. Of course you are careful. You don't stand in a bowl of water, lick your fingers and stick them in the sockets just for the fun of it. You are simply happy to use electricity to run your appliances.

But many miles from you a huge power station is generating raw, naked, electrical power. This electricity is nothing like the few meager watts that help keep your hair curled, your model train chuffing or your kettle boiled. No way. If this kind of electricity went straight into

your home it would be meltdown. Everything would be left as a charred blob on the landscape.

We can too easily assume the great God of the universe to be like common domestic electricity. Tame.

Safe. Manageable. But those who heard Jesus' offer to follow Him knew God to be like the raw power that comes from the electricity plant.

The ancients had a technical word for this kind of power – "holy." God is holy. Pure, powerful and unspoiled goodness. A

searchlight, not a flashlight. A forest fire, not a flickering match. A tsunami, not a wave.

And "holy" consumes anything that is not of the same substance – in the same way darkness is consumed by light, forests are consumed by fire and whole swathes of land are consumed by a tsunami.

What turns that raw electricity in to a safe power that makes life work better? A transforming sub-station. A go-between that stands between the ultimate power and us. And that is exactly what Jesus came to be – so we could have real life.

By His death on the cross Jesus stood between God and us – and goes on doing so. Through our faith in Him we have a way to relate to an all powerful and 'holy' God. To know Him. And to make it possible for that same God to be our strength and help.

This is what makes 'real life' possible.

PURE, POWERFUL, UNSPOILED GOODNESS.





DOING HARD THINGS

Lolo Jones, more commonly known as Lolo, is an American hurdler, bobsledder and track athlete who has won three indoor national titles, two World Indoor Championship gold medals and a World Championship gold medal. Throughout her years in the sport, Lolo has had to overcome disadvantage and disappointment.

"It is my job to hurdle over obstacles," she shares. "But I have also hurdled over so many life obstacles that [I have learned] those things can make you stronger."

"I definitely think that my struggles, in childhood, helped me learn how to fight."

Lolo, born in Des Moines, Iowa, of Native American, African-American, French, and Norwegian descent, had a tough childhood, "My Dad was always in and out of prison – drunk driving, violence, whatever. We never knew when he would be coming back."

Lolo and her four siblings, had to learn, early on, how to fend for themselves. "By the sixth grade, I was a professional shoplifter," she confesses. "Shoplifting frozen dinners from the grocery store."

Lolo's mother worked multiple jobs to make ends meet. However, they lived in poverty and "we were evicted numerous times, moved around a lot and were homeless at one point."

"We ended up at the Salvation Army (a rehabilitation centre). They let us sleep in the basement until mum got her feet on the ground."

"When you are battling the storm, it is hard to see if there are sunny days ahead," Lolo continues, "Because all you can see is darkness

and you feel so crushed and down and out. That can trick you into thinking that it is always going to be like that."

In spite of all the moving around her family did, Lolo's mother always made sure they went to church, grounding her children in the Christian faith.

Lolo was a keen listener to the Word of God and was eager to know more about Jesus and what He had done for her. Yet, it was not until she was in college that she revisited those roots and committed her life to God.

Part of that commitment was a promise to remain a virgin until marriage. "My mother had five kids and never married," she explains. "So, I've seen firsthand the consequences of having premarital sex."

Even though Lolo, now 36 and still unmarried, has admitted that maintaining her virginity has been "the hardest thing I've ever done in my life—harder than training for the Olympics", she affirms, "It is God's way of protecting me from heartbreak and I believe it is a gift I should give only to my husband."

Lolo says it was her father who cultivated her love for running. "When he was home, he was actually a great dad," she recalls. "He

was always buying these cheap cars to get us through a season and they would always break down...so we would have to run from one place to another.

"As my mum would shift from place to place or my dad would be in and out of my life, running was like the friend that never left. It was always there. It was the only constant thing in my life."

Although Lolo went to eight different schools in eight years, she had opportunities to pursue her passion whenever a sports coach needed a hurdler. "None of the other girls wanted to so I said I would do it," she smiles.

She often stayed after practice to do extra. "I wanted to keep going, keep running, and get a scholarship – so I could get out of poverty."

Lolo won a scholarship to attend the Louisiana State University and won ranking among the top-three women in both the 60 and 100 meter hurdles. She qualified for the 2008 Summer Olympics held in Beijing and was favoured to win the 100 meter hurdles. Lolo got off to a good start but, in the final, she was in the lead when she clipped the ninth hurdle, stumbled and finished in seventh place, before collapsing.

"I was absolutely crushed. It felt like someone had punched me in the stomach," she remembers.

However, as she lay there, she

says she heard God encouraging her with the verse, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28)

"I had to constantly remind myself, 'When I am weak, He is strong. I cannot do this in my own strength.'"

A year before the next Olympics, Lolo had a major surgery to repair a tethered spinal cord. Whilst her competitors were training for the upcoming games, she had to learn how to walk again.

But, slowly and steadily, she built up her strength until she scraped through the trials to get a spot in the 2012 London Olympics. While Lolo did place first and third in the semi-finals, she once again hit a hurdle in the finals and finished fourth.

Lolo sees her failure as a provision of God Who directed her to pursue another dream – competitive bobsledding. She was brake woman

for the US bobsledding team that finished 11th at the Sochi Winter Olympics in 2014.

Lolo is wise in the face of her disappointments: "That Olympic medal is something every athlete fights so hard for. It is your highest dream in life ...you think, once I get that, I'll be fulfilled. But it is not going to fulfil me. There is only one thing that can do that and it is my relationship with God. He put this void in us for a reason and only He can fulfil that."

MAIN PHOTO: Lolo Jones clears a hurdle in the semi-finals of the Women's 100 Meter Hurdles during the USATF Outdoor Championships in 2014 in Sacramento, California. Photo: Andy Lyons/Getty Images

INSET: Lolo's good looks have also created openings for her on TV shows and as a movie extra. Photo: Getty Images



DISTRIBUTED BY: