

BOUNCING BACK FROM DEPRESSION

May is Mental Health Month. Many people have found relief from their depression, suicidal ideation and anxiety through turning their lives over to God, however even the faithful may continue to struggle with mental health issues, as Simeon's story illustrates.

BY JANICE TEO

Simeon Neo moved to Perth from Singapore when she was 20. Within three years, the happy-go-lucky girl became deeply depressed and at one stage felt she could not go on.

She was lonely and isolated. Although she knew people in Perth of Singaporean descent, they had grown up in a different and unfamiliar environment. The Australian slang and accent were foreign. Culturally alienated, Simeon felt like a fish out of water.

"I felt my life and my whole identity were just crumbling," Simeon, now 27, tells *Challenge News*. "I became very closed off even from my own family. I was so very alone."

"I had this rose-coloured idea of what Perth would be like — that it would be easy to make friends or get a job — but it was so difficult to find work, even in a cafe or in retail. That affected my confidence badly."

She was also frustrated at not being able to pass her driving test. Unable to go anywhere except by public transport or inconveniencing others, Simeon only left home when she absolutely had to.

"I stayed in my room all day every day. My concerned parents encouraged me to make friends but I was too unhappy."

"I woke up every day feeling like I was drowning. I couldn't smile, couldn't talk, and couldn't see any future. I thought to myself: 'I don't

want to be here. Why was I born? I don't want to live like this anymore.'"

Thankfully, Simeon never acted on her impulses. The thought of grieving her family and especially her younger brother, who was 11 at the time, stopped her.

The one positive thing in her life — though it didn't feel like that at the time — was that she attended church and Bible study classes every week.

"I was brought up by Christian parents and I had accepted Christ as my Saviour, but it took a long time before I had a genuine relationship with God," she explains. Simeon says her obstacle was her scepticism.

"I wondered if God was real. If He was, did He really care for me? I needed Him to show up in my life



Simeon Neo

supernaturally. I attended church but, truthfully, I was just going through the motions."

It was at a church camp in Singapore when she was 15 that Simeon's prayers were answered.

"We were having a service and all of a sudden I felt an intense heat and I started shaking," she recalls. "It wasn't painful or scary; it felt wonderful."

"I knew immediately it was the Holy Spirit (the unseen presence of God). It was a defining moment for me because finally, I knew for myself that God was real."

"I had all the theory but now I also had the experience of God and my relationship with Him deepened after that. God stopped being something vague."

This touchpoint moment is what carried Simeon through her crisis in Perth. "Yes my faith wavered during that season but because my experience with God in Singapore was so tangible, I clung onto Him even though there were times when I got so angry that He was allowing me to go through such a tough time."

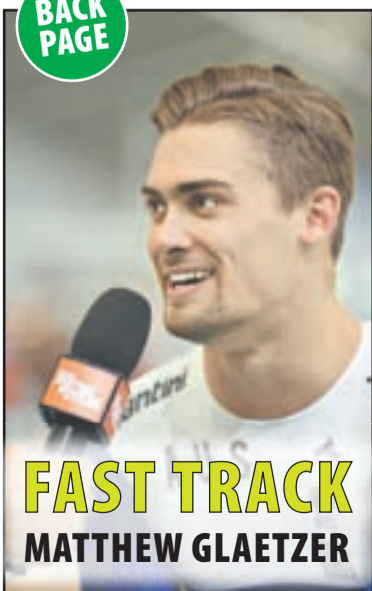
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Fun for Kids

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MATTHEW GLAETZER

YOUR TWO MOST IMPORTANT DAYS

BY JOHN HUTCHINSON

"The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why."

- Mark Twain

YOUR first day was one of the greatest miracles in the universe. Now you need to find out why it happened. Why was I born? Do I have a purpose? Am I wandering a meaningless path to nowhere or is there a definite reason for me being here?

I remember a troubled teenager desperately needing something to get him going. He helped on the farm and rarely spoke. One day he said, "Do you know what my problem is? - I've got nothing

to live for — I'm bored out of my wits, and if there's a tablet which would kill me — I'd take it."

That's truly tragic — a young guy charged with energy and potential — brooding on boredom and who would rather be dead than alive. But, is that how it should be?

You get just one go at life and need to get it right. One fellow I knew said, "All I've ever wanted is to be happy." But, happiness eluded him and he took his life. Happiness eludes many who surrender to futility and say, "No" to living.

Finding out why we're alive is urgent.

The answer

The reason why we're here was once defined

by a stranger who walked into the city of Athens. Some inquisitive philosophers asked him to speak. He did, and in simple words, the Apostle Paul told them why and how we got here. He said, "God gives us life and breath ... And has made from one all the nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth, and has determined the times for them to live and the boundaries of their existence that they should seek the Lord and happily find Him." Acts 17:26

The simple answer is to "seek the Lord and happily find Him."

But, how do we find an invisible God?

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“I remember not understanding what this feeling was. All of a sudden I wanted to hide my body. All of a sudden I didn't want to be seen by anybody. All of a sudden, I went from this vibrant personality as a little boy to a very, very inward, depressed, dark state,” Michael Cannatello recalls about being molested as a child.

Michael's Catholic, Italian parents didn't think twice when a priest on staff at their church, began to pay special attention to their seven-year-old son. “I didn't understand what was happening,” Michael says. “I didn't understand what sex was all about. I didn't know. From that day forward, I remember like a blanket of shame coming over me.”

Michael's mother was debilitated by multiple sclerosis and his father worked three jobs to provide for the family. Michael

was ashamed to tell his parents what was happening, and the abuse continued. “I felt inside, we were doing the right thing by going to church as a little boy, but it was killing me. It was hurting me. It was destroying me inside,” he adds. “I never turned my back on God. I always believed in Him. I always knew He was real, but my view of Him became worse, because I said, ‘if God would allow this, did He really love me?’”

By the time Michael was 18 he had moved to California. He led two lives - one as a worship leader, the other as someone very active in the gay lifestyle. “I started to do things that I

was very, very ashamed of,” he says. “Visiting pornography shops and having sex with other men privately behind closed doors —while I was in the church, while I was leading worship.”

Michael left the church and started frequenting gay clubs. There he was introduced to cocaine. “The very first time that I did cocaine I felt a sense of euphoria and the second that I put that drug in my body, I chased after it,” he says.

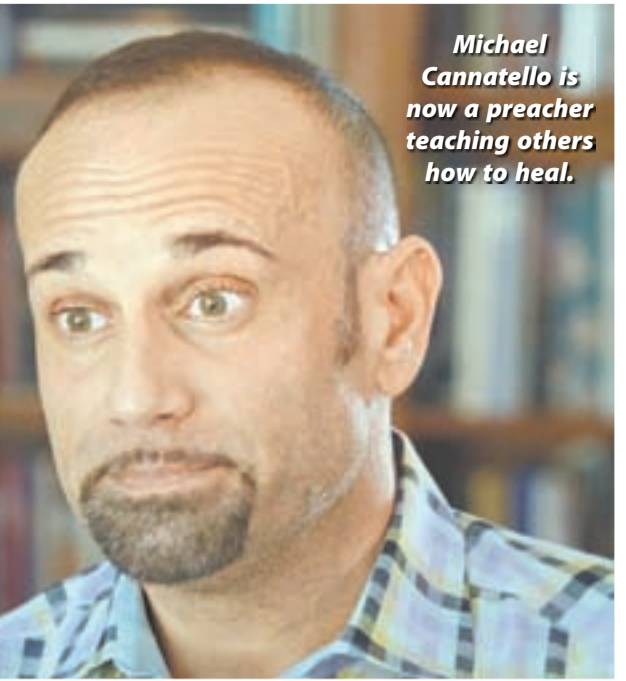
While Michael's promiscuity continued, his drug use escalated to heroin and meth. Then in 1996, at the age of 26, he was diagnosed with HIV and given six months to live. “I went into such a deep depression, but after that, I went deeper into drugs, to try to alleviate the torment. I was in total torment.”

Michael started hearing voices. He was diagnosed with schizophrenia, and institutionalised.

But among the hundreds of voices came a whisper of hope. “I would hear that voice, which was the Lord speaking to me, saying ‘Michael, this is all going to turn around for you one day. One day you're going to have a story to tell. One day all this is going to change.’”

Michael was released from the mental hospital. His body began shutting down from the HIV and drug use. One night, alone in his bedroom, he found himself in a physical and spiritual struggle for his life. “I was shaking and just sweating profusely, and I cried out to God and I said ‘Lord, if you don't help me now, I'm

Healed from abuse, drugs, mental illness



Michael Cannatello is now a preacher teaching others how to heal.

AT THE AGE OF 26, [I] WAS DIAGNOSED WITH HIV AND GIVEN SIX MONTHS TO LIVE



going to die. I need your help. I need to hear from you. I need you to speak to me and tell me what to do.”

Then God told him to open his Bible. Michael says, “I opened up the Word of God and I opened up and read through Jeremiah 30. When I got to verse 17, it was like a light was shining on this one verse, and the verse said, ‘I will heal you of your wounds and I will restore health back to your body.’ I knew what He meant by healing me of my wounds,” Michael adds. “He was talking about the shame, the abuse, the torment, all of the mind sickness and all of the things that happened to me.”

That night Michael committed his life to Christ and took the first step toward God's promise of healing.

He left the life of gay nightclubs and drugs. Then he came under the

care of Dr Douglas Walsh, a specialist in HIV treatment. “Michael was having congestive heart failure, he was suffering from failure of his liver and his heart — in very, very poor shape,” says Dr Walsh. “His HIV was advanced. He had an extremely high viral load. His immune system was just down in the single digits. And we prayed together and we worked together and started our journey on getting his health better.”

As Michael grew spiritually, he began to heal physically. Dr Walsh says, “Today Michael is totally HIV undetectable. In other words, he has a perfectly normal immune system. Michael was an absolute miracle. He should be dead and I tell him all the time that God has a purpose for him.”

Michael lives out that purpose by teaching others through Lazarus

Ministries, in honor of the God who he believes raised him from the dead. Today, the only voice he hears is the voice of his Savior. “He became everything to me that no one could ever become. He became my best friend. In a matter of a few weeks, he delivered me from addictions that had plagued me for decades,” Michael proclaims. “He was the one who restored me, and He was the one who put the satisfaction on my soul that I don't need men, I don't need money, I don't need sex, I don't need drugs to fulfill that inside of me. My fulfilment is in Jesus Christ.”

From The 700 Club. CBN.com.

Coffee Break

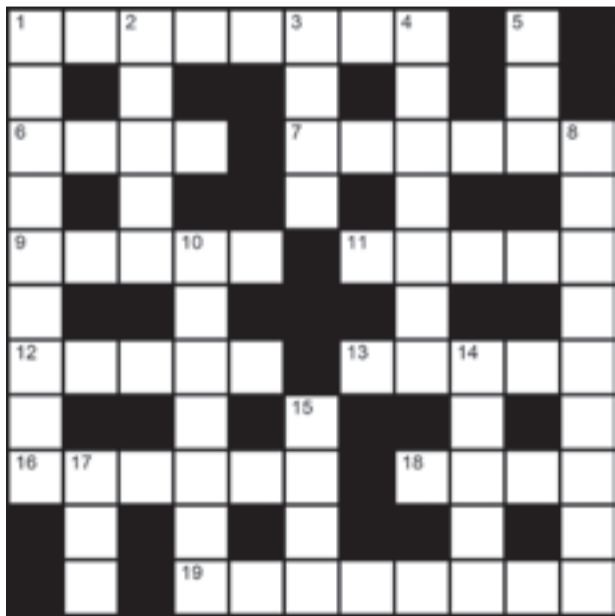
CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

ACROSS

- 1 Very hungry
- 6 1/1000 kilogram
- 7 Tree droppings
- 9 Condor habitat
- 11 Greedy skinflint
- 12 An open sore
- 13 Fly-fisher's target
- 16 Erased from a surface
- 18 To engrave
- 19 Beaten at war

DOWN

- 1 Person's written identification
- 2 Decoration; prize
- 3 Just standing around
- 4 Iced river
- 5 Pollen distributor
- 8 Pulled, extended
- 10 Green gem



14 Certain music ensemble

15 Wagyu meat
17 Sum charged for a service

Bouncing back from depression

• From page 1

Simeon used this valley to draw closer to God. She poured out her heart to Him and gradually, things changed. She got her driver's licence. She was accepted into her dream university course of film and creative writing. She began to understand Aussie slang and made friends.

Today, Simeon is bubbly and full of hope. Best of all, she can see a purpose in what she went through.

“Because of my experience, I developed a big heart for mental health,” she shares. “Because I was already involved in the art world, a friend suggested I would be good at art therapy — and it just clicked that that was what I wanted to do, so I'm saving now for my Masters degree.”

In the meantime, she has already taken part in an art exhibition. Called Lume, meaning light, the exhibition was the brainchild of church friend Phoebe. Simeon contributed a poem titled: *Will these dry bones live?* This is a reference to the Biblical

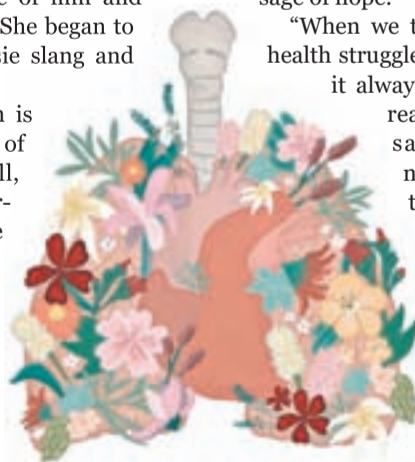
passage of Ezekiel 37:1-14, which is an account of a dream given by God to the prophet Ezekiel.

The aim of Lume, which featured works by Christian contributors depicting their journeys through mental illness, was to share a message of hope.

“When we talk about mental health struggles in the art world it always remains in that realm of darkness,” says Simeon. “It never goes beyond that. What we tried to do in Lume was to convey the message that the way out of the darkness is the light of God. It's a message of hope; with God, people don't keep struggling to find a way out.”

“I see now that what I went through was a refining fire,” she smiles. “God taught me how to empathise with people instead of just sympathising with them.”

“I feel God has made it very clear that mental health is an area I will eventually go into. Even if it's not art therapy, I definitely want to work in the mental health sector in a counselling role.”



The illustration that Simeon's friend drew to accompany her poem (right).

Will These Dry Bones Live?

In the bathroom full of bones
Tiled walls hear my silent cries
It ricochets off the mirror
Tap water running
My body sinks to the ground.
An arm in the sink
A foot hanging off the bathtub
Head on the ground
Cheek against cold tiles.

In this heart full of bones
The river has dried up
And graves line the shores
Fishes gasp for water
Gills lungs skin
Breathe in ashes
You stood by my side,
Hands holding onto mine

And You asked,
“Child, can dry bones live?”
And when I stayed silent
You asked once more
“Child, can these bones live?”
You said to me,
“Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live.
“I will clothe you in sinews and warm you with skins.
“I will put breath in you, and you shall live.”

In the bedroom full of bones
I watched as dry bones turn
To life. Breath enters the lungs
Gills lungs skin
And a song of melody sings forth
You opened the graves
Holding my hand
You called me out
Out of the darkness
And into Your marvellous light.

- Simeon Neo

SOLUTIONS PAGE 11



“Will anyone else be joining you or are you Alone”

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EATING DIDN'T HEAL MY HEART

American recording artist Mandisa rose to fame in 2005 when she competed in the TV singing competition *American Idol* and, while she didn't win, she went on to release six albums and scooped up a Grammy Award for one of them.

But when tragedy struck in 2013, Mandisa shut herself away from the world as she battled deep depression. That experience is the inspiration behind her new album and book, both titled *Out of the Dark*.

Mandisa auditioned for *American Idol* with Alicia Keyes' hit *Falling* and judge Simon Cowell, who is known for his brutally critical remarks, was overjoyed, saying, "You were everything I hoped you would be." But after she left the room, he said to the other judges, "Do we have a bigger stage this year?" and made other references to her weight during the season.

Mandisa addressed his comments with him on the program: "What I want to say to you is that, yes, you hurt me and I cried and it was painful, it really was. But I want you to know that I've forgiven you and that you don't need someone to apologise in order to forgive somebody. I figure that if Jesus could die so that all of my wrongs could be forgiven, I can certainly extend that same grace to you."

Simon responded that he was "humbled" and apologised to her.

Mandisa's faith journey began as a teenager when she was invited to a church performance about the birth of Jesus. At the end an invitation was extended for people to follow Jesus and she accepted.

"Though I had heard the story of Jesus dying on the cross many times before, it was as if I had heard it with new ears," Mandisa writes in her book. "I finally understood that Jesus wanted to come into my life, free me from the weight of my shame and make me a new creation ... I told God that I knew I was a sinner and that I believed Jesus had died, risen again, paid the penalty for my sin, and given me eternal life. I told God I wanted to follow Him and allow Him to be the boss of my life from that day forward."

After she graduated university, Mandisa became a backing singer for a worship leader at Bible conferences. That led to opportunities recording vocals for artists like Shania Twain, Trisha Yearwood and Faith Hill before reaching the top 10 of the 2005 season of *American Idol*. Two years later, Mandisa released her first album, *True Beauty*, which debuted at No. 1 on the Top Christian Albums charts and No. 43 on the Billboard 200.

Mandisa also overcame an addiction to food

and lost 100 pounds (45 kilograms). But then in 2013, her close friend Kisha Mitchell died of breast cancer despite Mandisa's fervent prayers for her healing. Mandisa "withdrew, wrestled with God and fell into a deep depression", according to her website biography.

"I was disappointed with God.

**I'M
THANKFUL
I DIDN'T
[TAKE MY
LIFE],**

|||||

I was mad because as I prayed for her, I believed that God was going to heal her. I'm not the kind of person who shakes my fist at the Lord and yells and screams.

I just shut down and started turning to food again for comfort. For years, I was turning to Him for comfort, but I didn't trust Him anymore, so I isolated and went back to my old friend, food. My loved ones were reaching out and I would ignore their



Recording artist Mandisa Lynn Hudley. (Photo by Jason Kempin/Getty Images).

phone calls and text messages. It got to the point where I had friends who, out of love and concern, came to the house banging on the door and I just put in some ear plugs and pretended I wasn't there. I stopped going to church. I didn't open my Bible."

In an interview for Faithwire's 4&3 Podcast, Mandisa admits that in a particularly dark moment she considered taking her life. She says that experience has given her empathy for those struggling with anxiety, depression and trauma on a daily basis.

"I'm thankful I didn't [take my life]," she says, "because I'm able to see now how God has redeemed it. I still wish my

friend were here, but I've learned how important it is to grieve and to walk with God through things like that."

Then God answered something she had been praying about for years – her brother John accepted Jesus as his Lord and Saviour.

"That was God reminding me that he did indeed hear my prayers," she says. "He was still there, and even though things didn't turn out the way I wanted them to with Kisha, sometimes God says 'no' and I'm just learning to be okay with that... I wish that I had all the answers, but at this point I say, 'Okay God, I'm either gonna trust you with all of my heart, or I'm not.' There's no middle ground here. I'm going to let the value and the weight of the character of God outweigh my need to know or understand."

Mandisa began reconnecting with people, working on her health and processing her pain through writing songs for her new album.

Mandisa, now 45, has just released her book *Out of the Dark: My Journey Through the Shadows to Find God's Joy*. She is also devoting her time to raising awareness about mental wellness and the importance of an honest and transparent relationship with God.

"The relationship that [God] is after with us, is honest," she tells Faithwire. "Yes, praise God when good things happen, yes ... The flip side of that, when I'm sad or when I'm angry, learning to bring those things to Him in a similar way, I think is so important."

Teen behaviours led to poor mental health

Mark Shedley remembers his childhood as being idyllic. "I grew up in a loving and supportive home on a sheep farm in Western Australia," he tells *Challenge News*. "I couldn't imagine a more enjoyable childhood."

However, he admits he had a very selfish attitude and confesses his motivations and decisions were based on a desire to be successful and shine among his peers.

"The desire to be popular led me into risk-taking behaviour as a teenager," he continues. "While at university in Adelaide I developed a binge-drinking habit on weekends and started smoking marijuana regularly."

"This combination led to a deterioration in my mental health to the point that I was hospitalised."

Mark's grandparents had been involved in Christian ministry for many decades but he says he doesn't remember ever hearing the gospel [the good news that Jesus died for our sins] until June 1997, just two weeks before his 21st birthday.

He had been invited to a youth meeting at a church in South Perth. While there, his heart was stirred when the pastor said: "It is because of your sin that you have been separated from the love and fellowship of God the Father. But He has made a way for that fellowship to be restored through the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross,

shedding His blood for the forgiveness of your sins."

Mark says those words had a wonderful effect on him. He remembers "it was as if a physical burden was lifted off my shoulders and a wonderful peace entered my whole body."

"I believed the good news about Jesus and talked to one of the leaders. He prayed with me and I got baptised [immersed in water as a symbol of dying to one's old life] two weeks later."

All this happened 24 years ago. Today Mark, who still lives in WA, is married with three young children.

He notes how the love and forgiveness of Christ have changed him. "My attitude has gone from being selfish and thoughtless to one where I delight to find opportunities to serve others and share the love and hope of Jesus with them."

He reflects that while there are trials and hardships in life, he is comforted "knowing that we have the Creator of the heavens and the Earth on our side to comfort, help and guide us through His Holy Spirit."

"The most fulfilling life a person can have is found in obeying and following Jesus and having fellowship with our loving, heavenly Father."

Mark's favourite verse – John 17:3 – sums up the gift he was given that day as a 20-year-old – "Now this is eternal life: that they know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom You have sent."



Mark Shedley with his family

Dear Challenge Newspaper,

LAST evening [early June 2021] I was called by a family member whose father had passed away. At the burial two days ago there had been some heated discussions revealing unresolved issues within the family. By the grace of God, I brought some *Challenge Newspapers* (South African edition) with me and used them to counsel the family members. They started to forgive each other. There was great joy and reconciliation in this family, and this is how God is using *Challenge Good News* papers to minister love, reconciliation and forgiveness to people.

Sent via Whatsapp from Nigel Bowers (edited for clarity)

Has Challenge News impacted your life?

Please tell us how at jodyb@challengenews.org

Good news from Ukraine

Both psychologists and pastors will tell you that one of the best ways to combat depression is to get grateful. Focussing on what we have to be thankful for changes our perspective and lifts our spirits.

With that in mind, here are some good news stories coming out of the war in Ukraine. Even in the midst of that turmoil and heartbreak, kindness is being shown, people are rising to the occasion and God is at work.

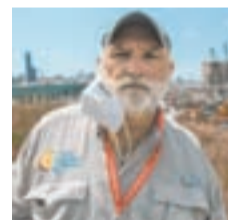
Volunteers in the historical centre of Kyiv cover a statue of Princess Olga (left), Apostle Andrew (not in picture), Cyril and Methodius (right) with sand bags for protection as the Ukrainian conflict continues, on March 27, 2022. (Photo by Maxym Marusenko/NurPhoto via Getty Images)



IN February, Tom Littledyke made a 2100 km journey from his home in Lyme Regis, England, to Ukraine with aid donations – and is now going back for a second time.

This time a convoy of 13 vehicles is making the journey with him, including two ambulances, vans and 4x4 vehicles containing medical equipment, thermal imaging equipment and rescue tools. Tom and his team hope to use their vehicles to ferry people out of Ukraine.

For the first trip, the 31-year-old former Royal Marine reservist drove a 16-seater minibus full of blankets, sleeping bags and teddy bears, according to BBC News.



CHEF and founder of World Central Kitchen **José Andrés** (left) is cooking for refugees on the Ukrainian border every day.

José set up emergency relief kitchens which prepare meals in giant paella pans and large ovens.

A warehouse in the west of Ukraine then ships the meals to people in cities like Odessa and Mykolayiv. In the month since the conflict began, World Central Kitchen has served 2 million meals.

A CREATIVE social media campaign encouraging people to book Airbnb accommodation in Ukrainian cities – without ever planning to check in – saw \$1.9 million raised in 48 hours. A week later, 434,000 nights had been booked, with \$15 million going to Airbnb hosts in Ukraine.

Airbnb.org has also pledged to provide free, short-term housing to up to 100,000 refugees fleeing Ukraine and dropped its guest and host fees for Ukraine.

People are, however, being warned to beware of potential scammers.

UKRAINIANS now have internet access after Elon Musk sent equipment necessary for his Starlink service, following a request for help via Twitter from vice minister Mykhailo Fedorov.

Hours later, Elon replied to the tweet: “Starlink service is now active in Ukraine. More terminals en route.”

Starlink provides universal internet access by saturating low Earth orbit with hundreds of tiny satellites. Connection is through a satellite dish which connects to a wireless router. A standard wall plug is all that is needed for power.

REFUGEES fleeing Ukraine are being greeted with donations of prams, clothes, toys and more at train stations in Poland.

Photojournalist Francesco Malavolta shared a now-viral photograph of prams lining a train station platform in Poland for mothers and infants entering the country.

The photo inspired more donations including hand-written notes offering encouragement and support.

PREMIER CHRISTIANITY UK reports so many people are reading the Bible that the Ukrainian Bible Society has nearly used up its whole 2022 print run.

“[The war] is a really good opportunity to ask people what is real, what the main priority in our life is, because circumstances push people to think about more than only their material, daily life,” Ukrainian Bible Society Deputy General Secretary Anatoliy Raychynets says.

“Yesterday, we were outside in a park, delivering bread to people. I had children’s Bibles in my vehicle, to distribute. One lady saw them and asked: ‘Are they Bibles? Can I have one please?’ And other people – 80 or 90 – asked: ‘Can I have one?’ One man, in his 70s, stood there with his bread in one hand and the Bible in his other hand and said: ‘I think the Bible is more important than daily bread, for me personally now. I never prayed before. I have never been to church, never read the Bible. But now it’s time to come closer to God,’” Anatoliy says.

Christians from different denominations are uniting for prayer, gathering in some of the city’s largest cathedrals. An evangelical service last week drew more than 1000 attendees and a further 45,000 watched on YouTube.

Anatoliy said: “I’ve personally seen so many miracles in the last 16 days: bombs falling down or rockets that don’t explode. A lot of lives have been saved because of that. Russian tanks left because they’re empty of fuel, and soldiers running away. In Odessa, on the Black Sea, for four days there has been a big storm and the Russians could not come closer to the city to shoot rockets. So pray. Your prayers are already bringing results. Miracles are saving a lot of lives.”



ISABELLE Robertson (right), an Australian expat who lives in Salzburg has set up “Free Rides West” with a group of friends.

They’ve been driving six vans over to Poland, dropping off supplies and picking up people who need lifts back to western Europe.

“We are just a group of friends offering lifts to those who need it,” Isabelle said. “We saw an opportunity to help.”

The group has transported 92 people from the Polish border to countries across Europe – organising plane tickets for them if it is too far to drive. They have translators on the phone ready to answer any questions.



YOUR TWO MOST IMPORTANT DAYS

• From page 1

To the men of Athens the apostle Paul dropped a vital clue when he said, “... God is not far from anyone of us”.

God is not far from the despondent teenager – not far from the rejected and dejected, not far from the troubled and lonely – not far from those doing time in prison – not far from those about to leave this life. And, He’s not far from you and me!

YOU WERE CREATED BY GOD FOR GOD. Lock that firmly into your thinking. Then grasp this awesome fact. You can know God as a friend. He sent His Son Jesus into the world to save you from your sins so that you can be in fellowship with Him.

Jesus suffered and died on a horrible Roman cross for our sins and rose victorious from the dead — and He’s alive today!!

What you need to do is to pray a

prayer like this: “Dear God, you have created me for yourself but I’ve sinned and gone my own way. I repent of (turn away from) all my sins and accept Jesus into my life as my personal Saviour and Lord. I commit my life to you.”

Get to know God. Start reading the Bible — begin at the New Testament. Talk to God in prayer. Ask Him to guide you and help you make good decisions. Share your new found faith with other Christians and then non-Christians.

Your new life with Christ begins the day you receive Him — and even death will not detain you as you anticipate being in God’s glorious presence for all eternity.

The Bible says: “Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and He will have mercy on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” Isaiah 55:6-7. •

What goes around ...

THE yeshiva.net site reports on a wonderful incidence of a good deed reaping a long term reward.

During World War II a Ukrainian woman, Mariya Blyschchik, and her family, risked their lives to rescue several Jews, including a girl called Fanya Bass, from the Nazis, when they invaded Russia in June, 1941. Recently, Fanya’s granddaughter, Sharon Bass, was able to return the kindness shown to her grandmother all those years ago, by ensuring safe passage to Israel for Mariya’s granddaughters when their town of Rovno, Western Ukraine, came under attack from Russian missiles.



Fanya Bass (left) and her rescuer Mariya Blyschchik.

STAYING IN A WAR ZONE

FROM CBS NEWS

WHEN the war started and Russian bombs began falling on Kyiv, missionaries Marie and Japhin John had to decide whether to leave the capital.

“It was not an easy decision until we prayed. But once we prayed, it was a very easy decision,” Japhin said.

He is from India. His wife, Marie, is German. Both are missionaries to Ukraine with the group Youth With a Mission (YWAM).

They decided to stay because of a commitment to serve the Ukrainian people, despite the very real danger to their lives.

Thirty minutes south of Kyiv, Japhin and Marie sprang into action, turning the sprawling YWAM campus into a humanitarian aid hub.

A ministry worker named Natalia and her two sons work in the kitchen making meals for folks in the neighborhood. “Sometimes there are days when we cook for a thousand people, sometimes 500 or 600,” Natalia said.

While driving to deliver supplies, Katarina, a YWAM missionary from Finland, told us, “The only thought that gave me peace was to go back to Ukraine, so that’s why I’m here.”

“I’m not saying that God was the one who forced me to go to the war zone, or it’s somehow that I didn’t have a choice, I had a choice, that was my choice. My choice was to come here, and God opened the door,” she added.

Now she hits the streets of Kyiv delivering food and other aid supplies to those unable to leave their apartments. Each visit ends with a time of prayer.

Meanwhile, an aid worker named David, who normally handles maintenance on the YWAM campus, is making dangerous missions to evacuate people trapped behind Russian lines. “Every time when I go to these areas I prepare myself that I might not get out of there. I pray every time. I’ve evacuated more than 100 people. I just work and work as long as I can, and as long as God allows me to help,” David said.

In another part of campus, Yuliia, who has been with YWAM for five years, is on the phone taking orders from a nearby neonatal hospital. Almost every other day, European countries ship medical supplies to Kyiv for distribution.

When they’re not handling day-to-day logistics or sorting through all the supplies coming in from around the world, Japhin and Marie visit elderly homes, bringing food and lots of warm hugs.

Marie said, “I just do it because of love for the country, and because of commitment, to say I’m not stepping away. If I feed two people or if I help to feed a thousand people a day ... my commitment to God is just the same.” •

YOUTH TRUTH

WA GIRL SINGS OF HOPE

BY HARRIET COOMBE

At just 21, folk singer/songwriter Sabrina Ives has achieved a lot. She has performed around Western Australia and Great Britain, has released an EP, *Blest*, and was nominated for a 7News Young Achiever Award. But unlike many young musicians, fame is not Sabrina's goal. Instead, she aims to write and perform songs that offer people hope.

Talking to *Challenge News*, Sabrina shares that she has always been musical but started writing songs and performing with her sister while living in the South West town of Denmark when she was in high school.

"Everyone always knew that Sabrina and Juliana would be busking on a Saturday outside the Denmark Bakery," Sabrina says with a smile.

That caught the attention of some WA Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) staff members, who were in Denmark promoting the university. She was invited to apply to the school and was accepted, despite being only 17 at the time.

Sabrina's music is influenced by John Williamson, classical music and Celtic music, and she always aims to tell a story through her lyrics.

"I think I've always had a story in my mind," Sabrina explains. "Imagery is the biggest thing – I have to see what I'm writing. I want the people who are listening to also not just feel it, but see the story."

Sabrina has used song-writing as a tool to process what she has experienced, such as her parents' divorce, a family member's struggle with their mental health, and witnessing

friends going through hard times.

Throughout her music, Sabrina always tries to weave in a message of hope. And for Sabrina – her hope is found in her faith in Jesus Christ. "I grew up in a Christian home and was under the Bible from a very young age," she remembers. Her family emigrated from Ireland, where her grandfather was a minister. Sabrina recalls being on holiday with her grandparents when she was about 14 or 15 when her grandfather showed the family a recording of his testimony (his story of how he became a Christian).

"It was such an impactful and inspiring message about his life and faith, and how he came to know Christ," she recalls.

"I realised through reflection that I didn't really know my Lord and Saviour, and instead relied more on my family faith to get me to heaven. I felt so convicted, fearful and emotional, as I knew I hadn't been walking with the Lord. With this, my Papa and I spoke privately and he took me through the scriptures that were used the night he was saved."

They read that "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:23), "*we all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all*" (Isaiah 53:6) and that "*every-*



WA singer Sabrina Ives aims to write songs that offer people hope.

one who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13).

"I prayed and asked the Lord to save me," Sabrina attests. "After giving my life to Christ I had a tremendous peace. I was so happy and knew what it was truly to be a Christian. I will forever be thankful for my Papa for guiding me to Christ and forever thankful to Christ for His mercy and love for me."

After becoming a Christian, Sabrina says she felt like her eyes were opened and she had conviction about her choices and temptations that came with moving out on her own at a young age.

"I made sure to always have the Lord as my priority and that in everything He was first," she shares.

Sabrina met new friends at university – many of whom were going through different struggles – and she wanted to show the hope of Jesus through her music in a gentle way. Her song *Two Minds* is about watching someone struggle with their mental health and wanting to be there for them.

"In past generations mental health issues were swept under the rug," Sabrina says. "And that affected the next generations."

Sabrina wrote her new song *Living Hope* during the Covid-19 pandemic as a source of encouragement to health-care workers.

"I wrote this song especially to encourage

and rekindle hope that all our hearts need," she shares.

Sabrina has been encouraged by the guidance and support of her WAAPA university professors over the past four years. In 2020, one of her teachers nominated her for a 7NEWS Young Achiever Award. Sabrina has visited schools to share her music and hope, something she aims to do more of once she graduates this year.

Throughout her journey, Sabrina says her mum, Wendy, is her biggest support and inspiration.

"Her whole life has impacted me in the best way. Who she is, is who I want to be," Sabrina shares.

"I wouldn't be where I am, without my faith and without God. We go through those dark days when we don't think we'll be able to get out of them because it's so bad, but God makes life worth living."

Sabrina is working on her second EP, while continuing her Bachelor of Contemporary Music-Artist studies. Her first EP, *Blest*, is available now on Spotify.



Sabrina's first EP, *Blest*, is available now on Spotify.

No longer helpless

KOREAN

Ji-Ho No was depressed. For years, he had battled with mental health issues and self-doubts. He thought he was never good enough. In order to feel more fulfilled he turned to pornography and masturbation.

"I was addicted to sexual lust," he says.

But, deep down, he knew that this was all wrong and that it could never fulfil him. Perhaps part of the reason he felt guilty was because of his morally good upbringing. "I had a normal childhood with great parents who provided for me and my siblings through the ups and downs,"

he reminisces. "We were raised to be good people and have family values."

It was during elementary and high school that Ji-Ho first heard about God. "I went on some vacation Bible camps," he tells *Challenge*, "but I did not think deeply about God at that time."

Ji-Ho did not really spare much thought for God as he graduated high school and moved on to study at university. It wasn't until 2019, as a 21-year-old, that he once again heard the still, small voice of God speak to him – this time it was through the internet.

"I first heard the Gospel (Jesus saving us from our sins by His death on the cross) through two pastors on YouTube," he says.

Still, Ji-Ho felt unsure about what he heard so he delayed responding to the Message for another year. But God didn't give up on him! He used the personal storms of Ji-Ho's life to bring him closer to the truth.

Feeling low, Ji-Ho watched more of the pastors' videos. On a day in March, 2020 he realised that maybe, through this Jesus, he could finally find freedom and wholeness.

"One of the pastors, Greg Laurie, invited me to pray a prayer to invite Christ into my heart and, as a result, I committed my life to Christ," he shares. "That day, I decided to become a Christian and the biggest changes have happened in my life!"

And that is how, through the internet, Ji-Ho's life was changed forever. With a big smile on his face, Ji-Ho relates how God has worked in him since that miraculous day.

"I have developed a daily prayer life and will turn to God for anything. I have stopped using curse words. I use the YouVersion Bible app to grow spiritually in God's words and plans for strengthening my faith and my relationship with God."

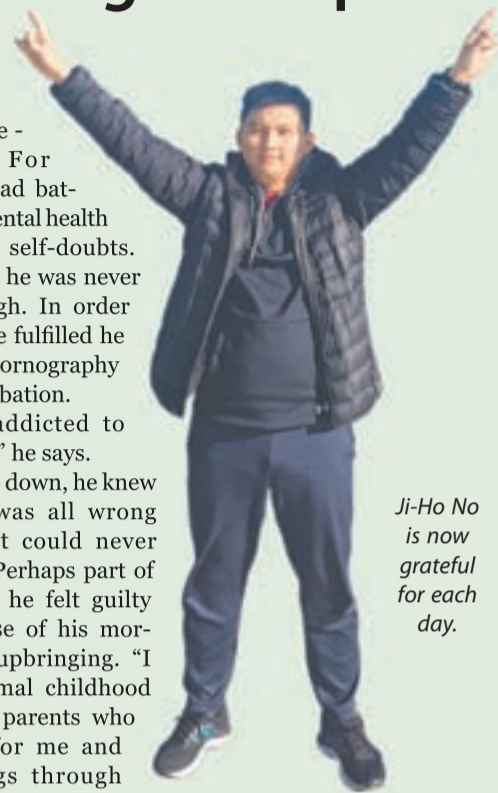
Being a Christian doesn't come without its hardships though. Ji-Ho explains, "Going through trials and storms is overwhelming and trying to resist temptation is hard. I have become aware of renouncing my habitual sins. I am taking steps forward and trusting God to overcome these struggles and being grateful for each day. My depression is less and my mental health has improved!"

His favourite Bible verse is Philippians 4:6 which says, "*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*"

Now 24 years old and two years into his new faith journey, Ji-Ho has a passion for sharing with others the Good News that changed his life. Even his family and friends have noticed the love that he pours out on those around him.

He says earnestly, "Jesus died on the cross for your sins to be forgiven. Jesus rose from the dead so that we can live again and defeat death through His sacrifice. Jesus loves you and He knocks on the door of your life and if you call on Him, Jesus will come into your life and save you from hell. He is the only way to heaven! Turning to Jesus will help you overcome your personal addictions and struggles. Only Jesus is the way to heaven, not by good works but by faith. There is power in the name of Jesus Christ!"

Greg Laurie's Harvest at Home services can be found on YouTube and his website Harvest.org.



Ji-Ho No is now grateful for each day.



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YOUTH TRUTH



FROM SUICIDAL TO ACCEPTED

© Stock photo

BY HARRIET COOMBE

At just 15 years old, Beth (not her real name) was overwhelmed by hopelessness. She believed suicide was the only way to make the pain finally end. But then a miracle took place and her life changed forever.

Sharing her story with *Challenge Newspaper*, Beth said she had struggled to find her purpose and identity since she was a young child. She was raised in a Christian home but couldn't seem to find what she was looking for in the church.

Beth said she always believed God was real but questioned whether He loved her as she was.

"I knew so many Christians that were 'Sunday Christians' and then they did whatever they wanted [the rest of the week]," she says. "I saw no point living my life to appease them, because it's clearly not for God, because God doesn't live at church."

Hope from the Bible

"But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint."
Isaiah 40:31

"For I have chosen you and will not throw you away. Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand."
Isaiah 41:9-10

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."
2 Timothy 1:7

"I was very worried. But your comfort brought me joy."
Psalm 94:19

"Come to me [Jesus], all you who are tired and are carrying heavy loads. I will give you rest."
Matthew 11:28

"I was looking to find this kind, compassionate Jesus that people talked about, but hadn't seen in another Christian," she remembers. "I was just really unimpressed with the Christians that I knew."

Beth's parents were also going through a difficult time in their marriage and while she knew they loved God, she didn't see them treating each other well. She also struggled to fit in within her own family.

"I'm quite different from my other siblings," she explains. "I'm very vocal, and very outgoing. And so when I'm struggling everyone knows it."

She was often told to be quiet, go to her room and stop making trouble. She was alone with her questions and search for identity and purpose.

"When I was about 14, I started thinking about ending my life... I just didn't have any hope," she admits. "I didn't think there was any point in living because I felt like my family hated me. I was always causing trouble and pain to them. I didn't see any way through it."

When she was 15, Beth attempted to take her own life.

This didn't work. "Which is a miracle," she shares. "Instead, I just felt God say, 'I love you, Beth.'"

She said it was different to hearing anyone else say they loved her. This was firm and solid, something she could find her identity and hope in.

"When I felt God say, 'I love you,' it was like this acceptance," she recalls. "And from that moment onward, I was like... 'God is real and God loves me and I have a purpose in Him and so my life has meaning'. And that was it for me and I've never looked back."

Beth surrendered her life to Jesus and felt a dramatic change in her

outlook immediately. "I had hope," she shares. "I had perspective. And then I just started seeking out Jesus. So I started reading my Bible, I started having my own worship times in my room. I had something to live for. There was a sense of excitement about getting to know Jesus."

Not all changes were overnight though.

"Some things I had to walk through for a couple years, like rejection in my own family – that took years to kind of process and get healing in," she says.

"To be able to actually love my family and not feel like they were against me, all of that took time."

As Beth read her Bible she also realised God had a plan for her life.

"I just knew that God wouldn't waste His breath on saving me from killing myself if there wasn't a purpose after this," Beth says. "So He must have a plan."

Beth felt God wanted her to become a missionary. When she was 17 she moved to Perth and joined a missionary training organisation called Youth With a Mission.

"I felt God speak to me to let go of my future, to stop holding on to it so tightly, but really trust Him with it," Beth remembers.

"And so I did that. The next couple months were really freeing to be able to grow without having the pressure of what was next. I learned how to hear His voice in that time and how to trust Him with little things."

She felt led by God to serve Him as a missionary in a closed country (one that does not allow Christians to talk about their faith openly). She moved there the following year and served as a missionary, setting up churches and seeing many people come to know Jesus.

She stayed for seven years before returning to Perth. Beth intends to move overseas again, to serve God in another closed nation. She encourages those who struggle with finding their identity and purpose, to not be afraid of questions they may have.

"Don't be afraid to ask God questions," she advises.

"Even if you're not quite sure He's real, or that He cares about you or that you matter at all. It's a conversation because it's a relationship." •

I FELT LIKE MY FAMILY HATED ME



How do you live with suffering?

Jake Berry, brought up in the suburbs of Sydney, had what he calls a normal and happy middle-class childhood. But even as a teenager he was perplexed by the suffering in the world.

"I'd always wondered how to live with suffering in my life. To me it was either you try your best to escape it by embracing selfishness, or you seek an explanation for it."

The 30-year-old says he remembers feeling lost and hopeless and that he searched for meaning in life.

The school he attended offered scripture lessons, and it was there that Jake first heard about God. He went on to join a youth group at church. Slowly, as he read the Bible and learned more about the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, things began to fall in place.

"Jesus' words resonated with me," says Jake, who is a youth worker in Sydney.

"His teaching answered the questions I had about suffering. Jesus explains that suffering comes from humans. We are the problem. But in essence, it's a lack of right relationship with God that causes us to suffer and be unsatisfied. Even when life is good, it's never quite enough. We're always searching for more."

"God, as creator, is the answer to understanding ourselves, as He defines our meaning and highest satisfaction in worship of Himself. I was excited to follow Jesus as I slowly understood the amazing news that He had made a way for me to have a right relationship with him."

"One night as I read the Bible I became convinced that Jesus was God and that I wanted a relationship with Him. I knew from that moment that I wanted to be a Christian."

Since turning his life over to God, Jake says the biggest change has been discovering his life has purpose and value.

"I'm made joyful by the fact that God loves me and has a plan for my life," he says. That's not to say that he doesn't struggle with certain aspects of his faith.

"Trusting in God can be hard to do practically," he admits. "Sometimes you have to wait on God and have no control."

"When Jesus says 'Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?' in Matthew 8:26, I remember that I too am like the disciples as I worry about my provision. When I sacrifice and suffer for Christ and expect His help, my worry is always disproven by His power."

"I do find it hard to trust Him as much in a way that drives away all fear and I pray for enough faith that I never will worry."

Having finished his Master of Divinity degree, Jake now works for a church. He wants people to share the hope he has in God.

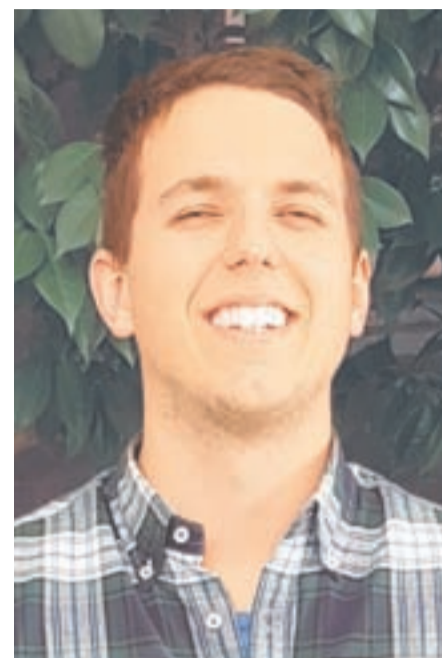
"People often reject Jesus because they want to be their own leader, or because they trust false promises of immediate satisfaction, or because they're afraid of what it means to follow Him," he muses.

"But God offers something so much greater than any plan you could make for your own life. Nothing else can truly satisfy."

"A Christian thinker once said that the problem is not that we want too much but that we settle with far too little. Riches, family, comfort or worldly importance can't compare to the eternal promises and blessing God wants to give you."

Jake's favorite verses are Colossians 2:13-15: *When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; He has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.*

"I love those verses because they explain the gospel so clearly," he smiles. •



Contact Challenge!

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

Fossils rock the boat

BY TASMAN WALKER OF CMI

For most of his childhood, Philip Worts lived with his family on farms in Western Australia, farms that were several hours drive from the state capital city, Perth. This affected many facets of his life, including access to education and church involvement.

Phil's great-uncle sparked his interest in geology. Phil recalls,

"My great-uncle collected gems, fossils, and minerals from all over Australia. When I was a young boy, he glued and labelled a selection of minerals into a shirt box (with a clear plastic lid) as a gift to me. I thought it was fantastic. For the labels on his own extensive collection, my great-uncle used evolution-based names and dates. At the time, I was not aware of the significance of this to my thinking."

Though he did not grow up in a 'church going' family, Phil's mother organised Sunday school lessons for the children through the postal service. Phil enjoyed the stories greatly.

When he started high school science he was again confronted with the concept of evolution over millions of years. He recalls its impact: "It was then that I whole-heartedly accepted evolution and quickly became thoroughly atheistic."

Also, at this time Phil set his heart on becoming a geologist.

Rural life impacted his final two years of high school when he needed to live away from home at a boarding school in Perth. To his dismay, his course did not allow him to study geology for his university entrance exam.

Not to be deterred, Phil got permission to do geology as an extra subject, but in his own time. And as a final achievement, the school allowed Phil to sit the geology exam as an extra school subject, which he passed.

Phil began his university studies at the School of Mines, Kalgoorlie, seven hours drive east of Perth. He said, "I chose that college because I always wanted to do the practical side of geology."

It turned out to be an excellent choice, since it gave Phil direct access to many geoscientists working in the extensive and varied mining enterprises of the region. However, he also encountered the negative side of university culture — a downward spiral into heavy drinking and the drug scene.

During his vacations, Phil worked as a geological sampler at the underground Windarra Nickel Mine, five hours north of Kalgoorlie.



Geologist Philip Worts and his wife, Jan, (above) and the jellyfish fossils (left) that finally convinced Phil that the evolution narrative he had been taught was false.

aspects of his new spiritual life. Not long after becoming a Christian, Phil met a fervent young rock collector who told him he had seen jellyfish fossils in a gorge at Wittenoom, in the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

This was astounding to Phil, who was still wrestling with evolution. "I momentarily thought 'Not possible. Complex multi-celled life was not around when those rocks were laid down'. Almost in the same instant, Phil became excited by the thought of a new possibility.

"I asked him for directions and organised a four-week family holiday to investigate. We found the fossils. Yes! They were clearly fossil jellyfish—supposedly '1.9 billion years' before complex life was supposed to have evolved." Phil put together a scientific paper about the fossils, which he published in the *Journal of Creation*² – Phil said:

"The implications of this fossil discovery are enormous. It directly contradicts many of the widely accepted theories about evolution. Specifically, it contradicts narratives about the development of life, the earth's paleoclimate, the earth's paleo-atmosphere, and the hugely popular theory of 'Snowball Earth'. That is a theory proposed to explain the sudden appearance of complex fossils in the so-called Cambrian Explosion."³

Phil thinks that accepting such clear fossil evidence, even when it contradicts a strongly held belief, should be the hallmark of a true scientist. "However," Phil said, "getting it widely accepted is difficult when the geological column is 'set in stone' and no-one dares to 'rock the boat' - puns intended." He went on, "I am convinced there are many specimens stored away in the 'too hard basket' because of a 'religious' adherence to long-age evolution beliefs."

Having become a Christian and learned how the Bible illuminates the world, Phil has had a passion to educate others. "I want to spread the information wrestled with after I came to Christ, information I found so liberating. I want others to have same joy and confidence in

"This was a fantastic learning experience. It gave me a great look at lots of ultramafic rocks¹ in fresh form, rather than the deeply weathered surface exposures. Also, I was thrilled to be trained by the company geologists. And as a bonus, it helped finance my studies," he said.

Phil had not been working long as a geologist when he became a Christian.

This happened when he encountered some Christian girls at university. Their faith in Christ challenged him, leading him to repent of his sins and asking Jesus Christ to be his Master and Rescuer. His hunger for understanding the truth of the Bible led to him reading and researching all aspects of biblical creation.

Phil describes the impact this had on his life: "Going from atheist-evolutionist to Christian, and hence creationist, was a total mindset change. Obviously, this was diametrically opposed to all I had been taught in my geology studies, when it came to Earth's origins and subsequent history."

Immediately, Phil started to reassess his geological teaching and his field observations to see if anything supported this new (to him) model of creation-Flood history. He said,

"I was amazed to discover that much of the geology I knew, especially the sedimentary rocks, indicated rapid water deposition rather than slow and gradual processes."

He also spent a great deal of time studying the Bible for direction in all

God's Word," he explains.

To that end, Phil relishes opportunities to speak at churches, youth groups, and Christian schools. He loves exploring geological sites and has accumulated a great deal of amazing evidence for geological catastrophe. He has run day trips into the country to show others the geological features firsthand.

"I want people to see for themselves how the rocks and landscapes at our feet provide powerful evidence for the reliability of the Bible."

Phil eventually married Jan, one of the girls who had challenged him about his faith at university. They are now grandparents.

References and Notes

1. Igneous rocks with low silica content.
2. Worts, P., Fossil Jellyfish from the Pilbara, Western Australia, *Journal of Creation* 27(1):114-118, 2013
3. Charles Darwin rejected Noah's Flood, and thus predicted we would never find any jellyfish fossils, but this has been proven wrong many times over. (eg. Creation.com/hundreds-of-jellyfish-fossils).

The original of this article appeared in *Creation* magazine. It has been condensed and is used with kind permission.

In 1977, Philip Worts completed a Bachelor of Applied Science in Mining Geology from the Western Australian School of Mines, Kalgoorlie. He graduated with a distinction, and received two gold-medal awards, one from the W.A. School of Mines and another from the Geological Society of Australia (W.A. Division).

Since graduating, Phil has worked in mining and exploration geology. He has focused on iron, nickel, and gold in Western Australia.

Believe it or not BY CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

'Over-engineered' crocodiles

BY DAVID CATCHPOOLE

RECENTLY I encountered this passage in a book about the evolution of crocodylians (crocodiles, alligators, caimans):

"... a conundrum noted in crocodylian lungs by Perry (1990). He observed that the lungs are complex and appear very well designed, reminiscent of bird lungs, and he wondered why they seemed to be 'over-engineered'. The notion that crocodylians are over-engineered was taken up by Colleen Farmer and David Carrier in relation to other attributes ... they noted that the apparently competent respiratory system in alligators, with such a complex musculo-skeletal system devoted to maintaining ventilation, seemed out of place in a sit-and-wait predator with a fairly low metabolic rate and a poor capacity for sustained vigorous terrestrial locomotion" (Farmer and Carrier 2000).¹

Over-engineering in nature is indeed a conundrum for evolution, and a serious challenge for evolutionists. They see the problem this way: How and why would natural selection select for an attribute for which there is no survival advantage, given the living conditions and lifestyle of the creature in question (in this case, crocodylians)?

There's a fundamental principle at issue here. If something is over-engineered, does that not mean that it must have been engineered in the first place? And if it was engineered, does that not imply an engineer who designed and built the creature?

Complexity, design, and over-engineering all imply a Master Engineer—and the Creator God spoken of in the Bible certainly fits that description.

1. Grigg, G., and Kirshner, D., *Biology and evolution of crocodylians*, CSIRO Publishing, Australia, 2015.

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BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

EXPRESSING ANGER WELL

BY ROB FURLONG

I USED to think the best way to deal with my anger was to push it down deep inside of me where it had no chance of escaping, say nothing at all and give the appearance of being calm and collected.

I learned painfully, however, that this is just as unhealthy a behaviour as expressing anger inappropriately.

“Be angry, and yet do not sin,” the Apostle Paul tells the Ephesians.

“That is easier said than done!” I hear you say. “I mean, is it reasonable to think you can express anger without hurting people or damaging relationships?”

Paul certainly believed it was.

Think carefully about what he is saying.

Firstly, it is ok to express anger.

Anger is a valid emotion, and we should not avoid it. Failing to feel or even acknowledge our anger only leads to greater personal frustration and emotional unhealth.

Peter Scazzero put it this way:

“To feel is to be human. To mini-

mise or deny what we feel is a distortion of what it means to be image bearers of God. To the degree that we are unable to express our emotions, we remain impaired in our ability to love God, others, and ourselves well.”

John Grisham highlights the danger of failing to feel and acknowledge anger in his recent novel, *The Judge’s List*. Although a work of fiction, it tells the story of a successful Judge who outwardly was a pillar of society, but inwardly was a raging storm. Over several years, he systematically hunted down anyone who had slighted him and then murdered them. Instead of learning how to deal with his anger in a mature way, he fell into extremely unhealthy behaviour.

We can easily conclude that this is just a book, but the reason Grisham’s story hits home is because it accurately mirrors what we see happening in our own communities. Just watch the Six O’clock News if you need convincing on this point.

Secondly, anger is to be expressed in healthy ways.

What are unhealthy expressions of



anger? Paul made a list:

- Talking behind a person’s back to defame them.
- Holding on to grudges.
- Using foul language.
- Using abusive put downs – verbal abuse.
- Telling lies about someone or slandering them.
- Hateful speech.
- Yelling.
- Any speech which is vicious in character and brings grief to another.

It’s not a comprehensive list, but it’s a good place to start.

Thankfully, such behaviours can be put aside and replaced with positive attitudes and expressions of anger:

- Acknowledge to yourself that you are angry with the person or the situation and explore the reason or reasons for your anger.
- Tell the other person you are

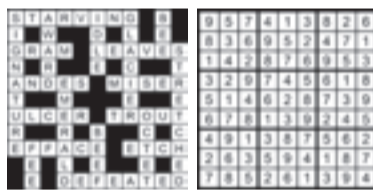
angry! Respectfully!

I have found it helpful to say something like, “I am really angry with what you just did or what happened, but I want to work it through with you.” There may even be times where you express a little “heat” about it – that is ok – so long as you don’t cross the line into the unhealthy behaviours listed above. If you are struggling with this thought, think about Jesus overturning tables in the Temple and using a whip of cords in the process. Something tells me this was not a casual stroll through a park on a Sunday afternoon, but a healthy display of anger.

Be encouraged as you read this. It’s ok to be angry. It is a valid emotion.

The challenge for all of us is to learn to express it in healthy ways!

Paul’s list of healthy and unhealthy expressions of anger is found in Ephesians 4:25-32. Read this through thoughtfully and try to identify the negative behaviours you are most prone to when angry. If you are brave enough, speak with a person you trust and who will be honest in helping you identify what they are. Then bring your behaviours to God and ask Him to help you change them.



HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

What? Salvation is an eternal relationship with God – now on Earth and, after we die, in Heaven.

The Lord Jesus says: “I tell you the truth. Everyone who believes in Me has eternal life.” John 6:47

“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” John 16:33

Who? Anyone can gain the eternal life offered through Jesus Christ, regardless of how you have previously lived or what you have previously believed.

God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

Why? Because sin separates us from a holy God. Sin is all the wrong things we do, say and think, as well as our desire to be our own boss.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

How? The Bible says you become a Christian by confessing with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.

If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. Romans 10:8b-10

Ready to change your life forever? Here is a prayer you can pray, but you can also use your own words. The words are not as important as the heart attitude – which only God can see.

Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth,
I acknowledge that I am a sinner. Please forgive me for all the ways I have disobeyed and defied You.
Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to earth to live the perfect life I couldn’t, and die on the cross for my sins. Thank You that His blood was sufficient to pay my debt to You, and His resurrection proves that there is life beyond death. I accept that His sacrifice is all I need to get right with You – I bring nothing I have done but I give you everything I am. Help me to live for You. Please be my Saviour and my Master. Amen.

What now?

1. Tell someone - either a Christian that you know or email us at info@challengenews.org
2. Use the resources in the green box on this page to find a Bible to read and more information regarding Christianity.
3. Keep praying. Talk to God anywhere, about anything. He is always listening, and you don’t need a formula.
4. Find a Bible-teaching church to attend.

AS A NEXT STEP : Please send me: Bible Some ‘starting off’ literature Information on a helpful church

I have prayed this prayer.

* Please tick and write clearly *

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Email address _____

Challenge Literature Fellowship, PO Box 978, Cloverdale WA 6985
info@challengenews.org

All overseas enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country

Want to explore more?

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

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

Winners never, ever give up

BY NICO BOUGAS

FAILURE is a fact of life. It is not something we like to talk about, in fact we would rather forget it. But consider that some of the most prominent and successful people that we may know of had their share of failure.

Winston Churchill repeated a grade during elementary school and, when he entered Harrow, was placed in the lowest division of the lowest class. Later, he twice failed the entrance exam to the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. He was defeated in his first effort to serve in Parliament. He became Prime Minister at the age of 62. He later wrote, “Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never – in nothing, great or small, large or petty – never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense. Never, never, never, never give up.”

Albert Einstein did not speak until he was four years old and did not read until he was seven. His parents thought he was “sub-normal,” and one of his teachers described him as “mentally slow, unsociable, and adrift forever in foolish dreams.” He was expelled from school and was refused admittance to the Zurich Polytechnic School. He later developed the general theory of relativity and is considered one of the most influential physicists of the 20th century.

As a young man, Abraham Lincoln went to war a captain and returned a private. Afterwards, he was a failure as a businessman. As a lawyer in Springfield, he was too impractical and temperamental to be a success.

He turned to politics and was defeated in his first try for the legislature, again defeated in his first attempt to be nominated for congress, defeated in his application to be commissioner of the General Land Office, defeated in the senatorial election of 1854, defeated in his efforts for the vice-presidency in 1856, and defeated in the senatorial election of 1858. He is generally considered to be one of America’s greatest presidents.

What was the secret of their success?

So what is it that turned these people and many more from failure to success?

They didn’t quit. There are many highly gifted people that made shipwreck of their lives because they encountered some obstacle and simply quit.

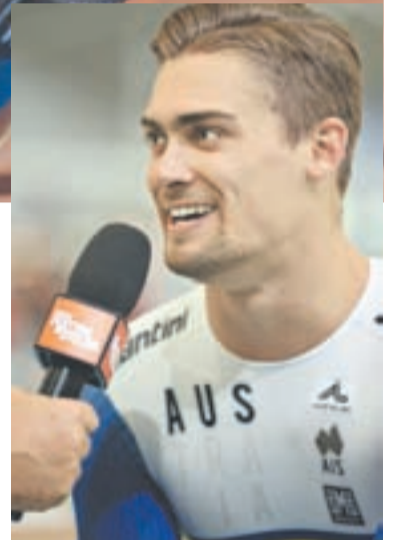
The people who are most likely to be successful in life are those that know how to persevere, that don’t give up and don’t give in to discouragement.

The Bible puts huge store in the virtue of perseverance. In Romans 5:3-5 Paul tells the Christians: “we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

Whatever you face, keep on, keeping on because “winners never quit and quitters never win.”



Matthew Glaetzer of Team Australia competes during the Men's Keirin repechages, on day 15 of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games at Izu Velodrome on August 07, 2021 in Izu, Shizuoka, Japan. (Photo by Tim de Waele/Getty Images)



Matthew Glaetzer at the Adelaide Track League of the Santos Festival of Cycling on January 19, 2021. (Photo by Peter Mundy/Getty Images)

FAST TRACK TO GLORY

Olympic cyclist Matthew Glaetzer has not had an easy time of it in the last few years. He has suffered through thyroid cancer, a torn muscle, exhaustion and a humiliating Tokyo 2020 final in which he made a strategic error.

The two-time track world champion, who stands at 190cm and can push the equivalent of a small car with one leg, has had to find even greater strength for the road he's travelling.

In October 2019, he was diagnosed with thyroid cancer.

"Receiving a diagnosis like that out of the blue, especially when I was so fit and healthy, was a complete shock. It was pretty heavy to get the call, but I'm also incredibly thankful that the doctors caught it early and I was able to get onto it pretty quickly."

A month later he had surgery to remove a tumour from his throat. He has yet to hear the words "in remission" but told cycling website tourdownunder that "things and all blood levels are looking good."

"No new thyroid tissue has been growing back but I haven't been given the all-clear...I'm kicking on as normal and taking my pills every day."

His recovery went so well that the now 29-year-old returned to training three days after surgery — and qualified for the Australian Olympic team.

Speaking to Australia's Channel 7Plus during the Tokyo Olympics, Matthew said: "I've gone through a tough two years, had to overcome a lot. Keep overcoming mistakes and challenges along the way. We all face our challenges. I've had my fair share and this is just testament to what you can do when you really dig deep."

At the time he posted on his Instagram feed: "The last 18 months threw me challenges larger than I could have ever expected, but by God's grace, I'm ready."

Unfortunately, Tokyo did not end well for Matthew. Riding in the keirin final (a six-lap sprint), he made a tactical error that saw him being blamed for costing his Olympic rivals a shot at unseating British champion Jason Kenny.

He became the target of harsh criticism.

Thankfully Matthew has deep inner resources — in times of trouble and stress he turns to his faith in Jesus Christ. He grew up in a Christian home and committed his life to Christ when he was five.

He admits drifting from God after being disillusioned by injuries while in his teens, but came back to his faith at a church camp. He now leads a youth group at his

church in Adelaide.

"Being a Christian enables me to have peace in any situation because I know that God is with me in everything and has His plan for me," he says. "No matter how significant the challenges that come my way, I have His help to get through them."

GOD HASN'T MADE ME A GIFTED ATHLETE TO JUST RIDE AROUND IN CIRCLES



As rewarding as his cycling career has been, Matthew recognises his God-given talent is meant for more. "I know God hasn't made me a gifted athlete to just ride around in circles

but to show His love to my teammates and the competitors I have contact with around the world," he states.

"The cycling community is very worldly and I have the opportunity to be an example of and share the love and grace [undeserved kindness] of Jesus with these people."

Matthew firmly believes his life's calling is not about winning races, but about letting God use him and shine through his life.

"What I do is all about giving glory to God through the gift He has given me."

Another gift Matthew is very thankful for is his family, saying, "They are so important to me. They have all supported me so much in

my sporting efforts and I am so grateful."

Matthew's love of cycling was apparent from the time he was just a boy and would build BMX jumps along a river near his house. He always wanted to be a professional athlete and tried his hand at basketball, pole vaulting and soccer.

It wasn't until he was 16 that he developed a serious affinity for cycling. Local victories, followed by national titles, began rolling in — the team sprint world title in 2012, the keirin gold and team sprint bronze in the 2014 Commonwealth Games, and silver in the 2016 World Championships.

Tokyo was his third Olympics. He previously competed in London (2012) and Rio in 2016, where

he missed out on the bronze by a whisker.

He is acutely aware that his life as an elite athlete makes him a role model and he is determined to be a good one. "I am in the public eye more than the normal person," he says. "If I can influence people positively, mission accomplished."

When he retires from cycling, Matthew plans to become a physiotherapist. "A wife and a couple of kids are in the long-term plan hopefully," he says with a smile.

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