

# TWICE AS COMMITTED

David and Jason Benham shared a womb, a room growing up and now an office. Between them, they have produced nine children, four books, a multi-million dollar empire and quite a bit of media controversy when they nearly got a reality TV deal but were knocked back because they were so outspoken about their faith.

The men grew up in Garland, Texas and both went on to play minor league baseball for a few years. David for the Boston Red Sox and St Louis Cardinals, and Jason for the Baltimore Orioles and then the Cardinals.

Jason retired to focus on his family but David thought that his destiny lay in major league baseball – until he was let go from the team and ended up working as a janitor for a while.

Now they live on the same street in Charlotte, North Carolina, where they began a real estate business from the ground up, without any formal business training.

“Serial entrepreneurs” the guys kept expanding their business interests into financial services, information technology and more, both domestically and abroad.

The identical looking, dynamic pair are also motivational speakers who talk and blog about family, faith, leadership and fitness.

In one of their interviews they state how, having grown up going to church, they gave their lives over to Jesus Christ at 12 years old. When they did so, their dad, who was a pastor and the one who led them to the

Lord, warned them that they had entered the battle between good and evil.

“When you make your peace with God, you declare war on the devil,” he explained.

That battle became all too real, and cost the pair their TV dreams, when HGTV gave in to pressure from left-leaning activists to cancel plans for a reality house flipping show featuring the brothers in 2014.

Nevertheless, the Benhams declared that they lived from the inside out and didn’t need the approval of the media or the Twittersphere, they were going to stand strong and continue voicing their stance on issues like abortion and gay marriage.

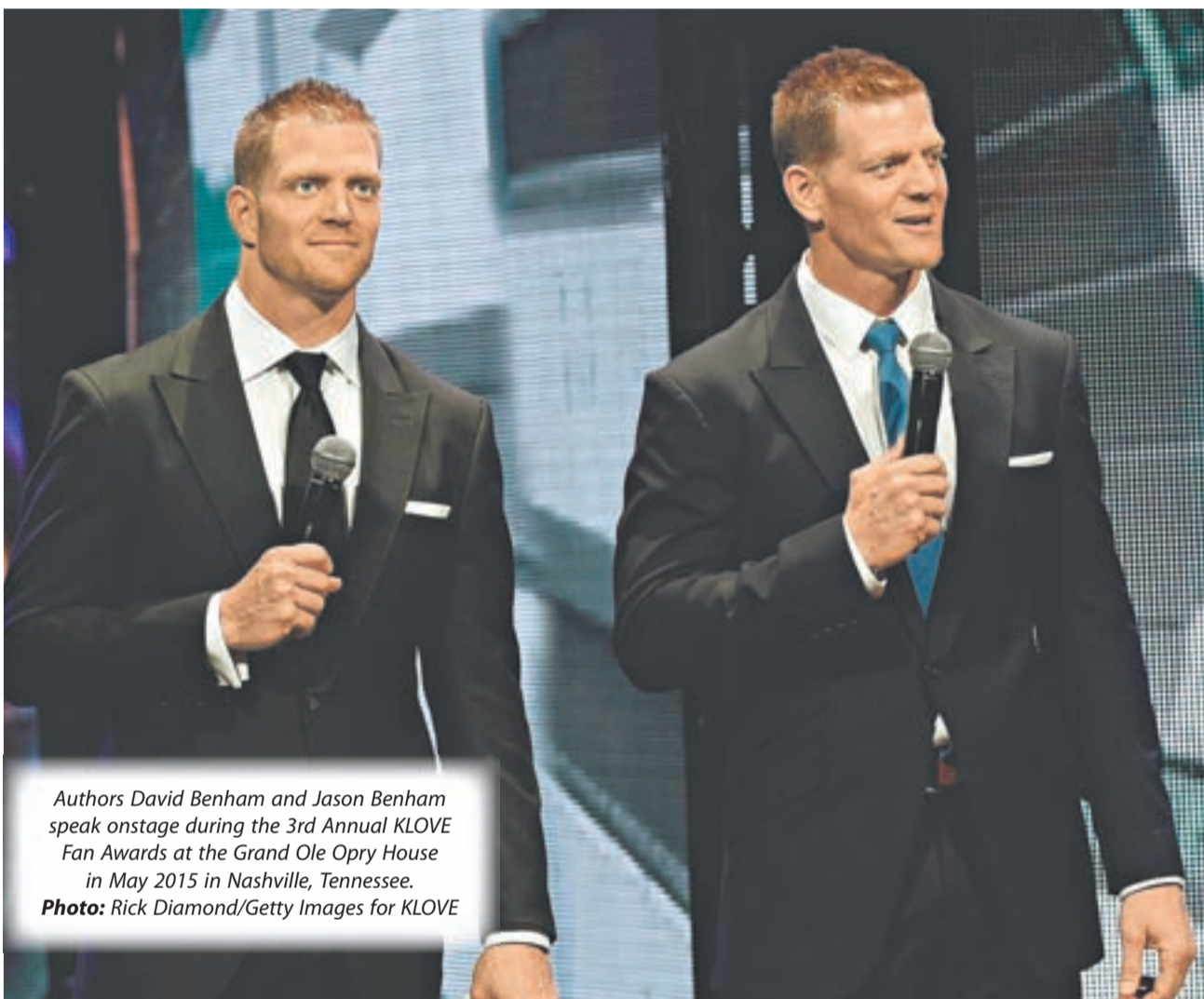
They believe “church isn’t somewhere you go, it is who you are.”

Their dad, Flip Benham, had walked the talk before them. He set up his church office next to a busy abortion clinic and shared Jesus’ love with the staff until Norma McCorvey (the woman who was Jane Roe in the landmark Roe v Wade case) who worked there, herself became a born again Christian in 1995.

“God loves all people but not all ideas. We don’t hate anyone,” the brothers declare.

“The world doesn’t need more bullies who stand firmly for the truth but ignore their own brokenness. The world doesn’t need bystanders who are broken over sin but won’t act boldly for the truth. The world needs faithful and courageous believers in a loving God whose truth has the power to transform a dying world,” their website proclaims.

As they quip: “It is fun to follow Jesus until you realise where He is going – to the cross.” Christian faith involves acting on what you believe and that, most probably, will involve suffering and sacrifice. However, as Jesus told His first disciples, “In this world you will have trouble but fear not, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)



Authors David Benham and Jason Benham speak onstage during the 3rd Annual KLOVE Fan Awards at the Grand Ole Opry House in May 2015 in Nashville, Tennessee.  
Photo: Rick Diamond/Getty Images for KLOVE

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**Fun for Kids**  
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## HOW DARE YOU SAY THAT!

BY JODY BENNETT

THE other day I went to the doctor for a blood pressure script and she made me stand on the scale, worked out my BMI and told me I was fat and needed to lose weight. Needless to say my first response was “How dare she! Who does she think she is?!”

In my offence I went through a million justifications: “How could she embarrass me like that! Does she think she is telling me something I don’t already know? I’m not nearly as fat as some people! Doesn’t she know I’ve tried! Does she think I want to be like this? I was born with this body type.” etc. etc.

However, the woman is a doctor and she knows the slew of health issues associated with being overweight. Those extra kilos are compromising my health and thereby contributing to the drain on medical resources in this country. For the sake of my health, my longevity, my family and my insurance premiums, I should lose weight. But I didn’t like being told so.

The outrage and justifications were similar when Israel Falou had the temerity to warn people that they were sinners going to hell apart from the forgiveness of Jesus. Being told we’re fat or sinful does not come as news to

us, but how dare people point it out! Truth be told we all know lying to the tax man is wrong, or swearing at our kids, or speeding, or taking drugs, or cheating on our spouse.

If anyone is brave enough to point out the elephant in the room, whether our sin or our weight, we have three choices I believe. The first, and easiest, is just to slag them off. Jump on our high horse, go through all our justifications, surround ourselves with like-minded people, moan and groan, and then try to forget the warning and continue living as before.

This was my knee-jerk response to the doctor and the route many have taken in response to Falou. This has led to a society where it is more important not to offend people than to tell the truth. Protecting our feelings has become more sacred than protecting our spiritual and physical health.

And so, stores change clothing sizing, use plus size models and sell T-shirts that say “love the skin you’re in!” And society gives condoms to teens, offers drug testing and sharps bins, and has made it harder to get a mortgage than a divorce, and easier to get a sex change than a fair trial.

### PROTECTING OUR FEELINGS HAS BECOME MORE SACRED THAN PROTECTING OUR .... HEALTH.

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# How dare you say that?

From page 1

And the result? Spiralling levels of depression, suicide, drug use, alcoholism, violent crime and family breakdown. More and more people report being miserable, stressed and lonely.



The second, and hardest response, is to take the criticism on board, muster all our self-discipline and force ourselves to change. We start a diet and join a gym. Or we start attending church and reading our Bible, swear off booze and throw out our porn.

This may work for a while. We get thinner, we feel happier, people comment on the change. Then we get proud. "Hey, I can do this!" Maybe we write a book. Then we get lazy; then we stumble; then we throw the whole thing up as too hard. Been there? I have - in my weight journey and my spiritual walk.

The third option is the most humbling. It involves turning to Jesus and saying, "I know I am fat/sinful. I have tried not to be. It is too hard. Sometimes I don't even want to change. I can't do this on my own, please help me. There is so much conflicting information out there, I don't really know where to start. Please show me how. Give me the desire. Give me the tools. Give me the discipline. Please forgive me for my selfishness and pride. Please take over."

Because the ultimate question in our lives is not "how do we behave?" or "what should we eat?", it is "who is in charge?" Christianity is simply putting Jesus in charge of the whole mess and then doing what He tells us. This is not a one-off decision, but a daily surrender, an hourly awareness, a constant obedience. That is what Jesus means by laying down our lives and that is the message of the gospel: "You need help. You can't help yourself. Jesus can. Give your life to Him because He loves you and cares enough to change you."

# The secret of satisfaction

BY ALAN BAILEY

**HAVE** you ever wondered why so many people are bored, lonely and dissatisfied? We hear about this problem even with young folk who seem to have everything. Surrounded by good things to enjoy and people to share with, and yet feeling empty. In their hearts is the unsaid question, "What's the use?"

It must be because they are looking in the wrong place for what truly satisfies their deepest longings. Nothing new about that. It is as old as the human race.

Where do we most commonly look? Four main places come to mind.

### Pleasure

There are countless experiences that bring pleasure. Eating, drinking, playing games, entertainment, following pastimes and so on. Today, alcohol and drugs loom large on the horizon of many searching souls.

Of course we would prefer pleasure to pain but somehow pain enters the picture too often. Pleasure does not last. King Solomon had everything his imagination could conjure up but he felt the bitterness of emptiness and vanity.

### Possessions

The lure of material things never fails to show up. Each generation has to learn the hard way that money and all that it can buy will never meet what the heart is crying out for. How many have slaved for the dream house and all the trimmings only to find themselves unhappy, their lives lacking a solid foundation. Crumbling relationships often occur where possessions are held as a high priority.

### Position

There are many who strive to establish their personal importance. It means a great deal to them. To be a "somebody" is a



badly want. Sadly, it can lead to taking one's own life. But popularity is something more than acceptance. Think how many very popular personalities you have heard of who have come to the point of hating their own lives. After the pinnacle of popularity so often comes a collapse.

This paper records story after story of people who have found what they were looking for in a relationship with the Lord Jesus. Maybe they tried drugs, religion, sport, learning or whatever. But at last they found Him to be the answer, their lives changed forever. He was sent to be our Saviour. He gave himself on the cross on our behalf. He lives to make us what God wants us to be.

Knowing Him brings lasting satisfaction. He said "I came that you may have life and have it more abundantly."

We need to look in the right place for the answer.

deep-down wish in the hearts of most of us. So we reach for promotion, publicity, honour, and respect. Now there is nothing wrong with healthy ambition, but how easy it is to hurt others, to give in to pride, to be consumed by the mirage we envisage.

### Popularity

As we grow up, all of us long for acceptance. We want and need it within our families and in our peer group. How many hearts ache today because they receive bullying and rejection rather than the thing they so

## Atheists' #1 anti-God argument

**CONSERVATIVE** pundit Matt Walsh addressed an important question in a recent vlog post: Why does it appear that God is invisible? Why does He hide from us?

Right now we live in a time where there is so much suffering, misery and pain, and so many people struggling, it might seem easy

to look around and "wonder why God doesn't just come out of the shadows and display His glory - even if just for one second," Matt notes.

"It is easy to use God's hiddenness, His invisibility, as an argument against His existence. It is not a bad argument, either. Indeed, it would seem that a loving and all-powerful God would manifest Himself clearly to His creation, especially when He notices that secularism is infecting the whole world like a virus."

Matt points out that many Christians would argue that God isn't hidden, at least not in the way and to the extent that atheists would claim. He reveals Himself daily through the beauty and intricacy of His creation and, historically, He revealed Himself completely in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

"And since that time, and before it, He has performed many other signs,

and appeared in visions, and shown His power and glory through miraculous healings and other supernatural deeds.

"And if you disregard those instances," Matt argues, "then you must admit that you are choosing to disbelieve, not in a hidden God, but in a God who has revealed Himself countless times to the human race."

But then atheists might counter: "OK, if God exists and if He is willing to reveal Himself, why does He do it to such a small number of people? Why not cut out the guess work

miracle that could make us love Him. It could make us fear Him, admire Him, even obey and worship Him, but a vision of His glory in the Heavens would not, for most of us, engender love. I think it would actually prevent love from forming."

Matt offers the analogy of human love - it has to be choice otherwise it is not love. It cannot be compelled. You can't be forced to love.

Matt argues, "If God were to give us the blessed vision we claim to want, we would be so overwhelmed by His beauty, so taken by His majesty, so terrified by His power, so aghast and awestruck. We would be simply swept away by God's sheer magnitude. We would fall before Him. Whimper. Tremble. Cry. Beg. But love? How could you possibly love Him then? "Unless, of course, they have already loved Him. The only ones who can love God upon seeing Him are those who loved Him without seeing Him. I think that is a simple fact of His nature and ours. We fallen creatures, need a certain distance from God in order to be able to love Him. We need space to make that choice."

"The reason God does not show Himself to us is that He does not want me to be a cowering, stupefied child who worships and obeys simply because I am afraid and emotionally overwhelmed."

"And so I can only thank God for the distance, the hiddenness, as painful as it may be," Matt says.

He adds that one day we WILL all see God in His glory, as He truly is, and we will all believe and all worship. But only those who have entered that encounter already having chosen to love Him, will love Him then and be eternally loved by Him.

"So God keeps us here in this reality," Matt concludes. "And calls us home when He knows we are ready. When our love has grown as much as it is going to grow and we are ready for the next stage. Or, alternatively, when He knows that we will never be ready, and love will never grow. That our cause is hopeless. In which case, we're finished."

"But either way, we have the chance now because of that distance and because of that separation to love Him. And we have to make that choice. And it seems to me that God reveals Himself as much as He possibly can, while still giving us the opportunity to truly love."

## Crossword

- |                        |                        |                      |                               |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b>          | 9 Professors and such  | 21 Without smell     | <b>DOWN</b>                   |
| 1 Untiring             | 13 Women, in           | 24 Yacht; warship    | 1 A crowd of people           |
| 5 Tide phase           | Westerns               | 26 Theater aisle     | 2 Arranged like radii or rays |
| 7 Plane finder         | 16 Item in a rowlock   | worker               | 3 Developmental insect stage  |
| 8 Retrieval of a wreck | 17 Golf term           | 27 Shower from above | 4 Health spring facility      |
|                        | 18 Old cleaning cloths | 28 Fast food (4-4)   | 5 A month                     |



- 6 Media / to iron  
8 Whale domain  
10 Exotic reef material  
11 Palm-tree fruits  
12 Rugged steep rock  
14 Etching solution  
15 Answer to a mix-up  
19 By whatever means  
20 Scamper about  
21 To come to pass  
22 It listens for you  
23 Hollandaise, for one  
25 To consume

SOLUTION PAGE 11

## Sudoku

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

Puzzle Level: Medium

6 3 8  
4 2 9  
7 5 1

SOLUTION PAGE 11

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

# Orphan in Oz finds answers

BY CHRIS EYTE

The sight of the city of Perth on the pink horizon caught the breath of the teenage boy standing alone on the ship as the waves lashed the bow.

It was Richard Hatt's 16th birthday but there was no family or friends present to celebrate. Both parents were dead - his father, Corporal James Hatt, blown up in WWII and his mother Ada from cancer.

Richard had travelled across oceans to reach Australia from his hometown of Maidstone in Kent, UK. It was February 1955 and his journey took him onto his final destination - Sydney, where he disembarked. For Richard, it marked a new chapter in his young life.

Richard recalls: "My father's brother George had been appointed my guardian as I was under age and had some behavioural challenges.

"Having seen an advert placed by the Australian Government offering opportunities to young men and sponsored passage he believed this made a great opportunity for me and encouraged me to take it."

Richard was already experienced in farming and soon found a job on a dairy farm near Muswellbrook NSW.

"Unable to adjust properly I left after nine months and returned to the organization who offered me a job on a farm 30km from Deniliquin NSW.

"I enjoyed most of my time there but communication between myself and my family was lost."

Richard missed being part of a family. Born in March 1940, the youngest of three boys, both his parents were Christians and they had met at a church youth camp. His dad volunteered for the army when the war began, assigned to a tank squadron and training base at Charing near Maidstone.

"In June 1944 the unit was to be part of the second wave of the invasion force. At 6.30am on the 24th, the day they were to move out, a V1 came down on the camp, killing 44 men including my Father.

"After the war it became necessary for my mother to work to earn enough to keep us but in 1949 she had to go into hospital for cancer of the breast, followed by radiotherapy. This meant she had not so much time for us.

"In May 1953 a recurrence of the cancer took her back into hospital and my brothers and I moved out from home, never to return. For a while I was moved around until, as I was in my last year of schooling, I obtained a job on a farm and accommodation, with an elderly couple in a nearby village.

"In January 1954 mother died, in the March I left school and went to work full time on the farm."

That is how the teenage boy, still mourning the loss of his parents, found himself working on an Australian dairy farm, thousands of miles from home. Yet life took an unexpected turn when he suddenly discovered the friendship of God.

"One afternoon while milking the cows I started sing the hymn, 'O come to my heart Lord Jesus, There is room in my heart for thee', and at once I knew I was not alone.

"God had come into my life." But getting to know Jesus personally was going to take more of a journey.

Richard found his way back to Eng-



Richard Hatt with his wife Angela at the grave of his father, Corporal James Richard Hatt, in Lenham, Kent.

land after 'different things happened' and his boat docked in Liverpool in late 1959. He went to live in Yorkshire and held down different jobs over the next decade, 'never managing to renew family relationships or settling'.

He met a girl and got married in 1969. The couple had two daughters, 'my pride and joy'.

"Life seemed good until she met

another man and decided to leave me. After much wrangling she left, leaving my daughters with me.

"I had to cease working to look after them, and was given a council house from having tied accommodation."

Richard then met Angela, who also had two children. She moved in with him and he got work as a houseparent at a local special school for boys with behavioural difficulties.



Richard Hatt, then aged 17, pictured working on a farm near Deniliquin, NSW, Australia.

A teacher at the school later helped Richard find a genuine relationship with God. It happened when he helped out during a week's break for the school boys in North Wales.

He said: "Circumstances set me to go and whilst there it decided to rain persistently causing us to sit in the minibus together.

"I shared my background with him and he shared the gospel with me, pointing out that I needed to let Jesus into my life and be filled with the Holy Spirit. [To be filled with the Spirit of God, enables us to have the power to live as Jesus commands.]

"I accepted Jesus [as Master of my life] and on returning home I shared with my partner who gave her life to the Lord. We were baptized together [immersed in water as an outward sign of an inward decision] and duly got married."

God has healed Richard and his wife Angela of 'many hurts' including, after 50 years, reconciling him with his two brothers.

"We have four grown-up children," added Richard, "four wonderful grandchildren, and will shortly celebrate 35 years of marriage during which God has been the third strand in the cord holding us together." •

nudge  
WITH KARL FASE

## Lincoln's 2nd address

ON March 4th 1865 Abraham Lincoln gave his second inauguration address. Throughout his prepared speech he referenced the Bible several times, both New and Old Testaments. He quoted Genesis 3, Matthew 18 on slavery and Psalm 19 in referencing the civil war. This for Lincoln was usual behaviour.

Lincoln used the Bible as part of his thinking and belief system. It



informed his private life and his public leadership role. For Lincoln the Bible

was not an ancient text for pious people to use in their private lives. It was a living document that informed his behaviour.

Lincoln also relied on prayer and once said: "I have been driven many times upon my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me seemed insufficient for that day."

This is an attitude we need to rediscover. First this can be done by a surrender of our life into God's hands, praying often and for everything and by making the Bible a daily reality in our walk with God by reading it.

We may not hear our political leaders quoting it in public addresses, but the Bible can be a key part of our thinking and a vital means of informing our actions. •

# Happier in the slums of Haiti

Elsie Lherisson had a good life. She lived in a fancy apartment in New York City, she was a jet-setter, and she was always out at cafes and theatres with her friends. Yet, she admits, she wasn't happy.

Now Elsie lives in the slums of Haiti, loving and caring for the poorest of the poor and yet she is filled with joy and peace.

Elsie was born in Haiti and attended a private, religious school growing up. "I was taught about God but I got the wrong feel of God from all these teachings," she says. "I never saw Him as a loving Father when I was a child. I was afraid of God. I was afraid to approach Him because I felt like He was a judge, always ready to punish me for the least little mistake."

After her high school graduation, Elsie moved to New York. There, she attended Banking and Finance School. "New York was fascinating to me - all those skyscrapers," she laughs.

Yet, even though she was on the fast track living a dream life, Elsie shares: "Inside I was so empty, so miserable."

Elsie longed to know God and she had many questions for Him such as: "Where are You? Are You real? Why is it that I don't know who You are?"

One day, she felt prompted to read her Bible. "The presence of God just consumed me. I said, 'God, I have sinned against you, what must I do?' As I closed my eyes and opened my arms, the words of the Sinner's Prayer [a prayer asking God for forgiveness and expressing allegiance to Him], which I have never heard, came from my mouth.



Elsie Lherisson

"After the prayer, I felt awesome, I felt new, I felt ten thousand feet tall, I felt clean! 'God,' I said. 'Something happened to me. What is it?' He put a name on my heart and said, 'Call that person.'"

So Elsie called up a friend and asked if she could go to church with her.

Elsie had never been to a church like her friend's before. "It was just incredible. First of all, I've never been in such a church setting with such diverse kinds of people - people of all colours, of all races. The sound of worship and praise - the vibrancy ... I felt like I was in heaven. I knew that was the place for me to be. I knew without a shadow of a doubt that God was in that place and I wanted to be where God was."

Later, Elsie felt that God was calling her to move

away from New York. "But I resisted that call," she recalls, "I was very shy. I didn't feel qualified and I felt so insecure in a new environment. I love New York!"

"So I said to God, 'If you show me where, I will say yes.'"

Elsie felt Jesus was calling her back to her homeland.

Today, she has been in Haiti for over twenty years, ministering to children and youth.

"I work with the very poor, the poorest of the poor," she tells. "These children, they live in very shoddy towns, they live in one home made of mud and sticks and oftentimes one little bed. They have a hard life. Many of them don't get to attend school. I feed them a good balanced meal twice a week and I provide medical assistance for them. I sponsor them in school, which is a tremendous help for them and their families, otherwise they would never go to school."

Elsie is very passionate about the work that she does but knows that she would never have started it had it not been for the gentle prompting of God. "I can see that if I had not said yes to God I would not have experienced the blessing of being part of their lives, touching the children's lives and making a difference.

"Now I can say that nothing can compare," she smiles. "It is indescribable - the joy that God gives. To know that we can make such a difference in someone's life. God has helped me do some amazing things that I never thought were possible and it all started the day I said, 'Yes, Lord.'" •

# Suicidal sex ring victim on path to recovery

BY CHRIS EYTE

Cyril Wilding lay slumped on his caravan sofa with blood pouring from both wrists and two empty bottles of vodka lying on a table nearby, while his dog jumped on his chest trying in vain to get a response.

His sister, checking on his welfare, found him half-dead and quickly called for an ambulance. A paramedic had to administer electric shocks to kickstart his heart after he flatlined.

It wasn't the first time that self-harmer Cyril, a drug addict and alcoholic, had tried suicide, and neither would it be his last. The criminal's emotional wounds ran very deep - birthed in dark pain many years earlier. In his early teens, Cyril had been the victim of a five-man paedophile ring. The gang were later jailed.

Even so, the horror of the abuse led him to 'self medicate' with drugs such as LSD, speed, coke and drink. Gang violence, drug dealing and other criminal activity put Cyril in jail on four separate occasions.

The first sentence was 12 months when he was 18 for robbery, and the last time inside happened after a car accident. He was sentenced to 21 months in jail for dangerous driving, driving whilst disqualified, driving with excess alcohol,

Cyril Wilding says if it weren't for God he'd be dead



failing to stop and report an accident, and having no insurance. In prison he was put on suicide watch.

"I didn't want to live anymore because I was sick of being a bad person. The crimes I had done ... the hurt I had caused [overwhelmed me with guilt] and I wanted freedom. I didn't want to do life anymore, I was sick of fighting," Cyril recalls.

"I had a lot of unforgiveness in my life and a chaplain came to see me. She said: 'Do you realise that when Jesus died on the cross it was to forgive all the sin in your life?'"

"I thought she was off her head. But she gave me a Bible and I read Psalm 23, which begins 'The Lord is my shepherd...' I got on my knees crying and she came back and prayed with me to accept Christ into my life. "That was in 2003, and I had 18 months left in the prison. I felt I wanted to help people [during the time I had left] and so became a prison listener. Someone whom people could go to, to talk."

When Cyril was discharged, he had given up drugs but alcohol and self-harm were still an issue.

One day his son told Cyril's partner at the time that his daddy needed a plaster because his arm was bleeding. Cyril had cut himself again.

It marked a turning point for Cyril as he realised his issues were affecting his family. He believed his life was worthless and that is when he headed alone to his caravan - to end the suffering.

Or so he thought.

Cyril found himself in Southport's main hospital, when he regained consciousness. A male nurse gave him a Bible: "I was there for three days and I never saw that nurse again." He was transferred to a psychiatric unit and when he was stable, began working as a volunteer at a charity shop at the hostel for addicts.

Then a phone call came - his sister was in trouble. Cyril visited her with other family members and she died from alcohol issues, aged just 29. Cyril was devastated and reached for the bottle and drugs again but felt God say firmly "Enough!". He checked into Victory Outreach Manchester, a Christian rehabilitation centre.

It was here in a prayer room that Cyril realised he carried a burden of unforgiveness towards his abusers during his early teenage years. He decided to forgive them all and prayed for each one separately. He had Christian counselling and has now found inner freedom, despite it being 'a long journey'.

Cyril, now aged 44 and living in Manchester, England, says "Jesus means everything to me". He works for a Christian organisation and goes into prisons to encourage addicts to embrace the hope and help he has found in Jesus. He recently led 15 women prisoners in prayer to give their lives over to God.

"I have got true freedom. I took drugs to find freedom but actually found freedom through Jesus. Because Jesus stripped it all back. If it weren't for God I would be dead.

"My hope in the future is that I will still be reaching lost people for Jesus. I'd say to anyone give Jesus full access to your life. Not little bits of life - give Him everything. He knows the plans He has for you, to prosper and not to harm you - as it says in Jeremiah 29:11."

# Hairdresser's living hell

Danny Velasco was a freelance hairdresser and makeup artist who worked with famous celebrities in photo studios around the world. His career was sky-rocketing, he had all the money he could ever want and his work was sought after by many well-known people.

However, drugs plunged him into poverty and madness until he cried out to God for rescue.

"In my early thirties, I moved to Paris where I got my first cover on Vogue magazine," Danny said. "When that cover hit the newsstands, my career just exploded. I had as much money as I wanted to spend on drugs. Suddenly, it wasn't just pills and alcohol, now it was cocaine and heroin."

Secretly struggling with his addiction, Danny was doing a photo shoot in New York and had an encounter with a model, Wanda, on set.

"She began to talk to me about God," he remembers. "To me, she was a religious fanatic. I didn't have anything to say to her, I just let her talk."

Before Wanda left, she asked to pray for Danny who stood there uncomfortably thinking the girl was crazy. After the prayer, she told him, "I just want to let you know that if you call on the name of the Lord, He is going to set you free."

"Listen, I will never call on the name of the Lord. That won't happen," Danny assured her.

Later, he got a contract with a big company and went to do a photo shoot for them during which he overdosed on heroin. They sent him back home and cancelled the contract, which ruined Danny's reputation.

"I didn't care," he said. "All I wanted to do was shoot dope."

Danny left all his wealth and prestige behind in a dramatic manner: "I pulled a garbage can between my legs and I began to cut up everything that had my name on it. Anything. Passports. Driver's license. I put my keys on the table, I walked out, I closed the door behind me and I never went back. I began to live on the streets."

Day-to-day existence on the streets of New York took its toll on Danny. He did drugs every day, he was starving, he lost so much weight he went down to 108 pounds [48 kilos] and he developed serious liver infections Hepatitis A, B and C.

He also developed unnatural phobias and was tormented by voices in his head. "I had gone from this celebrated person to this crazy man living on the streets of New York talking to himself, laughing, and cursing," he said.

Every once in a while, Danny would go to a pay phone and ring Wanda, asking her for money. She would always invite him to her church where, unbeknown to Danny, she had a whole team of friends praying for him.

One night, Danny was told by another drug addict that he was going to die if he didn't go to the hospital. He stumbled to the emergency entrance and blacked out before waking up in a pool of his own vomit. "The demonic voices were screaming in my head and in that moment, I heard this sweet little voice and it said, 'Call on the Name of the Lord. He's going to set you free,'" he remembers.

"At that moment, I cried out to God. I didn't know how to pray. I didn't know really what I was saying. I was just crying, 'Jesus, help me. Save me. You're my only hope. I have no other hope.' That's the moment that I'll never forget because the spirit of the living God just swept into that hospital room.

"All of the voices in my head stopped and all the fears and phobias just dropped away from me. I knew that I was in the presence of God. I knew that the Spirit of God was in the room healing me and changing me."

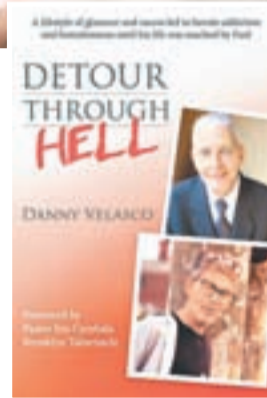
When he left the hospital, Danny went into rehab where he read the Bible and eagerly learned more about what Jesus had done for him on the cross. He also wrote to Wanda



and told her what had happened.

Upon leaving rehab, he went to stay with Wanda and her husband and they took him to their church. There, Danny met the people who had been praying for him and they surrounded him with encouragement and love.

"I'll tell you the thing that blows me away more than anything: God goes so much further than we ever dare to ask," he said. "When I called on the name of the Lord, I just wanted to get out of a jam. God goes: 'I'm going to



get you out of the jam and give you a new life. Not just that, I'll give even further than that. I'll stand you up in front of all the world, in front of audiences of thousands and thousands of people so that others too may know that they can obtain mercy.'

"It's almost like a trophy," he concluded with a smile.

"You're His trophy that He wants to show off to the world and say, 'I can do this in somebody's life.'"

Two weeks after Danny shared his testimony on a YouTube video, he passed away and went to be with Jesus in heaven.

## Healing for my heartache

**COLUMNIST** and author Carol Round was listening to the TV one day while cleaning her house when she caught the phrase 'You find what you're looking for' and she remembered the Bible verse where God says, "You will find me when you seek me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:13)



It reminded Carol of when she finally got to that place in her own life. As she tells it:

Growing up, I faithfully attended church and participated in youth activities. As a married adult, I allowed the secular world to distract me from church attendance. After my sons were born, I wanted them to have the same foundation I'd experienced. Unfortunately, I later wandered away from my roots.

In my late 40s, God began a work in me. I was a believer but I wasn't a follower. I hadn't picked up my Bible in years.

When my 28-year marriage dissolved, I began to seek the Lord and understand the difference between knowing of God and having a personal relationship with Him. I remember that sunny, warm October afternoon in 2001 as if it were yesterday. I was struggling. I was distracted from a writing assignment I couldn't seem to complete. Taking a break, I decided to go for a walk by the lake.

Nearing a picnic area in our neighbourhood, I veered from my path to a concrete table, where I could sit and watch the geese sunning by the water. In spite of the day's beauty, an emptiness engulfed me, threatening to overwhelm the strides I'd made after my divorce.

For the first time, I prayed aloud. "God, I'm so lost. I need some direction. Please help me."

As I finished praying, a peace settled over me, surrounding me like the arms of a beloved friend enveloping me in a hug. That friend was Jesus.

As imperfect human beings, we tend to seek money, fame, people and entertainment as our end goals in life. Accumulating those things becomes our reason for living. We seek materialism over eternal life through our Saviour and Lord. But, as I discovered almost 18 years ago, it only leads to emptiness.

To experience true joy and add value to our lives, we must seek God, a God who wants an intimate relationship with His children. His promises for us outweigh any material gains we've made.

Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

We don't have to struggle in this life. Striving to live a happy life through anything else but a relationship with Jesus only leads to captivity. We're never free until we seek His face and accept His amazing grace.

This article first appeared on [www.assistnews.net](http://www.assistnews.net) and is used with permission.

# TEENTALK

## Groundwork for a happy marriage

**M**egan Alexander is a beautiful and successful actress and author, she is also happily married and a mother of two. In the entertainment industry, a notoriously difficult place to maintain a happy relationship, Megan has some sage advice for the young and unattached.

**• Focus on the goal**

Most people are surprised that I decided to remain a virgin until I was married. I am reminded every day in my industry just how unpopular this decision is.

Early in my life, I decided I wanted to approach marriage in the best way I could. As I do with a big photo shoot coming up or a major assignment, I prepare in the best way I can. I try to refrain from bad food, work out often, and take care of myself. I study my subject and focus on the end goal.

It is the same in marriage. If you value it, you will approach it carefully and respectfully. Marriage is hard enough in this world. I wanted to enter into this sacred and priceless covenant the best way that I knew how. That meant working on myself and treating others as I would want to be treated.

A profound moment for me came when I was in high school. I was blessed to have a great group of friends. Through discussions in our group, I realized that every guy friend of mine was someone's future husband. Likewise, each



Beautiful people Megan and Brian Alexander.

girlfriend was someone's future wife.

**EVERY GUY FRIEND OF MINE WAS SOMEONE'S FUTURE HUSBAND.**



That mindset changed my outlook on dating. Instead of simply "having fun" and acting selfishly, I strived to treat others with respect and kindness. This approach allowed me to have a fun dating experience.

I laid out my boundaries clearly and tried to date guys who respected this decision. I had a blast! I did not stay home reading my Bible. I went to dances and kissed quite a few boyfriends. But I stood fast in my decision to save myself for marriage.

Teenagers (and their parents!) ask me all the time, "How did you do it?" A few things helped me achieve my goal.

First, I stayed busy pursuing my career. I served as student body president of my college, worked radio and television jobs, volunteered, travelled the country, cultivated hobbies, and stayed involved in a church. This variety of experiences allowed me to meet wonderful, quality and like-minded people.

I also kept setting goals. I often tell girls that I was too busy chasing my dreams in my teens and 20s to get into trouble with boys! And its true! I set many goals and set to work achieving them – no matter how big or how small. By the time I began seriously dating my husband, I was ready to understand and respect the profound marriage commitment.

Second, I found a guy who respected me and my decisions. Brian was not a virgin when we got married, as he found his faith later in life, but he made the decision to seek a "second virginity" with me. He dated me five years and ... he never pressured me to do anything I did not want to

do. He respected me, our commitment, and our goal.

**• After the honeymoon, life is not a fairy tale.**

So if we wait until we are married, the honeymoon will be a romantic, blissful fairy tale, right? Not exactly. Our honeymoon was romantic and special and fun, but it was also stressful and awkward. It's a little hard to move from "just say no" to suddenly "everything is OK and go for it." We put way too much pressure on ourselves to have the sexual aspect of our marriage all figured out, or figure it out quickly. This is not the case. This intimate part of your relationship takes time!

Life is not a fairy tale, but our wedding night was special for us because we had waited. One of the cutest things my husband ever said to me on our honeymoon was, "Well, honey, we have the rest of our lives to work on it!" That is a beautiful phrase to hear from your partner.



We are together for life, and there is no exit strategy. We are figuring this out only with each other. There is a sense of security and confidence that my marriage gives me in all aspects of my life.

God intended sex to be an extremely intimate almost spiritual act that bonds you with someone's heart, soul, mind, and emotions. I want to share that with only my husband.

I cringe at how lightly our world treats sex. God created

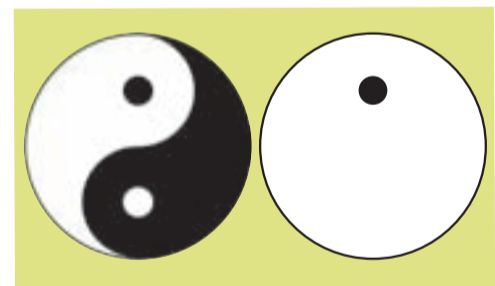
us to be such complex, brilliant and sensitive human beings. We need to value all that we are and take better care of our bodies and souls. The Bible tells us to "above all, guard your heart." (Proverbs 4:23) Take care of your sexuality and value it highly. For you were "wonderfully and fearfully made." (Psalm 139:14)

Good books on sex and marriage are: *Intended for Pleasure* by Ed and Gail Wheat, *The Meaning of Marriage* by Tim Keller and *Love and War: Finding the Marriage You Dreamed Of* by John and Stasi Eldredge. I also recently finished *The Wait* by DeVon Franklin and Meagan Good – one of my favourites! Very practical and encouraging.

My advice for the next generation is this: Be bold; dare to be different. It is never too early to prepare for your future marriage. Value yourselves and treat your bodies like temples. Look for a spouse who will be your best friend and biggest cheerleader. •

This is an excerpt from Megan Alexander's book, entitled: "Faith in the Spotlight: Thriving in your career while staying true to your beliefs."

## The misleading message of Yin Yang



**THE** Eastern symbol of Yin Yang, with its equal swirls of black and white, has become ubiquitous on clothing brands, computer games and in popular culture generally. This idea of a balance between good and evil, of an eternal struggle between the two, is played out in comics and TV shows, and is very appealing. We can identify that tug of war in the world around us and we feel the struggle within ourselves.

The concept of equal but opposing forces in an epic duel has even crept into Christian thinking. However, Biblical Christianity teaches a far different and more encouraging power balance than that 'good' causes and is dependent upon 'evil', and is just holding its own in the struggle.

Contrary to popular thinking, the opposite of Satan, or the devil, in the Bible is not God, or His Son Jesus. Satan is only a fallen archangel and his opposing equivalent would be another archangel, like Michael or Gabriel. Satan is a created creature, in no way nearly as powerful, all-knowing or magnificent as God. Comparing Satan to God is like comparing a rabid, barking dog – scary and dangerous no doubt – with the largest dinosaur that ever lived, who could simply step on the dog or destroy it with one swipe.

When Satan, then called Lucifer, rose up in pride and rebellion against God (Isaiah 14:12-15), he was thrown out of heaven with one third of the angels (Revelation 12:4). That means that for every one demon (fallen angel), there are two holy angels: therefore, there is twice as much force for good in the world as for evil. That's encouraging!

According to the Christian worldview then, the

Yin Yang sign should really be a big white circle with one little black dot. Sometimes we may feel overwhelmed by the bad things happening in the world but we should remember the incredible, mighty, vast forces arraigned on the side of all that is righteousness and holy and good.

In the Bible, in 2 Kings chapter 6, there is the story of Elisha and his servant facing the armies of Syria. His servant is afraid and Elisha prays that his eyes might be opened to see the horses and chariots of God on their side. The servant then sees a huge fiery army surrounding them, much more than those that stand against them. God is not impotent or uninterested, not reactionary or resigned. He is involved in our world, powerful to intervene and His current patience with evil should not be interpreted as tolerance.

God promises He will judge evil and destroy Satan, all his minions and those who have fallen for his schemes. We would do well to align ourselves with the (vastly more numerous and powerful) forces of good while we still have a choice. Today is the day to choose. As Joshua exhorted the Israelites "choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15) •



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# 'ROUGHEST KID' COMES RIGHT

CJ Blair grew up in inner city Washington DC. His mother worked on the streets and the only father he ever knew was her pimp.

"There was no one there to nurture me and keep me out of trouble," he explains. Before long CJ was selling drugs and running with gangs.

"My intention was to make enough money to get my mother off the corner," he explains; "and when I was offered three-, four- or five thousand dollars a night, then I was thinking my mother can stop selling her body and getting beat up by men."

One bright spot was spending his summers at his great-grandmother's house, which had a totally different atmosphere.

"My great grandmother believed God for everything, I mean everything!" he remembers. "Bread, rent money, everything. She would kneel me down at the side of the bed and pray blessings and protection over me."

"I was the roughest kid in the family but my great grandmother would always speak well of me and call me a man of God. She spoke positive things over me."

Despite his great granny's strong influence, CJ was reluctant to change his ways. "I was scared of hell, really scared," he admits. "My great grandmother had hammered that home. But I knew that becoming a Christian was going to mean leaving the lifestyle I had become accustomed to, so I wasn't going to play with God. Either I was all in, or I wasn't even pretending."

CJ dropped out of school and was arrested for the first time at age 13 on an assault charge.



CJ shares his story on Youtube (left) and in the bad old days (right).



He spent the next 12 years in and out of jail. Then, after serving a six-year prison term for robbery and malicious wounding, CJ went into the rap music business with some guys he met in prison.

One night, in the music studio, the studio engineer began to talk about Jesus.

He said, "If there's a Jesus, and you haven't accepted Him, and you die, you're going to be short."

"At that point God started dealing with me," says CJ.

A couple of weeks later CJ was driving home from a major drug deal, listening to a rap group singing how they had platinum currency cards with the mark of the beast on them. [A reference to some signs of the end of the world in the

Bible's final book, Revelation.] "That triggered a memory of things my great grandmother had talked about when I was eight or nine and I immediately said, 'I'm going to hell.' And suddenly conviction and the power of God hit me and I put my hands up and started saying 'Hallelujah, hallelujah [praise be to God]'."

Then CJ says he heard the audible voice of Jesus, say "CJ!" "Yes, Lord," he responded. "Take it out," Jesus commanded. CJ popped the tape out of the tape deck and turned on the radio.

"Do you know what miracles are?" the radio DJ said just then. CJ knew God was talking to him and thought that maybe this meant he was about to die. He reached behind him and began throwing the cocaine, marijuana and cigarettes

he had in the car, out of the window as he drove.

He remembers thinking at the time, "This better be Jesus because I'm throwing away all this money and people I answer to are going to kill me!"

When he got home, CJ went straight down to his basement and started praying as he had never prayed before. The next day when his mum asked what was going on, CJ replied, "I'm saved!"

CJ turned his whole life over to God, enrolled in Bible College and got rid of his guns. This made him, a former drug dealer, very vulnerable on the streets.

One day, while he was getting his hair cut at the barber shop, a dealer CJ owed money to, walked in. This was someone you didn't mess with and CJ felt his lack of weapon keenly as the guy walked right up to him.

"I heard you're with Jesus now," the thug said. "Yeh," said CJ. "Pray for me," the dealer replied, and turned around and walked out.

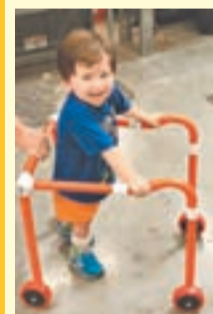
"That was such a blessing," CJ remembers; "because God spoke to me and said, 'I told you I could protect you.'"

Today CJ is a pastor, ministering in the same streets where he used to sell drugs.

"People need to see those who have made mistakes, but at some point have said yes to Jesus and had their lives changed. I live a good life as a result of the gospel and the purpose that God has instilled in my life," CJ finishes. "I was the guy who was rebellious, who went to prison, who got shot, who did all the wrong things, but I show forth His glory because if one word from God is injected into your life, all your past can change."

## smile STORY

### Hardware workers model kindness



**TWO-YEAR-OLD** Logan was born with a condition that impacts muscle development and balance. Logan's physical

therapist recently suggested that he get a gait trainer to help him walk. Logan's parents couldn't afford one and so they headed to Home Depot for supplies to make their own. But they ended up getting so much more.

When the hardware staff heard what the family was building, they sent them to go get ice cream while they gathered together everything they needed. Nice, right? That's what Logan's parents thought.

But after their ice cream trip, they returned to a stunning surprise:

There in the Home Depot was a perfect little Logan-sized walker.

The employees had made it themselves, complete with Logan's name across the back!

"I couldn't believe they were willing to do that," said Logan's dad. "It took everything I had not to cry because it hasn't been an easy road for my son."

But the best part? They refused to accept any payment.

From Inspiremore.com

## Girl under water for 30 minutes, has NDE

BY MARK ELLIS (ASSIST NEWS)

At a summer swim party with her church youth group, Steffani Besch was pushed into the pool by a young prankster. She hit her head on the edge, lost consciousness, and spent 30 minutes under water.

At the time, Steffani was 13 and lived with her family in Dodge City, Kansas.

It was a hot summer day and the public pool was overcrowded. The pool was overloaded with chlorine, so the water appeared cloudy.

There was a frenzy of splashing and activity, with many kids playing tag and other games. Steffani's friend Tad snuck up behind her at one point and pushed her and another girl, Tami, in.

Tami went out far enough to clear the edge, but Steffani's head snapped back and hit the cement.

"It knocked me out, but nobody saw. The next thing I'm in the bottom of the pool."

She didn't even let out a scream! Amidst the jam-packed frenzy of kids swimming, nobody noticed.

The pool drain was so strong it pulled Steffani to the bottom and held her fast to its grate.

Finally, after the youth group got worried and began searching frantically, one girl dove as deeply as she could into the deep end of the pool and could just discern the shape of a body underneath her. A boy dove in and pulled Steffani up.

Thirty long minutes had passed since she went missing. Time is critical when a person is knocked unconscious and stops breathing. According to medical professionals,

permanent brain damage begins after only four minutes without oxygen, and death can occur as soon as four to six minutes later.

When they stretched out her body on the pool deck, Steffani's eyes had rolled back in her head and she appeared lifeless.

As her friends stood around and prayed, the lifeguard attempted CPR, but it was to no avail.

Tami ran to call Steffani's parents and tell them to meet the ambulance at the hospital.

A friend from church happened to arrive at their house as Steffani's parents were leaving, and she went inside and began to pray.

At the small hospital nearby: "They thought I was dead and there was nothing they could do. They kept me in the hallway covered with a sheet because they didn't know what to do."

Meanwhile, throughout the drama, Steffani was having a supernatural encounter.

"I literally saw my spirit leave my body and I saw my natural body curled up in a fetal position on the bottom of the pool," she recalls.

After her spirit left her body, she remembers walking across the bottom of the pool, then up the silver stairs that exit the pool.

As her spirit left the pool she looked upward. "I was looking into space and just shot through like a rocket. I went through the atmosphere. It was so fast, in the twinkling of an eye I was there."

"The next thing I know I was at the gates of heaven and there was a battle for my life. I heard Satan say 'she's coming with me'. Then she heard Jesus say: 'It is not her time yet and when it is she will be with me.'



Steffani then and now.



Steffani recalls the gates of heaven being very tall and white. "I remember brilliant colours. I mostly remember the feel, because there was no fear. There was such a knowing of love and that I was safe and protected. Nothing else, even the arguing over my life didn't affect me. I knew I was safe," she says.

Immediately after Jesus said she will be with me, Steffani opened her eyes on the hospital gurney. "It was hard to breathe. I remember seeing my youth group. Some were leaning against the wall crying."

Her father walked in through the doors and pulled the sheet back that had been covering her face and she said, "Hi daddy," very weakly.

"They started asking me questions and I remember saying my head hurt. I knew my name and birthdate."

Amazingly, the staff decided to release her from the hospital.

"They sent me home but I would go in and out of consciousness."

Alarmed by her condition, Steffani's parents took her to the emer-

gency room at another hospital. There they discovered she had a concussion.

The doctor said: "I don't understand this. None of this makes sense. There is no water in your lungs."

Steffani said she had difficulty breathing.

"I can tell the chlorine had to be strong," the doctor observed, "because probably what is hurting is that you swallowed water but it went straight to your stomach. It looks raw in your stomach."

Then Steffani startled the medical staff by saying, "I know what happened to me. Jesus saved my life. He saved my life today. He gave me my life back."

"People need to know that God does miracles every single day. It's not just a story; He really does raise the dead," she declares.

Steffani Besch is now an associate women's pastor in Loveland, Colorado. She has been married to David for 31 years and they have three grown sons.

# Geologist's confidence in Genesis is rock solid

Scientist and musician tells how a simple graphic and some hard research changed his thinking on origins forever.

BY JONATHAN O'BRIEN

When I was small I went to a Presbyterian school where the Lord's Prayer was recited each day before class, and from about the age of six I believed in God. Around the age of eight I found an old Bible, having never seen one before. As I read the first words of Genesis I felt I was somehow reading God's own description of the creation. There was a simple power, eloquence and authority.

In the years that followed I became aware of the idea of Darwinian evolution through books and occasionally television.

When I was 10 my family went on a tour of a large cave system and the guides told us that the stalactites and stalagmites were a million years old or more.

I started to think that the Bible was largely based on mythical stories. As I grew up I became an agnostic, and by 16 was practically an atheist, and accepted Darwinian evolution as fact.

## Out in the bush

When I left school I worked on and off as a geological field assistant and jackaroo.<sup>1</sup> Working in the remote Queensland and Northern Territory bush seemed to draw me closer to God. We often camped under the stars, without tents or even a tent-fly when the weather was dry. Sometimes I'd wake in the middle of the night, and see the stars shining brightly with a quiet beauty that naturally made me think of God and eternity.

Beginning to practice music more at this time also made me more receptive to God, I believe. I was happier, because it was something I'd wanted to do for a long time. There were many nights in the bush where I practiced by the light of a kerosene lamp.

For some reason I started to think not only of God again, but also of evolution, completely out of the blue. Did evolution really happen like the school textbooks had said it did? I read the Gospels, and also a book by Francis Schaeffer on the book of Genesis<sup>2</sup>, and other Christian apologetics books.

I began to wonder if Darwinian evolution and the millions and billions of years might NOT be true. Eventually I believed in Jesus and gave my life to follow Him, becoming a Christian when I was 21.

## University

In my late twenties, after completing a music degree, I decided to do a second degree and become a geologist like my father and uncle. In

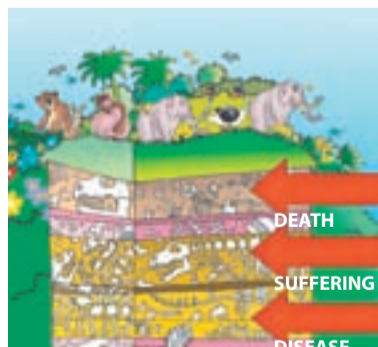


Jonathan O'Brien outside the Creation Ministries offices where he works part-time.

order to study geology, I decided that a change in my thinking was necessary—I would learn to accept Darwinian evolution and 'geologic time', the billions of years of 'prehistory'.

In those days I had never heard of a geologist who questioned the concept of billions of years, or Darwin's theory. I would try to combine secular theory with belief in the Bible.

At university I saw a poster advertising a talk on creation by Dr Don Batten, a Christian plant physiologist. I rejected many of the things he said, as at that time I believed in orthodox long-age geology. However, the talk was almost over when he put a drawing of Adam and Eve on the screen, depicted in the Garden of Eden, and in the ground under their feet were the bones of many long-dead creatures, which represents the situation if the Bible is interpreted to accommodate millions of years of geology. (See below). Yet this was meant to be God's "very good" creation.



Even so, theistic evolution seemed the only option for a Christian geologist. I started losing faith in the Bible again. I felt that if evolution were true, God should have told us. It is a story easily told, and readily believable by both the simple and the sophisticated. Many ancient people believed in some type of evolution.

Christian theology—especially the doctrine of fall and redemption, and the whole purpose of Christ—became a mess once I accepted Darwinian evolution. I still believed in the divin-

ity of Jesus, and the Resurrection, but my doubts were growing.

## Testing things

As the geology degree progressed I was motivated to look more deeply into secular geological assertions of earth's alleged long history. I started to question things that tended to be taken for granted by geology students—the 'just so' stories of secular geologists. I went to the geology section in the university library and the State Library of Queensland and did a lot of extra-curricular reading.

I also studied-up on the 'founding fathers' of geology such as Charles Lyell. Modern geology has been built at least partially on an anti-biblical foundation that was representative of a strong philosophical movement amongst western intellectuals at the time.

Eventually I rejected the view of secular geology that there is no evidence for a global Flood.

Evidence for the truth of God's existence, and His creation, is all around, and the Bible says we have no excuse not to believe. Acknowledging the reality of the biblical Flood is important too, and Peter in the New Testament foretold the rise of Lyell's uniformitarianism, the philosophy of secular geology which so influenced Charles Darwin, saying the scoffers will believe that "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation", linking this with denial of the global Flood.<sup>3</sup>

Just before the geology degree was completed I found some books outlining problems with the theory of evolution, by Michael Denton and Jonathan Sarfati. I was very encouraged by what I read, and soon after discovered *Creation* magazine. My Christian faith rebounded.

## Keeping what is good

It has been the experience of many Christians that rejecting anything in the Bible on the scientific advice of those who are philosophically committed to disbelief can lead

towards a similar state of general disbelief. Anyone keen to discern the "true truth", as Schaeffer put it, should rigorously check the assertions, evidences, assumptions, preconceptions and underlying philosophical commitments of those who have a big influence on something as eternally important as faith in God. A person who refuses to see will simply not see.

These days, I'm playing music again. Having entered university believing in secular geology, and having come out the other side as a young Earth believer, I now write for Creation Ministries International on a part-time basis.

## REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. A jackaroo is a term in Australia and New Zealand for a young man living and working on a sheep or cattle station to gain practical experience in managing the property.
2. Schaeffer, Francis A - *Genesis in Space and Time* (1972)
3. 2 Peter 3:4 (KJV).

This story first appeared on Creation.com. It is used with kind permission.

Believe it or not

## Wasp sting to antibiotic

BY CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

SCIENTISTS have discovered that some of the components of the wasp sting are very potent bacteria-killers.<sup>1</sup> This could be very important for treating antibiotic-resistant germs.

An MIT doctor investigated several of these components, called antimicrobial peptides (AMPs)—essentially tiny proteins only 12 units long. They have a positive charge, a spiral structure, and a water-repellent part, a combination thought to poke holes in the bacteria's cell walls.

One of these AMPs, in its raw form, was toxic to humans as well. However, the team made only minor modifications, and developed a form that would not hurt human cells.

Then they tested these modified proteins on diseased mice.

"After four days, that compound can completely clear the infection, and that was quite surprising and exciting because we don't typically see that with other experimental antimicrobials or other antibiotics that we've tested in the past with this particular mouse model."<sup>2</sup>

Researchers have also found that a toxin in wasp venom kills cancer cells—without harming healthy ones. The molecule MP1 targets lipids which are abnormally distributed on the surface of cancer cells, destroying them. While the treatment is not being tested on humans yet, laboratory tests so far seem promising.<sup>3</sup>

## References

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# BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS



## HAVE A STRESS-FREE FATHER'S DAY

A RECENT newspaper article reported the results of a survey into life in Australia in 2019:

Drivers in Australia who use their car to get to work are averaging a commute of 66 minutes per day.

Another interesting fact is that men are spending longer on commutes than women.

Of particular interest is that this is resulting in a high level of stress for working dads, especially dads with two kids.

If their commute time is more than two hours per day they are more likely to be less satisfied with their jobs and their pay, along with a decrease in flexibility to balance their work and life.

The survey was conducted by HILDA (Household, Labour and

Income Dynamics in Australia) and it also reports:

The cost of childcare has risen about 145 per cent in real terms, from \$62 in 2002/03 to \$153 in 2016/17

The majority of parents have experienced some sort of difficulty over the last 12 months when using or thinking about using child care.

All age groups have had a substantial increase in depression and anxiety diagnoses.

All of this adds up to significant levels of stress and pressure, especially on dads with kids.

Women are also under significant amounts of stress and in some cases, more so.

But as this month is Father's Day, I want to concentrate my thoughts on men and consider a few ways that may assist them in managing stress.

Please note, I am not naive enough to think that one column will be the cure all you require for managing stress. If this is a significant issue for you and you are having difficulty coping, then I encourage you to talk with your doctor or seek good help

through an organization like Life Line.

What I can do is share with you some things that help me to deal with stress.

Talk things over with a trusted friend. Hopefully this will be your wife, but you may feel the need to share your struggles with another man who has "been there and done that." I have been greatly helped over the years by having a few good mates around me who have listened to my struggles, encouraged me and prayed for me.

If you're not struggling and you think a mate might be, then don't be afraid to ask him how he is going.

Talk things over with God. (Really, this should be at the top of the list!)

Spending time regularly praying and reading the Bible each day brings great peace to my mind and heart and helps me to look at life from God's perspective. Jesus is the one who encourages us to bring our concerns to our Father in Heaven and to trust Him to deal with them.

Maybe you don't believe in God or go for "that religious stuff!" But



what have you got to lose? Give prayer (and God) a try – I think you might be surprised!

Listen to some good music. I like thoughtful, prayerful praise songs that remind me of God's love for me and His power to heal and give peace. Perhaps an uplifting piece of classical music is more to your liking.

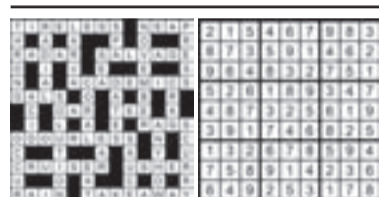
Whatever the case, open yourself up to the gift of music. It has been scientifically documented that music has the power to heal, bring peace and to alter the patterns of our brains in ways that are beneficial for us.

Carve out some time for yourself where you can spend it in silence and reflection.

Read a good book that brings encouragement and fosters your personal growth. In the busyness of our lives, we all need time out.

Practice the discipline of a regular day off when you can refresh and reconnect with yourself and your family.

I encourage you to commit to positive change and may your Father's Day be as stress free as possible!



## Ask Y:

**Peter Meadows answers your questions about God**

**QUESTION: Couldn't Jesus just be a legend – like Robin Hood with a halo?**



THAT'S a very reasonable question. Couldn't Jesus be no more than a sophisticated fairy tale? Could it all be exaggeration, confusion and myth? Have things just got changed and exaggerated over time?

It may seem a strange way to respond but imagine you are in the kitchen. Before you is your recently deceased Aunt Fiona's recipe for the quadruple-jam-layered triple-chocolate upside-down cake that's been handed down through your family for generations.

Will it cook? Only if it has remained the same – with 'jam' not becoming 'ham' or 'six eggs' becoming 'sixty eggs' or 'fifteen minutes' turning into 'five hours'. But you cook it and it works.

So back to the question. Has the "recipe" about Jesus changed along the way? Clearly not, because people of every walk of life and of almost every language keep putting the message of Jesus to the test and finding it works. They have discovered a fullness to life, real peace of mind and confidence in the ultimate future.

Which means the better question is "How come what we know from all that time ago is still accurate?" And the answer is fairly simple.

- First what we know about Jesus comes mainly from accounts of His life known as the Gospels. They were written by His most committed followers who were either eyewitnesses or they got the story straight from those who saw Jesus firsthand.

- To them, the facts were too important to be casual about. They had the same concerns as Jewish historians asked to report on the Holocaust. The importance of the events made them doubly committed to accuracy in every detail.

- Second, these eyewitness recorders were not simple peasants. They included a former civil servant, a businessman, and a doctor. And were so convinced about what they wrote they went on to give their lives for it.

- Third, Jesus was "THE" event of the day. Everyone knew what had happened and would have shouted loud and clear if the Gospel writers had exaggerated. Friends and enemies kept these writers on track—making sure their memories and those of many others did not wobble on the way.
- Fourth, the accounts of what Jesus said and did were written down too soon after the events to become a myth. Only five or so years after Jesus' death letters were circulating among His followers containing the central events of His life.

- Fifth, the thousands of manuscripts, from different eras, available of the things Jesus said and did all match.

Whatever any of us may think about Jesus and what He said, we can be sure that what we know can be trusted.

## 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) \_\_\_\_\_

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## No ears!

BY JOHN HUTCHINSON



IN the foyer of the Strathalbyn Library is a collection of paintings by an artist who has cerebral palsy and who paints in oils – mostly with his fingers.

The paintings are of nine prominent politicians. When you look closely at them you'll notice something missing. The artist doesn't have TV but listens all day to ABC radio, where he hears the politicians from all sides. The paintings express his frustration with them. The thing missing from their facial features is their ears.

The reason, he said is: 'They just don't listen to any of us.' (Advertiser 18/8/18)

Politicians need to listen – and, so do we! Too many times my wife has said, 'You haven't heard a thing I've been saying.'

Someone has said, 'All the great learners are great listeners.'

Jesus said, 'He who has ears, let him hear.'

And, what a priceless privilege is the ability to hear. I know someone who has never heard anything – never heard a Kookaburra, never heard a note of music, never heard the voice of another person.

We need to listen. What's the use of ears if we don't?

U.S. President, Lyndon B. Johnson, kept a sign on his office wall which read: 'You ain't learnin' nothin' when you're doin' all the talkin.'

Listen to good advice. Many have failed terribly because they wouldn't listen. Good advice can do wonders for us – but only if we listen!

Listen to those in need. All too often our ears are closed to the needs of the homeless and those doing it tough.

Listen to God - the one who created this spectacular mechanism of hearing.

But, you may ask, 'Can God really speak to us?'

Yes, He can. Sometimes He speaks through circumstances. Sometimes He may speak through other people.

But, He has spoken in His Word, the Bible. What a wonderful book it is. How better our world could be if we all listened and did what God said.

What a difference it could make if we listened to Jesus when He said, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'

The Bible says '... faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ' (Rom 10:17-18 NLT)

The good news about Christ, the Son of God, who loved us so much He gave His life for us on a cross – that's what we need to hear. Then the truly wonderful news – He rose from the dead and is alive today and can be our Saviour and Friend.

Listen carefully to what God wants you to hear.





# LEADING BY FOLLOWING

BY ADRIAN BARNARD (AMENDED)

**S**OUTH Africa cricket captain Faf (Francois) du Plessis became full-time Twenty20 series skipper in February 2013, took over the Test captaincy in December 2016 and captaincy of all formats in August 2017.

In an interview with *Passion for Sport*, Faf said his leadership style is “very relaxed” – but that doesn’t mean faffing about.

He says: “I am extremely laid back, but obviously at times when it’s needed for you to be firm you have to be blunt. It’s all about knowing when to do that because different players need different things to get them going or to get the best out of them.

“I’ve learnt a lot about myself and my leadership, and that’s certainly got to do with my faith as well as my character, which has changed through the years.

“My style is very relaxed and very honest, so I think those are my trademarks as a leader. Players and personnel know exactly where they stand with me.”

And Faf also knows exactly where he stands as far as God is concerned. His Twitter bio is called ‘Jesus Follower’.

He says: “That is the thing that is most important in my life. I understand that I have a purpose, through God, and He has put me in a place where I must shine His light.

“I must put Him before anything else. I do it to openly say to the world that God is the most important thing in my life and when I, as we all do, sometimes drift away from God, I just flick on to my Twitter or Instagram and I am



Faf du Plessis. Photo: Getty Images

reminded of that.

“For me, to be fortunate enough to be in a place where people look up to me, means that when they look at me, they see that I am a Christian first, a dad and a husband second, and then cricket comes after that.

“As important as cricket is because it is my livelihood, it definitely isn’t my first priority. The way I look at it every day is to just be thankful for being put in the place that I am, so that’s why my social media pages say that I’m a Jesus follower first because He is the reason that I am here.”

But he hasn’t always been a believer. Asked what made him change, he says: “I was playing for South Africa at the time and as a youngster, you’ve made it. You have financial security... you have a bit of celebrity status... so pretty much everything that you’ve ever wanted, you now have.

“But still, there were many times where I would feel that there was

so much missing from my life and I had a feeling of emptiness. That’s what being a Jesus follower [a Christian] now gives me, the fact that that hole, the empty feeling that I had, is now full.

“I grew up thinking I was a Christian but definitely not in a relationship with God. I went to Sunday school and it was a very old-school church. I would say prayers as a habit and read my Bible as a habit but without feeling or emotion. When you don’t have a proper relationship with God you don’t really

understand it all so that was me until about [2013].”

He relates that the pastor who gave Faf and his future wife pre-marital counselling challenged him about his faith: that Christianity is more than rules or knowledge but must be a relationship that informs how you live.

“I was intrigued, I told him that I was interested in changing my life and that there are a lot of things I’d like to get rid of. Slowly but surely I saw other things that I wanted to change and we actually worked through a little book called *One To One*, which unpacks what it means to surrender your life to God. In working through all that stuff, my heart began to change and I wanted to be obedient, for the first time I was starting to fall in love with God.

“Another turning point was a short time after when I was got a back injury and couldn’t go and play in the IPL (Indian Premier League). I was really disappointed because

**JULY 6, 2019:** Faf du Plessis of South Africa hits the ball over the boundary for six during the Group Stage match of the Cricket World Cup between Australia and South Africa at Old Trafford, Manchester, England. (Photo Andy Kearns/Getty Images)

the IPL for us is a huge income source. In this two to three-week period at home I went through a heart change, got baptised with my wife and [from then on I was] a completely different person.

“Initially, it was hard to grasp the concept of giving your career and performance over to God, trusting Him in success or failure. But now, as I have grown in my faith, I truly believe that He has put me here for a reason. I have a purpose in Him.”

Faf hasn’t allowed fame to go to his head: “I want to treat people with respect. Jesus’ first thing was always to be humble, to treat people well and to love people.”

His several tattoos mark important things in his life and act as a conversation-starter about his beliefs: “I specifically want my tattoos to tell a story of my faith,

because a lot of people ask about the tattoos, so I get an opportunity to discuss what I believe.

“I have one on the side of my ribs which reads ‘grace’ [in Urdu] because it is by the grace of God that my life has been changed. Then I have a quarter sleeve which has all the important things that have happened in my life, including cricket and my walk with God.” The sleeve includes dates and pictures marking his Test cricket debut, marriage and the day he got baptised. On top of it is written ‘Agape’, which is Greek for unconditional love.

Besides loving cricket, Faf enjoys cooking and fashion, and became father to a daughter in 2017.

The original article appeared on the Passion for Sport website and in Good News UK. It is used with permission.

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