



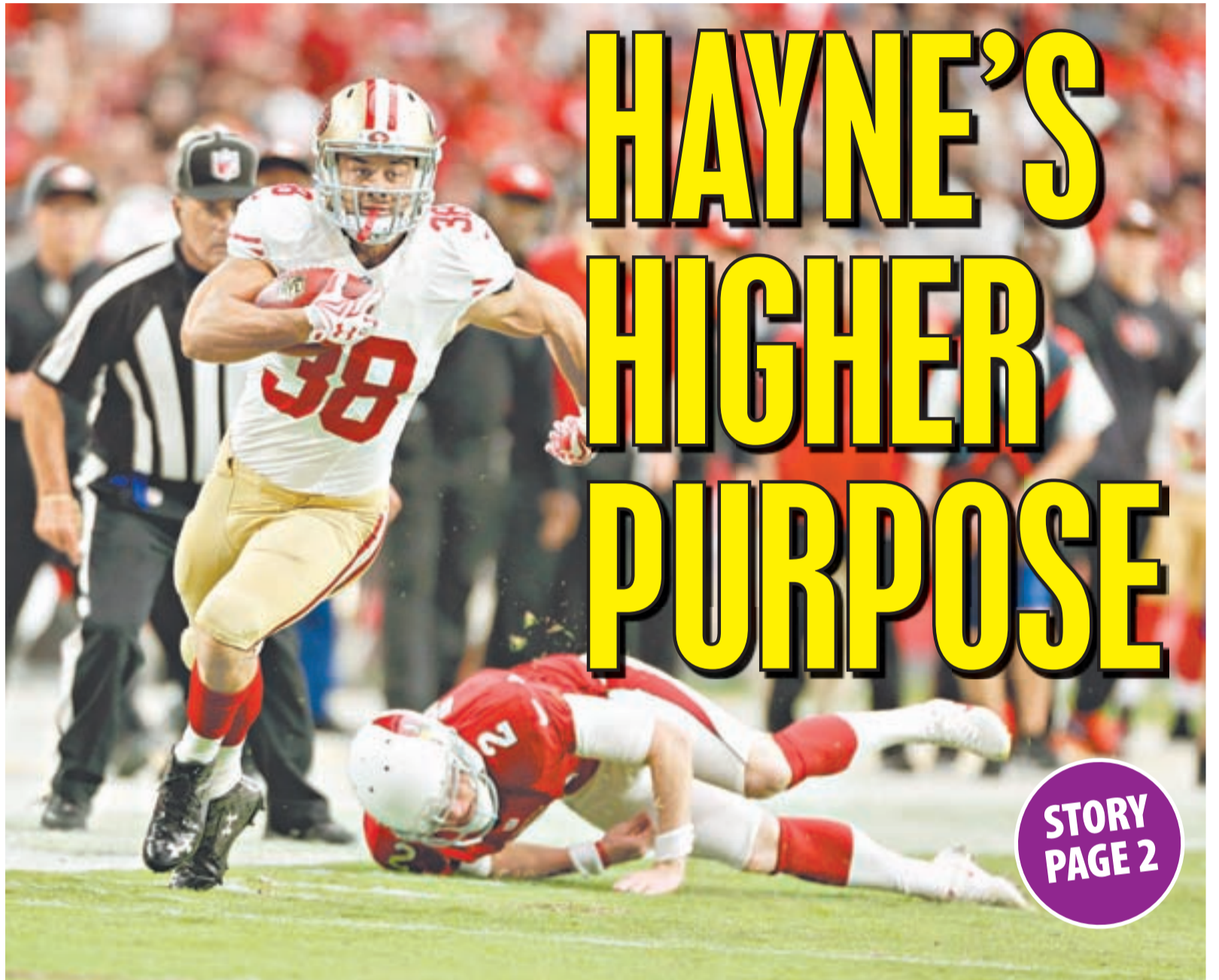
Outlaw's lonely underbelly
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ALIEN STAR WARS
Anyone there?
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No fear in this love
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HAYNE'S HIGHER PURPOSE

STORY PAGE 2



CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS DEFINE US

BY ANTON ZHANG

Christmas is a time of intentional expressions of our humanity – when friends, family, and communities come together in peace and love.

We ask ourselves: *How should I spend my Christmas this year? What presents should I give to my family and friends? Should I decorate my house? How can I show kindness and love to others this Christmas?*

Many of our decisions are directed at bringing joy to ourselves and to others.

While these are important decisions, we can be entirely consumed with our expressions of humanity (through love, kindness, community, etc.) without first asking ourselves some far more basic questions. *What does it mean to be human? What defines me as a human being? What is the purpose of living?*

● Turn to page 2



BALINESE SUPERMODEL
Secret to real happiness

Indonesia's first supermodel felt empty until something in Paris changed her life

BY CAITLIN CHODAKOWSKY

Tracy Trinita won her first international modelling competition at age 15 in 1995, giving her the greenlight to move from her small village in Bali to pursue a career in the world's fashion capital.

"I thought that if I had more money I would be happier, so I pursued modelling for happiness, leaving my friends and family behind to travel to New York," Tracy explains.

Following the lure of wealth and glamour portrayed in the modelling industry, Tracy writes on her blog that "life was full of surprises".

"Who would have ever thought

that a little girl who grew up in Bali would end up living in some of the greatest cities across the globe: New York, Paris, Milan, Spain, Sydney, Sao Paulo, Rio De Janeiro, Hong Kong, Manila, Los Angeles, Miami, and many more," Tracy explains.

She fell in love with the world of fashion and appeared regularly in New York and Paris fashion week for prestigious labels such as Yves Saint Laurent, Jean Paul Gaultier and Kenzo.

"When I went to meet Mr. Jean Paul Gaultier at his work shop in Paris for a fitting, I was in awe of this genius man's workshop," she says.

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JARRYD HAYNE'S HIGHER PURPOSE

Aussie rugby league super star on incredible NFL journey

BY DARRYL BUDGE

A near-miss with a bullet was the catalyst for Jarryd Hayne's transformation from being in the wrong crowd to an international sports star who has played for the San Francisco 49ers.

The former NRL star all-rounder was out drinking with three Parramatta Eels teammates in 2008 when one got into a scuffle with a group of bikies at Kings Cross in Sydney.

Later in the night Jarryd recalls he and his friends saw these men again and they became upset. As Jarryd and his friends fled, one bkie fired a bullet mere metres from him.

"For probably the next year I had sleepless nights, waking up at 11 o'clock running out of the house... [and thinking] 'They're coming for me'. I was a marked man, I was told," Jarryd shared in a 2011 radio interview on LightFM.

In fear for his life, Jarryd resolved, "I am a rugby player – I'm not a bkie, a gangster, a person who should be mucking around with guns."

That tumultuous year he says "was a God-glorifying year and something that changed my life. It made me who I am."

Honouring God is the new focus of

Jarryd's life, and the core reason he gives for overcoming the formidable odds of transferring his rugby league skills to NFL success in the USA.

"For me I've always put God first in this journey," Jarryd told Channel 9 TV in September.

"I know that without Him there would be nothing... no hope," he said. Without the spiritual aspect, he added, "it just doesn't make sense."

For 20 years of his life Jarryd was agnostic about God until he experienced a living connection with God through the Fijian team at the 2008 Rugby League World Cup.

During the team training and month-long tournament, he recalls being impressed how the team and chaplain prayed twice a day, shared Bible verses and sang hymns during half-time.

"The things they were saying [to encourage each other] were really good, pure and authentic," Jarryd remembers.

"There was just something about this team... confident, passionate and knows how to win. We all just fed off each other."

After their underdog team defeated France, Jarryd began to wonder, "Who is this God fella? What else can this bloke do? This person they're talking about is alive, real

and authentic. I want to know more."

When he saw and felt things he had never felt before, Jarryd says he felt so fulfilled by God that he wanted to give the Lord Jesus Christ control of his life.

"You are going to be that fulfilled (by God)", he says "that you will understand who He is", that is, to know and receive His goodness and perfection.

With Jesus in control his life, his performances in 2009 led to the highest accolades, the Dally M. Medal and International Player of the Year.

In 2013, TV presenter Ernie Dingo asked Jarryd what his religion means to him on the Pacific Sport 360 show.

Jarryd replied, "For me, relationship with God is everything. Religion is something you have to do, relationship is something that you want to do.

"When you're in a relationship with someone you're going to want to be in connection with them, you're going to want to be with them and show them love and show them time."

In another interview Jarryd explains that Jesus represents "The ultimate sacrifice... He gave His life for us. Shed his blood for us [to pay for our sins]."

"His sole purpose was to show love and make everyone understand that there is something bigger and better and greater," he adds, referring to having an intimate relationship with God.

The alternative according to Jarryd is to "be curled up into this life and lifestyle that we have now."

Earlier in 2015 Jarryd explained to the world's press that being a Christian is not about being flawless, but about submitting to the Holy Spirit's supernatural transformation.

"I'm the worst Christian I know," Hayne said at a March media conference confirming the San Francisco 49ers had secured him as an undrafted free agent.

"I'm not perfect. I struggle with sin and temptation all the time. For me, they are the key areas where I want to improve as well. They're part of that journey now. It's not just about playing in the NFL.

"Christ comes before everything. That is why, when you make those



decisions, if you don't have Him to lean on or focus on, there's going to be a lot of dark days over there. It won't last. I won't last."

Even in the dark times and mistakes of his past, Jarryd believes God

"works for the good of those who love Him" (Romans chapter 8, verse 28).

"For sure I regret my past, but if I didn't go through it I wouldn't be able to glorify God's name now the way I do," he concludes assuredly.

CHRISTMAS DEFINES US

● From page 1

If you doubt the relevance of these big questions, I assure you that all of us have answers to them whether intentional, assumed, or ingrained in us by our social context. And whatever answers we have will affect the way we view life and the way we behave.

So what has this got to do with Christmas? You may be familiar with the Christmas story of Christ Jesus born to the virgin Mary and her husband Joseph, but perhaps you have not realised that this story makes claims concerning the biggest questions of human life.

Cosmic Implications: The Christmas narrative makes amazing claims about ultimate reality: God exists, He can be known, and He has already made Himself known through Jesus Christ. If these claims are true, then cosmic implications of a grand scale will logically follow.

In the delightful story of baby Jesus we're really talking about the most powerful, perfectly good, and inconceivably great being coming down to earth as a man to interact with mankind on an intimate level.

Christ came for a purpose, which was to redeem mankind from the effects of their rebellion against Himself, which the Bible calls sin. His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross in the place of mankind brought peace and reconciliation between God and man. Christ's sacrifice on the cross followed by His bodily resurrection marked the defeat of sin and death (the ultimate effect of sin), a status which is yet to be fully realised.

Personal Implications: What we believe about God shapes everything else that we believe to be true and the way we act.

For example, our beliefs concerning God dictate our perceptions of truth, morality, and purpose. Our perceptions of truth, morality, and purpose shape our values and priorities, which then ultimately influences our behaviour.

The Christmas story tells us who we are as human beings. Right and wrong, good and evil exist objectively (beyond mere personal or social preference) and humanity has failed and continues to fail to uphold what is right. We were made in the image of the perfectly good God and chose to reject Him. We are creatures who require saving, and so a Saviour was born to rescue us – Jesus Christ.

In union with Jesus by faith, we are loved, forgiven, accepted, and freed. He takes our penalty and guilt, we are made right in His sight and we enjoy everlasting life with God. This is how we perceive ourselves as Christians and forms an element of our worldview. (Perhaps more accurately, it's the way God perceives His children which is independent of our own feelings and perceptions). Inevitably, our perceptions of who we are, our identities, affect our attitudes and our everyday decisions and actions.

Ask the Important Questions

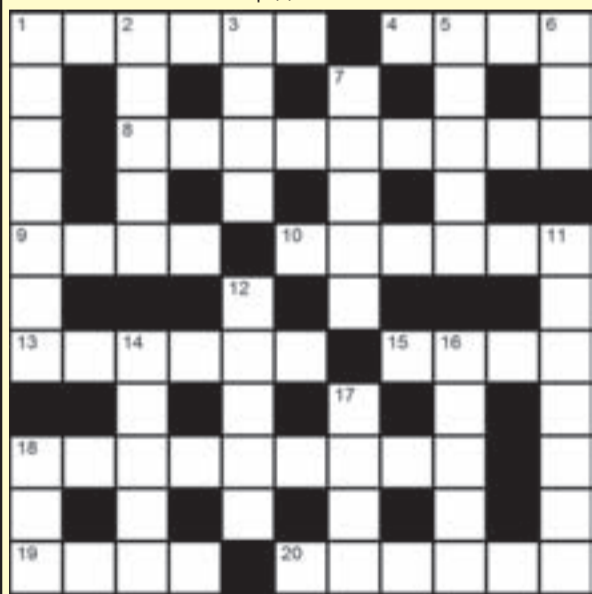
As Christmas approaches with all its lights and attractions remember that the story of the birth of Jesus is not just a story because it makes claims concerning ultimate reality. In doing so, implications emerge that range from the cosmic level to the personal level of everyday life.

Perhaps a good Christmas present to receive would be the ability to ask the right questions about Christmas – the most important questions.

Is Christmas a celebration of a truth that holds infinite importance, or is the birth of Jesus of no importance at all?

Crossword

- | | | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| ACROSS | 9 Night fliers (4) | 18 Fossil fuel (9) | DOWN |
| 1 Modify (6) | 10 Mediterranean capital (6) | 19 Lunar effect (4) | 1 Marine rock-clinger (7) |
| 4 Warty hopper (4) | 13 Passes (6) | 20 Playground equipment (6) | 2 Precious stone (5) |
| 8 Widely known (4-5) | 15 Zap (4) | | 3 Ice melter (4) |
| | | | 5 Stink (5) |
| | | | 6 Grayish brown (3) |
| | | | 7 Went downhill (5) |
| | | | 11 Mouth mass (7) |
| | | | 12 Posture problem (5) |
| | | | 14 Played on stage (5) |
| | | | 16 Not bold (5) |
| | | | 17 Lockup (4) |
| | | | 18 House animal (3) |



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

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

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OUTLAW'S LONELY UNDERBELLY

Young Justin Gardner rubbed shoulders with those who later formed Melbourne's underground gangs

BY JOANNA DELALANDE

After years of crime and violence, 22-year-old Justin Gardner hit rock bottom one night as he plotted murder and contemplated suicide.

"At that point in my life I had broken every promise I had ever made, I had burned every bridge, and I really didn't see any way forward for any kind of success, any peace, anything at all," Justin says.

In the opening chapter of his book *Crime-son*, Justin talks almost exclusively of his relationship with his father, whom he describes as the hardest man he has ever met.

He recalls how his father would force him into the outdoor pool on freezing winter mornings and make him do lap after lap, and if Justin did not perform well enough he would be deprived of his dad's love.

He also describes nights where his alcoholic dad "flipped out" and hit him, his mother, and his sisters.

"Some nights I thought dad would kill someone in a violent rage," Justin writes.

A lack of family love, a poor family

life, and a bad relationship with the abusive children in his neighbourhood are all factors that contributed to Justin doing and dealing drugs from age 12.

He was out of school and out of home at age 14, befriending some of the people later portrayed in the Melbourne Underbelly TV series.

Yet despite a rough start, Justin's life turned around one fateful night at age 22 when, feeling at his lowest, he renounced his plan for murder and instead cried out to God.

"I called out to Him that night in that room," he remembers. "I said, 'I've done it long enough my way, I'll do it your way if you just come into my life, take over my life and forgive me of [what I have done wrong].'"

At that moment Justin began a relationship with a heavenly Father who, unlike his earthly father, loved and accepted him unconditionally.

Following his decision, Justin moved away from the culture of drugs and violence he had grown up in and started reconnecting with his family and working on his relationship with Jesus.

"I was like a baby again. I couldn't

"It was like my childhood that I had been robbed of was starting to be restored"



"We're all fighting something," says Justin Gardner, pictured with wife Kim and their sons Oskar and Davis

read properly so my mum gave me my sister's picture Bible and I just began reading that, and she would be praying for me like a child. It was like my childhood that I had been robbed of was starting to be restored."

He also began attending the church, where he would later become senior pastor.

"Every time a service was on, I was there," Justin says. "I still looked like a drug dealer; I had big gold chains, I

wore a cap and sunglasses in church from start to finish... And I was crying every service."

He then volunteered at the church serving coffees and as he learned to live his life for others rather than for himself a passion for ministry sparked inside him.

"My mess, God turned into a message," Justin says. "And if He can do it for me, He can do it for anyone."

"So whenever I meet anyone,

whether I'm talking to a millionaire, someone in prison, or someone who is homeless, I know that everyone is fighting something. That makes me feel like I am on the same path as them because we're all fighting something; only I've got a God who helps me win."

Through his ministry, Justin wants to let people know that God is real, that He loves them, that they are one of a kind, and that: "Long before they ever had a problem, He already created a solution in Him," referring to Jesus sacrifice for us on the cross.

Justin is a living, walking example of what the Bible talks about in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 17 where it says anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person; the old life is gone, a new life has begun. And so all of us can be.

Justin Gardner is the senior pastor of a church in Hoppers Crossing, Victoria, which runs a local drug and alcohol rehab.

Supermodel's secret to real happiness

• From to page 1

"It was sooo messy and yet there were plenty of brilliant designs and ideas scattered around in that huge room. I wondered if I could ever be a designer, just like him."

Yet despite all her success, Tracy says she could not escape an unsettling feeling of emptiness inside.

Her friends suggested drugs and partying would make her feel better but this advice only scared her and left her seeking alternatives.

Tracy recalls noticing that people who had faith in God seemed happier and more content in life but, having been brought up surrounded by many different religious faiths, she felt confused as to which God was real.

It was at this point she remembers crying out to God, asking Him to reveal Himself to her.

Soon after, Tracy travelled to Paris for a modelling job where she met a girl who invited her to church.

It was here Tracy says, "God bridged the heart and the mind and truly comforted my heart; I sensed love like nothing I have ever felt before."

She had many questions for her friend about Jesus, asking, "how is it possible that what Jesus has done on the cross centuries ago is still relevant for me today?"

Her friend explained to her that



"I was glamorous on the outside... [but I had] poverty of the soul on the inside"

Jesus' sacrifice was "sufficient for the whole world" – for all who believe in Him and accept Him as their Lord and Saviour.

"I did not realise how much God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, the Lord Jesus, the only sinless person who ever walked on earth," Tracy later elaborated in her blog, drawing from John 3, verse 16.

"He had to suffer on the cross ... He was paying for all our sins ... The worst and the best trade ever, we give our worst to Him, all of our sins, while He gave His best to us – His righteousness – so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Looking back on her first encounter with God at the church service with her friend, Tracy recalls think-

ing, "If Jesus was not real, then how could I have felt so amazingly loved? I know fake happiness – that is what the world of modelling relies on – and this happiness was true. It was out of my power and God changed me."

Since accepting Jesus' free gift of forgiveness and making Him Lord and Saviour of her life in 2002, Tracy says she is full of joy.

"I was lost, a dead girl walking in my own land without purpose or meaning, glamorous on the outside and poverty of the soul on the inside," she explains.

"I'm forever grateful to the Living God for calling me and welcoming me as part of the family of His Heavenly Kingdom. I am now walking in the land full of purpose and meaning. I can constantly look up to God in good

times as well as in bad times."

Tracy continued to work in the fashion industry for a while but had a new outlook on her work, including the realisation that "other models were not the enemy or a threat, but just people like me doing a job".

Sometimes other models mocked her for choosing not to do certain fashion shoots because of her faith, but Tracy adds: "The things they made fun of were the very things that they were attracted to and questioned me about; they were intrigued by my faith and how I was different."

After seeing another friend of hers become a Christian, Tracy says a passion grew in her to share her story with others.

She soon left her modelling career to take up a scholarship to study Christian apologetics and theology at Oxford University.

Since completing her postgraduate studies, Tracy has worked as a pastor in Jakarta and international itinerant speaker for Ravi Zacharias Ministries, focusing on bringing a message of hope and faith to the fashion, arts, media and entertainment industries.

"You don't have to be smart, but trust God and let the [Holy] Spirit guide you. It is in Christ's power, not our own, that people find God because He is the one that calls people," she concludes.

nudge WITH KARL FAASE

Who is this guy?

Have you ever thought you knew someone really well, then an unusual event makes you wonder?

Jesus had 12 mates who thought they knew him well. One day on boat trip, a storm blew up and they thought they were going to drown. Jesus was asleep – which seems odd in a storm. They panic, wake Jesus up, and amazingly Jesus calms the storm. His gobsmacked mates asked themselves, 'Who is this man?'

You may think you know Jesus. You've heard some stories, read a book or two, seen a movie and think you have Him worked out. Yet can I challenge you that there is so much more to know.

Look into Jesus, find out more about His life and His claims. You may end up just like His mates and say "Who is this guy?" It could be the start of a wonderful road of discovery.

For more Daily Nudge by Karl Faase, see Nudge.org.au

STAR WARS: ANYONE OUT THERE?

GARY BATES, author of the Amazon top 50 selling book "Alien Intrusion: UFOs and the evolution connection," explores the roots of alien stories that capture our imagination

BLOCKBUSTER HIT SERIES such as *Men in Black*, *The Transformers* and the new *Star Wars* movie release feed our culture's fascination with the idea of extra-terrestrial beings, leaving some to ponder if there is any truth in the idea. This has become more of an issue in the light of the flow of photos coming from the Mars probe indicating water flowing on the red planet.

However, despite over sixty years of official, government-led investigations, the conclusions are that no extra-terrestrial crafts are actually visiting the earth. Yet, the 'UFO phenomenon' shows no sign of abating. A CNN/*Time Magazine* poll in 1997, found, among other things that:

- 80% believe that the government is hiding the existence of extraterrestrial life forms
- 64% believe aliens have contacted humans
- 50% believe that aliens have abducted humans
- 75% believe that a UFO crashed near Roswell

"UFOs change shape, merge into other UFOs and travel at speeds that defy the known laws of physics"

There is evidence to suggest that what are called 'UFOs' have been seen throughout the world's history. Many ancient peoples, for example, including the Romans and Greeks, spoke of flying shields.

However, the very best of research conducted by leading experts suggests that they do not manifest as real tangible physical crafts. On many occasions they have disappeared before the eyes of many reputable witnesses such as fighter or commercial airline pilots. Some have been seen to change shape, merge into other UFOs and travel at incredible speeds that defy the known laws of physics. One of the most famous secular researchers in this area, John Keel wrote:

*"The UFOs do not seem to exist as tangible, manufactured objects. They do not conform to the natural laws of lights in the sky."*¹

The foundation for belief in life on other planets is the belief in evolution. That is, if there was a big bang billions of years ago, life could have evolved elsewhere in the universe millions of years in advance of humans. In theory they would

be technologically advanced and could build faster-than-light spaceships, visit the earth and stealthily abduct people in the middle of the night. However, many scientists simply do not believe that the universe and the complexity of life we see on the earth is just a giant cosmic accident. As such, this concept of older and more technologically advanced aliens would be undermined.

The enormous popularity of science fiction movies, TV shows and books is creating a blur between fiction and the limitations of real science. This is not a matter of some advanced form of technology as some people think. Never once has a UFO been seen to enter our atmosphere from outside of the earth – they just suddenly appear. And it is a science fact that nothing physical can travel faster than the speed of light within our physical universe. This means it would take alien craft millions of years to reach the earth. Alleged abduction experiences and many UFO sightings violate the well-known laws of physics that govern our universe, which is simply a physical impossibility.

INTERDIMENSIONAL BEINGS?

Most serious UFO researchers now believe that these experiences emanate from some interdimensional realm. Dr J. Allen Hynek was a former government researcher into UFOs. Steven Spielberg's movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* was based, in part, on Hynek's work. Hynek wrote:

*"The conclusion I've come to after all these years is that ... It has paranormal aspects..."*²

And, *"[The extraterrestrial] theory runs up against a very big difficulty, namely, that we are seeing too many UFOs. The earth is only a spot of dust in the universe. Why should it be honored with so many visits?"*³

Interestingly, one of the world's oldest books – the Bible – speaks of such a realm and it records visitors from a spiritual realm who also interacted with humans with the sole purpose of deceiving them. It describes the earth as being the focus of a great battle between good and bad spiritual forces.

Coupled with this, is the circumstantial evidence of the contactees – people from differing countries and backgrounds – all seem to share a very common experience. The messages they are receiving from these so-called 'aliens' are aimed at rewriting the Bible's history. For example, many of them claim that they are the creators of life on earth via the process of evolution, in contrast to the biblical claim that a supernatural God created everything. Hynek's contemporary, Dr Jaques Vallee (who was also featured in Spielberg's movie) said:

"I am suggesting that what takes place through close encounters with UFOs is control of human beliefs, control of the relationship between

*our consciousness and physical reality, that this control has been in force throughout history and that it is of secondary importance that it should now assume the form of sightings of space visitors."*⁴

It is not logical to consider that advanced extraterrestrials are traveling millions of light years across the universe just to recondition our spiritual beliefs. As John Keel also wrote:

*"The thousands of contacts with the entities indicate that they are liars and put-on artists. The UFO manifestations seem to be, by and large, merely minor variations of the age-old demonological phenomenon."*¹

Uncomfortable as we may be with the thought of increasing contact

by the spiritual enemies of a Creator God, the evidence suggests it is happening. These visiting entities certainly seem to believe! And popular beliefs about evolution, extraterrestrial life and the possibility of interstellar space travel have made even the average person in the street susceptible to such deceptions and possibly contacts, and also a reason why such alleged contacts are on the increase.

1. John Keel, *Operation Trojan Horse* (Lilburn, GA: Illuminet Press, 1996), p. 266.
2. J. Allen Hynek, *Fate*, June 1976.
3. Hynek, *Lumieres dans la Nuit*, No. 168, October 1977.
4. Story, *The Mammoth Encyclopedia of Extraterrestrial Encounters*, in an article by Jacques Vallée, p. 753–754.



Create new festive traditions

What do you and your family do every year for Christmas?

Here are 10 creative ideas you might consider adding to your special festive traditions.

- 1 Avoid the crowds and the heat by heading down to the beach early on Christmas day to watch the sunrise and have breakfast together.
- 2 Rather than buying expensive gifts for everyone, consider introducing a "Chinese Auction". Each person buys and wraps three \$10 gifts. Gifts are put in the middle and each person picks out three in the pile to unwrap as well as three numbers drawn from a hat. Each person advertises their revealed gifts to the group then the drawn numbers determine the order of people as each takes turns swapping gifts. Provides lots of fun and laughs!
- 3 Have a baking day or craft day where everyone gets together to make cookies, Christmas treats and decorations. Consider taking some of the treats over to neighbours and those who could use some extra love!
- 4 Make a flask of hot chocolate or cool sweet tea and take a night drive around to see the Christmas lights.
- 5 Go camping and sing Christmas carols around a campfire.
- 6 Start a Christmas or New Year Diary. Write a short summary of the year, what you are planning to do for Christmas and your hopes for the New Year.
- 7 The night before Christmas, write a letter to each of your little children telling them what your favourite memories of them for the year are and what you love about them. Make this into a book with photos when they are older and present it to them when they turn 18 or 21.
- 8 Take your children to the shops and let them buy a small present with their money for another child in need and put it under the big Christmas tree at the shops.
- 9 Let your children dress as nativity characters for a Christmas church service.
- 10 The first night after decorating your Christmas tree, have the whole family sleep around it with the magic of falling asleep with the Christmas tree lights on.

THE BABY WHO DOESN'T FIT

BY ALAN BAILEY

THE wonder we feel when looking at a newborn baby is perhaps the potential of its life. All being well, there stretches before this little bundle decades of living out a unique existence.

In older times, relatives would make their suggestions about his or her career. Long fingers meant a pianist, for example. Looking at his first-born, poet C J Dennis wrote

in *The Songs of a Sentimental Bloke*, "I think we orta make him something great, A bookie or a champion heavyweight, A callin' that will give him room to spread, A fool can see he's got a clever head."

About 2000 years ago, an old man called Simeon held a baby boy in his arms, saying that the child would have a far-reaching influence on his nation and meet with significant opposition. How true his words would prove to be! The baby was Jesus.

An array of opinions

In the district in which He grew up, Jesus caused a stir by the claims He made about Himself. But the crowds concluded "He's just the son of a carpenter." Just one of us. Yet His powerful words were accompanied by powerful deeds – healing and even raising the dead. Extraordinary!

Then others said that He must be a deceiver, a magician fooling the crowds with clever stunts. But how far out was that idea! He undoubtedly exercised supernatural powers. Lives were blessed, and people were forever grateful. A deceiver does not change the lives of others for the better, turning thieves and liars into upright citizens.

So some leaders came up with the accusation that He was in league with the devil! Yet all that Jesus did was good. He challenged His critics to point out sin in His life and they couldn't. A sinless man doing all He did to the glory of God doesn't fit their accusation. The lengths people will go to avoid the truth!

Another opinion was that He was simply deluded or self-deceived. Well, that does not match with the wisdom He showed in all He did and said. Never did He lose an argument, never was He embarrassed, never caught out. On the other hand, He was always loving, understanding of others, willing to suffer and die in the place of sinners.

No man-made category fits

The commentators then and now try to place Jesus in a category other than the correct one. He simply doesn't fit whatever they come up with. His own claims stand firm. He said He was one with the Father (John 10:30), that He was Saviour of the world (John 14:6), and the Judge of all mankind (John 5:22). Great claims indeed! But there He fits, and His death and resurrection substantiate the truth of it all.

So, this Christmas, give Jesus the honour He truly deserves.





What is the meaning of Christmas and the Virgin Birth?



The true meaning of Christmas is love. "For 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. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him." (John 3:16-17).

The true meaning of Christmas is the celebration of this incredible act of love that God became a human being in the Person of Jesus Christ.

As is written in Philippians chapter 2, Jesus took "the very nature of a servant" and humbled Himself by adding human attributes to His divine nature. He took on the frailty of a human body and chose to lay aside the independent exercise of His divine power, submitting perfectly to His Father's will for the duration of His earthly life and ministry.

Why did God do such a thing? Because He loves us and we needed a Saviour!

Why does God love us so much? "God is love" says 1 John 4:8, so His nature is perfect love.

Why do we celebrate Christmas each year? Out of gratitude for what God did for us, we remember His birth by giving each other gifts, worshipping Him, and being especially conscious of the poor and less fortunate.

The true meaning of Christmas is love and God revealed His love us by providing a way – the only Way – for us to spend eternity with Him.

He gave His only Son to take our punishment for our sins. He paid the price in full, and we are free from condemnation when we accept that free gift of love. "But God demonstrated His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Why did Jesus have to be born of a virgin? Scripture teaches that Jesus was fully human, with a physical body like ours. This He received from Mary (Luke 1:30,35). At the same time, Jesus was fully God, with an eternal, sinless nature (John 1:14; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:14-17.) If He was not born sinless then Jesus was in no position to save anyone from the consequences of their sin.

The Virgin Birth circumvented the transmission of the sin nature and allowed the eternal God to become a perfect man and thus be able to pay in full the price for our sin so that we can be declared not guilty before a holy God. Christmas was all about giving us the greatest gift in this life- eternal life.

Courtesy www.gotquestions.org

No fear in this love

Surrounded by many who seemed to know who they were, Stephanie Budge admits that a firm idea of her self-worth and identity seemed out of her grasp.

"I can honestly say I had an identity crisis despite growing up in a Christian family, church and school," Stephanie shares.

"In frustration I began searching for an identity in other people, movies, media and things around me. I tried to imitate what I saw and with my guard down, I accepted anything and everything I thought looked good."

Despite committing her life to Jesus at a young age, and publicly declaring her faith in the Jordan River where Jesus Himself was baptised, she says, "I still struggled with my self-worth".

"All through my life I thought that if I turn my back on God, He will turn His back on me – and I will no longer be His child," she explains.

"I would also worry that God is watching my every move, ready to pounce and punish me when I make a mistake or do something wrong, so in fear I pursued self-righteousness."

After years of striving to be a good person, to do good things, to please people and hoping to receive God's favour, Stephanie finally came to the end of herself.

Through a heart squashed by fear and anxiety Stephanie cried out to God for help. That help came through the Bible and the gentle guidance of Stephanie's husband-to-be in 2013.

She read, "I (Jesus) give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me is greater than all, and



Stephanie wondered, "If I make mistakes, will I be abandoned?"

no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand" (John 10, verses 28-29).

Then turning to Romans 8, verse 38, Stephanie read, "Neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

"As I read these verses they began filling my heart with new truth I had not seen before," she says.

All the fear Stephanie felt of God rejecting her, if she stumbled at all, left. "A peace and joy filled me with the new knowledge that there is nothing I can do to earn God's love. Rather than my efforts, my eternal security is rooted in God's love for me."

Finally, she took comfort that just as God promised to never reject His people Israel, He would never reject her either.

"I took you from the ends of the

earth, from its farthest corners I called you," the prophet Isaiah writes in chapter 41. "I said, 'You are my servant; I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.'"

Stephanie adds, "God loves me unconditionally so much that He sent His one and only Son Jesus to die on the cross in my place and there He forgave all my sin past present and future. And the best part is that He rose again and defeated even death itself and now offers me eternal life and a personal relationship with Himself. This means that once I genuinely become a child of God, I will always be a child of God!"

Stephanie has now rooted her identity in Jesus Christ, the One who loves her unconditionally and who is the same yesterday, today and forever. •

Lonely at Christmas?

BY CAITLIN CHODAKOWSKY

IN MY EXPERIENCE, Christmas and New Years are the worst times of year to be lonely. When I was seven, my family and I immigrated to Australia and for years I longed to celebrate Christmas with my relatives back in South Africa.

After what I considered a few lonely Christmas', my mum did the most extraordinary thing: she started inviting other people who were lonely at Christmas around for a meal.

Suddenly I realised that I was unusually blessed to be in a loving close-knit family and there were many who were lonelier than me, people who struggled through the festive season with a heavy heart over the death of a loved one or a broken relationship, and people who had no family or friends at all.

This thought reminded me of a vivid story Jesus told about a wedding feast, which in that day was a joyful Christmas-like celebration that lasted up to a week.

According to Matthew chapter 22, Jesus talked about a king who was preparing the wedding feast for his son but the invited family and friends all made excuses as to why they could

not attend.

In response, the king decided to open up the invite to whoever was willing to come and his servants went out onto the streets and invited people "both bad and good" to attend as guests.

The people who accepted the king's invitation prepared themselves and respectfully dressed in wedding attire to celebrate the big

occasion.

However, one man just came as he was, not bothering to dress for the occasion. The king was insulted and threw him out of the party into the darkness.

Jesus told many parables like this one to explain what the Kingdom of God is like.

This parable illustrated the fact that one day there will be a massive banquet of celebration in Heaven. God first invited Israel, His chosen people, and some of them rejected Him as their King. Through Jesus Christ, God then opened up the doors of heaven to whoever would be willing to come. Jesus said, "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved" (John 10:9). In the story's conclusion Jesus warns that those who do not face God on His terms,

believing they can reject His invite or rock up without preparing themselves respectfully and appropriately, will be cast out into the darkness.

Whether this year will be a lonely Christmas for you or one filled with big family festivities, you need to consider whether you have accepted heaven's invitation and are prepared for the biggest banquet you could ever attend. In John chapter 1 verse 11 to 12 it says, "[God] came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God."

The good news is that Christmas is about God's rescue mission from the ravages of sin and death. It is God's gift and invite to eternal life. The key thing is that such a gift has to be accepted, just like an ordinary Christmas gift or invite. As we do that by faith, we are adopted into God's huge family and receive the eternal blessings and God's wonderful forgiveness that comes with it.

The invitation is not based on who you are, good or bad, but on God's kindness towards us. I'm not sure about you, but when I leave this life, I look forward to the biggest family banquet celebration ever and no more lonely Christmases! •





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Christmas BBQ ignited new beginning

A family gathering on Christmas Eve prompted Hadley to wonder what Christmas really meant

Hadley Toweel's tough life began with bullying at school, where he decided to overcome his shyness by turning to alcohol, starting at the age of 14.

"I sometimes had blackouts as a result of the drinking. My school work deteriorated and I failed three years of high school," he says.

Feeling hopeless, Hadley turned to minor crime and tried to forget his troubles with alcohol and smoking cigarettes because he saw others doing it.

The trouble was, he became aggressive when drunk and often got into fights to the point that one brawl

almost ended his life.

Having to repeat multiple grades at school, Hadley joined the South African Air Force in 1977 at age 20.

Then, a succession of events, all in one year, changed his life, beginning with a bomb explosion at the Air Force Headquarters in Pretoria, South Africa, that killed 19 and injured 200.

Hadley narrowly escaped serious injury as glass and shrapnel cut into his legs.

"After that I somehow knew that this was the last time that God would save my life," Hadley recalls. "I even stopped smoking dope for a while."

A short time later, Hadley began

reading a curious book on the occult, which contained many contradictions.

"It clearly stated that all religions were the same and that anyone could practise occultism," he recalls. "But later in the same book I found that the only people who struggled to astral travel were Christians. It said that the only way to overcome this 'blockage' was to stop attending a Christian church, and to stop praying in the name of Jesus."

Out of curiosity as to why this could be, Hadley began reading Christian books to learn more about the God of the Bible.

"I eventually became intellectually convinced that Jesus Christ was the only way to God," he says.

In October of that year, he then prayed with Bible in hand, asking desperately for God's help.

"I asked God to give me a wife and a family who would love me," he explains, having been through a divorce already. "I said to God that if He did this for me, I would become a Christian and follow Him."

Then Hadley opened the Bible randomly and he was challenged as he read from Matthew chapter 6, verse 33 which says, "Seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well".

"I believed that God had spoken this verse to me, but I was also convinced that I couldn't live without a woman. So I left it there," he says.

Two months later, on Christmas Eve, Hadley was at a family barbecue when he began thinking about the meaning of Christmas.

"That day being the time when Christians remember the birth of their Lord Jesus Christ, I started thinking about my life and the people's lives that I had messed up through my years as a juvenile delinquent," he recalls.

"For the first time it dawned on me just how completely rebellious against God I had been. So, I told Jesus that I was sorry for the mess-up I had made of my life and for all the people I had hurt. I told Jesus that I wanted to give Him a birthday gift ... I wanted to give Him my life. That night God saved me and delivered me from the things that had a grip on my life."

"As trusted in Jesus Christ for forgiveness of my sins, I knew that I had to forgive my former wife for the things she had done, but I really battled with that. After praying for three days, I did not feel any bitterness and told her what Jesus had done for me, but she remains bound in alcoholism by events in her childhood."

Hadley says there have been incredible changes in his life as God took control.

"Before I became a Christian I had such a foul mouth that my friends would ask me to curse less. Now, suddenly, I had no desire for cursing, alcohol or drugs. I was no longer obsessed with women. I had an insatiable desire to read the Bible and I read it cover to cover in a few months. I also burnt all my books on the occult."

With his priorities finally in order, Hadley says joyfully: "I asked God where my wife was, and the next day



I met Lynette, who would become my wife."

With his earlier two children, Hadley and Lynette now have five children. He has since become an international award-winning photographer and photographed many high profile South Africans including Nelson Mandela.

Now he also volunteers as a chaplain at a nearby prison, looking to share the joy of Jesus with others.

As he recalls Jesus' words about seeking after God's Kingdom, Hadley strongly believes that God has blessed him greatly because of his commitment to putting God first in his life.

Believe it or not

BY CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL, CREATION.COM

DNA, bone cells in T-Rex bones!

SINCE the late 1990s, Dr Mary Schweitzer from Montana, an evolutionist herself, has been rocking the evolutionary/uniformitarian world with discoveries of soft tissue in dinosaur bones (see creation.com/schweit). And late in 2012, she and her team also found bone cells (osteocytes), proteins such as actin and tubulin, and DNA. None of these should be able to survive the supposed 65 million years since dinosaur extinction.



T-rex at Universal Studios "Jurassic Park" (By Flickr user scottkinmartin, CC BY 2.0)

DNA is especially problematic.

Most people think DNA is very stable, but in reality, about a **million** DNA letters are damaged in **each** of your cells **every** day. We would soon be a mutated mess without special repair enzymes (creation.com/dna-repair). Researchers have also measured how long DNA could survive even protected by bone. They show that even at below freezing -5°C (23°F), DNA would be totally disintegrated after 6.83 million years—only about a tenth of the assumed dinosaur evolutionary age. Yet Schweitzer's team found DNA intact enough to form a double helix.

Could this be contamination from bacteria? No: the DNA was found right where we would expect it to be found in a dino cell. Further, Schweitzer's team detected *histones*. These are little protein balls upon which DNA is wound in eukaryotes (organisms with cell nuclei) like dinosaurs and man, not in bacteria.

- For more about this powerful refutation of millions-of-years dogma, see creation.com/dna-dna.
- Molecular analyses of dinosaur osteocytes support the presence of endogenous molecules, *Bone*, 17 October 2012.
- The half-life of DNA in bone: measuring decay kinetics in 158 dated fossils, *Proc. Royal Society B* 279(1748):4724-4733, 7 December 2012.

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Tips for small business

ASKING "WHY" WILL BOOST YOUR BUSINESS OR ORGANISATION

Many entrepreneurs start out their business having decided, "What product?" and "What way do we promote it?" Unfortunately, this is in part why so many small businesses fail, because there is a third and more crucial question: "Why does the business serve its customers?"



Clients do not buy into what product the business sells or the way it does it. Their interest is more in why the business is servicing them and whether it meets their needs.

When the "why" is established, the founder can create a business that externally promotes and develops employees, peers, suppliers, customers and even family members that are in alignment with the business itself.

Clarity in 'who' the business is means you know where the business needs to head, and will attract the right people who want to head in the same direction.

SOME IMPORTANT QUESTIONS:

Why do you do what you do?

Why is it important to those you serve?

Why does the existence of your organisation matter?

These are simple and yet difficult questions that will lead to a simple vision statement. This is a sentence describing the business' desired end-state, the clear and inspirational long-term desired change resulting from an organization or program's work.

By long-term, business experts say it should be so aspirational that it would be impossible for the vision to be completely fulfilled. It can be between three and 30 words long, and the average is 15. A two to six word summary "tagline" will help everyone remember it. Take a look at these examples:

Walmart USA has 11,000 stores in 28 countries and employs over a million people in the USA alone. Their purpose is help people "to save money so they can live better", and summarised as "Save money, live better".

Luxury car maker BMW AG states their purpose is "to enable people to experience the joy of driving", and summarised as "Sheer driving pleasure".

Electronics manufacturer LG says their vision is to "make our customers' lives better, easier and happier through increased functionality and fun." Their tagline is "Life's Good".

A vision or purpose that is plain to those impacted by the business are far more likely to either want to work for the business or support it because it delivers what they need.

For inspiration from other companies, check out MissionStatements.com. For taglines, check out www.NameDevelopment.com/list-of-taglines.html.

TRUCKIE'S BRUSH WITH DEATH

Singing carols led to former small-time criminal's survival

Experienced truck driver Jason Whittaker might have regretted a snap decision to chase after his 30-tonne road train in an unloading shed, except for the many miracles that occurred that day in 2011. "This accident totally changed my priorities and my direction in life," Jason declares.

As he raced to the cab, the prime mover side-swiped him against the shed's one-metre high concrete wall. He was spun and crushed on the spot, breaking bones in his pelvis and hips and spine, and crushing nerves in his hand, lower spine and foot.

In the next hour, alone and pinned to the wall, the pain became overwhelming and his chest swelled, restricting his breathing.

Believing death was near, Jason began to pray: "God, I'm in absolute agony, can you call me home now? Otherwise, let someone in the control room notice the door has been activated."

Five minutes later prayer a control room worker arrived and Jason was soon helicoptered to hospital. His co-worker later said that an unexplainable prompting to go to the control room came over him.

Jason admits he questioned why God did not send someone to rescue him straight away, but now he realises that one hour delay brought co-workers and fellow patients to express interest in the God who saved him.

"My boss' wife has told me that a few co-workers were asking, 'Who is Jason's God?' They know there's no way I should be alive.

"As I look back, I really believe the Lord knows intimately what is going to happen with us. He wouldn't have let my accident happen if it wouldn't show how great and loving He is."

Now four years later, the pain of

Jason's injuries keeps him from driving trucks and has instead steered him into community service, motivated by his Christian faith.

He is completing a ministry internship at his local church, and he facilitates free financial counselling courses as part of the community non-profit Christians Against Poverty.

"I run these courses to empower people to manage their money regardless of their financial situation, and help alleviate the stress of being in debt," Jason shares.

"Next year I intend to teach a money budgeting system to teens in the local

school. I believe this knowledge is unfortunately lacking amongst our youth today."

Jason has been on a dramatic journey to have such thankfulness in spite of physical discomforts.

He confesses that some years ago he was part of a drug syndicate, for which he would harm people if they did not pay on time.

"I was working for a company that ran an operation not unlike a bikie gang. Knowing I had a criminal history, this business soon had me collecting debts. Some time after I called it quits, I met my wife."

His wife wanted their children sing Christmas carols in 2007, so Jason and his family visited a church in a nearby caravan park. Through this introduction, he began attending an Alpha course, which examines the evidence about Jesus Christ and why He died and rose again.

"When the course ended, the caravan park owner and I gave our lives to the Lord Jesus Christ and we were baptised in the park's swimming pool."

Jason said a simple prayer to God, confessing all his wrongdoings and surrendered control of his life to the Lord Jesus Christ, believing that He died on the cross to take the everlasting punishment he deserved.

Jason understood this forgiveness and new life was a free gift.

"Sometimes, the Devil, God's enemy, tries to tell me I'm not forgiven," Jason adds, "but I just remind him that because I trust in Jesus' Christ's sacrifice for my sin, I have been forgiven once and for all.

"In my new life in Jesus, I try to help people and talk to people, to do the opposite to what I used to do. Everyone at my former workplace knows that I am a Christian, I don't hide my faith."

As a miracle survivor, with a titanium plate holding the front of his pelvis together, Jason thanks God that function in his nerves has returned and he can walk unaided.



Helpless without love

Rejection led Stacey to adopt an unsatisfying identity

"**L**eave the house or I will blow your brains out", Stacey Folds roared at his drunken stepfather as he held up a rifle to rescue his battered mother.

"As my stepfather walked out he told my mother to choose him or me. She chose him," Stacey recalls sadly.

Stacey was then 16 when his biological mother rejected him for the second time after his biological parents split up when he was four.

At age 15, he had moved in with his mother and stepfather but over that year Stacey says he was also molested by a trusted male friend of the family.

Following this abuse and his mother's rejection Stacey turned to drugs to "kill the pain", and was shattered again with rejection by his school peers.

"People called me homo, fag, queer. After you hear it so many times, I believed that I was gay," Stacey explains.

He dropped out of high school and detached from his devoutly Christian family, because, he says, "Their church said I was not welcome."

At a gay bar he searched for love and approval, and found enough excitement to stay.

"The lights, music, drugs and alcohol were fascinating to me at age 19," Stacey says. "I enjoyed it, or at least I thought I did."

Following a degree and a new job to get himself off drugs, Stacey recalls, "I got myself involved in a relationship with another man for ten years. It was a very tumultuous relationship – filled with deceit, lies and secrets.

"When he passed away in 2003 I moved back home and got a policing job in 2007. My life was still empty, but I loved my job. I still love my job."

In his workplace Stacey had a friend who both annoyed and intrigued him with his

constantly good mood.

"Chad was always talking about his faith, and I didn't like him. I had no use for Chad, because, to me, God didn't love me and I didn't love Him.

"But for whatever reason I was drawn to Chad. I would listen to every word that came out of his mouth. To this day I couldn't tell you why, I just did."

In contrast to his friend's mood Stacey slid into depression and decided upon suicide in 2010.

"On my way home from a bar at 2am, I sped up to 190kph and at that point I believe God inter-

vened. I chose to see my parents at their church the next morning as my way of telling them bye."

In that church service Stacey says, "God just spoke to me, and to be honest He ticked me off."

Stacey was so mad that he opened the Bible his mother had given to him years before, and he recalls, "For whatever reason the Bible spoke to me."

Stacey returned to his parent's church many more times, and finally asked Pastor Josh Buice to help him. Stacey likewise reached out to an old friend in the church, a man named Joey Rainwater who he had known for years.

"I told Joey that I was in a dark place and I didn't want to be there anymore. I gave my life to the Lord Jesus Christ and in that moment a weight was lifted off my shoulders."

The desires he had for decades changed instantly, Stacey says.

"I no longer desired to be with men or to curse. I wanted a wife and children."

After a year Stacey married Jennifer. Four years on, they have a son, Edwin, and are expecting their second child. "God has given ten times what I deserve," Stacey concludes. ●

"I'm in a dark place; I don't want to be there anymore"

EAT CHEAP AND HEALTHY ACCORDING TO THE SEASONS

BY MIRIAM RUTHENBERG (BSC. NUTRITION, BSC. HEALTH PROMOTION)

BUYING fruits and vegetables that are in season this summer has three great benefits: (1) they are at their cheapest prices all year, (2) they are at their nutritional peak, and (3) they taste better when in season!

SUMMER IN-SEASON PRODUCE: banana, oranges, rockmelon, watermelon, strawberries, cherries, mangoes, pineapples, plums, stone fruit, grapes, beetroot, broccoli, cauliflower, lettuce, mushrooms, eggplant, capsicum and corn.

Fruits and vegetables are also super healthy as they provide your body with fibre, vitamins (such as vitamin C), minerals (such as iron) and carbohydrate, as well as being a good source of water during the warmer months.

Health experts recommend that adults eat two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables everyday, and that everyone aims for a wide variety in their diet.

One fruit serve = 1 medium size fruit (e.g. apple), 2 small fruit (e.g. apricot) or 1/2 cup diced fruit. **One vegetable serve** = 1/2 cup cooked vegetables or 1 cup salad vegetables.

Summer in Australia is certainly the season for fantastic fresh fruits – who wouldn't enjoy a platter of grapes, mango, peach, nectarine and watermelon whilst sitting back and watching the cricket? ●



"My co-workers know there's no way I should be alive," says Jason Whittaker



Building Better Marriages

BEST MARRIAGE GIFTS AT CHRISTMAS

BY ROB FURLONG

DESPITE our best attempts it is difficult not to think about gifts when Christmas comes around each year and this is especially true if you have young children! There are also many voices that compete for our attention at Christmas and among them is the one that cries, "Let's remember the true meaning of Christmas!" I agree with that sentiment but I want to ask the question – how many of us take that seriously?

I think many of us agree with the suggestion but deep down we know that there are expectations from others that we will be giving out presents and we also have an expectation that we will receive gifts.

Perhaps what is needed is a shift in our thinking about what a gift really is as well as recognizing the many gifts that we already have, so as a



your side with whom you not only share Christmas but life as well.

It is also the *gift of presence*. True intimacy is so much more than merely talking with someone at a deeper level. It is also about giving the other person the gift of yourself. It is so easy to give a person the impression that you are listening to them when in reality you are thinking about being somewhere else or about what you want to say next. But presence in intimacy involves empathy, interest and genuine concern for the other person.

And it is the *gift of oneness*. Intimacy between a couple brings a sense of completeness; that the one I am married to makes me a stronger person and the sense that together there is no challenge too great for us to face. True oneness provides support for each other in difficult times and the security of knowing that you are deeply loved by another.

And this wonderful gift is closely tied to the true meaning of Christmas! For Christmas is the time when we are reminded of the gift by God of His Son, Jesus, to the world. His

Son who would grow to manhood, point people back to His Father and ultimately die for their sin that they – and we – might experience intimacy and relationship with God.

Through Jesus we experience *companionship*. He walked through the same, difficult world that we do – He is not a stranger to our pain. He experienced rejection, weakness and suffering but never stopped caring for, loving or healing hurting people.

He was *present* with us. More than that, He was God present with us and proved beyond doubt that God loves us and is concerned for us. How easily He could have remained aloof from our pain but instead, He walked among us and saw firsthand what sin, suffering and injustice had done to the world.

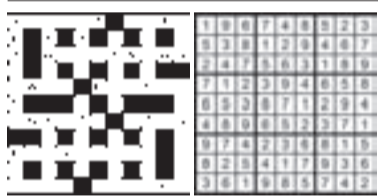
And He offers us *oneness*. Through His life and death the door is opened up for us to know God personally and deeply and a relationship that is defined by love not fear.

Yes, let us remember "the true meaning of Christmas" but in doing so let us also be prepared to change our focus by being thankful for its presence in our lives and for the gift of knowing God through His Son Jesus.

couple this Christmas why not think in terms of one of those gifts that you have – the wonderful and enriching gift of intimacy?

Why should a couple think of intimacy as a gift?

Because it is the *gift of companionship*. As a couple you have both been blessed to not go through life alone. You have been gifted with a friend with whom you can do life with! Solomon described it well when he said, "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work." Loneliness is the only companion many will know at Christmas so be thankful for the friend by



Computers & Technology

Free up phone space with cloud backup apps

By Darryl Budge

Through Christmas and holidays mobile devices can store 1000's of snaps and videos for sharing with others. If you are running out of space I recommend installing one of these free apps to auto-backup your photos and videos to the cloud. They will not delete your files if you neglect to use your account either.

flickr **Flickr by Yahoo** (iOS, Android, Windows Mobile, or web): The free Flickr app is unique due to the optional social experience of the Flickr community if you choose to publicly share your photos and videos. The mobile app will auto upload your media, entirely uncompressed, to a private space with a free storage limit of 1000GB (1TB). The service is available from a web browser at Flickr.com.

Google Photos (iOS, Android or web): Featuring powerful image recognition and search, Google Photos offers uploading and editing of an unlimited number of photos and videos in high quality (16MP pics, 1080P videos, stored with minor compression techniques).

Alternatively, the original uncompressed resolution can be stored using your free 15GB, or go to drive.google.com to purchase more space. Go to photos.google.com to browse your memories from your computer.

Apple iCloud and Microsoft OneDrive are two other free options, but as of 2016 OneDrive joins iCloud in offering just 5GB of perpetual free storage (was 15GB).

Support Aussie businesses and find quirky gifts without killing your feet

Hardtofind.com.au: For specific-celebration gifts, home & garden, fashion, jewellery and clothes, this Sydney-based small business supports "cottage industries" and independent studies, and provides a "personal maker-to-customer shopping experience".

Yellowoctopus.com.au: This Melbourne based online store aims to sell "Australia's coolest gifts, gadgets, toys and games." For gifts "outside the box" go to yellowoctopus.com.au/unique-gifts.

Latestbuy.com.au: Perth-based online retailer LatestBuy launched in 2003 to sell the "good, fun, smart and latest stuff". They sell things with "an interesting twist and generally hard to find in Australia".

Gyrofis.com.au: "From unique homewares to quirky gadgets and fun toys, there really is something for everyone. We consider ourselves the curators of cool!" Gyrofis is based in Caringbah, NSW.

Urbanattitude.com.au: Melbourne-based Urban Attitude claim they have "the world's most unique combination of exciting new homewares, books and accessories that are quirky, cool and sometimes down-right outrageous."

Jaycar.com.au: Jaycar offers a wide variety of electronic gizmos and component parts. They have all manner of gadgets, especially items for electronic, sound, security, automotive and outdoor enthusiasts and hobbyists.

Thinkgeek.com (USA): This Virginia-based online store offers geeky toys, gadgets, apparel and outdoor gear. They rate a mention because they have great merchandise for fans of Star Wars, Star Trek, Doctor Who, among many others.

How can I become a Christian?

Anyone can gain the eternal life offered through 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.

"Lord Jesus, I need You now. Please forgive me for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Saviour and Lord. Thankyou for loving me so much that You died on the cross for me. Take control of my life. Make me the person You created me to be. 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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MEDICAL MATTERS

BY DR JEREMY BECKETT

High blood pressure THE SILENT KILLER PART 2

In **PART 1** we looked at hypertension (high blood pressure) and the damage it causes to arteries, potentially leading to heart attack, stroke, kidney failure and other life threatening conditions.

How is hypertension diagnosed?

Blood pressure is measured using an inflatable blood pressure cuff and a stethoscope, but hypertension can't be diagnosed on just one reading. Your blood pressure fluctuates from moment to moment and is affected by stress, pain, exercise, caffeine and cigarettes.

The most accurate way to assess your blood pressure is to have it checked at home at different times of the day and night. There are two ways of doing this. One option is to take home an automatic blood pressure machine, which can be purchased from pharmacies or sometimes borrowed from your family medical practice, and keep a record of your results.

Alternatively you can wear a portable blood pressure recorder that takes a reading each hour (for 24 hours), which needs to be arranged by your doctor.

Blood pressure readings are described in two numbers: the systolic pressure (when the heart contracts) and the diastolic pressure (when the heart relaxes). It is then expressed as the systolic pressure over the diastolic pressure: for example, 120/80. Persistent readings of 140/90 or above are considered to be high, and can be dangerous in the long term.

What happens next?

1 Investigating to find the cause.

Your family doctor should examine you, and may order some tests, to search for treatable causes of hypertension. As mentioned in Part 1, in more than 90% of cases there is no obvious cause.

2 Looking for organ damage. Your doctor should also examine you to see if your high blood pressure has damaged any organs. This may also involve an electrocardiogram (ECG) of your heart, and blood and urine tests to check your kidneys.

3 Addressing other risk factors. It is important to also deal with other risk factors that increase the danger of hypertension: smoking, diabetes, high cholesterol and obesity.

4 Lifestyle changes. There are several lifestyle changes that have been shown to reduce blood pressure in most people, which may mean that less (or no) medication is required:

- Weight loss ✓✓✓
- Exercise ✓✓✓
- Reduced salt ✓

5 Medication. In most instances hypertension will not be controlled by lifestyle changes alone, though these changes can make a big difference. There are a huge range of different blood pressure medications, and they have different side effects. Many patients find that they require more than one type of medication to control their blood pressure.

Hypertension should not be underestimated – just because you feel fine doesn't mean that you are. There are no reliable symptoms of hypertension: many people are not even aware that they have the problem. The only way to know is to have your blood pressure checked. It's a simple enough thing to uncover this silent killer.

CRICKETER FINDS PURPOSE BEYOND GAME

BY DARRYL BUDGE

Former NZ Black Caps middle-order player Dean Brownlie has a solid case for a national recall as last season's star batsmen for NZ first-class side North-

ern Districts Knights, compiling 1204 runs including the first triple century in the team's history.

His 334 runs against the Central Stags on February 16 is the fifth highest by any New Zealander in first-class cricket and just four runs short of the third-best set by Roger Blunt.

The triple-century places him near two records by Kiwi hero Bert Sutcliffe, who holds the top two scores of 385 and 355. The pair also share with John Reid the exclusive milestone of making half centuries in their first three tests.

Despite a wrist injury in March, Dean immediately impressed for NZ

A in their recent series victory over Sri Lanka, crafting 68 and 113 on his home turf.

"I haven't played a game in seven months due to the injury so it was good to get some time in the middle and make some runs," he told *Challenge*.

The former New Zealand number five and leading run scorer in the Black Caps' 2011 test series against Australia is humble about his triple-century.

"I guess you go out there every game hoping to make a contribution to the team. When it comes off it's always a good feeling," says Dean, who gladly recalls

it was also the day of his brother's wedding back in Western Australia.

The 31-year-old sincerely hopes for a Black Caps return while working hard to achieve his best, as demonstrated by his 11 centuries and 26 half-tons from 66 first-class matches.

"I hope to motivate others to accomplish their dreams"



HOBART - DECEMBER 09, 2011: Dean Brownlie of New Zealand plays a shot during day one of the Second Test match between Australia and New Zealand. (Photo by Robert Prezioso/Getty Images)

"I'd love to play more for the Black Caps," he states. "It's a great team to be part of with a great group of guys but my only goal is to keep improving."

"If that's playing for the Black Caps or domestic cricket, I am pretty happy."

Enjoyment of the game and downtime close to nature have been keys to his success, says Dean.

He recently moved to Mount Maunganui where the beach lifestyle and surf allows him to "get away and not be consumed by the game."

"Enjoy your cricket and have fun," he advises aspiring cricketers. "There are a few sacrifices along the way, but I think it's all worth it."

From his experience as an international sportsman Dean says that maintaining his relationship with Jesus has also kept him away from the anxiety that troubles many high-profile sport stars.

"Having a relationship with Jesus allows me to play cricket for the game it is, a game. To me it is a game that allows me to share with people who don't know Jesus yet."

"The anxiety and negativity are gone because I know God wants me playing cricket right now."

The Perth-born former West Perth footballer admits that back in 2008 he had mistakenly put sport first in his life before a church sermon challenged him.

He was raised in a Christian family and honestly recalls, "I was cruising through life and struggled in giving my heart to God."

As a preacher spoke about doing great things for God, Dean was struck by a verse from Isaiah chapter six: "I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here I am! Send me.'"

"It was then I gave my heart to the Lord Jesus Christ and submitted to Him as King over my life and Saviour from my sins."

"It wasn't until I understood that God was my priority and sport was



MOUNT MAUNGANUI, NEW ZEALAND - OCTOBER 21, 2014: Dean Brownlie of New Zealand plays the ball away for six runs during the One Day International match between New Zealand and South Africa at Bay Oval. (Photo by Hannah Peters/Getty Images)

something He could use through me to honour Him that my cricket really flourished."

Then aged 24, Dean says he felt God directing him to pursue his career in New Zealand but initially struggled due to illness.

As he spent time with God in prayer and Bible reading, one morning, Dean sensed God's confirmation as he read, "Go from your country and family... to the land I will show you... I will bless you... so that you will be a blessing" (Genesis 12:1-2)

"After reading this I knew I was

meant to stay and was truly blessed," he says.

Now as he looks back on his time with Canterbury Wizards and Northern Districts Knights, he says he will always place his confidence in Jesus.

In those highs and lows, Dean says, "Jesus is my joy and salvation. I know from experience He will always be there for me."

After his first "good break" in six years last winter, Dean says he looks forward to opening for the Knights in their one day and test sides, and as number three for T20s. ●

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