

NEW ACCEPTANCE



INCREDIBLE FEELING: Ashraf Saleh, seated with his family, says, "I felt an amazing sense of peace that I had never felt before."

Dr Saleh was on the verge of suicide in his personal crisis

Medical officer Dr Ashraf Saleh has endured a lifelong heartbreaking conflict between desiring to respect his parents and his hunger for seeking the true meaning in life.

Ashraf's parents migrated from Egypt in the midst of declining political stability and settled in Sydney during the 1970s heyday of immigration, all the while maintaining a careful adherence to Islam.

School bullying due to his Arabic appearance, younger

age and short stature had not seriously fazed Ashraf, but he recalls a personal crisis began at age 13 when he pondered why his family's religious rituals "really did not have any meaning in my personal life."

Fearing repercussions from his parents, Ashraf quietly searched for answers in his own mind, then began independently exploring how he could know God in a personal way after high school.

"It was important for me at that stage in life to be able to freely ask God to be in my life," he continues.

"I had this innate desire to be at one with God, to be in a relationship with Him. If there is a purpose [to my rituals], I wanted God to show it to me."

While studying medicine at university he took advantage of the open-minded learning environment and resolved to directly approach God with his questions.

"I said, 'God, if you are real, you should show yourself to me. I am tired of having to go through this life alone and not knowing what it is all about. I feel emotionally numb.'"

Many months passed without any answer from God, leading Ashraf to angrily tell God, "You have done yourself a disservice by creating me and I really want to end [my life] now."

Just hours before Ashraf planned to jump from a four story building he was awoken by an extraordinary feeling.

"I woke at 2am, drenched in sweat, heart pounding, and felt an amazing sense of peace that I had never felt before. It reassured me, 'You are at peace. You have peace because I am in you.' No fireworks, no big dream, just a sense of peace. I knew that I couldn't go on with that [suicide] plan."

As Ashraf wandered through the streets of Parramatta, working out his next steps, he was approached by a friendly man whose sense of Ashraf's loneliness encouraged him to open up.

After quietly listening, the man said, "You're going through stuff, and we all have. But you have to respect your parents, because that is the right thing to do, and I think you know that."

● Turn to page 2

REALITY RULES

Page 2

BACK PAGE AGAINST THE GRAIN

Great Aussie Dream is no surety

BY HADYN SENNITT

OWNING ONE'S HOUSE is something that Australians have long aimed for, and even expected.

It is, for want of a better phrase, the Great Australian Dream. Having your own house gives a sense of security and a sense of community.

Many, however, simply cannot afford a house and that is a bitter pill to swallow. In a world that is quickly becoming less secure and community links are weakening, this issue is posing many problems.

Our TV stations offer little solace: a few nights ago there was a programme on British home renovations, followed by two other such programmes in Australia. One of those was a repeat of a previous episode and all the ads concerned where to purchase home renovation products. For those of us, like me, priced out of the housing market, it's like waving a fish before a starving cat.

All of this, however, poses the question about where we find hope and security. Is it in bricks and mortar? Is it in a career, or family, or more, or all of the above?

The problem with having security in a house is that the one owning, or trying to own it, is victim to other people's behaviour. Prices rise and fall according to supply and demand; interest rate repayments



depend on the mood of the Reserve Bank and 'market forces'.

Even when you buy and pay the house off, it can be burned down, broken into, and it falls apart. Upkeep and renovation is costly, laborious, and time-consuming. Worse, some families invest more in the condition of their homes than they do in one another. Instead of having community, they get absorbed in the house.

When Jesus walked this earth He offered a stunning alternative. Profoundly and simply he said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal" (Matthew 6:19-21).

More to the point, He said,

"One's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (in Luke 12:15).

Nothing in or on this earth will last because it is all made of matter! But what will last? Eternity with Jesus Christ, and all who put their trust in Him. The well-known John 3, verse 16 tells us, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life".

To have this security we need to seek forgiveness from God for rejecting Him and accepting Jesus Christ as Master and Saviour. He wants to give us abundant everlasting life in Himself, but that can only happen when we let go of our stuff and allow Jesus Christ to control our life.

Haydn Sennitt is pastor of a church in Georges River, Sydney

YOLO and the House Rules

YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE, so make sure you know the Universe's rules

BY RICK LEWERS

I AM FASCINATED by reality TV. Whether it be *Renovation Rumble*, *House Rules* or *My Kitchen Rules*, it is clear that every contestant is trying to rule. When I was at school, and later with my sons, a 'rumble' had nothing to do with building but it did have a lot to do with ruling.

I am very interested in reality TV's use of the word 'Rules'.

There is a famous parable of a wealthy and successful man who appeared to be ruling his life rather well. He was so successful, he planned

a complete renovation of his property but this was not to provide for others' needs, no, his complete motivation was to satisfy his own stomach.

His prize when the renovation project was done would be the ability to sit back, eat, drink and be merry. You would be forgiven in our age for thinking that this man ruled his own life well. He appeared to have made a great assessment of his life situation, economically and in terms of his pleasure seeking.

In the parable's conclusion, Jesus, the originator of the tale, said the man's problem was that he made no accounting for the Judge of the Universe. He thought he was wise. God

said he was a fool. He had forgotten the most important of house rules. He built with no regard for God.

With his plans before him, a glass of wine in his hand, and some big dreams for his future he dropped dead, exposing this glaring mistake.

A person ruled by their stomach and their possessions often makes this mistake, for which there is no prize.

At least on MKR and House Rules, those seeking the prize never lose sight of the judge.

First, there are the super judges who are rather despotic. Then comes peer judgement by fellow contestants who deep down

don't want others to succeed. Finally, there are the unseen judges like myself, sitting in a living room somewhere debating the merits of those with whom we have no relationship.

Why such religious effort on these shows? Why do they work like slaves all week to satisfy judges who pick their efforts apart? It is all about the prize. And such is the prize, they religiously compare themselves with each other and even compete with one another to gain the judges' favour. Religiously they 'do, do, do' in an attempt to win a better future: if only I offer the sacrifice of the perfect meal I could one day own my own restaurant; or if only I build the best

"Those seeking the prize never lose sight of the judge"



MELBOURNE, 3 MAY 2015: Contestants from Reno Rumble (The Block) arrive at the 57th Annual Logie Awards at Crown Palladium. (Photo Ryan Pierson/Getty Images)

temple or shrine then my debt will be cancelled and we can sit back, eat, drink and be merry.

Well, that is religion and the practice of the religious – people seeking to satisfy a judge or judges who do not really care about them personally, and whom the person doesn't really know, in the uncertain desire of attaining a better future.

Many people think that is what Christianity is all about – and they could not be more wrong. Chris-

tianity is not about 'do, do, do' but about what has been 'done' for us by the person of Jesus Christ. It is not about a judge who picks away at our efforts but the Judge powerful enough to repair them. Christianity is about the God who builds a future for us that we could never build for ourselves. Christianity is about a Saviour who makes right every life renovation bungle with forgiveness, and repairs every failed recipe for life with the right ingredients.

Christianity is about God, who through His undeserved love, seeks to decorate your life with everything that is beautiful, noble and honourable. It is about God's invitation to wine and dine with Him at the greatest banquet in heaven. There's the prize, not for your efforts, but for the efforts of Jesus Christ. It is not a prize for us but a gift, and the only judgement you need ever fear from Him is the one reserved for those who reject His invitations.

NEW ACCEPTANCE

● From page 1

Ashraf says, "Deep within me I knew that. But he gave me this openness and unconditional love that I had been missing and that I didn't know existed. I had to ask him, 'What is so different about you?'"

The man, a Christian immigrant from Ghana, replied, "I believe in God and God through Jesus Christ has set me free."

Impressed by this man's testimony and his relationship with God, Ashraf began attending his church to learn more.

Until that church, Ashraf says, "I never had free access to a Bible before. I learnt about God, and saw in His wonderful Scriptures things I had innately appreciated even in the Qur'an, but never seen in that kind of colour and life."

Six months later, 18-year-old Ashraf decided to believe that Jesus is God and took the penalty for his wrongs against God. He was then publicly baptised as a symbol of his faith in Jesus.

He naively told his parents of his confession of sin and dedication of his life to Jesus. They physically beat him and ordered him to never return to church. He agreed to obey them for two years until he graduated university and visited Ghana to work out what he wanted to do with his life.

"I saw abject poverty but at the same time amazing humility and a love for God, which I had never seen before," Ashraf shares.

His experiences there "opened my eyes to see the truth about life", a truth that "brought peace to my heart."

"I realised that this is not a perfect world, we are amongst sin and a lot of imperfection and turning-away from God, and our attempts to be righteous are as filthiness in God's sight."

Now living in Toowoomba with his Kenyan wife and three children, Ashraf says he loves to share his story with Muslims and Arab immigrants who are settling in Australia.

"To those who are interested", he says, "I would love to share my experience, as well as the love of God with those who are going through such tumultuous times."

"I show them that I, being brought



Ashraf Saleh

up a Muslim, have come to open my life to Jesus Christ because He is the truth, the way and the life."

Ashraf has not had contact with his father for over six years, but says there is still a tacit bond with his mother and his siblings. He has been excommunicated from the family and asked to never share his faith with anyone in the Egyptian community.

"I have told my father that I will forever be a child of God through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ," Ashraf says.

When he is discouraged, Ashraf receives comfort from the Bible, which he says "continually reminds me that since the world around me is imperfect I cannot rely on it, including my family, for peace and joy which can only come from our loving Father."

"Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me," he quotes from Psalm chapter 27, verse 10.

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Crossword

ACROSS

8 Woolly South Americans (7)	13 Close to closed (4)	17 Somewhat old (7)
1 Rainbow fish (5)	9 Bulb gas (5)	18 Golfer's gadget (3)
3 Deadly snake (5)	10 Animal shelter (4)	14 Young military trainee (5)
6 Polyvinyl chloride (3)		19 Shoulder gesture (5)
		20 Dark time (5)

DOWN

1 Sort (4)	2 Hot drink dispenser (6)
3 Superhero accessory (4)	4 Capital of Romania (9)
5 Soak up (6)	7 Herb (9)
11 Documents (6)	12 Ravine (6)
15 Talk big (4)	16 Liquefy (4)

SOLUTION PAGE 11

Sudoku

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

Puzzle Level: Medium

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

SOLUTION PAGE 11

SHADOW OF PROTECTION



"I so longed for that shelter, that peace and protection against the world"

"At 32 years of age, what a freedom I found! Total peace came over me," says Christa, pictured beside husband Cobus

After a string of divorces, Christa found the safe place she longed for

Well-educated and raised in a stable loving family, Christa Britz recalls her life was set on a confused course when a preschool teacher molested her.

"The teacher asked me to put my hand on a black Bible and swear I will not tell anyone ever about what has happened," Christa begins.

"I knew enough to know what a promise was, especially on a Bible, so I never told anyone."

Although this teacher soon disappeared, more tragedy, confusion and loneliness followed when her parents divorced during her teen years.

Christa's internal battles were ultimately displayed outwardly in two devastating forms: adultery and anger. "To be honest," she shares, "everybody lies and cheats, steals and curses, but my problems were adultery and a bad attitude. I was married three times, and now in my fourth, and last, might I say."

It upset her greatly that she had no money to study for her dream job working with children.

She also battled loneliness when she found work after graduating high school and had to live with an unfamiliar family member who had many boyfriends.

To escape her isolation she impulsively married a school friend she barely knew and was soon pregnant.

"Six months after I was pregnant we were married in a simple civil ceremony. We were poor and I cried through my whole pregnancy. After my first son was born, something really bad happened, so I filed for divorce and began living with my dad.

"I will never forget that terrible day of my divorce hearing when I was five months pregnant, and the most gracious old magistrate asking me over and over, 'Are you sure?'"

Feeling guilty that her father had to support her, Christa married another school friend she knew well and had a third son.

"Life was so meaningless for me; I was so empty inside," Christa remembers.

"Hoping it would add meaning to my life, I started an affair with a wealthy man who was old enough to be my dad. I then left my husband to be with this man.

"I remember praying every night to a God I did not know: 'Please help me out of this situation.' One day I got the courage to leave.

"Many times I wanted to end my life, but three beautiful boys popped up in my mind every single time."

In a troubled neighbourhood Christa met some acquaintances who

invited her to their church. There she heard the most hopeful message of her life.

The preacher spoke from Psalm 91: "Those who live in the shelter of the Most High will find rest in the shadow of the Almighty."

The Psalm concludes, "I will rescue those who love me," says the Lord "...I will be with them in trouble. I will rescue and honour them. I will reward them with a long life and give them my salvation".

Christa continues, "I so longed for that shelter, that peace and protection against the world, myself and all that was happening around me. Slowly something happened inside me."

After making up with her mother, Christa moved in with her and began attending her church.

"I learnt a lot about Jesus' salvation and knew I had to make a decision.

"I heard from the Bible that Jesus is the only One who can save you and forgive you, and who loves you unconditionally. Who does not hold your sins against you and does not remember them anymore.

"So I asked the Lord to come into my life and take over my life. I turned away and repented from all my sins and made Jesus Lord of my heart.

"At 32 years of age, what a freedom I found! I asked many people to forgive me for my wrongs against them."

After this, Christa says, "Total peace came over me. I was not afraid anymore. I was so excited and the emptiness was gone!"

Now free of her burdens as a Christian, Christa explains that she still made more mistakes and learnt another hard lesson.

"I did not consult God's guidance about a man I wanted to marry, a mistake that led to another sad divorce. It was a very hard lesson to learn. I have made my peace because God knows and He forgave me.

"Eight years after I joined a full-time Christian outreach ministry, I met my husband Cobus. God spoke clearly to us through Isaiah 54-55 to both of us during a Christian conference. We have been married now for three years.

"I have been diagnosed with an incurable auto-immune disease called Lupus. We pray every day for His strength and healing, and God often shows me this verse, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my strength is made perfect in weakness' (2 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 9).

"I love God, my husband, my three sons, and two four-year-old angel granddaughters. To God be the praise for His salvation, forever and ever." ●

Addictive past given up

Curiosity led Neil Caintic to try drugs for the first time. Little did he know he was being led into a trap – one that seemed to have no escape.

Drug use and abuse was common in Neil's home in the Philippines, and as a young boy of 14 he graduated from cigarettes and alcohol to illicit drugs.

"I always wanted to fit in with those around me and get along with the people in my neighbourhood," Neil says.

His hopes and dreams for a bright and successful future took a hit when his lifestyle started to affect his education.

From seemingly harmless consumption of marijuana to "shabu" (crystal meth) and other prohibited drugs, Neil became a self-confessed "menace to society".

Neil knew his lifestyle could not go on, and a customer of a relative who sold Bonsai plants showed him the solution.

This Singaporean customer happened to be involved with a Christian drug and alcohol rehab centre House of Hope, which Neil signed up to in 1998.

"Everything went smoothly during the year of rehabilitation," Neil recalls. "Broken relationships with my loved ones were reconciled.

"However, getting to know Jesus Christ and having a personal relationship with Him was the greatest thing I learned."

Feeling like a new man, Neil set off to encourage people and spread the good news he had heard about Jesus Christ.

But behind the scenes he continued to do wrong, succumbing to lying, lust and gluttony.

"Lust and pride seemed to always be present and often I fell to their allure," Neil confesses. "When I left the centre I returned to my old ways and within two years was worse off than before."

Neil re-admitted himself in 2001, refusing to give up, this time giving everything he had to the Lord.

He was determined never to return to the man he had hated being, pressing forward towards a better life.

This was no easier feat the second time around, but Neil was aware of the support system that surrounded him.

"God provided people that would inspire me and helped me get back on track," he says. "Through the



Neil Caintic with his wife and children

"I have no interest nor any joy in thinking about drugs now"

Bible, they helped me grasp again the truth and brought back the joy of my salvation."

Upon finishing the program in 2002, Neil felt called to help others dealing with the same things he had and became a volunteer for the organisation.

Now 16 years in sobriety, Neil is a mentor and liaison officer at House of Hope, and the head teacher of the centre's day-care ministry for children.

"Drug addiction is not a lifetime struggle," he says confidently. "I have no interest nor any joy in thinking about drugs now. What is constant is the fight against sin, such as with lust and pride."

When he is tempted to sin Neil says that he sets his eyes on Jesus "the author and perfecter of our faith."

"God is always faithful. His eyes is upon me, guided me and let my eyes see upon the perdition of this fallen world. I drag myself back to Him," he says.

"The Lord has been faithful in answering my prayers all these past years. He has enabled me to stand firm from temptations through the grace of Christ.

"I thank God in Christ for his mercy and his gift of salvation given in Christ," he adds. "His joy is my strength."

Married to "a God-fearing Christian lady" Neil says he is grateful they have been "gifted with two kids, a son and a daughter". ●



Money can become a drug

UK University professors Stephen Lea and Paul Webley argue that human behaviour towards money cannot solely be explained by its usefulness.

They write: "Money isn't just a tool but it also acts as a drug on the mind, changing how we feel. Part of the benefit people derive from acquiring money (is) feeling good... So we chase money partly just for the sake of having it."

This helps us understand why Jesus taught that you cannot serve both God and money and why we must be very careful in our response to wealth. ●

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

Officer Rudi's awakening

I was not prepared to die, says former cop

Rudi Van Zyl was a police officer who loved to party and drink with his friends, yet a fear of the judgement of death remained.

"Every time I looked at a deceased person in my job, I heard an inner voice ask me where I would be if I was dead," Rudi explains.

Although he was raised as the son of a church pastor he confesses he had a combative attitude, which resulted in his attraction to the police force.

"I had the intention of becoming a successful, dedicated hardworking cop," he recalls.

However, he says his lifestyle was "dominated by alcohol abuse and fighting".

"From childhood I loved fighting. I had an arrogant attitude especially when I joined the police force. Lying, stealing, immorality and almost every other sin was part of my lifestyle."

Although his offences were never discovered Rudi could not shake his guilt because when he looked at a dead body a chilling truth came over him.

"I just knew that I was not prepared to die," Rudi says.

"I foolishly decided that when a bullet entered my body I would turn to Jesus!"

Then a convicting voice, which Rudi knows was God, spoke to him in February, 2000.

"The Holy Spirit asked me, 'When will you turn to Jesus for your salvation?'"

"I told God, 'Lord I want to repent, but my friendships and parties have power over me.'"

"God clearly responded, 'I am going to speak very loud.'"

The next morning Rudi remembers standing in the mortuary identifying someone very close to him.

"I identified the body of my younger brother who was killed in a car accident. Three months earlier he had believed in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour."

"I asked God why he killed my brother and not me, because I was living in sin and deserved to be killed."

"God said to me, 'I did not come to kill but to save!'"

A few weeks later, Rudi discovered that these words were written in the Bible.

"I found Jesus said in Luke chapter 9, 'For the Son of Man [Jesus] did not come to destroy [people's lives], but to save [them].'"

Rudi pondered these words about God's undeserved kindness to him even though God knew about all his wrong-doing and evil thoughts. Days later he came to a deep conviction.

"I felt like I was the filthiest person who ever lived on earth. I had the deepest desire to get rid of all my sin."

"I wanted to get right with God, for Him to change me, so I would no longer live in sin and guilt."

Picking up his sister's Bible, Rudi began praying desperately.

"As I became desperate in prayer, I

realised that my tears and repentance cannot save me because God does not owe me salvation. So I begged Him for His love which I did not deserve, confessing that I despised Jesus' sacrifice for me for so many years."

"When I asked for God's mercy, I immediately realised my sins were gone! I just knew God had forgiven me."

Since that day Rudi has known he has peace with God.

"I know without a doubt that I will spend eternity in heaven with Jesus when I die."

"God made me free from all the sins I was addicted to, and He gave me a love for His Word the Bible, prayer and meeting with other Christians."

He also had a desire to tell other people about Jesus, not out of obligation, but because he wanted to.

"The Bible verse became true: 'if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold all things are new' (2 Corinthians 5, verse 17)."

Shortly after his new life with Jesus began Rudi resigned from the police force. Following four years in private work he had theological training and became a church pastor in 2007.

"I know that it is 'God who works in [me] to will and to work for His good pleasure' (Philippians 2:13). And that I must 'neither give place to the devil', according to Ephesians chapter 4, and avoid places and people where I will be tempted to sin."

"God enabled me to trust Him for a deeper work in my life so that I can live in spiritual victory," Rudi says gladly.

"I asked God why he killed my brother and not me"



Rudi Van Zyl admits his life was "dominated by alcohol abuse and fighting"

You're a feminist

BY CLAIRE DEBROIS

The concept of feminism today has become confused with the idea that women are the same as men. But that's not what feminism is about.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, feminism means, "the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of equality of the sexes."

Yes, women are equal in value to men. But we are not the same.

Just like that brainteaser we've all heard, a tonne of steel and tonne of feathers both weigh the same, but they are certainly not identical.

Likewise, my television might be worth the same as my washing machine, but they certainly don't have the same abilities.

Just because two things are of the same value, does not mean they are the same.

I was very sporty growing up, and always took great delight in beating the boys in pretty much everything. I was taller, stronger and faster. Around age thirteen it all came tumbling down. Overnight, the boys around me shot up in height, they suddenly could run like the wind, and smash my hand into the table in an arm wrestle.

It took me a while to accept that although I was equal in value, I was not equal in physical ability.

A DEEPER DIFFERENCE

As I've grown older, I definitely see the differences between men and women, particularly highlighted in a military environment (I work as an NZ Army Reserve field engineer). During extreme stress, we react differently. We prioritise differently. We behave differently. Some of this may be inadvertently following cultural norms, but there is definitely a deeper 'difference' that makes men stronger in some areas, and women stronger in other areas.

A radical feminist would argue with me. She might argue women can do everything men can, and we need to break free of our perceived weaknesses and fight the stereotype of our perceived strengths. But I disagree.

It's just the way we are. According to the Bible God made us different.

We are all of equal value, regardless of gender, but we are not the same.

Gender inequality is still a huge issue around the world. It needs to be tackled by those who understand the true meaning of feminism—that it is about recognising equal value, not attempting to be identical.

"The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved." – Matthew Henry



Claire Debrosis, a NZ Army reservist

Instant answers smother truth

BY BEN HALBROOKS

On *TheVerge.com*, Thomas Ricker gives a comical reflection on his increasing forgetfulness: *Google's making me dumb*. He blames the search giant for its ready-made, easy-access answers to everything: "Why memorize anything when it's so readily accessible?" His tech-dependent laziness might sound familiar – but is he right?

On *Salon.com*, writer Ian Leslie probes the question further from a psychological and philosophical perspective. His piece *Google makes us all dumber* is an excellent read.

Leslie warns: "Google is known as a search engine, yet there is barely any searching involved anymore. The gap between a question crystallizing in your mind and an answer appearing at the top of your screen is shrinking all the time. As a consequence, our ability to ask questions is atrophying... One day, the gap between question and answer will disappear. I believe we should strive to keep it open. That gap is where our curiosity lives. We undervalue it at our peril."

The irony is unmistakable: in the internet age, we have an overabundance of information but a corresponding lack of wisdom and depth of inquiry. When it's all at our fingertips, we lose the thrill of the hunt. It's what Leslie calls "a short-cut to stupidity." Contrast that to the tireless curiosity of a child and the never-ending barrage of "How?" and "Why?" questions: "Somehow, children instinctively know there is a vast amount they don't know, and they need to dig beneath the world of appearances." We need to recapture that sense of wonder.

Instead, we're just a few clicks away from being know-it-alls, a mile wide and an inch deep. "The Internet can make us feel omniscient," notes Leslie – but it's a foolish illusion. Case in point: just a few months ago in the *Wall Street Journal*, atheist Dan Dennett forecast the demise of religion at the hands of the internet, arguing that religions



survive only by tightly controlling what their followers know. Where Christianity's concerned, Dennett couldn't be more wrong. But when we equate a simple Google query with the search for truth, what do you expect?

It's not just Google. The tech world is full of companies using anticipatory algorithms that promise to "know what you want before you do," as if that were a thing to be desired. (...Maybe we just don't know we want it yet?) Why track down the perfect present when you can just use an Amazon gift guide for anyone from "Boyfriend/Husband" to "Motor Lover?"

Of course, the problem isn't really the technology itself; it's how we're using it to outsource our humanity. Leslie puts it well:

"We will only realize the potential of technology and humans working together when each is focused on its strengths... Technology visionary Kevin Kelly succinctly defines the appropriate division of labor: "Machines are for answers; humans are for questions." The practice of asking perceptive, informed, curious questions is a cultural habit we should inculcate at every level of society."

Here's to that.

COURTESY FIXED POINT, WWW.FIXED-POINT.ORG

LOVING OTHERS IS HIGHEST HONOUR

Sporting honours comes a poor second to golden relationships, says Shannon

Track and field athlete Shannon Winant found that every aspect of his life and sport improved when he stopped focusing on personal gain.

Today, he is thrilled to be building up and training with South Africa's Olympic-calibre athletes.

Shannon confesses that he "lived for sport" and gained confidence, discipline and determination as he competed in track and field from first grade.

While there were many positive results from sport, he admits, "As I became more talented sports became part of my identity and everything became about my own gain."

Shannon's group of friends loved

sports as much as he did but as he watched them he noticed they behaved differently to him.

"They were brighter and more joyful, so I wanted to see why," Shannon recalls.

As these friends attended a church youth group, Shannon began going as well. As a 13-year-old he recalls his enjoyment of the activities and devotional talks, and even attended one Friday without his friends. On that night he knew he needed to ask for God's forgiveness and let God change his heart.

"The youth pastor asked if there was anything holding us back from fully giving our lives to Jesus Christ. I felt God tugging on my heart, and as soon as I raised my hand I felt the weight of the world release from my shoulders.

"I prayed, 'Lord Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross for my sins, and raising on the third day. I am a sinner and the only way to God the Father is by you. You are my Lord, my God and Saviour. I love you.'

From then on, Shannon wanted to follow Jesus, but in competitions he admits he was focused on himself rather than God and others.

"I gave God a little shout out," Shannon says, "but the only reason I worked hard was for my own gain: to be better than everyone else."

He also recalls that when his performance dropped "I had a really poor attitude that led to a major downfall for me."

This downfall came after he was accepted into Whitworth University in Spokane, USA where he became the fastest on that team and had almost achieved "All-American" honours before he was humbled by a foot fracture and a severe knee injury

in successive years.

After two months working to repair his knee, he recalls expecting to jump really far at his first meet.

"My body was not ready to jump that far and I landed my worst result for every jump. I was so angry at myself and jealous of my teammates who were healthy. I was not being a good teammate and I was not honouring God."

One of Shannon's teammates, Emmanuel Bofa, a two-time NCAA DIII National Champion, offered him some advice.

"Emman said, 'God makes it pretty simple for us: love God and love others', which is Jesus' summary of His Ten Commandments" (see Mark chapter 12, verses 30-31).

"Life and athletics is not about us," Emman added, "it is about spreading the love of God to all you come across, and using the talents that God has blessed you with to do so."

Shannon recalls, "As I talked with Emman, it felt like God was taking out my old heart and giving me a new one". Shannon then prayed to ask God to change his attitude.

At the following day's practice, Shannon remembers, "I felt so much weight was off my shoulders. A week later I jumped three feet further.



Shannon Winant (centre) with friends and South African elite athletes Menzi Mthembu, Ruswahl Samaai (Commonwealth bronze medalist in the long jump), Apelele Rasmeni, Junior Mkatini, and Dylon Cotter

My body had not strengthened that much in seven days, it was about my perspective."

From then on, Shannon says he worked his hardest on the track and loved and supported both teammates and competitors "as much as I could".

Shannon's commitment to his team led to becoming team captain in his third year at university. "I had an amazing year as I put teammates before myself, loving them and loving God through my sport."

Wanting to go abroad to tell others about God through his sport, Shannon gained an internship an international Christian sports ministry called Athletics in Action.

"I was placed on a track and field team at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. Here God created relationships with Olympic calibre athletes that will last a lifetime."

One of South Africa's strongest prospects for the 2016 Summer Olympics is long jumper Rush, who is one of these friends. Before his

break at the end of 2013, Shannon remembers, "Rush said to me, 'You have [taught] me a lot and I am so blessed for that. You gave me the most blessed gift in the whole wide world [the Bible].'

Seeing the changes in his teammates, Shannon says, "I feel it is God's appointed task to tell South Africans who have never experienced the love of God."

Being a staff member of AIA South Africa is a "dream come true", says Shannon, who graduated with a marketing degree from Whitworth University in 2013.

"I love Jesus with all of my heart. For me, Life is about using my gifts and abilities to spread the love of Christ.

"I have experienced team unity issues, car troubles, and very dangerous car-jacking situations, but God calls us to be thankful in these situations. The will of God is to give thanks in all circumstances, according to 1 Thessalonians 5, verse 18." •



Shannon placed 7th in the Senior Men's long jump at the South African Central Gauteng Athletics Championships in 2014

Anxiety is over

BY JOANNA DELALANDE

Once a happy and confident child, 25-year-old Nateeka White spent years of her life crippled by severe social anxiety.

You could say it began with a hat. As a Year 4 student, Nateeka was told off by her sports teacher for not having brought her hat, an unpleasant experience she came to associate with sports in general.

That feeling then grew into an irrational fear of sports carnivals.

"Every year at the lead up to carnivals I would cry, gripped with great fear. Mum never forced me to go. She would encourage me but she could see how gripped with fear I was," Nateeka recalls.

Soon it was not just sports carnivals but any kind of social interaction that terrified her, and she grew to dread shopping centers, social events and even the social time following church services.

"This fear wasn't something that I could simply face on my own," she explains. "It's a difficult thing to explain but anyone who has experienced irrational fear will know that it's not an easy thing to get over."

But in 2005 Nateeka was able to attend her school carnival with no fear. "I actually love crowds and thrive in social settings," says Nateeka, who is now studying to become a primary school teacher.

The change happened in a matter of seconds. Nateeka, who had grown up in church, was singing songs of praise to God and heard Him say to her: "Today I am going to take your fear away."

"I didn't feel different but I had a deep sense of knowing that what God had told me was true," she says.

On the morning of her sports carnival that year Nateeka says she felt only peace, and when she opened



Nateeka White with young friends in East Timor, where she often helps teach children

her Bible she read in 1 John Chapter 2 verse 13: "I am writing to you who are young because today you have won the battle with Satan."

She realised her social anxiety had not been from God but was a lie from the Devil. By dying on the cross for everything she had done wrong, Jesus allowed her to access the love of the Father and be delivered from all her fears.

All she had to do was realise God was stronger than any lie Satan was trying to tell her about herself, and accept Him into her heart as her Lord and Saviour.

"Since then God has also showed me how He has healed me of fear in other ways. I am healed of my fear of crowds. I know that this liberating feeling I have now is truly how God created me and intended for me to be."

Nateeka is now studying and preparing to be a primary-age teaching trainer in East Timor from 2016.

"If obedience to God has brought me this much joy I will gladly obey Him wherever He sends me and in whatever He tells me to do," she says. •



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Former drug dealer is now a prisoner mentor

“Power from drug dealing was replaced with a life of peace” says transformed former prisoner Glen Roberts

His customers were addicted to the drugs but Glen Roberts was more addicted to the power that came with dealing.

“When you sell drugs and people are addicted to them,” Glen explains, “they will do whatever you tell them and they will make you feel like a king.”

This feeling stemmed from growing up in a poor family without some of the nice things other kids seemed to have.

Glen was 11 when his desire for cool clothes led to stealing because he thought it was easier than washing cars and odd jobs.

He began breaking into lockers and selling his “findings” at the local flea market on Sundays.

At 14 he was discharged from the army cadets for stealing and selling Army equipment.

Glen began taking drugs and rebelled against his parents, thinking their hardworking ways were slow and he had found a more efficient road to success.

At 16 he was selling marijuana and hanging out with street gangs, finally experiencing the kind of belonging and popularity he had longed for in high school.

“I had girls, friends and constant excitement,” he says. “I felt like I was really on the right path in life; I was popular and I fitted in.”

Glen lived by the law “Do what thou wilt”, justifying his unethical behaviour by saying he was merely “robbing from the rich”.

“I had a real hatred for any authority. If I was told, turn left, I would go right,” Glen says.

Glen’s parents were forced to spend all their savings on lawyers to keep him from going to jail, only for him to return to his lifestyle as a drug dealer.

Eventually Glen’s actions caught up with him and he was sent to Casuarina Maximum Security prison, then relocated to Albany Regional Prison where “my cell mate was beaten up twice by two different people within the first hour of us being allocated the cell.”

The next day when a prisoner invited Glen to the church service he agreed for some reason, despite the risk of becoming a target.

“When we walked down to the church area I felt a warm, calming atmosphere like the rest of the jail was behind us and I met all the guys and felt completely welcomed,” he describes.

For the second time in his life Glen felt like he belonged somewhere, only this time it was not for his power or success but simply for being himself.

His addiction to power was soon replaced by a hunger to know more about God.

“I ended up giving my heart and



Glen Roberts once had “a real hatred for authority” but now mentors prisoners

life to the Lord Jesus after praying with a guy named Marlin,” he says, “and I soon developed a thirst and a hunger to know everything about the Bible and God.”

“My mindset began to change. I went from thinking I would go back to society after jail to a life of crime to thinking that if I was smart enough to make it in life the wrong way, surely I was smart enough to do it the right way,” Glen adds.

Soon he spent every moment he had learning more about God and praying with his friends, notably Kevin Barry Nolan, one of Perth’s well-known criminals who had also given his life to God.

“This was one of the many amazing Christian brothers that God had

brought into my life and I am so grateful to the Lord for that time in Albany Prison,” Glen says.

Later in Woorloo Prison Glen began a Bible study for the prisoners, where even the toughest, non-Christian criminals encouraged and admired him.

After prison Glen had to start from the bottom, working a menial job.

“But God worked with me. He has built a great life for me surrounded by good friends and a great family,” he says referring to his wife and twin boy and girl.

Glen now has a passion for leading Bible studies for drug addicts and prisoners, working closely with Prison Fellowship and two friends he met during his time in prison.

“Now I pray God can continue to use me and my past experiences for His glory I am His humble servant to do with as He pleases.”

Believe it or not

BY CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL, CREATION.COM

Human gene mutations “arose in the last 200 generations”



We have periodically pointed out that, from a biblical perspective, there have only been about 200 human generations since time began. (E.g. creation.com/human-population-growth, creation.com/biologos-adam)

In that light, consider these recent findings by evolutionary geneticists, who studied more than one million mutations, or changes to our DNA code, found across human populations.

“Most of the mutations that we found arose in the last 200 generations or so,” said Joshua Akey of the University of Washington. He and his co-researchers found that of the mutations likely to be harmful, 91% emerged in the last 5,000 years. Many of these have only existed for the last thousand years.

Echoing Akey’s statements, population geneticist Alon Keinan of Cornell University said: “Humans today carry a much larger load of deleterious variants than our species carried just prior to its massive expansion just a couple hundred generations ago.”

These observations match the Bible’s declaration of a world “in bondage to decay” since Adam sinned (Romans 8:19–22). Evolutionary geneticists belatedly realised that the rate of degradation of the human genome poses huge problems for the evolutionary timeline (See creation.com/time).

- Analysis of 6,515 exomes reveals the recent origin of most human protein-coding variants, nature.com, 28 November 2012.
- Human evolution enters an exciting new phase, wired.com, 29 November 2012.

“[At Albany's prison church] ... I felt completely welcomed”

\$ Family Finance

TAKING THE STRESS OUT OF FUNERALS

Arranging a funeral is never easy due to the emotional and financial cost but there are various arrangements that we can prepay as well as fix the arrangements and cost ahead of time.

Prepaid funeral: This option involves prepaying a part or total of the funeral cost, fixed at today’s prices. Options include a progressive payment plan, or a pre-purchased funeral package including a cemetery plot, or plaque on a memorial wall or the memorial garden. Make sure you check the inclusions and exclusions in the fine print.

Funeral insurance: Insurance should be considered as a method of ‘prepaying’, by paying the monthly or annual policy until you reach age 90, after which the cover continues for free. Pick from fixed or variable premiums, the latter likely to increase annually and will vary by specific health and lifestyle conditions. Some exceptions may apply in the early years of a policy, and the later you purchase a policy, the more costly cover will be. Premiums are unlikely to be refunded if you stop paying for the policy.

Superannuation: Most super funds include a death benefit. Make sure you are aware of what it covers, and



you have provided your preferred ‘nominated beneficiary’. Rules vary by state, so contact the Australian Taxation Office or investigate super death benefit policies.

Funeral bonds: Bonds are typically offered by life insurance providers, paid for in a lump sum or instalments. The company holds your money in investments, but as this may not cover additional items like flowers and a burial plot, it may be wiser to have your own separate savings account for this.

The sooner your funeral preferences are known, the better the financial outcome and experience your family will have during their grief. Make sure you read the fine print of any financial contract you enter into as there can be hidden and unexpected difficulties, which can be avoided with due care.

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PUFFED UP PARATROOPER CHANGES TACK

My amateur boasting was humbled after 10,000ft jump, says Hermann

As a young ambitious paratrooper Hermann Meyer wanted to be a 'sky god' but was forced to swallow his pride after his big mouth led him into life-threatening trouble.

"I believed a 'real' paratrooper would not be the one jumping with static line and falling out of the plane like a bulky refrigerator," Colonel Hermann remembers thinking as a young Second Lieutenant 35 years ago.

With this notion in mind, he began exaggerating his abilities to gain respect from his military comrades.

"I started to claim to be a qualified free faller although I had only done about two dozen parachute jumps – all with static line," he admits.

As rumours of his feats spread, Hermann confesses, "my blatancy and swollen chest eventually led the lord-mayor of our unit's garrison to request if I could conduct a freefall jump demonstration as sort of highlight for the 1250 year jubilee of the city."

Light-headedly he agreed, hoping

and doubting that the jump would not go ahead because of additional security regulations.

Yet one week before the event Hermann was informed that everything had been approved and he would be jumping out the plane following another experienced freefall paratrooper from the army reserve. "With that information my throat immediately swelled close ... I suddenly knew there was no way out of this calamity other than humiliating myself," he explains.

"Three sleepless nights full of fear followed before I made my decision: I prayed to God and told Him how ashamed I was of my big mouth and vanity."

As he knelt before God pleading for forgiveness, Hermann prayed God would help him face up to the consequences of his sin.

"I begged Him to please carry me through ... and decided to make that freefall jump."

Hermann had learned about God's grace and undeserved love through Jesus Christ as a child growing up

in a family devoted to serving God.

"God wants to be part of every aspect in life – not only at special times or certain traditional occasions," he recalls his parents often telling him.

"Yet over the years I pushed the 'Jesus business' more and more into the background and relied only on my personal skills and abilities. There seemed to be no need to get any closer to God."

Yet the reality of what he was about to face showed Hermann that he could not rely on himself, life was not in his hands.

Sunday morning dawned and more than a thousand spectators assembled in the city square to watch the paratroopers make the 10,000 feet freefall.

"The Lord's grace was overwhelming," Hermann recalls of that moment. "I followed the old soldier out of the plane and was immediately whirled down in highspeed spirals – not a chance for an amateur and cheater like me to gain command and control of anything at all."

As Hermann tried to stabilise his lightning-like descend, he continued praying to God for protection and breathed a sigh of relief when he finally had the chance to open his parachute and come into landing.

"Tremendous silence and peace surrounded me. The Lord let me complete this first freefall jump of my life tremendously shaken and absolutely convinced that God is patient

"I suddenly knew there was no way out of this calamity other than humiliating myself"



"Tremendous silence and peace surrounded me", says Hermann Meyer

and faithful even though I did not deserve it and would never meet His perfect standards."

Reflection on that frightening experience helped Hermann realise that he was not as in control as he had thought and God deserved to be first priority in his life.

"From my parents' example, I knew it was totally unfair from me to only pull that last and ultimate rescue-cord of His help in situations that showed no success by using my own," he admits.

"I felt deeply ashamed and decided to make God the pillar of my plans of operations from then on."

As time went on Hermann says prideful ambition, self-reliance and ungratefulness sometimes clouded

this revelation but each time he found himself humbled before God once more, finding comfort in the Bible's book of Psalms chapter 91.

Looking back on a life now as an experienced Colonel, Hermann has this to tell younger military personnel: "Trust in the fact that God loves you exactly how you are, because He designed you. Don't be ashamed and don't keep yourself away from Him. Run straight to the Lord because He is waiting with His arms wide open to welcome you back.

"There is no one like our Lord and [nothing better than] to rest and live in His loving arms and to try to follow His son, Jesus Christ, the way He showed us how to live. Dare to believe in Him and He won't let you fall." •

Lust loses to love

One faithful man changed Leonie's mind about love

Until she met Brian, Leonie Edge thought that men cannot love in the same way as women, but now she has a happy 22-year marriage. The secret, she says, is his daily expressions of unconditional

love.

After sleeping with nearly 100 men, Leonie firmly concluded, "Men do not care, they do not have affection, they only want to get into bed."

Now, she says of their marriage based on the love of Jesus Christ, "Brian has taught me that love wins over lust every time and that men do have loving feelings. He is wonderful!"

As a child growing up in Coober Pedy, Leonie had seen her mother leave her natural father after four years of "the silent treatment".

Her next father-figure was a violent man who gambled away nearly a million dollars of her mother's jewellery shop income, was a pimp for a prostitute, and made her mother sterile due to venereal disease.

With this history, Leonie dismissed the idea of a loving heavenly Father. She wondered, "Why would God allow all this?"

Her impression of God was formed in the stiff church of her step-father's relatives, where she remembers the services were "boring and all in Greek".

The religions she knew were disconnected from her inward needs so Leonie invented her own.

She thought to herself, "I prefer the 'romance' of being a white witch – after all I didn't worship Satan, did I?" At the time, she had no idea of what she was getting involved in.

One of her needs was male affection. At many weekend discos, she remembers, "I bedded any bloke I wanted, trying desperately to get the love I needed but, of course, it was only sex."

Leonie turned to a dating agency to meet men, had another failed relationship and a two-year marriage to an Air Force man, before she met her current husband,



HAPPILY MARRIED: Leonie Edge

a friendly neighbour living below her new Melbourne flat.

Brian was a church-goer, but Leonie was hugely impressed when he gave up smoking at her request.

"He was prepared to sacrifice for me in a way my former husband had refused, so one Sunday I asked him to take me to his church."

After the sermon explaining God's forgiveness through Jesus, Leonie says, "There was an altar-cation by God. I knelt to ask Jesus into my life."

When another person in the service said "not yet", Leonie felt crushed and believed she was not good enough, but kept going to church.

Upon telling Brian about this, three months later, he said, "Don't you know the Devil loves church? He loves all the hypocrites there!"

"I left so released – Jesus Christ had accepted me and loved me for me!" Leonie explains.

Guided by other Christians, Brian and Leonie married in Warrnambool, and have a teenage daughter.

Leonie says their trust in God was tested in 2006 when Brian, a self-defence instructor, was thrown off his motor-bike at 90 kilometres per hour by a four wheel drive. The police did not expect him to survive, nor did the local bike wreckers when they saw the wrecked bike.

An acquired brain injury and 13 operations did not stop Brian from defying expectations that he would walk again.

"God, as He always does, prevailed, and so did our prayers," Leonie says.

"From the accident payout, we bought a small farm in Cavenish, Victoria where we grow food to help others. We told God that if He ever gave us our own place, we would call it 'Rejoice' in His honour. It's more His property than ours."

By growing fresh produce for others, Leonie says, "We do what we can, where we can, with what we have. God continues to give and give." •

YOU COULD BE WRONG

BY JOHN HUTCHINSON

We've been wrong about many things – never assume the obvious is true!

Being wrong about a sports game or the weather may not matter too much. But sometimes we need to get things right.

The right diagnoses of an illness and taking the right medicine may help us recover. I know of a lawyer who got it wrong in a legal issue which cost his clients dearly. They nearly lost their home.

We are entitled to opinions but, sometimes restricted by them. However, our quest must always be the truth. Truth liberates.

Jesus once said to His opponents, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

He had said incredible things, particularly about His eternal pre-human existence, and proclaimed that "I and (God the) Father are one". His resurrection from the dead, however, authenticated Him in every way. He is, as the Bible says, "the Son of God" – "the Saviour of the world" – "the Way, the Truth and the Life." •



Howzat?! I cannot be wrong, umpire!

Building Better Marriages

YOU WILL ALWAYS BE A FATHER AND GRANDFATHER

BY ROB FURLONG

“Gramps! Gramps! Can we do super hero and dragging please?” Over the past two months this has been a constant question that I have heard from the lips of my grandchildren during their stay with us.



while their family has stayed with us as they prepare to move east for a few years.

Why am I telling you this?

Because while they have been living with us I have been reminded that you never stop being a father, never.

Having six extra people living in our house

for two months, four of them under the age of seven, has been challenging but it has also been one of the most rewarding experiences I have had in a long time.

It would have been tempting to have “checked out” when they all descended on my family back in early June and just wait out the next two months until they left for the East Coast. But I chose to engage with them and make this as enjoyable a time for all of us as possible.

And so I discovered many things.

I discovered that my one-year-old grandson has an adorable smile that lights up when you do one of those stupid things that grandfathers are renowned for.

I learned that my three-year-old grandson expresses his gratitude and

love by throwing his arms around you and giving you a big hug.

I found out that my five-year-old granddaughter cannot stop giggling as you “super hero” her around the house.

And I also learned that my eldest granddaughter, though excited about moving to the other side of the country was also understandably sad to be leaving her extended family and friends behind.

I would have missed all this and more if I had simply chosen to withdraw into myself and ride things out until they left – I’m glad I chose to engage with them.

Let me speak to you as one Dad (and Grandfather) to another. I know that you are busy and that at the end of the day you need some space when you arrive home. Coming home to a house full of excited (sometimes whinging!) kids is no picnic. I have been in fairly demanding roles for most of my working life so I understand what this feels like.

But the reality is that we only have the briefest of moments with our children. It’s a cliché but it’s also true – they really do grow up quickly!

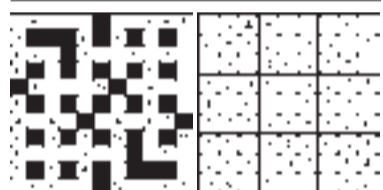
Don’t abdicate the role that you have as a Dad or a Grandfather to someone else. Only you can be that person in their lives. So get involved with your kids and resolve to do something stupid with them as well, like “super hero” them to bed!

Is it worth it? The sad look in my granddaughter’s eyes as she told me the day she left that “we couldn’t do the ‘super hero and dragging’ tonight” tells me it is.

You’re a Dad. You have been blessed with beautiful kids. Don’t waste a minute of it!

What, exactly, is “super hero and dragging” I hear you ask? It involves me picking up each of my grandchildren (there are four in this particular family!), holding them in the plank position while I simulate flying them around the house Superman style on their way to bed. The dragging bit was where they held onto my ankles and I would drag them across our slippery wooden floors.

This has been my regular, night time routine for each one of them



COULD GOD LOVE SOMEONE LIKE ME?

Yes, He **LOVES** you and has a plan for your life

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**
“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (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 that You loved 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: “He who believes in me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:38)

AS A NEXT STEP :

If you prayed the above prayer, tick this box

- 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

- 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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Computers & Technology

Australian music streaming services

BY DARRYL BUDGE

Many companies are competing for your music spend, with a going price of around \$12 per month. The only free track-on-demand service is Spotify, plus the web-only interface of Myspace.com. If you are happy with ad-supported free playlist streaming, try Pandora, iHeartRadio and Rdio. If you have a Samsung Galaxy device, try the free “Milk Music” radio app, or on a Nokia Mobile try the free “Nokia MixMusic” radio app (both can be purchased via other devices).

Music streaming service (ordered alphabetically)	Free streaming or Trial period	Specific features (all services are Android/iOS/Web compatible)	Basic/Premium Price (per month)
Apple Music	Three-month trial	30m tracks, live worldwide radio station, artist-centric social network, requires iOS 8.4, Android app 'coming soon'	\$12 or \$18 per family
Deezer	Ad supported (after 12 mths, 2 hour monthly limit)	30m tracks, pre-release album streaming, auto Facebook sharing, WinPhone, Windows, Blackberry, plus many unusual platforms.	\$12
Google Play Music All Access	30-day trial	20m tracks, upload for free your own music collection to stream (50k max), off-line caching	\$12
Guvera	Video-ad supported	10m tracks, guest-curated playlists, off-line caching	\$12
iHeartRadio	Free	15m tracks, artist/song based playlists, Windows Phone, Kindle Fire, Blackberry, Sonos and Xbox.	-
iTunes Radio	Ad supported (6 skips per hour)	Easy purchasing of tracks, subscription includes iTunes Match for cloud storage of your music	\$35/year
JB Hi-Fi Now	10-day trial	18m tracks, offline caching, Windows Phone, Airplay and Sonos compatible.	\$6.67 for web or \$8.25 for mobile
Pandora (Radio)	Ad supported (max skips & timeouts apply)	Select artist you like, get instant 'station' of similar music. Compatible with many platforms, see pandora.com/everwhere	US\$5 per mth or US\$55 per year for ad-free
Rara	\$3 for 3mths on web, or \$9 for 3 mths mobile	22m tracks, Special playlists by London-based curators.	\$8 for web or \$13 for mobile
Rdio	Ad supported	More independent & eclectic music, offline caching. Compatible with WinPhone and Kindle Fire	\$6 (25 tracks offline) / \$12 (unlimited cache)
Spotify	Ad supported (60-day trial until Oct 5, 2015)	20m tracks, Facebook & Last.fm integration for music discovery. Compatible with WinPhone, Blackberry, Sonos, Playstation. PC can be controlled via 'Spotify Connect' mobile app.	\$12 / \$30 per family
Tidal (Jay-Z co-owned)	No trials as it is artist controlled	Curated playlists by Jay-Z, Beyonce and Cold Play. High quality 16-bit FLAC 1411 Kbps available.	\$12 for 320Kbps quality or \$24 for FLAC
Groove Music Pass (formerly Xbox Music)	30-day trial	30m tracks, sync your library to OneDrive, stream via Xbox/web/Windows app, downloading to 4 devices, FLAC available	\$12 per mth / \$120/year

15 SIMPLE THINGS DADS MAY NOT REALISE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS

DADS, here are 15 simple things your kids want from you. As it turns out, these little things are actually the biggest things of all.

- 1. Hang out in the garage.** Invite your children to see and hear about what you’re building or repairing, and let them help. The job may take longer but you will make their day.
- 2. Dance with your children.** It doesn’t matter if you can’t dance. Sway side to side, spin in a circle, jump up and down. Listening to music together creates healthy family bonds and shapes positive memories.
- 3. Stick to a routine.** Have regular special times together every day, such as: make and eat porridge together every morning, meet up for lunch, help them get dressed, or brush teeth together at night.
- 4. Ask questions.** Ask about school, their friends, what they’re worried about, what they’re looking forward to. If they share a problem do not try to fix it – they really just want you to listen. Otherwise, try gently nudging them in the direction of a solution.
- 5. Teach the rules.** Next time you’re watching a game on TV, explain the rules to your child. You’ll probably end up with a friend to watch the next game with.
- 6. Leave messages.** Words from your heart mean the world to your child. Regularly surprise your children with notes in their lunch box or sticky notes on their bathroom mirror. Tell a joke, relate what you admire about them, or just say “I love you.”
- 7. Read out loud.** They’re never too old for this – a bedtime story in their younger years or taking turns reading when they’re older.
- 8. Surprise your children.** Come home early from work



- when you can. Take the day or the morning off work to do something fun with your kids, even if it’s just once a year.
- 9. Bring your children to work.** Show them your desk, where you fill up your coffee, and the meeting room where you have your weekly staff meetings. Tell them what you do all day when you’re away from them.
- 10. Tell stories.** Your children love to hear simple stories from when you were a child. Also, tell stories about when they were younger.
- 11. Go outside.** After work, play outside together before dinner for a few minutes. Some suggestions are looking for bugs together, play catch or kick-to-kick, or take a quick bike ride around the block.
- 12. Make dinner.** Pick a night and make dinner with your children – ask them to help pick what to eat and if they help make it they are bound to eat it too.
- 13. Look through family photos.** Spend an evening reliving your vacations, their first steps and birthday parties.
- 14. Show up.** To concerts, ball games, dance recitals, and school open days. Whatever their hobbies or interests are, be there.
- 15. Hug them whenever possible.** You cannot get too many hugs from your dad, especially quality hugs that last over six seconds. For older children try working up from high-fives to hugs.

AFL favourites

AGAINST THE GRAIN

"Australians typically wince when someone publicly mentions God"

Kangaroos captain
Andrew Swallow



BY CAITLIN CHODAKOWSKY

Some AFL greats are publicly declaring their faith in Jesus despite the norms of our sporting culture.

Australia and footy go hand in hand but when it comes to the Christian faith it has always been more of an American thing to pray to God before a big game.

Despite this, sports writer Michael Gleeson wrote an interesting article last year for *The Age* about AFL's growing band of religious players and their boldness in going public with their beliefs.

AFL players Gary Ablett, Zac Smith, Aaron Hall, Andrew Swallow and Jonathan Giles were among some of the boys Gleeson highlighted as going against the grain with their bold Christian faith,

stating, "Australians typically wince when someone publicly mentions God".

He adds that Gold Coast captain Gary Ablett made some people uneasy in their seats during his speech on Brownlow night back in 2013 after his second win.

"I want to thank God because without Him I wouldn't be up here tonight," he said, adding to this bold public statement with frequent Biblical references, links and Christian Youtube clips on his social media pages.

On one occasion Ablett posted a photo on social media of himself praying with Gold Coast teammates Aaron Hall and Zac Smith accompanied by scripture from 1 Corinthians chapter 10 verse 31, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

The picture attracted more than 1600 likes on Instagram and 86 retweets on his Twitter account.

When Smith was asked about this public display of his faith – praying with Ablett and Hall before each game – he affirmed that he too was "a man of God".

"I trust in Jesus every day just to help me through," Smith explained to Gleeson.

"It's just our group but we invite others in, it's open to anyone ... We love it, that's why we do it. We just love having that relationship with Jesus."

Along with prayer, Smith, Ablett and

Hall formed their own "Life Group" where they could meet regularly and invite others in to talk about life, their struggles and, according to Smith, "to encourage each other in our faith."

These footy boys are not the only ones passionate about their Christian faith.

North Melbourne captain Andrew Swallow adds his support saying, "People are so passionate about football, why can't we be passionate about our God?"

When asked about his beliefs, Swallow explained, "Yes, I am religious but I don't like the term religious because of the connotations it has. I am a spiritual person. Christians believe Jesus died for my sins.

"For me it gives me great grounding and a sense of purpose and destiny and that allows me to go and do what I do. All the guys know I go to church and do all that but I don't stand around bashing them with it. Hopefully they see it through me and they are drawn to it within me and the boys are always asking questions."

Essendon player Jonathan Giles also attends a Christian church regularly or makes a plan to spend quite time alone with God when playing interstate.

"I downloaded a couple of Easter services to my laptop and watched them on the plane and in my hotel room," he shares about one past experience.

Port Adelaide coaching director and former Brisbane Lions player Shaun Hart also identifies himself as a church-going Christian and described a metaphoric connection to Gleeson between faith and team sport.

Gleeson writes, "Football preaches an ethos of team first, self as sec-

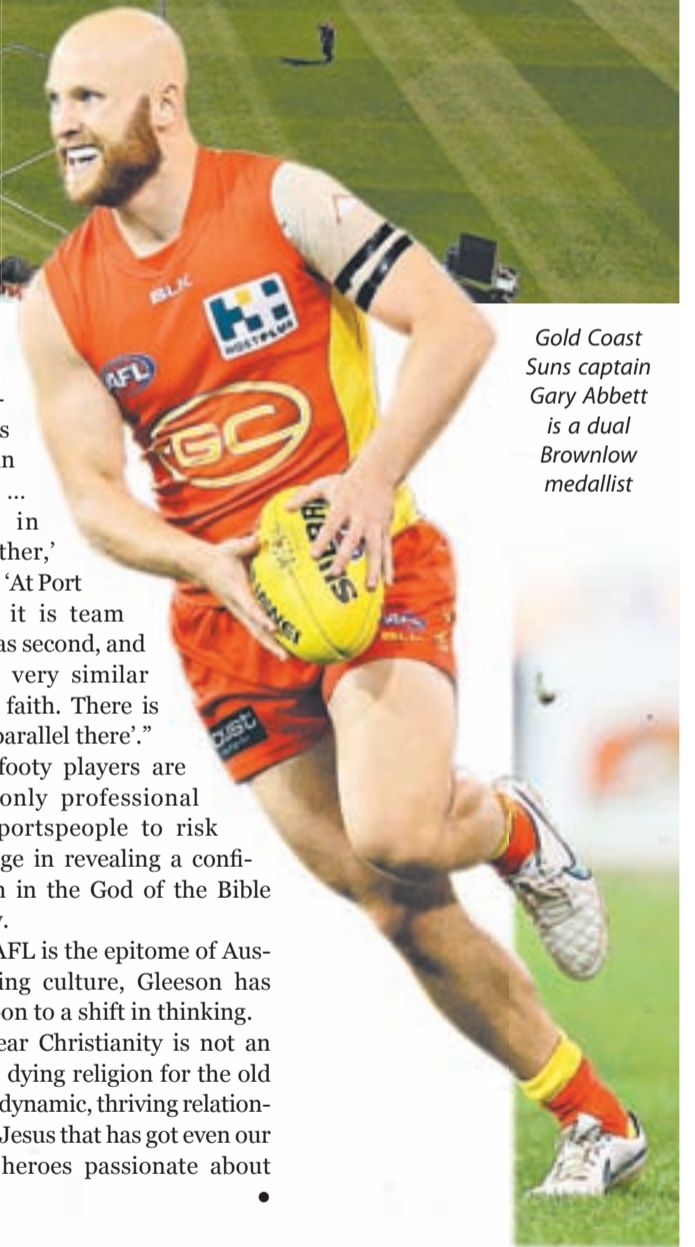
ond; of worrying for team a t e s more than yourself ... 'We are in this together,' Hart said. 'At Port Adelaide it is team first, self as second, and that is a very similar theme to faith. There is a strong parallel there.'"

These footy players are not the only professional Aussie sportspeople to risk their image in revealing a confident faith in the God of the Bible publicly.

Yet, if AFL is the epitome of Aussie sporting culture, Gleeson has cottoned-on to a shift in thinking.

It is clear Christianity is not an outdated, dying religion for the old folk but a dynamic, thriving relationship with Jesus that has got even our sporting heroes passionate about sharing.

Gold Coast
Suns captain
Gary Ablett
is a dual
Brownlow
medallist



Essendon ruckman Jonathan Giles formerly played for Greater Western Sydney

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