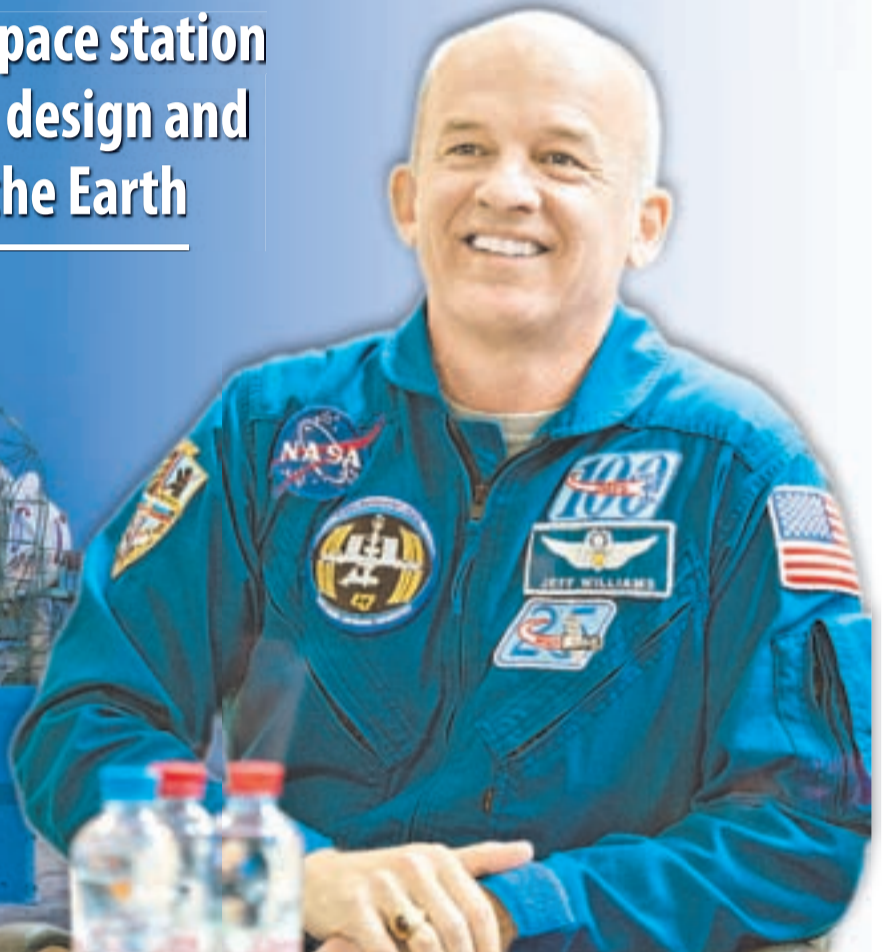


ON TOP OF THE WORLD

Astronaut on space station
sees amazing design and
beauty of the Earth



BAIKONUR, KAZAKHSTAN. MARCH 17, 2016: Flight Engineer Jeff Williams of NASA (right).
Main photo: The Soyuz TMA-20M spacecraft is rolled out to the launch pad at Baikonur Cosmodrome, to take its crew to the International Space Station. (Photos Aubrey Gemignani NASA via Getty Images)

CHRISTINA GRIMMIE'S PARENTS SHARE HOW THEY ARE DEALING WITH THEIR TRAGIC LOSS

Strength to handle pain

The assassination of American singer Christina Grimmie while she signed autographs following a performance at the Plaza Live in Orlando in June, shocked the music industry but was absolutely devastating for those who knew her personally.

The 22-year-old, who was a finalist on *The Voice 2014*, was shot on June 10, 2016 by Kevin James Loibl and taken to hospital in critical condition. The gunman shot himself on the scene, after he was tackled by the singer's brother.

A week after her death, in a public memorial service held in her native New Jersey, thousands of family members, friends, and supporters remembered the talented young woman.

"Christina, I am so proud of you," her aunt Kathy said during the service. "I love you girl. I love that you're walking with Jesus on streets of gold. I'll see you later."

"She was a woman who sought



HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA - MAY 7, 2016: Singer Christina Grimmie attends The Humane Society of The United States' To The Rescue gala at Paramount Studios. (Photo Jason LaVeris/FilmMagic)

truth with all her heart," a childhood friend shared. "She cared deeply and she loved wholeheartedly." A cousin took the stand

saying Christina's joy in life was contagious.

The star's parents wept as they addressed the church, and explained how they were finding the strength to keep going after their daughter was cruelly taken from them.

"I want to share what I've shared with several people here," Albert Grimmie, Christina's father, said. "And that's— there's this gigantic hole in my heart that I know is never going to go away.

"God showed me He's way bigger than that hole," he added.

"The three things that have kept me walking upright, otherwise I would just be a crumpled up mess in the corner, are: that I know I'm going to see her again; I know she's better off now, she's more alive now that she's ever been, she's not going to hurt anymore; and thirdly - and this is where I'm wrestling - is that God's plan is better than my plan."

● Turn to page 10

VETERAN NASA astronaut Jeff Williams is currently Commander of the six-man team of Expedition 48 aboard the International Space Station, returning early September.

Looking down on the blue ball we call Earth, Jeff is stunned by its beauty once again – the ISS trip is his fourth space flight. Everyday he posts amazing photographs of Earth on his Twitter feed.

In 2009, after his third space-flight, Jeff wrote the book *The Work of His Hands: A View Of God's Creation From Space* in which he reflected upon "God's care for his creation, and His wisdom in ordering the universe."

The committed Christian sees no conflict between his faith and his science – quite the opposite. He says that the design of the universe that science reveals just increases his awe and wonder at the power of God.

He says "there are many Christians in NASA" and that his work "has been perfectly compatible with the Bible".

Jeff says his relationship with Jesus began late in his life when he and his wife of seven years were slowly drifting apart. While he was away doing flight training his wife became a Christian. He was so impressed by the change in her, he gave his life to Jesus as well, and it saved their marriage.

● Turn to page 2



Something more than gold

— BY ALAN BAILEY

HAVE YOU ever imagined yourself standing on the centre riser of the Olympic podium, decorated with a gold medal and listening to the strains of your National Anthem? This is nearest that the overwhelming majority of people will ever get to gold and glory.

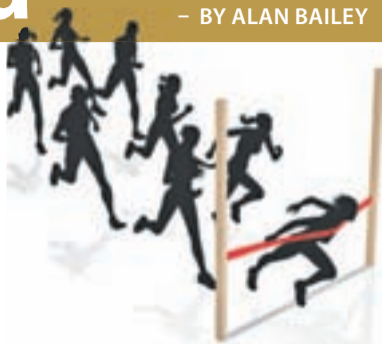
In my daydream I would love to come running into the stadium leading the field of marathon runners to the finish line.

For the real Olympic athletes, standing on that podium makes all the effort worthwhile – the sweat, the agony, the months and years of discipline. It is the ultimate.

OUR MEASURING STICKS

Popular thinking always places victory over rivals as the road to success. Our heroes are the winners. No question. To do well in the world means to come out on top, to make a fortune, to have your name on magazine covers, to match up with a dream partner. The alternative is being an also-ran or a failure.

This kind of thinking needs to be challenged. If not, disappointed people will abound, questioning the worth of their lives. Competitors



returning from Rio without a medal may sink into despair. Millions who regret their education, their careers, their broken marriages, will have nothing to show, nothing to boast about.

IS COMPETITION WRONG?

It's often said that competition itself is wrong. Fine for winners but devastating for losers.

I'm not convinced about that. It seems that competition is so much part of being alive that we will never avoid it unless we crawl under a rock and stay there.

Competition can bring about great achievements and act as the enemy of laziness and sloth. Learning to be a gracious loser builds good character.

Of course, there is a level of dog-eat-dog competition which is not healthy. Rivals are despised, others seen as less than human. Crime and injustice are the fruits of this twisted sense of values.

MORE THAN GOLD

Perhaps the most successful people are unknown and unsung. Our way of thinking about success has blinded us to the things of true and lasting value.

People who are faithful, honest, pure, kind, considerate and loving don't hit the headlines for being that way. In our world, they look old-fashioned, even a bit naïve.

As for possessing what is valuable, what price would you place on forgiveness of sin and peace with God?

He offers us eternal life as a gift and fellowship with Himself and His Son, Jesus Christ. Now we are talking about things infinitely worthwhile. All bought with the price of the precious blood of Jesus, shed for sinners.

The offer is to all. Rich or poor, successful or unsuccessful. We can be rich in the right sense of the word. We make our choice.

Floods of joy after despair



"Through Jesus all things can be mended for eternity," says Arthur Vaka (right) with wife Belinda and family.

FIFO family overcomes depression that nearly tore them apart

Four years ago divorce seemed inevitable for Arthur and Belinda Vaka as they lived apart in the same house, unable to resolve their depression and his alcoholism.

"Both of us were so lost and damaged," Arthur says.

"We took our frustrations out on each other, not realising the damage it was doing to our kids."

Their marriage first began unraveling when eight years on a WA north-west mine and weeks of separation undid Arthur's resolve against the liquid drug that had torn apart his childhood family.

"I was fighting with depression and thought money was the problem solver for all things," he explains.

Eight years of alcoholism followed until Belinda's father's advice led to a seemingly impossible transformation: childhood hurts healed, an end

to all alcohol and a restored marriage.

Arthur's parents had split when he was 13 due to alcohol and violence, and Belinda also came from a childhood of violence and abuse.

As he grew older Arthur kept in touch with his dad and rescued him from suicide three times. Those experiences contributed to Arthur's suicide attempt during their marriage struggles. "Thank God I was found by my brother," he says.

In the final stages of their divorce, Belinda called her father for advice.

Since he had become a Christian later in life, he asked, "Have you prayed or been to church?"

She said no and hung up, but later that night Belinda realised that if God had rescued her father, He could rescue her too.

With a big cry in her heart, she prayed, "Lord, if you are real, I need to know, please reveal yourself."

As He did, Belinda desperately pleaded, "Please help me, my life is such a mess."

"I felt His love and grace beyond anything ever experienced," she remembers, "as though He embraced me in His arms. He broke through the darkness that surrounded me and revealed Himself."

"That experience changed my life forever. I surrendered completely and decided to follow Jesus for the rest of my life."

Belinda and the children began attending church and "she constantly prayed for me," says Arthur.

For three months he refused to go to church, usually due to a hangover, but the dramatic changes in his wife changed his mind.

"God answered her prayer," he says with a smile. "I began a relationship with Jesus and, as I got closer to Him, Jesus slowly chipped off those rough edges."

Now their marriage and family is happier than it has ever been. "Jesus is what holds us together," Arthur reports.

"We are free from alcoholism and the two sons and a daughter who are still at home are all mended. Our family is together because of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As a family we hope and pray that our oldest son will one day open his heart for the Lord Jesus to find him."

The family now loves to contribute to the music, sound production and children's ministries at their local church.

Arthur says he clearly understands what went wrong with his family.

"There is evil in this world and God has given a free will to all humanity. It is sin that breaks up families, but God was there to comfort us through it all after we turned to Him."

His favourite Bible passage is Jeremiah chapter 29:11, "For I know the thoughts I have towards you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not evil, to give you a hope and a future."

Arthur hopes his story gives hope to people in similar troubles, as he concludes, "Through Jesus all things can be mended for eternity."

ON TOP OF THE WORLD

● From page 1

Talking about his work in space, Jeff says: "The thing that's most apparent to me when I'm up there is the detail of the design of the part of creation we call Earth. And you see where Earth is in the solar system, you see how vibrant Earth is... the systems that it takes to support life..."

"And, oh, by the way, we can only do this because of the order in God's design. Physics is a demonstration of order, mathematics is a demonstration of order, and the fact that we can launch a rocket at a precise moment, at a predictable moment required, and nine minutes later we're in orbit going 17,500 miles an hour—that's a very vivid demonstration of the order that we can see in God's design of his creation.

"The creation provides but a glimpse of the Creator. When people see Earth from the perspective of orbit, whether first-hand or through the descriptions of those who have been there, their thoughts often turn to God, or at least the question of God."

But while creation points us to God, Jeff says we can only find a relationship with God through trusting what He has told us in the Bible.

"In studying the Bible, I have grown both in awe of it and in complete trust in it as the source of the truth of reality, wisdom, and all things necessary for life... It is only through the revelation of God in the Scriptures that we can actually become close to Him in

relationship and actually know Him.

"The experience of being on the space station only intensified my response to God as I viewed the work of his fingers."

Some parts of the Bible seem to describe a modern scientific view of earth from space despite being written thousands of years ago. Job 26:7-10 says: "He (God) stretches out the north over the void and hangs the earth on nothing... He has inscribed a circle on the face of the waters at the boundary between light and darkness."

Jeff concludes: "In Colossians 1:16-17, Christ is acknowledged as the Creator and also the one who sustains – that is upholds and governs – His creation. While in orbit for six months, I grew in appreciation of being sustained and upheld day by day."

share your story

Do you have a story about how you came to know Jesus, that may encourage others? Send your testimony, with a colour photograph, for consideration to jodyb@challenge.news.org



WWW.CHALLENGENEWS.ORG

Testimonies • Children's pages
Lifestyle articles • Sports

Published 11 months of the year by Challenge Literature Fellowship (ABN 98 206 125 814) in association with the international family of Challenge newspapers.

Editor: Carl Carmody. Staff writers: Darryl Budge, Jody Bennett, Joanna Delalande

WANT A YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION? 11 issues:
1 copy per month \$39.93 (WA \$37.73)
5 copies per month \$81.40 (WA \$77.00)
BULK PRICES AVAILABLE

News stand for public place distribution: \$75 + freight

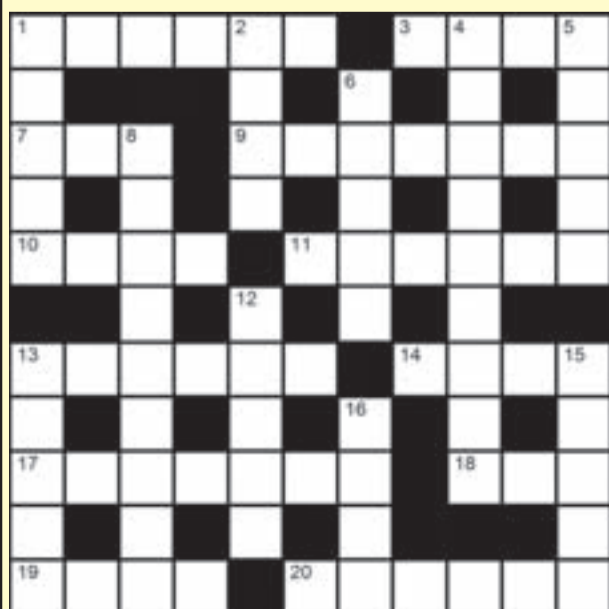
Order Challenge from
Challenge Literature Fellowship
PO Box 978 Cloverdale WA 6985
Call 08 9453 3311

Email: accounts@challenge.news.org



Crossword

- ACROSS**
- 1. Fool's gold
 - 3. Hot rock
 - 7. Fink
 - 9. One of the low countries
 - 10. Citrus fruit
 - 11. Engine component
 - 13. Shortsighted
 - 14. Part of a rose
 - 17. Dark complexioned
 - 18. Baby carrier
 - 19. It's used to walk the dog
 - 20. Guard



- DOWN**
- 1. Danger
 - 2. Toothpaste holder
 - 4. Greek philosopher
 - 5. Office paperwork
 - 6. Braid of hair
 - 8. Short term
 - 12. Pipers garments
 - 13. Slightly foggy
 - 15. Cat
 - 16. Information unit

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

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

HYPNOTIST QUILTS AFTER DARK ENCOUNTER

BY DARRYL BUDGE

The claimed therapeutic benefits of hypnotherapy were not worth the pain for Sally Jane.

Though her business was thriving she permanently closed it in 2015 to be free from the spirits that deceived and troubled her.

"I now have peace and unconditional love like I have never had in my whole life," Sally says with joyful tears.

The trouble began during an intimate relationship with a charming man who had a hidden secret.

"I discovered he was deeply involved with satanic dark powers and black magic," Sally shares.

It was a "massive shock", she recalls, to be face-to-face with "dark experiences" that inflicted serious anxiety and pain on her life for a number of years.

"I ended the relationship and the darkness continued to try and possess my thoughts, my dreams, my every waking hour."

"I had made the right decision"

She tried to escape by reaching out to spiritualists, new-age healers, and psychics.

"I went to pretty much everyone in the New Age movement, but I actually didn't find any freedom, in fact I found the opposite."

As an atheist for over twenty years Sally was adamant there was no Supreme Creator.

"In that atheist mentality," she explains, "you just don't want to believe that God exists, probably since I was swearing and cursing Him for twenty years!"

Her condition, however, had become impossible as she suffered constant anxiety, then suicidal thoughts.

In desperation she humbly asked her best friend how to ask God for help.

"He advised that I search online for the 'sinner's prayer'. He clearly said, 'Do not read it aloud unless you mean it, because God will know if you are being genuine or not.'"

"I read one prayer, and I was in fits of tears: something inside my spirit resonated with it."

Sally explains this inner desire for God in reference to two Bible verses that now have a rich meaning for her.

"Two Chronicles 7, verse 14, says, 'If my people, who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and I will forgive their sin and heal their land.'"

"Centuries later, Jesus said, 'Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you' (Matthew 7, verse 7)."

On one of her darkest nights, being troubled by these spirits, Sally pleaded with God for peace and forgiveness of her offenses against Him.

"I think my exact words were, 'I am kneeling down before your throne and I am asking you if you are actually there. I want to see You.'"

After five minutes she remembers "an incredible thing happened."

"My eyes were closed and two blinding flashes, like lightning, came through my eyes."

"Every bit of human emotion left me and I lay in a peaceful state, it was supernatural. I just knew that my Father was telling me, 'None of your sin matters now', and that everything would be okay."

After this Sally knew her life would change as her relationship with God deepened.

"God revealed parts of me that I needed to change and parts that He just changed through His Holy

Sally Jane



Spirit. Changes that I am still grateful for now.

"It's just been such a smooth transition. I am not the person I was last year."

At first Sally made excuses so she could practise hypnotherapy.

"The more I continued, the guiltier I felt, I knew I was not pleasing God, my Father."

"He showed me that I was being deceived and that hypnotists have been used as a puppet by deceiving spirits of divination."

Sally read in Deuteronomy chapter 18 that God "detests" divination, acting as a medium or calling up the dead.

"This verse gave me peace that I had made the right decision."

"I chose God and my life got better."

I found peace and unconditional love like I had never had in my whole life," Sally says with joyful tears.

"I found new friendship, the truth of His Word, and God has also removed so much bad out of my life too."

Referring to her experience, Sally says there is no truth or peace in seeking for anything one's heart desires, like money, wealth, talking to the dead, or going to see people to try and talk to the dead.

"Such a life is deception, one which I fell for myself for many years," she says.

"My prayer is that you should reach out to God, accept Jesus for what He did for us, and humble yourself and in return receive the gift of everlasting life."

ABRACADABRA

BY JODY BENNETT

YOU MIGHT have seen a great series on Netflix that exposes the secrets of famous magicians.

The show first shows you how the trick is performed and then exposes the secret to how the illusion is achieved, and it has got me thinking about its parallels to life.

Firstly, the audience in a magic show has only one perspective - either the camera shot on the TV or the front of the stage at a live show - and can't even guess at what is going on "behind the scenes". In one trick the illusion is created that an army tank has disappeared into thin air when in fact the camera, and audience, is just turned to look at a totally different spot!

Secondly, the show brought home to me how dependent we are on what we see, or imagine that we see (whether literally or figuratively), and it is very easy to fool us into believing things that are simply not true. We "see" that the coin is solid, the girl is floating in the air or the box is empty, when in fact none of those things are true.

Thirdly, so many of the illusions come down to distraction: getting the audience to look at the beautiful girls, the elaborate costume or set, or the trajectory of the knife, in order to miss the secret on which the illusion turns.

But once the trick is explained and you know that the secret is twin women, a hiding place in the prop or handcuffs that are rigged, then the whole act usually seems pretty silly.

How like life, where as humans our view on the world is so limited by our narrow perspective as earth-bound, mortal, relatively short-lived creatures; where we are so dependent on what we see; and where we are so easily distracted by the unimportant affairs of life.

If we imagine "all the world is a stage", as Shakespeare said, then God is the only one above and behind the scenes who can see the situations of life for what they truly are.

The Bible calls God's nemesis, Satan, the Father of Lies and says that when he lies he is speaking his native language. He is out to deceive people at every turn.

He does that first by convincing us that what we see



is all there is, blinding us to the reality of the spiritual world, and to the existence and importance of our own, eternal souls.

Next we get distracted from what is truly important by the trivial - the footy score, how much we weigh or our bank balance, none of which matter in the light of eternity.

And finally, Satan lies to us that after the "show" (this life on earth) there is nothing else. However, our whole life on earth is just a tiny fraction of our eternal existence.

The big question is this: if life is like a magic show, short and at times deceptive, have we taken time to work out our response to the love, life and death of Jesus that determines where we go when the final curtain comes down? Because where we go is our choice not God's sovereign directive. And no choice is still a choice.

MAKING THE MOST OF TODAY

I
t
f
What
t

There is a bank called 'Time'. Each morning you are credited with 86,400 seconds (24 hours) to spend however you please, and each night whatever amount that not invested in a good purpose is written off.

This means we must use our time wisely.

You can't draw more time out for 'tomorrow'; you can only live in the present on today's deposit. Invest it wisely. The clock is running, make the most of every day.

WHAT IS A WISE INVESTMENT?

In a lifetime the average person will spend 25 years sleeping, 10.3 years at work, 9.1 years watching TV, 1.1 years cleaning and 92 days on the toilet, according to calculations done by wikibrains.com.

It is crazy to think that we could spend more time cleaning and sitting on the toilet than we do thinking about our purpose in life and what happens after we die.

Most people spend a considerable amount of years working to earn money to buy nice things but when we die what do we take with us?

If a heaven and hell exists, have you really considered where you will end up for eternity?

God is the One who sees and knows all that we do, whether good or bad. "Teach us to number our days," says Psalm 90, verse 12, "that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

God doesn't give us time so we can earn His favour, or use it to secure a place in heaven - the gift of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ is free.

Using time wisely means pursuing God, believing in Jesus and understanding His will and purpose for our lives. It will involve loving and serving others like Jesus does. It will involve living lives which give glory to God.

I encourage you not to take time for granted. Remember the clock is ticking ... make the most of your time!



Dr bes

Literary genius and best-selling author Eric Metaxas was once convinced no one could claim to know God, but an epiphany led him to devoting his life to this very claim he once rejected.

As a typical university student, Eric lived how he pleased but recalls feeling trapped “in the belly of a corporate whale” and unable to find a job after graduation.

Despite good grades, Eric was eventually forced to take the only job he could find: proofreading chemical manuals and other non-literary arcana.

In the drudgery he befriended graphic designer Ed Tuttle, a Christian believer who often engaged with Eric about his search for life’s meaning.

One day when Eric’s uncle had a

stroke and fell into a coma Ed was there to comfort, saying he and some friends were praying for his uncle.

“I was astounded at the kindness of the gesture and at the idea that these people believed there was a God who heard prayers like this and could do something about it,” he says.

“Around this time a slight shift was taking place in my mind, too.”

Eric continued searching and sometimes prayed for God to reveal Himself in some sort of sign.

Then, just before his 25th birthday, he had a vivid dream where he says God clearly spoke to “the secret vocabulary of my heart”.

His dream involved his favourite past-time, ice-fishing, where he recalls, “I looked into the large hole we had cut into the ice and ... [there was] a fish poking out.”

As he picked it up by the gills Eric says he suddenly became aware that the fish was IXTHYS, the early Greek word of Christians from the acronym for Jesus Christ Son of God Our Saviour.

This symbol was important in Greek orthodox culture, Eric explains, which means “God was one-upping me in the language of my own symbol system.”

In that moment Eric realized God had revealed Himself through the person of Jesus Christ.

“I realized in the dream that He was real,” he says.

The next day Eric explained to Ed how God had spoken to him personally.

“I said that I had accepted Jesus [as my Saviour who took my penalty for sin]. And when I spoke those words I was flooded with the same joy I had had inside the dream. And I’ve had that joy with me for the past 25 years,” he says.

Looking back on his past beliefs, Eric says, “Just because somebody can’t explain something doesn’t mean that it’s not a) explainable or b) true.”

“I think the idea of that dream



Eric Metaxas

doesn’t particularly prove anything, on the other hand it’s either true or it’s a lie.”

Knowing Jesus is real now motivates Eric to commit his life to explaining his love for God through his gifts in writing and speaking.

Among many others, he has been recognized for his New York Times best-seller *Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy* and has followed in the footsteps of people like Mother Theresa and Bono as the keynote speaker at the 2012 National Prayer Breakfast in Washington DC, an event attended by the President and other key world leaders.

In more recent times Eric has had key engagements where he makes a strong case that religion is the essential exercise of virtues, without which

a society will collapse.

“We live in a culture that has bought into the patently silly idea that there is a divide between the secular world and the faith world,” Eric shared with WSJ.com in December 2015.

“Some of the greatest minds I’ve ever met; people that are just extraordinary, brilliant, thoughtful, emotionally intelligent people are people of faith in Jesus.”

In his personal life, Eric adds that while life can sometimes be difficult, ultimately God has given him the purpose and hope he had been lacking.

“Following Christ means I am going to follow Him wherever He leads me, and even if He leads me into suffering and difficulty there is joy in the midst of it,” he says.

“That’s the paradox at the heart of following Jesus – a life with meaning is what we are looking for.”

Believe it or not

READ MORE AT CREATION.COM

Australia’s Red Centre through new lens

VISITORS to Australia’s Red Centre will often only hear a secularist explanation for the spectacular, red landscape. Now they can also consider a Biblical perspective.



The Centre is popular with tourists the world over, eager to experience the fascinating desert environment: rocky outcrops, gorges, unusual plateaus and valleys.

Creation Ministries International recently released four, short videos that showcase the beautiful scenery and reveal their origin as explained by the eyewitness historical record of the Bible.

CMI geologist Tas Walker said, “The clips show how the spectacular scenery was formed during the recent global catastrophe of Noah’s Flood. The evidence in the Centre is dramatic and powerful. Professional geologists are documenting the evidence for catastrophe right through the centre of Australia.”

He went on, “Most people are surprised when they first have this evidence pointed out. Surprise turns to amazement when they see the same features in front of their eyes wherever they travel. The evidence is so obvious that they are astounded that they did not see it before.”

Although the clips are short, detailed back-up information with pictures and diagrams is available at creation.com/redcentre.

People learning about or planning to visit the Centre will get so much more from their visit by checking out the material.

Presenter Dr Mark Harwood said, “Understanding Noah’s Flood changes how you look at the world, and how you see your place in it. Check it out at creation.com/redcentre.”

TALE OF MERCY REIMAGINED

BEN HUR (3D)
Rated PG, out August 25

BY DARRYL BUDGE

IN A TIME when movies appeal to our lowest impulses, the new *Ben Hur* film shines with forgiveness and mercy over vengeful violence.

Produced by Mark Burnett of MGM’s *Survivor* and *The Apprentice*, the new 3D blockbuster is a thrilling and beautiful reimagining of the original 1880 novel rather a remake of the 1959 classic.

“The 1959 movie was about revenge, not about forgiveness,” says director Timur Bekmambetov.

“For me that was the main problem, as I think that the novel is mainly about forgiveness... a human being learning how to forgive.”

Our modern world, says the director, “reminds me very much of a huge Roman Empire... where the most important values were pride, rivalry, power, strength, the dictatorship of power, and self-love.

“This kind of world does not have any prospects today. Humanity has to learn how to love and forgive. This would be our only solution.”

The novel, by US Civil War Union General Lew Wallace, has been hailed as “the most influential Christian book of the nineteenth century” and is set during the time of Jesus Christ.

The new movie casts Jack Huston of *Boardwalk Empire* as Judah Ben-



Hur, a Jewish prince whose adopted brother Messala (Toby Kebbell) has returned after commanding a Roman legion of soldiers.

As some Jews mount small, violent rebellions against their Roman rulers, Messala falsely accuses Judah of attempted assassination after a Roman commander is shot. He sentences his brother Judah to life in the Roman sea galleys, and falsely imprisons Judah’s mother and sister.

After years of slavery, aided by wealthy horse trainer Ilderim (Morgan Freeman), Judah returns to his homeland to seek revenge.

A new spirit of radical forgiveness is changing Jerusalem, however. The old rationale of ‘an eye for an eye’ and ‘love your friends and hate your enemies’, is being replaced.

Judah finds a new path when he watches Jesus’ confronting crucifixion. He looks at the crucified thief alongside Jesus and then looks at the soldiers responsible for

carrying out the executions, and realises that their sinful deeds can be cancelled by His sacrificial death, His perfect love.

The two paths before Judah become clear: revenge and the cycle of perpetual hatred and violence, or pardon and peace through the mercy of God.

He chooses to turn away from a world that praises revenge, tyranny, and the spilling of blood.

When Jesus taught that true joy comes after body-and-soul surrender to His sacrificial love, it swept through the ancient world and changed the history of the world forever.

Estimated to cost \$70 million, *Ben Hur* uses convincing CGI unlike the 1950s-era film, which used great crowds of extras, grand sets and real stunts that cost US\$15m (\$129m today) and killed a stunt man and 100 horses.

Check out the trailer at ShareBenHur.com.au

CREATION
THE WORLD’S PREMIER FAMILY MAGAZINE
ON THE ISSUE OF ORIGINS

• Answers for Bible/science questions
• 56 pages full colour
• No paid advertising
• Only \$28 per year
• Delivered to your door

Call us on (07) 3340 9888

CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

OR

CREATION.com/mag

FATHER DAY

BREAKING FREE

Aussie dad escaped twenty years of self-destructive habits

Former male prostitute Thomas Wedge has travelled the world telling people there is everlasting hope freely available to those trapped by harmful addictions.

The American-born married father-of-one now living in Perth says his decade-long addictions to drugs and sex were sparked by a lack of love.

As a young teen Thom felt unloved by his wealthy father, yet he recalls a 27-year-old man “told me he loved me, and I had to give him my body for that love.”

This childhood sexual abuse became a lifestyle choice upon adulthood as Thom told himself, “This is what I am going to be.”

During his theatrical studies at Pepperdine University in Malibu, California, Thom was miraculously and instantly healed of bronchitis and pneumonia.

Thom recalls, “I knew the healing was Jesus’ doing,” and he enquired what Jesus could do about his lifestyle until a church minister declined to help.

He found success as a TV and theatre actor in the Hollywood entertainment industry and embraced his homosexual attractions, as he felt more accepted in them than he had at the minister’s church.

After attending sex clubs he became addicted to crystal meth and recalls having a “long string of boyfriends”, which he says was emotionally painful.

“I disappeared into Hollywood sex clubs for up to five days. On meth I wouldn’t eat or drink, and had very little water.”

Thom sold his body for money and was about to enter adult films, but an audible voice saying “Don’t” prevented him from visiting the film set.

It was when his friends began disappearing Thom realised his life had to change.

“Some were dead, diagnosed with HIV followed by AIDS, or in prison for drug crimes,” he sadly recalls.

“I never completely trusted people around me in this lifestyle, but I found Christians were very nice to me. I was often choosing between a sex club or going bowling with a Christian young adults group.”

He listened quietly to sermons at the back of a church.

But Thom was still consumed by his addiction. He felt miserable after numerous failed attempts at sexual addiction recovery programs, and tried overdosing on drugs.

Before he could overdose Thom says God inaudibly warned him: “Thom, I love you, but you reap what you sow.”

A devastating HIV diagnosis motivated him to finally give Jesus control of his life.

Outside the clinic he went to the Bible in his car glovebox and happened to read God’s offer of life and death to the people of Israel, recorded in Deuteronomy chapter 30: “Today, I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing.

Therefore, choose life that both you and your descendants may live.”

Immediately Thom prayed, “God, I want to live, but I don’t know how I am going to do it.”

As Jesus took control of his life Thom began reading the Bible systematically.

Weyman and Susan Howard, a Christian couple he had met three weeks earlier, warmly invited him to eat and

stay at their house even as he continued attending sex clubs.

“Weyman and Susan won over my heart,” Thomas explains. “I had a picture of Jesus and life outside of the sex clubs, and a place of peace with them.”

“God, I want to live, but I don’t know how I am going to do it”



Thomas Wedge

world with Weyman and Susan “to share God’s love”.

Thom met his Perth-born wife Misty at an English church in 2008 and today he mentors young men and runs his own men’s skincare business.

He quotes Jesus’ promise, “If you can believe [in Jesus],

all things are possible for him who believes.”

“Now you have heard my story, will you choose life? Choose Jesus!” Thom exhorts.

“G.K. Chesterton said the good news of Jesus has not been found wanting; instead, ‘It has been found difficult and not tried.’”

Worth more than you know

Self-doubt drove Jody Bennett to pursue romantic relationships in her early teens but with three girls of her own today, she is determined to prevent them from making the same mistakes she did.

“I wish now that I could go back to that unhappy 13-year-old and tell her what I know now,” Jody says.

It all began when Jody’s father, wanting to avoid anything inappropriate, withdrew physical affection and distanced himself from her as she entered adolescence.

“Desperate to know that I was attractive to the opposite sex and valuable as a person, this was very hard and led me to start dating at age 13,” she shares.

When that first “true love” relationship did not work out, Jody became suicidal and tried to overdose.

“This was the beginning of several years of wrestling with my sense of belonging and self-worth,” she says.

“I made myself throw up after meals because I felt fat and continued to be tempted by suicidal thoughts. I withdrew into morbid music and fantasy ‘zoning out’ for hours at a time.”

Her mother could not understand why she was so “angry” all the time but from Jody’s perspective she was just crying out for help.

Not knowing how to respond, her parents punished or ignored her “attention getting behaviour”, leaving her feeling even more miserable and misunderstood.

“Through those years, at the back of my mind, I somehow knew the truth that the answer to my need for acceptance and love was to give all my brokenness and hurt to Jesus. It just took me some time to believe it,” she says.

She recalls attending a church family camp at age six, where she knelt with her mother beside her bed and prayed for Jesus to become Lord of her life.

“Even at that young age I knew that every inclination of my heart was to do wrong and I needed Jesus’ help, and wanted to go to heaven to be with Him when I died,” she explains.

Later, at age 11, Jody was baptised as a public declaration of her faith in Jesus.

“In high school I learnt a Bible verse that became a lifeline to me and the basis for developing a new, healthy self-image grounded in what God says,” she shares.

“It reads: You have looked deep into my heart, LORD, and you know all about me. You know when I am resting or when I am working, and from heaven you discover my thoughts. You notice everything I do and everywhere I go. Before I even speak a word, you know what I will say, and with your powerful arm you protect me from every side ... You are the one who put me together inside my mother’s body, and I praise you because of the wonderful way you created me. Everything you do is marvelous! Of this I have no doubt. Nothing about me is hidden from you! ... Even before I was



Jody with her father and daughters

born, you had written in your book everything I would do.” (See Psalm 139: 1-6; 13-16.)

However, it was only at 27, and after several boyfriends, that Jody finally let go of the lie that only being part of a couple proved that she was loveable or valuable.

“That was when I fully embraced God as the only source of my identity and self-worth. I found true release from the need to make myself into what others wanted.”

Shortly after that Jody met her husband, and she says she was able to enter into marriage

“not needy or wanting my husband to fulfil me”.

Now with three girls entering their teens she says she encourages them and others to see that the best foundation to build your identity on is written in God’s Word, the Bible.

“Listen to and believe what God says about you and not what society is pressuring you to be,” she exhorts.

“You have intrinsic worth, God made you the way you are for a reason, you don’t have to try to be someone else and God’s plans and timing are always the best.”



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

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

Name _____

DOB / / Male Female

Street _____ Suburb _____

State _____ Postcode _____

Parent/Guardian Signature (if under 18 years) _____

Delivery Address:
Room 42
Level 2, Trinity Arcade
671 Hay Street Mall
Perth WA 6000

We are looking forward to hearing from you!
(08) 9321 6706
info@pssm.com.au
pssm.com.au



THE VERY BEST DAD

"My heart has been healed," says child abuse survivor

Growing up without a father and years of physical and sexual abuse sent Queenslander Mark Stiles down a road of low self-esteem, depression and suicide attempts.

Mark was just 12 years old when he was sent to a church home in 1971.

"It was a very lonely place," he recalls. "It was devoid of love, it was devoid of pleasures... It was devoid of family."

There he suffered at the hands of one of the staff whom he says sexually abused him "at least four out of every seven days."

"Many times he would drag me out of bed at 3am for allegedly making a noise," he told the Royal Commission when he shared his story with them in February last year.

Mark left the home in December 1972, but the destruction he had suffered continued to affect him every day.

When you leave a place like that he explains "you take into life a lot of mistrust, hate; you take into life a lot of arrogance, very poor opinions, those sorts of things. And they form part of who you are."

"I have been second guessing myself my whole life, almost every day. I feel I have gone through life afraid and my self-esteem has been shot to pieces," Mark says.

That and the lack of a father figure in his life caused Mark to make some "bad decisions" and for years he drank to drown his insecurity and depression.

"I had no self-worth whatsoever ... life was without meaning."



FILE PHOTO

One morning at 4am Mark awoke and began writing at his computer. What he ended up writing was a book of his experiences at the Home.

A few days later on his drive home from work Mark was thinking about the words he had written when he heard the voice of God very clearly say: "Mark, Jesus is alive."

"I had to pull over. I broke down into tears. It was too much," he says.

"It was the beginning of me discovering [that] what I'd wanted all my life was a dad. And I had the best one. I had the top of the tree, the very best dad I could have, which was God. God the Father."

Mark describes the next few days as rough as he fought to accept the notion of a loving heavenly Father who wanted only good things for him.

Today, however, he says he has been completely healed from the pain and

destruction his childhood trauma had caused.

"I can't even begin to describe what [God] has done for me. He healed my heart, He gave me love.

"Most of all He taught me my identity: I'm a son. And I have a dad. For the first time in my life I have a dad, and I love Him to bits."

Mark says he has learnt to forgive those responsible for the abuse he suffered at the home.

"When we forgive and we learn to love, it's just the full release of everything.

"Today my message is simple," he says. "Jesus is Lord of all. To all that are lost in the pains of hurts many years ago, wherever you are, go into a quiet place and ask Jesus to touch you. Begin your journey home to where we all belong, in the lap of the Father [God]."



What type of father is God?

HAVE YOU HEARD people say 'I like the Jesus of the New Testament (NT) but I don't like the angry God of the Old Testament (OT)?'

According to Christianity, Jesus is God in human form. Jesus told His followers that if they had seen Him they had seen God. Sometimes it seems to me though that we think they are two different types of gods: that the OT God is a stern, strict Victorian father who takes the strap to his children if they do wrong, whereas we imagine Jesus as a modern, fun parent who gives us lots of hugs and positive reinforcement. But are either of these really the picture the Bible portrays?

In fact, the Bible often does portray God as a Father.

- In a verse that appears on lots of Christmas cards, Jesus was prophesied in Isaiah to come as a Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace.
- King David, in the Psalms, says, 'You are my Father, my God.' (Psalms 89:26)
- The famous story of the Prodigal son describes God as the loving Father waiting expectantly for the return of his disobedient child.
- Romans 8 says that Christians are "adopted" into the family of God, and they can cry out to their "Abba", which means "Daddy" in Aramaic.

But even the OT shows us a picture of God being a very compassionate father to the Israelites - repeatedly overlooking their disobedience to His laws, giving them another chance to do as He has directed, giving them plenty of warning before He disciplines them, not enjoying correcting them and relenting when they turn back to Him.

Bearing in mind that God is a being of infinite power who, the Bible says is so big He holds the world in His hand, He could have wiped them off the face of the earth at any time, quite justly, for their rebellion against Him.

However, His anger at their wrongdoing and betrayal of Him is short-lived compared to His infinite loving kindness towards them.

And in the NT we find Jesus is not an indulgent dad, but He shows the Father to us as a God who has high standards, who disciplines the children He loves, who will one day judge the world and all wrongdoing, who hates sin and who wants us to be "holy", which means set apart to do what He wants.

The God of the Old and New Testaments is one and the same God. A God who is both completely perfect and incredibly forgiving and kind.

His perfect holiness means that our sin (wrongdoing) cannot be overlooked because that would make Him unjust. His love means that throughout history He has made a way to pay for our sins and make us part of His family.

Out attempts to "earn" right relationship with God ourselves, by our own goodness, are like a small child who repeatedly tries to reach a door handle or climb an obstacle, until eventually he or she bursts into tears and admits defeat.

In fact, righteousness is so far out of our reach, it is more like a child trying to pull down the moon or fly off a tower!

Although we may desire to do the right thing or feel the noble emotion, we all know the frustration of completely lacking the desire or ability to follow through for long on that good intention ... or indeed at all!

However, the message of the Gospel is that when we give up trying in our own strength and ask for God's help, the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross pays for all our wrongdoings and we get given His righteousness as a free gift.

That's why Christianity is good news!

Inspiring Father's Day

BY GRAHAM MCDONALD

IN 1909, John and Sonora Dodd attended the Mother's Day service at their church. As Sonora listened to the sermon and heard the virtues of mothers and motherhood from the Scriptures, her mind went back to her childhood. She thought of how important fathers are in raising children and she thought of the notion of a Father's Day.

Sonora's father William, a Civil War veteran, lost his wife as she gave birth to their sixth child. Sonora was sixteen at the time of her mother's death and being the eldest child, much of the responsibility to raise her five brothers fell on her shoulders.

Through the difficult years following her mother's death, Sonora watched her father care for the six children with love and devotion and saw him make sacrifices in order to give the children better lives.

After the Mother's Day church service in 1909, Sonora felt inspired to campaign for equal recognition of fathers. In June 1910, Sonora approached the Spokane Ministerial Alliance and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) to establish Father's Day as a

holiday in the same fashion as Mother's Day.

Due to the support of these Christian organisations, and Sonora's dedication to the cause, the first Father's Day was celebrated on June 19, 1910.

Sonora wanted Father's Day to be celebrated on the first Sunday in June, which was close to her own father's birthday. However, to allow pastors enough time to prepare a service, the first Father's Day was pushed back to the third Sunday of June.

Local businesses that had already profited from the Mother's Day celebration started taking out newspaper ads with a Father's Day theme. Many trade groups that would benefit most, for example manufacturers of ties, belts and braces, helped Sonora to receive national coverage for Father's Day.

President Woodrow Wilson approved of Father's Day in 1916, and by 1919, when Sonora's father - the man who inspired the holiday - died, Father's Day was a popular occasion and celebration across The United States of America.

Sonora was honoured as the founder of 'Father's Day' at the 1940 New York World Trade



Fair for her contribution to commerce.

Some 72 countries celebrate Father's Day on the third Sunday in June, whereas Australia, New Zealand and some of the Pacific Islands celebrate this event on the first

Sunday in September.

Sonora Dodd's efforts to celebrate and promote Father's Day were a practical expression of the fifth of the Ten Commandments: "Honour your Father and your Mother."

This article appears on www.DIDUNO.info

Better than "Dad jokes"...

Four men are in the hospital waiting room because their wives are having babies. A nurse goes up to the first guy and says, "Congratulations! You're the father of twins."

"That's odd," answers the man. "I work for the Minnesota Twins!"

A nurse says to the second guy, "Congratulations! You're the father of triplets!"

"That's weird," answers the

second man. "I work for the 3M company!"

A nurse tells the third man, "Congratulations! You're the father of quadruplets!"

"That's strange," he answers. "I work for the Four Seasons hotel!"

The last man is groaning and banging his head against the wall. "What's wrong?" the others ask.

"I work for 7 Up!"

Dear Dad: \$chool i\$ great. I'm making lot\$ of friend\$ and Studying hard. I \$imply can't think of anything I need, \$o ju\$t \$end me a card, a\$ I would love to hear from you. Love, Your \$on

Dear Son: I kNOW astroNOMy, ecoNOMics and oceaNOgraphy are eNOugh to keep a student busy. Do NOT forget that the pursuit of kNOWLEDge is a NOBLE task, and you can never study eNOugh. Love, Dad

BEAUTY WITHIN

Lizzie Velasquez was browsing through YouTube as a typical teenager when she came across a video titled *The Ugliest Woman in the World*. She soon discovered the video starred her and already had over four million views.

Now 27 years old, Lizzie Velasquez has never weighed more than 29 kilos in her life and has zero percent body fat. She suffers from an undiagnosed, very rare condition that prevents her from gaining weight. She is also completely blind in her right eye and has limited vision in the other.



"Yes, it is as good as it sounds," Lizzie jokes about her syndrome. "I can eat whatever I want whenever I want, I get half off prescription for my glasses and if someone annoys me I just tell them to stand on my right [blind] side, and it's like they're not even there."

But Lizzie has not always been so light hearted about her syndrome.

"I first realized I was different in kindergarten," she explains, recalling how the first little girl she ever walked up to looked at her like she was a monster.

Year after year of bullying caused Lizzie to hate herself and her syndrome.

"I thought my little tiny legs and my little arms and my tiny face were ugly. I thought I was disgusting. I hated when I woke up in the morning and looked in the mirror getting ready for school. I thought, 'Can I just scrub this syndrome off? It would make my life so much easier'."

Then one day Lizzie decided she would no longer let her condition

and the effect it had on her outward appearance define her.

When the cruel video came out and comments started appearing like: "Lizzie, please, please just do the world a favour, put a gun to your head and kill yourself," Lizzie had a choice.

She knew she could believe those things about her, or she could stand above the insults and believe she was beautiful and treasured by God her creator.

"God is the number one reason why I am here," she told CNA. "He blessed me with the greatest blessing of my life, which is my syndrome."

As King David wrote in Psalm chapter 139 verses 13 and 14, "For You (God) created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well."

Lizzie's decision to follow Jesus Christ came at the end of high school and has seen her through every difficult situation since then, from bullying to physical challenges.

"Even when it seems like things will never get better in the darkest times, if you have faith and continue to push yourself, you can eventually get through anything," Lizzie says, understanding that God made and loves her just as she is.

"I started to realize my life was in my hands. I could either choose to make this really good or choose to make this really bad," she says. "I could choose to be grateful for the things I do have and make those the things that define me. I can't see out of one eye, and I might get sick a lot, but I have really nice hair."

"Am I going to let the people who call me a monster define me? Am I going to let the people who said 'kill it with fire' define me? No," she adds.

What defines Lizzie is her confidence, her success, her talent for motivational speaking and writing, and her faith in Jesus.

"(My faith in Jesus has) been my rock through everything, just having the time to be alone and pray and talk to God and know that He's there for me," she says.

Lizzie has come to see her syndrome as a blessing from God, which she can use to motivate, inspire, and help other people realize they are loved and perfect as they are.

The video may have had 4 million views, but her inspiring 2013 TEDx Women talk has been seen by 7 million and has had an impact on countless lives. •

Lizzie tells of her own journey towards self-acceptance in her 2012 book *Be Beautiful, Be You* and in a documentary *A Brave Heart*, see ABraveHeartFilm.com



Lizzie Velasquez

Identifying wounds HEALS ANGRY AFTERMATH

Resolving inner wounds can heal Rwanda and angry men, says reconciliation worker

As a World Vision worker John Steward thought his 27 years of marriage were happy until his wife announced, "I am running out of patience with you – you need to work on your attitudes and how you relate to others."

A psychologist friend recommended a "Non-Violent Solutions" weekly workshop for up to 50 men that explored the behavioural impact of upbringing, parental models and expectations.

The workshop taught John so much that he now applies his personal experience to others, including helping mentor Rwandans recovering from horrific genocide.

"Observing others' emotional healing, and affirming those changes, provided the foundation for much of my reconciliation work in Rwanda's recovery from genocide," John explains.

When he and his wife Sandi first went to Rwanda in 1997, John recalls, "The post-genocide situation was a cauldron of fear, anxiety, bitterness, pain, shame, disappointment, shock, uncertainty, poverty and confusion."

One young woman believed she was responsible for the death of her brother since she believed false government radio reports to stay at home rather than flee to Burundi.

In one healing workshop, John recalls asking her, "Did you want the killers to come? Did you in any way plan or desire it?"

After answering no, she said, "So I am not responsible for the death of my brother am I?"

John continues, "The strain on her face began to dissolve. After the workshop her mum said, 'You're coming alive.'"

Like this young woman, years



John Steward with Dr Habyarimana and Mrs Munyeli, two Rwandans who played key roles in the grass roots process, gacaca (loosely translated to "justice amongst the grass").

later John says that in the non-violent solutions workshop, "I discovered personal wounds that had subconsciously influenced me... that needed to be healed."

He asked his wife every week how she felt and in quietly listening to her he realised his wounds had deeply affected his wife, daughters and acquaintances.

"My two false beliefs were 'you cannot trust your feelings' and 'strong feelings damage relationships'."

The group learned about healthy behaviours: openness, respect, timeout, forgiveness and apology.

John began to consciously identify his passive anger as chest tightness, as well as his verbally aggressive anger, then as quickly as possible he verbally discussed the root cause with his wife or the person it involved.

"Once I attended to the root cause, the negative feeling evaporated. I was amazed by how I became lighter in spirit and more able to forgive others and myself. It was daunting, hard work. My faith was tested, as was my commitment to marriage."

Where did John gain this courage to face up to himself and help a country floundering from a violent past?

John says the answer is his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

As a child living in Java with his missionary parents John realised

that trusting the God of the Bible delivered his family from the fear that surrounded them.

"For three years I observed my parents live their Christian faith amongst village people whose lives were focused on fear of spirits – and it was a stark contrast," John says.

Years later in university John began to question what he truly believed.

"One Easter I was invited to consider: did Jesus die on the cross for me? I knew the answer was 'yes' and that I could either choose to live for myself or for my Saviour, Jesus Christ."

"I began to study the Bible in order to make choices which led to a growing faith in Jesus and an adventurous life."

After marriage and two daughters John is thankful that God uncovered the "black seed" that was poisoning his life.

"Thank God my wife found the courage to tell me what my darkness felt like to her."

"This led me to understand my deep inner wounds, which clouded my desire to live as a follower of Jesus."

John believes God used the changes in his life to bring about amazing transformation in the lives of many Rwandans. •

Read more about John's work and his book *From Genocide to Generosity* at www.2live4give.org

Strength to handle pain

• From page 1

Christina's mother Tina said she wanted to be strong but wasn't dealing with Christina's death well and was completely dependent on Jesus for strength.

"I don't have too much to say," she began before breaking down, as an eyewitness told US magazine. "To anybody who says I'm strong, I want you to know that I'm the weakest person here, and I declare my dependence on Jesus Christ because I don't have anything else. It's just so much."

Christina was discovered on YouTube in 2010 by Brian and Mandy Teefey after they watched her cover of Miley Cyrus' *Party in the USA*.

Her career took off as she performed in the UNICEF charity concert, sang backup vocals for Selena Gomez & The Scene, performed alongside Taio Cruz at the 2011 American Music Awards, and released the EP *Find Me* in 2011 and her album *With Love* in 2013.

Her second EP, *Side A*, was released in February this year, and Christina had expressed in interviews her desire to release a second full-length album by the end of the year.

Christina's cover of the song *In Christ Alone* was played at the start of the memorial. She had posted it on YouTube for Easter 2012 with the accompanying caption: "Owl City's cover of this inspired me to sing this for you guys. Easter is one of my faaaaaavorite holidays! Jesus Christ is my Lord and Saviour and I'm not at all ashamed of it." •



Christina Grimmie

Building Better Marriages

FATHER'S LOVE AND AFFIRMATION IS VITAL

BY ROB FURLONG

SINGER-SONGWRITER David Meece has produced some profoundly moving songs over his long career, many of them telling the story about his struggles with his self-worth.

If you have ever attended a Meece concert you will know that he intersperses his music with deeply personal illustrations about growing up in a family with an alcoholic father.

One of the most powerful of these is when he tells of the night that his father, in a drunken rage, drove the family car through the wall of David's bedroom.

His father staggered out of the wreckage, held a shotgun to David's head, stared into his eyes and said, "You're worthless..."

When David Meece recounts this story he points out that those words were more devastating to him than had his father actually pulled the trigger.

You can hear the pain that it caused Meece through his song, **When I was Seventeen:**

*My daddy left home when I was a kid
Said he had to move on
He took the bottle as his only friend
I didn't know why, I didn't know why*

*Mama tried to do the best that she could
But she just didn't understand
All the confusion I was feeling inside
I didn't know why, I didn't know why*

*Feeling so alone
How I wish back then I'd known
When I was seventeen*

*From study hall to the senior prom
I felt like no one at all
And just a shadow in a crowded room
I didn't know why, I didn't know why*



David Meece

He discovered he wasn't worthless but precious in God's eyes.

He discovered what many others have discovered – that God loved him for who he was and that He called him "son".

David Meece discovered that God was his Father and that he would never be rejected by Him.

In his song, **My Father's Chair**, he contrasts the love of his Father God with the abandonment that he felt from his earthly father:

*Sometimes at night I'd lie awake
Longing inside for my father's embrace
Sometimes at night I'd wander downstairs
And pray he'd returned, but no one was there.
Oh, how I'd cry, a child all alone*

Waiting for him to come home.

*My father's chair, sat in an empty room
My father's chair, covered with sheets of gloom
My father's chair through all the years
And all the tears I cried in vain
No one was there in my father's chair.*

*Sometimes at night I dream of a throne
Of my loving God, calling me home
And as I appear, He rises and smiles
And reaches with love to welcome His child
Never to cry, never to fear
In His arms, safe and secure.*

*My Father's chair sits in a royal room
My Father's chair holds glory beyond the tomb
My Father's chair, my God is there
And I am His eternal heir
Someday I'll share my Father's chair.*

Study after study reiterates that a father's love and affirmation is vital for the healthy emotional development of a child.

Many of us understand the feeling of being abandoned by our natural fathers.

And the scars and pain of this loss can be carried well into our adult years.

But here is good news!

God longs to be your heavenly Father and when you turn to Him in simple trust and faith, He accepts you as a treasured son or daughter.

You can be His much loved son or daughter – now that is reason to celebrate this Father's Day!

UPCYCLING: MAKE IT YOUR BUSINESS

A hobby can be made into a successful business venture in a few easy steps, writes Jen Vuk

'Upcycling' seems to be the word of the moment, but it can also be much more than a passing hobby. If seen in the right light, upcycling, which is basically converting used or waste materials into new materials or products of better quality, is also a great business opportunity.

Classic upcycled products include designer handbags decorated with old chocolate wrappers, soft drink tops or even old seat belts; or jewellery fashioned out of old buttons or washers.

An upcycling business is ideal for those entrepreneurs interested in working from home.

Here are a few handy tips to help get you started:

WHAT'S YOUR INTEREST?

Perhaps the first thing to do is to hone your interest. What exactly is your area of expertise? Do you like sewing or crafting? Or is recycling furniture more your thing? Or, perhaps, you have an eye for fashion and know how to turn that dowdy 1980s outfit into something more modern? The point is to find your talent and stick to it.

IS THERE A MARKET?

Once you've worked out your area of expertise then it's time to look where to place it. Try to identify a gap in the market that you can tap into. Put your personal spin on your own line of products, maybe for pets or children's bedrooms, for instance.

DO SOME SHORT COURSES

Before you begin it's always a good idea to do a few short courses. Small-business courses give you the skills you need to set up, manage, market and run all kinds of operations. If you don't have the time to commit to onsite learning, there are a number of online courses available.

MAKE A BUSINESS PLAN

It's important to prepare a business plan when starting or growing your business and review it regularly to keep it up to date, because a business plan allows you to set out your goals and objectives, and also chart where the business is going.

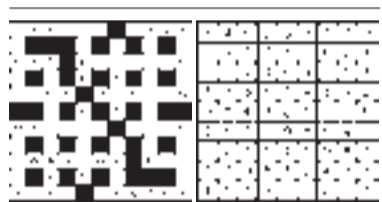
Before writing your business plan, consider the need to research your idea, your competitors and the marketplace. Look online for examples of business plans as well as free templates.

GET BUSY

Take the plunge and practise on anything and everything. The more you practise, the better you'll be. Making mistakes is a big part of learning and it also helps you find your own style and grow in confidence.

Remember, we're often our own worst critics, but chances are there's a niche market out there lying in wait for your unique product. What have you got to lose?

Used with permission. This article first appeared in the Salvation Army's *Warcry* magazine.



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 <i>"Everyone has sinned. Nobody is good enough because God's standards are perfect" (Romans 3:23)</i> | ADMIT |
| GOD'S REMEDY / SOLUTION: | Jesus died on the cross <i>"God demonstrates His own love for us in this; while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8)</i> | BELIEVE |
| OUR RESPONSE: | Trust Jesus by receiving Him <i>"To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12)</i> | 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:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>If you prayed the above prayer, tick this box</p> <p>I have prayed this prayer. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please send me:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Bible</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Some 'starting off' literature</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Information on a helpful church</p> | <p>If you have NOT prayed the prayer at this stage, tick this box</p> <p>I would like to think about this. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Please send me:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> More information as I am inquiring about being a Christian.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have a problem (see attached letter)</p> |
|--|--|

** Please tick and write clearly **

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Age and occupation (it helps) _____

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

All overseas enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country

Computers & Technology

FREE VIRTUAL REALITY 'FIELD TRIP'

BY DARRYL BUDGE

Google's Expeditions app (Android only for now) is now freely available so you can make a virtual visit to the Great Barrier Reef, Italy's Verona and even Mars, among over 200 locations.

The 360-degree virtual tours are fun without Cardboard or another VR viewer, but it is certainly a more real experience if you have one.

The Expeditions app was initially designed for a teacher to take their whole class on a peer-to-peer synced virtual field trip, using dozens of cheap Android phones, \$5 Cardboard VR viewers and a 'tour guide' tablet. Over a million students from 11 countries have been on such virtual expeditions in the past year.

Locations include Antarctica, Machu Pichu, Dubai's Burj Khalifa, The Great Wall of China, the Congo, and many US National Parks. You can also explore human anatomy (like a less colourful "The Magic School Bus") and the careers of a few accomplished artists.

Other free family-safe apps for 360-degree experiences are YouTube, Fulldive VR, Orbulus, Titans of Space, Volvo Reality, and Roller Coaster VR.

Classrooms also have a new Google Cast for Education app available for Chrome browsers, which enables teachers and students to share their screens on a HDMI-equipped screen via a Google Cast Wi-Fi dongle (approx. \$50). Schools that use inexpensive Google Chromebooks will find this extremely useful.



Cardboard viewer



Students using cardboard viewers

WORLD RECORD FALLS

“Jesus did it,” says South African 400 metre victor



RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL - AUGUST 14, 2016: Wayde van Niekerk of South Africa competes in the Men's 400m final at the Rio Olympic Games. (Photo Patrick Smith/Getty Images)

South African Men's 400m Olympic gold medallist sprinter Wayde van Niekerk broke a 17-year-old world record, but if you ask him: “Jesus did it”.

The 24-year-old, who friends say is humble, friendly, and decent, won despite qualifying fifth-fastest for the final and being relegated to the dreaded outside lane, where he couldn't see any of the other runners.

Being in lane eight may actually have helped him though, as he told reporters in Rio he was convinced someone would chase him down.

“I thought someone was going to catch me, because I felt very alone and I was like, ‘What's going on?’

“It gave me so much motivation to

keep on pushing, and ... I just dove for the finish line.”

Wayde won convincingly in the time of 43.03 seconds, breaking Michael Johnson's record, and gaining the high praise – and embrace – of Jamaican sprinting legend Usain Bolt.

“The only thing I can do now is to give God praise,” said Wayde moments after millions around the world watched as he bowed in prayer after the race.

“I asked the Lord to carry me through the race and I'm really, really blessed and grateful for this opportunity,” said the University of the Free State student who commentators – including Johnson – immediately began speculating could become the next big athletics

star when Bolt retires.

“I went on my knees each and every day and I told the Lord to take care of me every step of the way – I even wrote it down on my spikes,” said Wayde in a track-side television interview with *BBC Sport* in which he held up his running shoes to show the words “Jesus I am all yours, use me”.

Speaking of the importance of his faith, he said he values it because God “is the one who blessed me with talent”.

He previously told sports media organisation *Passion for Sport* that “everything that comes my way I thank the Lord.” He said: “I leave every race and every step I take in His hands. I trust Him in every movement I do.”

After the race he tweeted his thanks with the words “God is power” and “Jesus did it” in an attached graphic.

Wayde was the flag bearer for South Africa at the Games' opening ceremony, and flew 10 members of his family to Rio to watch him compete, including his girlfriend Chesney Campbell, 24, his grandparents and parents.

Bolt, who is also a vocal Jesus-follower, congratulated Wayde track-side and 20 minutes later went on to make history as he won his third, successive 100m Olympic title. The two did not compete against each other at Rio as Wayde, despite being the South African champion at 200m, elected not to enter that race in his first Olympics.

“My favourite event is the 200m, to be honest with you,” Wayde told *Sports Illustrated*, when asked if he'd like to take on Bolt.

“I'd love to race one day, when I'm big. These are guys that inspire me, that keep me competing; the same like with the guys in the 400m. I'd even love to run 100m with the big

dogs one of these days.”

Wayde's personal best in the 100m is 9.98 seconds, making him the first man in history to run under 10 seconds for the 100m race, under 20 seconds for the 200m race and under 44 seconds for the 400m race.

Wayde's 74-year-old coach, Anna Botha, was exuberant in her reaction to his victory but was unable to get onto the track to congratulate him, as security officials did not believe the white haired great-grandmother was who she claimed! Botha, who has been coaching athletics since

1960 has been working with Wayde for three years.

Of the comparison to Bolt, Wayde said: “I am grateful and blessed to be surrounded by such great sports people of my generation and I am just grateful to be where I am today.”

BELOW: van Niekerk beside the results board after breaking the world record in the Men's 400m final. (Photo Olivier Morin/AFP/Getty Images)



RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL - AUGUST 15, 2016: Wayde van Niekerk celebrates winning the gold medal for the men's 400m at the Rio Olympic Games. (Photo Johannes Eisele/AFP/Getty Images)



DISTRIBUTED BY: