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We have produced this Jesus Bible for those of you who are wondering about Jesus and have questions about him. Who was he, who is he, and what is the meaning of it all? Many people have questions about Jesus that they don't have answers to. They might have an idea about him, they might have certain hopes about him, but they never quite know for sure.

Maybe you have never even read the Bible.

Well, here is your chance. This edition contains the New Testament, which is the second part of the Bible. It is mainly about Jesus and his followers.

Besides the entire New Testament, we have also added another 128 pages, filled with powerful, interesting, and touching life stories, as told by people who say that they have been helped by Jesus. Read for example about BeBe, who met Jesus and then left his gang and a life of crime to start a whole new life. You will also meet Olli, who was

a hooligan, filled with hate, but who then experienced a strong love that radically changed his life. And Lena, who suffered through sexual abuse for years, but who did not allow her difficult past to shape her future. And many more.

This edition also contains written prayers, poems, and information.

Read it for yourself – try it and see!

It's all about Jesus – because he is amazing!

Roul and Birgit Åkesson
Bible for the Nations



GOD MAKES ALL THINGS GOOD

ROUGH START!

My mother was not a very happy person. She considered suicide several times and tried it once before I was born. When she found out that she was pregnant with me – as the result of an affair with a married man – it did not make life any easier. Her deep longing to be loved led her into a series of unhealthy relationships that brought a lot of pain into our little family. Some of the men who lived with us were very violent and aggressive, permanently causing strife and arguments.

GOD'S PEACE

Praise God for my grandma. She lived in a different city but regularly came to visit. At a very early age she introduced me to God and taught me about the importance of committing your life to Jesus. She had also dealt with a series of painful relationships, but she became a Christian on a bench in a cemetery after talking to two nuns in the 1950's. Whenever she came to visit us she would bring tapes, books, devotionals, whatever she could find in the Christian bookstore to teach me about God. In those years I got to know Jesus in a very intimate way. Whenever hell broke loose in our house, I could sense his peace and love.



CAN I REALLY TRUST HIM WITH MY LIFE?

I could have never denied God but when I was in my late teens I was not so sure anymore if Jesus was able to satisfy my desire for a life full of purpose and adventure. That was what I was yearning for. In those days I thought I could get the ultimate thrill out of sports and a series of relationships, even though I knew that they wouldn't actually lead anywhere and that they were very unhealthy. My strategy in life, what little one I had, was not really working. My longing was still there and I knew that something had to change. I wrote a letter to God that sounded a bit like this:

"God, I don't want to live a boring life. I read in the Bible how fulfilling and meaningful the first Christians lived their lives. They found peace in you, you sent them to heal the sick and to change the world, you provided supernaturally for their needs and asked them to share with all nations what you have done on the cross – if a life like that is still possible today, I want to commit myself fully to you."

WHOEVER PUTS HIS TRUST IN GOD WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED

A voice deep down inside of me told me that I should trust the God of my childhood, although it meant I had to make a series of difficult decisions. I had to get out of a relationship, disappoint some of my relatives and take steps into unknown territory. That is how I entered into a completely new season of my life 20 years ago. I went to a Bible College, studied to become a teacher and earned my degree in theology. In 2006 I started a missions organization and a Bible school that is committed to sending teams of young people to preach the gospel around the globe. I have experienced miracles in my own life and in the lives of others. Physical and emotional healings were among them. Wherever people hear the gospel they are filled with new hope.

THANKFULNESS

I am so thankful for everything that God has done in my life. To trust Him was the best decision I have ever made. He has changed my life, though I still have to be careful not to slip back into patterns that wrongly shaped me during my childhood years. He has given me a wonderful wife, three beautiful children and has made my life new. With all my heart I desire that you have the same experience: God is good!

P.S.

In 1998 my mother was diagnosed with cancer, but it was also the moment that she committed her life to God. Though her physical situation deteriorated every day, Jesus wiped away a lifetime of pain and emotional misery. She became a truly happy woman. Finally, she also found her peace with God and received grace and forgiveness.

This is my story.

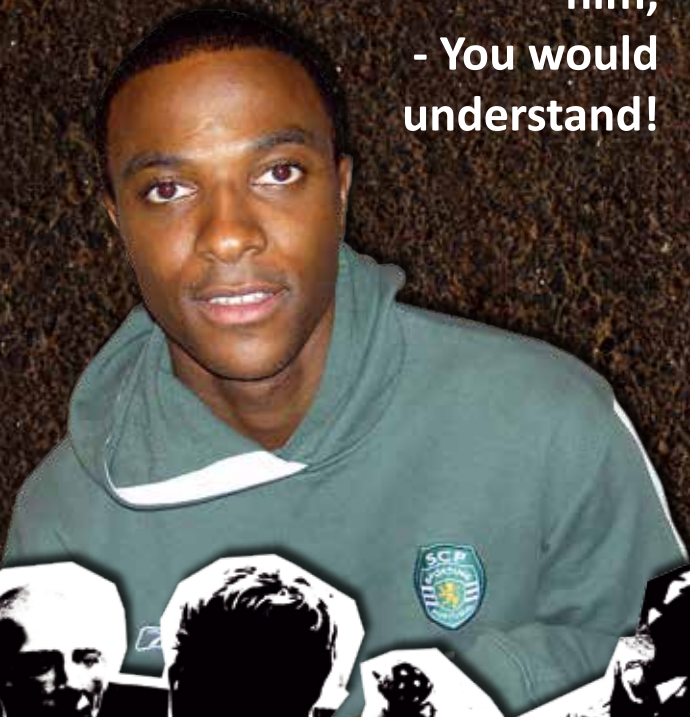


Jernot



BeBe

- If you knew
him,
- You would
understand!



A NORMAL CHILDHOOD

My parents are from Cap Green, an island that used to be a Portuguese colony. I grew up in a big family with five brothers and three sisters. I had what you would call a normal childhood. I was a happy little kid. But when I was sixteen everything would change. I joined a youth gang that hung out in my neighborhood. I didn't want to be at home, so I was out nearly every night. I didn't show up back home until late at night, with plenty of lies and excuses of course. I was somehow able to keep what I was really doing in the evenings from my mother. I often skipped school during the days, but my mother never found out.

I KNEW THAT WHAT I WAS DOING WAS WRONG

Deep inside, I knew that what I was doing was wrong, but there was so much peer pressure that there was no way to get out of it. Now and then I'd talk with someone in the neighborhood who noticed that my life was heading in the wrong direction, and they were brave enough to point that out to me. To make things worse, I had even gotten my little brother involved in the gang. But I felt like it would be impossible to get out of the life I was living. By this time the gang had started breaking a lot of laws. Besides all the robberies we were involved in, I had also ended up in a fight during which I stabbed another guy. Thankfully he survived. But I got caught by the police. Now my double life was revealed to my mother. She couldn't believe what had happened. She wondered how a boy who had received such a good upbringing, learning to distinguish between good and bad, could now become a criminal. She was in shock and crying when the police came





to get me. When I ended up in jail, I was treated badly by the guards because I was just another criminal to them, even though I was just a kid. I was released once the trial date was set.

I CRIED FOR AN ENTIRE DAY

Around the time this happened, I received an invitation to participate in an indoor football tournament. I had no idea that the people who had set up this tournament were Christians. I decided to go. When I got there, one of the leaders took time for me and really showed how much he cared. He made me feel special and important. I was also surprised at how loving these people were toward one another. They were just completely different, so different from the people I knew. It felt like they had something that I was missing. And I really wanted what they had. Not long after I met these people, I had the chance to go with them to a camp in Algarve in southern Portugal. There were many activities there, including playing football together. I don't know what words I could use to describe what I was feeling on the inside. I had never felt that way before.

One day I just cried the entire day. I just couldn't stop crying. I felt so sinful and full of guilt. Shortly after that I asked Jesus to come into my life and forgive me my sins and my guilt. I also asked him to change my life and truly placed my life in his hands. After that prayer I felt such an enormous peace inside.

MY OLD GANG DIDN'T WANT TO LET ME GO

It was really difficult to come home to my old surroundings where my old gang hung out. The gang didn't want to let me go and refused to accept what had happened to me. They just didn't understand. Thankfully I had a friend, the only close Christian friend I had. He was a bit older than I was, and he became like a father to me. He succeeded in getting me out of the gang, and took a lot of time with me, even taking me to church. With his help and encouragement I was able to get out of the old stuff I had been in.

THE TRIAL

Eventually I was summoned to a trial for the stabbing fight. When the judge asked my mother about my life, she told me that I had become like a whole new person since I had become a Christian. Due to circumstances, it turned out that I didn't need to serve any time or be punished. They simply decided to drop the case.

JESUS CHRIST CHANGED MY LIFE

The greatest longing that I have in my life is to do something for Jesus. Right now I am doing that by playing indoor football for a successful indoor football team in Portugal and by being a Christian among my friends on the team. Wherever I go I usually tell people about how Jesus Christ has changed my life. In fact, Jesus means everything to me today, and I couldn't live without him in my life. Maybe that's hard to understand if you don't know him. But if you knew him, you would understand!

BeBe



The Devil's Dance...



GOD FELT FAR AWAY

Even as a little girl I took religion very seriously. I was fully convinced that there was a God. But in spite of that, my feeling was that God was very far away when I prayed to him.

EMPTINESS INSIDE.

When I was very young I learned to read Arabic and also learned to pray special Arabic prayers. My Turkish grandmother who lived with us taught me the Arabic language. As I was growing up, a feeling of discontent and emptiness grew on the inside of me. This led me to start investigating occultism. Parapsychological phenomena were especially interesting to me.

THE DEVIL'S DANCE

When I was about six years old I saw a movie that made a big impression on me. The movie was called "The Devil's Dance." I started to have frequent panic attacks after watching that movie. Fear and anxiety would come over me at night. Horrible images came into my mind. I started to sweat and was paralyzed with fear. I wouldn't be able to get rid of these fears until I was sixteen years old. Unfortunately, the fear didn't disappear completely, but just evolved into a fear of the future.

I was scared of having to live the same kind of life that my parents lived. Since things kept getting worse, a doctor had to write a prescription for me to start on medication. This caused big changes in my mood, and I became very aggressive. Each night it took four to five hours before I could fall asleep. I kept thinking about what the meaning of life could be. I just couldn't imagine that the only meaning of life was to get a good education, get married, and have kids. Deep down inside I was sure that there must be more; something that could satisfy me completely.

I WAS SO TOUCHED

My life seemed okay at first glance. I had everything anyone could ever ask for. I had a mother and father, was dating a nice guy, and I had many friends. But despite all of those things, I wasn't content with my life.

As a result, I started to share my heart with God. I just told him how I was feeling. I also started to ask myself who Jesus really was. Since I couldn't come up with any specific answer, I started to ask some different people who Jesus was. But I never met anyone who could really explain to me who he was.

Then one day I was walking past a square where an outdoor

church service was taking place. Several people got up and talked about Jesus. As I was standing there listening, I just knew that this was what I was missing. I was so touched by what I was hearing about Jesus that I decided right then and there to ask Jesus to come into my life.

I DIDN'T DARE TO GO TO CHURCH

It wasn't until six months had passed that I dared to go to church. Since I was a Muslim, I was scared of what would happen if I decided to become a Christian. The service I went to was for young people. It was completely different from what I thought it would be, and the people there prayed to God in a different way than I had been taught. One of my first thoughts was: either they are all crazy, or I am. I was also scared that one of my friends would find out that I was there. But the love that these people were showing was something that I didn't have. So I said to Jesus, "If you really, really do exist, then speak to me today and do something so that I can see that you exist." Nothing special happened after that, and I was on my way out. Suddenly a man came up to me and said that he sensed that he had received something from God to tell me, and he wondered if he could pray for me. Ok, I thought.

A WAVE OF TEARS POURED FORTH

When he put his hand on me and started to pray for me, power poured over me and I felt such an enormous love. It was God himself who was taking me into his arms. I was overwhelmed and felt my knees start to buckle. Then this guy said several things about my life, in detail, that were accurate. Then it was as if a wave of tears poured forth. It was as if I "cried out" all of the pain I had been carrying inside of me, after all those years of anxiety. When I went home after that youth service and that experience, it felt as though everything around me had changed. Everything was more beautiful, from the streets to all the surroundings.

Everything felt so different. I was bubbling with such joy and felt like something new had happened on the inside of me. The fear that had been my constant predator was also gone.

MAMMA, JESUS IS ALIVE!

The first thing I said to my mother when I walked in the door was: "Mamma, Jesus is alive! He has spoken to me." And I told my father, "Pappa, I have become a Christian, because I have met Jesus." And when I was with my friends, I talked about Jesus almost the entire time. They wondered what had happened to me and my boyfriend cried and looked at me, wondering who this "new" Yasmin was.

But inside me, I knew...this is what I had been looking for all my life, this is what every person needs: Jesus Christ! I was so happy about what I had experienced that I decided to never ever let this new relationship with Jesus disappear from my life.

THE NARROW ROAD

After my decision to become a Christian, things haven't always been easy. Not at home, or among my friends. And I have gone through a lot since then, but I have also sensed how God helps me in very specific ways. There is a narrow road and a wide road, and we are all challenged to choose the narrow road: God's road!



Yasmin



KEVIN RASCHLE

Unfulfilled Longing

I grew up in a home where my mother talked to me about Jesus and God. I accepted Jesus in my life as my Savior and I followed Him. I wanted to walk with the Lord until around the time I turned 15, but I'll get back to that later on.

There was constant fighting in my home when I was growing up. I dealt with it by becoming addicted to video games. I played video games all the time. When it was time for me to go to bed at 8 pm, I played video games so that I wouldn't hear the fighting so much. I played through the night until I had to get ready for school the next morning at 6 am. This time in my life was very difficult for me. Actually, I never really experienced what it means to be loved. I grew up lonely, full of hate and despair. School was hard too, because what was happening at home made me very withdrawn. Almost every day I was bullied and beaten up, and I just put up with it. I had to change schools several times because the bullying just got worse and worse.

During this period of time I still had my faith and I knew that God was with me every second. Even though I felt very lonely, I knew my faith was what was keeping me from breaking down.

At home it was either my parents fighting with each other or it was me fighting with them. I was even fighting with my brother. We just didn't get along and both of us were totally overwhelmed by the situation. The 'good' thing was that I thought every family was like this. That's why I never learned what it means to be loved or to have someone who is on your side.

The conflicts at home got worse and my life was dominated by fear and despair. So even from a very young age I had thoughts of taking my own life. I tried it a few times, but I was never successful. Looking back, I am so thankful that God prevented it every time and had His hand over my life.

Unfulfilled longing

I was longing for love even from a young age. For six years I was in love with a girl, but I didn't have the courage to talk to her. I was so afraid of being rejected. So I preferred not knowing how she would respond rather than risking rejection from the only person I loved.

I didn't have any friends and so I missed having someone to talk to. But because of what I had been taught, I believed in God and often asked Him to help me. For many years he was the only one I talked to. But I wanted more. I wanted to be accepted by people. I was looking for love and acknowledgement. I thought that was the only thing that could fill me and allow me to have a good life.

Time went by and I was aware that I wanted to die. With this decision made up in my mind at such a young age, I had absolutely no more to give. I was desperate and mad, and I didn't feel like anyone understood me. I had the feeling that I was all alone in the world and nobody would ever care for me, accept me or love me.

In the church I was attending I did not feel very good at all. I felt more like an obligation to go there. For a long time I felt terrible every time I went there. I decided that I didn't need a church and that my faith in God was enough. I also found prayer unnecessary. So as time passed, my commitment to God declined.

New experiences

One day we went to another church, but I still felt the same. Even though I had faith, I didn't want to attend church. But in this new church I got to know some people who had a special charisma. They were very nice and caring; they prayed for me and talked to me. It was so nice to know that someone was interested in my life. But my problems remained. After about 3 years in this church I started attending a youth group there. For the first time in my life I experienced something like acceptance and love. Even though these people from the youth group were like strangers to me, they all hugged me the first day. I had never experienced something like this and it felt so good. For me it was like a family, a big family, that helped each other, laughed together and shared sad times together.

Without me knowing it, I realize today that God had put many people in my life who helped me through. But unfortunately my commitment to God was not much stronger in the new youth group either. I went to church because of the people. I trusted some of the young people in the youth group and they prayed for me. Ten years later I found out that some of them were still praying for me and remember me.

When I was 15 I met my first love. For the first time in my life I felt accepted and was introduced to a completely different way of seeing life. Finally someone was really there for me and I felt accepted and loved. (I am so grateful that my first girlfriend also believed in God. This changed many things in my future).

But our relationship broke up very quickly and I felt more abandoned than ever. Now I thought I had lost everything. I had also neglected my relationship with God. I partly blamed Him for allowing all this to happen. But the good thing is that I realized that it wasn't His fault, that He had given us free will as a gift. Every person decides on their own what they want to do and not do. What God does is show us the right way. He never said it would be easy to follow Him. But he wants to save us and give us eternal life.

At the end without God

Unfortunately, I turned away from God. Instead of going to the youth group or to church, I looked for fun in other places. So starting at 15 I tried solving my problems with alcohol. I opened up myself to the destructive things in life. From then on things went very badly for me. My suicidal thoughts grew worse and I could hardly stand under the big depression that hung over me. My life was a catastrophe. Whatever I tried in school or with people, I failed. The only thing I had left were two friends from my youth group (one of them was Andi, who is still my best friend today). I went drinking with them every weekend instead of going to the youth group. For two years I lived this way until I got to a point where I didn't want to have any more contact with anybody. I just played video games all day. Every weekend I told my colleagues that I wouldn't go out with them, even though they kept calling me. But I preferred being stuck in my video game addiction.

At the age of 17 the fighting at home got worse. In school I broke down more than once. My teachers noticed how bad things were and sent me to a Christian therapist who had lots of experience with the problems I was having. He told me it would be good to move out of the house because otherwise I really would break down. But I was afraid of the reaction my



parents would have. So I told the therapist that this was not possible for me, even though I would have liked to. 'Good' thing the fights at home got so bad that my father told me to move out. So I packed my things and called my friends who I drank with. I called Andi, who I hadn't had any contact with for over a year. He let me stay at his place so I left home the next day.

A month later I got a room in a flat where there were people who took care of us, but things got even worse there. Now there was nothing keeping me from taking my life. Now I didn't have to be afraid that my parents might find me while I was trying to commit suicide. I started smoking marijuana and quit my internship. During this time I was taken to the hospital a few times by Andi. I never told him when I was planning to commit suicide, but somehow he always sensed it and came to me. Once it even happened in the middle of a Christmas party. Much later he told me that he always got a sense that he had to come see me. Now I know and understand that God had done this so I wouldn't commit suicide. More than once he saved me. I also started taking stronger drugs, like LSD, MDMA and cocaine to be able to forget the pain I had.

Psychiatric care

When I realized how much pain I had caused Andi, I decided to go to the psychiatrist. It didn't bother me that my own life was ruined, but I didn't want to ruin Andi's life as well. The psychiatrist gave me anti-depressants and other strong medication (neuro-

leptics). I took those meds for years. They helped me to manage my grief and pain, but they also took away the last little bit of joy I had. I was just an empty shell of blood and flesh.

I stayed in the psychiatric ward 3 times, for a month each time. It did not solve my problems, but I did learn to talk about my problems. There I realized I was not the only one having such problems. I had 7 different therapists, but none of them knew how to help me. Some of them had exhausted their knowledge and had given up on me.

In the meantime, I had already worked in 5 different places and also failed at a new internship because I couldn't handle it physically. I started new relationships very often, always hoping to find the love I so desired. I was completely convinced that I could be happy once I was in a relationship where I felt loved. But this wasn't the case. Because of all my problems, my relationships fell apart and I hurt many people in my life. I had been deceived and it just made me feel worse.

Final option

When I was 24 I just couldn't take it anymore. I had lost all hope and motivation. I had given up on myself up. I didn't want to get out of this situation anymore; I just wanted to die. Since all of the other ways I had tried to end my life had failed, I decided to go to Exit (an institution for euthanasia). Exit promised me their support in case I still wanted to die when I turned 25.

At this point I started to think about whether I could really say that I trusted in God. I couldn't say that I trusted in God and in everything he had promised me if I was planning to take my life in 8 months. After a few months I came to the conclusion that it wasn't possible to take my life, because it didn't agree with the little faith I still had. So I came to another deeper point in my life. I had given

up the final hope to end my life. So I had to deal with my problems somehow. I had to go on, even though I saw no way out.

In my desperation I called my mother and two other people and for the first time in my life I asked them to pray for me. One of these people was my first girlfriend, who was a Christian. The other person was an old school friend who I also knew was a Christian. I simply knew that nothing and nobody could help me except God!

A new beginning

I had problems sleeping. I was terrified of going to sleep, so I only slept every second or third night. I was obsessed with loneliness. The worst was when I woke up in the morning with no strength to get up. Sometimes I lay in bed up to 20 hours, without any motivation to get up. I started listening to worship songs. For the first time I was able to fall asleep and get up out of bed without much difficulty.

Then I started to pray. I talked to God and told Him all my problems. I spent hours talking with Him and gave Him my burdens. A few days later I decided after nine years to go back to the church I had been in before. It was incredible – during the church service they talked exactly about my problems. All my life I was looking for acceptance and love from people to fill the emptiness inside of me. This was the topic of the sermon and it made me think about my life.

For years I was trying to hold onto people, I depended on relationships and I was looking for acceptance. I had completely forgotten that God had already accepted me, that I was loved so much by Him, that he is proud of me every moment of my life, that he will never leave me alone and that he will help me. This was the moment when I gave my life to Jesus again. And this time it was a personal, simple decision, which was not influenced by my upbringing. I prayed to God and asked Him to lead me,

told Him that I wanted to follow Him and spend my life with Him. I gave Him my life and gave Him all of my heart. Even though my trust and faith in Him were not big, I wanted to follow Him.

Healed heart

Two days later I was driving with two friends of mine. On the highway I let them listen to some of the worship songs that I always listened to now. Suddenly I had this strong feeling that I should pray to God and tell Him about my problems and thank Him for my friends. It wasn't a long prayer, nothing special, just really simple.

After praying I noticed that something was strange. I suddenly felt very happy. I did feel happy sometimes, but it was always mixed with sadness and sorrow. Then I thought about my depression and the moments which made my life so hard and things which really had hurt me. In astonishment, I realized that all the grief had disappeared from my heart. I couldn't believe it and I was so grateful. Peace had filled me and I sensed an incredible, indescribably big love. For the first time in my life I was filled with the Holy Spirit, with His love and His care.

I expected these great feelings would only last a few hours or at the most one day. I would have felt very happy without having these negative thoughts for just one day. Just feeling this love from God was as if my biggest dream had come true. While we were hiking I prayed again and again and was so grateful to God. Grateful for the world he had made, grateful that I could enjoy every day, that he is with me all the time and that he would never leave me. No matter what we do, in Him we find peace and forgiveness. I had such a great day that day, unlike any I had ever had before in my life. I didn't even imagine it was possible to experience such a wonderful day.

Then I waited for my depression and sorrow to come back. (My faith in God was too little to expect more from Him at that time). But nothing happened. God had planned something much better than giving me joy and peace for only one day. What I was struggling with for years, he changed in just one moment. He put everything into order. He changed my entire life. Despite my lack of faith and confidence in Him that he had a plan for me, he did one miracle after another in my life. He healed me.

A new life

Since October 7th, 2014, there is an indescribable joy inside of me, peace and the knowledge that no matter what comes my way, God will be in control. I see people with different eyes and I can smile now. Actually, I can't stop smiling! I am so happy to be alive and have more hope and joy than ever before. Not only did God do what had to be done so that I could manage my life, he made it 1,000 times better than I could ever have dreamed. He is a father who will never leave me. I am His son and he will always love me.

In addition to all of this I was able to become drug-free. I have no desire for the drugs, because the problems that caused me to start doing drugs have disappeared. I know that God encourages me in this decision and will help me to pull through.

To experience His love and to give him my burden is something I cannot fully understand yet. It is a wonderful new feeling. It's amazing how God works in our lives. I never want to forget what he has done for me and what he can do. I don't want to miss a single day living with Him and His endless love. Only His love is capable of filling the emptiness in people's hearts.

Don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions. I am so grateful if I can share God's endless love and mercy with you.

Kevin

I HAD TO cut myself

The pressure was so great that I needed something to help deal with it; otherwise I could not go on living. I began to scratch a little and thought, "Maybe this will help." At first it was good, because the pressure on the inside of me subsided somewhat. The pain inside of me was so strong that the pain I inflicted on my outer self was not so bad. And yet I started doing it more and more. I had to cut myself more and more until it became quite normal. I just had to do it.

ALESSANDRA STUTZ

Expectations from the outside

I gave everything I could in order to be somebody. But I came to the point where I had to admit that my life was at its end. What is the sense of this? What am I doing here? In school I had to be good, to be liked by my teachers, so I was a good student and achieved high grades. In addition, of course, there were the expectations from the outside, from society, to be slim, athletic, to be attractive as a woman. I struggled so hard to handle all of these things, but it just didn't work. The pressure was too great. So I tried very hard, making an effort to meet expectations everywhere I went.

I didn't want anybody to notice

I felt so empty that I considered taking my own life. Outwardly everything was one continuous performance. I didn't want anybody to notice that I was not doing well. I had to remain a good student, a good friend. It was expected that I wouldn't make the same mistakes everyone else did. But very often I told myself that everybody was expecting me not to fail. The pressure was so great that I

needed something to help deal with it; otherwise I could not go on living.

So I started to scratch myself. I just had to do it. There was no question about it, it was part of me. It was like a spiral that was pulling me further and further down.



"I can live because God has set me free. This God recognizes me just as I am and accepts me with all my rough edges."

I simply could not go on any longer

Once again I was in my room, laying on the ground, totally exhausted and I just had to cut myself. I was covered in blood, all black from the smudged makeup mixed with my tears. I could not go on any longer. I cried out to God: "God, if you exist, if you really exist, please help me!" At that moment, I heard this voice in my heart saying, "Alessandra, I love you!" Just those four words. And I could not believe it.

"Alessandra, I love you!"

Previously I had given everything to be loved and now, completely at the end of myself and so far from perfect, God told me that he loves me. I could not believe it. But the next day it was the same again. I felt that my end had come, I had cut myself, but again these words: "Alessandra, I love you!"

Slowly these words seeped into my heart and I realized that I wanted to decide to follow this Jesus. Not because I had to, but because he loves me with a love that totally freed me and changed me. Now that I know that I am loved by God, I can open my heart to other people again.

When I see the scars

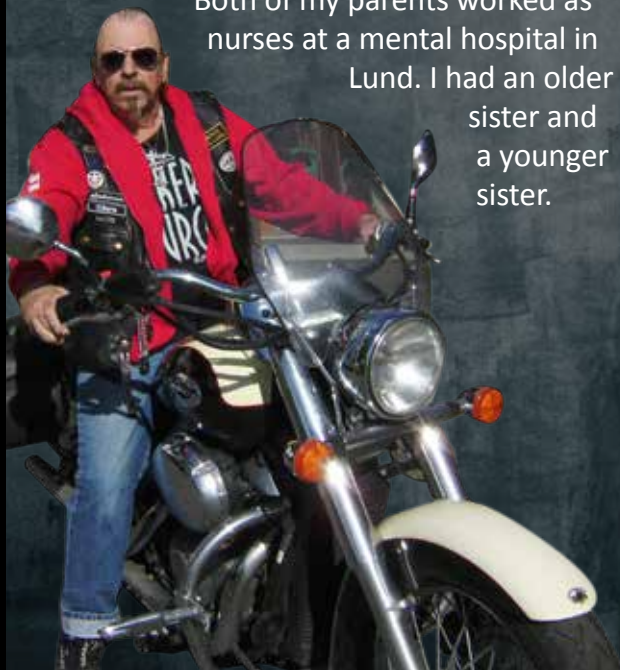
I can live because God has set me free. This God recognizes me just as I am and accepts me with all my rough edges. I no longer have to cut myself. The pressure to inflict pain on myself is no longer there, because I know I am loved. When I see the scars, I remember that God is the one who can change a person so completely.

Alessandra Stütz

I decided that

IT ALL JUST HAD TO END!

I saw the light of day in Lund in 1954.
Both of my parents worked as
nurses at a mental hospital in
Lund. I had an older
sister and
a younger
sister.



Problems in school

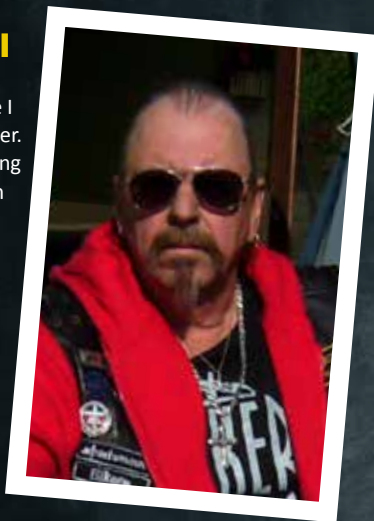
In the fourth grade I started to have problems in school because I couldn't get along with my teacher. I also had trouble sitting still during class. I was probably dealing with something that was unknown at that time, but is now known as ADHD. Financially our family was well off, and we had more than most of my friends did. But my Dad died when I was eleven. It was a tough time for my mother and for us kids.

My friends were all several years older than me, which meant that I tested a lots of things when I was still young. At ten years old I had to go to a special school for boys with behavioral problems. I attended fifth through seventh grade there. I didn't learn very much during those years. Then our family moved south. I was so tired of regular school by the ninth grade that I went to technical school as a carpenter's apprentice instead.

I drank away everything I saved

In my late teens I worked very hard, saved all of my money and behaved myself. But when I entered the military the real partying started. I had already tried hash and beer as a fifteen year-old, but at a much different level. All the money I had saved I just drank away while I was in the military.

After my time in the military I tried amphetamine for the first time. A guy at a party let me try it. I felt so good, like a totally different person. A friend told me, "Mazze, you're going to take am-



phetamine again." I didn't believe him, but that's what happened, first just on weekends, but then even in the middle of the week. Since I had my own business, I could work even while taking drugs. But in the end nobody can keep that up. My life consisted of drugs, dealing, and other criminal activities.

I just didn't want to keep running in circles

During this time I was involved with a woman and we had a son. But because of the life I was living I couldn't stay in touch with him. The drugs were taking over my life.

Then I spent many years in rehabilitation and in prison. I led such a troubled life, up until the last time I was in prison, for assault and battery. It seemed like nothing was going my way. Everything went wrong, and today I look back on it as a time when God was seeking me, and wanting me to listen. It was January 7, 1998. I was very depressed, which happens to everyone in prison. Right at that time my divorce papers came through, which didn't make things any easier. I started to wonder why I should live at all. I decided that it all just had to end. I just didn't want to keep running in circles. So I thought about using the cord of my radio or my belt to hang myself. When the door locked behind me, I sat down on my bed for a long time, thinking hard about my life.

I folded my hands to pray

Since I couldn't see the point of life, or any way out, I stood up to get my belt. At that moment I heard an inner voice that just said, without any warning, that I should pray. But I didn't know anything about how to pray. I folded my hands anyway, because I had seen people do that when I was in Sunday School as a little boy. Suddenly I heard myself saying such beautiful words. They were words from my own mouth, but somehow they weren't my own. They were so beautiful, words I didn't have in my own vocabulary.

At the same time I was filled with so much joy and peace. From having been majorly depressed it now felt like I was going up in an elevator towards heaven. I felt so good. I sat on the bed and then fell asleep and slept until the following morning.

I was crying like a child

In the morning when I awoke, I still had that same joy on the inside. I felt really good. But I didn't tell anyone. Instead I kept it to myself and thought about what had happened, and whether it meant that I had become a Christian. That evening a guy came to me and gave me a brochure. He had been at a meeting that some Christians had arranged in the prison. The pastor told him that the little brochure was for my cell – even though no one knew what had just happened to me! When the guard locked my door I sat down and read the brochure, which talked about getting saved. I read it over and over again, while the tears ran down my cheeks. What I had experienced the night before was exactly what was described in the brochure. It was so freeing for someone who had never been able to cry before, and now I was crying like a child. It felt so good.

God has never let me down

The next time the Christian group visited the prison I joined them. I told them that I had gotten saved. Then a lot of things happened. I got the chance to serve nearly half my sentence at a Christian rehabilitation center. Since I could be in a community of Christians, my faith grew. I went to lots of services, meetings, prayer gatherings and revival meetings. Wherever there were Christians gathering, I tried to join them.

It's been several years since I became a Christian. Life has been tough and I have had a few relapses. I have encountered several difficult situations, but God has never left me or let me down. The past six years I have been sober and drug-free. Today I

live a completely different life. I am in a church and very active in a Christian MC club, the Streetchurch Bikers. I am married to Eva and work part-time as a carpenter. I feel good and I like to laugh. But most of all I long for others to experience the same help and salvation that I got to experience when Jesus moved into my heart.

This is what happened to me

Finally I want to include this Bible verse, which describes what happened in my life so well. It says in Psalm 40:3

"He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand."

That is exactly what happened in my life!

Mazze

Street Church Bikers



A LONGING FOR A MEANINGFUL LIFE



Hi! My name is Ulf Christiansson and I can call myself a rock musician. I spent most of my teenage years playing in different bands in Gothenburg, and my life was focused on one thing only, to become a rock star.

I played around at the different clubs in Gothenburg and lived a definite rock and roll life.

I can recall that sometimes I had to walk home to Partille (several kilometers and I often missed the last bus) after having been partying at night. I would have a hangover and look up toward heaven and say: If God exists, then He has to show Himself to me. I demanded evidence, visible evidence.

A LONGING FOR A MEANINGFUL LIFE.

In a strange way I was longing for a more meaningful life, but at the same time I was afraid to take a step. I was not impressed by Christian people because it looked like they lived a very boring life. I did respect that others could have a faith in God but I thought that it wouldn't be anything for me. I knew that if I would become a 'Christian' then I would have to make some changes in my life ...outwardly I thought. I did not understand that it would be changes on the inside.

MY BROTHER WAS CHANGED.

When I turned twenty years old I got quite tired of the life I was living and the band I was playing with. There were only problems, arguments about money and disagreements among the band members.

One day my brother came home and told me that he had become a Christian, which was a total shock for me. I argued as much as I could against him, yet I could not deny

that there was a change for the better in him.

I said that if God existed and was good, then He could also fix the mess that we humans have created, and if He was God, then He should have understood that it would be like this, since He had created us and knew everything. Everybody who has a brain to think with will understand, that it is only a security that we humans have created ourselves.

I was going on like that for about a year until one day I was asked if I wanted to come along to an event that would take place in the Slottsskogen in Gothenburg. I had just broken up with my girlfriend of four years and was not really in the mood to come along but I said ...OK, I'll come anyway.

"JESUS LOVES YOU MAN"

When I got there I saw a lot of people and they told me that two guys from the Jesus people would talk but I had no idea what it would be like. Then suddenly two guys with very long hair got up on the stage. They looked like they were playing in some rock band and when they said "Jesus loves you man," most of my prejudice against what a Christian would be or look like, disappeared. They said that you had to choose either for or against, no middle line...I knew that I was not directly against but not for either so I thought that I would give God a chance....but only one and if it didn't work then I would not waste my life on a 'Jesus trip'.

I GAVE GOD A CHANCE.

So that night I gave God that chance and did not know what adventure I was actually going to be a part of. I quit playing in the band that I was part of, which was only a lot

of trouble anyway...and I told God that if He showed me that what He said was true, then I would follow Him..... from that time on a lot of changes took place in my life. I understood that I had to give up something to get something else. He showed me that what He tells me actually stands...

All this became the start of the band that I later started in Gothenburg—'Jerusalem' with which I have toured almost the whole world.....but that is another story. Yes ... this is my life story, or at least a little part of it..... so what shall I say....that God exists? Yes, He exists, but He also does have conditions for us to experience Him. A proud, arrogant and self-sufficient person cannot experience God; it takes humility and a willingness to give Him entrance into our lives.... it is actually simple, yet very difficult for us to give up....all our own reasoning will only keep us in uncertainty ... not security.

We all make choices every day about a lot of things, maybe this is the most important choice that we ever make - I actually believe it. It is possible to believe if one wants to... but only if one wants to....

Bless you all...
Uffe



www.u-l-f.com
www.jerusalem.se

THE SEARCH IS OVER!

I spent the first 19 years of my life filled with self-centered ambition, always wanting more. I searched for meaning and purpose in men, drinking, partying, popularity, and all kinds of activities to keep me busy. I was always desperate for **more**.

More love. **More** attention. **More** happiness. **More** friends. **More** boyfriends. **More** achievements. **More** hobbies. **More** travel. **More** popularity. **More** beauty. **More** success. You get the point. I wanted more. **The more I tried to fill this need, the more I still wanted.** It was a trap. Nothing was ever enough for me.

In my first year of college I kept this search going. I hoped a new city, campus, friends, social group, or major would be the more that I was looking for. Sadly, it wasn't. And I was tired of looking. So tired I became hopeless and depressed. I spent night after night crying in my dorm thinking, "God, there has to be more than this." This question absolutely haunted me.

I grew up with a view of God who was just sort of "there on Sundays". He wasn't personal. He couldn't have been. After all, if He was so good and so great like we sang about those times I went to church as a child, why was my life full of pain? Why were my parents divorced? Why was I mistreated? Why did my life feel so empty? If He was 'so good and so great' and 'died on the cross for me'...then...Why?

Those phrases become meaningless to me. So meaningless, to avoid conversations about God in a small Christian town I actually called myself a Christian – even though I had NO idea who God really was or what I really believed.

So I started asking friends in dorms, classes, and parties, “Don’t you think there has to be something more in life than this? Do you think it’s God?” Most everyone laughed it off, “What are you talking about? What’s gotten into you? Oh, you’re just drunk!”

They kick you out of the dorms in the U.S. for Christmas, otherwise I would have stayed. Home was a place I avoided for nearly my entire life, both because of the pain I encountered with my family and the mistakes I had made.

I’ll never forget that Christmas morning

I wasn’t sure if God could hear me, but I fell to my knees and prayed anyway, “God there has to be something more to this life. If you are real, reveal yourself to me.” It was the first sincere prayer of my life.

That same day, my grandparents pulled me aside and asked if we could “talk.” My grandma said, “Rachel, your Grandpa and I have been praying for you. This morning we think God said He wants to reveal Himself to you.” ***In that moment, I was sure God was real.***

They told me that when I went returned to campus, I could go to a Christian organization called Cru to hear more about Jesus. Without hesitation, I went. I marched into a room full of the most beautiful people I had ever seen in my life. They were radiant and joyful and genuine. It totally freaked me out. They seemed to have everything I wanted. To my surprise, they did not reject me. They actually embraced me.

The next day I poured out my heart for 2 hours and confessed every sin I had ever committed (not that she asked me to). My new friend listened and prayed for me. She was the first person in my life to do that. I asked if we could meet the next day to talk about God. It was in the Bernhard Center that I met the real Jesus for the first time. She explained to me that Jesus was the more I had



been looking for. She told me the reason is that the appetites of our hearts were made for God and they will not be satisfied until we feast on a relationship with Him. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst." Everybody is thirsty. Everybody is searching for a fountain of everlasting joy. When we find Jesus, the search is over.

She drew a diagram illustrating that while God loves us and created us, the problem is that we were sinful and had fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) which separated us from God (picture a giant gap between a mountain). That's why Jesus died on the cross for us. Though he was rich, yet for our sake he became poor so that by his poverty we might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). He lived the perfect life, died the perfect death, and rose from the grave in victory for all our sin and death. (Imagine a bridge between the gap of the mountain). If you put your trust in Him, you can be forgiven and have a personal relationship with God. (Ephesians 2:1-10)

This was good news! It meant I could stop my search. It meant I was finally found. It meant I was alive and given new life. Finally! I found hope that day in the person of Jesus.

Friends, nothing compares to the thrill of a personal relationship with God. I've known God for almost 4 and a half years now, and I can truly say I am entirely satisfied in God's love. While I still fail (daily) and sometimes I run back to my poor tendencies of seeking life in things other than God, His grace is sufficient for me (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Whatever you are looking for, Jesus is *more*

For an honest insight into my on-going relationship with God, check out my website: rachelduelo.wix.com/rachelduelo OR send a message here. I would LOVE to hear about your spiritual journey.

Rachel Duelo

CARLOS LABORDA
COVERED BACKS - SPANIEN

FORGIVEN

Rebellion and Loneliness

I was born in September 1975 in the town of Palencia, Spain to a middle class family. I was the youngest of three brothers. For some time my parents lived in the North of Spain, in Santander we lived there until I was nine years old and then, due to my father's work, the whole family moved back to the town of my birth.

From a young age, I started to have feelings of rebellion, without knowing where they had come from it meant that wherever I was I always got into trouble, especially with anyone who represented authority or rules. At primary school, then at secondary school with teachers and then later on in various different jobs — I always showed a lack of respect which made me defiant and uncaring about other people.

I was always complaining



about everything. Maybe that's why one of the first bikes I rode was a 49 cc Derbi FDS which I had stolen with some friends.

When I was thirteen years old, I started to drink and take drugs which made me feel closer to other kids and more accepted. The drink and the drugs also helped me to continue being rebellious although at night the constant feeling I had was one of loneliness.

Round about that time I began to play the guitar and play in a couple of bands with some friends. The words of the songs were usually full of rage and misunderstanding as I wanted to try and explain what was going on inside me. This was when I started to write songs which opened a door to the occult. I started to get involved with satanism and to practice spiritism and other similar things, at first it was like a game which made us different from other people but very soon we started to get into trouble.

Strong attraction to death

In 1991 I met Eva who is now my wife and the mother of our two sons, her background was similar to mine and at the time we both started to take occult practices more seriously. We spent hours in cemeteries at any time of the day or night. We practised divination, worshipping the dead and we even desecrated some graves; the origin of all of this was a strong attraction to death.

Inevitably, these things we were involved in led to problems and two of our friends committed suicide. We were only seventeen years old but our lives were very complicated, not only socially but also on a personal level. We both had behavioural problems which made us increasingly rebellious and aggressive, as well as having a lot of thoughts related to death.

It was getting more difficult to relate to other people in a normal way and thoughts of suicide and the inability to accept ourselves became stronger as time passed.

A few years earlier Eva had been in contact with a group of Christians who she met at an Ozzy Osborne concert. They spoke to her about the power of God to set people free from the kind of things we were going through.

Time passed and our lives were the same. One day, remembering the words that those people at the concert had said and thinking about their message, we started to spend more time with them (up until then we only had contact with them occasionally). They shared the message of Jesus with us in a simple way without any kind of rituals or liturgy, without cold or distant words which is what we were used to whenever anyone spoke about God.

They also introduced us to people like us, not to professionals who had to talk about God because it was their job, but men and women who had experienced firsthand the benefits of responding positively to the question that Jesus asked the sick man at the pool of Bethesda: 'Do you want to be made well?' You can read this story in John 5.

THE MESSAGE FROM HEAVEN

At this time we were open to the gospel but without any commitment — we didn't take the words of Jesus personally. We thought that just thinking about Jesus in a sentimental way was enough and that everything was fine in our lives. Our idea was that the message from heaven did not have to mean a commitment to God. Maybe other people, whose lives were worse than ours, needed Jesus in a more real way but for us thinking favourably about the gospel

was enough.

So time passed and nothing much was going on; our lives continued to be surrounded by depression, darkness, aggression and an incredible weight of guilt because we were unable to be normal like other people.

From 1994 onwards God began to confront us with our own lives and attitudes and to show us that we needed to respond to that important question: 'Do you want to be made well?'

We were still open to the gospel, we even visited some churches and Christian communities from time to time, but without making a commitment to the message of Jesus; maybe because we were embarrassed by what our friends would say, or because of peer pressure as we were living a life that was totally contrary to the message from heaven. However, in 1995 we came to the point where we realised that accepting the gospel message was the answer we needed to resolve the problems we were facing in our lives.

God prepared the way to make us understand that we needed Jesus to come into our lives and sort out all the craziness. In every life God acts in the way He needs to in my case I remember that I was stealing at work to try and make some extra money by selling the things I was taking. This made me think a lot about what I was like and I realised that throughout my life I had turned my back on God.

Up until then I wasn't concerned about trying to join the two worlds; God's world and my own. I was trying to serve two lords. Up until then, I didn't think it mattered whether the word of God influenced you or not. I wanted to find something to hold on to but without changing my lifestyle: which, to call it what God calls it, was a sinful lifestyle.

I remember saying to God, 'I'm too young to change my

lifestyle and stop doing the things that don't please you. Let me live the way I want to and then when I'm about thirty-five or forty we can talk again about living in a way that pleases you.' I didn't realise that all God wanted to do was to take away all the things that had been troubling me and bothering me for years and to heal my wounds. I was living like a 'good religious person' on the face of it pretending to be someone completely different to what was going on inside me; I was like a bad Christian or rather, in reality, I was not really a Christian at all.

This was when I felt that God was talking to me about how I had betrayed Him.

I knew there were questions to which I could say 'yes' to in my mind like 'Do you go to Christian meetings? Do you love your family? Do you sing Christian songs? Do you help other people?' I could say yes to all of these questions but I was still the same.

I knew God was saying "I need your heart. I want to forgive you and change you. I want to heal you and forgive you! I want to take away your burden of guilt!"

These words resonated in my head and made me cry like a child asking Jesus to come into my heart and make it clean. Now I understood His words, everything made sense. I stopped being a religious person and became a new person that had a relationship with Jesus. I could feel that something special had happened and finally Jesus became real to me.

I started to pray regularly as a way to relate to God, to read His word (the Bible) to find out how to be closer to Him and please Him. I began to feel that I was of value to Him, accepted and not judged; I began to experience God in such a close, loving

FORGIVEN

way that it was impossible for me to think that it was just my imagination. At the same time, Eva was going through a similar process with God and facing difficult situations which made her accept Jesus as her Saviour too.

Today, our lives are based on the words and message of Jesus. This doesn't make us super-human nor does it make us better than others, but our behavioural problems have disappeared. The occultism and everything relating to it is a thing of the past. We no longer need that rubbish to feel that we are somebody. Jesus filled the emptiness with His love and peace. We have the hope and assurance that we are going to spend eternity by Jesus' side and that is something very special. There is no stronger feeling than having the assurance that you have been forgiven.

We love rock music, bikes and the culture that surrounds them, we love and feel loved by Jesus.

Currently, we are the presidents of the Motorcycle Club 'Covered Backs MM' and our greatest desire is that others can come to know Jesus in a personal way.

/ Carlos



CAN'T SLEEP!

Jesus, I can't sleep.
I feel so anxious; give me peace.
Is there something standing between us?
Have I done something wrong?
Jesus, show me what it is.
Forgive all my sins.
Let my thoughts take a rest.
I command all anxiety and
sleeplessness to go in Jesus' name.
Jesus, give me peace
so that I can have a good night's sleep.
I pray in Jesus' name.





MIKE FITTON

**NATIONAL CHAIRMAN CMA (UK)
CHRISTIAN MOTORCYCLISTS ASSOCIATION**

'Always Running Away'

If I had to sum up my life before I met Christ in a single phrase it would have to be: 'Always Running Away'. So many people are driven by the desire to be successful in business, to gain status, and to accumulate possessions. They build their life's existence around personal achievements and miss one fundamental truth: that God is trying to get their attention. In my case I was so intent on finding the 'answer' I didn't stand still long enough to understand the 'question'. Are you still with me? Let me try and explain. I grew up in a small country village, where there was a large church that always appeared old, cold and irrelevant to my life. But I always had a sense deep within my heart that there was something I had to discover, and that this 'something' would bring me the satisfaction I craved. I called it 'The Answer.'

HE HAD SOMETHING I LONGED FOR

At sixteen I decided to travel around Europe, drifting through nine different countries. I saw many amazing sights but none of it brought lasting satisfaction. I had a brief encounter with a cult in Vienna located in an old rundown building. They offered me a meal if I answered a questionnaire based on their beliefs, but when they found out I was sixteen they kicked me out. The next brief but memorable meeting was with a YWAM worker (Youth With A Mission) in Amsterdam. He asked me if I wanted to go get a coffee at a Christian café called 'The Ark'. I still have the tract at home. I didn't take any notice of what he said, but his eyes

.....

have stayed in my memory since 1975. He had something I longed for. I didn't realise at the time that what he had was the peace of God that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7).

ALWAYS CRAVING THE NEXT HIGH

I returned home disillusioned and decided that I would find satisfaction in an exciting career, so I joined the Police Force so I could get involved in fights and car chases. I was hooked on adrenaline and needed a daily fix. I became involved in endurance sports, always craving the next high. If I didn't get it, I descended into the depths of depression. I pushed myself hard to succeed physically. Rock climbing, winter mountaineering alone in the Alps and Pyrenees (which was extremely stupid!) canoeing, riding motorcycles, endurance backpacking and cycling became daily habits. Sometimes I would climb six hours a day until my arms wouldn't function anymore. My police career was taking a downward spiral because of my frustration with authority (ironic, since I was in a position of authority) and a growing awareness that I was developing a frequently violent temper. Taking my frustrations out on someone else was just too easy. So I decided to move to Alaska. Surely living beside the Yukon River in a cabin I had built in the ultimate wilderness would be the answer? But God had different plans.

I WANTED TO STOP RUNNING

In 1978, when I was on duty, I met some Christians. The roof of their house had blown off in a storm and they invited me in for some tea. I was very interested in a phrase I saw on their wall: 'So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed' (John 8:36). I didn't realise at the time that it was a verse from the Bible. I just visited these people to get out of work for a bit. I saw in their eyes the same peace I had seen in the eyes of the YWAM worker in Amsterdam. Over the next eighteen months, as I skipped out of work in their home drinking tea, they taught me about Christ. I attended some meetings in the Wesley Chapel and heard a tough Welsh preacher, David Shepherd, speak about God loving me even though He knew all about my sin and violent temper. I ran out of the first two meetings, panic-stricken with a deep fear of losing control. I wanted to live my life my way, but the following day I was drawn back again to hear more. The third night I realised that Jesus had died for my sins, and everything I had filled my life with just made me thirsty. I carried a burden of guilt bigger than any pack I had hauled around the

mountains. I ran from all my problems and left a trail of hurting people in my wake. I wanted to stop running. That night I walked to the front of the packed church and surrendered my life. I asked Jesus to change me. I walked out of the Church 'free indeed'.

YOU WOULD BE CRAZY TO SAY NO

Returning to work the following day began years of ridicule, but it was the best training ground for evangelism anyone could ask for. My colleagues must have thought I had swallowed a Bible overnight and knew all the answers. I had never read the Bible, so I had to begin with the basics. Over the years, God did a work of grace in my heart. In 1980, during a meeting at Keswick Convention, I knew very clearly that God was calling me to serve Him as an evangelist. Twelve years passed by before that full-time call finally became a reality. I was injured in a big fight and it left me with a weak right shoulder. I had to leave my career as a policeman, but this opened wide God's door to ministry. I became a full-time youth and children's evangelist in the north of England for ten years. I have led youth missions in Poland, and have been on short-term missions in Spain. I spent two years as a full-time evangelist in the seaside town of Whitby. God blessed my life in a mighty way when He brought my wife Sandy and I together. We met when I preached in her church, Whitby Christian Fellowship. We have an equal passion to reach out to those who don't know Jesus yet, and to encourage God's people to go deeper with Him. My passion for evangelism and motorcycles led me to become involved with the Christian Motorcyclists Association (we ride a 1340cc Harley Davidson Heritage Softail Classic). Our mission is to make Jesus known amongst the biker community of the UK, and to offer support and friendship to bikers and their families. In June 2004 I was asked to become the first full-time National Chairman of the CMA UK, an incredible privilege. I don't run away anymore. I don't have to. Jesus is and always will be the answer to every question I could ever imagine. So what drives you?

What are you running from?

Who are you running with?

What direction are you running in?

Let me finish by asking: "If God really existed and loved you even though He knew everything about you, would you want to know Him?" You would be crazy to say no.

God Bless you, Mike

AS LONG AS THERE IS LIFE, THERE IS HOPE

As a young child I thought that life was without limit, that it actually was infinite. There were no limitations on either possibilities or time. Everything was one big opportunity stretching out before me. I already had plans and expectations for life that made it look very hopeful. My parents also made it clear to me that I was a very important person, a special gift to people around me. It was the beginning of a long journey where the sun was shining and the water was as smooth as glass.

Without losing my sense of all of life's opportunities and the thought that all of us are a special gift to the people around us, during my life's journey I have seen that the glassy water can become unsettled and stormy. Both in my own and others' lives, I have seen storms create chaos and leave people wounded and lonely.

Many times it has looked like the storm won the victory and that it is no use to start again and try to sort out the chaos. But as someone once said: as long as there is life, there is hope. As for me, I have had the privilege of meeting and getting to know people who have risen out of the deepest chaos, gotten a hold of their own lives, started again and refused to give up. Several of these people have gained new strength and inspiration from the 'good book', just as I have. It is

so amazing to know how many others there are, along with me, who have experienced the healing and strength in the Bible.

If you haven't read it for a while, you now have the opportunity to regain this fantastic wisdom, strength and guidance for your own life.

My goal is clear

Returning to the picture of life as a journey, I lastly want to tell you how very thankful and happy I am that I am not alone on my journey through life. Of course, I am grateful for the people that I live my life with. But closest to me, closer than my own thoughts, stands the God that I met as a young person. I want to continue my journey through life with Him, assured that each started journey has a purpose. For me that destiny is clear: it is heaven.

If you are travelling without a goal and you feel that you are walking around in circles rather than moving forward in life, with a few simple words you can ask Jesus to take over the rudder of your life.

I wish you all the best on your life journey, and I hope that we will meet at the end.

Birgit





I PRAY TO GOD EVERY DAY

I first came to know the Lord a little over five years ago. I knew about Him from an early age, but I had my own things on my mind and not the things or thoughts of God. As a little boy I went to Sunday school and took religion classes in junior and high school, but at that age I was into playing drums and being a bit of a wild child.

My wife was very instrumental in my walk towards God. She came to know Him before I did. I would come home after being on tour and she would be doing a Bible study. I would take a peek at it, and she would get frustrated with me for reading her Bible when she needed it. One Sunday she talked me into going to Spanish River Church. It was on this day that the Lord moved in my heart. The music was phenomenal, and I just started to cry from the passion through the music - it was wonderful. Touched by the Holy Spirit, I gave my life to Jesus Christ.

Since that day I pray to God daily. I am so thankful that He has forgiven my sins. I know that God has given me eternal life through

His son Jesus Christ. It is the good news from God. He is just and caring, and He loves us all. It is a promise for everyone.

None of us can live up to what God wants from us, so He sent His only son to die on that cross. There on the cross Jesus took all our sins upon Himself. Jesus died on the cross, but three days later He rose from the grave and overcame death.

The good news is that Jesus Christ took our sins and guilt upon himself, and through him we are now forgiven. Isn't that great news? Wow, that means that all of us who have had our sins forgiven by Jesus Christ will have a place in heaven for eternity with God. If you don't get to know God and find peace through Him, you will have eternal separation from Him. I don't like the sound of that at all - do you?

No, I want to see and be with you all in heaven, so if you haven't discovered the good news yet, there is still time to get to know Him.

John 3:16 is one of my favourite passages from the Bible. These are the words of our saviour Jesus Christ:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life".

Isn't that great? I also think that Romans is a great book as well. If you want a kind of quick fix for getting to know God, then this book is cool. It was written by Saul/Paul. He has written thirteen of the books in the New Testament. Also read the book of Acts; it will explain how Paul came to know the Lord and it lays the foundation for building the church.

GOD BLESS YOU

Nicko McBrain, IRON MAIDEN



I HATED CHRISTIANS

My name is Michael Hero, and I grew up in Luleå, which is in the northern part of Sweden. Early on in my life I decided that I wanted to play guitar and start a band. At the beginning my idols were SWEET, but after awhile I discovered KISS, who I thought were much better and more importantly, much cooler. Later on I also had other role models like VAN HALEN, ACCEPT, DIO, RAINBOW, IRON MAIDEN and so on. My life was all about girls, playing music and partying hard with my friends.

I HATED CHRISTIANS

One day somebody knocked on the door of my girlfriend's home. She opened the door and outside there was a long-haired guy with a MAIDEN shirt on. He spoke with my girlfriend about JESUS and faith for several hours. He then asked her if she wanted to

go with him to church and pray with the "Summer church gang". She said yes, and when they went to church, she had an incredible encounter with God and was totally touched by it. They then of course asked her if she wanted to receive Jesus

in her life. She answered that she had to talk with her boyfriend (me) to see if we should become Christians together. When she talked to me I went out of my mind and was scared to death, very angry and sad at the same time. I hated Christians and all they stood for - or at least what I thought they stood for. I managed to talk her out of this "terrible" thing that was about to happen.

THE NAME JESUS, JESUS, JESUS POUNDED INSIDE OF ME

Two years after this happened I started to question the life I lived. Sure it was fun to party and rock hard, but there was still something missing. During this time I started a band called MYSTERY. Two of the members were Christians, and we began to speak more and more about faith and about JESUS. I was absorbing everything they said. My girlfriend and I wanted to have something new in our lives - something exciting.

Later on we opened up for LEVITICUS in Luleå. The day after that, we went along with them to Piteå and watched their next gig. During this time Björn Stigsson (the guitar player of LEVITICUS) spoke with me about Jesus. When the gig was over my girlfriend, her friend, and I were on our way home. When we were driving through the forest on the E4 highway, all of a sudden there was a strong feeling of deep joy that came over me, and the name JESUS, JESUS, JESUS pounded inside of me. It was such an enormous joy that I had never experienced before. I asked if the others in the car felt the same way and they did. I sat there with tears flowing, and I just felt happiness. It was like all my burdens were suddenly gone. I don't know if it was true, but it felt like the car was hovering a little bit above the road - Jesus was definitely present. I remember that I went right away and bought a Bible and started to read it. The Word of God is food for the hungry and water for the thirsty. That was exactly what I experienced. I am living proof that Christian metal is of importance. That is why I now travel around and play with HERO and SONS OF THUNDER. I want to talk about what Jesus has done in my life and what Jesus wants to do for people who don't know him yet!

Rock on for Christ / Michael Hero

*"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."
(Matthew 6:33)*

The way to Salvation

GOD CARES!

Some people don't think that God cares for them, but the Bible says that God cares so much for us that He sent his son Jesus to die in our place! We are so valuable to God that Jesus was even willing to die for us while we were still sinners. [Romans 5:8]

NOBODY IS PERFECT

No man is perfect, and we all miss the mark somewhere. This is what the Bible calls sin. It is our sin that separates us from God. Our sin is like a barrier that blocks us from having fellowship with God. Jesus came down to earth to restore the fellowship between God and man. He took our sins upon himself and died in our place. Since Jesus did this for us, the way to heaven has been opened so that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life - that means fellowship with God forever. As a result of what Jesus did we can now have our sins forgiven and get ourselves right with God to the extent where it is like we have never done anything wrong.

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD!

Deep inside every man there is an emptiness that neither parties, material things, sex, drugs nor anything else here on earth can fill. Only God can fill this emptiness and give us real satisfaction - a satisfaction not just for the moment but that lasts for your entire life. If you choose to put your life in God's

hands and devote your life to Him you will have personal fellowship with God.

That is what a real Christian life is all about! It is not a dry, boring religion but a living relationship with God! This means that when you choose to follow Jesus you will have a personal relationship with God.

GOD WANTS TO GIVE YOU COMPLETE SATISFACTION

It is no accident that you are reading this, because God has a plan for your life! He also wants you to get the most out of life. He wants to give you complete satisfaction. This will only happen, however, when you come into God's plan, where you will find the ultimate meaning of what life is all about and be fully satisfied.

As long as you choose to go your own way, you will miss God's plan for your life. You will never be truly satisfied but will always feel that there is something missing. If you choose to devote your life to God, however, and lay your life in the hands of God, you will get the most out of life.

YOU CAN PRAY LIKE THIS:

"Jesus I believe that you died and rose for me. Thanks for being willing to also die in my place. Forgive me of my sins. From this moment I will follow you and let you be the Lord of my life. Thank you for forgiving my sins. Thank you that I now have fellowship with you from this moment. Amen."

TODAY I DECIDED TO PLACE MY LIFE IN JESUS' HANDS AND HAVE RECEIVED JESUS AS MY SAVIOUR..

Date: _____

Place _____



I WOULD LIKE TO GET TO KNOW OTHER CHRISTIANS NEARBY.

Name: _____

Age: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

E-mail: _____

Send to:

Bible for the Nations e.V -

Aulkestrasse 28

D-48734 Reken Germany

HOW WILL I HEAR GOD SPEAK TO ME?

We can talk to Jesus about anything and everything, and we can be sure that he will help us, both in everyday things and in the most important decisions in life. Finally, I just want to give you some tips on how you can let your relationship with Jesus grow, and how you can get to know God more and more. I also want to congratulate you for making the most important decision we humans can make: to ask Jesus to forgive our sins.

SOME IMPORTANT TIPS FOR YOUR LIFE TOGETHER WITH GOD.

- *Read "the instruction book" (the Bible) or as some-one said Best Instruction Before Life Ends*
- *Talk to Jesus often, and don't forget to listen to his answers!*
- *Be sure to find Christian friends who can help you and support you!*
- *Tell others about your decision. Tell them about your faith in Jesus!*
(this is actually a part of salvation itself)
- *Attend a church where you get to know more about God and grow in your faith.*

And one more thing:

Don't forget that God is always with you!

ANGUISH

I open up my heart to you Jesus Christ!

Take away all these evil thoughts that are tormenting my soul.

Thank you for your blood that cleanses me from all my sins. Deliver me from all anguish and give me peace.

Give me power to live a pure life.

I pray in Jesus' name.

Amen

HATE

Jesus! Deliver me from my hate and my anger!

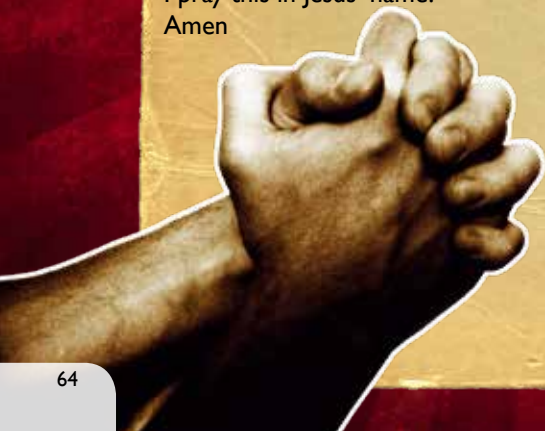
Let all anger and hate wash away from me as in a spring flood.

Give me love for those who have hurt me.

Give me power to forgive those who have hurt me.

I pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen





I just didn't want to live.

Even though I had never been to church as a child, I grew up with an inner certainty that there was a God. My sister and I grew up without our father, but with a mother who tried to do everything she could for her children. But even as a very young child I carried a kind of sadness around with me. And by the time I was seven I was depressed, thought about death a lot and just didn't want to live. I spoke a different dialect than my friends, which made me an "outsider." I was bullied both verbally and physically. I felt cast aside and unwanted. From the ages of six to twelve I was also sexually abused, on top of everything else. Maybe that is also why there was a longing to die growing so strong on the inside of me. My feelings and my longing for death were also mixed with wondering what the meaning of life really was.

We were often drunk and obnoxious

I started to enjoy alcohol when I was thirteen. I also started to try to fill the emptiness inside me with relationships with different guys. But all of my relationships were casual and superficial. The only people I had a deeper relationship with were my mother and sister. Even though I was so sad on the inside, I was the class clown. And since a longing for death was at the front of my mind and I didn't expect I would live very long, it became my focus during my teenage years. Most of my

life was just surviving from weekend to weekend. At this time both my sister and I were two girls who really stuck out. We were often drunk and obnoxious. In some strange way, my longing for death was mixed during this time with a certain hunger for peace and love. But in the relationships I had, it most often just about sex.

From that moment on I wanted to live!

One morning, when I came home from partying when I was 18 years old, I just felt that I had had enough. I just didn't want any more. I took a knife and slit my wrist. As the blood pumped out of me, I saw before my eyes something like a film. It was a movie with different scenes where people had told me about Jesus. As clear as lightning, I was convinced that God exists. I was just as convinced that if I were to die right then, that I would not come to him. Even though no one had told me that, I knew it with full certainty. There, in the middle of my misery, I cried out: "God, if you really exist, take over my life and make something of it!" At that moment, the darkness in the room where I was standing had vanished. Instead, I felt like a strong light had come into the room. I was sure that something had happened, and that I would never be the same again. I put a bandage on my wrist. From that moment on I wanted to live.

It was embarrassing to show that I needed help

Just a few days later I heard about a group that met above the pub where I usually hung out. It happened to



be some Christians who were setting up an outreach service. Since I felt at home at the pub, it was no problem for me to go there and just take the stairs up to the meeting. While I sat there listening, the preacher asked if there was anyone in the room who wanted to give their lives to Jesus. A huge struggle was going on inside of me. I felt like I needed Jesus in my life, but the room was full of people, so I thought it was embarrassing to show that I needed help.

Chains in my life were ripped apart

The preacher said that there was someone in the room who had one last chance to make peace with God. No one said anything, but inside of me I knew that I was the person he was talking about. I felt as though I was being embraced by an enormous love from God. I got up, and in front of everyone in the room, I walked the whole way to the front. Then some Christians prayed with me. When I gave my whole life to Jesus in that prayer, something strange happened inside of me. It felt as though the chains in my life had somehow been ripped apart. All of the sadness that I had carried around since I was a little child just disappeared. It was as if my entire black and white life now was full of color. Everything became brand new.

I became very radical in my faith

The day after this event, in the morning when I woke up, I felt like everything was different. Inside of me I knew that Jesus had now taken over my life. I became very radical in my faith, since the encounter with Jesus completely transformed my life. I was a completely new person on the inside. My little sister, who was part of a punk rocker gang, didn't like my conversion at all. She became very aggressive and said that faith in Jesus was something that weak people needed. And since I completely quit partying and no longer had any desire to drink or date more guys, even my mother became a bit con

cerned. She thought it was ok for me to believe in God, but that I didn't necessarily need to become a fanatic about it. She thought that I could just go on living as I had done before. But I had been completely transformed inside. I really didn't want my "old life" back.

The people in church showed me so much love

Instead, I started going to church. I wanted to know more about Jesus and wanted to follow him with all my heart. I was feeling so great as I sought after more of Jesus. My transformation was apparently making an impression on my family, because soon my mother starting to come along to church and soon after that my previously so aggressive little sister also gave her life to Jesus. The people in the small church I attended showed me so much love. There was one older couple in particular who took good care of me. Wherever I went, I wanted to share what I had experienced, and how Jesus had changed my life. I gathered a group of young people and brought them to church. It was with that group that I started to have youth group meetings.

God's plan for my life

I now began to also understand that God had plans for my life. He had a plan that I could follow. I wanted to take the path that God had for me with my whole heart, and I wanted to give everything I could to Jesus, since he had done so much for me. So I enrolled in a Bible school that had a practical, theological program. My little sister also attended the Bible school, and she and I started to help out in small churches in eastern Europe. For the next twelve years my sister and I traveled to many countries where we supported the Christians and encouraged them to tell their friends and colleagues about Jesus, especially in small churches. We even helped to start new churches in different places.

Eastern Europe, Africa, Kyrgyzstan and Indonesia

After my time in eastern Europe, I started to work in Africa. Then I spent several years in central Asia, in Kyrgyzstan. I set up a Bible school there and worked as a pastor in a church that had started from nothing. That was where I met Bola, who became my husband. He was the first student at the Bible school. My sister had been there when he met Jesus and became a Christian. Both Bola and I had our hearts set on truly giving everything to Jesus. That was what our lives were about and of course that would also characterize our lives together. After the years in Kyrgyzstan, we helped out in a Christian ministry in Indonesia. Now we live in Europe. Bola and I have two children and we both work as pastors. In the past few years I have started a Christian pre-school and elementary school where I live.

I am happy

I am really happy now. My whole personality is adventurous and in love with life. Today I know why I am alive. I am thankful to God for every new day that I get to live. For me, life is truly a gift from God. I want to give my whole life to Jesus, and I want more people to have the chance to have the same life-transforming encounter with Jesus that I had, so that they can get to know him too.



/Esther



God has always helped me

Name: Paulinho Guára
Born: 1979-08-29 Nationality: Brazilian
Height: 182 cm Weight: 78 kg
Original club: Clube Atlético Mineiro [Bra]

CLUBS

2015 Tigres do Brasil
2014 Coruipé (Brasilien)
2014 Democrata SL (Brasilien)
2013 Arapongas EC (Brasilien)
2012 Democrata SL (Brasilien)

2011 Naval
2011 Hammarby
2010 Örebro
2008–2009 Busan IPark (Japan)
2005–2008 Hammarby
2002–2005 Örgryte IS
2002 Atlético Mineiro (Brasilien)
2001–2011 Int. Limeira (Brasilien)
2001 Guarani E.C (Brasilien)
2000–2001 Valerio FC (Brasilien)
1999–2000 Uberlândia E.C (Brasilien)

FOOTBALL FAMILY

My real name is Paulo Roberto Chamon De Castilho, but I call myself Paulinho Guára. I am 32 years old, a Brazilian from a city called Sete Lagoas Minas Gerais.

Brazil is a huge football country and since my father was a professional football player, I was born into a football family. This had an influence on my childhood and my sisters' childhood, but especially on me.

You could say that our family was neither rich nor poor, rather more like a middle class family. My mother worked as an administrator at a hospital. My mother has meant so much to me. She has always been firm and maybe also a little bit strict, but at the same time extremely warm-hearted, like my grandmother, whom I also had a warm relationship with before she passed away.

God means so much to me! Yes, truly 100%.

I UNDERSTOOD THAT GOD EXISTS

It was also my mother who took me to the Catholic church she regularly attended. I was very young when I first understood that God exists. I was probably about six years old when I experienced God's nearness and power in a very tangible way for the first time.

School was more or less a must, and I would rather have spent all of my time playing football. But my parents were strict: if I didn't do well in school, then I didn't get to play football either. So, I knew I had to do well in school.

TOUGH COMPETITION

Personally, I have always liked to be with people; I am pretty open and can make new friends easily. When I was little I had lots of friends, and of course football was an important ingredient in my life the whole time I was growing up.

My teenage years at home were pretty short-lived since I moved out of the house when I was sixteen years old so that I could concentrate

on football full-time.

In Brazil they say: "If you can't play football, then you aren't a Brazilian." There is so much pressure on those who want to get somewhere in football. The competition is so tough, and almost daily there are new skilled football players who come along.

PRACTICES AND DISCIPLINE

If you want to be among the top players you have to fight incredibly hard. It was the same with me; I had to work hard every day in grueling practices and I had to be disciplined. I fought much harder during that time than I do now. I learned a lot and was able to reach my limits of potential in Atletico Mineiro Minas Gerais, where I got the chance to become a football player. At that time I didn't even think of one day getting the chance to play in Europe.

GOD HAS ALWAYS HELPED ME

Since I have always believed in God as long as I can remember, and have counted on his help, I have also gotten to see how God has helped me. Yes, God has truly helped me my whole life! I have never doubted in God. I also believe that God tests us, tests our love for Him, through trials and hindrances on our journey of life.

So when I finally landed in Sweden and took my first steps on Swedish ground, it was a very good feeling. I felt as though God had opened

a door for me when I got the chance to play in Örgryte. I have now played two years here in Gothenburg and both my wife Giovana and I like it here. I might stay here awhile longer, but of course I have the dream of going further and playing in one of the big clubs in France, or why not in Barcelona in Spain. But like I said, only God knows what the future looks like.

MY ROLE MODEL

What is important to me is that my family is doing well and that I enjoy what I do. Besides football I don't really have any other special hobbies the way many other Swedish players do. For us Brazilians there is only football if you are a football player. But besides reading my Bible every morning, especially in the Psalms, I like to listen to music and I especially love Brazilian music. My role model in life is Jesus, but besides that, my own father is one of my role models. My football role model is Ronaldinho who plays in Flamengo.

...WE'LL SEE WHAT HAPPENS

All in all I am a positive person who looks at life from a positive perspective. I love to be with people and think it is easy to get to know people. If I were to mention something that makes me sad, it is maybe not so much of what I see in Sweden, but more the thought of the poor people in my home country, not the least of all the prostitutes and street children.

Maybe in the future I can help some of them. I would like to give something back to God, that which I have received as a gift from Him. Also, I want to make sure that my family is doing well. I will probably play football until I am thirty-five, then we'll see what happens.

GOD MEANS SO MUCH TO ME

If you don't know God, then I would like to say to you: "Life can be tough enough, even if you do know God; how much harder it can be to go through life without Him!"

/Paulinho Guára

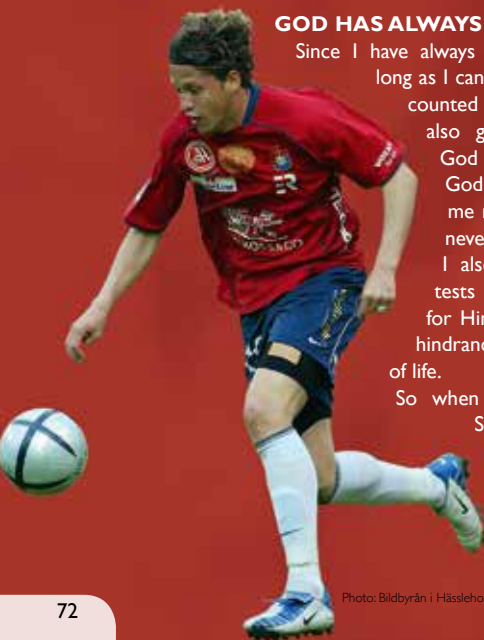


Photo: Bildbyrå i Hålsjöholm

Free from a life as a witch!

I was fully convinced that the black magic that we practised was a reality. But what kind of forces were there behind this spiritual world?

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PECKING ORDER IN CLASS

At an early age I came in contact with the occult, which nearly destroyed my whole life. I was eight years old when we moved from Finland to Sweden, I came to a foreign country, whose language I couldn't speak and attended a school where no one understood me. It was a complete disaster. I didn't settle and I consequently became involved in fights. Since I didn't speak the language I was insecure, shy and timid. I became the target of the bullies.

PAIN IN MY STOMACH EVERY MORNING

I had pain in my stomach every morning when it was time to go to school. After years of being bullied every day, I was so filled with hate against my classmates that I just snapped and started to fight back. I was physically stronger than they were. The bullying came to an end, but I never made any real friends in the class. Instead I started to hang with friends that were some years older than me.



"THE SPIRIT IN THE GLASS"

My mother was a Christian, which meant that as I grew up I went to Sunday school and attended church services. When I was thirteen, I decided not to have anything to do with my mother's God. I viewed Christianity as boring, and filled with lots of rules and regulations. It seemed like everything that was fun was sin and you should have a life that is as boring as possible. The years of bullying had left their mark on me. I was broken inside, had low self-esteem and felt a great void inside me. Some older friends had started messing with "the spirit in the glass". It seemed exciting when they told me about the game. I decided to join them and test it. To be really sure that none of the others were bluffing I asked exact questions with answers that only I could know. To my great surprise it worked. The glass that was being used moved in its "own" power from one letter to another and gave me the answers I was looking for. "This was cool", I thought. Maybe I had found something that would give my existence the excitement and the meaning I was looking for.

SATANISM

I became more and more involved in occult activities. I devoured all the occult literature that I could get, which wasn't so much at that time. Since I was wide open for anything that was supernatural, I was like a magnet that was drawn to people that practised these things. I met some people that were into Satanism. Their ideology appealed to me: "Do as you want, as long as it makes you feel well. If you reach your own goals it doesn't matter if you run over others. The strong will conquer the weak they must be eliminated", and so on. It was an ideology of total selfishness where I could be strong and look down on other people. I didn't have to feel inferior any more.

I WAS DEDICATED TO BEING A WITCH

For many years I had been ganged up on in my class, but now I had the chance to take revenge on my tormentors by putting curses on them. Voodoo was an effective way to get revenge. I saw how these unseen curses hit the people that were being

exposed to voodoo. At the same time that I was fascinated by the supernatural spirit world it felt a little spooky. I was totally convinced that the black magic which we practised was a reality, but what kind of force was behind this spiritual world? It certainly wasn't Mom's God anyway. I was completely sure of that. After all there were a great deal of the Sunday school teachings that had stuck in my memory. I had heard about a God that is good and a devil that is evil.

The day I was dedicated to become a witch, I renounced everything that had to do with Christianity. I firmly believed that my life would be a success and that I would succeed in all I did. I thought the spirit world should protect me, if I did what was pleasing to my master, Satan. But no matter how much I filled my life with occult activities, like astral travels (experiences outside the body), there was still a nagging unrest inside me. The emptiness in my inner being just became bigger each day.

SEDATIVE DRUGS AND MORPHINE

Finally I started to use sedative drugs and morphine to get rid of the anguish that was growing inside me. Since drugs can only ease the pain for a short time, it wasn't a solution. In my 20's I had a child with my husband, who I had married a few years earlier. He was not initiated into Satanism, but he had problems with alcohol and drugs. The marriage broke up after a few years, and I got the care of our son Mikael. Now I had a new mission to raise Mikael to be a good Satanist right from the start. Just as Christians see it as natural to teach their children about their religion, it was just as natural to me to teach my son the ideology that I believed in. But life didn't really turned out as I expected. Right from the start Mikael had problems at school. He was aggressive against the teachers and against everyone that wanted to rule over him. Both Mikael and I felt worse and worse.

MORE AND MORE DEPRESSED

I wanted to break with Satanism, because it made me more and more depressed. Life felt like a big darkness that I couldn't break out from. Was there anything or anyone that could help

me? My thoughts started to go back to the God I had heard of in my childhood. Could he help me? Would he hear me if I prayed to him? I didn't really know if I dared to try, because I believed that the dark forces were stronger than the God of Christianity. Finally I picked up courage and cried out "If you hear me and if you can help me, then show it in some way". Immediately I got a strong thought "Go to the Pentecostal church now". I wondered if it was God that gave me the thought. If it was I couldn't afford to miss it and off I went. The service had already begun and the Pastor stood in the front behind the pulpit ready to start his preaching. I sat down in the back of the church. Then something happened. The Pastor said that he just had received a message from God to someone in the congregation. What he said, corresponded exactly with my situation, right to the smallest detail. I understood that God had heard me and answered my prayer. He cared for me!

THE JESUS OF THE BIBLE

After this event things started to fall into place, just like a puzzle. I got in touch with Christian people who enabled us to get away to a place where we could get help with our problems. After my decision to believe in the Jesus of the Bible, as God's Son and my personal Saviour, I felt that the dark disappeared and light filled my life. I now had true meaning and substance. The emptiness that I had always felt was filled with the love of God.

REMARRIED WITH THE SAME MAN

I am now remarried to Mikael's father, who has also had his life changed by God. These days I tell others about my life and warn people against all kinds of occultism, in different places and for all different age groups. One thing I know for sure: Jesus can change any situation, no matter how hopeless it seems!

Heli

MY FUTURE

I have such terrible pain on the inside!
It hurts so bad, I just want to die!
Help me Jesus!
I call out for your help. Set me free from this pain. I want to live!
Set me free from this longing to die.
I want to live!
Give me a future with a family that is whole.
I long for a life of freedom and joy.
I want to be free from my old life.
I want to have a whole new life in freedom and truth.
Set me free from the lies.
Thank you Jesus for loving me.
In Jesus' name, amen!



From biker president to mother of five

"We are the ones our parents always warned us about." This had always been the motto of my life and with this philosophy I had finally become the president of a biker club. By doing so, I believed that I had fulfilled the goal of my dreams. What more was there to accomplish? But everything always turns out differently than what you expect.

I stood my ground like a man

Born in 1963 as the fourth daughter instead of the son my parents had been longing for, I tried early on to fulfill their expectations. Their desire that I should have been a boy soon influenced my behavior. I played with an electric train and with the boys on the street where I lived. I followed the example of my mother who prevailed in our family and against my father with beatings and loud yelling in that I also secured

acceptance by hitting. In this way I gained acceptance and respect in a man's world. Only my grandmother represented a bright spot in this dark and upside down world of my childhood which was marked by inner and outer wounds and injuries. In the evenings she often prayed for me. Still, my heart became harder and harder and the joy of life was like a foreign concept to me...

The blast of air blew all problems away

...until the day I sat on a motorcycle for the first time. This is completely understandable once you realize that this was a Kawasaki Z 1000. My neighbor, this cool guy we looked up to, invited me for a ride when I was almost 13 years old.



It was incredible! Pure freedom. The immense blast of air simply blew all my worries, problems and difficulties away. I enjoyed the inclined position and the great sound when this machine released its enormous power and transformed it into exhilarating acceleration. This was the buzz which I had sought for so long. What a life! Immediately I took my older sister's moped without asking and went on repeated rides that gave me a feeling of power, independence and freedom. Unfortunately the police had a slightly different view about this and with the rage and beatings of my parents I had to pay a high price for these feelings.

I took drugs and was involved in the occult

When my sister died in a tragic accident, I was completely shaken. I began to drink, smoke weed, and to get involved with the occult. I tried to get in contact with my dead sister, but all I got from that were nightmares and I felt that demons had entered into my life.

Under their dark influence
I watched an ever increasing number
of horror

movies and soon got
addicted to crueler and crueler
films of that kind.

In the biker scene

I spent the weekends in the biker scene in order to find the feeling of acknowledgement, independence, power and self-affirmation in the wild life that the camping at some biker meetings offered. I tried to find those things in this subculture where the daily routine consisted of smoking weed, drinking bouts, jawing matches, fights and sex shows accompanied by the rhythm of the hardest rock music. I needed a bigger and bigger dose of this destructive self-affirmation. Faster and faster motorcycles all the time. That did not change when I married for the first time. I was 21 years old. It was now

my husband who beat me instead of my parents. When at last he wanted to sell my motorcycle I had had enough and I left him on the spot. In my second marriage a little later, in which I had two wonderful children, the same thing repeated itself. Violence, alcohol and separation, all of which made me look at men from then on only as a means to an end. Inside I put up a protective barrier to save myself from further disappointment.

In 1989 I founded the women's club "Queens of the Road"

Increasingly hard and violent, I stood my ground in the biker scene and founded my own women's club "Queens of the Road" in 1989. We established ourselves on the scene and were famous from the North Sea to the Baltic Sea and rode from biker meeting to biker meeting. Temporarily, I lived in several worlds. During the day I was a business woman and mother, in the evenings I drove a taxi and on the weekend I was president of a women's club. Then I met a man who asked me if I wanted to experience a real sexual buzz. I said yes right away and ended up in very perverse situations. Finally I could inflict the same pain on men that they had caused me for years and years, and return the sorrow on them instead. These activities, with the leather costumes and the power which I had suddenly gained over the hated men, fascinated me.

I reached an end and cried out loud for help

In the end of October 1997 I woke up early in the morning in bed next to a sleeping man whom I knew, but with whom I only had a sexual relationship. All of a sudden it became clear to me what a wearisome, chaotic life I was leading which was destroying me and pulling me down further into the abyss. The abyss consisted of addictions, sexual perversions and the occult. On this path of hopelessness I was quickly moving towards death, or prison at best. My two children, whom I loved more than anything, came to my mind and so I slipped out without saying goodbye and left only a note which said: "Never call again." In the car I cried out loud in

all my exasperation. "Won't anyone help me? I don't want to live like this anymore." No money, a crazy ex-husband trying to destroy me and my friends, and the perverse sexual lust to hurt men which was getting stronger – how could I get out of this?

My cry was heard

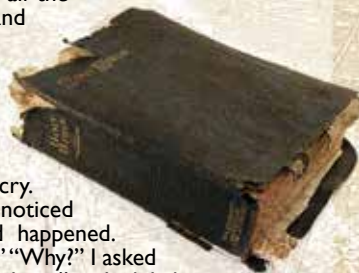
On the next day I rode with my club to a biker meeting, where a friend introduced me to Henning, her boyfriend's cousin. Henning fascinated me at once. Something was different about him, something made him unique from the bikers and men that I had known in my life before and who had produced the hatred of men that was glowing inside me. He radiated a great calm. When we said goodbye, after having arranged a date for a meeting, he left a feeling in me which had been completely unknown to me – a strange magic calm. On Monday morning he came to visit. Although I thought that surely like every other man he wanted one "thing," I was glad he came by. Everything was going to turn out differently from what I had imagined it would. He asked me to bring my one and a half year old son to where we were sitting at the table and he took care of him affectionately. I was astonished and touched. Never before had anyone cared for my children, not even their own father. We talked and at some point, when our conversation came to hobbies, he said that his greatest hobby was Jesus Christ. I was alarmed and I drew back on the inside. Was I being caught up in a sect? But something calmed me down again and so it became a great day. The next day he visited us again. And with him came again this atmosphere, this magical calm, security, and happiness. After we had been acquainted for several days, Henning said that he had to go to southern Germany on business. He asked if I wanted to accompany him with my two children. I was curious so I accepted the offer. In the morning after our arrival in southern Germany, Henning had to go to his office to get some things done. So we were alone in his nice and bright two-room apartment. Glancing at a bookshelf, I took a book and began to read a fascinating story about a dead person who had been resurrected.

Jesus Christ is alive

I remembered that I had heard this story before on one of those evenings when my grandmother used to read us stories. So I looked at the cover of the book and was extremely surprised when I saw what was written there: the Bible. I had become curious and after a while I wanted to know if those stories were true and said aloud: "Jesus, if you really exist then show yourself to me, come into my life and I will follow you." What happened then was unbelievable. I could sense that somebody stepped into the room who I could not see but at whose presence all the errors and mistakes of my past life came to mind. I took a notebook and wrote down all the sins that I could remember and asked the invisible person who I could feel was there for forgiveness. At once there was an indescribable peace, a deep calm, security and happiness. My heart became soft and I began to cry. When Henning came back he noticed at once that something had happened. "Did something happen here?" "Why?" I asked him in return. "It is so different here," and while he came towards me and looked into my eyes he only said: "You have given your life to Jesus Christ!" "Yes, how do you know that?" I answered. "You have lost that harsh look on your face; now you are even smiling," were his words, when we fell into each others arms. For the first time in my life I knew what love is and it was as if we were united together in thoughts and in faith – in Jesus Christ.

Now Jesus Christ is holding the handlebars of my life

Back again in northern Germany I didn't really want to tell anybody about what had happened in my life. But I couldn't hide it because already on the first evening my friends noticed that I had changed completely. So I explained to them



with clear words that I had handed my life over to Jesus Christ. But they only stared at me like I was mad and they didn't have a single good word for me. The same thing happened with all the people I knew and so I moved away from that area to begin a new life. Jesus Christ is now holding the handlebars of my life and I have to say – he often drives at extremely high speeds. My life has changed radically. Gone are the times when I was involved in perverse sexual activities because my attitude towards sex has normalized from one day to the next just like my harsh facial expression, my longing for power, my addiction to the occult and horror movies. Henning and I got married in 1999. The year before, my father gave his life to Jesus Christ on his death bed. We now live in our own house and have five great children. Three of them are foster children who came to live with us in the year 2001 – just as we had asked for in our prayers. I am about to pay back my financial debts and I have forgiven my mother, my brothers and sisters and everybody else who hurt me. I see people now from a completely new perspective and have gained many new friendships. I don't want to ignore my obligations as a mother of five anymore. It is an important commitment, and a very rewarding one. Thanks be to Jesus Christ, the Lord.

Helma



Prayer

Loneliness

Where are my friends?

One can be in a city of millions

And yet loneliness is there like a shadow

That you want to shake off.

Imagine having someone to talk to.

Can you hear me Jesus?

Come closer, Jesus, I want to talk to you.

Push away my feelings of loneliness.

Talk to me, Jesus, I want to listen

I want to be a faithful friend

To those who feel lonely.

Amen





Olli - former hooligan, punk skinhead and neo-nazi

I was born in an East German (DDR) family in Berlin-Köpenik. Though the DDR disapproved, when I was little, my mom sent me to Sunday School. To be honest, the only thing that drew me to that was their West German candy. By the time I was 10, my father was drinking heavily, and my mother divorced him. My mother, who taught Russian and English at a community college, had very little time for my seven year old brother and I, so we had to make it on our own. We did a lot of foolish things.

A LONGING FOR ATTENTION

In school I was the class clown. I wanted to be noticed in every way, and I barely made it through school. In time, I got to know some punks, and I became one of the founders of the punk movement in the former DDR. We didn't just see ourselves as people who scared others, but as enemies of the state. Around that same time, I met some football fans who vandalised the Berlin football stadium. Here I came in contact with true violence. On the weekends we went around trying to start fights during football matches. We usually won, but I often came home with a broken nose and black eyes.

IN PRISON AT 17 YEARS-OLD

Shortly after that, the police found pamphlets, pictures and cassette tapes in my apartment that were considered a threat to the state regime. I was convicted and sent to jail as a political prisoner. It was rough—suddenly I was totally alone with no friends or gang. As a 17 year-old, I was sitting with hardened criminals who were murderers, rapists and pervers.

In prison, I grew hatred towards people. By the time I was released, my hate was deeply rooted. In addition to hating the state and the police, I also developed a deep hatred for myself.

SKINHEAD AND NEO-NAZI

The Berlin wall fell, but it didn't affect my way of life. I plunged deeper into the football hooligan gang. There were many fights, and I was often in court because of my actions. I also joined a skinhead gang. These extreme, right-winged skinheads shaped my worldview with their propaganda. I seldom missed a concert by right-winged bands, and I even participated in marches in Denmark and Sweden. My life became more and more about partying, and I lost my footing completely.

It was as though I had sunk into a bottomless pit. Sometimes during the long hours of the night, I wondered if there was a God out there, somewhere.

A BIKER BIBLE

One night, I was invited to a biker party. I had a lot to drink and was sitting at the bar, when to my surprise I saw some guys wearing leather jackets with a large yellow cross on their back. They stood right in the middle of all the losers in the bar. I asked one of them what they meant by wearing a cross. That led into a long conversation with some of the members of the Tribe of Judah Biker Club. The conversation had a different feeling to me, and there was a great atmosphere where we were sitting and talking. Before I left, they gave me a Biker Bible. When I came home, I placed the Bible on my bookshelf. But it was as if God kept "knocking". I tried to drown my anxiety and questions with alcohol, but I also used to watch NBC on Sunday, where a pastor named Wolfgang Wegert would preach at 12:30. Even when I came home in the early morning after a night partying, I set the alarm so I could get up in time for the sermon.



PRETENDING TO BE DEPRESSED

A friend and I started a hooligan pub. I made my living there, and spent my evenings there when I wasn't at some other party. Soon, the pub began to do poorly, and on my friend's advice, I decided to claim sickness so I could receive government compensation. We hoped to use that money to improve the pub's finances. I decided to make up a story. Since I wasn't too bad at acting, I succeeded in convincing a doctor that I was suffering from depression. I was diagnosed and given 10 months of sick pay. Eventually, the government refused to pay me more money. Instead, I was forced to go to a special hospital to get well. I didn't have any choice in the matter, even though it meant I wouldn't be able to be at the pub for six weeks.

BEGINNING TO READ THE BIBLE

I brought books and CDs with me for the stay, including the Biker Bible I received earlier. I knew that for six weeks I would have to play the part of a manic depressive as best I could. I knew it wouldn't be easy, and I actually prayed that God would help me. I succeeded in playing my part well for the doctors, therapists and other patients. But after about two weeks, I got tired of the role I was playing. I visited a church one Sunday, but the service seemed long and the people looked sad. Some evenings I flipped through my Biker Bible.

One Sunday when I was walking in the park, I took a new path and thought about whether God exists. I wanted Jesus to show himself, if he really did exist, so I cried out, "Jesus, show yourself to me!" I walked uphill, continuing to say, "Where are you? Or do millions of people have faith in something that is just make-believe?"

A short while later I came to a large house almost like a castle up on the hill. It had a sign that read: "Faith Centre." It was a Bible school. I was astonished! At the entrance there was a small box with pamphlets that had scriptures about faith. I took one and began to read.

ARE YOU JESUS?

To my surprise, someone tapped me on the shoulder. I turned to meet Jörg, who saw me coming from his window. He felt convicted to come talk to me.

He looked me straight in the eye and asked who I was looking for. I felt like my legs would give out under me. I couldn't say that I was looking for God! But before I said anything, he said,



"I believe you are looking for God"!

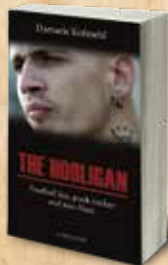
At first I couldn't say a word, but then I sputtered, "Are you Jesus?"

"No," Jörg said, "But I know him well." We spoke for awhile, and he invited me to come to a service a few days later.

Afterwards, I sat on a bench and read a pamphlet by Reinhard Bonnke all the way through. At the end of the pamphlet was a short prayer to pray if you wanted to give your life to Jesus. At 2:55 p.m. on November 21, 2002, I prayed this little salvation prayer three times—I wanted to make sure! It was as though my whole life was played out before my eyes, it was if I was dying. I saw all of the fights with football fans and all of the people I had hurt. I was permeated by feelings of guilt and disgust about my life: it was though I was stuck in the mess! But I also felt how I could leave all of my sin at the cross of Calvary. I sensed that Jesus forgave my guilt, and on that bench I received forgiveness for all my sin. I had finally come home! I, a grown man, wept like a small child. I felt like a completely new person.

THE NEW OLLI

Repentance can be different for different people, but for me, when I stood up from that park bench, I was completely transformed. My entire worldview was new. Everything that happened to me up to that point belonged to my old life, and now something totally new had begun. It was actually as if I saw my surroundings and the landscape around me differently. Above all, I had a strong desire to read the Bible and to get to know this Jesus, to whom I had devoted my life.



Olli

To read the whole story about Olli, order the book "The Hooligan" at info@jesusshop.com

Lena

I decided that my background wouldn't shape my future

A NIGHTMARE THAT LASTED FIVE YEARS

My parents got separated in the early eighties. I was ten years old at the time. That was okay with me, since my father had been controlling our family in an unhealthy way. I wanted to live with my mother, but my dad decided that I would live with him.

The year that I turned twelve, both my older siblings moved out of the house. That was the start of a nightmare that lasted five years. My father started to molest me. As time went on, the molestation got worse.

I was scared. I was so scared that I didn't say a word. My father's brother had murdered his girlfriend, so I thought that my own father would also be capable of such violence.

THE MOLESTING CONTINUED

The only bright spot in my existence was the hope that the God I had heard about in Sunday school would help me, and I really did want to live.

I wanted to believe that there was another life for me than this one. I cried out to God for help.

After primary school, I started to train as a hairdresser. The molestation continued. I especially remember one time when I said to myself, "A year and a half from now I won't be around anymore. I won't make it that long." It was around that time my older sister began

"I won't make it that long."

to sense that something was wrong at home. She was seriously concerned for me. Two weeks before

I turned seventeen, my sister told a young woman named Maggie who had just become a Christian about her suspicions about what was happening to me. After that, Maggie sensed that God told her to go and get me. When she found me, she took me and brought me home with her. I was full of fear and felt like jell-o when I was finally freed from my prison.

THE BEGINNING OF DELIVERANCE

I stayed with Maggie for ten weeks, and that was the beginning of my deliverance. Maggie was a housewife, so she could give me lots of her time. She could speak God's word and God's promises straight to me in a way so that I could understand it. Even though I didn't have the energy to read the Bible myself at the beginning, she was there, telling me about the solution that God had to my problems. His solution was for me to forgive, despite all that I'd experienced. Maggie could tell me about it in such a great way that it was possible for me to tell God that I forgave my father. This became the key that started a healing process inside of me. Maggie was willing to give her time to help me, which was amazing. She was always by my side, no matter where I was. She spoke life, the "word of God," to me whenever I needed to hear it.

TRIAL

After my time with Maggie I moved in with my mother. Once I got there I looked for a church. I quickly became a part of their fellowship and made many friends. It was a healing environment for me, but what healed me the most was God's word. By then I had also received the power to deal with what had happened. I offered my father four months to get help. He didn't take that chance, so my mother filed a report with the police. It took an entire year before the trial started. I found a good lawyer and the trial took place behind closed doors. It was a painful experience to tell about the things that had happened. I remember it all in a haze, but I could also feel that God was there with me, helping me along the way. My father was sentenced to three years in prison. Strangely enough, I didn't feel any hatred toward him, but rather relief that it was all over.

WHEN HENRIC DIED, A LOT OF THINGS FELL APART

I had several good years after this. I met a lot of people and was involved in lots of different things. I met a man and we got married. Life was good. But then my husband Henric got cancer in 1995. It was the worst kind of cancer in the liver and pancreas. Everything was ready for an operation in which Henric would get a new liver. But during the operation the doctors noticed that they couldn't do anything else for him, so they sewed him up without doing anything. Henric came home. He received medical help every day, but the sickness worsened very quickly and he died after only three months. That was in March of 1996. In spite of his illness, that was our best time together. We slowed life down and each day was a gift. When Henric died, a lot of things

fell apart for me. He hadn't been just my husband, he had been my family and my safety net in many areas, including finances. Henric was an amazing man.

MATS

I didn't receive any widow's compensation. Henric died three months too early for that. There wasn't really any time to mourn, because I had to try to make my life work. I owned a hat store, and there were such hectic days that I almost completely disappeared from the fellowship at church. Eventually I completely hit a brick wall six months later. I was 26. It was a stormy year, and self-pity took over for a long time. I was at the mercy of my emotions and focused only on what I thought I needed. Finally I started to go back to my roots in God. I prayed that I would meet a Christian man. Through different circumstances I got to know Mats. We fell in love and not much later we were a couple. We got married quickly and had two children soon after that. After awhile the day to day life took over and suffocated our love. We fought a lot because we were so different. The only thing that really worked well was when we prayed together. All around us our friends began to separate. I even received the advice that I should think about myself first. But I realized that because I feared God more than man that God did not want this, and that there must be a better way. So both Mats and I had to make a decision based not on what we felt but on what the word of God said.

GOD OPENED A WAY FOR US

We decided to seek God's path for our lives. That was when God opened a completely new path

for us, and we got the chance to work abroad. We sold everything we owned and left as a family to go help out in a church.

During this time we had a new chance to build our relationships together with God. I had so much baggage that I had brought with me into my marriage. My ability to trust anyone had been majorly damaged, since my own father had abused my trust. I had to relearn, renew my mind as the Bible says, in order to once again trust my husband. During this time I used all of the resources of God's word, the Bible. The promises that are written in the Bible became a new foundation in my life. I had to lay down my own ego and think instead first and foremost about what was best for us as a family. In that way I also received so much more in return. I decided that my background would not shape my future.

CONFIDENT ABOUT THE FUTURE

We feel confident about the future and look forward to new adventures where we as a family can work together, not each person on their own like we did before. Finally I want to say to those of you who have experienced a lot of hardships in your lives, that even if your background has been difficult, your future can be amazing. Do what I did, choose God's path. He has the best for you. He has promised to never leave you.

Lena

Prayer

SET ME FREE FROM DRUG ADDICTION

Jesus, I am stuck in drug abuse. It's like a prison. I feel so alone and powerless. I know that you have conquered these demons of drugs who want to destroy my life. Jesus, I place my entire life under your command and I leave everything behind me. I want to be free from this addiction.

Jesus, forgive all my sins and give me a pure heart and give me completely new thoughts. Light me up on the inside and give me a new passion for life. Thank you, Jesus, that you are now my Lord and my Saviour.

Jesus, I want you to lead me and to keep me away from evil powers that want to pull me down into destruction. Thank you that your blood protects me. Thank you for giving your life for me on the cross. You have forgiven me all my sins and wrongdoings. Thank you Jesus!



SET ME FREE FROM THE DEMON OF ALCOHOL

Jesus, I come to you with my alcohol abuse. I feel terrible and I want to get out of this abuse. Jesus, set me free from the demon of alcohol! Jesus, cleanse me from all my sins and the evil things I have done. Forgive me all of my sins. Thank you for helping me. Lead me to the right friends who don't drink; give me a free zone from alcohol. Give me strength to pour out the liquor, beer and wine right now. I break off with my addictions today. Jesus, fill me with your power and fill me with the Holy Spirit. Jesus, I want you to be my boss (Lord). I pray for my friends and my family. Forgive me for all the pain that I have caused them with my addictions. Heal all of the wounds I've caused among my family and friends, so that we can become good friends again. I pray for my children. Help them and protect them from all evil.

Amen.



10 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS FOR JOEL

I DOES GOD REALLY EXIST?

I believe that there is no question that every piece of art-work has an artist who painted it. Every wristwatch, regardless of whether it is cheap or expensive, has a manufacturer. Every technical thing that you have in your home has been made by people who thought creatively and then made these things. But when it comes to Creation (of humans, animals, plants, etc.) many claim that it was all made by chance. They say that all of these things, which are much

more thought-out, complicated, and detailed than computers and wristwatches and people's inventions, were made by chance. Isn't that illogical? The latest computers and the newest cars can make an impression on us. But what could be more thought-out than creation itself? The computer has a maker, but that which is many times more complicated than a computer, we human beings—could we really have a maker? For me it is obvious that we do.

2 CAN ANYONE GET TO KNOW GOD?

I am totally convinced that God wants every human being to experience Jesus' forgiveness and love and wants everyone to live for Jesus.

Jesus opened the way to God for every person. The one who chooses to invite Jesus into their lives starts to live for Him and will get to know God. God has promised in His word that if you seek Him with all your heart, you will find Him.

3 DON'T ALL RELIGIONS LEAD TO GOD?

Some people think that I am a bit narrow-minded when I answer that question with no. This is my conviction and I would not be honest if I said anything else. Jesus said Himself that He is the only way to God. Why is Jesus the only right way, one can wonder? Because he was sent by God to take away the sin of humanity. He says Himself that He is the way, the truth and the life, and that no one comes to the Father except through Him. Then each person has to decide for themselves if this is really the truth. I have seen for myself that what is written in the Bible does work and therefore I believe what is written in it. Jesus has given me peace on the inside, plus joy and love. This makes me believe in Jesus' own words that He is the only way to God.

4 WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T BELIEVE IN JESUS AND DON'T RECEIVE HIS FORGIVENESS?

The Bible says that all have sinned and are in need of receiving forgiveness from Jesus. If your sin is not removed, the punishment for your sins remains. God can't have anything to do with sin because He is holy and thoroughly true. Without the forgiveness that comes through Jesus we are separated from God and all that He stands for. When a person dies he will experience this as a clear reality. Eternal life or eternal death. To be separated from God means that we are separated forever from truth, love, life, joy and all other good things.

5 AREN'T CHRISTIANS VERY BORING PEOPLE?

Do you have any close friend who is a Christian? Sometimes people imagine things that don't agree with reality. To be a Christian means to live for Jesus and that is anything but boring. It is an exciting life. But there are those so-called Christians who have not yet experienced the real life with Jesus. Maybe they have just adopted some of the outward traditions and actions instead of the real life. They have no depth in their faith. Imagine an orange: if you taste the skin you just get a bitter taste in your mouth, but if you taste what is inside it tastes good. I believe that each person who goes deep in their faith in Jesus will experience that there is joy and life.

6 IS IT TRUE THAT CHRISTIANS NEVER HAVE ANY PROBLEMS?

As a Christian you also face problems—life is just like that. But there is an enormous difference. When you are living for God you are never alone with your problem. God is always there and He wants to help. It says in the Bible that we can cast all our worries

on God, for He cares for us. Together with God you can get help in meeting your daily problems in different ways.

7 IF GOD IS SO GOOD, WHY ARE THERE SO MANY TERRIBLE THINGS HAPPENING IN THE WORLD?

God is a good God who only wants every person's best. But because humanity has turned their back on God, there is a lot of evil in the world. I believe that most of us are in agreement about that. The evil that is happening in the world is a result of humanity turning its back on God. Let's look at one example. God has given us the earth and there is enough food so that everyone can have enough to get fed. But because of our selfishness, many small children die every day due to lack of food.

8 WHY ISN'T GOD STOPPING ALL THIS?

God has committed the power over this earth to us humans. And He has given us a free will. We are free to choose between evil as well as good. And God is not interfering with our free will. He could have created us as robots who did everything correct all the time, but He didn't. He wanted us to have our own free will. He wanted there to be a creation that would love Him. God wanted us humans to turn back to Him and to live in love and to love our neighbours as much as we love ourselves. But as long as people are living in rebellion against God, a lot of terrible things are happening and sadly even innocent people are being affected. There will come a day when all those who believe in Jesus will live with Him in heaven. Then there will be an end to all evil..

9 WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS AFTER DEATH?

This is a question that I believe everybody is asking. I remember when I was out with a friend, talking to people about God. While we were walking in a park we saw a couple on a bench and I went up to them and asked: Do you know what actually happens after death? This is a question that is too straightforward to ask a stranger, but I asked anyway. Later I found out that when I approached this couple, they were just talking about what happens after death, because of the passing away of a close relative. My friend and I could bring hope into their situation. Then they wanted to receive Jesus' forgiveness and start to live for Him.

If you have Jesus as your Lord and your best friend, you can be assured that you have eternal life and that death is not the end. It is actually the beginning of something much more wonderful.

10 WHY DO YOU BELIEVE IN JESUS?

I grew up in a Christian home. My parents have never forced me to become a Christian, but it has definitely influenced me. It actually became natural for me to continue to believe in Jesus. I think the reason is that I have experienced so much myself. The greatest thing is probably not all the signs and wonders that I have seen, but rather that I feel like a close friend of Jesus. I talk to Him and He talks to me. It is fellowship. This fellowship gives me so much strength and inspiration. I would never want to live without this friendship with God.

Joel Sjöberg was born in 1976 and lives in Hällefors in the Västmanland province in Sweden.

He is a publisher, lecturer and a preacher.

He likes to travel and to meet new people.

He is active in music, weightlifting, and running in his free time. Aside from this, it is faith in Jesus that influences his life.



A GOTH'S SPIRITUAL CONVERSION

A testimonial by Mark Allen,
former guitarist with Ex-Voto

DAD'S DEATH

Dad died when I was 12 years old. We were close and my Mom didn't tell me he was dying, so it came as quite a shock when it happened. I didn't cry, or have any outward signs of distress. But the impact of this event would shape my life over the course of the next 25 years.

I WAS WILLING TO GIVE UP MY SOUL FOR THIS

I started using drugs of all kinds about the age of 12. Beginning with pot and climbing the drug charts with a bullet all the way to the pinnacle, heroin. I was a bonafide hope to die junkie at the age of 25. I didn't care about anybody or anything other than my music and my drugs. Girls were just something to use and get rid of. I was slamming heroin and practicing magic any chance I could get. I felt like I had power for the first time in my life, and that something big was going to happen. I was going to be a star! I thought that the devil would protect me and that he would give me the desires of my heart. I was even willing to give up my own soul for this. I had written a contract one night while intoxicated on heroin and cocaine. The contract read that for seven years of fame and fortune I would give my soul to Satan. I cut my hand and bled all over the page, did an incantation to seal the deal and hid the document in a safe place.

THE FIGURE MUST HAVE BEEN AT LEAST SEVEN FEET TALL

One night, I was practicing black magic in my room when the silhouette of a figure started to materialize on my closet doors illuminated by the flickering candles on the floor. The shape must have been at least seven feet tall with wings. Yes, wings! I had been asking the dark powers to visit me that night, but I didn't really expect it to happen, at least in a physical way. But it did. I got scared and ran out of my room and into the front yard completely frightened. What had I done? Would the figure be in my room when I went back? I wasn't sure. Slowly I walked back down the hallway to my room. The scent of candles was present and the flickering shadows were visible on the wall. To my surprise, nothing was there to greet me. I blew out the candles and tried to sleep.

My thoughts were filled with demons and death all night as I tossed and turned. I had given the devil a foothold that wouldn't be broken for almost another decade.

MY MUSIC CAREER WAS OVER

We were playing clubs, getting better and better, and more people were coming. Our manager ran the Krypt Klub in Los Angeles, which was the only real Gothic Club in town. As the band got more exposure and played bigger shows, my drug use got worse and worse. I would be doing heroin right before a show in the dressing room or bathroom. My drug use and temper caused a severe rift within the band. Just when we were about to go big time, I imploded. The band fired me because I was too much trouble to deal with. Arguments, jail stints, drugs, etc. They canned me hard. I was devastated because they pretty much wiped away any trace of my history with them and my influence on their success. I soldiered on. Undaunted, my heroin addiction progressing rapidly, my weight declining and my health tentative, I formed my own band, The Covenant. It was a great line up with a strong set of material that I had written and arranged. We were set to debut at The Blitz Club. I read about it in the papers. "Former Guitarist from Ex-Voto Debuts with his New Band". Sounded exciting, but I never made it. I ended up slamming heroin in my car that night. My music career was over.

I BECAME HOMELESS

The next several years found me either in jail or on the streets. I was staying in homeless shelters and sleeping anywhere I could stay warm and dry. I wandered about the streets of Santa Ana, my music career long gone. Just trying to survive day to day and keep the heroin flowing. Whenever you get a meal when you are homeless at a shelter or somewhere, you have to hear someone talk about God. It was something I had to deal with to get what I needed. So I put up with the Jesus stuff. This went on for several years with no change. Then one night, something happened. I was standing in a crowd of about forty homeless people waiting for my food. The preacher was intense as he read from his Bible. He caught my eye once and stopped his sermon

dead in its tracks. He said to me "son, come up here for a minute". So I did. He looked at me in the eyes and said "I believe that Jesus is going to deliver you from your heroin addiction tonight". He asked me if I believed that Jesus could do this, and that He was the Son of God? I said "yes, I did". I couldn't believe I said that, because ever since my Dad died I had been a God hater.

My heart was changing and God was doing the change. I got down on my knees in the dirty streets of Santa Ana and made a confession of faith in Christ Jesus and accepted Him as my personal Lord and Saviour.

MY TIME AS A GOTH

I still remember how lonely I felt in those days within the Goth scene. I had never had more people around me, and yet felt so alone. I thought I fit in that scene, but just like every other scene before it, I never really fit. I just fooled myself into thinking that I did. The reality is that until you are ok with yourself and with God, you can't fit anywhere. Only through Jesus taking this lonely, lost, hurting and broken soul, cleaning me up and setting me in another direction did I finally find out who I was, where I had been and where I was going.

IT IS A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH!

There really is a plan for you that is bigger than you could imagine. Don't let the devil sell you a bill of goods that is just a cheap imitation of the original. The Bible says that the devil's plan is to steal, kill and destroy. I sure allowed him to do a pretty good number on my life up until I accepted Christ. If he has stolen from you, and destroyed things and relationships in your life, he hasn't finished with you. He intends on killing you and will not be satisfied until this is accomplished. Be aware, there is a spiritual battle for your soul. Use wisdom and choose rightly whom you will serve. It is a matter of life and death! Choose life, choose Jesus!

God Bless!

Mark

Confessions of a Teenage Satanist

Charles Evans

HOW HAD I GOTTEN HERE?

I stared into the flickering black candle that sat in the midst of the skulls and black-handled knives on my homemade altar to Satan. Reciting the incantation, I tried to ignore my nagging thoughts. I was still young - just a teenager. How had I gotten here? I felt like I was sliding headfirst into hell.

REVOLTING AGAINST CHURCH

Growing up, my family attended church every Sunday. We prayed before meals and had the standard "20 pound family Bible" on the coffee table. I always knew about "God", but during the boring Sunday church services I wondered, "Is this all there is to knowing God? How can I possibly get closer to Him?" With these feelings, I soon rebelled against church and simply stopped going.

HEAVY METAL

In junior high school, being part of the crowd meant being a devoted fan of rock and roll music. A neighbour introduced me to heavy metal rock, and I instantly liked it. Soon a single rock album grew into a large collection of rock albums. I had to listen to my music constantly. I skipped school so I could have it all day. I bought an electric guitar and tried to form my own rock band so I could be like my rock heroes.

WITCHCRAFT, VODOO, SATANISM

Then I noticed that all my favourite performers promoted the occult or satanic practices in their songs. This frightened me, but the music was stronger than my dislike of black magic. I wondered if this "god" of the rock bands was what I had been searching for! I wasted no time finding out. Soon I had a personal library on the black arts and a huge "circle of salt" on the basement floor at home. I bought albums only if they talked about witchcraft, voodoo, or Satanism. I drew an upside-down cross on my black T-shirt, which proudly proclaimed, "Satan lives!"

Finally, I began leading others into the worship of Satan. Teenagers would beg to join my "coven". As you can see, I was actively involved in my religion rather than simply sitting in a church pew for one or two hours each Sunday. My dread and despair seemed to grow more suffocating each day. Instead of finding the pathway to God, I was sliding headfirst into the depths of hell.

A CHRISTIAN PATIENT

About this time my dad had some routine surgery. Sharing his hospital room was a Christian patient who eagerly talked about the forgiveness of sin Jesus Christ offers by trusting Him as your personal Saviour. Although my dad had gone to church for

years, this roommate had something he didn't have. Soon my father trusted Christ as his Saviour and became a child of God...but there was a child of Satan back home! Picture this: Downstairs is a teenage Satanist son with a huge hexagram on the floor, an altar to Satan nearby, and rock and roll music constantly blasting from the stereo. Upstairs is a new Christian father who suddenly understands what is taking place in his home! It wasn't pretty.

HIS PRAYERS FOR ME

I could yell as loudly as my dad when we argued, but there was one thing I couldn't fight - his prayers for me, along with the prayers of all of his new Christian friends. After weeks of increasing despair, one day I confessed to my best friend, who studied the occult with me, that I wanted out of Satanism. He reminded me: Don't even think of leaving, or else... Soon however he admitted that he felt just as bad. We were helplessly trapped.

TO A SURE DEATH

That evening we drove to the Niagara River to end our lives. In a few minutes the swift currents would plunge us over the Niagara Falls to a sure death - and eternity in hell. Obviously we didn't do it, and all I know is that when I got home to my bedroom, I knelt beside the bed and poured out my heart to God.

FORGIVE ME

"Dear Lord," I said, "I'm not sure You even exist. And even if You do exist, I'm not sure You can help me. And even if You can help me, I'm not too sure that You will. But whatever happens from this point on, I want You to know that I am giving my life completely to You. Please forgive me for all that I have done wrong, and help me to love the way You love. Amen."

I EXPECTED SATAN TO KILL ME

I expected Satan to kill me that night because I had abandoned him, but instead I slept like a child, and the next morning I woke up as a new person! Jesus Christ filled my heart with a joy so strong that not even Satan could take it from me! I can't say that everything changed in a moment, but that night God delivered me from Satan and changed my life forever.

JESUS CONQUERED DEATH

You may not have rebelled as much as I did, but you still need Jesus! Your sin keeps you from God just as much as my sin kept me from Him. Jesus Christ is a real person - God in the flesh - who died for all our sins and then rose from the grave three days later. Jesus defeated death! Only He can offer forgiveness and eternal life to those who will trust in Him.

ETERNAL LIFE

A Bible verse I have known from childhood explains why Jesus died for us: "God so loved the world [you and me] that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

Jesus also said, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." (John 3:36)

YOU HAVE A CHOICE TO MAKE!

You have a choice to make my friend, just like I did - trust Jesus and follow Him to heaven or do nothing and face eternity in hell. No matter what your sin, if He can save a teenage devil worshipper like me, He can save you too. Trust in Jesus today!

Charles Evans

PRAYER

When in anguish

Dear Jesus, you know how I feel, I
feel bad
But thank you that you are with me
And you forgive me all my sins
In Jesus' name I will command these
evil thoughts
To be gone from my mind
I want your thoughts that give me
Peace,
Strength, and Joy
You are my best friend
Thank you. Amen

Mega Life!

I wanted to have time at home with my wife and two children



In my eight years away from Megadeth, I seized the moment to branch out into many new artistic opportunities - all of which really helped me to grow as an artist, a musician and a person. Initially, I got calls to tour with some big rock and roll artists, but first and foremost, I really wanted to have time at home with my wife and two children, and I knew that wouldn't happen if I was on the road for someone

else all the time. I feared waking up one day, 50 years old, finding that my kids were off to college and I had missed their entire childhood.

Instead, I put together several rock bands, played on a bunch of different records, and did Artist Relations work for Peavey Electronics Corporation. Another thing I really wanted to do in my time away from Megadeth was develop music that tied into my Christian walk. A few years later, my family started going to Shepherd of the Desert Lutheran Church in Scottsdale. During this time I was asked to become an elder, and shortly thereafter, our new Pastor Jon Bjorgaard asked if I would help create a new worship service with him, which he wanted to call MEGA Life!, based on John 10:10.

Megadeth

I had been in Megadeth as a co-founding member since I was 18 years old. I grew up there and had been given a good life as a result. I got sober in 1990, at 25 years of age, and that brought me back to a renewed Christian walk that I had as a kid growing up in the Lutheran church. So there I was, all those years playing in Megadeth but being groomed spiritually behind the scenes.

I clearly see the invitation to return back to Megadeth as God's timing, not mine. I view it as a way to finally clear the past once and for all, to mend fences and show the world that even a messy situation like a rock and roll band's demise can be made right through Christ. I also see that, in many ways, my return to the band probably has more to do with what my faith should be (which is forgiveness and glorifying Jesus in all that I do) even if that means going outside the church (and my own hometown ministry) to make things right during this

particular season of my life. It's a chance to be on a different stage and to be serving while doing it.

Really being honest and true to yourself

I've said for many years that I've always been a Christian musician, even though I don't always play Christian music. I think it's okay to live in the world and enjoy the activities and fun things God has placed here for us to partake in, as long as our convictions aren't compromised in the process. I view it as being 'in the world, but not of the world,' and not conforming to ways of the world, as expressed in Romans 12:2.

Being a Christian and a rocker aren't two totally separate things. Some people have to quit one to be true to the other, but for me, they both work very well together. When you're really being honest and true to yourself, you go and pursue the passions that the good Lord put in you anyway.

As far as future lyrical messages, I'm not sure Megadeth will ever be a band blatantly singing songs of praise to Jesus, nor should it. It's okay to sing songs about various topics outside of just your faith. However, it is very evident to all of us that God has done some huge things in our personal and professional lives this year and that our current success is to His glory.



www.megalifeaz.org

Dave Ellefson - Megadeth



HEAD TO CHRIST

The band KORN was formed in 1992, but under a different name. In the beginning the band consisted of Welch and guitarist James “Munky” Shaffer, bass player Reggie “Fieldy” Arvizu and drummer David Silveria. Singer Jonathan Davis joined the group in 1993. It was at that time that the band changed its name to KORN. They released their debut album in 1994, and it sold double platinum and was celebrated for being innovative. The group has released a total of six studio albums with Welch, and over 11 million albums have been sold in the U.S. alone. Welch’s last album, “Take a look in the mirror,” was released in 2003.

This is Brian Welch’s story.

I WANTED WHAT THIS FAMILY HAD

My first contact with Christians was when I often visited a Christian family in my early teenage years. They had such a nice atmosphere in their home. It was so peaceful, and I never heard them arguing. These people told me about Jesus, but I never understood who he was, but what I remember is that I wanted what this family had. After I lost contact with the family and had turned sixteen, I really started to party. During the time that I played with KORN I had become addicted to cocaine and amphetamine. I was stuck and couldn’t stop doing drugs, even though I desperately tried to for months. I was also deeply depressed and felt awful all the time.

ON OUR WEBPAGE ARE MESSAGES ABOUT DYING, DEATH AND KILLING

I was also becoming more and more uncomfortable with the image I saw that we had in our music and in our videos. It all went against what I stood for. The band had a dark, sick image. I saw on our webpage that there were messages like dying, death and killing. But I didn't do any of that stuff and I didn't want to stand for it. Something finally woke me up when I heard my five year-old daughter humming, "All day I dream about sex." Then I just felt like I had had enough.

PLEASE, GIVE HER AT LEAST ONE PARENT WHO IS DRUG-FREE

I was in my room, preparing a drug dose, when I just stopped, looked straight up and said, "Jesus, if you are real, set me free from my drug addiction. My daughter has lost her mother to drugs, please, give her at least one parent who is drug-free, and help me want to live!" What happened was something that no therapy, and not even love for my daughter, could accomplish.

Within a week's time I was completely free from my drug addiction. I had also found new hope for my life. It was at that time that I found a church so that I could get help. They prayed for me and helped me in my process of being completely restored.

I WAS SO HAPPY THAT IT DIDN'T MATTER WHAT PEOPLE THOUGHT

After experiencing this amazing deliverance through Jesus Christ, I wanted to tell everyone about it. But inside of me, I sensed the Holy Spirit warning me that people were going to make fun of my experience. But he also told me clearly that I was to never be afraid of confessing the name of Jesus. I was so happy that it actually didn't even matter what people thought about me. I knew now that this faith in Je-



... ..

sus thing wasn't actually what I and so many other people had previously thought it was: a finger in your face, prim and proper religion designed to keep people in line. Now I knew that it was about a real relationship between God and people. When I read about all the heroes in the Bible I told Jesus, "I want to walk with you just like these heroes did." This is the coolest thing in the world! It's so much more than any drug can give you.

I TALK TO GOD EVERY DAY

Sure, there are people who think that I am a little bit crazy. And it's ok with me if they want to look at it that way. I talk to God every day, and the first thing I do when I get up in the morning is to say hello to Jesus. My life has also been completely transformed, both for me and my daughter in everyday life, as well as what I do for other people. I feel like I want to invest my future earnings in starting orphanages in different countries. There isn't anything else I need. I don't want to just sit on a bunch of stuff. We just started an orphanage in India

and more orphanages are on the way in different places around the world. God has really given me a burden in my heart for street children. We just have to save these children who sleep outside at night and scrape to survive.

"I feel like I want to invest my future earnings in starting orphanages in different countries"



FINANCES TO START MORE ORPHANAGES

So I'm writing music again, this time for a purpose. Partly to get out the message that is close to my heart, but also to finance the start of more orphanages. Like I said, I don't need any more stuff. I used to have everything that people usually strive to get. I really had it all! But when you've acquired everything you want, you'll still only live to be 80, or 90 at the most. When you realize that you have to leave it all behind, you'll be asking yourself what the point of it all really was. That's what happens to so many people. They run after money, or a house maybe, but they will never find the meaning of life that way.

I'M ACTUALLY HAPPY NOW

My life is complete now. And I am going to do all that I can to try to change this world! Or I will die trying. I'm actually happy now and it all feels like some fairy tale. Sure, I go through trials every day, but God helps me and speaks to me in many different ways.

The only thing I want to add if you are reading this is: Give your life to the Lord. He is the only one who can make your life complete and fill the emptiness you have on the inside.

BRIAN WELCH

www.brianheadwelch.net

LIGHT IN MY DARKNESS

Jesus, fear and anxiety always creep in early in the morning.

I don't know where this anxiety comes from.

Jesus, set me free!

I open my entire heart to you.

Jesus, you bore all my anxiety on the cross when you died for me.

Thank you Jesus for taking my fears.

Set me free and let me see light in this darkness.

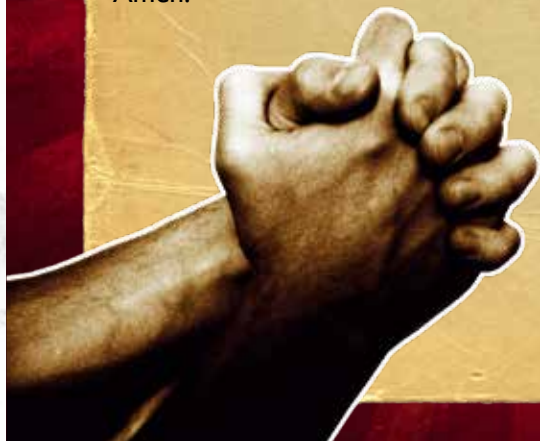
Protect me from my enemies; you know the things that I fear.

I want to be free from all evil and criminality.

I want to start a whole new life.

In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen.



Prayer

I CONQUERED CANCER WITH THE WORD OF GOD

THE BIBLE MEANS EVERYTHING TO ME because it is the inspired Word of God. I was brought up in a Christian home and learned the truths of the Bible and how to apply them to my life from a very young age. When I started playing Christian metal music 25 years ago in 1984, it was because I love metal music, but also because I wanted to share with metal fans worldwide the truth of God's Word.

In 1996 I was diagnosed



with leukemia and twice was given just two hours to live. The first time was in June '97, four months after a bone marrow transplant and again in April '98 with severe brain fluid disease. All through my journey surviving cancer I had scriptures plastered all over the hospital walls around my bed wherever I was being treated. That way every time I looked around I could read about God's truths. For example, "I shall live and not die and declare the works of the Lord."

MY FAVOURITE BOOK

My favourite book is the book of James written by Jesus' brother. I do endeavour to "consider it pure joy when I face trials of many kinds." My favourite verse of scripture is James chapter 1 verse 27: "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."

HOPE FOR ETERNITY

The Bible has given me the words to fight and beat cancer and the devil. I live on to share my hope in Christ with others through the music and concerts of Mortification. I remind myself daily to stay clean from the world's ways. My wife Kate, our son Leighton and I support a child through Compassion International even though in a Western sense we are not very financially rich. We live like royalty, however, compared to the real poor of this world. Without Christ the living Word of God I am nothing and have no hope in eternity.

God bless you! Steve Rowe



Street Church is an organisation and network of Christians from different churches and denominations. It consists of people who have had enough of sitting in churches where there are still empty seats. Street Church is a group of people who **KNOW** they have the **BEST NEWS** the world has ever heard or seen, and they just can't keep quiet about it!

Street Church is a **JESUS** movement. It is a group of people who have decided that they will take Jesus to the people – all people, everywhere.

The Street Church network is a bunch of ordinary Christians who really enjoy being out **WHERE THE PEOPLE ARE** on Friday and Saturday nights, offering them free coffee, talking to them and helping out in whatever way they can. Street Church is also present during festivals, carnivals, in pubs and at other events – **JUST HANGING OUT!**

You could also call us “the Church on the Street.” (We’re not a traditional church, so we are not replacing the local church. Rather, we are there as a Jesus movement, designed to bless ordinary people).

This association is a fresh one, newly started, and one that is always on the move. Maybe you will meet us in your city!

You are welcome to come up to us when you see us. Grab a cup of coffee and a cookie, and chat for awhile. **IF YOU NEED HELP**, then we'll try to do our best...It is because of you and others that we are out there. We are a **LIVING, MOBILE** church: in the cities, in the communities, and at festivals.

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Target group Bibles – with the word of God! We are working in many countries in Europe together with Christian organisations, Bible societies and churches. We are convinced that God's word is for everyone. It gives us a foundation for our

lives, security and hope for the future. During the last ten years we have published hundreds of thousands of target group NT's in many languages. Most of the NT's that we produce contain the whole NT + 128 colour pages with testimonies, interviews, statements, written prayers and info.

The NT's have been well accepted among the target groups we are trying to reach with the word of God. These different NT's have received attention in the media. Examples include the Street Bible, Bible for teenagers, the Biker Bible that we have published in 11 languages, the Trucker Bible for truck drivers, a special NT for businessmen, and the Women's NT.

In every new Bible project we strive for excellence in the quality of the testimonies and interviews, as well as in the layout and format of the NT. We do this as a way to creatively package the most valuable thing we have, the Word of God.