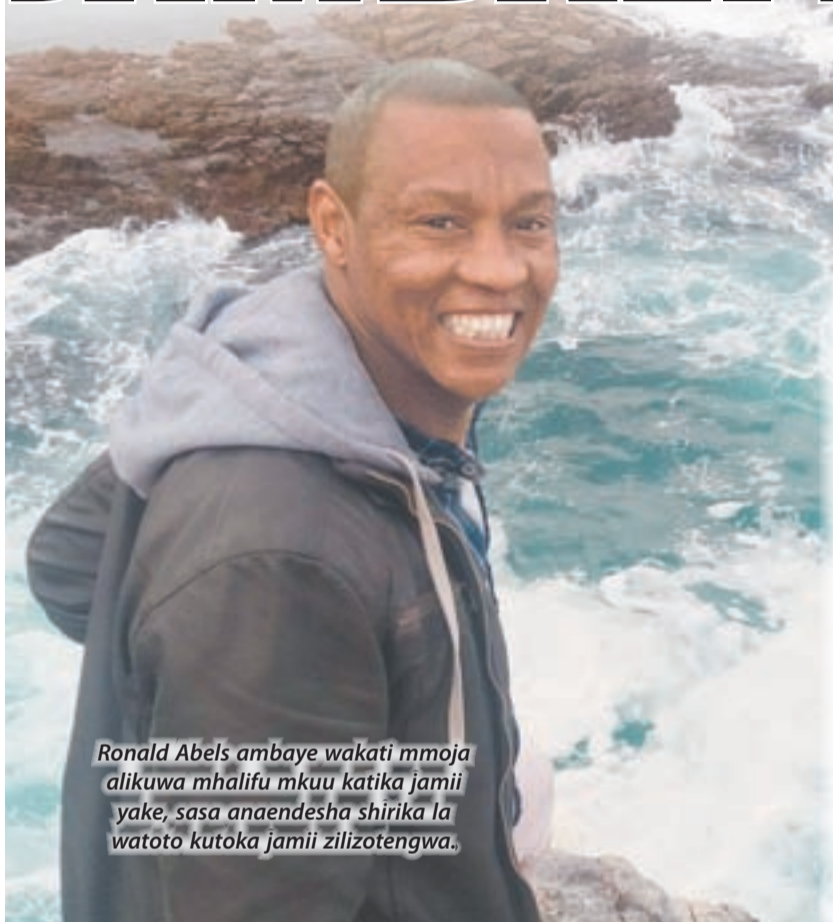


# JAMBAZI ASHANGAZWA NA UPENDO



Ronald Abels ambaye wakati mmoja alikuwa mhalifu mkuu katika jamii yake, sasa anaendesha shirika la watoto kutoka jamii zilizotengwa.

Ronald Abels alikuwa na umri wa miaka 16 tu alipofanya wizi wake wa kwanza kwa kutumia silaha na kuanza kuuza dawa za kulevya. Alikuwa na nia ya kuwa jambazi mkuu katika jumuiya yake ya Capricorn Park, Cape Town. Lakini alipokutana na watu ambao walimshangaza kwa upendo wao, shauku na uaminifu, alianza kutambua kunaweza kuwa na zaidi ya maisha. Kwa sasa anaendesha shirika la watoto kutoka jamii zilizotengwa na maisha yake yamebadilika sana.

Katika mahojiano na Thislife Online, Ronald anaeleza kwamba alilelewa na babu na nyanya yake na akiwa mtoto alikuwa na ndoto ya kuwa polisi.

“Lakini wakati homoni zangu zilipoanza, niligundua kwamba majambazi walivutiwa na wasichana wazuri zaidi na nikaamua kuwa jambazi mkuu kuliko wote,” anakumbuka. “Kwa hiyo nikiwa na umri wa miaka 15 nilianza kupigana na wavulana wakubwa zaidi shuleni.”

Alijipatia sifa ya kuwa mhalifu na akachukua udhibiti wa genge lililokuwapo.

Ingawa Ronald hakuwa akitumia dawa za kulevya wakati huo, alianza kuzi- uza ili kupata pesa.

Baada ya kumaliza shule, alifikiri alikuwa akiishi maisha ya juu ya kijambazi.

“Kisha wamishonari wazungu wa kwanza wakaja huko Capricorn. Sikuwahi kuona mzungu kwa karibu hapo awali na ghafla mwanamke huyu mweupe wa Kiingereza alitembea moja kwa moja kwangu na kunikumbatia tu. Sikuelewa ni kwa nini! Baadaye, nilipomjua Julie, aliniambia kwamba aliponitazama nikiwa nimesimama huko nikiwa na koti langu bandia la ngozi na tabia za kijambazi, alimwona tu mtu aliyetaka kupendwa.

“Hiyo ndiyo ilikuwa mara ya



Ronald Abels na mkewe Sydney.

kwanza kwa mtu kunikumbatia. Niliwapenda babu na nyanya zangu. Walikuwa wema kwetu na walitutunza vizuri, wakituandalia kila kitu tulichohitaji, lakini hawakuwa watu wenye upendo.

“**Mara mbili nilikimbia njama za kutaka kuuawa.**”

Ronald alianza kuhudhuria kikundi cha Kikristo cha nyumbani ambacho Julie na mume wake Mike waliongoza.

Usiku mmoja walimwalia kwa chakula cha jioni lakini alipofika, walimwambia kwamba walipaswa kuondoka mwishoni mwa juma.

“Walinipa funguo za nyumba yao na wakaniambia nilale huko wikendi. Kwa mara nyingine tena, walinishangaza na sikuelewa kwa nini waliniamini. Wazo langu la kwanza lilikuwa kwamba ningeweza kuiba kila kitu cha thamani, lakini nilikuwa nimevutiwa kabisa na upendo wao na uaminifu kwamba hata sikuvuta sigara kwenye uwanja wao.

Ronald aliamua kuwa Mkristo na akajaribu kuwa “mtu mwema”.

Lilikuwa ni badiliko kubwa kutoka maisha ya kijambazi ambapo alikuwa daima akipigana, akiishi katika

hofu, akikimbia sheria na kwa uhakika angeuawa.

“Mara mbili nilitoroka njama za kuniua”, anakumbuka.

“Mara ya kwanza nilipotekwa nyara na kuwekwa kifungoni kwa zaidi ya wiki moja huku nikilazimishwa kuchimba kaburi langu mwenyewe. Niliwashawishi waniruhusu nijiunge nao walipokuwa wakivuta tik [methamphetamine, au meth] na wakaanza kuniona kuwa mmoja wao.

“Mara ya pili, nilikataa kwenda mahali nilipopaswa kuwa na mtu mwingine alidhaniwa kuwa mimi na kuuawa kwa kupigwa risasi.” Jitihada za Ronald za kuwa “mtu mwema” hazikudumu.

“Hatimaye nilianza kunywa pombe tena na kuishi maisha ya kinafiki. Sasa ninatambua kwamba nilikuwa nikikubali tu sheria za kidini wakati huo na kwamba bado Yesu hakuwa halisi kwangu.”

Alianza kuvuta sigara tena na akajitenga na rafiki zake Wakristo.

“Nilijiunga tena na genge langu la zamani ili kupata ulinzi na nikaanza tena kuuza dawa za kulevya.

• Fungua ukurasa wa 2

## The blind men and the elephant

ADAPTED FROM DAVID A. HORNER

THERE is a popular analogy used to show that all religions are valid ways to describe God. Religion professors especially love this philosophic analogy, because it equalises all religions, making all religions equally “true” in their description of God. The analogy is this: there are four blind men who discover an elephant. Since the men have never encountered an elephant, they grope about, seeking to understand and describe this new phenomenon. One grasps the trunk and concludes it is a snake.

Another explores one of the elephant’s legs and describes it as a tree. A third finds the elephant’s tail and announces that it is a rope. And the fourth blind man, after



discovering the elephant’s side, concludes that it is, after all, a wall.

Each in his blindness is describing the same thing: an elephant. Yet each describes the same thing in a radically different way.

According to many, this is analogous to the different religions of the world – they are describing the same thing in radically different ways.

Thus one should conclude that no individual religion has a corner on truth, but that all should be viewed as essentially equally valid.

• Turn to page 2

BACK PAGE

**A SOLID FOUNDATION**

JAMIE JONES-BUCHANAN

# Jambazi ashangazwa na upendo

## ● Kutoka ukurasa wa 1

“Nilipata pesa lakini nikaharibu faida zote na sikuweza kununua dawa za kulevya kwa ajili ya kuuza... nikawa bila makao, nikizunguka nyumba za dawa za kulevya na kulala popote nilipoweza.

Akiwa bila tumaini na mpweke, Ronald akumbuka akiwa ameketi mbele ya rundo la takataka akifikiri lazima kuwe na cha ziada maishani. Hakutaka tena kuwa sehemu ya maisha ya kijambazi.

“Wakati huo huo wa kukata tamaa kabisa nikasikia sauti ikisema, ‘Ronald, ni wakati wa kwenda nyumbani’. Naamini ilikuwa sauti ya Yesu.”

Ronald alitii sauti hiyo na kurudi nyumbani alikokuwa ametoka.

“Nilikuwa mchafu, nilikuwa na chawa, nilianza kunuka, na nilikuwa nimechoka. Ilinichukua muda wa kuoga mara tatu ili niwe safi. Nililala kwa siku nyingi. Nilipopata nafuu, nilijiunga na kanisa la eneo letu. Mara ya kwanza nilipobadili lilikuwa ni kwa wazo la Ukristo. Wakati huu nilimjumuisha Yesu. Sasa nilikuwa katika uhusiano hai pamoja naye. Hapo ndipo ilipokuwa kweli kwangu...

“Sijawahi kuhisi upweke tangu wakati huo. Ninatambua kwamba sikuzote nilikuwa nikitafuta upendo. Yesu amenijaza kabisa. Yeye ndiye ninayemtegemea. Sikuzote anayajali masilahi yangu.

Ronald alianza kwenda kanisani, na upesi akawa mwanafunzi. Kanisa lilimsaidia kuhudhuria Chuo cha Biblia na mnamo 2016 akawa Msanidi wa Mishonari wa muda wote kanisani.

Pia alianzisha Future Life Ministries, ambayo husaidia vijana kutoka jamii zilizotengwa huko Cape Town.

Sasa Ronald amemwoa Sydney, mmishonari kutoka Marekani. Pia hutumia wakati pamoja na binti zake wawili kutoka katika uhusiano wa zamani.

“Moja ya zawadi kubwa Yesu amenipa ni uhusiano uliorejeshwa pamoja nao, na napenda kuwa na uwezo wa kuwapa nyumba salama wakati wapo pamoja nami”, anasema.

“Mimi husoma, hutazama televisheni, huenda kwenye sinema, mambo ya kawaida. Siogopi kamwe. Nimeambiwa kwamba sasa ninachukuliwa kuwa ishara ya tumaini huko Lavender Hill. Wanasema kwamba ikiwa Mungu alinibadilisha, anaweza kumbadilisha mtu yeyote. Nakubaliana nao! ●

# Letting go of bitter feelings



Doria Chanda

**B**usinesswoman Doria Chanda’s parents died when she was 18.

She had relatives but says none were able or willing to look after her and her siblings. And so Doria took on the role of single parent.

“I couldn’t forgive them for that,” she tells Challenge News. “I couldn’t forgive them for not wanting to take care of us after my parents died. I struggled with resentment for years.”

She was also desperately lonely after losing both parents and longed for a special relationship “but I couldn’t find any”.

Five years after her parents died, when Doria was 23, she attended a church service and there she heard the gospel (the good news that Jesus Christ came to Earth to die for humanity’s sins) for what seemed like the first time.

Doria’s parents were Christians but they were not regular church-goers so her own background in the faith was patchy at best.

But everything changed at that service. The message that day was based on the Bible passage of Mark 10: 46-52, which recounts how Jesus healed the blind beggar named Bartimaeus. Something in the message touched Doria deeply. “I became convicted that I needed God and I prayed to receive Him into my life.”

In the 23 years since that day, Doria has gotten married and now has a fulfilling life. In addition to running a business, she also serves in her church’s children’s ministry as a teacher. She is also involved with Child Evangelism Fellowship, a Bible-centered organisation whose purpose is to evangelise children and establish them in local churches.

Doria says she has learned to be a more committed Christian and to trust God in all situations.

“For those who like me have a passion to reach children for Christ, I hope they will partner with me and together we can win many souls to the Kingdom of God.” ●



# WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF A LIGHTHOUSE?

BY ILSE FRIIS

**A LIGHTHOUSE** is designed to warn the ships of dangerous rocks or shallows and show them the way they need to go. They deter ships from running aground, preventing the ship’s destruction and that of their cargo, and the lives of their crew. Now, if a lighthouse and a ship are on a collision course, who has to move? Of course it is the ship that needs to move, otherwise it will be destroyed. The lighthouse will always be at the same spot. It is not designed to move, but to be constantly showing the way. It will always be there to protect.

As long as those rocks or shallows are there, they pose a danger; in the same way, as long as sin is present it will destroy people (i.e. always). God’s Word and principles will be a lighthouse warning us of the peril we face if we do not change our course.

His lighthouse of truth shows us the way to conduct our lives and to make the best decisions. It protects us from shipwreck and keeps us safe. If we follow God’s guidelines and commands we will always receive God’s best for our lives. His lighthouse is there to keep us from destruction, not spoil our fun. Proverbs 6:23 reads: *Sound advice is a beacon, good teaching is a light, moral discipline is a life path.*

And Proverbs 2: 6-8 says: *For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding; He stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk uprightly; He guards the paths of justice, and preserves the way of His saints.*

Don’t you think the safest course is to let God’s Word and principles guide your life? You can start by praying to invite Him into your life, and asking Him to empower you to live as He directs. Then read His instruction manual (the Bible) and be guided by its light. ●

## Crossword

SOLUTION PAGE 7

**ACROSS**

1 Break loose

4 It falls in flurries

8 Steal from

10 Delivery vehicle

12 Hit the slopes

13 Conclude

14 Forebear (8)

18 Not rigid (8)

22 Neither hot \_\_\_\_\_ cold

24 Unwell

26 Historical period

27 It may have a sauna

28 Pottery oven

29 Victor at Trafalgar

**DOWN**

1 Corn cobs

2 Log home

3 Former US VP Mike

5 Definitely not

6 Blowy; gusty

7 Camping gear

9 “Fine by me”

11 Lend \_\_\_ ear

15 Woodwind instrument

16 Mayday!

17 Move stealthily

18 Physically weak

19 Genesis garden

20 Public persona

21 Shoppers sheets

23 Alternative

25 Yard grass

## Sudoku

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

Puzzle Level: Medium

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

SOLUTION PAGE 7

# The blind men and the elephant

## ● From page 1

This is a powerful and provocative image, and it certainly seems to capture something of the truth.

If God is infinite and we are finite, it is reasonable to believe that none of us can fully capture His nature. But does this philosophic analogy demonstrate the truth that all religions lead to God? To conclude that it does would ignore several points...

First, there is a fact of the matter: the elephant. What the blind men are attempting to describe is, in fact, an elephant, not something else. Just so, there are factual questions regarding God. “Does God even exist?” is a question of fact, much like, “Was Abraham Lincoln ever President of the United States?” If so, it would be true whether anyone believes it or not, and to deny it, one would be mistaken. Thus, not all opinions, whether concerning elephants or the nature of God, are equally true.

Second, all four blind men are, in fact, mistaken. It is an elephant and not a wall or a rope or a tree or a snake. Their opinions are not equally true -- they are equally, and actually false. At best, such an analogy of religious pluralism would

show that all religions are false, not true.

Third, and most importantly, the philosophic analogy does not take into account any kind of special revelation.

If a fifth man were to arrive on the scene, one who could see (and who was able to demonstrate his credentials of having sight), and he was to describe the elephant as an elephant, then it would change the analogy entirely.

Jesus Christ, unique among all religious leaders of history, claimed to be such a “fifth man,” a definitive revelation of God. Many of the people who watched Jesus’ miracles and heard Him speak were offended by His clear statements about His deity. “This was why [they] sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath but also called God His own Father, making Himself equal with God” (John 5:18).

Jesus however, invited us to believe in Him if we want our search for God satisfied... “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst” (John 6:35). Want to check out Jesus’ reliability to be this “fifth man”? Read Lee Strobel’s book *A Case for Christ*.

This article was first published on EveryStudent.com and is used with kind permission. ●

# Overcoming bitterness

**W**hen Trudie Sylvester's father abandoned his family, they were plunged into poverty. Despite being able to financially support them, her father chose not to. It was a daily struggle to find food and many times, Trudie and her seven siblings went to bed hungry. Resentment grew within Trudie's mother and she rejected her children and became an alcoholic.

Her childhood challenges made Trudie angry.

"I struggled with bitterness because of my childhood," she tells *Challenge News*. "I tried to commit suicide as a way of trying to escape the circumstances we lived in." Trudie went on to marry a man who was involved in a church and spoke a lot about God. They had children, and Trudie was determined that they would never face the same struggles she had to as a child.

Her oldest daughter attended church with Trudie's sister and one day, she invited Trudie to come along to a service and she agreed.

"That morning in church the sermon was the first time I heard about the gospel," she recalls. "The preacher's sermon was about the fruit you carry as a parent. I wondered what fruit my children will take from my life if I don't have Jesus in my life? I asked forgiveness for my sins and turned my back on the world and turned to God."

That was 30 years ago and Trudie says now that the biggest change in her life is her mindset. "Due to the circumstances I grew up in, I always thought that God abandoned us," she explains. "When I committed my life to Christ I realized even though many times we went to bed hungry, God still protected us."

She admits that her biological father's rejection sometimes causes her to struggle to regard God as a loving father but she takes comfort in her favourite verse Psalm 121:5: "The Lord watches over you – the Lord is your shade at your right hand."

Trudie now shares that Jesus loves without conditions. "He wants to be your friend, He laid down His life so that you may have life and life in abundance," she shares. "If you look at life in general nowadays, people seek for love in sex, drugs, alcohol, etc. God is love and seek that love in God. The Bible declares in Jeremiah 29:13: 'You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.' Cover the lies of the enemy with the Word of God. The only way you can overcome rejection is through the perfect love of God." •



Trudie Sylvester

# MAISHA YANGU YOTE YALIBADILIKA



Jameson Kamenga sasa ni mtu aliyebadilika.

"**N**ilikuwa mtu mbaya sana", anaungama Jameson Kamenga.

"Nilikuwa mpiganaji, mlevi, mvutaji sigareti, na mpenda-wanawake. Hata nilipigana na polisi na kulewa kila siku."

Jameson anakiri kwamba pia alikuwa na tatizo la hasira na uchungu.

Jambo la mwisho alilotaka kusikia lilikuwa mtu akihubiri kumhusu Mungu!

Hata hivyo, baadaye mtenda-dhambi huyo mwenye sifa mbaya alirudi kwenye mji wa kwao, Kasempa, Zambia, akiwa mtu aliyebadilika.

ALIKUWA ndiye yule aliyekuwa akihubiri habari njema ya Yesu. Wenzake wawili wa zamani kutoka siku zake za unywaji pombe walishangaa!

"Walisema 'Ikiwa mtu huyu ambaye alikuwa mtenda dhambi mkuu anaweza kuwa mhubiri, basi tunaweza kusamehewa pia!' na wakayatoa maisha yao kwa Bwana siku hiyo," Jameson anasimulia.

Ni nini kilileta badiliko kubwa kama hilo kwa kijana huyo mwovu? Naam, ajabu, Mungu alitumia ugonjwa.

Jameson aliugua malaria mwaka 1984 alipokuwa na umri wa miaka 18, na alilazimika kulazwa hospitalini, na ilikuwa ni wakati huo kwamba kasisi wa hospitali alimhubiria injili.

Alisikia kuhusu Yesu Kristo, yule Mungu aliye-fanyika kuwa mtu, akifa msalabani ili kuwaokoa watu kutoka katika dhambi zao.

Mara moja, Jameson alijua huu ulikuwa ukweli na akasali sala akimwomba Mungu amsamehe na ayaongoze

maisha yake. "Nikawa mtu mpya, aliyezaliwa mara ya pili na pia nilipokea nguvu za Roho Mtakatifu na nikaanza kufanya kazi kwa ajili ya Bwana wangu," Jameson anasema.

Baada ya hapo alihudhuria ibada za kanisa na mikutano kwa bidii.

Maisha yake yote yali-badilika kabisa lakini hai-kuwa rahisi.

Anasema kwamba mwanzoni kulikuwa na vita ndani yake kati ya Jame-son wa zamani ambaye alitaka kurudi kwenye mambo ya kidunia, na Jameson mpya aliyeongo-za na Roho Mtakatifu wa Mungu akimwambia aishi kwa haki.

Hata hivyo, sasa anashukuru sana kwa ajili ya msamaha wa Mungu, ambao umeo-sha kabisa dhambi zake nyingi, na ana shauku kubwa ya kuwasaidia wengine

kujifunza kumhusu Mungu pia.

"Watu wanakufa katika dhambi zao na ni wajibu wetu kwenda na kuwaambia kuhusu Yesu Kristo ili waweze kuokolewa. Lazima tuhubiri habari njema ulimwenguni mwote, "alihimiza.

**“ Nilikuwa mpiganaji, mlevi, mvuta sigara na mpenda wanawake. ”**

Mistari miwili ya Maandiko anay-oipenda sana Jame-son ni: Mathayo 6:33 – "Bali utafuteni kwanza ufalme wake, na haki yake; na hayo yote mtazidishiwa; na 2 Mambo ya Nyakati 7:14, ambapo Mungu anasema: "Ikiwa watu, wangu walioitwa kwa jina langu, watajiny-enyekeza, na kuomba, na kutafuta uso wangu, na kuziacha njia zao mbaya; basi, nitasikia toka mbinguni, na kuwasamehe dhambi yao na kui-ponya nchi yao." •

# LONGING FOR LOVE



**G**rowing up with a stepmother was difficult for Zimbabwean teacher **Edith Mushonga** (left), now 50. She tells *Challenge News* that she "yearned for motherly love all the time".

Unfortunately that longing for love took her to all the wrong places. She had several boyfriends and fell into sexual immorality. She also battled with anger, she adds.

When she was 25, Edith decided she wanted a different life and turned back to God. She had first heard the gospel (the good news that Jesus Christ came to earth to die for mankind's sins) when she was about 10, during a crusade in her hometown.

"I am so glad I gave my life to Jesus," she says. "It has been a joy and a blessing, even though my relatives have shunned me.

"I would like them to see Christ in me by my testimony and the example I set. I want to say that God has been good despite the challenges in life and I am happy to experience His grace (undeserved love of God) each day." •

## LESSONS FROM NOAH'S ARK

- Don't miss the boat.
- Remember that we are all in the same boat.
- Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.
- Stay fit. When you're 60 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big!
- Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job.
- Build your future on high ground.



- For safety's sake, travel in pairs.
- Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
- When you're in deep waters, float awhile.
- Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.
- Noah sent out birds three times — if at first you don't meet with success, keep trying.
- No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.

# SIFUATI TENA DINI ISIYO NA MAANA

Joseph Mulembo alielewa alichosikia, kisha ghafla maisha yake yakapinduliwa kabisa. Aliliambia gazeti la Challenge News, “Hili lilikuwa jambo gumu zaidi kusikia, kwa sababu wakati huu nilijiona kuwa Mkristo! Kila Jumapili nilikuwa nikienda kanisani, nilikuwa pia mwanachama wa kikundi cha vijana kanisani mwetu – tulikutana kila Jumapili alasiri. Zaidi ya hayo, nilikuwa pia mshiriki wa timu ya kusifu.”

Yusufu alikuwa amesikia nini? Ni nini kilichomfanya abadili maisha yake? Kwa hakika ni lazima awe alikuwa Mkristo wa kweli kwa sababu alijishughulisha sana na kanisa lake! Je, kujitolea kwake hakukutosha kumpendeza Mungu? Je, hilo halikumfanya Yusufu apate nafasi mbinguni?

Yusufu, kutoka Zomba, alikuwa na upande mwingine wa maisha yake, na kama kila mmoja wetu, alifanya mambo yaliyomletea aibu. Mambo ambayo aliyaweka mbali na washiriki wenzake wa kanisa.

Anasema, “Nilikuwa mfungwa wa tamaa mbaya za ngono. Nilikuwa nikinywa pombe kupita kiasi, nikiiba, kusema uwongo, na kufanya mambo mengine mengi mabaya.”

Wengi wangesema kwamba hayo ni mambo ya kawaida ambayo kijana atayaacha atakapokuwa mtu mzima, na hakuna madhara yanayotokea – maadamu hakuna mtu anayejeruhiwa.

Hata hivyo Yusufu alifadhaika sana kwamba hangeweza kudhibiti yale aliyojua kuwa ni mabaya katika maisha yake, kwa maana dhamiri yake ilikuwa ikimtia hatiani sana.

Yusufu alikutana na baadhi ya vijana kutoka timu ya mpira wa miguu ya Disciples huko Zomba. Walikuwa wamemwleza kwamba Bwana Yesu Kristo alikuwa amebadili maisha yao kutoka giza hadi nuru, kutoka kuongozwa na dhambi (mawazo na matendo mabaya) hadi kuwa watiifu kwa Yesu Kristo.

Hii ilikuwa kwa sababu walikuwa wamesikia ujumbe wa injili, moja kwa moja kutoka kwenye Biblia, na si kupotoshwa na desturi au fundisho lolote la kanisa. Jambo la ajabu ni kwamba kweli yaweza kupatikana kwa urahisi katika Biblia – ikiwa tu tungeisoma kwa unyofu! Mafundisho yote ya kanisa lazima yajaribiwe kwa kulinganisha na yale ambayo Biblia husema hasa, na si kukubali tu bila kuuliza maswali. Ujumbe wa injili mara nyingi umepotoshwa na mafundisho ya kidini na desturi za kanisa ambazo hazina msingi katika kweli ya Biblia.

Hivyo kusikia kwa wazi ujumbe wa injili kulimfanya Yusufu kutambua kwamba kweli hakuwa na uwezo wa kujibadilisha mwenyewe. Hata hivyo alitambua ni Yesu Kristo peke yake ambaye angeweza kumbadilisha na



Joseph Mulembo

kumfanya upya kutoka ndani – akimpa uwezo wa kudhibiti hamu ya kutenda dhambi, na hata zaidi, kumhakikishia mahali mbinguni, kama mtu aliyesamehewa na kukombolewa.

Yusufu anakiri, “Nilihiti kusalimisha maisha yangu kwake Yesu Kristo kama Mwokozi wangu na Bwana wa maisha yangu.”

Akizungumza maisha ya kanisa lake, anasema, “Mambo haya yote (kazi za kanisa) yalionekana kuwa hayana maana na hayana uwezo mbele za Mungu – kama vile mapambano yangu ya maisha yalivyothibitisha!”

Yusufu alielewa kile ambacho Biblia inasema wazi katika Warumi sura ya 3, aya za 22-24, “Wote wamefanya dhambi na kupungukiwa na utukufu wa Mungu, na wanathibitishwa haki kwa neema yake (Mungu) kama zawadi, kupitia ukombozi ulio katika Kristo Yesu.”

Alikuwa ametafakari juu ya hili kwa wiki nne alipokutana na waumini wa kweli ambao walimwonyesha ukweli rahisi wa injili – wokovu kupitia Yesu Kristo pekee na kupitia neema yake pekee, na sio kupitia mambo yoyote mazuri tunayojaribu kufanya. Walimwonyesha kwamba wokovu si kitu cha kununua, ni zawadi ya bure kutoka kwa Mungu, iliyo-nunuliwa kwa damu ya Yesu Kristo.

“Kwa neema na uweza wake Mungu alinigusa na nikaokolewa (kutoka katika hukumu dhidi ya dhambi yangu)”, Yusufu anasema. Biblia inasema katika Waefeso sura ya 2 mstari wa 8-9, “Kwa maana mmeokolewa kwa neema, kwa njia ya imani. Ambayo hiyo haikutokana na nafsi zenu wenyewe; ni zawadi ya Mungu, si kwa matendo (matendo ya kidini), ili mtu yeyote asije akajisifu.”

Nilijawa na furaha nilipotambua jinsi Mungu alivyo mwenye rehema! Tangu siku hiyo imekuwa ni desturi yangu kukutana pamoja na waumini wapendwa katika Bwana Yesu Kristo.

Mimi si mtumwa wa dhambi tena, kwa sababu najua nina Mshauri (Roho Mtakatifu wa Mungu) na ananiongoza,” anasema Yusufu.

“Ninashuhudia haya yote kwa utukufu wa Mwenyezi Mungu, bila hofu, na kwamba licha ya ujana wangu, sitaacha kumwabudu Bwana wangu kwa neema yake.” Yusufu alikuwa amedanganywa na dini kufikiri kwamba alikuwa Mkristo kwa sababu alikuwa mshiriki wa kanisa. Lakini kiwango cha Mungu kwa wokovu wa wanadamu si sawa na matarajio yetu, ni kwa kumwamini Bwana Yesu Kristo peke yake kwa msamaha wa dhambi kwamba tunaweza kuokolewa kutoka kwa dhambi na hukumu inayokuja.

Katika maandiko tunasoma, “Wala hakuna wokovu katika mwingine awaye yote, kwa maana hapana jina jingine chini ya mbingu walilopewa wanadamu litupasalo sisi kuokolewa kwalo”. (Matendo 4:12)

Unatumaini nini? Wema wako? Dini yako? Desturi ya kanisa lenu? Au unategemea tu na kwa yale ambayo Yesu tayari amefanya kwa ajili yako wakati alitoa uhai wake kama fidia msalabani? Mtume Paulo anashangaa alipoandikia kanisa la Galatia, “Uhai nilio nao sasa katika mwili (mwili wake) ninao katika imani ya Mwana wa Mungu, ambaye alinipenda, akajitolea nafsi yake kwa ajili yangu.” (Wagalatia 2:20)

## Experience outweighs knowledge

BY ILSE BEUKES

IN 2006 I had the privilege to climb Mount Kilimanjaro.

Part of our preparation was to hear the account of, and receive some valuable tips from, a man who had done the climb the year before.

Even though it gave us a better picture of what to expect, the experience at the end of the day far outweighed just talking and dreaming about this adventure.

In the same way, we can grow up hearing about other people's experiences of faith and God, but until we set out ourselves to find God, we will never really understand what they are describing.

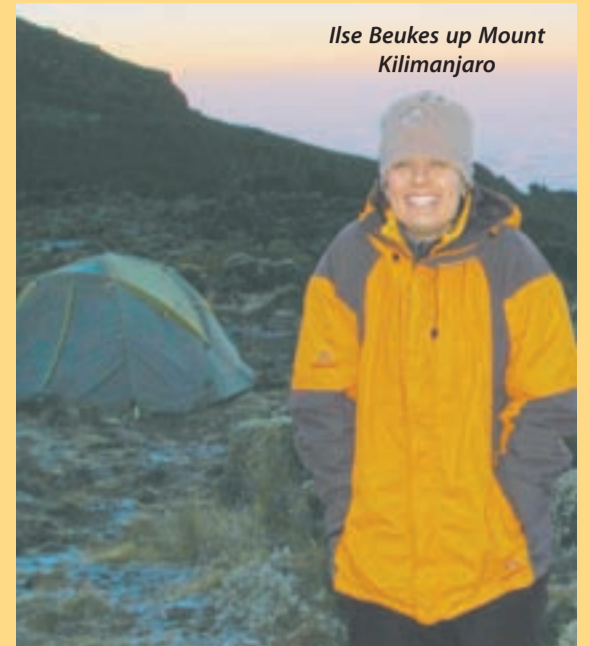
We can grow up in a Christian home, go to church, and hear about other people's relationship with Jesus, but it is not the same as having the life changing experience ourselves when we surrender our lives to Christ, ask His forgiveness for our sins and make Him the Lord of our lives.

Then we will start to understand what Christians mean when they say they: feel washed clean and new; have unquenchable joy; experience inexplicable peace; and feel that everything is suddenly more beautiful.

In Jeremiah 29: 13 God says, “You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”

What a wonderful promise! We do not have to be satisfied with “hearsay” of what other people experience, but when we look for God we WILL find Him and experience Him ourselves. Christianity is not a set of rules and Bible stories, but a relationship with a living and loving God.

Don't you want to make that choice today, to invite Him into your life and experience an intimacy with Him for yourself? See how on page 7.



Ilse Beukes up Mount Kilimanjaro

## Light came on for troubled man

Prostitutes, robbery and debt had trapped Tshepo Maine like an animal in a snare by the time he was in his twenties.

“My life was all darkness and gloom,” he shares. “I had a job at a restaurant but I spent the money on things like prostitutes.”

“Then I got greedy and lost my job after about a year. So I got into debt. I was studying at that time and I didn't have enough money to pay for my studies.”

The South African looked around and envied those he saw living the life he wanted but could not have.

“I was very jealous of other people; in fact, I hated them,” he admits as he remembered how unhappy he was then. “I was also very selfish and stubborn.”

Then three years ago Tshepo received an invitation that would change his life. He was asked if he would like to attend a Christian revival meeting.

There he heard for the first time the good news about Jesus Christ, that he came to Earth, lived a sinless life, died on a cross to save people from their sins, and rose from the dead. If a person believes that and gives their life to Jesus, all their past is washed clean and they are put in right relationship to God.

A light came on for the troubled man. At the end of the



sermon, when the speaker asked if anyone wanted to commit their lives to Jesus Christ, Tshepo put his hand up immediately and instantly felt God's presence envelope him.

“I had never thought of spiritual things [before],” he acknowledges. “In fact I was spiritually dead. I always wanted to feel peace but there was no peace in my life. Then that night when I heard the preacher I finally felt it!”

“At last I had the peace I was searching for,” he enthuses.

To say his life and his attitudes have changed would be

an understatement. Tshepo says he now loves “doing good and being kind and gentle to others.”

“God has filled my life with the Holy Spirit (the unseen presence of God),” he says. “Now I have self-control, I can pray and I am able to love others.”

“I just want to serve the Lord and be faithful and loyal to Him. I want to be a light to those who like me were in darkness. I want to tell them that Jesus came for those who are lost, not those who are good.” Tshepo likes the passage in the Bible where Jesus says in Luke 15:7, “I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents (turns away from their sin) than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.”

# KUHANGAIKAA GIZANI

Raquel alikuwa katika shule ya upili alipogundua unajimu.

Alipendezwa sana na wazo la kwamba mahali vitu vya angani vilipo huathiri watu na ulimwengu unaomzunguka. Kila siku alisoma nyota zake na kulinganisha ishara za nyota za rafiki zake.

Lakini haikuwa hivyo sikuzote. Raquel anashiriki katika video kwenye kituo chake cha YouTube, Raquel's Regal, kwamba alilelewa katika nyumba ya Kikristo na alihudhuria kanisa mara kwa mara.

"Nilipokuwa mtoto mdogo nilijua mengi kuhusu imani ya Kikristo na nikaamua kutoa maisha yangu kwa Kristo nikiwa na umri mdogo," anakumbuka. "Nilipokuwa mchanga nilijitolea sana – Nilimpenda Yesu. Nilivyoendelea kukua uhusiano wangu na Mungu ulianza kudorora kwangu na nikamweka nyuma."

Katika shule ya sekondari mambo yalizidi kuwa mabaya sana hivi kwamba Raquel alitaka kuishi maisha yake mwenyewe.

"Mungu hakuwa kitu ambacho nilikuwa nikifikiria", yeye akiri.

Kwa hiyo alichunguza mawazo na mazoea ya Enzi Mpya na akafahamu awamu za mwezi na "kuweka nia".

"Wakati huu nilianza kuona giza lote ulimwenguni na sikuwa na hamu ya Ukristo", Raquel anaeleza.

Pia alikuwa na maswali juu ya Ukristo, ambayo yaliongezeka tu alipoenda kwenye chuo kikuu.

"Nilikuwa nikianza kuamini kwamba Ukristo ulikuwa, kama watu wengine wanavyosema, 'dini ya mtu mweupe' na hakikuwa kitu ambacho nilitaka kuunganishwa nacho tena. Nilihisi kama Ukristo ulitumria sisi watu weusi na sikutaka kuhusika nao wakati huo.

Kwa hiyo Raquel akachunguza kwa undani zaidi Enzi Mpya akaanza kutafakari na kupatanisha nyota zake.

"Ninakumbuka nikiona kitu ambacho kiliunganisha unajimu na hali ya kiroho ya Kiafrika na ilisema ishara yako ya nyota ni mungu huyu au yule. Huo ulikuwa mwanzo wa kujingiza katika mambo ya kiroho ya Kiafrika. Katika

sehemu tofauti ya maisha yangu mambo yalianza kuvunjika, na nilikuwa katika hali mbaya sana maishani na nilihisi kama sikuwa na mtu wa kumgeukia."

Raquel alijaribu kutumia mazoea yake ya Enzi Mpya na ya kiroho ya Kiafrika ili kumsaidia aondoke mahali hapa penye giza.

"Haikusaidia hata kidogo", anakiri. "Ninakumbuka jinsi nilivyojihisi mpweke na nililia. Andiko kutoka katika Biblia lilitokea akilini mwangu: "Nanyi mtanitafuta na kuniona mtakaponitafuta kwa moyo wenu wote" (Yeremia 29:13). Nilisema, 'Sawa nitafanya hivyo.' Nilimwomba Mungu na kum-

wambia ajionyeshe kwangu. Nilitaka kujua ukweli. Nilitaka kumtafuta kwa moyo wangu wote.

Mungu alijibu sala ya Raquel. "Alianza kunionyesha [kweli] zaidi na zaidi na nikaanza kusoma Biblia yangu... Kila kitu kilianza kuwa na maana zaidi kwangu lakini bado sikuwa na uhakika kuhusu sehemu inayomhusu Yesu."

Raquel alimwomba Mungu kwamba amwonyeshe ukweli kumhusu Yesu.

"Nakumbuka Mungu akikutana nami katika wakati huo na akajionyesha mwenyewe na nakumbuka kuhisi amani hii ambayo sijawahi kuhisi katika maisha yangu yote na upendo wake na bila shaka alikuwa Yeye katika chumba hicho na mimi wakati huo.

"Sikuweza kufanya lolote ila kulia

tu na kuomba msamaha. Nilikuwa nikiomba msamaha na nikagundua – 'Hii ndio! Yesu ndiye ukweli! Siwezi kukana tena.'"

Raquel alijawa na shukurrani sana kwamba ingawa alimwacha Yesu, Yeye hakumwacha kamwe. Anayaona mambo hayo kuwa muhimu sana maishani mwake.

"Tangu wakati huo nilitaka tu kuyatoa maisha yangu kwa Kristo na nilitaka sana kuyabadilisha maisha yangu na kuwa bora kwa Mungu. Nilianza kubadilika sana na Mungu akaanza kunifinyanga kwa njia inayowakilisha Yeye alivyo.

Raquel alimwomba Mungu msamaha kwa ajili ya matendo ya Enzi Mpya ambayo alikuwa amejihusisha nayo.

"Niligundua kuwa nilikuwa nimeji-fungua kiroho..."

"Nilikuwa nimemfungulia shetani mlango kuwa katika maisha yangu na hadi nilipoacha mambo hayo na kukata kabisa uhusiano nayo, bado ulikuwa ni mlango kwa adui. Kwa hivyo nilikataa kila kitu na nikaomba msamaha na baada ya hapo nilikuwa huru kabisa na ninamshukuru Mungu sana."

Raquel aonya kwamba kwa nje Enzi

Mpya waonekana kuwa kitu ambacho sicho.

"Ni kweli inaonekana kama kitu kisi-cho na hatia na unafanya kitu ili kuwa mtu bora na kufikia utu wako wa juu [lakini] shetani atakuja kama malaika wa nuru (2 Wakorintho 11:14).

Yeye kamwe hatakuja akionekana wa kutisha au kuogofya... Ibilisi atajionyesha kama kitu ambacho unatamani – yeye ni mdanganyifu. •

## Teen dabbles in the dark

Raquel was in high school when she discovered astrology. She was fascinated with the idea that the positions of celestial bodies influenced people and the world around her.

Every day she would read her horoscope and compare her and her friends' zodiac signs.

It wasn't always this way though. Raquel shares in a video on her YouTube channel, Raquel's Regal, that she grew up in a Christian home and attended church regularly.

"As a little kid I knew a lot about the Christian faith and I chose to give my life to Christ at a young age," she recalls.

"At a young age I was really devoted – I loved Jesus. As I grew older my relationship with God began to be less and less of a priority for me and I put Him on the back burner."

In high school things progressed to where Raquel wanted to live her life her own way.

"God was not something I was really thinking about," she admits.

So she explored New Age ideas and practices and became familiar with moon phases and "setting intentions". "At this point I began to see all the darkness in the world and I just was not really interested in Christianity," Raquel explains.

She also had questions about Christianity, which only multiplied as she went on to college.

"I was starting to believe that Christianity was, like some people say, 'the white man's religion' and it was not something that I really wanted to be connected to anymore. I felt like Christianity was forced on

us as black people and I didn't want anything to do with it at that point."

So Raquel delved deeper into the New Age and began meditating and aligning her chakras.

"I remember seeing something that connected astrology to African spirituality and it was saying your zodiac sign is this or that goddess."

"That was the entryway for me getting involved in African spirituality. In a separate part of my life things began to fall apart, and I was in such a low place in life and I felt like I really had no one to turn to."

Raquel tried to use her New Age and African spirituality practices to help free her from this dark place.

"It was not helping at all," she admits.

"I remember feeling so alone and I was crying. A scripture from the Bible popped into my mind: 'You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with your whole heart' (Jeremiah 29:13). I was like, 'Okay I'm gonna do this.' I prayed to God and I told Him to just show Himself to me. I wanted to know what the truth was. I wanted to seek Him with my whole heart."

God answered Raquel's prayer.

"He started to just show me [the truth] more and more and I started to read my Bible..."

"Everything started to make more sense to me but I still wasn't sure about the Jesus part."

Raquel prayed that God would show her the truth about Jesus.

"I remember God meeting me in that moment and He showed Him-



Raquel

self and I remember feeling this peace that I had never felt in my entire life and His love and it was undeniably Him in that room with me at that moment.

"I could do nothing but just cry and just say sorry. I was asking for forgiveness and I realised – 'This is it! Jesus is the truth! I can't deny it anymore.'"

Raquel was overwhelmed with gratitude that despite the fact that she turned her back on Jesus, He never turned His back on her. She sees that moment as a turning point in her life.

"From that moment on I just wanted to give my life to Christ and I really wanted to just change my life and be better for God. I started to change a lot and God started to mold me in a way that represents who He is."

Raquel asked God for forgiveness for the New Age practices she had been involved in.

"I realised that I had opened myself up spiritually... I had opened the door for the devil to be in my life and until I renounced those things and completely cut ties with it, it was still an opening for the enemy."

"So I renounced everything and I asked for forgiveness and after that I was completely free and I'm just so grateful to God."

Raquel warns that on the surface the New Age appears to be something it's not.

"It really seems like something that is super innocent and you're just doing something to become a better person and be good and reach your higher self [but] the devil is going to come as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). He's never going to come looking scary or like a goblin..."

"The devil will present himself as something that you desire – he's deceptive." •

“  
Sikuwa na uhakika kuhusu sehemu ya Yesu.”

“  
I just wasn't sure about the Jesus part.”

# Ladies' man now a new man

**B**rian admits to a weakness for women. "I was sexually immoral," he tells *Challenge News*.

"I went to church but I loved the things of this world."

Brian and his brothers were brought up by God-fearing parents who talked about God and read the Bible to them as soon as they were old enough to understand.

Those early conversations laid the foundations for October 10, 1994 — the day the Gospel message (the good news that Jesus Christ came to Earth to die for humanity's sins) sank into Brian's heart.

"From the pastor's preaching that day I came to know that I am a sinner and that I needed Jesus in my life. I also learned that Hell is a place of eternal punishment for people who live in sin.

"When the pastor gave an altar call and asked who wanted to give their lives to God, I went to the front and prayed and repented (turned away from my sin). That was the day I



Brian

gave my life to Jesus because He is the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Brian says his life changed remarkably after that.

"From that day I was a changed person. The Holy Spirit (the unseen presence of God) came into my heart

and my life started changing.

"I grew in my faith and today I am a new person because of what Christ did in my life on that great day."

Today, Brian is the pastor of a Baptist church in Zambia and takes every opportunity to share his story with those who are looking for a fresh start. He tells them the best part of being a Christian is just that — the chance to be free from sin and the past.

"This is what I want to tell others — that Jesus loved us so much that when we were sinners He died for us, He paid the price for our sins.

"My desire is to see more people come to the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ so He can set them free from the power of sin," Brian concludes. •

## Help for my marriage

**E**lizabeth Gwatocho knew how to hide her feelings. "I wouldn't say anything if someone hurt me but in my heart I would harbour bitterness," she tells *Challenge News*.

"I called myself a quiet person but I didn't have a gentle and quiet spirit."

Born into a Christian family, Elizabeth had attended church for as long as she could remember but the sermons and teaching meant nothing to her.

In fact, it wasn't until she got married that she realised she needed outside help.

"I faced challenges with my husband — I couldn't stand the marriage. But then one day I heard a sermon about how we should die to ourselves and talk to God about our problems."

That was the moment Elizabeth turned to God and "immediately I started having an inner peace that I could not comprehend".

She turned her life over to God and says that since that time she is "no longer worried about any-

thing. I take everything to God in prayer now." •



Elizabeth Gwatocho

# Nimeupata upendo na tumaini

Judeit Baadjies



**M**aisha magumu ya utotoni yalimwacha Judeit Baadjies akihihi kutopendwa na bila matumaini. Familia yake iliachwa na baba yake, na kuwacha bila makao, na Judeit hakuona njia ya kutokea. Lakini hilo lilibadilika miaka 21 iliyopita na tumaini lake kurejeshwa. Sasa maisha ya Judeit ni tofauti kabisa na anawapa watoto wake maisha ambayo hata hangewahi kudhania.

"Nilikua maskini sana," Judeit anaeleza *Challenge News*. "Mimi ni wa tatu kati ya watoto watano. Wazazi wangu hawakuwa wameoana na baba yangu alimwacha mama yangu baada ya kumpata mtoto wa tano."

Kuhusika pekee kwa babaye Judeit na familia yake kulikuwa kiasi kidogo alicholipa cha malezi ya mtoto. "Msaada wa mtoto ulikuwa R300 na mapato yetu pekee na tulilazimika kuishi kwa kupitia pesa hizo tu."

Mama Judeit hakufanya kazi na akaanza kunywa pombe sana.

"Tulilazimika kukaa naye kwenye duka hadi saa 8-9 alfajiri", Judeit anakumbuka. "Hatukuwa na nyumba yetu wenyewe, kwa hiyo tuliishi na watu wengine, ama katika chumba

kimoja au katika kibanda kilichokuwa nyuma ya nyumba. Wakati mmoja mama yangu na ndugu zangu watatu walikaa ndani ya gari kwa miezi michache." Alipokuwa na umri wa miaka 10 au 11, Judeit alianza kunywa pombe na kuvuta sigara. "Wakati mwingine nilivuta bangi pia," Judeit anakiri. "Baadaye nilifanya haya yote pamoja na mama yangu." Kadiri Judeit alivyoeendelea kukua, alihisi kwamba hana tumaini na hapendwi.

"Nilipokuwa mwanarika, nilikuwa na tatizo la kujiona kuwa safai. Sikuwahi kuwa na ndoto yoyote kwa ajili yangu mwenyewe na maisha yangu ya baadaye."

Akiwa macho kitandani usiku, akijiuliza, "Kwa nini sisi? Kwa nini kuyapitia haya?"

Kila kitu kilibadilika kwa Judeit mwaka wa 2001 alipotembelea kanisa la Kikristo. "Hapo ndipo niliposikia habari njema kuhusu Yesu," Judeit akumbuka.

Kabla ya hili alikuwa ameshasikia kuhusu kanisa na Yesu — "lakini sikuelewa yote hayo yalimaanisha nini", anasema.

Sasa, aliposikia kuhusu Yesu na dhahibu aliyoitoa kwa ajili yake msalabani, Judeit aliona tumaini la maisha yake kwa mara ya kwanza.

"Nilikuwa nimepotea na kukata tamaa na njaa ya mabadiliko hivi kwamba sikuwa na chaguo jingine ila kutoa maisha yangu kwa Mungu," anakumbuka. "Nilikuwa kanisani Jumapili asubuhi, na wito ulitolewa. Kisha nikaamua inatosh. Nami nilitoka na kumpa Yesu maisha yangu... Tangu nilipokuwa Mkristo, nimeyashinda masuala yangu mengi, kama vile kutojithamini. Ninajua sasa kwamba ninapendwa, kwa sababu Yesu alikufa kwa ajili yangu.

Licha ya kutomaliza shule, Judeit sasa anafanya kazi kama meneja wa utawala na anayasimamia maduka mawili. Pia alitoa mafunzo kwa wafanyakazi wa idara katika maduka mengine mawili. Yeye na mume wake wana nyumba yao wenyewe. "Nina binti wawili wenye umri wa miaka 18 na 11 na mume na sote tunamtumikia Bwana," Judeit anasema. "Sehemu bora ya kuwa Mkristo ni kujua kwamba maisha yangu yapo mikononi mwa Mungu na ninaweza kufanya mambo yote katika Yesu, ambaye hunipa nguvu; na kumjua Yeye na kumtumikia Yeye tu." Ujumbe wa Judeit kwa wale wanaopambana na hisia za kukata tamaa ni kwamba, "Yesu yu hai na anataka kutupatia maisha mazuri".

"Ni uamuzi bora mtu yeyote anaweza kufanya kumchagua Yesu. Sisemi kwamba njia hii ni rahisi, lakini naweza kusema inastahili. Maisha yangu ni ushuhuda hai wa kile Mungu anaweza kufanya na msichana ambaye hakuwa na ndoto yoyote.

"Alinitoa katika hali yangu, akanisafisha na kunionyesha kwamba Yeye ni Mungu. Alinipa maisha ambayo sikuwahi kuyawazia. Mungu alinisaidia kupona majeraha yangu ya kihisia-moyo. Sasa naweza kusema nimeshinda mengi ya matatizo yangu. Mungu huponya waliovunjika — niulize — Najua!"

Judeit anasema viongozi wa kanisa lake walimwongoza katika njia ya kupona.

"Namshukuru Mungu kwa kuwaweka katika maisha yangu", anasema. •

“**Nimeyashinda maswala yangu mengi.**”

## Je, Mungu aweza kumpenda mtu kama mimi

### Ndio, ANAKUPENDA na ana mpango kwa ajili ya maisha yako

Twasoma katika Neno la Mungu "Kwa maana jinsi hii Mungu aliupenda ulimwengu, hata akamtoa Mwanawe pekee, ili kila mtu amwaminiye asipotee, bali awe na uzima wa milele." (Yohana 3:16)

**TATIZO LETU:**

**KUTENGANISHWA mbali na Mungu**  
"Wote wamefanya dhambi na kupungiwa na utukufu wa Mungu" (Warumi 3:23)

**KUBALI**

**SULUHISHO LA MUNGU:**

**Yesu alikufa msalabani**  
"Mungu aonyesha pendo lake Yeye Mwenyewe kwetu sisi, kwa kuwa Kristo alikufa kwa ajili yetu, tulipokuwa tungali wenye dhambi." (Warumi 5:8)

**AMINI**

**WAJIBU WETU:**

**Mwamini Yesu kwa kumpkea**  
"Wote waliompokea aliwapa uwezo wa kufanyika watoto wa Mungu ndio wale waliamini jina Lake" (Yohana 1:12).

**FANYA**

Hapa kuna mfano wa jinsi waweza kusali.

**"Bwana Yesu, ninakuhitaji sasa. Tafadhali nisamehe dhambi zangu. Ninafungua mlango wa maisha yangu na kukupokea kama Mwokozi na Bwana. Asante kwamba ulinipenda sana hadi ukafa msalabani kwa ajili yangu. Chukua usukani/udhibiti wa maisha yangu. Nifanye niwe mtu yule uliyenumba niwe. Amina."**

**Bwana Yesu asema: "Aniaminiye mimi, kama vile Maandiko yalivyosema, mito ya maji yaliyo hai itatoka ndani yake." (Yohana 7:38)**

### KAMA HATUA INAYOFUATA :

- Ikiwa umesali sala lile lililo hapo juu, twakuhimiza utume ombi kwa **Emmaus** (tazama kijisanduku kilicho hapo kando kwenye ukurasa huu) ili uanze masomo ya Biblia kwa njia ya posta bila malipo. Ikiwezekana, mueleze pia mtu yule aliyekupa gazeti hili.
- Ikiwa HAUKUSALI sala hilo hapo juu na ungependa kujifunza mengi kuhusu kuwa Mkristo, bado wakaribishwa kutuma ombi la masomo ya **Emmaus** bila malipo.

*\* Tafadhali andika vizuri \**

Majina Kamili \_\_\_\_\_

Anwani \_\_\_\_\_

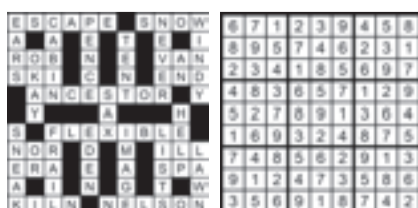
Umri (Itatusaidia) \_\_\_\_\_

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Maswali kutoka nje ya Kenya yatahitaji kuelekezwa kwa mtu aliye nchini mwako



Jamie Jones-Buchanan of Leeds Rhinos tackled by Rémi Casty of Catalans Dragons during Betfred Super League regular season match. (Photo by Tim Clayton/Corbis via Getty Images)

**Challenge  
SPORT**



# A SOLID FOUNDATION

**W**ith a string of accomplishments under his belt — and the physical and mental scars that go with it — rugby union player Jamie Jones-Buchanan is every bit the tough getter you would imagine.

The imposing 41-year-old, who was born in Leeds, has won seven Super League Grand Finals, three World Cup Challenges and has played at

international level for England and Great Britain.

In 2022 he was awarded a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to rugby league football and the community in Leeds.

Not bad for the lad who dreamt of becoming a professional rugby player while growing up in working-class Leeds.

Yet there is much more to him than meets the eye.

He may hold aloft his cups and trophies with undisguised glee, but just as quickly he points to them and says “these things are perishable; they don’t last. Don’t build your life on these.”

So what then does Jamie build his life on?

It turns out he builds his life on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

He spends much of his down time at his local church and various speaking engagements for organisations such as the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Association.

“I always believed in something when I was younger, but I didn’t really know what it was,” he shares.

“How could I really? I’m

just a lad from Bramley who wanted to make it and realise his dreams as a rugby player.”

His involvement with church was only at funerals and weddings — and a short stint trying to make head or tail of the book of Revelation in the New Testament section of the Bible when he was about 10.

“As you can imagine, I didn’t get very far! Yet sometimes when I was younger I would go numb with fear at the thought of dying, wondering ‘is this all there is?’”

Then in 2004, his club signed on Samoan Ali Lauiti’iti. Jamie describes him as someone who had a “different feel about him.”

“He was this burly bloke who carried the ball like a peanut — but he was different away from the game.”

Ali was a committed Christian so Jamie asked him about death.

Ali invited him to a service and Jamie jumped at the chance — even though at that time he thought people who attended church were like Ned Flanders, the flaky Christian character in the Simpsons cartoons.

But he found out “nothing is further

from the truth. Churches are made up of people all just trying to love Jesus and live like Him as best they can.

“I didn’t know at the time, but it was a life-changing opportunity when Ali offered to take me to church for the first time.

“I always had Christianity close to

me; my nana would say her prayers on a night and I’d do school Nativities and things like that, but theologically speaking, I had no idea what the Bible stood for until that day.

“Ali took me

under his wing and we started to go through the gospels. Before long I had accepted Christ. The day I got baptised in 2009 was the most emotional day of my life.”

It is not an easy life though, being a professional rugby player.

The sheer physicality of the game as well as the mental strain of having to be at peak fitness puts a tremendous pressure on Jamie. He has also struggled with injuries.

However, he says “when I go through adverse periods, that trust and belief in Christ is truly what keeps

me believing and gets me ready to go again.

“You can draw meaningful links to biblical figures who have endured hardships and times of toughness.”

At a talk Jamie gave to a meeting in Ireland, he held up one of his many trophies then said: “I’ve won countless trophies and achieved a lot, but it counts for nothing really, does it? Nothing lasts forever, everything is finite, and that directly relates to sport.

“Whatever I achieve in sport is limited and I refer often to building treasure in heaven. Only that lasts eternally.”

Sharing his life story is high on Jamie’s list of pursuits for the church.

“I’ve done testimonies everywhere,” he says, “even on a barge in Canary Wharf once.”

His singular message in all his addresses is this: “All the accolades in the world aren’t enough to fill that God-shaped space at the centre of our hearts and minds.

“We can chase things in life and even when you achieve them, it’s meaningless without God at the centre of it. That’s what I want to try and really impress upon people I speak to. God has to be at the centre of everything.”



Jamie Jones-Buchanan poses with his MBE, awarded by the Princess Royal during an investiture ceremony at Buckingham Palace on October 12, 2022. (Photo by Kirsty O’Connor-Pool/Getty Images)

“**All the accolades in the world aren’t enough.**”