

FREE June - August 2015

RISE

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Matthew Glaetzer: On track for success

by Wendy Rush

Why we advocated for Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran

by Rob Buckingham

LifeWell Conference Edition

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RISE

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Cover: Elite sprint cyclist Matthew Glaetzer in action (story page 5). Photograph by Richard Morton. Used with permission.

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Heather Packett serves on the Pastoral team at Crossway Church in Melbourne's East. She and her husband Lucas have set up and oversee 'ARK', a network of missional communities aimed at calling followers of Jesus in Australia to rise up and respond to the plight of vulnerable kids who need love, compassion and a future filled with hope.



The most priceless gift of all

In a world where we are conditioned to focus on 'Self', Heather Packett reminds us that life is really all about 'Us'.

I remember as a child hearing the words *'It's better to give than to receive'* and thinking it was a load of hogwash.

As a child, there was no better time than Christmas, when those presents would be loaded up under the tree over a few weeks – all different shapes, sizes and weights, each one bearing a surprise for the receiver. Even better than Christmas, when everyone got to receive gifts, was a birthday – when every present I could imagine was purchased, wrapped and presented especially for me. Oh the joy and anticipation of those significant days! I liked to draw them out and revel in the suspense, making the gift unwrapping last as long as I could.

I was never a good gift giver. In fact I was terrible at it. When I got to the age when I could choose things myself for other people I was always profoundly bad at imagining what they'd like. Etched in my brain to this day is the year I budgeted my own pocket money and chose gifts for my family for the first time by myself. I must've been about eight I think. I saw a beautiful Christmas tree trinket in a shop window and thought it'd be a great present for my dad. What I didn't realise was that it was actually a cake-decorating shop and I'd bought him an intricate icing sculpture. What on earth was he supposed to do with that? On opening it he asked what it was, and someone informed him (and inadvertently me) of my error. I was embarrassed. But apparently, as I was told, it was okay, because *'it's the thought that counts'* (another sentiment I seriously questioned the validity of as a child).

In some ways I think that experience has scarred my gift-giving potential for all time. Even now as a parent I find myself always buying copious amounts of 'back-up gifts' just in case the one I'd originally picked is met with unfavoured politeness. I can stand for hours in a shop second-guessing myself, or even worse, on an overseas trip I'll try to get the gift buying out of the way during the first couple of days, only to find something better at every subsequent stop, meaning that I end up with what can only be described as a suitcase full of junk as I head home.

Why is it that by-and-large, we think of gifts when we think of the sentence 'it is better to give than to receive'? The phrase is actually found in the Bible, in Acts 20:35, spoken by the Apostle Paul (quoting the words of Jesus) explaining how he has worked hard to give his life, time, talents, emotional energy, and *self* to the people living in Ephesus at the time.

Paul's point was not that we should shower each other with gifts, and somehow we'd gain some greater blessing in life, but rather that giving is about sacrifice and placing others needs ahead of our own.

As an adult the idea makes a heap of sense. In fact I would go so far as to say that the fabric of our humanity craves this sentiment to be true.

I heard an interview on the radio recently where the discussion revolved around the good things a man was doing for those around them just prior to passing away. Many people started calling in and talking about how they like the concept of 'paying it forward'. One gentleman said he always buys a coffee anonymously for the person behind him in the coffee queue. Another spoke of always stepping in if a stranger needed help, regardless of the lack of convenience. People were applauding each other for acts of selflessness and encouraging more of the same.

As humans, we innately want those in trouble to be rescued by those who have the means to do it.

I saw a woman stop her car in the middle of a thoroughfare the other day, to carry an elderly lady's groceries to her car for her. She copped some abuse from other drivers to do it, but I couldn't help but think – isn't this what we need as a community? People who will do the hard thing, the thing that may cost them popularity, or time, or money, or resources?

In Luke 14 Jesus tells his followers that when they have room at their table, instead of inviting people like them, they should invite the poor and broken – people who can't

pay them back – to share the meal. Then he adds this amazing comment "though they cannot repay you, you will gain reward from heaven."

The fact is that we know this reality to be true: when we give of ourselves to those who are in need, our self-worth, purpose and passion arises to the surface. It doesn't mean it won't be hard, or challenging, or that we will always feel a sense of euphoria about it – sacrifice by nature carries pain with it – but *there is something immensely fulfilling about recognising what we have and using it to ease the difficulties others face.*

On a regular basis I get to see this sacrifice – this giving – being outworked by people who are inviting vulnerable kids into their families. They love and accept these children as one of their own, and they face the inevitable challenges of raising them head-on, sometimes at great personal sacrifice, because they understand that every child needs a family, and it is far better to give than to receive.

Responding is not easy. It requires great sacrifice. It requires considering the need of others above our own desires. It requires understanding that we may be someone's only hope of succeeding in life. It requires compassion for those who have found themselves in circumstances they didn't choose, and being prepared to do something practical about that. It requires love. It requires grace. It requires pain, but it brings the great reward of seeing hope in a person who may have had none.

And this is the true blessing of giving. We get the joy of seeing that life is not entirely about me. Life is about us. We get to experience the joy of seeing someone else being blessed through us.

And that, in itself, is a priceless gift.

Hear more from Heather at LifeWell Conference: lifewellconference.com.au

Read about the work that Heather is involved in at: arkaustalia.org

Every morning, shortly after I force myself out of bed, I drink a cup of brown-gold goodness, extracted from hot water passing through ground-up grains that were roasted beans seconds ago, and the seeds of a bitter cherry at some point in the past. I pour velvety textured milk on top at the perfect temperature to maintain flavour and sweetness, and my heart leaps to life again. That's an excessive (and obsessive) description of an everyday coffee, but my friends tell me I'm a little more zealous about the stuff than your average cup-drinking Joe.

I live on the beautiful Central Coast of NSW, which was hit recently by the closest I've ever experienced to Noah's Ark weather conditions. Ok, so the Ark thing is an exaggeration, but still - flash-floods, fallen trees everywhere, power outages, 24 hour petrol stations and McDonalds stores closed - it was the kind of weather that cries for building a blanket fort and watching all six Star-Wars movies straight. One problem though. No electricity.

My wife and I lost power for two nights and days. We got off light (no pun intended); many of our friends had no power for a week. But our small taste of mildly medieval life was enough to test my metals. We burned every available candle, ate corn chips and salsa for dinner one night and went to bed at the embarrassing time of 7:30pm. We functioned at a pretty basic level of existence without power. As a fairly un-resourceful Gen-Y poet, I tend to rely on other people to do all the practically useful stuff that keeps the world turning. I read about what humans can do under enormous adverse circumstances....but I'm sceptical I'd be able to survive any problem that couldn't be solved somehow by literary means.

I missed the lights. I missed the oven, the microwave, the fridge. But as a Bona Fide coffee snob, I missed my little espresso machine more than anything else. Sure, I missed the caffeine, and I had a cracking afternoon headache to remind me that. More though, I missed the ritual. Coffee is this small thing that seems to hold a lot of my routine together. It creates an un-rushed part of my morning; something I expect every day. When I drink that cup of sweet nectar, I do so while reading ancient words from a library of texts I like to spend time with. I sit, I savour, I soak in old wisdom.

In this ancient library of texts, there's this strange little poem/prayer called the 23rd Psalm. Even if you're one to avoid the steeple, you've probably heard bits of it here and there. *'The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want....'*, and *'...though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil....'* You know the one? It was written by a guy named David, who almost makes Kanye West look like a stable human being at times. The reason it's strange is because it opens with these really serene images of quiet pastures and peaceful streams of life-giving water. And then almost immediately the scenery shifts into 'the valley of the shadow of death'. It's a strong contrast. And then David says:

"You prepare a table for me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
forever."

For most of us, our 'enemies' are just people that send us spam emails or cut us off in merging lanes. David had the good old fashioned kind of enemies that are always scheming ways to knock your head off. And yet, he's writing about eating a meal, right there in the presence of these enemies, and in the same breath proclaiming that goodness is going to follow him, all the days of his life.

I get the feeling David knows a thing or two about 'Shalom' - this old Hebrew word that basically means peace. Things in their right place. All things, as they should be.

The thing I've been wondering is, do you really know if you have Shalom, before it's interrupted? Is it possible to still have a deep sense of peace when the power's out, the lights are off, and you're sitting eating a cold meal of corn chips, in the presence of your enemies?

When our rhythms are interrupted, it's hard not to stop and ask: where does my Shalom come from? In what, or whom, does my soul rest?

Is it my coffee machine? Is it my access to my social media accounts? Is it the roof above my head or my postcode?

I'll be sharing some spoken word poetry around this idea of 'Shalom' at LifeWell conference in Adelaide.

This Shalom business is a complex cocktail I don't pretend to have mastered. But Psalm 23 leads me to believe that there's a soul peace, a deep rhythm of wellness, that is not dependent on creature comforts, such as latte's and power-points.

And I have a hunch that it's not found in a thing. But a who.

The one, who is right there in the chaos, when the power is out, and the enemies are at the door. Setting the table.

Hear more from Will at LifeWell Conference: lifewellconference.com.au



Will Small is a writer and spoken word artist with an ear for rhythm, a heart for justice and a belief in the human act of storytelling.
willsmall.com.au
facebook.com/willsmallpoet



*"...there's a soul peace, a deep rhythm of wellness,
that is not dependent on creature comforts..."*

Shalom

when the power goes out by Will Small

Matthew Glaetzer:

On track for success

By Wendy Rush

When 22 year old South Australian Matthew (Matt) Glaetzer was young he would build BMX jumps along a river near his house. As a child he dreamed of becoming a professional athlete and tried a variety of sports including soccer, basketball and pole vaulting, but it wasn't until he was sixteen years old that he began to develop a serious interest in cycling.

"I have been riding for six years now and came to the sport through the annual Weet-Bix Kids TRYathlon held in West Lakes.

It was the first time I had competed in sport for two years after experiencing constant hamstring injuries caused by pole vaulting when I was 12-13 years old. I started racing just for fun but within six months I won a silver medal at the Nationals which made me think I might be able to take this sport further."

Since then Matt has continued to accumulate medals and records and competes alongside some of the legends of Australian cycling

such as Shane Perkins and Anna Meares, who he looks up to. He brought home gold from the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow for the men's Keirin and his sport regularly takes him across the globe to compete in places such as Italy, France, Germany and Mexico. "But winning the 2012 Team Sprint World Title (in Melbourne) by 0.001sec is something I will never forget."

The London Olympics in 2012 was also, not surprisingly, an amazing experience for the young athlete. "The Olympics was mind blowing! No amount of preparation can actually get you ready for what the Olympics is really like for an athlete. I was able to live out my childhood dream of being an Olympian four years earlier than planned too!"

Matt makes no secret about the fact that he has his eye on an Olympic medal but he is acutely aware that as an elite athlete his life, as well as his sporting achievements, is on show to the world. "I hope to be a good role model for my team mates and anyone who follows my career as I am in the public eye more than the normal person. If I can influence people positively, mission accomplished."

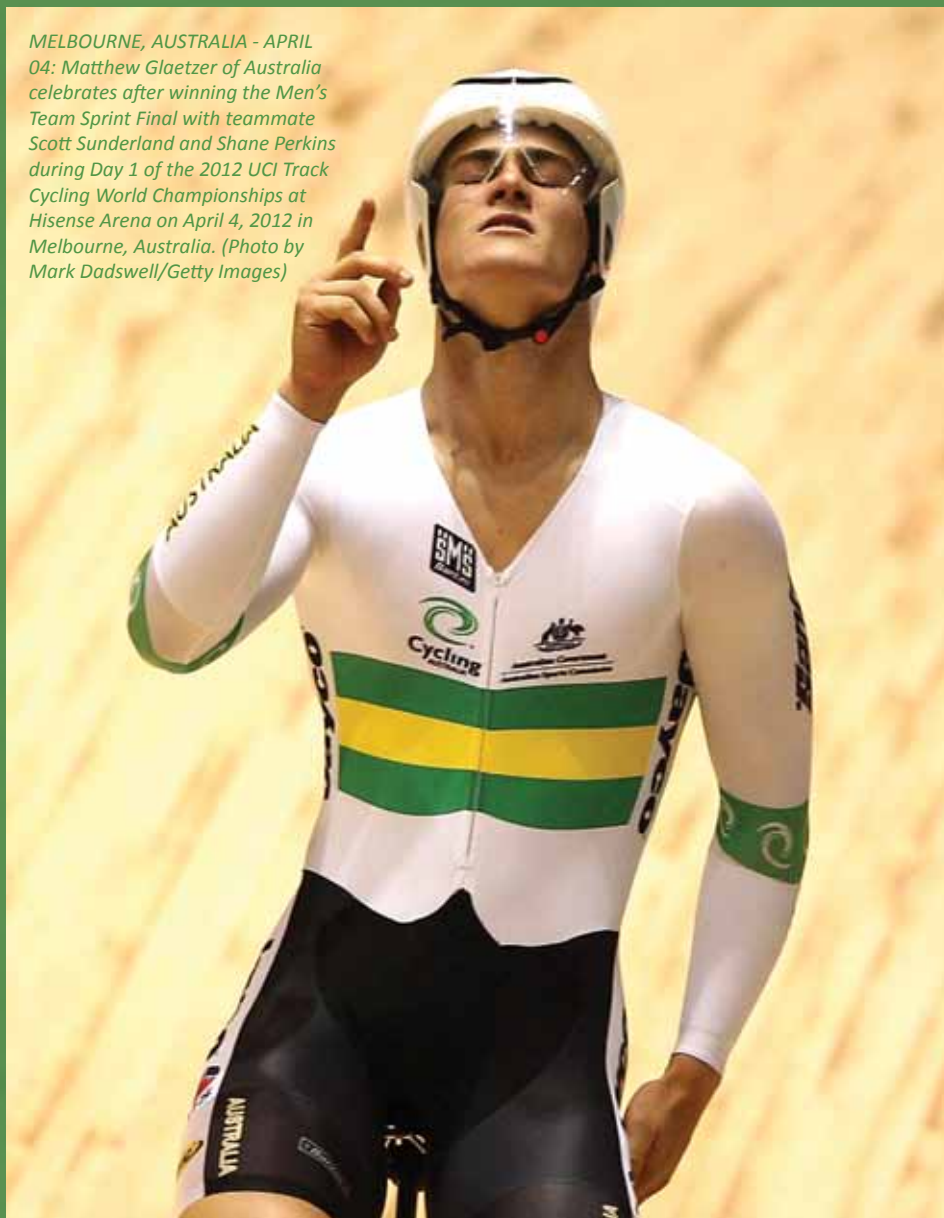
Achieving his sporting goals means foregoing the kind of lifestyle that others his age take for granted.

"On weekends I can't really hang out with mates at night because I will be too tired for training the next day. And due to the amount of training I do, my university degree is going to take four times longer than usual as I need to be very part time."

But these are concessions he is willing to make, and he offers some sound advice to anyone working towards sporting success.

"In all of your training, take no shortcuts. Know that there will be certain social opportunities that you will miss out on but stay focussed on the end goal. Be willing to push your body to its absolute limit, a strong mind is so important in getting the most out of your training."

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA - APRIL 04: Matthew Glaetzer of Australia celebrates after winning the Men's Team Sprint Final with teammate Scott Sunderland and Shane Perkins during Day 1 of the 2012 UCI Track Cycling World Championships at Hisense Arena on April 4, 2012 in Melbourne, Australia. (Photo by Mark Dadswell/Getty Images)





Matt grew up in a Christian home and made a decision for Christ when he was very young, around five years old.

"Being a Christian enables me to have peace in any situation because I know that God is with me in everything and has His plan for me. No matter how significant the challenges that come my way, I have His help to get through them.

"I know God hasn't made me a gifted athlete to just ride around in circles but to show His love to my team mates and competitors I have contact with around the world. The cycling community is very worldly and I have the opportunity to be an example of and share the love and grace of Jesus with these people.

"I really do feel that what I do isn't about winning races but letting God use me and be seen through me. It became apparent to me that being a Sprint Cyclist was God's plan for this time in my life when He gave me a revelation of the impact I could have in my team mates' lives.

"For me, what I do is all about giving glory to God through the gift He has given me."

Apart from cycling and God, Matt counts family and friends as being extremely important.

"My family is so important to me, they have all supported me so much in my sporting efforts and I am so grateful for the way my parents raised myself and my older brother Lindsay who is 25.

"My friends from school, cycling and church also have a big part in my life. Not many things can beat a good hangout with quality mates."

What is Matt aiming for in the longer term?
"Sporting wise I would love to become World

Champion in the Sprint and Keirin events along with breaking the World Record for the 200m Time Trial."

He has already contemplated life beyond elite sport which is something that athletes don't always think about until they are faced with the prospect of no longer being able to compete.

Swimmer and gold medalist Duncan Armstrong said that when his swimming career ended he discovered a void. "It is something that is common to top line professionals whose career, through choice or circumstance, comes to a sudden halt. There is a need to find something to replace it, but you know full well you will be going to the bottom of the ladder and virtually starting over. It can be terribly confronting" said Duncan (*Rise Magazine*, 'Out of the water and still making ripples', September 2010).

Matt is wise enough to realise that, even with so much sporting opportunity ahead of him, he needs to begin planning for a future beyond elite sport. "I am interested in investing and would like to develop skills in that area in the near future so hopefully in the long term I can have a strong portfolio of some kind.

"I am studying part time and working my way to becoming a physiotherapist when I retire from elite sport. A wife and a couple of kids are in the plan long term hopefully."

If Matt's cycling accomplishments so far are any indication, then his plans post cycling are sure to be successful. One of Matt's favourite quotations is by motivator, speaker and philanthropist Nido Qubein: "Your present circumstances don't determine where you can go; they merely determine where you start." We get the feeling that Matt is destined to go far.

Read more about Matt's cycling accomplishments under
'High Performance - Rider Profiles' at cycling.org.au

Why we advocated for Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran

By Rob Buckingham

A few years ago Christie and I got to know Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, two of the Bali Nine. We weren't looking for something else to do. We were actually taking a few days in Bali to rest after a particularly busy and stressful time. While we were there we met up with some old friends who told us about the work they were doing inside Kerobokan Prison. They asked if we would like to join them in the jail for a morning – which we did! Little did we know that meeting Andrew Chan on that morning would lead to all that has taken place since.

It's been quite a journey – a very difficult one at times – made often harder by people

misunderstanding why we were helping "Drug Traffickers." In fact, out of the many questions we've been asked, that would be the number one question. So let me try and give you some good answers to that question and others...

It's true. Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran were part of the Bali Nine who attempted to bring over eight kilograms of heroin into Australia. We helped them because we got to know them and love them. We were amazed at their sorrow for what they'd done and for the way they were demonstrating that sorrow – not just by rehabilitating themselves, but also in working hard to help reform others.



Rob is the Senior Minister at Bayside Church - a contemporary multi-site church in the southern bayside region of Melbourne. Rob started the church in 1992 with a team of 40 people and over the past 23 years the church has grown to over 2,000 people in regular attendance. Bayside Church has a strong commitment to make a positive difference in its community and beyond. Bayside's slogan is "Church has changed – check it out!"

As well as his church work, Rob is a well-respected part of Melbourne's media community having worked as an announcer with Easy Music 3MP for 15 years. In December 2002 he began work with Melbourne's new Christian radio station, Light FM. Along with radio work Rob and Christie also co-host an interactive TV Chat show called The Exchange.

We “bothered” with them because Jesus “bothered” with us: *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Rom 5:8). God did not wait for you and me to get our act together, He didn’t wait for us to reform or rehabilitate – He demonstrated the full extent of His love for us **while we were still sinners**. I’ve had people say to me, “Those guys don’t deserve mercy!” My response has been, “I couldn’t agree with you more!” No one deserves mercy. By its very definition it is something we DON’T deserve. Mercy is *“compassionate kindness shown toward an offender or an enemy.”*

God’s people are called to show mercy, kindness, compassion and grace to all people – even people who make massive mistakes!

Others have said, “They knew the risks. They deserve what they got.” Yes, there are BIG signs at Bali airport warning travellers of the penalty for drug trafficking. The Bali Nine probably did know the risks but they were young. Did you make any mistakes when you were young? I know I did!

Recent research into the teenage brain shows some very interesting outcomes. Consider this quote from the online Health Encyclopedia, *“It doesn’t matter how smart your teen is ... good judgment isn’t something he or she can excel in, at least not yet. The rational part of a teen’s brain isn’t fully developed and won’t be until he or she is 25 years old or so. In fact, recent research has found that adult and teen brains work differently. Adults think with the prefrontal cortex, the brain’s rational part. This is the part of the brain that responds to situations with good judgment and an awareness of long-term consequences. Teens process information with the amygdale. This is the emotional part. In teen’s brains, the connections between the emotional part of the brain and the decision-making center are still developing. That’s why when teens are under overwhelming emotional input, they can’t explain later what they were thinking. They weren’t thinking as much as they were feeling.”*

It’s fairly evident to me that Andrew and Myuran and the others weren’t thinking of the consequences.

What about the people who would have been hurt or killed by those drugs? Aren’t you being soft on justice?

I’m glad every member of the Bali Nine was caught. I wish all drug traffickers were

caught and brought to justice. I wish those who are behind the trafficking of drugs were caught and brought to justice too – not just the drug mules. I used to use drugs and I know all about their harmful effects. I lost some of my closest friends to drug overdoses. As a pastor I have seen the devastating effects of drugs, not just on the users but also on their families and friends.

In regards to Andrew and Myuran, the request was that their death sentences be commuted to life sentences so they could continue their work of rehabilitating other prisoners. Soft justice was never considered. A life sentence in Kerobokan Prison is not soft justice. The eight kilograms of heroin didn’t make it into Australia, but many other drugs do. Those who use drugs need to take responsibility for their habit and seek help to become free of addiction. Blaming a drug supplier for your habit is like blaming a barman for your drinking problem.

Why are you just advocating for those two? What about everyone else on death row?

While I personally advocate against capital punishment in all circumstances (mainly though Amnesty International), Christie and I got to know Andrew and Myuran personally. It was because of our friendship with them that we advocated so strongly for them. Having said that, the two guys have asked that their deaths not be in vain and that we would all continue to advocate against the death penalty to eventually see it abolished in every nation.

What about helping.... (Insert other people in need here)?

Why are you helping drug traffickers? What about ... the poor, the asylum seekers, the homeless, the drug addicted, the mentally ill, aborted babies you name it. I’m not sure why some people think we can only give our attention to one issue at a time. There are many things that we’re passionate about: We are very engaged in helping the poor, the marginalized, the disadvantaged, the asylum seekers, the homeless, the orphans and widows. We can’t solve all the world’s problems but we can make a difference to some.

Are you against the death penalty in all cases?

Yes I am. I believe I have to be consistent in my belief, which has changed over the years. I used to be very much for the death penalty but not any more. There are many reasons for this. Let me give you two reasons here:

Firstly, when Andrew and Myuran and the other guys were executed, a Filipino lady named Mary Jane Veloso was also going to be shot. The Indonesian government was going to execute an innocent woman – if the guilty person had not come forward at the last minute Mary Jane would be dead now. The death penalty always risks killing the innocent.

Secondly, the death penalty punishes the innocent family and friends of those executed. Looking into the eyes of Andrew and Myuran’s families was heartbreaking. Seeing their grief and sadness over the loss of their loved ones was unbearable. As I said earlier, I am not into soft justice, but I don’t believe that killing a person for their crime is just.

How do you know they are really rehabilitated?

Some have suggested they were just pretending to be reformed so as to get a lesser sentence. Others have said, “They wouldn’t have changed if they weren’t caught.” Of course no one knows what would have happened if Andrew and Myuran weren’t caught. The fact is they were caught and during their ten years in Kerobokan Prison they demonstrated by their words and actions that they were genuinely changed men. Christie and I and hundreds of other people have witnessed this rehabilitation firsthand over many years.

A great example is the author of the hymn *Amazing Grace*. John Newton was a slave trader – a trafficker of people. He later became a Christian and a pastor. There’s not a person on this planet that has met John Newton – he died in 1807. How do we know that this man who was an infidel and engaged in immorality and people trafficking was genuinely reformed? How do we know he wasn’t pretending? We know he was rehabilitated because of the fruit of his life after he became a Christian: Same with Andrew Chan. Same with Myuran Sukumaran. Same with me – and you!

Pastor Rob Buckingham is 57 and has been married to Christie for 21 years. They have three daughters, Gigi (16), Paris (13) and Trinity (6).

Hear more from Rob at LifeWell Conference: lifewellconference.com.au



Your passion is a signpost to your purpose

by Wendy Rush

It's so easy to live your life totally in line with other people's expectations to the point where you lose touch with who you really are. If you're doing the job you're doing because it makes your parents proud; if you're running from here to there to make sure your children get to sport, music, and sleep overs; if you're careful about your weight, wardrobe and general appearance because you want the world to see you in a particular way; or if the only friends, interests and activities you have are someone else's friends, interests and activities then you've probably lost sight of yourself.

Is there something in your life that you do just for you and no-one else? Have you found anything that truly excites you and that, if you had your way, you would do every day? Or do you think that life is generally a chore and the only break you get is either sleeping or vegetating in front of the television?

If your answer is sleeping or vegetating, then you need to get to work on yourself immediately! It may surprise you to know that all of us have the same needs:

- A need to find purpose in what we do that helps to define who we are
- A need to pursue something we really enjoy doing
- A need to be appreciated for what we uniquely bring to the world.

When you find and begin to pursue your passion it will reveal your purpose. Purpose is important because it gives us a reason to live, to get up every morning. It motivates us and energises us. It brings satisfaction, we accomplish things we didn't know we were capable of. It creates opportunities for new and more fulfilling relationships. It is good for our mental health and, as a result, our physical wellbeing.

The University of Minnesota's website expresses it this way:

Why do you get up in the morning?

The secret to a fully alive life is to ask yourself this question regularly and use the answers to find your evolving life purpose—your own unique ways to contribute to the world.

We all have a need to find purpose in life. Some people find a way to express their purposes in their jobs, while others seek opportunities outside their daily work.

Just as you eat healthy foods and exercise to take care of your body, seeking a meaningful life of purpose nourishes the spirit—and, as contemporary research shows, improves your physical and emotional health as well.

When he was nine years old my son Ryan asked me "Mum, is it true that if you find something you really love doing you'll never have to work a day in your life?"

Out of the mouths of babes! Almost twenty years later I still don't know where that came from, but it's absolutely true. Work is not hard if you are passionate about whatever it is you are working at. So if your whole life seems like hard work, you need to find some space for something that is not so hard. (And I don't mean sleeping or vegetating!)

How do you do this? To start with you need to find something that excites you. Something you enjoy doing that is absolutely for you and you alone. Yes, it's time to be a little selfish and it may take you some time to deal with the guilt but, believe me, everyone will be better off as a result. Your partner, your parents, your children, your friends, your work mates – and particularly you!



It may be something artistic or creative, a hobby, a sport or literary pursuit. It could be some kind of involvement in your community or church. Perhaps there's something you've always wanted to learn – a language, a craft, a musical instrument.

If you don't know where to start, try thinking about these three stages of your life and see whether something springs to mind or to heart!

1. By the time a child is seven or eight years old you can pick up strong clues as to what their gifts and talents are by observing what they like to do. If you can remember that far back what did you like to do?

2. Imagine you are sixteen years old again and there are no obstacles to you becoming whatever you want to be. What is your dream? Australian guitarist, singer and song writer Joe Camilleri talks about his continued success as a musician and how he keeps himself on track. He says "You've got to go back every now and then to see if you've dropped anything. Then go 'I'll have that'". He says "I keep coming back to what I was doing when I was sixteen."
3. Fast forward to your hundredth birthday. Your batteries are running low and you're looking back and contemplating your life. What is it that you are really glad you did? Or what is it that you regret not doing?

Now, most importantly, what you need to remember is that you do not have to be good at this thing! I have lived all my life trying to do everything perfectly and I ended up either not doing things, giving up on things before they were finished or killing myself trying to second guess everybody so they would all be satisfied (and I would end up in a heap). Being good at something is absolutely **not required** for this exercise.

The other thing that is **absolutely essential** is: this thing you do should have nothing to do with wealth, fame or power. These are things that relate to the world's expectations and everyone else's assessment of who you are and how worthwhile you are. You are already 100% worthwhile, you may just need some guidance to set you on a path of purpose which will help you live life well.

A journey starts with a single step. Find something you'd like to do. Learn about it, visualise it, take action and, even in a small way, move toward it. Buy a book, enroll in a class, do some online research, set fifteen minutes a day aside to focus on it, join a club or find a friend who has a similar interest.

Do it for you – to discover who you are. It will help to reveal how far your life can take you and help to transform you into the person you were always designed to be.

Richard Bach, author of the best-selling book *Jonathan Livingstone Seagull* said "We look at some people as if they were special, gifted, divine. Nobody is special and gifted and divine. No more than you are, no more than I am. The only difference, the very only one, is that they have begun to understand what they really are and have begun to practice it."

Our Creator knows who we really are and what our purpose is, so if you ask God a few questions about what direction you should be heading in he will show you. The Apostle Paul said: "It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for."

Are you already pursuing your passion? Your responsibility is to help others find theirs – to dig over the embers that have not quite gone cold and help blow some winds of change to ignite them into full flame. Your partner, your parents, your children, your friends, your work colleagues. Imagine what this world would be like if we all ignited our passion and enthusiastically and unswervingly lived out our purpose?

Wendy Rush is managing editor of Rise magazine. She has qualifications in communications and media and is general manager of a national professional association for educators. Her passion is encouraging others to find their passion and purpose.

Beyond The Myth of Self Esteem: Finding Fulfilment

By John Smith



I must admit when I opened this book I was fascinated to find out why the author described self esteem as a myth. I soon realised that I too had been seduced, swayed slightly off course from the truth. In the opening pages the author acknowledges that self worth is important and that some aspects of the self esteem movement can be helpful. But his clear message is: 'There is more to life than the nurturing of our self esteem.'

Over the past thirty years, in our pursuit of happiness, the concept of self esteem has permeated western society. The book describes it as 'a form of spirituality that's all about me'. Phrases such as 'listen to your heart' subtly elevate self as the source of wisdom. The new age, 'I am God' myth is a logical extension of these me-focused attitudes.

The book covers the history of self esteem and identifies five myths: 'Be whatever you want to be; You must feel good to look good; Boosting self esteem brings happiness; the 'All about me' myth; and the 'Never my fault' myth. It discusses the well known gurus of self esteem, the effect that the self esteem myth has had on society, and the rising doubt that it actually helps. The final chapters offer an alternative path to finding fulfilment, one based firmly on the teachings of Jesus.

This book is well written and easy to read. The author tells his own tale of searching for fulfilment and meaning in his life and throughout the book are other stories, quotes and personal experiences. There are a few academic explanations for the more learned reader but not enough to put others off.

The only weakness I see is in the title where the 'Finding Fulfilment' part is easy to overlook. In this culture where everyone is desperately seeking to find fulfilment I think this statement of hope should be put first.

As a parent, I found this book extremely interesting. It challenged my perceptions and explained some of my nagging doubts about certain recent parenting and teaching methods. This book should have wide appeal especially for parents, teachers and anyone involved in helping others.

'Beyond the Myth of Self Esteem' is published by Acorn Press. It is available in paperback and ebook format and can be purchased at Koorong (online and instore).

Reviewer: Cindy Williams



A Reasonable Belief

Just when you thought it safe to go back into the waters of life confident that scientists had got rid of God ...we hear some disturbing news. A survey of scientists in Europe and the United Kingdom has revealed that 74 percent of them believe in God or a creator being that is responsible for the universe.

And then we have David Attenborough, famous for his wild life programs, usually an agnostic, now saying that the more he delves into nature and sees its design, he can't help but contemplate a divinity.

Paul Davies, one of the world's top mathematical physicists is saying that belief in God is scientifically reasonable, certainly no less reasonable than believing that the universe exists by accident for no reason at all.

We are talking here about what some of the best thinkers of our time believe. So, I wonder what it is that you believe.

Please don't tell me that you believe in God and that's enough. Even the Devil believes in God but that certainly doesn't make him a Christian.

Please don't tell me that you believe in doing good to people and that makes you a Christian. Doing good is also the creed of many atheists.

Christianity is much more. It is about having your sins forgiven and accepting God's love. It means living a radical life of sacrificial love. It means doing things that count for eternity.

So, why not go for the real deal?

Fancy yourself as a reviewer? We welcome expressions of interest from people who would like to write or submit reviews for Rise Magazine.

Please email Wendy at info@risemagazine.com.au for more information.

For more see: 'The Bible on the Key Issues of Life', by Dr Nick Hawkes, available from bookshops. Nick has degrees in science and theology. He is a pastor, writer and broadcaster.
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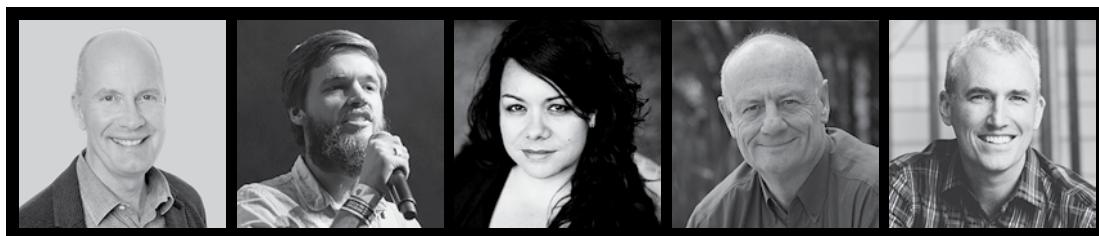
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