

A PUBLICATION FOR CHRISTIAN WOMEN

BUT GOD

Breaking News

HOLIDAY 2023 EDITION

HE WAS THERE, EVEN AT THE
BOTTOM OF THE BOTTLE

DISCOVER THE
POWER OF THE
BRAIN!

Paulette Kengg
Vera Jimenez
Roxanne Vargas
& MORE!

LISA
VANDERKWAAK
HOW TO MAKE AN IMPACT



A PUBLICATION FOR CHRISTIAN WOMEN

BUT GOD

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Editor's Note

BUT GOD MAGAZINE

When I was a child school field trips were what I remember exciting me the most. Typically the night before the trip my heart rate was high, I took forever to fall asleep and acted just like I was sugar high. The next morning I'd wake up early before my parents had the chance to wake me up full of expectation of what the day would hold.

When Jesus was born so many were so excited for that first Christmas. The expectation that the son of God had come and he'd be the savior was what many had hoped and waited for. He was finally there! In an even more exciting way, us Christians today await with full expectation the second coming of Jesus Christ.

My prayer is that you hang on to the knowledge that he is coming for his church and while you wait that your heart will be full of expectation and ready for his return.

Merry Christmas!



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2023 is getting to its end!
Enjoy the last edition of the
first year of But God
Magazine. Happy Holidays!



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EVENT PLANNING AND DESIGN


 by Vera Jimenez

Good tidings of *great Joy*

“Good tidings of great joy.” The angel told them the Son of God had been born. Luke 2:10

As a child, what little I remember of my grandmother, it seemed like she was always in prayer. I remember she carried a Rosary in the pocket of her tattered apron and after we ate lunch, she would pull it out of her pocket and pray. I can still see her arm, bent at a ninety-degree angle, hand up to the ceiling rolled up into a fist where she pressed her temple against it, resting her head. In the other she held her Rosary, with her eyes closed, I could hear the whisper of the Our Fathers and the Hail Mary's. After she was done, with her head still resting against her fist, she would take a little cat nap.

I grew up going to church on Sundays. As a family, I would not describe us particularly religious in fact I would rather describe us as mostly lapsed Catholics. My grandmother and my mom both believe that God is where you are, and going to a church or another place of worship isn't necessary to be close to God.

As a kid, she would send me to mass with my sister and our cousins, who lived close by. The Parish we belonged to is a mile and half away, so it was a leisurely walk to my church. This, however, was enough to make it easy for me to eventually stop going to church and to put the Sunday ritual in second place instead of first, God, family, work.

As I drew further and further away from the church in my teenage years, and then into young adulthood, I started questioning everything including my religion. It seemed like a natural process or stage as I learned to become a critical thinker and a skeptic. Deep down in my heart, I knew what I knew, and what I knew was that God lived in me, but what if my brother was right?

One of my brothers is a skeptic, and when I was in the middle of questioning life, death, the life after, and my purpose in life, he would tell me not to worry, that organized religions were creations of man to control and manipulate one another. In my gut and heart, I knew that it wasn't true, but I had to be sure. My young, impressionable mind needed some concrete piece of information to make sure that the “Good News of the Lord” was indeed fact and not a made-up story to manipulate me into handing over my agency or freedom for fear of not going to heaven.

God is in Everything that We Do

When I transferred to the university as an English major, all of the upper division classes, like English, were impacted and hard to get into. So, my first semester, as a transferred junior, I filled my schedule with electives. As I searched through the catalog for fun classes to take, I came across one called "The Historical Jesus Christ". I couldn't believe it. This was it. This was God sending me what I needed; He was calling me back. This was the class that would prove to me and my brother, the skeptic, that Christ was real, that he had been beaten, crucified, and had risen on the third day for me, for us, and for the world. I must admit, with all the terrible things that happen every day, I could see my brother's point. If God was real, why did he allow so much evil, especially to vulnerable people like children? It sounded like a tall tale, but I knew what I felt and what lived in my heart, and He was always there. Faith is complete trust or confidence in something that isn't concrete or visible.

As the semester started, I had a stack of books a foot high that scared me and made me feel ignorant. Each book showed me how much I didn't know about something that was so real in my heart, but otherwise intangible. My limited familiarity and understanding of the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, was overwhelming, when they added texts I'd not heard of like the "Gospel of Thomas", the "Gospel of John", and something called the "Gospel of Q", my brain hurt and felt like it would melt and ooze out of my ears. The "Gospel of Q"? Learning about the Pharisees, and the Maccabees and places I had never heard of with hard to pronounce names that no longer existed, overwhelmed me. Trying to keep it straight, while working a full-time job and being a full-time student, made me want to quit, but I needed to know. My desire to know the Lord was more important.

Finding the Proof

One of the assigned books is called the Antiquities of the Jews and was written in Greek by a Historian named Flavius Josephus. His work was written in 94 CE, a very, very, very long time ago. He was writing the history of the Jewish people. In this book there is a reference to Jesus. The reference is very brief, but because this book is a historical account, scholars reference it as proof of Jesus's existence.

There are two references that are commonly cited, however one is said to be an interpolation by Christians of Josephus's writing, the other is believed to be more accurate by all modern scholars. Here's what it says in Book 20, Chapter 9. "The brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James." This citing isn't even about Jesus, it's about

James, so even though the subject of the quote here is really James and not Jesus, the fact that Josephus is using Jesus, who was called the Christ to describe who James was, proves to modern scholarship that Jesus was indeed flesh and blood and walked the earth. It wasn't much of a reference, but it was enough to prove that he was indeed alive.

That was all the proof I needed. I knew it in my gut, and I knew it in my heart, and now my brain knew it too. I knew it every time I shouted thank you Jesus for the great parking spot as, after circling the parking lot on campus.

It wasn't exactly what I expected. Where in this book, was the account of him walking on water, or multiplying the bread, fish, and wine, and what about all the healings? It had to be in there. No one walks on water without people making a big deal about it, right? These are the accounts I was expecting to read about, but they were not there.

The citing was so brief, that I had to reread several times to understand who Josephus was writing about and who James was in history and why he was being chronicled and not Jesus. Something else I had to learn to make sense of. With each passing day, the only thing I knew and was certain of was how much I didn't know about my faith, and with each page I turned, I was certain that I needed to take another class, then another, and another. Before I knew it, I had to declare a major to earn my bachelor's degree, so it made perfect sense to abandon my original major and switch to Religious Studies. I always get a perplexed expression when people learn this about me, but it was the best gift I gave myself, who needs a degree in English, when you can have Jesus, right?

I remind myself that knowing God doesn't always make sense. It's this incredible, beautiful feeling so deep and strong in my heart that I am often drawn to tears because I truly feel The Holy Spirit in me.

I remember the first time my husband saw the tears rolling down my face; he was utterly confused and concerned. He could not understand the stream of tears running down my cheeks; we had not had the happy tears conversation yet. This still happens to me at Mass, although now it's a combination of sorrow and jubilation. Sorrow for the unimaginable pain he suffered for us and for our salvation and jubilation for the "Good Tidings of Great Joy," not just for His birth, but also for His resurrection, and for the day when He comes again.

Vera Jimenez is an award-winning journalist, business owner, public speaker and a passionate contributor to the community. You can find Jimenez on the screens of KTLA5 on weeknights, at the board director of the Boys and Girls Club of LA Harbor, and the corp of Redondo Beach Rotary Club.

BY MATT SCOTT

THE POWER OF THE BRAIN

A PARENTS GUIDE TO HELPING CHILDREN REALIZE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

When asked what the purpose of my children's book series, Find Something Awesome! Book Series, it is one of the most important questions that I am asked and that I get the privilege of answering.

"But God" Magazine's "Who are we" statement... is this: "But God Magazine is a Christian women's magazine focused on personal development that will teach you how to grow in your faith and find your own way of worshiping the Lord." Which is quite an endeavor! But what does this mean? And more importantly, how do I teach these concepts to my own children? Let's face it, understanding God and religion is difficult for most adults so how do we even begin to explain it to our children?

In my opinion, first and foremost, the answer is to lead by your own example. It is by knowing what it even means when we say "to grow in faith" or to "worship the Lord." The next step is to be able to teach it. I like to simplify things in action and a simple action Christians are asked to do is to "praise and thank the Lord."

It takes both actions for all people to realize their true potential to "grow in faith" and subsequently reach their full potential while worshiping the Lord. As I know and try to teach my own kids, it's impossible to be thankful, to be truly thankful, unless you are first, truly giving praise!

But then we are asked, "What does praise mean?"

The definition that I have found best fits the life of my family and myself is that praise is to find something awesome and let it be known. Let yourself know and let others know! I find that people today seem to become closed off when the word "praise" is used for whatever reason so instead I change "praise" to "Find Something Awesome!"

The purpose of my children's book series, Find Something Awesome! Book Series, is to teach our children to give praise, and also to remind us parents to give praise too and find something awesome in everything that we do!

Finding Something Awesome

The first and in my opinion, the most important thing and

and what the goal for all parents should be, is to help children learn how to love themselves. I ask my own children, or children I coach in baseball or soccer, or any kids when given the opportunity, "What are the seven magic words?" The answer? "I am awesome. I can do this!"

Step one to parents who are seeking to guide children to their full potential via truth, is to simply ask them "What happened today that you thought was awesome?"

Step two to helping guide children to their full potential, is to ask them if they were thankful. I ask them if they are thankful for the things that they thought were awesome. Did they feel thankful? Did they give thanks?

The third step to helping parents guide to their children's full potential is communicating what to do with the potential. The answer I have found is to imagine clearly what you want to accomplish. Then seek the opportunities that arise to help you get there and most importantly, pray. We need to teach our kids to pray and show them that that is the portal to communication with God. So I ask my kids what they want to accomplish and what it looks like. I want them to be able to imagine it clearly. I want them to stay focused and then be able to talk about it and share their goals with others.

My answer and advice on how to guide children to understand their full potential is to simply ask them these questions and let them search for their own answers:

1. Did you find anything awesome today?
2. What were you thankful for today?
3. What would you like to accomplish?

I hope this simplified version helps parents guide their children to discovering the truth of their own potential to happiness and success!



Matt Scott discovered the awesome power of our brains to find happiness and success. Now, he wants to share his discovery with all young people with the Find Something Awesome! Book Series. He is the father of 3 children and a Montana native entrepreneur, owning and managing several businesses.

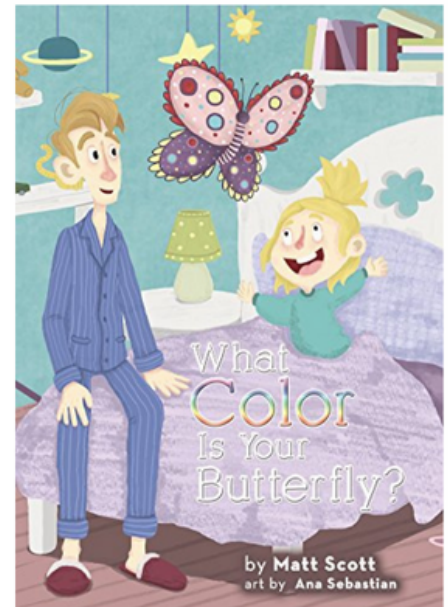
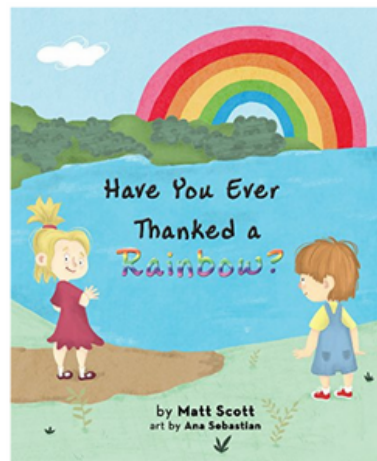
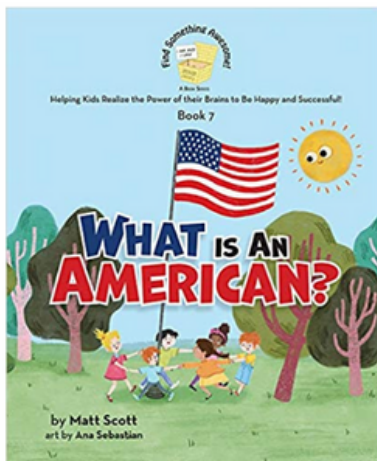
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BOOK SERIES

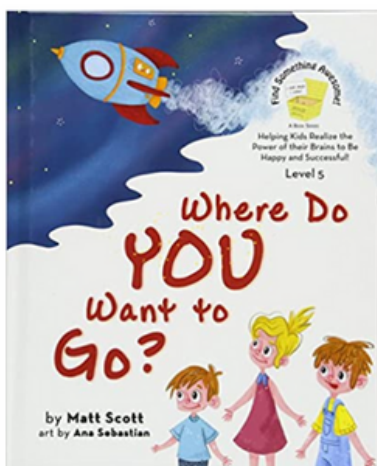
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MATT SCOTT author



Each title in the series is fun, lighthearted, easy-to-read, and beautifully illustrated. The series introduces kids to the concepts of positive thinking and focused imagination early in life. That way, kids can start mastering important and powerful skills to build a strong, capable, and self-confident inner-foundation.

findsomethingawesome.com



COVER

**“DO YOU WANT TO HAVE A BIGGER
IMPACT ON THE WORLD BUT DON'T
KNOW WHERE TO START?”**

I made the decision to take my voice back. The enemy had tried to get me fixated on my beginning , whereas God wanted me to focus on my becoming. The very place where the enemy tried to oppress me was the very place God had ordained for me to shine.

PHOTOS: @VERANOAGENCY



WITH LISA VANDERKWAAK

THE POWER OF USING

Our Voices



D

o you want to have a bigger impact on the world but don't know where to start? It wasn't until I was in university that I began to sense that God had a bigger plan for my life, but I had no idea what that looked like or where to start.

Throughout my childhood I was surrounded by chaos and confusion, and thought the only way to survive was to take control of my own life. That led me to become anorexic and mistrusting of everyone. When I was 15 years old my parents divorced and I thought finally I would be free. Instead, I experienced a deep ache in my heart for the love of a father that I pushed away all my life. It was during that time of struggle that I heard a voice tell me to read the Bible. I decided to start reading the Bible and had an encounter with Jesus that changed my life. It was not until a few years later when I went to university that I met Christians who explained to me what had happened to me when I read the Bible. From that point on, I experienced transformation and healing as I learned to forgive and be forgiven.

In fact, if you want to start today, you're going to learn about one important action that you can take to step into your calling to become a voice of influence.

Well you can, once you realize that you have a role to play in impacting lives.

In fact, if you want to start today, you're going to learn about one important action that you can take to step into your calling to become a voice of influence.

THE WRONG DECISION

It all started when I was in my twenties and I was in ministry with my husband. We had just finished taking a group of students through an 8-week course, and we were now holding a banquet to celebrate their success. My husband had just finished his speech and without any warning to me, he said out loud in front of everyone, "Lisa, why don't you say a few words?" I looked at him and I froze.



Follow along Lisa on social media:
[@lisavanderkwaak](https://www.instagram.com/lisavanderkwaak)

Have you ever had someone put you on the spot to speak and you just froze? I'm talking full-on body paralysis. In fact, if you had been sitting next to me that day, you would've seen my face turn beet red and my neck gets all blotchy all the way down my chest. You know what I'm talking about? You know when you're so nervous that you feel sick to your stomach, and you just want to pass out? Well, even though my body and my mind were protesting that day, my heart was yearning to say something that made a difference in the lives of these students.

And I couldn't. I had lost my voice. I even knew where I had lost it. It was when I was seven years old and I was standing at the foot of a hospital bed looking at this woman whose face was so badly bruised and swollen that she was unrecognizable until she spoke. And then I knew it was my mom. My dad was an alcoholic and he used to get really violent and here was one of the times that my mom ended up in the hospital. So imagine yourself as a little seven-year-old girl trying to figure out what is going on. That day I made a decision. I made a decision that's not safe for a woman to speak.

Have you ever made a decision like that?

Have you ever made any decisions that you realized years later that it was holding you back from being the kind of influencer that God wanted you to be?

Well, that was me. At that banquet, I realized that that decision was holding me back from fulfilling the call of God in my life and from becoming a voice of influence. Even though that was a terrifying moment, it became a turning point where I made another decision.

TAKING BACK WHAT IS YOURS

I made the decision to take my voice back. The enemy had tried to get me **fixated on my beginning, whereas God wanted me to focus on my becoming.** The very place where the enemy tried to oppress me was the very place God had ordained for me to shine.

This decision led me on a journey of transformation and learning how to use my voice. I sought out help from mentors and realized that **my voice was an instrument of transformation that needed to be heard.**

I stepped out and began to share my story and I became convinced that I was not only meant to speak, but I was called to speak and share my story. I was called not just to give information, but to have a transformational impact on people's lives through my testimony.

But then a funny thing happened. I began to look around and I saw all these amazing speakers, gurus, experts, and ministers having a big impact on people's lives. Has this ever happened to you? You know when you hear someone sharing a story that's similar to yours and then you get bombarded with thoughts like, "Why do I need to share my story? Those other speakers are doing a far better job than me" or "Why would I need to share my story? Surely there's only room for one".

Then I heard a crazy story about these musicologists who had found a way to assign musical pitches to DNA strands to make musical compositions. Did you know that your DNA and my DNA are 99% the same and only less than 1% different?

Less than 1%. That's what makes you unique, that 1%. These musicologists decided to put that 1% DNA to music and created what is known today as a "unique life song" based on your 1% DNA. There was a father who decided to give his family a gift by sending off their individual DNA to get turned into musical compositions based on their 1%. There was a little six-year-old boy in this family who loved to make noise. You know how when boys play, they like to bang on things? Well, this little boy would run around and he would bang, bang, bang on the piano and run off every day.

When his musical composition came back, guess what they found? Not only was it in the form of the piano music, but it also contained the exact three to four notes that he would bang on the piano every day, so what seemed like random noise was actually his unique life song yearning to be expressed.

**What's inside of you that's yearning to be expressed?
What's inside of you that needs to come out?**

EVERYONE'S STORY IS UNIQUE

I realized that I have a unique life story, that's only mine to tell. That no one else has the unique story to be a kingdom influencer, you need to own your story. You need to use your voice, but you're probably thinking, "Lisa. Okay, that's fine. But really what difference can one voice make?"

Let me share with you three quick stories to illustrate the difference one voice can make.

The first one is about a Samaritan woman. She's the woman written about in John 4, who met Jesus face to face. He came to the well and started a conversation with her that transformed her life. She was so impacted that she ran back

to her city, and at the risk of receiving further rejection, ridicule, and shame she told them what happened... What difference did it make? The whole city had changed. She became the first female evangelist to the non-Jewish world.

Then there's the story of Mary Magdalene. Most people see her life as a little bit controversial. The enemy wants you to get stuck and fixate on her beginning, but God says no. I want you to focus on your becoming.

Mary Magdalene was the first to show up at the tomb and encounter the resurrected Jesus. She was the first witness. The only problem is that in her culture, a woman's voice was not valid. Her witness was not valued, but guess what Jesus said? He said, "Mary, go tell. Tell the other disciples that I am risen."

She ran to tell the disciples that Jesus was alive and because she chose to use her voice, not only did she elevate the status of women in her culture, her name is written up as a voice of influence.

Now, there's the Famous Five, at least that's what I like to call them. In the book of Numbers chapter 27, there's a story about Zelophehad's 5 daughters who did something no one had ever done before. These 5 sisters found themselves on the edge of destitution because their father had just died. In that culture, the inheritance of the land got passed to the sons. The only problem is they didn't have any brothers. Together with humility and boldness, they came before Moses and advocated as one voice. They asked Moses why should their father's land be passed on to someone else? Why couldn't they inherit it? Moses took their case before God. Guess what God did? He not only ruled in their favor, He changed the law to protect daughters in the future who found themselves in that situation.

What a difference one voice can make? One voice can change a city. One voice can change a culture. One voice can change the laws of the land.

The question is, what difference can your voice make? The only way you're gonna find out is to use it.

TAKING INITIATIVE

If you're ready to get started to become a voice of influence, I want you to decide today to stop fixating on your beginning, and start focusing on your becoming. I encourage you to do what I did. Stop worrying about what people can do to you, and start welcoming what God wants to speak through you!

As it was in the days of Esther, now is not a time to be silent, nor to shrink back. It's not even a time to sit on the sidelines. It's time to speak! Your voice is an instrument of transformation and needs to be heard. It's time to step into your calling and become the powerful voice of influence God is calling you to be.

When I decided to allow God to use my voice, He took me from being terrified to speak, to now training women to speak. He led me to develop a speaker academy where women are learning to speak with confidence, clarity and transformational impact. If you know God is calling you to speak and want help getting started, I invite you to contact me at www.speaktotransform.com.

There are people waiting to hear what you alone can say. Your voice needs to be heard. Together, we can change the world.



“Good tidings of great joy.”

The angel told them the
Son of God had been born.

LUKE 2:10





Cantinho da Leitura USA, um projeto iniciado pela Hi Brazil Market, inaugurou sua “Pequena Livraria” no sábado, 1º de julho, em Redondo Beach, na Califórnia, nos EUA.

O objetivo fortalecer as raízes culturais brasileiras entre as famílias que residem longe do Brasil e incentivar o amor pela leitura em língua portuguesa.

Durante o mês de julho, autores brasileiros residentes na Califórnia estarão visitando o espaço, autografando livros e compartilhando sua jornada literária, acompanhados de caminhões de comida brasileira. Os eventos estão abertos a comunidade.

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Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death for ages 10-24 and we are working to decrease this heart-breaking statistic.

Studies show that by the age of 5, a child has already developed their self-esteem. Moreover, studies continue to show that low self-esteem is linked to mental illnesses and suicide. This is why Hope Gatekeepers has created an inspirational program for children with a mission to support their growing minds. Our Little Seeds of Hope program is tailored for children ages 5-9 and focuses on 8 pillars of skill building. These 8 pillars consist of; Affirmations, Contribution, Environment, Wisdom, Moral Compass, Emotions, Friendship, and Hope. With our work we are taking action against mental illnesses—and holding open the gates of hope for their families.

As we continue to support families in our community, our hope is that you would consider partnering with a nonprofit organization like Hope Gatekeepers that serves to make a positive + faithful impact.

Misty E. Rivera
Founder

By Michelle Schaffer

The power sharing His news has on the world

BREAKING NEWS

As a mother to three incredible individuals, I've witnessed the transformative power of stories firsthand. With my first two children, I juggled the roles of a student and a full-time worker, leaving me with little quality time to spend with them. However, by the time my third child was in middle school, life had changed dramatically. My husband and I were both at home with her, able to take her to and from school every day. This change allowed us to create a cherished routine: her "stories."

On our daily drive from school to home, she would eagerly recount all the day's events, her eyes shining with excitement. Her enthusiasm was palpable as she'd exclaim, "OHH, I have a story!" We'd listen intently as she detailed the day's happenings, like a young news reporter sharing the latest updates. Though she's grown and moved out on her own, she still occasionally calls or FaceTimes us, announcing, "I have a story."

Throughout history, stories have been the vessels through which we pass down our heritage. As believers, we find our history and faith woven into the narratives of the Bible. In our own families, we share stories, some of which have been passed down for generations. In my family's folklore, my maternal ancestors from Sweden were hardworking farmers and lumberjacks. The story of my great-great-great-grandmother giving birth in a barn while milking a cow, showcases the resilience and dedication of our lineage.

Overlooking the Ultimate Story

The world has changed significantly. We're inundated with a constant stream of stories and breaking news, often overwhelming us if we're not cautious. While it's incredible to have instantaneous access to global events, our minds and spirits may not be equipped to handle this daily information deluge.

Yet, amid this constant barrage of news, there's an extraordinary story that remains the most powerful and relevant of all time—the story of Jesus. Though it may not feel like breaking news to those who've known of His existence, we can't overlook the astonishment it must have evoked in those living during His time. Jesus' birth reshaped the world, and His death on the cross is the GOOD NEWS we still proclaim today.

Today, there are people desperately in need of this revelation, this BREAKING NEWS. Despite our technology and access to information, some remain in the dark. What if every reader decided to share this revelation as eagerly as my daughter shares her stories? What if you shared the news of Jesus with the same joy and anticipation, saying, "I have a story"? I believe this would ignite a wildfire of transformed hearts, sparking a global revival.

Sharing His Truth

I carry this knowledge with me every day, and I cannot keep it to myself. My hope is that you will allow this message to burn inside you, just as my daughter's stories did. Let it bubble up within your soul, ready to burst forth as you share the most life-changing breaking news of all. The message of Jesus is alive and well, offering the most hopeful message of our time. If we don't share it, who will? If we don't burn with excitement to spread it, who will?

You don't need to be a pastor or a theologian. You simply need your own relationship with Him, allowing the gifts of grace and mercy to fill you. Then, share those gifts through words and deeds with everyone you encounter. Being part of this gift-sharing is a profound and wonderful experience. So, where will you share the breaking news today?

XO,

Michelle Schaffer

@MICHELLESCHAFFEROFFICIAL
PHOTO: MODELADAS, BRAZIL

By Deise Eliassen

BEING ALIVE THROUGH GOD

Since our daughters left home to study, we created a new tradition in celebrating Christmas at any time of the year we can manage to be together. We have celebrated

Christmas in basically all of the months of the year for the past 15 years. Yes, we love Christmas. Yes, we wear Christmas PJ's. Yes, we put up the Christmas tree and the centrepiece of our decoration and resource for our devotion time, the nativity set.

Why do we do that? Because we love Christmas and its significance for each one of us and our family members. When Jesus is born, not only in the Bible history or world history, but in our personal story, it is our personal Christmas. We want to make sure our personal lives as well as all of our generations will be impacted by Jesus in all of the spheres of life.

The birth of Jesus and the relationship that follows has a profound impact on us and has implications for the way we think, feel and live.

Changes in Sight

When Jesus is born in our personal life, we encounter various components of growth during the spiritual journey, such as belief and conviction, repentance, trust and the certainty of forgiveness, commitment and covenant with God, the action of the Holy Spirit and our communion in the Christian community, for maturity and deepening.

There is a profound change and reorientation of thoughts, convictions, and the development of greater clarity of understanding through the experience of the truth that sets us free. The birth of Jesus as walking in truth and light is basic to the process of healing and transformation. His life in our life cannot be confused with a simple reform of conduct, but rather with new birth, a profound transformation of small things, actions, choices, and meanings, based on identity in Christ. In other words, His birth is also our birth!

It is possible because of His unending love for us. In the freedom of this love, we are healed of our wounds, graced with gifts, talents, meaning to live and a mission to fulfill, supported and directed by the Father himself.

J.I. Packer states that: "Conversion (when His birth is our birth!) is a complex process that involves thinking and rethinking, doubting and overcoming doubts, self-reflection and admonition, fighting feelings of guilt and shame, and focusing on what it really means to love and follow God."

There is a connection between emotional health and spiritual maturity and, therefore, we will hardly become spiritually mature if we don't go through a process of emotional maturation. In the field of emotions, we know that the influences we receive in shaping who we are is multifactorial, such as lived experiences, the environment, genetic and personality factors. Our spirituality and faith journey

need to be integrated: to unite mind and heart. We need to observe the practical dichotomy we live in, correct our course, and integrate these inseparable realities. Our affections and feelings must be identified and dealt with in the light of Christ, so that our emotions can undergo the process of redemption and healing.

The experience of conversion proposes a new path, restoration, redemption, liberation from evil, a fresh start in the company of God and in the community.

Love that Transforms and Confirms Sonship

All of this provides a path to emotional health and life, even though on our journey in this world we are subject to dealing with so many circumstances that contain signs of death.

The text of Romans 5 reminds us of God's love that transforms us even in the midst of feelings of sadness, anger, bitterness, suffering and even cynicism, apathy and despair. We come to know this love not only through cognition, through thought, but also through our affections and we are encouraged towards hope. As we reorder our affections, the Holy Spirit pours His love into our hearts, and this leads us to the practice of gratitude.

Jesus' touch in our new birth and journey with Him reminds us daily of our identity as beloved children and we are transformed. Through His love and grace, He offers us a fresh start, a new way of being people, of relating and working - signalling to the world, through the hope given to us, a path of redemption in all spheres of life.

Allow Him to be born in your heart and today can be your personal Christmas!



Deise Eliassen is a commissioner of The Salvation Army, serving now in Johannesburg. She is originally from Brazil and has lived in many countries out there, such as Mozambique, England and Chile. After graduating in Journalism, she was called to serve as a full-time pastor. Deise is married to Torben Eliassen, with whom she shares the blessing of two beautiful daughters and six very naughty grandchildren who are their source of endless love and inspiration. To follow Jesus Christ and share His abundant life is the Eliassen's ultimate goal which they embrace wholeheartedly.

WORKOUT

SCAN ME



Brazilian Fitness Coach, Fabi Ford, shared the perfect workout for you to do in the comfort of your home!



Fabi Ford
@fabi_ford



PHOTO: @TUCOMENEZESF

30 MIN HIIT WORKOUT

This is a 30-minute HIIT Workout! It incorporates several rounds alternating between several minutes of high-intensity movements to significantly increase the heart rate, followed by short periods of lower-intensity movements. Complete each exercise for 40 seconds and rest for 20 seconds between each exercise and as needed.

- Sumo Squats
- High Knees
- Skaters
- Jumping Jacks
- Mountain Climbers
- Jumping Ropes
- Butt Kicks
- Abdominal Crunches

3 Rounds

Need help with the exercise? Scan the code and watch selected video tutorials!

He Was There

EVEN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BOTTLE



A STORY ABOUT
SOBRIETY AND FINDING
GOD WHEN WE'RE AT
OUR DARKEST

As the youngest of five kids, I grew up in a home with two alcoholics where secrets were created and never shared with anyone, including each other. Yelling, images of my dad trying to strangle my mom with my siblings and I scampering on the floor of their bedroom, crying.

BY PAULETTE
KENGG

How many times did one of our uncles faithfully come in the middle of the night to rescue us by bringing us to his home, where our cousins had to let us sleep with them again.

Of the two parents, my dad was the one who loved me. The pressure was on my mom to produce a son, so after three girls, a son was finally born. The last thing my mom wanted was another kid. And I showed up. Looking back as a wife, mother, and grandmother myself, I don't blame her for not wanting anything to do with me. The poor woman was exhausted and abused on a regular basis, with no one to talk to.

My life changed when one of my uncles shot and killed my dad while in a drunken rage. I was given Jack Daniels and Coke that night by my oldest sister, who was married and picked me up to get away from it all. This was all she knew to do because it was all we were ever shown.

In the coming decades I was raped, had two failed marriages, a miscarriage, two layoffs totaling four years all while a single mom. Thankfully my mom and I reconciled our relationship and had a few good years together before she lost her life tragically and unnecessarily at the hands of others.

I was a "normal drinker" for most of my life, even though there were periods here and there of heavy drinking. Shortly after my mom passed away, I landed the 'job of my dreams' as a regional editor of a healthcare magazine. I was responsible for the South Texas region, and part of my job was developing story ideas - something I was good at.

My new boss was elated and boosted my ego, saying all the other editors were jealous that their staff weren't coming up with nearly the amount of compelling copy as hers was. My daughter had grown up and moved, so I was alone with nothing else to do but work at the job I loved so much.

Finding the Bottle

Enter the most unwelcome insomnia, which consumed me for the next 10 years. To my surprise I met a wonderful man who became my third and final husband. Unfortunately after we married and I moved in with him, I discovered he had a very bad snoring problem. Not good for anyone, but especially for someone with insomnia.

I ran into an old friend and had dinner. She innocently suggested a glass of wine to help me fall asleep. It never occurred to me to use alcohol to help me fall asleep. I talked it over with my husband, and we both agreed it couldn't hurt.

Within a week my brain became addicted to alcohol. I'd wake up after a few hours and just pour another glass. It wasn't too long before I was drinking an entire bottle a night, sometimes two.

My husband and I slept in separate bedrooms so I would hide the empty bottles in my rainboots. When he left for work, I'd put the empty bottles into a bag, rush to the store, throw them away, and buy replacement bottles.

My beloved has a photographic memory, and I would spend hours driving around trying to find the exact wine labels so he wouldn't notice any missing. After some time, I began drinking hard whiskey. At 2 am, 5 am, 8-9 am, 1-2 pm and so on while he was at work.

I tried AA several times but it never helped, despite it being a popular program. God created us differently and not all programs resonate with everyone. I refused to label myself or believe I had a disease that only I could diagnose, which is what we're told by doctors. I began reading books about addiction and recovery, listening to podcasts and took several online courses. And while my periods of sobriety were getting longer and longer, I was still hard on myself when I would pick up a drink. I began worrying about my mental health because while I wasn't suicidal, let's just say I hated waking up to another miserable 'groundhog day'.

I had a terrible accident while alone at our vacation home one night and almost died. I am literally a living miracle, saved for a time and purpose.

The Salvation

I was treated by a team of doctors for 1.5 years for my insomnia. Together we cracked the code of my insane sleep-deprived brain, so alcohol was no longer the solution but it was the bigger problem of the two.

My husband was very supportive of me throughout this period, even though he didn't understand why I couldn't stop drinking. I tried many forms of therapy and counseling, all of which were helpful. Unfortunately, the first place I always thought I should have been able to go to was the last place I went to: our church.

When I confessed my problem to one of my pastor friends, he said he'd been "clean and sober for 20 years now". The relief and no longer feeling ashamed was palpable. He connected me with a Biblical counselor who I worked with for over a year. "The Heart of Addiction" by Mark E. Shaw and his accompanying workbook showed me the real root of my problems. God gave me the gift of repentance and healed me one unique step at a time.

Today I'm living my best life and feel amazing. I never planned to write a book about my experiences and all I learned from doing research, but it happened anyway and came into the world after just two months.

My sleep problems have been resolved, I've learned how to manage my emotions and spend my time helping others in recovery through my Facebook group, blog posts and just being available in whatever ways the needs present.

I'm grateful for my journey because I wouldn't have this ministry today. I've created an important, lasting legacy for my daughter and grandkids, and shown my siblings we can recover when we trust and obey God.

Extra, Extra! Read All About It

**The Good News is
something we should
cherish and give, not fear**

By Roxanne Vargas

Luke 2:10 And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

Imagine receiving the good news that the savior of the world has been born. Imagine yourself in the field as the shepherds and the glory of the Lord shone around you. What would be your reaction after an encounter like that? The Shepherds were filled with great fear, and rightly so! I'm sure we would be filled with great fear as well with such a powerful encounter. What would be your response after such an encounter? Would you be quick to take action? In Luke 2:15 the scripture says that when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” What stands out to me in this verse is the acknowledgment from the shepherds that the Lord has made known to them the “Good News”. After the initial fear of the encounter, the peace that came upon them after the Angel of the Lord said, “Fear Not”, they immediately knew the Lord made this known to them and they took action.

In this day and age, what kind of news makes us take action? What is your response to “BREAKING NEWS”? Does it stop you from what you are doing to listen and pay attention? Depending on the news, it leads us to a plan of action. A hurricane warning, a pandemic, a brush fire, a flood warning, or an amber alert, all lead us to action. Many of us become emotionally invested in tragic news of devastation by following the latest updates.

When the “Good News” of the birth of our Savior came forth, many understood the magnitude of the news, but many ignored it.

The Most Extra! News of All

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are called to be bearers of the Good News. God in His love for us, sent His only begotten son to be crucified, beaten, and tortured, to take upon Himself the sins of all, died and was buried, and then rose on the third day. The most important and most incredible news ever told. We carry that redemption story! Just like the paper boys of the past yelling “Extra, Extra read all about it!” “Extra” because something exciting had happened, something justifying an extra edition that they wanted to sell.

The birth of Jesus the Messiah was and still is an “Extra, extra read all about it” news, A “Breaking News” story for today. We are image bearers and “Good News” deliverers. The transforming power of this news is something that needs to spread wherever we go. We have been transformed by the BREAKING NEWS of His birth. John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. One of the greatest scriptures written.

Our nation and the world are in a state of destruction. Without Christ, the consequence of sin is death. Sin is the reason for the state our world is in, and Jesus Christ is the answer.

Mark 16:15-16

“Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

Galatians 4:4-5

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

Distributing our Greatest Gift

The “Good News” The “Gospel Of Jesus Christ” should have our full attention and empower us to take action by proclaiming the news of redemption only found through the work of the cross in Christ Jesus.

His prophecy was fulfilled! What extraordinary news!

Isaiah 9:6

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

We have the opportunity to offer someone the greatest gift ever given through the message of salvation. Let's take action through prayer as we intercede for the lost, that the Gospel we proclaim will cause them to stop and pay attention to this “Breaking News” that they will experience for the first time. The prayer is that the “Good News” will cause them to take action through repentance, confession, and commitment to follow Jesus. That they can acknowledge as the Shepherds did, that the Lord has made this known to them.

Extra, Extra Read All About It! Jesus is the answer!

Let's take action through prayer as we intercede for the lost, that the Gospel we proclaim will cause them to stop and pay attention to this “Breaking News” that they will experience for the first time.





EVENTS

BUT GOD CONFERENCE

January 20th
Los Angeles, CA
Details: www.butgodmagazine.com

CORAÇÃO EMPREENDEDOR

Brazilian Women in Business
February 4th
Los Angeles, CA
Details: www.entrepreneurheart.org

GOD GIRLS MAKING MILLIONS

November 29th - December 1st, 2023
Miami, FL
Details: www.incredibleoneenterprises.com

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