

EASTER

2026

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This newspaper has been brought to you by A Purple Cross, New Zealand's inter-denominational Christian newspaper and media ministry, including contributions from, and representing God's Church, the body of born-again believers spread across several Christian denominations here in Aotearoa.

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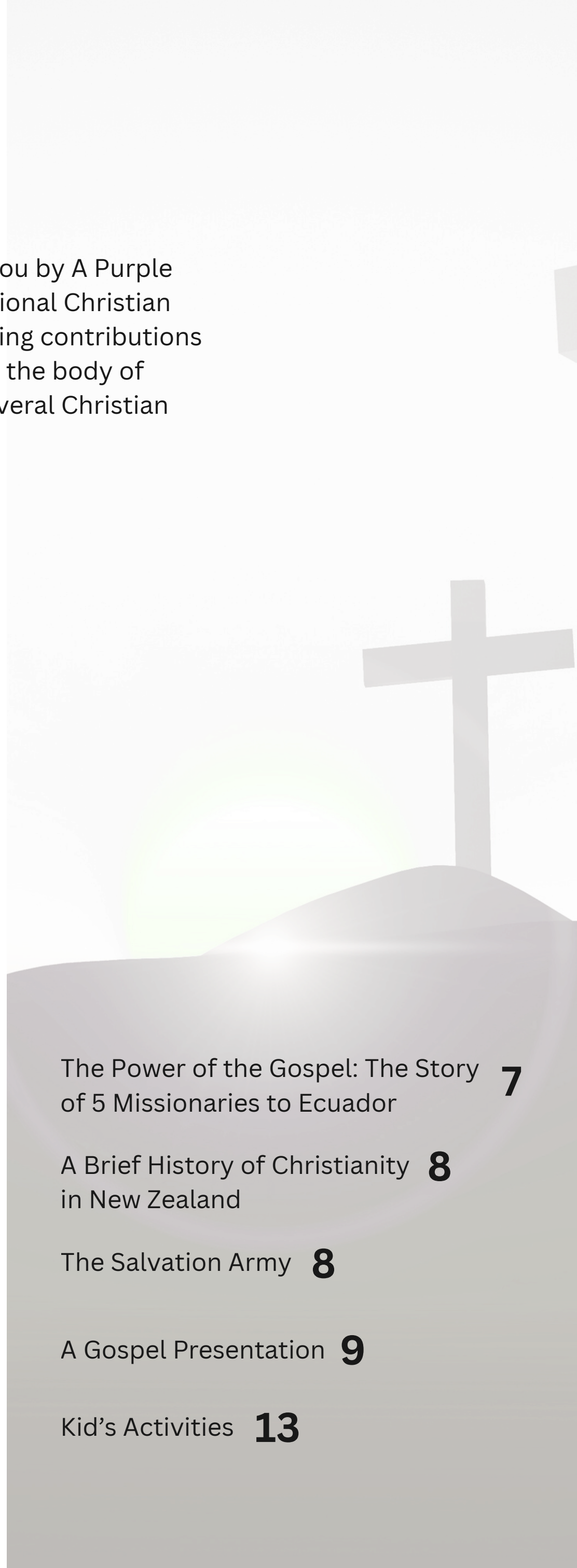
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Kathryn Riley Testimony

**“Jesus is
literally
the answer
everyone
is looking
for!”**

I grew up like many New Zealanders in the religious sense, as in I would have described myself as having no religion and, in my late teens/twenties, identified as atheist.

In my late twenties, I was invited to Church by a new friend and I went along really only to be polite. I was struck with the light in many of the people at the Church, particularly the teenagers who, interested in missions trips and serving others, were a stark contrast to the teenagers I was familiar with who were interested in parties and drinking and the like.

My experience at the Church made me feel that there was something to this Christianity thing and I switched from identifying as an atheist to agnostic at that point. I bought a Bible at this time also.

Fast forward to 5 years later, I unpacked a dusty Bible that has barely been read from the bottom of a box as I was moving into a new house. My daughter, who was 5 years old at the time, would ask me to read it to her, we didn't believe in miracles or in Jesus being the risen Son of God or anything but we both enjoyed the morals and lessons in it, however the language was a little old for my young daughter, so I bought her a children's storybook Bible for Christmas that year.

The story book Bible was great and we read the entire book over 4 nights. The following night, on 29 December 2013, I had an excruciating toothache suddenly come on from a chipped tooth. The pain was so bad that paracetamol wouldn't have made a dent in it and it was late at night so I couldn't visit a dentist. I was helpless. Without even consciously realising I had accepted in my heart that Jesus was the risen Son of God, alive and able to perform miracles, I called out to Him to take the pain away.

He did! Not only that, I was a smoker who had been failing at giving up for some time and God completely delivered me from that addiction in that moment, it was as if I had never smoked. But most of all, it was the 'washing over' feeling I had - of restoration, I felt so alive, like I could see clearly for the first time, and the hole in my heart which had me always searching and never satisfied, was now fill with the love of God.

I would read in the Bible later that this experience was called being 'born again', and is what happened when someone became a Christian.

I'm so thankful for my new life with God and I just wish I could make everyone see what they're missing. Everyone is stumbling around in the dark, trying to fill the empty space in their hearts with worldly things like alcohol, or money, status in society, more friends, more material things etc, but always searching and wanting for more.

Jesus is literally the answer everyone is looking for!



Ian McCormack Testimony

"I was stung
on my
forearm by
5 Box-
Jellyfish"



"I found myself
being translated
up into an
incredibly brilliant
beam of pure
white light"

Ambulance

One night while diving for lobster on the small Island of Mauritius I was stung on my forearm by 5 Box-Jellyfish, which the local Creole fishermen called "invisibles". A sting from a Box-Jellyfish often proves to be fatal – as exemplified in Australia where 70 people are known to have died from their stings. Many books quote this particular type of Jellyfish to be among the most venomous creatures in the world. I had been travelling around the world for 2 years, leaving New Zealand in 1980 at the age of 24. And in April, 1982 at the age of 26 I was stung by these Jellyfish. By the time an ambulance arrived my body was totally paralyzed and necrosis had begun to set into my bone marrow.

On route to the hospital I began to see my life flash before me. At this point of my life I was an atheist – but I knew I was nearly dead and I didn't know if there was life after death or whether there was just nothing. As I lay there dying, I saw my mother in a vision praying for me, encouraging me to cry out to God from my heart and He would hear me and forgive me (my mother was the only Christian in our family). I didn't know what to pray and cried out that if God was real, could He help me to pray. Immediately God showed me the Lord's Prayer, and for the first time in my life I prayed from my heart and gave my life to the Lord. { Matt 6 }

Death & Hell

The ambulance stopped and they placed me in a wheel chair and raced me into the hospital. The nurse took my blood pressure twice but could not find a pulse as my veins had collapsed. The doctors tried to save my life by injecting anti-toxins and dextrose into my body, but seemingly to no avail. Within a few minutes I seemed to slip away (apparently life ceased from my body for a period of approx. 15 – 20 minutes).

During this time I found myself in a very dark place, not realising where I was. So I tried to find a light switch, thinking I was still in the hospital – but as I reached out into the dark I couldn't touch anything. Reaching to touch my face I found my hand go straight through it. It seemed so bizarre, as I knew I was standing there but couldn't touch any part of my physical body.

As I stood there I began to sense that this wasn't just a physical darkness but that there was something else there. I could feel a cold eerie feeling as though something or someone was looking at me – a spiritual darkness { Acts 26 : 18 – 20 } . From the darkness I began to hear men's voices screaming at me telling me to "shut up" – "that I deserved to be there" – "that I was in Hell". I couldn't believe it, but as I stood there a radiant beam of light shone through the darkness and immediately began to lift me upward. I found myself being translated up into an incredibly brilliant beam of pure white light – it seemed to be emanating from a circular opening far above me (I felt like a speck of dust being drawn up into a beam of sunlight).

The Journey

I entered this opening to find myself inside a long narrow passageway or tunnel { Matt 7 : 13 – 14 } – at the far end of the tunnel I could see the source of the light – it was so radiant that it looked to be the centre of the universe. As I continued to look towards this light it seemed to draw me towards it at an incredible speed – I wasn't walking but was being translated along this tunnel towards the source of this light. I watched as a wave of light broke off the source and moved up the tunnel towards me – as it passed through me I could feel a wave of warmth and comfort flood my soul ... it was incredible. This light wasn't just physical, but was giving off a living emotion ... Halfway down another wave of light – this time it gave off pure peace – followed by another wave – of pure joy. Coming out of the end of this tunnel I found myself standing in the presence of awesome light and power – it seemed as though even the constellations in the universe must find their energy source from this focal point.

As I stood there I wondered to myself if this was just an energy source in the universe or if perhaps there could be someone standing in the midst of this light!!!! A voice immediately responded to my thought and asked me "Ian, do you wish to return?" Return, I thought!!! Where am I??? As I looked over my shoulder I could see the tunnel going back into darkness.

The Light

I thought – darkness – hospital bed – am I out of my body? – is this real? – am I standing here? – or am I in a coma having some bizarre dream? Am I in my body or out of my body?? (I could cognitively think of the two alternatives). As I looked back towards the light, it was still there ... I responded "I don't know where I am, but if I am out of my physical body I wish to return." The voice responded "If you wish to return – you must see in a new light." "New light", I thought, "I'm seeing the light." "Are you the true light???" Words appeared in front of me "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5)." I had never read a Bible before in my life so I didn't know this was straight out of the scriptures. God is light, I thought – that is pure light – I see no darkness here, I have just come from darkness – I see no evil, no shadows – this is pure light – am I standing in the presence of God??? He knows my name and I didn't tell Him, only God could do that – He knows what I am thinking before I even speak, only God could do that. Then he must be able to see everything I have done wrong in my life ... no ... I don't want God to see that. I felt totally exposed and wanted to move away from the light and go back into the darkness where I belonged. I thought someone had made a mistake and brought the wrong person up. As I drew back towards the darkness a wave of light swept through me ... I felt pure unadulterated Love flow over me. Love I thought, how could God love me – I've taken his name in vain – I've slept around – I'm not a good man ... but no matter what I said, waves of His unconditional Love continued to flow over me. I found myself weeping uncontrollably in His Presence. It was so amazing that He had totally forgiven me and accepted me as I was.

The waves of Love ceased and I wondered if I could possibly step into the light and see what God looked like. I was so close. ... I asked if I could step in. ...???.. I heard no response but thought if God could love me so much, He wouldn't mind As I stepped into the light I found myself disappear into it as it was so radiant – it had the intensity of laser light, yet you could look directly at it. The light seemed to absorb me into it – the centre seemed to

“ I had been dead for a period of some 15 – 20 minutes ”

be very bright so I aimed for it – I could feel a healing presence coming off this light that was healing my broken heart ... it was touching me deep inside my heart of hearts where no one gets to see ... so beautiful.

God

Suddenly it opened up in the centre and standing in front of me was the most awesome sight – I could see a man standing in front of me, but he was not like anyone I'd ever seen before in my life. His garments were shimmering white in colour – garments of light – I could see His bare feet and His hands were outstretched towards me as if to welcome me. I knew I was looking upon God ... as I looked toward His face the intensity of the light seemed to increase 7-fold – you couldn't make out the form of his face as the light was so bright – such purity, such holiness, such beauty. I asked God if I could step closer. I felt I could, I wanted to see His face. Moving closer waves of more Love began to flow towards me, and I felt very safe. Standing, now feet away, from the Lord I tried to see His face – but I didn't know that no man can see the face of God and live. And so, as I moved my face into the radiance that surrounded His face, He moved – and all His Glory moved with Him. Directly behind Him it opened out into a brand new World – green pastures, a crystal clear stream { Rev 22 : 1 – 5 }, rolling green hills to my right, mountains in the distance, blue skies above, to my left fields interspersed with trees and flowers. As I looked at the grass in front of me I could see the same light that was on the presence of God was radiating throughout this entire creation – totally untouched by man – perfect creation. And in my heart I knew I belonged here, that God had created me to live here – I knew I was home. { Rev 21 : 1 – 8 }

Return?

I was just about to enter in and explore, when God stepped back in front of me, and asked me this question. “Now that you have seen – do you wish to step in or do you wish to return?” I thought, “I don't want to return. I wish to step in. I have no one to

go back for and no one has ever loved me, all they've ever done is manipulate me and try to control me ... I have no one to go back for, I wish to step in.” But God didn't move, so I looked back behind me to say “goodbye, cruel world”, and standing behind me in a vision in front of the tunnel was my mother. And as soon as I saw her I knew that there was one person in my life that had shown me love, and that was my mother, and that she had prayed for me every day and tried to show me that this was the way. In my mind I thought, “if I am dead and I did choose to step into heaven, what would my mother think? Would she know I made it or would she think I went to Hell – because she knew I had no Faith? ... I realised that it could break her heart and that she would have no reason to believe that God had heard my prayer in the ambulance and forgiven my sins. ... I thought, “how can I do that to my mum, it would be so selfish” ... and decided I wished to return.

God then spoke to me and said, “If I wished to return – I must see things in a new light.” I understood that to mean that I must begin to see through his eyes of Love, Peace, Joy, Forgiveness, from His Heavenly perspective, not my temporary earthly perspective. Looking back towards the tunnel again I now could see a vision of all my family, and thousands and thousands of other people. I asked God who all these people were, and He told me that if I didn't return then many of these people would not get a chance to hear about Him....

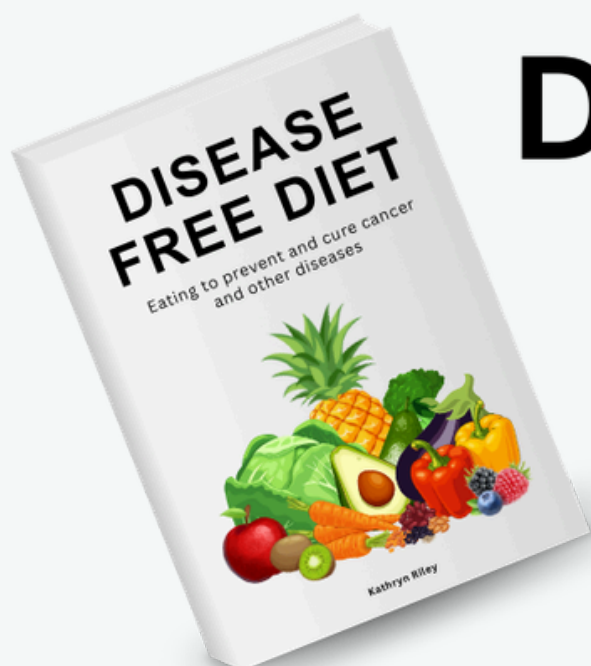
I told God that I didn't know most of them and I didn't love them, but that I loved my mother and wished to return for her. God spoke to me and told me that He loved those people and wanted them all to come to know Him. I asked God how could I possibly return back down the tunnel and back into my hospital bed. He spoke and said “Son, tilt your head, now feel the liquid drain from your eye. Now open your eye and see.” And I was immediately back in my physical body.

Back to earth

As I opened my eye, I was lying back on a hospital bed with my right leg elevated,

cupped in the hands of the young Indian doctor who had been trying to save my life. He had a scalpel or some sharp instrument in his hand and he was prodding the base of my foot like a dead piece of meat. He wasn't aware that I was looking at him. I thought, “what's that man doing with my foot, what is he doing with that knife!!!!!!” At the same time something seemed to spook the doctor and he quickly turned his head to see my right eye open, looking at him... Terror struck his face and I got the distinct impression that he has just seen a dead man looking at him... My eye wasn't moving much and I could see the doctor thinking to himself that perhaps he had hit a nerve in my foot and caused the corpse to twitch, and that he had the evil eye looking at him or something. As for me, I was trying to grapple with what I had just seen. ... Did I just see God, has He just given my life back??? As I lay there I heard the voice of God say “Son, I have just given you your life back.” I said if that is true God, could you help me to tilt my head to the left and look out of the other eye, as I was getting sick of looking at the doctor's terrified face. Strength came back into my neck and I opened my left eye to see a whole bunch of nurses and orderlies standing in the doorway looking at me as if the dead had just risen ... As my eye locked onto theirs they began to jump backwards out of the doorway. From what I can ascertain I had been dead for a period of some 15 – 20 minutes. I prayed to God that night and asked him to heal me and enable me to walk out of the hospital. That night God completely healed me and enabled me to walk out of the hospital the next day.

I asked God what I had become, as I found my entire life was changing for good. God told me I was a Re-Born Christian and that he wanted me to read His Bible. I had never read a Bible and had never heard about being Born-Again. Over the next 6 weeks I read the entire Bible. I have never been the same, and believe that I saw our Lord Jesus Christ in His Glorified form (Rev. 1 : 13 -18)



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**HEALING
ROOMS**
NEW ZEALAND



www.healingrooms.co.nz

“Love conquers depression which leads to sickness – truly sets the captive free.”

Rooms. A wonderful team came together quite quickly and we met each fortnight in a midwifery centre to pray for the sick. A second Healing Rooms became established in Putaruru, directed by Pastors Murray and Val Roberts – Assemblies of God church.

A mandate then came from God to move to Onerahi and establish a Healing Rooms. A week prior to leaving Cambridge, a man named Bill came to our home to fulfil a simple task. He looked so very ill and he revealed he was suffering from terminal cancer of the liver and other vital organs. Arthur and I and Heather, a team member, prayed for this dear man. He telephoned me two days before moving and with a voice trembling with excitement he revealed he had an ultra-sound and not one jot of cancer could be found, his body completely made whole by Almighty God. Such Joy!

I once sent a prayer cloth to a young woman in Auckland, tender age of thirty-two, very close to death from the effects of cancer. Jesus Healed her BEFORE it reached her letter-box.

Same Miracle happened to a lady in Melbourne, Australia – she was also Healed by Jesus before the prayer cloth reached her letterbox. O Blessed Jesus – how I Love You.

Healing Rooms – where did it all start? It began with a ministry call from God to a willing Vessel, John G. Lake. and I marvel at the way God established such a marvellous

ministry. He became a Missionary to Africa nearly one hundred years ago. He planted hundreds of churches there and he constantly witnessed Signs and Wonders. After a period John G. Lake returned to America and settled in a beautiful city - Spokane, in Washington State. In time he brought together a group of Christians and he trained them in the principles of Healing and Evangelism, and in 1915 opened what he called Healing Rooms for a five year period and over 100,000 documented Healings took place. This had an enormous impact on the local community, so much so - the U.S. Government declared Spokane the healthiest city in the world.

John G. Lake had a vision for Healing Rooms to spread to every city in the world but he died before his dream could be realised.

However, like seed in the ground, God, in His Timing, waters it until it germinates and grows and ultimately reaps a harvest. Eighty years later, in 1999, Reverend Cal Pierce, a then retired Real Estate Developer, was called by God to carry this ministry to it's fulfilment and today, as an International director, he oversees over 2000 Healing Rooms in over 50 nations. Amazing Testimonies of physical and emotional Healings are being documented world wide.

In New Zealand there are well over 50 Healing Rooms. Healing Rooms are set up similar to a Doctor's office, with a reception

area, a soaking Room and consultation rooms where people with needs can come and their Healing prayed for in a safe and confidential environment. No appointment is needed – unless out of Healing Rooms hours and the service is free of charge. Trained, mature team members from different denominations are present to care for people with real needs.

It thrills me to see how God moulds precious team members together into one unified body and we have a true heart to see a hurting soul set free from anything that steals their joy.

My vision as a Director of Healing Rooms is to see the ministry of Healing restored to the whole church and Jesus Glorified in it. Healing Rooms belong to God and His Beautiful Presence is with us every time we open the door.

I personally feel we are in the ark and we are sailing into deeper waters – new waters – deeper than we have been used to, and the faith and appreciation for the need of God's Wondrous Glory and Healing Power is needed to set people at liberty.

The main thrust of Healing Rooms ministry is based on 'Love' – The Love of Jesus – The Compassion of Jesus – true unity and Love for each other and Loving Commitment.

Love conquers depression which leads to sickness – truly sets the captive free.

Jillian Tyquin-Smith

Healing Rooms New Zealand

I do believe New Zealand is on the brink of a tremendous Outpouring of Healing Revival and it thrills me through and through.

It brings me down memory lane – the glorious Miracle of being Healed Supernaturally of terminal cancer as I sat in a little old Pentecostal church in Melbourne, Australia. That very night in 1979 Divine Love and gratitude met and I gave my life and my heart to my Beloved and Blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, my only wee boy did too.

An incredible journey began almost immediately. I joined a Bible College quite near my home and during those two and half years of study, an unusual ministry was birthed in God. I was graced with prize winning little dogs and suddenly I found myself praying for other prize winning little dogs which were to be put to sleep by the act of euthanasia because of serious health problems. God would Heal these precious and much loved little treasures in the most incredible and wondrous ways. Even my Veterinarian would constantly write in his report --- MIRACLE, MIRACLE, MIRACLE. Word circulated and I found myself travelling to breeders properties near and far praying or and laying hands on lovely little doggies.

When I became a Minister of the Gospel, a new season of opportunity sprang forth. It involved establishing churches in Melbourne, Canada, and Fiji. I relied on The Blessed Holy Spirit for everything and He became my very Best Friend. Healing ministry blossomed in Him and wonderful Miracle services were birthed for a period of five years, incredible Healing took place. Jesus I Praise You.

In the year 2000, my husband, Darren, and I were sent by God to this beautiful country of New Zealand and again it seemed Healing ministry came to the forefront.

In 2008 Darren was killed in an automobile accident and again – with my hand in The Hand of The One Who stills the water, a new season began. I took on the role of President of Aglow in the South Island for two and half years, when the two devastating earthquakes struck Christchurch and outlying areas. I lived in the worst hit town of Kaipoi. My lovely home was sinking and even that was miraculously rectified by The Lord. In God's Timing I was married to my lovely Arthur and we moved to Cambridge in the North Island. It was at this time I met Reverend Julie Calvert and became Director of Leamington Healing



Ema: A Youth Testimony

I was five years old when I first heard the story of Jesus dying for our sins and being resurrected. Upon hearing about it, I immediately believed it to be true, put my faith in Jesus, and became a born-again Christian.

That was over 12 years ago, and since then, I have seen God work many wonders and miracles in my life. The first miracle I can recall happened when I was six years old. My Mum accidentally slammed the car door on my hand, and I remember it being quite painful! But then I suggested we pray for Jesus to heal my hand, and when we did, God took away every ounce of pain instantly.

I've experienced many other miracles in my life, along with prophetic dreams. For years, God has regularly spoken to me about things to come through dreams. One of the most specific dreams I've

had occurred a few weeks before I was due to move. In the dream, I became friends with a girl who had identical twin sisters after I moved. A few weeks later in real life - the day after I moved - I met a girl whom I became friends with, and she had identical twin sisters! I have also moved a few times throughout my childhood, and I often dreamt about what a house would look like months before we would move into it.

Through knowing God, I was blessed at a young age with the wisdom, knowledge, and discernment He gives His people. But I have noticed the stark contrast between myself and the other young people around me, and am saddened at the problems many of my peers face which are easily resolved by knowing God. Problems such as getting their identity from other people, having low self-esteem, not knowing their path in life, or even going off track with drugs and alcohol which can destroy their life

Because I have a personal relationship with my creator, I only receive my identity from him, as he is the one who gave me my identity when he created me. He

doesn't make mistakes, and I therefore know that he created me perfectly, so I am secure enough in myself to not let my self-esteem be affected in the slightest by others' opinions. God creates every single person with a specific path in life, and when you know God, you can hear him tell you what that is. Because of knowing God, I knew my path in life from a young age, and choosing a fulfilling career has never been a struggle for me as it is for many other young people I know.

I am also without the hole in my heart that all people who don't know Jesus have, and therefore I haven't had the need to chase after money, fun, alcohol, or other temporary pleasures to try and fill it, as God has already filled that space in my heart which belongs to him. Because of this I have never gone off track with partying or drinking like the many people my age do.

I was very fortunate to have discovered Jesus and been saved by Him at such an early age, before I could go off track and experience these problems. Growing up with God in my life saved me from struggling with identity or self-esteem issues, a lack of direction in life, or damaging my future by going off track. But most importantly, Jesus has saved me, which means I have nothing to fear when I die, because I know I will be in Heaven with my Father.

Matiu Rota: Gangs to God

Growing up in a broken home, never learning right from wrong and not knowing love, Matiu Rota turned to gangs at a young age and, at the age of 15, received his first criminal conviction, marking the beginning of what would be years of crime and several prison sentences.

At 26 years old, Matiu found himself homeless and a drug addict, squatting in a derelict Auckland house and contemplating suicide, when a chance meeting with a pair of Christians would set his life on a new trajectory.

Fast forward to present day and you will find a transformed man of God. Matiu has enjoyed an impressive and inspiring life of ministry, most notably with "The Peacemakers" ministry he founded in 2008 to connect with others from a similar background to him, acting as a light and a place of belonging to those who may feel judged or not welcome in many Churches.

Wearing gang looking insignia and with full face tattoos, Matiu understands all too well the judgement of others, but if you look closely at the badges on his leather vest or his tattoos, you will read things like "Child of God", or "Jesus Christ for life".

As Matiu points out, God looks at the heart, and we should be doing the same, looking further than just skin deep, and understanding that we are all human. He doesn't believe in Church being confined to a building, but rather it being wherever a Christian is, and living it day to day. A true inspiration, Matiu's good work continues on currently through his Nelson based counselling practice Akoako Counselling.



The Power of the Gospel

The story of 5 missionaries to Ecuador



Ed McCully, Peter Fleming, Jim Elliot

On January 8, 1956, Jim Elliot and four other American missionaries, Ed McCully, Rodger Youderian, Pete Fleming, and their pilot Nate Saint, were brutally killed by a group of ten warriors from the Waorani tribe.

A few years prior, Jim Elliot had heard about this hostile and fierce Amazonian tribe in the Ecuadorian rainforest who had killed every outsider that ventured into their territory, and Jim had become convicted to attempt to reach them with the message of Jesus Christ's love.

Initially the encounters with the Waorani tribe were positive. The missionaries flew over the Waorani territory for 3 months, dropping supplies and gifts in buckets, and, on January 3, 1956, landed on a river bank a few miles from the Waorani village. Upon landing, they enjoyed contact with three Waorani tribesmen,

even taking one of them for a joy ride in the plane, but were speared to death a few days later by other members of the tribe who were not persuaded that the missionaries were not there to hurt them.

This could have been the end of the story but what was to follow almost beggars belief. Three years later, Elisabeth Elliot, the wife of Jim Elliot, along with their three year old daughter, Nate Saint's sister Rachel, and the three other missionaries' wife's, went to live with the Waorani tribe. This demonstration of love and forgiveness made a significant impact on the Waorani tribe with many of them becoming Christian. One of the Waorani tribesmen put it so poignantly when he said, "I have killed twelve people with my spear! But I did that when my heart was black. Now Jesus' blood has washed my heart clean, so I don't live like that anymore".

Whilst Elisabeth Elliot and Rachel Saint have since passed away, Steve Saint, the son of Nate Saint, the pilot and missionary killed, still to this day works with the Waorani people, and has forged a particularly strong bond with Mincaye, one of his father's killers.

The Waorani tribe are currently largely a Christian people and absolutely transformed by coming to know Jesus, made possible through the deaths of the five very brave missionaries and their demonstration of faith lived out, which can be summarised with a famous quote, and one of Jim Elliot's favourites as recorded in his journal,

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose".

JEREMIAH 29:11

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."



A Brief History of Christianity in New Zealand



Samuel Marsden

On Christmas Day, 1814, Samuel Marsden preached the first Christian sermon in Aotearoa at Rangihoua Bay, Bay of Islands, hosted by Ngapuhi chief Ruatara.

Marsden and Ruatara first met a few years prior in 1809 when Marsden found a deathly ill Ruatara on an Australian bound convict ship, nursing him back to health and inviting Ruatara to his home in Parramatta, where from there a strong friendship ensued. Between 1809-1814 Marsden also befriended other Maori who he had stay at his home in Parramatta, and Marsden learned the Maori language. During that time, Marsden became increasingly interested in establishing a Christian mission in New Zealand and in 1813, upon becoming greatly concerned with the European settlers massacring and corrupting the Pacific Island and Maori people of New Zealand, successfully lobbied the Church Missionary Society to make him president of a New South Wales chapter of the society, and in charge of leading a mission to New Zealand.

In March 1814, Marsden appointed three missionaries to embark on an investigative journey to New Zealand where, upon their arrival, met with Ruatara as well as two other Rangatira, Korokoro and Hongi Hika, from the Ngapuhi tribe who controlled the Bay of Islands region, and who agreed to the proposed establishment of the Christian mission. On December 24, 1814, Marsden along with the three missionaries and other prospective settlers arrived in Rangihoua Bay, where Marsden delivered the first New Zealand Christian sermon the following day to a 400 strong congregation.

On 24 February, 1815, Marsden exchanged 12 axes with Ruatara for 200 acres of land to build the Christian mission. Ruatara, who was ill, died a few weeks later, and Marsden returned to Parramatta, leaving the missionaries to build the Christian Society settlement under the management of one of the missionaries Thomas Kendall.

The years following were not without significant issues, including the, supposed to be banned, trade of muskets with the Maori, particularly the Ngapuhi chief Hongi Hika, leading to subsequent devastation of neighbouring tribes during what has become known as the 'Musket Wars'. The influx of whaler, sealer, and trader European settlers and the diseases and alcohol they brought with them caused further devastation to the Maori people, and the subsequent increase in settlers, leading to the war, and invasion and theft of Maori land by the British, obviously was of considerable hindrance to the efforts of the Christian mission which, in stark contrast to the non-missionary European settlers, enjoyed much more peaceful and respectful relationships with the Maori. Despite these hindrances, Christianity was adopted by many Maori who took ownership of spreading the Gospel around Aotearoa, becoming a dominant faith of Maori by the 1830's.

With many of the European non-Christian settlers also coming to know God, Aotearoa became a largely Christian nation by the end of the 19th century and, although sadly moving away from Christianity in recent times, current day New Zealand still enjoys the benefits of a society shaped by Christian values such as non-violent resolution, compassion, honesty, helping the less fortunate, and social justice. It is only through knowing the God of the Bible that societies are transformed, a society that works for all people, and this is really truly something worth fighting for.

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The Salvation Army

Founded in London in 1865 by William and Catherine Booth, The Salvation Army has since grown to 14,495 churches and thousands of social service centres across 134 countries worldwide. Originally intended to reach the poor and marginalised not welcome in traditional churches, The Salvation Army's motto was "soup, soap, and salvation", and still very much honours this foundation today through it's extensive network of churches, 58 food banks, and over 530 housing units in New Zealand alone.

Historically, both William and Catherine Booth advocated for equal rights for men and women in ministry, and The Salvation Army played a significant and active role in the Women's Suffrage movement that led to New Zealand being the first country to give women the vote on 19 September, 1893.

Today The Salvation Army assists over 120,000 people annually in New Zealand by providing food, clothing, budgeting advice, and life skills programs. In addition to these services, it also provides drug and alcohol addiction treatment and supportive housing for people struggling with addictions. Other housing The Salvation Army provides includes emergency housing, and housing for people leaving prison, as well as community reintegration support for them too.

Salvation Army members are colloquially known as 'Salvos', or 'Salvationists', and their incredible work is driven by their faith and Christian mission to care for the vulnerable in society, following in the example of Jesus by serving the marginalizsd. The organisation believes in treating everyone with dignity and respect and welcomes anyone regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or background.



William and Catherine Booth 1862

What is a Christian?

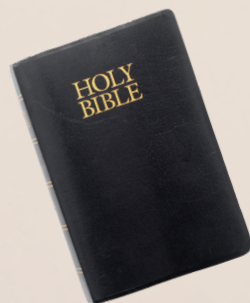
Did you know that everyone has a religion? Every person on earth without exception has a position of faith and a belief about who or what they think God is, or even if He exists at all.



If you say you have no religion, you are probably agnostic, you believe no one can truly know the truth and, whilst not defined by a pre-determined set of beliefs or doctrines but rather by a more individualised and eclectic mix of doctrines, it is very much a set of doctrines and position of faith like all others.

It is also a very wrong one in that it can be known exactly who God is, and there is one group of people who do know God because, unlike every other religion in the world, their beliefs are not based on a set of doctrines but rather on a personal relationship with God. These people are called born-again Christians and they can be found scattered across several different denominations of Churches, or not attending Church at all because a Christian is not a person who simply goes to Church. In fact you will meet some of the most vile, unfriendly, judgemental, and self-righteous people at 'Christian Churches', even Pastors preying on people for money, or on children and youth, allegations of sexual abuse in Churches often coming to light.

All excavations over the past 150 years confirm archaeological sites, artifacts, and people mentioned in the Bible, with no Biblical reference ever being definitively contradicted.



The 1947 discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls ignited a decade long search that uncovered a total of 972 texts that confirm the Old Testament books of the Bible.

The Bible

THE WORD OF GOD

There is no other book in history that has as much integrity as the Bible in that it has been verified by so many outside sources, even the miracles Jesus performed being attested to, and even by His adversaries.



1947 Dead Sea Scrolls

Of the roughly 2,500 prophecies contained in the Bible, approximately 2,000 so far have been fulfilled to the letter, with the remaining being predictions regarding the future.

Yes, a Christian is certainly not a person who simply goes to Church or who proclaims to be a Christian. A Christian is a person who has been born-again, who has been given the Holy Spirit of God, a God who is the only one who can say if a person is indeed a child of His.

"In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance..."

{Ephesians 1:13-14}

A personal relationship with God is only possible through faith in Jesus being the risen Son of God as God tells us is the case in the Bible.

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

{John 3:16}

Jesus is Risen!

Over 500 eye-witnesses saw a risen Jesus on the 3rd day after His crucifixion, many who stood by their testimony in the face of persecution and even death.

Would you die for what you knew to be a lie?

Immediately after Jesus' resurrection, just as is the case today, some believed and some didn't.

The Roman guards stationed at the tomb experienced a violent earthquake and saw a bright light and an angel descend from Heaven as the massive stone at the tomb's entrance rolled back.

The Jewish priests paid the guards big sums of money to lie and say Jesus' body was stolen in an attempt to prevent the rise of Christianity because, like the Romans, they desired the people to follow them rather than Jesus.

"For nothing will be impossible with God"

{Luke 1:37}

Son of God or Liar?

Some people say that Jesus was 'just a good man'.

Jesus claimed to be the risen Son of God and the one and only path to a personal relationship and eternal life in Heaven with God.

If this isn't true, that would make Jesus a liar and a con-artist - and really not a good man at all.

It has to be one or the other!

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"

{John 14:6}

Science and the Bible



The distinction must be made between scientific facts and theories.

A scientific fact is knowledge obtained through repeated experimentation yielding the exact same results every time.

For example, if you drop an apple, it will fall to the ground every time because of what we know to be gravity - a scientific fact.

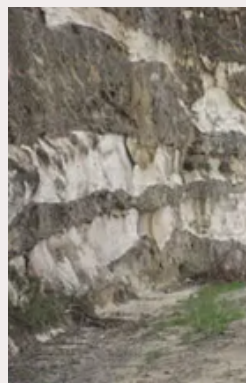
In contrast, theories on the origins of the earth and/or its inhabitants, such as the big bang theory or the theory of evolution, are just that - theories, and they are religious in nature.

We can however examine the evidence to point us in the right direction.

The Worldwide Flood

In many cultures, passing on stories of the past is very common, and one of the most common stories found across nearly every culture is the story of a catastrophic worldwide flood such as the one in the Bible.

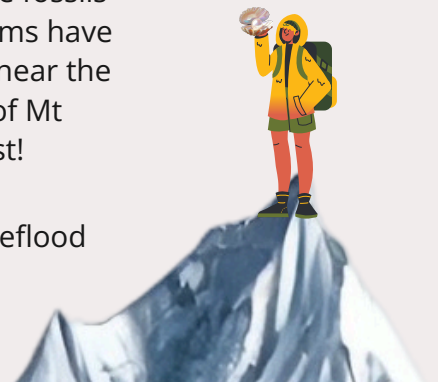
There is overwhelming evidence for the worldwide flood of the Bible, such as the ripple effect on layers of earth, suggesting that the layers were formed rapidly with water rather than by billions of years.



'Ripple' effect on layers of earth indicate being formed rapidly with water

Did you know that many marine fossils including clams have been found near the summit of Mt Everest!

#worldwideflood



“They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than twenty feet”.

{Genesis 7:19-20}

The Evolution Myth

A lot of people may behave like a chimpanzee but have you ever actually seen any half human-half chimpanzees walking around?

Each species, whether living or found in fossil records, is a distinct species in itself, created according to its kind.

"And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good".

{Genesis 1:25}

DNA can rearrange and lose information, becoming mutated, but it does not add entirely new information.

Even if this phenomena existed (which it doesn't), it would be a mathematical impossibility that the new DNA was added and rearranged trillions upon trillions of times to form even a single celled organism let alone millions of complex organisms that can only exist in a finely balanced ecosystem all dependant on each other to survive in the first place.

Obviously they would have all had to have been created perfectly whole and intact in the first place.

Evolution is a fairytale that originated from a very big leap of faith (in the wrong direction), when observing the process of natural selection.



Geneticists have traced the human population back to one male and one female.



Dogs can be bred to be distinctly different from each other over time but they will never turn into a cat!

Are You a Good Person?

What would you rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10? Probably high right, I mean chances are you haven't murdered anyone or anything. But what about lied? Or objectified someone? Have you put anything before loving and following God with all of your heart?

There is a story that, when asked to rate herself on a scale of 1 to 10, Mother Theresa rated herself 5. This is because she knew the bar was set a little higher than not being a murderer, and that she had fallen miserably short of God's perfect Holy standard.

NZ 'Gangster' Society

1st

TEEN SUICIDE RATE

These are some alarming statistics!

You just need to walk down any Auckland street for 1 minute to experience people scowling at you, trying to barge you out of their way, or worse.

2nd

BULLYING

These people are across all ethnicities, ages, socioeconomic status, and in every town and city.

3rd

CYBER BULLYING

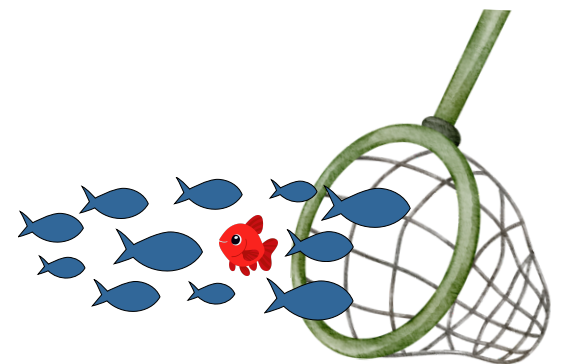
NZ society is rough!

God calls us to love others, put others before ourselves, and treat others how we want to be treated. Whether a person behaves badly because of mental illness, in retaliation, or any other reason, there is no justification and they are just a gangster (not a good thing!).

Think for Yourself

Just because everyone in your life believes something, it doesn't mean you have to also. And just because the majority believes something, it doesn't make it right. The majority of people between 1930-1950 believed smoking was a medically safe prescription for anxiety. Majority does not equal fact. Think for yourself about what you truly believe regarding faith.

It's important - especially when your eternal destination is at stake!



Are you Searching with an Open Heart?

Is it that you just haven't stopped to consider the truth regarding Jesus, God, and the Bible, or is it that you do not want to?

"Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear their deeds will be exposed".

{John 3:20}

Regardless of what you believe, you will be judged when you die and live eternally in either Heaven with God or in hell.

"The wages of sin is death".

{Romans 6:23}

The only one way to avoid hell is to stop putting yourself in the place of God - acknowledge God's sovereignty and accept His gift of salvation through faith in His Son Jesus who died for your sins.

You can not do it on your own as all people have sinned and it is incredibly blasphemous to claim you have the power to save yourself and enter Heaven in your own strength and in your own sinfulness. Only Jesus is the perfect sinless sacrifice for your sins.

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God".

{Romans 3:23}

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

{John 3:16}



THE FRIENDSHIP CLUB MAGAZINE

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Faith
Fun
Friendship

An Easter Story

Of everything God created, He was most happy with the two people He made, Adam and Eve.

One day Adam and Eve sinned, they did what the devil told them to do instead of obeying God.

This made God very sad because Adam and Eve and all people forever more could no longer live with Him because God is Holy and perfect and can not have sin in His presence.

"I know", God said, "I will make a special way for all my children to be with me again".

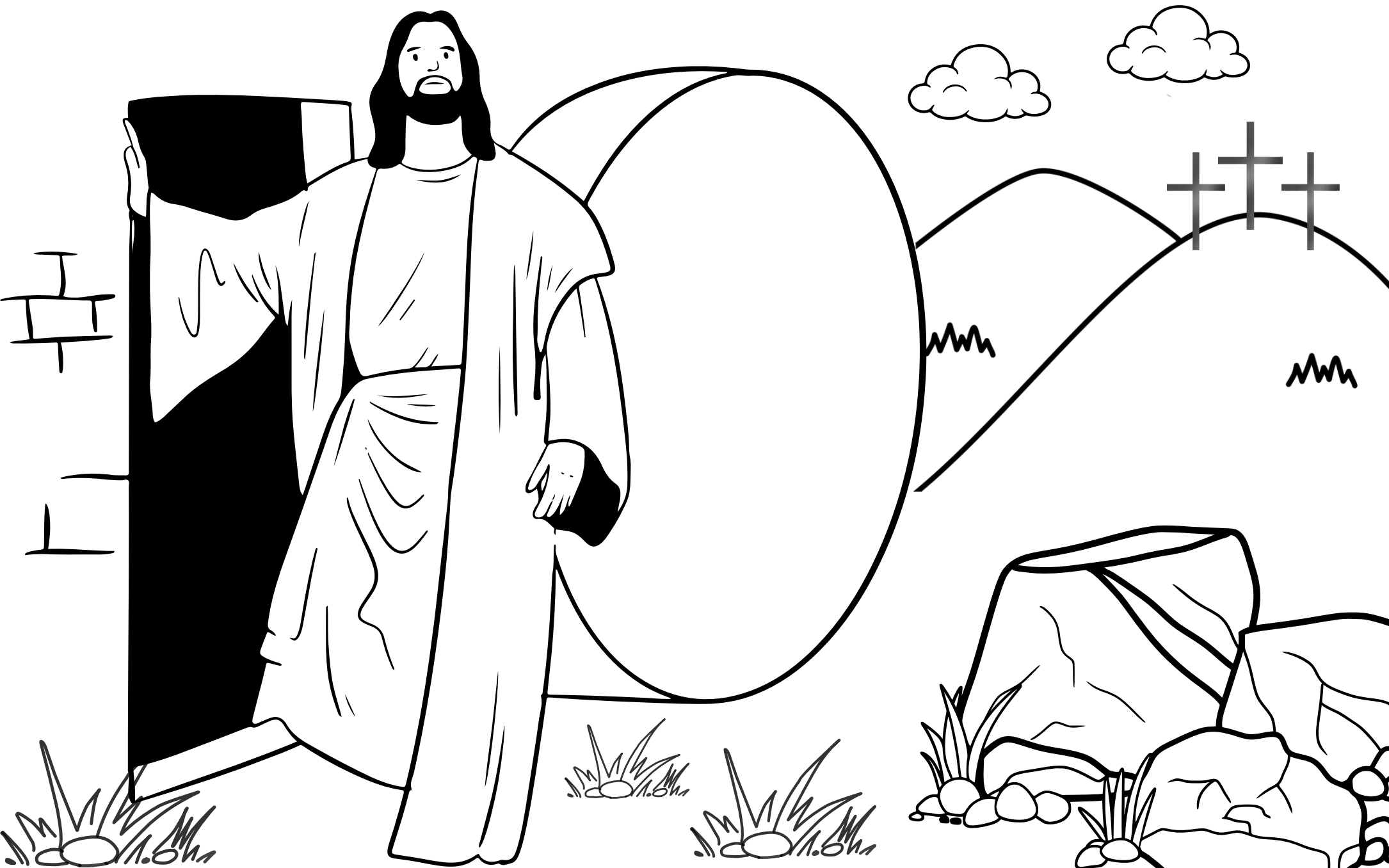
So, God sent His Son Jesus to earth - to be born a baby and then die on a cross. You see, the punishment for sin is death, but Jesus, who is God's perfect Son, took all of our sin and punishment and died for all of us!

But wait, that's not all...

Three days later Jesus rose from the dead and now He is alive!

God knew we could never be perfect like Jesus, so instead is we love Jesus and believe that He took our punishment and that He is alive today - we can live with God too - while we are alive and forever in Heaven too.

AMEN!





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