Inside Life

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Inside Life

A Magazine of Understanding

Number 17, August 2012

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***Inside* Life**

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Printed by Inkprint Ltd

***Inside* Life** *is a magazine of understanding. Rather than just reporting on life,* ***Inside* Life** *seeks to delve inside the marvellous mystery that is life, to discover what it is all about. What does life mean? Where did it come from? How can we make the most of it?*

***Inside* Life** *provides insight and answers to life's deep questions and challenges, and aims to provide articles of lasting hope, help, and encouragement for successful living in today's fast-moving world.*

***Inside* Life** *is published three times a year, free of charge, as a community service.*

ISSN: 1177-3693

Our Cover *features an artistic interpretation of a black hole in the centre of a spinning nebula. The lead story profiles the implications of the exciting experiments in particle physics being carried out at CERN's large hadron collider under Geneva, Switzerland. Is it possible that our understanding of the intricacies and mysteries of how the universe works will propel humanity to knock on heaven's door—the realms of the "unapproachable light" where God lives?*

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Approaching the Light

By John Halford

This is an exciting time to be a particle physicist. Especially if you are a particle physicist who believes in God, because we appear to be on the verge of exciting new discoveries that could force us to rethink how we look at the natural world.

Recently I visited the CERN[1] Super Collider in Geneva, Switzerland as the guest of Dr. Keith Baker, a particle physicist who is also a committed Christian. Keith is a Yale Professor who has also been involved with the cutting-edge experiments now being conducted using this amazing technological marvel carved into the rock beneath France and Switzerland.

We watched the operators in the control room, which reminded me of Mission Control for a space mission. Which, of course, it is. Except that these men and women are supervising a journey into inner space. The actual experiment is going on deep in the ground under our feet in a circular tunnel 27 km in circumference. Down there, protons (one of the smallest particles of matter) are accelerated to nearly the speed of light, and then redirected to smash into each other.

I have a vague understanding of what happens when these particles collide, but I think it would be better to leave the explanation to someone who really knows what he is talking about. So we have included an interview with Keith Baker in this issue (see page 6). By the way, don't feel bad if you don't fully understand it. It seems that no one does. I take comfort from the words of the Nobel Prize-winning pioneer of quantum mechanics, Niels Bohr, who admitted: 'If you are not completely confused by quantum mechanics, you do not understand it'.

Author John Halford recently interviewed Dr Keith Baker at CERN.

Nevertheless, what we are on the verge of learning from the collider is likely to turn our understanding of the universe on its head. As physicist Lisa Randall wrote:

> We are poised on the edge of discovery. The biggest and most exciting experiments in particle physics and cosmology are under way and many of the world's most talented physicists and astronomers are focused on their implications. What scientists find within the next decade could provide clues that will ultimately change our view of the fundamental makeup of matter or even of space itself—and just might provide a more comprehensive picture of the nature of reality.[2]

At CERN that excitement is contagious. As we look over their shoulders, it can be an exciting time for the rest of us, too. And especially for Christians, because surely the more we understand about the creation, the more we will appreciate its Creator.

Could it be that discoveries that revolutionise our ideas about creation could also revolutionise our understanding of its Creator? Sadly, many people will see a threat in the very idea. Some Christians like to think they have God figured out, and when science comes up with something that challenges established ideas, their first reaction is to resist. Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, and Einstein proposed ideas that blew the conservative doors off their hinges and opened up startling new levels of understanding. That might be about to happen again.

Some scientists also like to think they have got things figured out. But as they probe ever deeper into outer and inner space, they discover new levels of intricacy. There is still so much we do not know about our cosmos, even the small part that is available to experiments. Most of it

Aerial view of the CERN site just outside Geneva. The large circle shows the line of the LEP tunnel, 27 km in circumference, the small circle shows the SPS tunnel, 7 km in circumference. The crossed line indicates the border between France and Switzerland.

is not. What scientists have labeled dark energy and dark matter make up 94 percent of the universe. They are beyond the reach of our senses and our instruments, but they have a massive impact on the small sliver of the cosmos we can investigate.

What we do experience seems to be just a part of a greater reality. Are we just one of millions of other universes? Are there extra dimensions beyond those we experience? Is time linear, or do the past, present, and future all 'happen' at the same time? Could there be life—even intelligent life—elsewhere in the universe? Einstein based his theories on the apparent fact that the ultimate possible speed is the speed of light, but recent experiments suggest this might not be so.

These are hard ideas to contemplate, let alone understand. Lisa Randall wrote:

> Any human being will have difficulty creating an accurate visual image of what's going on at the minuscule scales that particle physicists study today. The elementary components that combine to form the stuff we recognise as matter are

> very different from what we access immediately through our senses. Those components operate according to unfamiliar physical laws. As scales decrease, matter seems to be governed by properties so different that they appear to be part of entirely different universes.[3]

New discoveries are always hard to explain, and just to talk about them takes us, as theologian/physicist John Polkinghorne observed, 'to the frontiers of language'. In other words, we don't have the words to express what we think we might be trying to say. The easy way out is to dismiss new understanding as nonsense, and that, sadly, is the road that religion has often chosen. When scientific advances are seen as threats, the natural reaction is to attack and ridicule them. It need not be so. New discoveries simply give us deeper insight into the reality of the creation as God actually made it, not as we have assumed that it should be. There is no threat to God in scientific discovery; he's the one who made whatever it is that we discover. So why should believers feel threatened?

When scientific language becomes inadequate to describe new frontiers in understanding, scientists sometimes find themselves resorting to language that sounds vaguely theological. Lisa Randall based the title of her book, *Knocking on Heaven's Door,* on the idea that as we now have instruments that can accelerate particles to approach the speed of light, we are metaphorically 'knocking on heaven's door'.

In metaphorical language of its own, the New Testament tells us, 'God dwells in unapproachable light'.[4] Whatever we discover about the intricacies and mysteries of the universe, we will never 'discover' God in it, however long and hard we knock on heaven's door.

That's why God came knocking at our door, meeting us on our territory. God, in the person of Jesus, became one of us. For about thirty years he lived among us, showing us things and telling us things we could never discover for ourselves. He showed us that behind the curtain of 'unapproachable light' there is indeed an awesome power, one that is not forever beyond reach. He showed us a Creator who knows us, loves us, and in Jesus, shares all that he is with us.

Inside the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) tunnel at CERN

The people who believed this before the scientific age found it exciting. We, who have the blessing of knowing so much more about the creation, should find it even more so.

This is indeed an exciting time to be a scientist—and a Christian.

Notes

1 This acronym stands for the French name *Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire;* in English, the European Council for Nuclear Research.

2 Lisa Randall, *Knocking on Heaven's Door: How Physics and Scientific Thinking Illuminate the Universe and the Modern World*

3 Ibid.

4 1 Timothy 6:15-16

John Halford is Editor of *Christian Odyssey* magazine. This article and the interview on pp. 6–7 were first published in the Feb-March 2012 edition of *Christian Odyssey* (www.gci.org/publications/odyssey)

So, Why Collide Hadrons?
(and What Are They, Anyway?)

John Halford interviewed Dr. Keith Baker, professor at Yale University, and an experimental particle and nuclear physicist. He is a member of the experimental team working at the CERN Collider in Geneva, Switzerland.

John Halford: *Would it be true to say that you are on the leading edge when it comes to experiments in this field?*

Keith Baker: Yes. The most likely venue for new discoveries in all of science is at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN. And that's where I am. I've been working at the LHC for just over 15 years.

JH: *What does the Hadron Collider do?*

KB: The Large Hadron Collider is a proton-proton collider, that is, it collides hadrons. Briefly, hadrons are particles that have internal structure whereas the other class of particles—leptons—are structureless. For example, protons, neutrons, and mesons are all examples of hadrons; they are made of quarks and gluons. Quarks and gluons are subject to the strong force and come together to form these hadrons. On the other hand, electrons, positrons, taus, and muons are examples of leptons. As far as we know, these have no structure and their interactions are not governed by the strong force, only the weak and electromagnetic forces. With circulating proton beams, higher energies can more easily be achieved than if leptons are collided. And the higher the collision energy, the deeper is our probe of space and time. That is, the greater our chance of discovery.

Using a stream of magnets, we send one beam of these protons one way and you send another beam of these protons the other way. Then, as they approach the speed of light, you make them collide at different points around the approximately 27km circumference ring. We want to get to the highest energies we can, and make enough of these collisions so that these rare events that you're looking for can take place in a reasonable amount of time. The magnets can focus these charged particles and we can make the collisions happen wherever we want. And of course, we can have millions of collisions every second. We then analyze the results. That's the collider in a nutshell.

JH: *Popular journalism has suggested you are looking for the "god particle." However, scientists don't like that term, do they? Why not?*

KB: It implies that what we're looking for will satisfy some deep religious question. But there's no connection there. We are looking for evidence that will explain some important gaps in our scientific understanding—not theological.

We have a theory that's called the Standard Model of Particle Physics and it describes everything we know about all the particles we've discovered up until now. Some people describe this Standard Model of Particle Physics as the greatest theory ever developed.

But there are problems with this Standard Model. It doesn't explain the dark matter and dark energy, which are the most dominant constituents of our universe. We'll come back to that later.

In the Standard Model all the particles are mass-less. That's the only way the theorists who developed this Standard Model could make it work. But we know that particles do have mass. For example, a proton is heavier than an electron. A lambda hyperon is heavier than a proton. So we know that these things have mass, so what is it that gives them mass?

There could be any number of explanations, but the most likely one is what's called Higgs field. It was named after Peter Higgs, a Scotsman. He theorized that there's a field that interacts with particles that gives them mass. And so if there is a Higgs field, then there should be a particle—the Higgs boson. They called it the "god particle" because it's the only missing piece of this Standard Model. We have to discover it to explain how it is that particles have mass. It is a

scientific question—not a religious one.

There are other ideas. For example, some have suggested there are extra dimensions. Our experience tells us that we live in a world that has three space dimensions plus time. But there could be other dimensions that exist. If they do, they're probably small, and we just pass through them.

JH: *You mentioned dark matter and dark energy. Can we talk about the implications of that?*

KB: As I said, the Standard Model is a wonderful theory, but it is incomplete. There are lots of things that it doesn't explain. About three quarters of the universe is made of what we call dark energy, but we have no idea what it is. We see the effect of it on stars and galaxies, but we haven't been able to create it in the laboratory.

Dark energy is somehow making the universe accelerate as it expands. In what some call the 'Big Bang', 13.7 billion years ago there was a rapid expansion of space. Until recently we assumed that this expansion would eventually stop and then come back in on itself. But the data now indicates that the universe is not only expanding, but it's speeding up. It's accelerating as it expands. We don't know what gives rise to this accelerated expansion, so we just give it a name: dark energy. But this theory we have, the Standard Model, completely fails to explain it. We're not even close.

And then there is dark matter. Cosmological and astrophysical data and data from astronomy indicate that nearly 30 percent of the universe is made of dark matter. We don't know what it is. The Standard Model completely fails to explain that too. So all the stuff that you see—the stars, the galaxies, the clusters of galaxies and if there are black holes—all that is only a tiny sliver of the universe. The Standard Model explains roughly just four percent of the universe. It has to be incomplete because it doesn't explain dark energy or dark matter, at least not as it is formulated right now.

JH: *Do you have a problem reconciling this extraordinary experimental field that you work in with your belief in God?*

KB: That has never been an issue. I see no incompatibility with being a scientist and being a Christian. I will say that there are times when I'll look at the universe and just say "wow!" It is so delicately balanced. Some people have compared it to balancing a pencil on its tip on the table and having it remain balanced for 13.7 billion years. It could not have been a chaotic process. Something made this universe be as delicately balanced as it is and allow us to exist. This is pretty amazing, even at our level of understanding, and our understanding will increase over time, obviously.

JH: *There have been some reports recently that you are on the verge of a breakthrough. What does this mean?*

KB: Some people say this is the most exciting period in the history of our field or in many generations. All our experiments up until now indicate that there has to be some new phenomenon that happens when we collide protons together as we're doing now. But we don't know if that new phenomenon is going to be this Higgs mechanism, or extra dimensions, or super symmetric particles that pop out of the vacuum. And that's what makes it exciting.

What we understand now just may be a small piece of something that's much bigger. And for me, being a part of this adventure is why I went into physics in the first place!

Editor's Note: This article was written in early 2012, before the 4 July discovery of the Higgs boson by CERN scientists.

While this exciting discovery may help provide the answer as to why things in the universe have mass (weight, size, and shape), it doesn't answer why things like the Higgs field and the Higgs boson particle exist in the first place, and where they come from.

Writing in the *NZ Herald* on 7 July, John Roughan stated: 'The glimpse of the "Higgs boson" or something like it, allows minds to boggle on the existence of "dark matter" and the possibility there really is a dimension to the world that is beyond human sensory perception'.

The Ultimate *Love Story*

By Joseph Tkach

If the word 'princess' appears in a book title, I know my wife and daughter are going to buy it. They love princess stories. My son claims he is burnt out on princess stories, but he still enjoyed the movie, *Princess Bride.* It had everything; pirates, monsters, sword fights, as well as a love story.

We all love stories. It's an easy way to learn and a very effective way to teach. Princeton University researchers have discovered that storytellers cause the brains of their listeners to operate in sync with their own. Groups of specialised neurons called 'mirror neurons' exist opposite each other in the left and right hemispheres of the brain. This makes it possible for us to participate vicariously in what someone else is experiencing. These neurons also enable human empathy, allowing us to tune into each other's feelings. In effect, mirror neurons allow us to live 'inside' the minds of others. A good story provides a point of entry—a portal—that allows the listener to join in the adventure. This is why hearing a story of adventure can be almost as exciting as having the adventure for yourself.

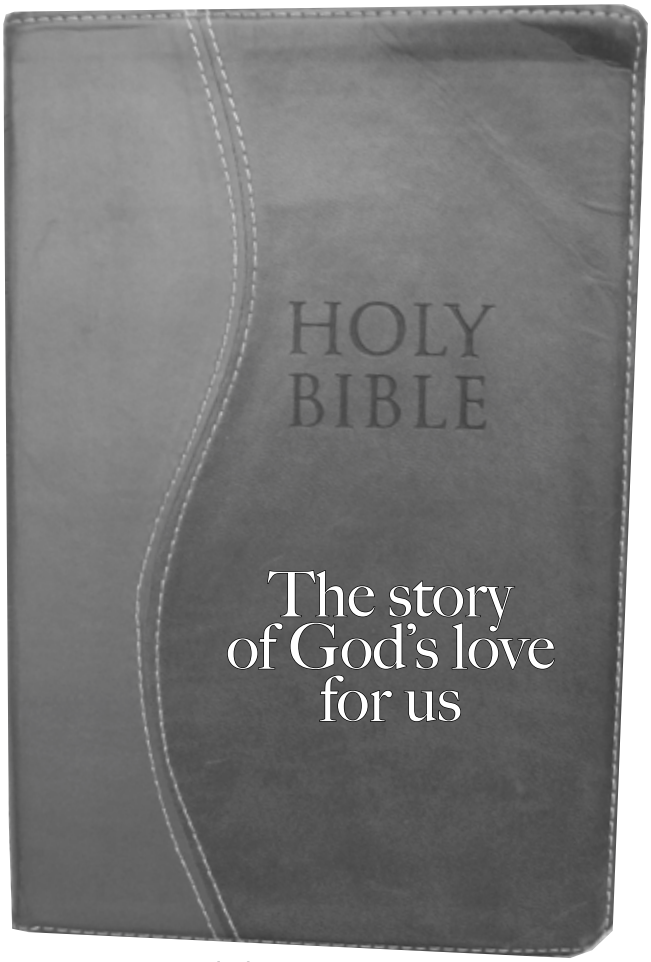
Every human being's life is a unique story. Just think of it: over seven billion different stories going on all at once, intertwining, and overlapping, as we love each other, hate each other, struggle, and laugh together. Every minute, new human stories are beginning in birth, and old ones are winding down in death.

Eugene Peterson, author of *The Message* says, 'We live in a narrative, we live in a story. We have a beginning and an end, we have a plot, we have character'.

It would seem that story is the language of the heart. Our lives are not just a series of impersonal calculations. Rather, we experience the images and emotions of a dramatic narrative.

And each of our stories has its own context, culture, and time in history. No matter when we live, or where we live, we are all part of a bigger story. The Bible introduces us to that story. God is the ultimate author and the ultimate storyteller. In the books of the Bible, he tells us, in many different ways, of the relationship he has had with us, a relationship that actually began before the creation and was consummated in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

It is sad that so many use the Bible as a rulebook, or even as a weapon, to instil fear and lay guilt on themselves and others. The Bible is a love story. God gives us the plot and shows us how we all have a part in it. It is the story of God's love for us individually and collectively. A love that has to deal with rebellious and distrustful people who can be full of pride and evil desires—all too often even carrying out those sinful desires. We are given an overview of the entire plot in



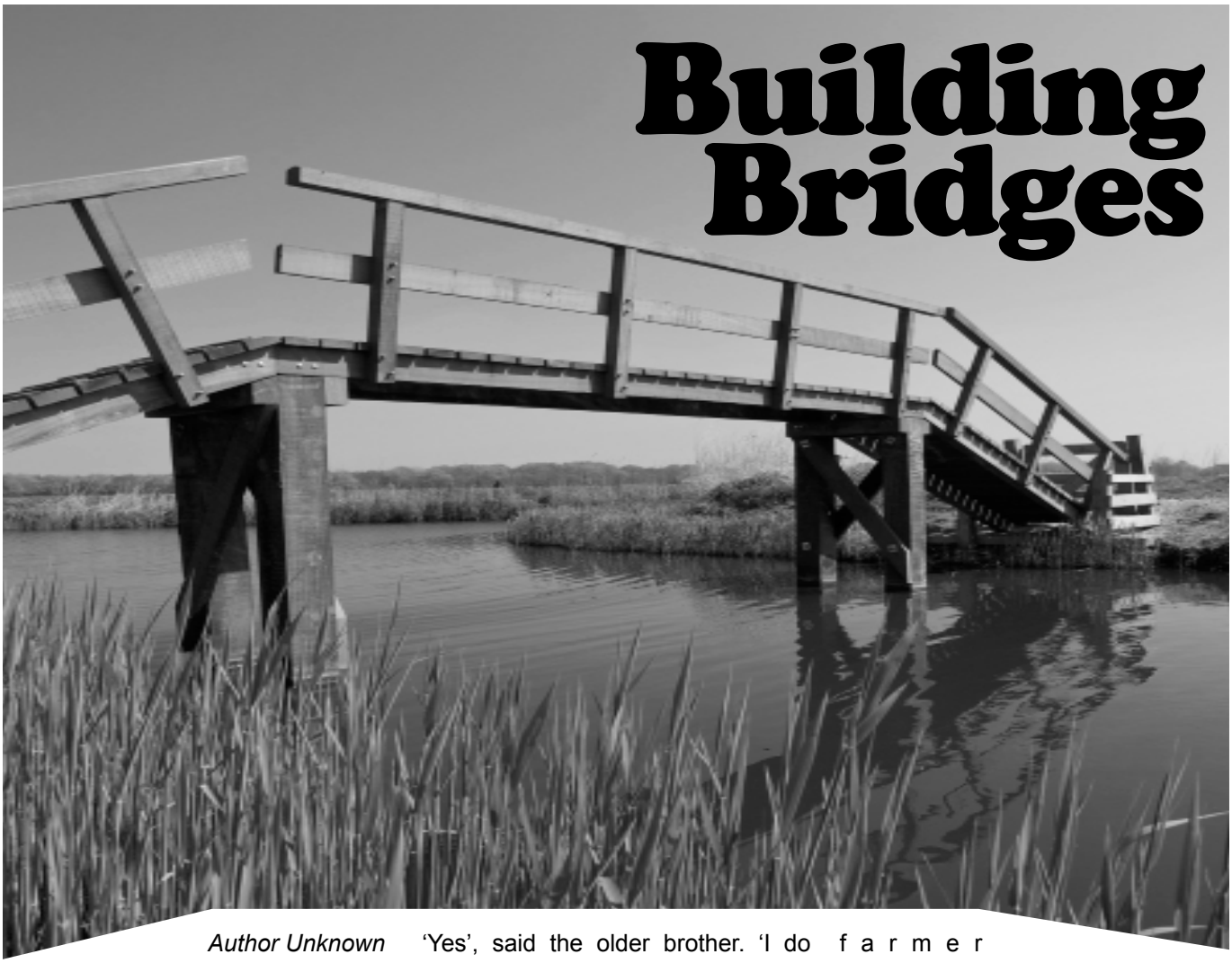
John 3:16-17. These verses have been called the story of the Bible in a nutshell:

> 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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (*TNIV*)

The God of the universe has made our story his story, by entering into it himself, reconciling us to himself that we might receive from him life eternal. Truly, no greater love story has ever been told.

This is a transcript of a weekly 'Speaking of Life' radio programme by Joseph Tkach, president of Grace Communion International. For more information visit www.gci.org.

Building Bridges



Author Unknown

This is the story of two brothers, John and Tom, who lived on adjoining farms and fell into conflict. It was the first serious rift in 40 years of farming side by side, sharing machinery, and trading labour and goods as needed without a hitch.

Then the long collaboration fell apart. It began with a small misunderstanding, and it grew into a major difference, and finally it exploded into an exchange of bitter words followed by weeks of silence.

One morning there was a knock on John's door. He opened it to find a man with a carpenter's tool box. 'I'm looking for a few days' work', he said. 'Perhaps you would have a few small jobs here and there I could help with?'

'Yes', said the older brother. 'I do have a job for you. Look across the creek at that farm. That's my neighbour; in fact, it's my younger brother, Tom. Last week there was a meadow between us, and he took his bulldozer to the river levee and now there is a creek between us. Well, he may have done this to spite me, but I'll do him one better.

'See that pile of lumber by the barn? I want you to build me a fence, an eight-foot fence, so I won't need to see his place or his face anymore.'

The carpenter said, 'I think I understand the situation between you and your brother. Show me the nails and the post-hole digger, and I'll be able to do a job that will please you'.

The older brother had to go to town, so he helped the carpenter get the materials ready and then he was off for the day. The carpenter worked hard all that day measuring, sawing, nailing. About sunset when the farmer returned, the carpenter had just finished his job.

The farmer's eyes opened wide, and his jaw dropped. There was no fence there at all. It was a bridge—a bridge stretching from one side of the creek to the other! A fine piece of work, handrail and all, and the neighbour, his younger brother Tom, was coming toward them, his hand outstretched.

'John, you are quite a fellow to build this bridge after all I've said and done'. The two brothers stood at each end of the bridge, and then they met in the middle, taking each other's hand.

They turned to see the carpenter hoist his toolbox onto his shoulder. 'No, wait! Stay a few days. I've a lot of other projects for you', said the older brother.

'I'd love to stay on', the carpenter said, 'but I have many more bridges to build'.

Titanic

By Rex Morgan

April 15th this year marked the hundredth anniversary of the sinking of RMS Titanic, provoking a renewed flurry of media attention as people revisited this fascinating piece of history. More than 1,300 people paid around $10,000 each to sail on the MS Balmoral, retracing the doomed liner's fateful journey and taking part in a memorial service at the spot where it struck the iceberg and sank.

It would be hard to find anyone who hasn't heard about the Titanic. It is a real "human interest" story and can even be seen as a modern-day parable, abounding with instructive lessons. James Cameron, director of the 1997 blockbuster movie based on the disaster said: 'This is a great sort of metaphorical novel that actually happened. You can go and visit the wreck and see this monument to human folly.'

What are some of the principles we can learn from this salutary event?

Pride Goes before Destruction

Firstly, it is an illustration of the fleeting emptiness of human pride and arrogance.

The year 1912 was an era much like ours today, marked with material prosperity and technical advancement. People were motoring around in a new contraption called a "horseless carriage", and two fanatical brothers in America were even trying to fly! In the midst of all this advancement, a magnificent ship was built—a "Titanic" achievement—a structural marvel, an engineering feat of great splendour and pride. It took 12,000 men over two years to construct for the White Star Line, then locked in bitter competition with the Cunard Line.

This was the largest and most luxurious ship the world had seen, a floating palace loaded with fine amenities, a five-star hotel on the sea, with restaurants, millionaire suites, heated swimming pool, Turkish bath, squash court, gymnasium and libraries. It had a five-feet-thick double-bottom and 16 water-tight compartments, designed so it couldn't possibly sink. The owners, builders, and news media alike proclaimed it unsinkable. It was a symbol of what humanity could achieve, and one company employee is widely quoted as saying: 'Even God himself couldn't sink this ship!'

This brings to mind the biblical maxim 'Pride goes before destruction'.[1]

The wreck of Titanic was discovered in 1985 by Dr Robert Ballard. Ballard described the decaying wreckage as 'frozen rivers of rust covering the ship's side and spread out over the ocean floor '. This evokes the sage advice of Jesus, 'Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal'.[2] So much for the materialism and conceit of humanity.

One little known fact about Titanic is that while three of the ship's prominent funnels released steam from the boilers, the fourth was just for show. The designers thought the ship would look more impressive with four funnels rather than three![3]

Failure to Prepare

Another lesson the Titanic teaches us is the importance of preparedness.

On Sunday April 14th, 1912, Titanic was making excellent speed and most of the passengers spent the day indoors because the weather had suddenly turned cold. They were meant to have a lifeboat drill that day but the Captain cancelled it. Why have a drill when this ship was unsinkable?

As for lifeboats, Titanic's owners were so sure it wouldn't sink that they only included enough lifeboats for fewer than half of the passengers on board, to make for a better looking, less crowded deck.

During the day before the sinking, Titanic's radio operators received six messages from other ships warning of drifting ice, which passengers on board had begun to notice during the afternoon, but they went unheeded. At about 11.35pm there were three warnings from the crow's nest that ice

Lessons

had been spotted. The first two were ignored. Finally the officer picked up the phone—but it was too late.

Even after the passengers were informed of the collision with the iceberg, many went to bed with full confidence in Titanic's ability to stay afloat. Some refused to put on lifejackets because they said they didn't want to get dirty and mess up their clothes!

It's easy for us to criticise them now, in hindsight, but would we really have done differently if assured the vessel we were on was unsinkable? Civil defence authorities tell us regularly to be prepared for an earthquake or other natural disaster, but how many of us take that really seriously, unless we live in Christchurch!

As mentioned earlier, there weren't enough lifeboats for everyone. And even worse, when people got on to the 20 available boats, only a few were filled to capacity. Several left less than half full. For instance the first lifeboat lowered, boat number 7, had room for 65 people, but just 28 boarded. Lifeboat number 1 could accommodate 40, but departed with only 12 people on it. Forty per cent of lifeboat spaces were unfilled, while hundreds of people milled about in the freezing water wearing life jackets.

It Can Happen to Us

Our lives can be compared to an ocean voyage. Each of us is like a ship steaming through the waves of life. So the Titanic story can hold some personal lessons for us. We need to be prepared for the 'icebergs' life might launch at us.

For instance, having insurance on items we can't afford to replace, and putting aside savings for a 'rainy day'. It is also important to maintain good relationships with family and friends we can fall back on if trouble comes.

What if the unthinkable happened and you suddenly found you had only days or weeks left to live? This type of news can and does come to unsuspecting individuals every day. At a time like that, our pride and our possessions abruptly lose their value.

History reports that as the Titanic went down the band's final number was 'Nearer My God to Thee'. When people are faced with imminent death, thoughts often turn towards God. Where do you stand with him?

The Bible says that 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God'.[4] It adds that the wages of sin is death'.[5] So from that point of view, every one of us is on a sinking ship.

But the Bible hastens to assure us that a lifeboat is at hand to rescue us. 'I am the way, the truth and the life',[6] said Jesus. He freely saves us from spiritual death by his grace . In contrast to the tragic deficiency of lifeboats on the Titanic, this lifeboat captained by Jesus Christ has room for everyone who has ever lived! 'Everyone who believes in him (Jesus) will have eternal life'.[7]

These are some of the Titanic lessons we can learn from this dreadful incident in human history. Have you stepped into the lifeboat yet?

Notes

1 Proverbs 16:18, all scriptures from NIV unless otherwise indicated.

2 Matthew 6:19

3 About.com: 20th century history

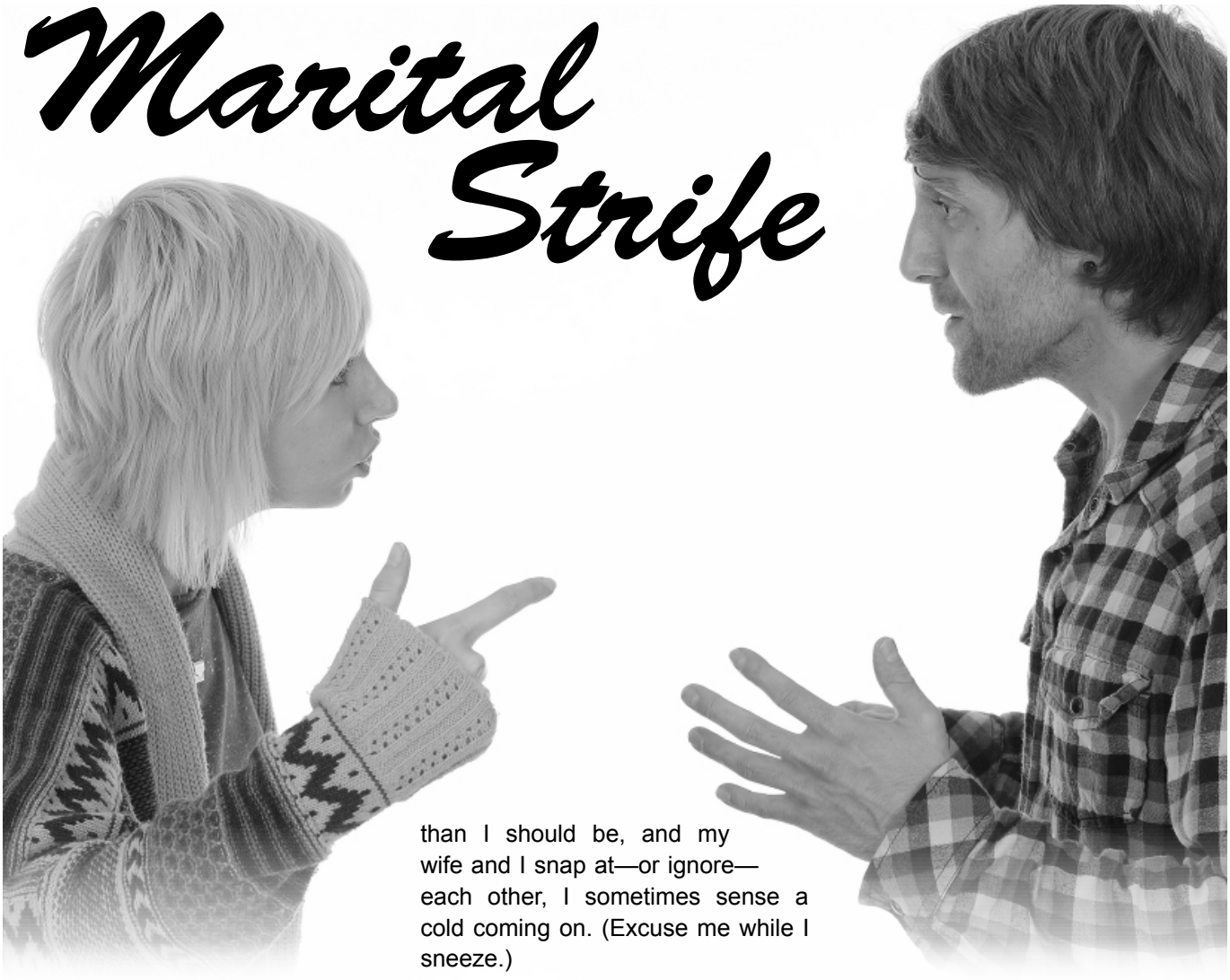
4 Romans 3:23

5 Romans 6:23

6 John 14:6

7 Romans 3:24

Marital Strife



By Rusty Wright

'Is Marriage Good for Your Health?' asked The New York Times headline. It depends, says current research. If you're married, being happily married seems to matter most.

For years, scientists have known that married people tend to be healthier and live longer than the unmarried. But recent research indicates that the quality of the marriage may be what counts. People in troubled relationships can end up having more health problems than the never married. So learn to fight fair.

Stress and Your Immune System

Stress and unresolved conflict can weaken the immune system. Hmmm. Maybe that's why, when I'm less kind than I should be, and my wife and I snap at—or ignore—each other, I sometimes sense a cold coming on. (Excuse me while I sneeze.)

Or when I interrupt her by trying to finish her sentences—especially when my assumptions of what she would say are incorrect—her icy (she says 'wounded') silence makes my neck hot and my stomach tight.

The New York Times article[1] surveyed contemporary research on relationships and health. Pneumonia, surgery, cancer, and heart attacks are rarer among marrieds than unmarrieds. But according to the newspaper: 'One recent study suggests that a stressful marriage can be as bad for the heart as a regular smoking habit'.

The article quotes marriage historian Stephanie Coontz: 'It is the relationship, not the institution, that is key'.

Newlywed Games

The New York Times article reported on a novel experiment by Ronald Glaser and Jan Kiecolt-Glaser at Ohio State University College of Medicine, who arranged for 90 newlywed couples to have their blood drawn during discussions of potentially volatile issues, such as housework, sex, and in-laws. Sure enough, relationship hostility saw immune-system declines. A subsequent study saw marital hostility correlate with slower healing of skin wounds.

The message: spousal hostility can negatively affect your marriage and your body. 'Try harder to make [the relationship] better', advises University of Chicago sociologist Linda J. Waite. 'If you learn…how to manage disagreement early', she says in the article, 'then you can avoid the decline in marital happiness that follows from the drip, drip of negative interactions'.

and Your Health

My ten-year marriage to my wife has been terrific. But like any couple, we have to work through our differences. One evening recently, Meg and I went to bed with a dispute unresolved. The next morning, we had some business in a downtown office building. During a break, I found myself privately consulting a very Good Book to remind myself how to be a better husband.

Wise Words

Some of its simply Divine advice:

Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry.[2]

You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.[3]

Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behaviour. Instead, be kind to each other, tender hearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.[4]

Words, of course, affect the emotional tone of discussions. University of Utah psychologist Timothy W. Smith found that among couples married an average of 36 years, arguments that lacked any warmth—or that emphasised controlling language—were associated with increased heart risk. 'Difficulties in marriage seem to be nearly universal', notes Smith in *The New York Times.* But, as my wife observes, nastiness need not be.

So, conflict is inevitable, but fight fair. It's better for your relationship and your health.

Notes

1 Tara Parker-Pope, April 14, 2010

2 Ephesians 4:26

3 James 1:19-20

4 Ephesians 4:31-32

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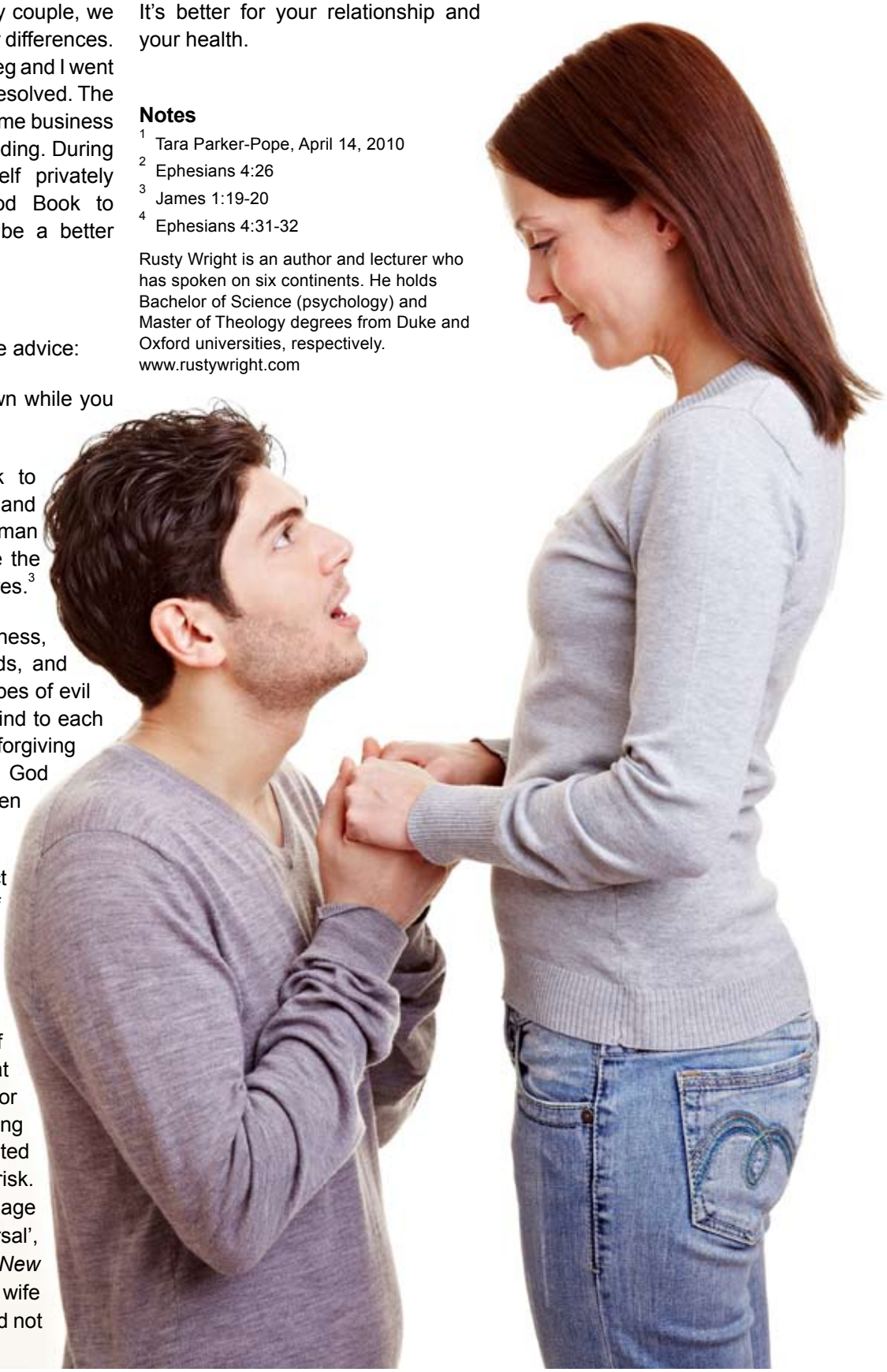

The Finer— and Finest—Things in Life

By Chris Widener

In America, we have a saying: the finer things in life. These are the things that most people talk about when they are speaking of things of high quality. In fact, much of that which propels people to pursue success, particularly financial success, is the desire to participate in the finer things in life.

Let's face it, increased finances enable us to do more things and enjoy things that we otherwise would not be able to afford. And we should consider that a blessing.

I am at a stage where my wife and I, and our kids, can enjoy some of the finer things in life. It hasn't always been that way. I think sometimes it is best to have to go years of getting by so that we appreciate more fully the finer things in life when we are able to experience them. I am thankful for where I am.

Who can argue against the beauty of a fine painting? Who doesn't love the smell and feel of leather furniture? Who doesn't enjoy driving a well-engineered car? Who doesn't dream of the softness and warmth of a Cashmere sweater? Who doesn't like a nice watch that can be passed on to your son or daughter someday? All of these are common symbols of the finer things in life, and indeed they are.

There is only one possible pitfall that I have found in the pursuit of the finer things in life. It is common that many fall into this trap. It is this: while pursuing the finer things in life, we often become so engrained, so focused in the pursuit, that we do not experience the finest things in life.

You see, for the most part, the finer things in life, as commonly defined, cost money. And usually it takes a lot of time working to make the kind of money that enables us to experience the finer things in life. And in the pursuit of the money to enjoy the finer things in life, we are spending so much time that we are missing regular opportunities to enjoy the finest things in life.

Let me tell you of a recent experience. When my son was 9, I took him down to see some spring training baseball in Phoenix, Arizona. This was our second trip down together and we hope to make it an annual tradition. We popped down just for three days to see three games.

The first game we saw was against the California Angels in their spring training facility in Tempe. There we sat waiting for the game to start. Now let me assure you, this was not an experience of the finer things in life. It was actually a little chilly out, though the sun was shining. We were sitting on relatively hard seats, and my cuisine consisted of peanuts and a diet-Pepsi. Hmmmmm.

But do you know what I found myself thinking? 'There is no place else in the world I would rather be right now.'

I was spending time with my boy, doing something we would both enjoy, and creating memories that will never go away. This, my friends, was one of the finest things in life.

What are the finest things of life in my book? Here are a few. You can

see where I am going and name a few yourself.

- ✔ Reading a novel just for the fun of it;
- ✔ A casual stroll along the beach with nowhere to go;
- ✔ An extra half-hour at the coffee shop, catching up with friends and actually tasting the great flavour of a cup of coffee, rather than rushing it;
- ✔ A game of crazy eights with my kids;
- ✔ A quiet evening out with my wife;
- ✔ A Saturday afternoon sleeping on the couch in front of the fire;

and the list goes on...

Are you taking enough time to stop and taste the finest things in life? Or are you so bent on getting to a point where you can experience the finer things in life?

I have a saying that 'good is the enemy of the best'. Sometimes the finer things of life get in the way of the finest things in life. Sometimes we settle for the finer things in life when we could be enjoying the finest things in life.

A credit card company produced a series of advertisements that went something like this (describing a vacation): Airline tickets: $1500. Hotel room: $1200. The smile on her face: Priceless.

We can always put a value on the finer things in life, and I would encourage you to enjoy them if you can. But the finest things in life are priceless. You can put no value or price tag on them. It is a mandate that we take the time to enjoy them.

Take some time this week to live up to the old saying: Stop and smell the roses. You will never regret it.

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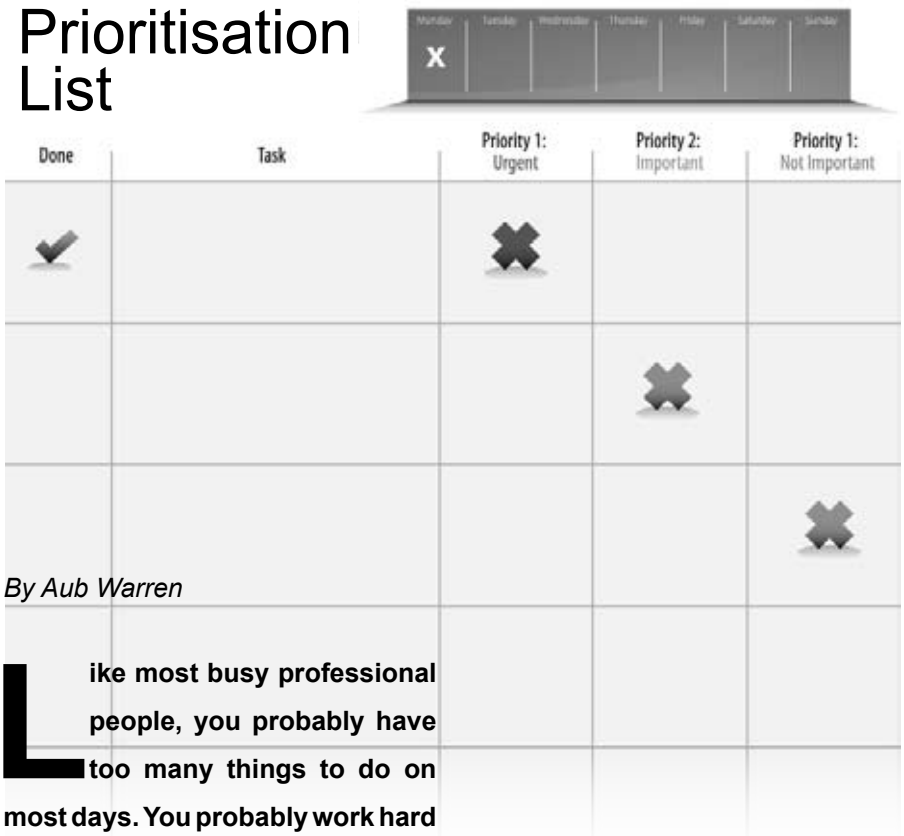
The Most Important Thing You'll Do Today



By Aub Warren

Like most busy professional people, you probably have too many things to do on most days. You probably work hard all day, but maybe you sometimes get home and wonder if you really achieved anything.

Tom Peters urges us: 'Stop doing all unimportant things now!' It's a challenging statement. Of course, sometimes everything seems important—then what? Then we just have to prioritise: put first things first, sort out the important from the urgent, identify the most important from the less important.

Easy to say, of course. Harder to do. Hard, but not impossible. In fact, it's indispensable if we're to be effective as individuals, professionals, parents, partners. So, here's the most important thing you'll do today: identify the most important thing you need to do—and then start work on it.

Too easy? Want to take it a step further? Stick to that most important thing until it's done—or at least until you really can't take it any further. Completed tasks are called achievements—achievers are those who complete the most important tasks.

Still too easy? Still want to go further? Help the people around you prioritise and pursue the most important things first. Help them see those things through to completion. Help them become achievers.

It will be the most important thing you'll do today.

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