

The War Cry

BRITAIN'S MOST POPULAR CHRISTIAN WEEKLY

16 April 2005

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IN TRAINING:
Nick Hanover

KEEP ON RUNNING

It may be painful at times – but they hope to be happy in the long run. Tomorrow (Sunday 17 April) more than 40,000 runners will hit the streets of the capital for the London Marathon.

Tomorrow's race will be the 25th in the history of this runaway success. In 1981 7,747 people lined up to start the first London Marathon. Since then the number of runners has grown, until now the course has reached capacity.

One of those getting set to go is Nick Hanover. Nick, 29, a Salvationist currently living in South London, is running to raise money for Salvation Army work in Hong Kong. But that's not his only reason for choosing to cover the 26 miles and 385 yards of the route.

'It's a big personal challenge,' he tells *The War Cry*. 'I like sport, I like keeping fit, and I've also been encouraged by other friends who have run it, and talked about what a great experience it is.'

Nick says that he has been gearing up for the big day for months.

'The training is built up over time. You start by running three or four miles or for 20 minutes and gradually run for longer.'

'Generally I train five days of the week and rest the other two. Sometimes I run distance, sometimes I do hills, sometimes I do sprints – there are different exercises.'

'I've also had to be more careful with my diet. I eat energy food and drink more water.'

Nick was expecting a challenge and, even before lining up for the marathon itself, he has found one.

'I've heard people say that, although a marathon is a physical challenge, it is even more of a mental one. It must be true because whenever I've had to do long runs, it's the mental side that's tougher. You have to deal with the bit of you that wonders, "Am I going to make it?" or thinks it would be easy to stop and have a rest.'

In facing the challenge, Nick says he has made discoveries about himself.

'I've found discipline that I thought I didn't have. I guess I've always been someone who's managed to get by quite

Runner is ready to reach a 26 milestone, reports PHILIP HALCROW

easily, certainly in physical activities, but this wasn't something I could just blag. I had to stick to it, to go out when it was dark and raining.'

Nick has also gained insight into another aspect of life.

'I've learnt more about the whole analogy of running that the apostle Paul used in trying to describe the Christian life,' he says.

Prize

Paul, not one to shy away from the challenge of trying to comment on the human race, insisted that life was ultimately not about hate and guilt but love and forgiveness – as revealed in Jesus.

He talked about running the race of life to win the prize of a new and everlasting life. He insisted it was worth sticking with the hope offered by God, even when things looked very dark.

'There's a close parallel because I can do all the training I want,' says Nick, 'and even now, having run more than 20 miles, I feel good – but I've not run a marathon. Wanting to start is a good thing, but it's how you finish that is ultimately important.' And where we finish up!

It's the mental side that's tougher

Pick of the week

THERE have been few weeks in modern times like it. A papal funeral, the heir to the throne marries, the Prime Minister announces a general election and there is a delayed start to the Grand National. If a film or book blended these storylines it would likely be dismissed as too fanciful a plot. Fact is stranger than fiction.

In its own way each event is truly historic. Pope John Paul II was the first non-Italian pontiff for 455 years. His 27-year reign was the third longest of all time.

Prince Charles's marriage to Camilla Parker Bowles was the first between a divorced heir and a divorcee. The first time an heir did not have a church wedding.

Tony Blair's long-expected announcement that the country will go to the polls on 5 May kick-started Labour's attempt at an unprecedented third consecutive term in office.

The Grand National moved from its traditional time of 3.45 to accommodate television coverage of the royal wedding which, like the Prime Minister's announcement, was delayed because of the Pope's funeral.

That was the week that was – a week which puts choice high on the agenda.

The cardinals who attended the funeral will shortly gather in conclave to elect a new Pope. Prince Charles has made public his choice of Camilla as his wife and life's partner. British voters are giving careful consideration as to who deserves the sign of their cross on polling day. Aintree punters are rejoicing and rueing their race-day selections.

In historic weeks and on ordinary days we all have choices to make. Most are mundane. Some are life-changing: Is he really the one for me? Which university should I go to? Should I start the treatment? Is it kinder to switch off the life-support machine?

Serious choice-making often involves a battle between the head and the heart. Our best decisions are those we make with a mind of information, a heart full of conviction, and a sense of the guidance and approval of a loving Heavenly Father.

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TWO men who have survived human rights abuses in North Korean prison camps have spoken at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR), the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and at the European Parliament.

Kim Tae Jin and Kim Young Soon visited the influential bodies with the help of campaign group Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW).

Kim Tae Jin, 49, has spoken of how in 1986

Survivors speak out on human rights abuse in Korea

he defected to China where he became a Christian. After 16 months he was repatriated by the Chinese authorities but a Bible was discovered among his belongings. On his return to North Korea he was tortured, interrogated and imprisoned without trial in Yodok Political Prison Camp (No 15) where he was beaten and forced to carry out hard labour on minimal food intake.

Kim Young Soon, 67, was arrested by North Korean authorities after her husband 'disappeared' at the hands of security forces. She and her four children were imprisoned in Yodok for association with him, where two of her children died and one became disabled.

Stuart Windsor, CSW's national director, says: 'It is vital the international community hears the truth about conditions inside the prison camps of North Korea. These

two survivors need to be heard by the world. The UNCHR, the FCO and the EU must do all they can to ensure the end of these political prison camps and all that happens in them.'

Smooth jazz to resound in cathedrals

SUCCESSFUL jazz trio Acoustic Triangle are to tour Britain's churches, abbeys and cathedrals. Concerts on the group's summer tour will include music especially written for the venues. Double bass player Malcolm Creeve says: 'One of the main aims of this tour is to celebrate the architectural heritage of the UK. We have one of the largest and finest collections of ancient and architecturally important sacred buildings in the world.' For more information visit acoustictriangle.com

Bishop moves to reject Bill

A BISHOP who sat on the House of Lords Select Committee on the Assisted Dying for the Terminally Ill Bill believes the Bill should be rejected.

The Bishop of St Albans, the Right Rev Christopher Herbert, said: 'I am profoundly opposed to euthanasia and assisted suicide, and believe that the Bill should be rejected. It would be far better for more resources to be provided for palliative care in our country to enable people to die with dignity and be surrounded by compassion.'

Some groups criticised the report, saying it did not move the debate on euthanasia forward. But the Bishop pointed out that the report was a careful summary of evidence presented, and that the task of the committee was not to come to conclusions about the rights and wrongs of euthanasia.

Fair trade leads prayer and action agendas



Tearfund picture: MARCUS PERKINS

CHRISTIANS across the globe have been praying for trade justice over the past week, after signing up to an initiative organised through the internet by Tearfund.

The Christian relief and development agency's 24-7 prayer initiative was held to coincide with the Global Week of Action for Trade Justice, which ends today (Saturday 16 April).

Mari Griffith, Tearfund's trade campaign officer, says: 'It's so encouraging to see the enthusiasm of people around the world to pray for trade justice. Unjust trade is ruining the lives of millions of people in developing countries. But our prayers and campaigning efforts can help to turn this situation around.'

Rice farmers in Burkina Faso know the effects of unjust trade rules, as cheap imported rice means they struggle to sell their rice for a profit

Resist quick-fix on crime, voters urged

CHURCHES are urging voters to resist the temptation to support quick and easy solutions for crime offered by political parties, reports the Ekklesia news service.

The Churches Criminal Justice Forum (CCJF) has issued a positional paper for

the general election, urging parties to 'promote constructive dialogue and refrain from using the fear of crime as a tactic, as this merely hinders the debate'.

The forum believes that crime should be seen within a wider social and economic

context, and identifies social cohesion and early intervention as important aims in successful criminal justice policy.

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ A PROGRAMME about the Chaplain to the New York Fire Department who died at the World Trade Centre in 2001 won the Premier Award at the Sandford St Martin Trust Awards. *Victim 0001* examined the life and ministry of Father Mychal Judge and the campaign to have him declared a saint. Chair of the judging panel Andrew Barr said the film presented a

portrait of compassion and hope in post-9/11 America.

■ A BAFTA-NOMINATED film about a former gangster who takes part in a passion play is the subject of some new discussion resources from the Scottish Bible Society. The Rev Fergus Buchanan has written a guide to help discussion group leaders examine the characters, themes and biblical references in *Man Dancin'*, directed by Norman Stone, which is now available on DVD.

■ THANKS to an intensive lobbying campaign by The Salvation Army and the Methodist Church, there will be just one super-casino in the UK under the Gambling Act, which was passed in the final days of the last Parliament.

PUZZLE ANSWERS

CROSSWORD

ACROSS: 1 Claim. 4 Incan. 8 Elm. 9 Charm. 10 Barge. 11 Ecu. 12 Woman. 13 Relieve. 16 Random. 19 Asking. 23 Stretch. 26 Abate. 28 Opt. 29 Extra. 30 Trend. 31 Eye. 32 Ripen. 33 Ratio.

DOWN: 2 Alarm. 3 Memento. 4 Impure. 5 Cabal. 6 Norse. 7 Sieve. 9 Cower. 14 Irk. 15 Van. 17 Art. 18 Due. 20 Scatter. 21 Greed. 22 Chosen. 23 Sheen. 24 Rotor. 25 Tramp. 27 Adept.

QUICK QUIZ

1 Hans Christian Andersen. 2 Annette Crosbie. 3 Leeds. 4 24. 5 The soundhole. 6 Four.

SUDOKU

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

HONEYBALL AVENUE



LISTENING EAR COLUMN

I HAVE separated from my husband. For years we did not get on. Last year I felt I had had enough, and moved out. My three children live with their dad. I miss them, but they do not like the person I am with now.

This man is kind. Sometimes I feel I have done the right thing by moving in with him, but at other times wonder if it will work out. After my divorce he wants to marry me, but I said we should wait as I am not sure what is going to happen and feel I am rushing into things. I wouldn't want everything to go wrong again.

I now have a job, which takes my mind off things, but I think about all this a lot at night. I get angry with myself, and sometimes feel I could just end it.

I wonder about how things could have been different. I now get on with my husband and go to see the children a lot.

I cannot get my head round things. I am able to talk to my minister, and find him to be very kind.

WE sense some of your confusion as you deal with memories of the past and hopes and anxieties for the future.

We can understand your reluctance to make a quick decision on whether to marry again. You have chosen to give yourself more time, suggesting that you feel there are issues to work through.

We can imagine that you could well be wondering if you made some contribution to the failure of your marriage. Questions might be going round in your head, and it could benefit you to talk them through with someone else. In this way you could be helped to see the realities of that relationship – the good and the not-so-good times, what your failings were, where your husband's actions were responsible.

Having a clearer view of your marriage could release you from some feelings of guilt or responsibility, and so free you from worries about the same things going wrong in future relationships.

Your brief mention of how you now get on with your ex-husband suggests you could be having second thoughts about your divorce, so complicating your thoughts about your future.



‘I wouldn't want everything to go wrong again’

Library picture posed by models

I'm not sure about marrying after my divorce

LISTENING EAR is a column by qualified counsellors. They will listen to any questions and reply in complete confidence.

Write to LISTENING EAR, The War Cry, 101 Newington Causeway, London SE1 6BN, marking your envelope 'Confidential'. Or email listeningear@salvationarmy.org.uk

Your letter says that your children do not like your partner. We wonder what lies behind that statement as you do not expand on it. Nor do you tell us much about him and the quality of your present relationship. Might your children be picking up

something about him that you are also aware of, but find it hard to accept and think about because he has been kind to you and because he has given you a better life? We can only speculate on this, and may be completely wrong, but offer it to you to think about.

Finding a job has been helpful to you, you say.

This feels like a satisfactory step for you, and one that will bring you into a new social group. It will also help restore any self-confidence and belief in yourself that you may have lost through the difficulties in your marriage.

Being able to share your thoughts and feelings is a way to make them less powerful. Talking things through also helps to sort them out. Perhaps you are doing this with your minister and could continue to look at some of the issues we mention here. Maybe he could suggest some other person or resource to help you in this process.

May you find peace of mind and the wisdom to take the right steps and make the right decisions.

Gold **Keith Green** **EMI Christian Music Group**

IT is 23 years since New Yorker singer-songwriter Keith Green died in a freak plane accident. At the time Keith was 28 and at the forefront of the Christian music scene.

In a celebration of his life and his music ministry, two of his most popular albums, *Songs for the Shepherd* and *No Compromise* have been re-released in a box set. Both albums reflect the musical chemistry that existed between Keith and his wife Melody. Together they penned hymns such as 'There is a Redeemer' and



'You are the One!'

Songs for the Shepherd is particularly memorable as a tour of how Christian music sounded in the 1970s – with its quirky, catchy tunes and simple yet effective lyrics. Each song is sung with power, and the intensity of Keith's voice on the country-and-western-style 'Draw Me' and his reworking of the popular hymn 'Holy, Holy, Holy' could not fail to convey his sincerity to even the hardest listener.

Grown **Kendall Payne** **Fierce!**

GROWN is the second album for Los-Angeles based Kendall Payne. Since her first release, *Jordan's Sister*, Kendall has written and performed songs which have featured in soundtracks to big movies such as Drew Barrymore's *Never Been Kissed* and *Beautiful* with Minnie Driver. She also toured with Dido. But, as can happen in the music industry, Kendall and her management parted and she went silent for a while.

Kendall's latest album features 13 tracks, mainly written by the singer, which reveal her past hurts and disappointments, but also her hopes for the future. Acoustic guitar and thick instrumentals blend together to accompany most of the tracks. Songs range from the catchy 'Scratch', 'Rollercoaster' and 'Backwards' to the inspirational 'Twenty Three' and 'Pray', a simple song detailing the power of prayer.

Seamless **Jeff Anderson** **EMI Christian Music Group**

ON this well-woven album, American singer-songwriter Jeff Anderson sings with conviction, and his voice has a gravel-like quality which is refreshing considering the current emphasis on manufactured music. The opening track 'Open My Eyes' speaks of Anderson's realisation that to be near to God is to be most content in life. And his musings that Christians should be in the



world and not of it are reflected in the moving composition 'I Don't Belong Here'. The sequence of songs flows well and the varying moods enable the listener to be taken on a musical journey in the style of the Dave Matthews Band or Keane.

If you'd like some help...

Dear War Cry, I'd be grateful if you'd send me

- Basic reading on the Christian faith
- More information about The Salvation Army
- The name and telephone number of a Salvation Army officer whom I could contact

Name

Address

Postcode

Send to The War Cry, 101 Newington Causeway, London SE1 6BN

Everybody suffered my KUNG FU fight

THIS man could kill me. Here and now. With his bare hands. Click of the fingers. Snap of the neck. Gone.

If, as we sip tea and chat together in a back room of a Southend church, this incongruous thought disturbs me, it surely frightens the living daylight out of three-times kung fu world champion Tony Anthony.

'In the film *The Matrix*, Neo has to learn kung fu,' he says, settling in his fireside chair, 'so he attaches electrodes to his head and downloads computer files into his brain.'

'I wish I could delete the kung fu files from my mind. Just because I am now a Christian, doesn't mean I don't get upset. I'm just as human as the next guy. I'd like to think that my faith means I wouldn't cause harm. But if someone were attacking my wife or children...

'I would love to believe that I was strong enough to hold back, but I can't guarantee that. I wish I didn't know how to hurt people.'

'Kung fu is incompatible with Christianity. Jesus tells us to turn the other cheek. Kung fu encourages you to turn the other fist. Jesus said that no one can serve God and another master – as I was growing up my grandfather was my master.'

Tony was raised by his Chinese grandfather in Canton after being sent to China by his parents when he was four years old. Around the time Tony was born his Italian father developed multiple sclerosis and had to give up work.

'My grandparents were very pleased to look after me,' he says. 'Out of 34 grandchildren I was their only grandson. In Chinese culture boys are considered lucky. It also meant my grandfather had a male to pass family traditions on to.'

The family's 500-year-old traditions

centred on Buddhism and kung fu. Tony's grandfather, Cheung Ling Soo, was a Shaolin monk and kung fu grand master. Tony's education was very hands-on.

'My grandfather raised me on the bamboo cane,' he says. 'He'd beat me very badly – usually as a punishment before I did anything wrong. If we were eating dinner he would beat me around the head until my ears bled

In the first of two articles, former world champion TONY ANTHONY tells Nigel Bovey about his rage

and then say that was just in case I didn't finish my food. He called me "Little Foreign Devil". He would wake me up by throwing iced water over me at three in the morning. I learnt quickly and accepted it as the norm.

LOOKING back I suppose it was like breaking in a wilful colt, being moulded to the will of the master. I wanted to meet my grandfather's high standards. I wanted

to please him, to gain his respect. So when he taught me about meditation and kung fu, I was ready and willing to give it my all. Wanting to gain his approval is what gave me the will to win.'

And win he did. For three consecutive years Tony battled his way to become world champion.

The best that most Westerners know about kung fu is through the glamorised films of Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan. What, though, is authentic kung fu about?

'Kung fu is derived from the spiritual discipline of Taoism. It was first developed by an Indian Buddhist monk called Bodhidharma, whom the Chinese refer to as Ta Mo. Legend has it that when he arrived at the Shaolin Monastery in

Province, northern China, he noticed that the monks constantly fell asleep while meditating.

'Meditation is an attempt to gain control over, and harmony with, your body through your mind. The monks would meditate for hours – even days – on end.'

'Ta Mo looked for a technique to keep the monks awake. It was while walking in the wilderness that he studied how animals act and react:

how they defend themselves, how they attack their prey. He devised a series of exercises which imitated the animals and taught them to the monks. He linked these movements with the monks' concentration on the spiritual energy of Ch'i ('breath' or 'life force').

'Monks then discovered that these movements were a powerful form of self-defence. They were often attacked while travelling between monasteries. By meditating, the strength of the whole body is concentrated into the point of contact. Now they could defend themselves with devastating – even lethal – effect.'

'What started off as an extension of a spiritual discipline – trying to get in touch with one's inner life force – was soon hijacked by those wanting to hurt and kill.'

After the world championships Tony was invited to become an instructor for the International Kung Fu Federation, training newly recruited bodyguards in hand-to-hand combat. He then went on to qualify as a bodyguard himself.

'Ironically, our motto was *Deum solem timidus* ("In God alone we fear"),' he says. 'I didn't even fear

YOUNG CREATURES WORDSEARCH



Look up, down, forwards, backwards and diagonally on the grid to find these baby and young animals

CALF
CATERPILLAR
CHICK
COLT
CUB
CYGNET
DUCKLING
ELVER
FAWN
FILLY
FLEDGLING
FOAL
GOSLING
HATCHLING
INFANT

JOEY
KID
KIT
KITTEN
LAMB
NYMPH
OWLET
PEACHICK
PIGLET
PUP
SPIDERLING
SQUAB
TADPOLE
WHELP

I'd walk down the road and just lash out at the nearest person

ing

God, because to me there was no God. 'I wanted the fast life. Fast bikes, fast cars, money and girls. I travelled the world. I went to high-rolling casinos and racetracks.'

On a visit to his father in London, Tony met a Swedish law student, Aiya, on the boating lake in Hyde Park. Romance blossomed and, for the first time in his life, Tony knew what love was. The couple got engaged and Tony spent his spare time travelling between his home in Naples and Stockholm.

Then one day Tony's flatmate told him that there'd been a phone call. Aiya. Killed. Car crash. Joyriders.

'Aiya meant the whole world to me,' says Tony.

'She was the first person ever to love me. When she died, things went bad. I was in a rage. Rage towards life. Rage towards people. Everything.'

'I took it out on anyone. I beat people up. I'd walk down the road and just lash out at the nearest person, kick them in the face. I was merciless. I enjoyed the violence, the smell of blood. It was like bleeding a radiator, letting off steam. Nobody messed with me.'

Tony had lost touch with the discipline his grandfather had instilled in him. Approached by a gambler client, Tony agreed - against his professional code of conduct - to do some debt-collecting. He thrived on the chance of teaching debtors a lesson or two.

ONE evening his parents told him they needed £30,000 for breakthrough treatment for his father's MS. Now in Cyprus, Tony set about raising the cash. He had none of his own, so he relieved others of theirs from their luxury hotel rooms.

Tony's parents flew to Cyprus to collect the money. After he dropped them off at the airport, Tony stopped for a coffee in a Limassol café. 'Some Christians were setting up a massive cross on the high street. "What a bunch of idiots!" I thought. They were

offering a free bottle of wine to anyone who wanted. Their message was that salvation is a free gift. No strings. But we need to receive it.

'One of the men got talking with me and said it would be good for me to go to their church to talk with their pastor, Michael Wright.'

Tony never made it to church. A few days later the police arrested him. He escaped custody long enough to phone his parents. But they had gone for good not just for hospital. Betrayed and bereft, Tony was alone - until the police called. In court Tony pleaded guilty. On Christmas Eve 1989 Tony started his three-year sentence in Nicosia Central Prison.

'It was like the film *Midnight Express*,' he says. 'There were murderers, thieves, paedophiles and terrorists all mixed together. There was also the insane - guys who slit you with a razor blade just for fun.'

'E'VERY month somebody would be killed. Some men were raped, gang-raped or cut. Every day you had to fight just to survive.

One day, out of the blue, I got a letter from Michael Wright. He said he'd like to visit me, and that his church was praying for me. I thought: 'How dare this man write to me; he doesn't even know me!'

'Then a fellow prisoner said Michael visited him and always brought a bottle of Coca-Cola. The prison food was junk so a cola was nectar. I put in for a visit but told myself that if he Bible-bashed me I'd hit him.'

'At the end of Michael's visit he said he wanted to pray with me. I thought he was a nutcase but I said OK.'

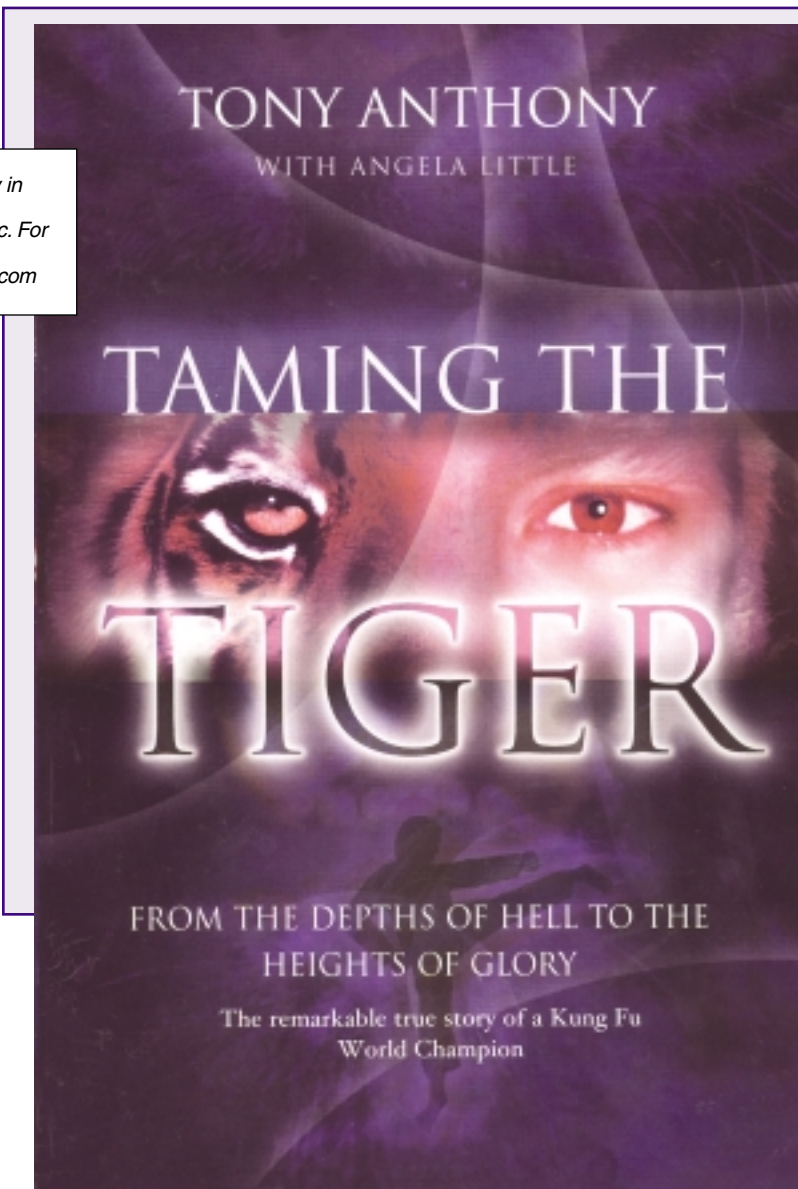
'The next day I got a postcard from him. That impressed me. He had made the effort to buy, write and send a card to a no-hope prisoner like me. I'd lost everything. I didn't care if I lived or died. But he showed me he cared. I was overwhelmed.'

Every Thursday for six months Michael visited Tony. If he couldn't, someone else from the church did. The fact that 15 years later Tony still recalls some of those conversations shows just how much they meant to him, even though he didn't realise it at the time.

The distraction of the visits, however, could not counter the daily horrors of prison life.

'I'd seen something horrendous one particular day just before I saw Michael. I was deter-

Tony tells his full story in 'Taming the Tiger', published by Authentic. For more information visit www.avantiministries.com



Win 'Taming the Tiger'

THE War Cry has copies of *Taming the Tiger* to give away to five readers who can answer the following question:

What was the name of the pastor who visited Tony in Nicosia Prison?

Send your answer on a postcard, along with your name and address, to *Taming the Tiger* Competition, *The War Cry*, 101 Newington Causeway, London SE1 6BN. Entries must be received by Monday 25 April. The first five correct entries drawn on 26 April will receive a copy of the book. The Editor's decision is final.

it, but reckoned it was time to pray. I just spoke out into my dungeon cell. It was a pathetic prayer. I mumbled a "sorry" for hurting that guy and then started saying sorry for everything else I'd done wrong in my life. I think I fell asleep in prayer. It was 3 May 1990.

'The next morning I felt an amazing peace. When the guards opened my door I didn't reach for my cigarettes as usual. An inmate burnt me with a cigarette. Instead of hitting him, I brushed the ash off. I looked at my arms where the burn should have been. Nothing!

'Later I looked out of my cell window at the clear blue sky, heard the birds singing and realised that God made this, as well as me and all the other scumbags in the prison. I saw my fellow inmates in a new light, and I started to share my Christian faith with them.'

'In my three years in Nicosia Prison, ten men gave their lives to Christ.'

● Next week: Tony faces prison in England

mined to hit him. "Why are you coming here?" I asked him. He replied: "I'm here to tell you Jesus loves you and can set you free." I thought he was taking the mickey.

"You have this God-shaped hole in your life which you've tried to fill with the world championship, with money, with sex, with violence, but the only thing that will fit is God."

'He read the words of Jesus in John 8: "Everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it for ever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

'Michael said: "Money can't set you free, drugs can't set you free, friends can't set you free. Only Jesus can set you free. If you ask him, he will do it and

you'll experience freedom in prison."

'For the first time I thought, what if he's right? What if there is a loving God who wants to set me free from myself?

'I was in solitary that night. (I'd broken the nose of a prisoner after Michael's visit.) I was fighting against



Tony Anthony

Picture: NIGEL BOVEY

I don't want to pitch in with my fork!

JUST A THOUGHT...
with Mark Harris



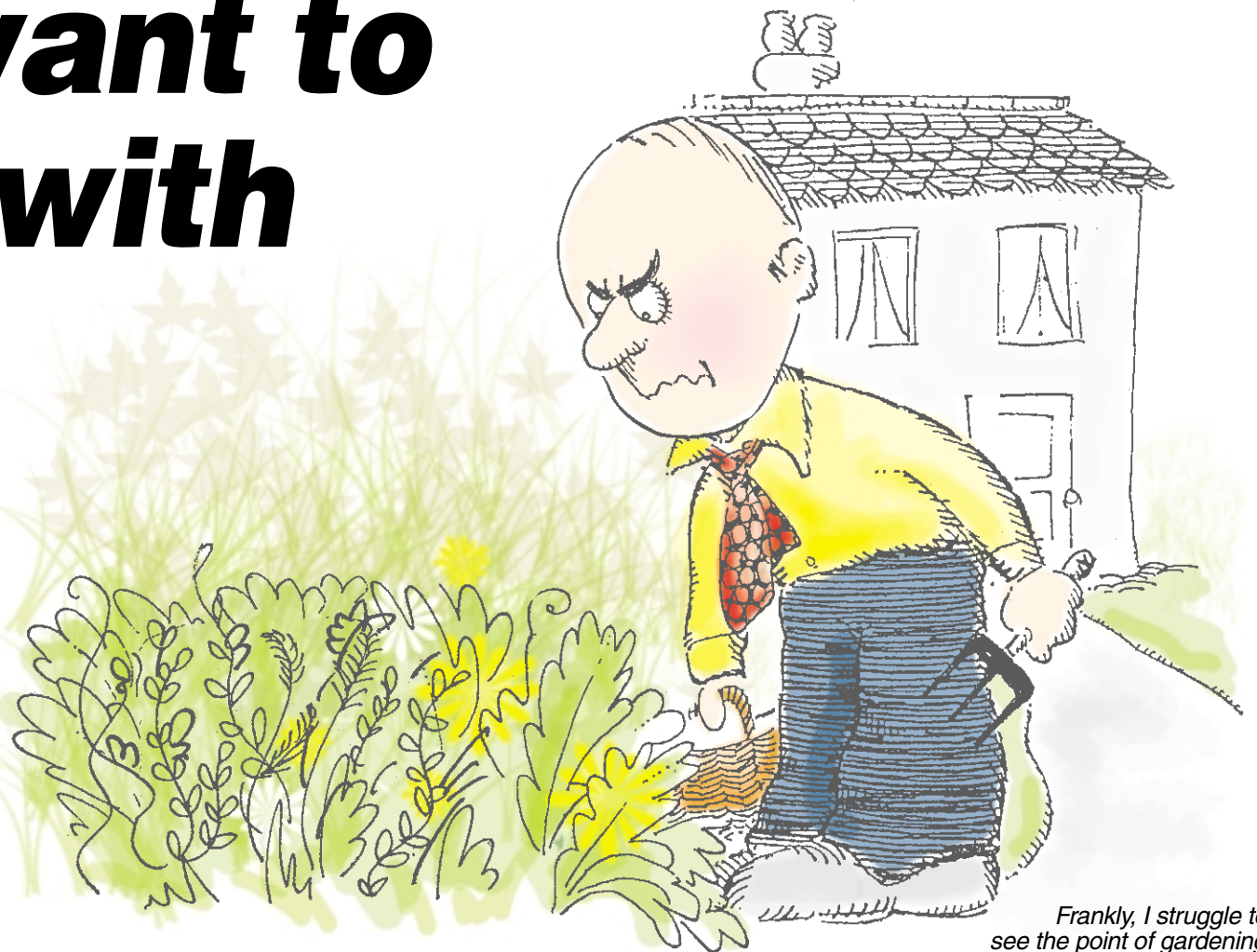
I AM to gardening what Julie Andrews is to gangsta rap. To say I have anything near what would constitute green fingers would be a blatant lie. If the FBI (Foliage Bureau of Investigation) had a most-wanted list, I would be No 1. If I touch anything green it dies – no ifs or buds. I'm a cereal killer!

Frankly, I struggle to see the point of gardening. Why spend so much time cutting the grass, trimming the hedge, weeding the flower beds, building a compost heap and raking the leaves, when all you really need to do is pour a little concrete, build a wall and take a chainsaw to the tree?

I know gardens can be an endless source of enjoyment. Who doesn't like sitting out back – barbecue burning, cold drink in hand – looking at those flowerbeds full of colour.

My wife would say that I'm just plain lazy. I want to reap the rewards of a gorgeous garden without paying the price in hard, sweat-generating work. To use a phrase from the Bible, I want to reap without sowing.

The garden is a reminder to



Frankly, I struggle to see the point of gardening

those of us who want everything now. We live in a quick-fix age of instant coffee, instant meals, instant hair-restorer, and, if the gossip magazines are to be believed,

instant deep and meaningful relationships.

The law of the garden says there is no such thing as a quick fix. We only get out what we put in. The person we are

today is the product of past sowing – the investment of time, energy and love, from ourselves and from others.

There's a saying that goes: Sow an action, reap

a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny.

Let's stop looking for quick fixes. It's time to dig in – and dig deep.

QUICK QUIZ

1. Who wrote stories about a little mermaid, an ugly duckling, and an emperor's new clothes?
2. Who played Margaret Meldrew in the TV series *One Foot in the Grave*?
3. In which Yorkshire city would you find Headingley Cricket Ground?
4. According to the nursery rhyme 'Sing a Song of Sixpence', how many blackbirds were baked in a pie?
5. What do you call the hole in the middle of a guitar?
6. How many prongs has a dinner fork?

Answers on page 2

It's David versus Goliath

First Book of SAMUEL

THE two books of Samuel and two books of Kings provide a more or less continuous story of the Israelite monarchy, which lasted 400 years.

Interwoven throughout are the words and actions of people known as prophets, who advise kings, warn against disobedience towards God, and outspokenly condemn moral failure.

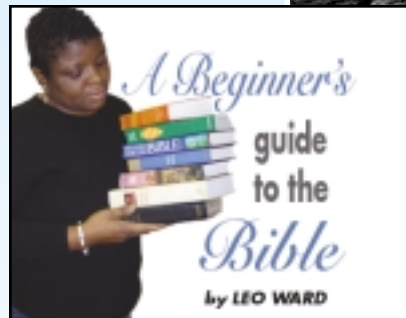
The story begins with Samuel, dedicated at birth to God's service at the temple of Shiloh. He is sometimes called the last of the judges and the first of the prophets.

After a measure of success in uniting the Israelite tribes against Philistine invaders, Samuel loses credibility by appointing his sons as judges, a position they exploit.

The resultant unrest leads to an appeal by tribal elders for the appointment of a king. Samuel's early reluctance is overcome when he receives assurance of divine approval and guidance as to a suitable candidate. So the momentous decision is taken.

Saul, the first king, shows considerable promise. He unites the tribes against an enemy threatening an Israelite town.

Fighting characterises Saul's



whole reign and he achieves some early successes. But military prowess is not to be the only criterion of judgment for Israel's kings. How closely do they obey God's will and encourage their people to worship and serve him?

On two occasions Saul is judged to have failed this test, so forfeiting the support of Samuel. After the second incident we read:



'As long as Samuel lived, he never again saw the King; but he grieved over him' (15:35 *Good News Bible*).

Samuel is led by God to anoint a successor secretly. And so the youthful shepherd David enters the stage of history. It will be some years before he assumes the throne, but an outburst of popular acclaim greets his early victory over the Philistine giant Goliath.

Saul, troubled and isolated by Samuel's rejection, is consumed with jealousy. As David plays the harp to soothe the King's depression, Saul attempts to kill him. But the young hero flees into the hills and becomes the leader of a band of outlaws whose adven-

David kills Goliath with a stone shot from a sling

tures make fascinating reading.

Saul's fortunes, meanwhile, are in decline. He hunts David without success.

After Samuel's death, and under severe pressure from Philistine invaders, Saul seeks out a medium in the hope of a comforting word from his now-dead mentor, but to no avail. Tragically, Saul is killed in battle against the Philistines, alongside three of his sons.

In his last conversation with David, Saul speaks his own sad epitaph: 'I have been a fool!' (26:21). It might have been so very different.



BBC picture

SPEAKING VOLUMES

If you can't put a good book down, you'll like *Page Turners* – a new BBC One daytime television programme broadcast every Monday and Friday throughout April.

Programme host Jeremy Vine showcases 24 selected new books – everything from crime fiction to taste-bud-tickling cookery. All have been read, approved and chosen by a panel of celebrities and literary experts, including television presenter Claudia Winkleman and authors Fay Weldon and Marian Keyes.

Each programme features three books, which are discussed by guests and a studio audience of book club members.

For armchair critics – and those who just like a good read – the featured titles will be in participating libraries and bookshops and on the BBC's website.

The first books being considered were *The Kite Runner* (Khaled Hosseini), *Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim* (David Sedaris) and *Chronicles: Volume One* by Bob Dylan. Even hard-to-please readers like Janet Street-Porter and Jenny Eclair confessed to being gripped by books they wouldn't normally consider, and Phill Jupitus revealed that reading Bob Dylan's story prompted him to buy

ROSEMARY DAWSON takes a look at a daytime TV show

his albums for the first time. The panel choosing the books for the programme work to strict criteria. The books have to be a compelling read, easily accessible and have a broad appeal. They have to be distinctive, surprising and a

springboard for debate. Above all, they have to introduce readers to new subjects and ideas.

But just a page-turning minute! All that could be said of the world's greatest blockbuster – the Bible. True, it's been around for generations.

But then, its message is relevant for every generation. It has something to say about every human failing and struggle.

And from beginning to end it speaks about God's love, compassion and forgiveness for the human race – and how

we can find new meaning and hope for our lives through Jesus.

The Bible is much more than a page-turner – it's a life-changer!

So start reading. It might even encourage you to turn over a new leaf.

“The books have to be a springboard for debate”

QUICK CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Assert (5)
4. Of South American Indian people (5)
8. Tree (3)
9. Allure (5)
10. Canal boat (5)
11. Forerunner of euro (3)
12. Female (5)
13. Allay (7)
16. Haphazard (6)
19. Inquiring (6)
23. Expand (7)
26. Lessen (5)

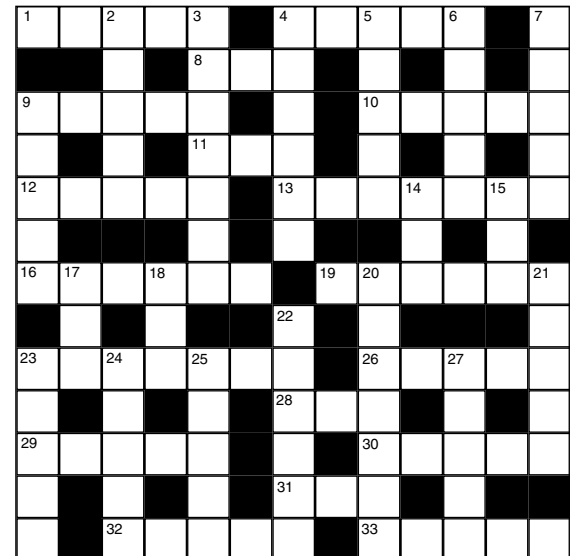
28. Elect (3)
29. Additional (5)
30. Fashion (5)
31. Observe (3)
32. Mature (5)
33. Proportion (5)

DOWN

2. Scare (5)
3. Keepsake (7)
4. Tarnished (6)
5. Secret political clique (5)
6. Of Scandinavia (5)

7. Strainer (5)
9. Cringe (5)
14. Irritate (3)
15. Vehicle (3)
17. Craft (3)
18. Owing (3)
20. Strew (7)
21. Avarice (5)
22. Selected (6)
23. Gloss (5)
24. Hub radiating blades (5)
25. Vagrant (5)

Answers on page 2



THE ADDRESS OF YOUR LOCAL SALVATION ARMY CENTRE IS:

the CHALKS and the CHEESES

