

ACDP wants women to have ultrasounds before aborting



Ultrasound picture of baby. (PHOTO: istock via [Times LIVE](#))

Originally published in [Times LIVE](#)

The African Christian Democratic Party is proposing a bill to amend the Termination of Pregnancy Act to ensure women receiving an abortion after 12 weeks must first receive an ultra-sound and counselling.

The ACDP's Cheryllyn Dudley said a mandatory ultrasound would show the women visuals of their foetus to help ensure they know what they are doing.

“It is a huge decision and a decision about life and death. They need information.”

She also wants women considering abortion after 12 weeks to have counselling.

“We want to ensure that women who feel they don't have any alternative can hear what options are available.

“The bill is to protect women at a very difficult time.

“We need to be society that provides a safety net to these women.”

She also said they needed to be told about adoption as an option.

“No child should ever ever be a child that deserves to die simply because its parents feel they can’t afford a child.”

The bill is open for public comment until August 11. It will then be presented to a parliamentary private bill committee and likely opened for public hearings.

Asked if the failing health system was able to offer every woman wanting to terminate pregnancy an ultrasound, Dudley said: “South Africa needs to get with 21st century. It is a simple technology.”

**Jesus healed her of autism
and mental illness**



Shelliقة Carby-Bird

Jesus does heal autism, neurological disabilities and mental illness, says Shelliقة Carby-Bird, 31, of Pietermaritzburg, who has experienced healing and freedom from her own suffering in those areas through the power of prayer and Christian ministry.

Shelliقة who has a long history of health issues including Asperger syndrome (a type of autism), bipolar mood disorder and post traumatic stress, shares her healing journey that began last year on a [blog](#) through which she hopes to help others and challenge a widely-held viewpoint that autism is incurable.

A former board member of Autism South Africa, she writes: "I am not against disability and autistic rights, in fact I support them as I have experienced the suffering, discrimination and stigma that people with disabilities/autism experience. I AM against disability and autistic pride. Disabilities and autism are NOT gifts and they are not nice things to have."

Describing the dramatic change in Shelliقة since March last year, a month before her wedding, when she requested prayer to be freed of autism, her mother says: "Something had changed! I

suddenly had the daughter I always knew was 'in' there, but could never 'find'! The gentle, loving daughter who looked me in the eye. Who engaged in conversation without negative or inappropriate comments."

In a [testimony](#) posted on ShelliQue's blog, her mother says she herself was baptised in the Holy Spirit when her daughter was 10 and was set free of lifelong curses. From that time on ShelliQue became free of epileptic seizures and asthma attacks she had experienced since infancy.

When ShelliQue was in Grade 11 she was diagnosed with Asperger syndrome as well as bipolar mood disorder, ADHD and depression, says her mother. She could not look people in the eye, had frequent "meltdowns" in public, could not make friends, was generally "driven", and could not enter into worshipping God.

But, continues her mother, despite the suffering, ShelliQue did not want to be free of autism because of pride in "special abilities" and believing the view that her disability was incurable.

Then, a month before her wedding, ShelliQue suddenly told her family she had had enough of autism and asked her father and her fiancé to pray for her and command autism to get out of her.

"And so ShelliQue was set free from autism!" she writes.

"She was the most beautiful bride I have ever seen! There was a glow and a peace about her. She radiated love in a way I had never seen before," says her mom of her daughter's wedding day, which would normally have been a setup for a meltdown.

The next breakthrough in ShelliQue's healing journey happened in July last year when she went for a 3-hour sozo (Christian healing ministry).

She says God told her and the women ministering to her that He had set her free from depression, bipolar disorder and other mental disabilities like post traumatic stress disorder. They also identified roots of her problems including being abused as a child.

Shellicque said she experienced peace and joy after the ministry.

The women told Shellicque not to stop taking her psychiatric medication but she decided to try and wean herself off the drugs because of their terrible side effects, including causing insomnia and tight muscles. She had tried this unsuccessfully a few months before but after the sozo she managed to phase out the medication. A psychiatric general practitioner subsequently took her off the medication.

On her blog she shares many ways in which she has changed as a result of her healing – including having more energy, less irritability, better concentration, freedom from various food intolerances, and a much better relationship with people and with God.

She still has ups and downs – but within the normal range of behaviour. She also says the ongoing healing process after her big prayer and sozo breakthroughs have been hard and lonely at times.

Having a relationship with God, being Spirit-filled, and reaching a place where she was desperate for healing were some of the keys to experiencing freedom, she said. Shellicque said anybody who would like to learn more about her journey to healing is welcome to contact her at exautistic@gmail.com

I'm allergic to my husband but God is our rock



Johanna and Scott Watkins pictured together before she became severely allergic to her husband. (PHOTO: Scott Watkins)

Originally published in [The Christian Institute](#)

Twenty-nine-year-old Johanna Watkins cannot touch her husband or even be in the same room as him.

After getting married, she was diagnosed with a complicated condition called Mast Cell Activation Syndrome, rendering her severely allergic to scents, foods, sunlight and other people.

The former teacher, from Minnesota, lives in a sealed attic bedroom, with special filters to purify the air.

Joy in God

But despite her pain and isolation, Johanna and her husband Scott have found amazing joy in God and remain firmly committed to one another.

In an interview on the BBC's World Service programme, they

described their struggles and hope for the future.

Scott told the programme: “There’s not an easy way around this problem. I want to keep Johanna safe and me going to see her compromises her safety. One of the ways I can take care of her now is by not going to see her.”



On their wedding day the couple were unaware Johanna’s condition would become so severe. (PHOTO: Jen Jacobs Photography)

‘Till death do us part’

Johanna said: “They don’t know if I will get well, and so we hope and we pray that I will”.

Talking about their marriage, she added: “On our wedding day we made vows to each other that till death do us part. No matter what life brought.

“We every day try to learn more about how we can love each other and we hold on to hope in God and I can tell you that even if I have this until I am 90 years old I would be committed to my husband with that vow”.

Gifts and blessings

Later in the interview, Johanna was asked what she does to pass time alone in her room.

She revealed that she listens to a Christian song each morning to motivate her, saying she is “reminded of all of the good gifts God has given me”.

“I have many gifts in my life, many blessings that I have to be thankful for and that reminds me to not become selfish, and to just make it all about me”.



Johanna has not responded to any treatment so far, including four rounds of chemotherapy. (PHOTO: [BBC](#))

Faithfulness

Johanna opened up about her faith in an article for the Gospel Coalition website last month:

“If it weren’t for God, I’d have given up long ago. But while

I've been broken and empty, God has been faithful and strong. He has borne every grief.

"Never have I been alone. He has lifted my head and filled my anguished heart with a joy unlike any I've ever known before."

She concluded: "While I still pray for physical healing and don't know why God chose this road for me, this suffering has been a grace, because God has used it to help me love him more."

Some hope and optimism in struggle against AIDS

By Doctors For Life



South Africa successfully hosted the latest International AIDS

Conference in Durban last week – this time, having a track record of rolling out the largest HIV treatment programme in the world.

Indeed, we have come a long way from those disastrous days of Government AIDS denialism which severely restricted availability of ARV medication when we hosted the conference 16 years ago. The theme in 2000 was “Breaking the silence” – appropriate for the time when there was a global paradox with HIV in the northern hemisphere benefiting from availability of treatment while the force of the epidemic had moved to sub Saharan Africa where over 70% of the world’s infected suffered mostly untreated. The eyes of the world were opened then to this injustice and social dilemma.

With over 18 000 people attending from scores of countries the conference brought together scientists, policymakers, researchers, activists, people living with AIDS and many others.

Some hope and optimism

There is some hope and optimism as we face the daunting task of addressing the epidemic now with 34 million people living with AIDS globally. While there is no vaccine or cure available yet, we do understand the science a lot better and are making steady progress following some promising leads. As tools we have very efficient treatment available which prolongs lives, maintains viral suppression and also diminishes transmission. Globally 17 million people now have access to treatment due to improved access in developing countries.

New developments in pre exposure prophylaxis and slow release treatment promises prevention for those at risk of infection and monthly injections rather than daily pills for those on treatment.

Having had a few Doctors For Life (DFL) members attending the

conference, some were just offended with the rude and boisterous way with which the [lobby to decriminalise prostitution](#) was pushed down the throats of the conference-goers, e.g. the prostitutes at one stage grabbed the microphone from the Minister of Health and started shouting their demands. The red umbrella group were protesting daily inside the conference and well-built men with condom suits were serving as waiters. Some of DFL's members actually mentioned that they would not be interested in attending again because of that.

Concerning Judge Cameron calling the prostitutes onto the stage and asking the audience to applaud them, we felt that, while it is appropriate to recognise our common humanity, we could have done it without glamourising or condoning a lifestyle that is so degrading.

Responses to prostitution

With some of our members talking to the prostitutes one was struck by how deeply traumatised many of them were. Surely our answer should be to help them exit this horrible profession and not make them comfortable in their slavery – like providing mattresses and other paraphernalia to slaves in the hulls of ships on their way to be sold at the slave markets.

The conference-goers were however refreshed by a plain Zulu woman who put up her hand during one session and asked conference goers why they thought they could come from other countries and tell us to make prostitutes of our daughters and sons here in SA. She actually challenged our government to send their own children into prostitution first, as an example before expecting the public to do it.

Consequently, the red umbrella group left the conference to follow the woman to confront a lively group of young South Africans who were protesting against decriminalisation of prostitution. The group included young women whom DFL had assisted to exit prostitution and who are getting skills

training through one of our programmes.

US Supreme Court blocks law to curb abortion clinics



Judge Clarence Thomas disagreed with several of his fellow Supreme Court Justices. (PHOTO: [The Christian Institute](#))

Originally published by [The Christian Institute](#)

The United States Supreme Court has struck down a Texas law thought to have led to a dramatic reduction in abortion facilities in the state.

Supreme court judges voted five to three to overturn the law, which required abortionists to be endorsed by a nearby hospital and abortion facilities to meet the same health standards as hospitals. Abortion advocates were angered by the closure of around 20 practices in Texas – half of all clinics

in the state.

No consensus

Immediately after the ruling, similar legislation was ruled out in Mississippi and Wisconsin and the Attorney General of Alabama announced he would drop an appeal to bring in a similar law there. Pro-abortion campaigners claim that several other states with pro-life laws will be affected. However in his dissenting opinion, Supreme Court Judge Clarence Thomas said the ruling was so 'muddy', there is very little consensus on what impact it will actually have.

Thomas criticised some of his fellow judges for bending over backwards to accommodate abortion and overriding the United States Constitution in the process.

He wrote: "The court has simultaneously transformed judicially created rights like the right to abortion into preferred constitutional rights, while disfavoring many of the rights actually enumerated in the Constitution".

The ruling claims that an "undue-burden" was placed on women by the Texas law, but Thomas said his fellow judges applied the "undue burden standard in a way that will surely mystify lower courts for years to come". "As the Court applies whatever standard it likes to any given case, nothing but empty words separates our constitutional decisions from judicial fiat", he added.

Responding to the news pro-life organisation Family Research Council (FRC) pointed out that the Texas law protected the health of women. A statement on FRC's website highlighted that "26 500 women experienced abortion-related complications in 2011 alone (3 200 of whom required post-abortion hospitalization)".

The group also cited the case of Dr Kermit Gosnell, who performed thousands of abortions in the last three decades at a clinic in Pennsylvania, dubbed a "house of horrors". Gosnell

routinely carried out illegal late-term abortions (post-24 weeks), and would deliver babies alive then use scissors to 'snip' their spines.

'Idolatry'

President of □The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Dr Albert Mohler reflected: "Abortion is now, according to the United States Supreme Court, not only a constitutional right but a constitutional right that may not be infringed upon".

"The modern project to declare absolute human autonomy", he added, "has developed an idolatry of that very human autonomy that is not only unsustainable but downright deadly". He also noted that in practically all the coverage of the ruling, the issue was "singularly the woman. The unborn child does not show up in any way as being, even to any extent, morally important".

Fears grow genetically modified embryos could be created within months



Originally published in

[Christian Today](#)

Fears are mounting that the genetic modification of human embryos could happen in British laboratories within months.

The fertility regulator will decide today whether scientists at the Francis Crick Institute can alter the genes of human embryos donated by IVF patients. If passed, the researchers will be the first in Britain to change an embryo's DNA and only the second in the world.

Researchers say the move could help reduce miscarriage and improve IVF but critics fear it is the first step towards designer babies

However Nola Leach, CEO of Christian public policy charity CARE, said the proposals will have "completely unknown consequences for future generations".

"We should not be experimenting with the sanctity of human life," she told Christian Today.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) have been asked to grant permission for researcher Kathy Niakan to study how an embryo's genes effect whether it survives the first week after conception. Less than one in two eggs survive the first week after fertilisation and just one in eight last the first three months of a pregnancy, according to the [Mail Online](#).

Scientists say that learning more about this first week of life could spare more women the pain of miscarriage.

"The reason this is so important is that repeated miscarriages are unfortunately extremely common but they are not very well understood," said Dr Niakan.

"One of the main aims is to understand these very early stages of human development.

"We believe this research could lead to improvements in

fertility treatment, provide a really fundamental insight into some of the causes of miscarriage and a much deeper understanding of the earliest stages of human life.”

However Leach said although infertility was “heartbreaking”, there were other options such adoption or fostering.

“The Universal declaration on the human genome and human rights is explicitly clear that germ-line interventions could be judged as contrary to human dignity,” she told Christian Today.

“The UK should be talking to its international partners and discussing this issue rather than simply trying to be a trailblazer in this complicated area.

“We have already raised concerns about GM babies yet the pressure is still mounting and in the face of it all, we would urge the HFEA to stand firm and refuse this request.”

Dr Niakan wants to use a system known as CRISPR-Cas9 to target specific genes in the embryo and stop them working one by one. By doing this she hopes to identify which are key to an embryo’s early survival.

If scientists knew which genes were important, the information could be used to improve IVF as they could screen a woman’s embryo’s and implant only the healthiest. A faulty gene could also be tweaked or corrected.

However, this has given rise to fears that this could be a slippery slope towards genetically modified embryos, which are currently illegal.

Dr Calum MacKellar, of the Scottish Council on Human Bioethics, told [Mail Online](#) the project opens the door to “full-blown eugenics”.

“The UK should not isolate itself and go it alone in making possible the gene editing of embryos,” he said. Instead, it

should consult its international partners before making such an important and ground breaking decision which will have implications for the whole of humanity.”

Porn linked to child abuse



PHOTO: [Thorn](#)

Originally published in [Times Live](#)

Porn addicts are at high risk of sexually abusing children, including their own.

This is according to research by Dr Antoinette Basson, of Unisa's youth research unit, who interviewed convicted child-sex offenders in prisons in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and Western Cape.

The study, which focused on child-sex offenders who used porn, found that the offenders had in common:

- Exposed to pornography while young by peers or family members;
- Preoccupied with pornography; and

- Had low self-esteem and came from dysfunctional family environments characterised by violence, unstable relationships and abuse.

The early exposure to porn prompted offenders to use it for grooming victims, the research stated.

Said Basson: "Based on the results it is reasonable to conclude that porn has an influence on human behaviour in relation to the sexual exploitation of children."

Dr Shaheda Omar, a representative of the Teddy Bear Clinic for abused children, claimed that exposure to pornography while young creates a "vicious cycle".

Said Omar: "It is a huge factor that leads to perpetuating this behaviour, when these kids feel excited or stimulated they do not have anyone to speak to," she said.

While the law prohibits pornography from being displayed in the presence of a child, Omar said it is difficult to police private homes.

She called for "stringent measures", such as punishing parents who leave porn lying around for their children to find.

The SA Law Reform Commission is investigating the pornography laws.

Child rights activist Joan van Niekerk said the commission will begin consultations with others when it has completed its report.

Pornography was legalised in 1994. The change in the law and the growth of the internet caused the porn market to flourish.

Basson said her study sought to examine the link between porn addiction and the exploitation of children . The men and women interviewed for the study were aged between 20 and their late 50s, and came from different backgrounds and occupations.

Many were serving life sentences in maximum-security prisons.

Basson said: “These offenders were very intelligent – engineers, teachers, social workers – very professional people. They develop a total preoccupation with porn; they watch it at work without even thinking about work.”

Many of the subjects reported early exposure to pornography.

“My father had a lot of porn tapes and magazines,” said one offender.

Another offender said he first watched porn after he found his mother’s porn lying around the house.

One father interviewed said that he would expose his two daughters to porn while his wife was at work before sexually abusing them.

Special need = Special gift



A monthly column by Vivienne Solomons who is a legal consultant who passionately believes that God wants His people to make a difference right where they are and to stand up for what is true and just. She is also passionate about encouraging young women to walk victoriously with God and she is engaged in a challenging faith journey as a parent of a child with special needs.

This past long weekend I was in the fairest Cape for a family wedding, and what a joyous occasion it was. We had planned our break away so that we could also spend a few days in Cape Town and surrounds, before and after the nuptials, catching up with family and friends.



In truth, this was a faith expedition for us and our son. For while the breathtaking scenery and the occasion itself promised wonderful days, it had all the makings of an emotionally stressful time – varied locations and a lot of time with people, just chatting and eating, usually with no other children around.

Ordinarily, I would jump at the chance to get away and just “kuier” but I had to consider how my son would react and adapt (or not) to being at a new location and meeting people he hardly knows or doesn’t know at all – over and over again. You see, my son, who is seven years old, has been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (“ADHD”) and social anxiety disorder, and, in addition, sensory integration dysfunction (or sensory processing disorder). Yes, it’s a mouthful. I know. And while I don’t like to label him as having “this” or “that”, giving what he deals with everyday a name does help to focus our time and energy on what is needed in order to assist him in leading a fulfilled and purpose-driven life. This is the goal of all our interventions.

Our decision as parents

In short, the ADHD, amongst others, causes our son to be lethargic and slow to respond to instructions. It also interferes with his sleeping patterns. Then there is the incessant talking, the impatience and the impulsiveness, as well as the tantrums. We are forced to medicate during school

but choose to not do so outside of the learning environment, unless absolutely necessary. In other words, generally speaking, he does not receive the drug on weekends or during school holidays. This is a decision we have taken as parents. Although he is more compliant and better behaved under the drug's influence, we prefer to experience him as he really is, which is an engaging individual who is, for the most part, fun to be around.

The social anxiety aspect provides its own set of challenges. Not the least of which is resistance to visiting new places and meeting new people. It causes our son to behave awkwardly, and avoid interaction with others, to the point of saying hurtful things in order to push them away. Even those he knows have to 'break the ice' when meeting him again after an interval of only a few days. There is, of course, a pill for this as well, which we duly administer on a daily basis. If I am honest, I would have to say that currently, I can live without my son taking medication for ADHD but life is difficult when he does not receive the anxiety medication. He becomes very fearful and clingy, and even going to the bathroom alone is not possible for him.

Then there is the sensory aspect. For those who are not familiar with this, it may be described as a condition in which the brain has difficulty in receiving and responding to information that comes in through the senses. It has far reaching consequences. For example, where a child experiences inadequate vestibular processing, he or she will have difficulty with balance and knowing where his or her body is in space – and it often manifests itself by a reluctance to sit on the toilet. For those with taste processing challenges, certain tastes and even textures are avoided, leaving the child with a very limited palate and therefore also a restricted menu – often soft, not chewy foods like bread, bread and, much to my dismay, more bread.

But our son is not slow in his thinking nor in his ability. On

the contrary, he was able to recognise colours at the age of 2, and could also count to 20 at that age. He taught himself to read when he was just 5 years old. As a result, we walk a tightrope as parents of, on the one hand, needing to stimulate him academically while on the other, trying to mitigate his challenges. All the while cautiously administering medication and simultaneously praying for his complete healing and restoration.

Finding strength

Our journey to this point has been one of recognising that 'something' is not quite as it should be, and then finding the strength, the courage, the time and the resources to address the issue. It has also been one of trial and error in finding solutions and making compromises that work for us as a family. But, as you might expect, not all of our friends and family are always 'on the same page'. There are the inevitable opinions, whether verbally expressed or not, ranging from "there is no problem that a good dose of discipline can't solve" to "perhaps you shouldn't be so ..., you are causing your child to behave in this way". The key here, however, is to 'take the meat and leave the bones'. People usually mean well, they just don't know what to say or what to do to help. If they haven't lived it, they can't know. So at times it can be a frustrating and lonely path to tread. But this is where the friendship of parents with special needs children is invaluable. They know. They understand. We can encourage one another. We can celebrate the smallest of victories with one another.

In the event, our weekend went smoothly, and, for the most part, without a hiccup. It is a testimony about me and how far I have come in this journey as much as it is about our child taking a huge step towards overcoming his fears and relating normally to others. I have grown. I have become more comfortable in parenting my special gift of a child with all of his quirkiness and less concerned about what others think

about my parenting ability in the face of constant challenge. Yes, we are still learning, trying out different approaches and regimens to find the best fit for us as a family, and that is just fine. We simply celebrate the victories and learn from our setbacks.

What I have learned is that there are no quick fixes outside of a miracle of God and that His mercies are indeed new every morning. Each day I am given a new opportunity to try again and do better. To rise up in faith in the face of yesterday's defeat. To hope against all hope. I also draw comfort from the fact that we have seen progress that medication and countless hours of therapy cannot explain. And we continue to trust God for more. For our goal as parents is to see our child thrive and become the best version of himself, growing more independent day by day and able to make his own unique yet significant mark in this world.

Studies confirm the healing power of prayer



PHOTO: Timeanddate.com

Originally published in [Newsmax Health](#)

For the devout, there never has been any question that prayer has the power to heal.

Now, more and more medical research from leading hospitals and universities across the US has shown conclusively a belief in God really IS good for you, making you healthier and happier, and helping you live longer.

“Studies have shown prayer can prevent people from getting sick – and when they do get sick, prayer can help them get better faster,” Duke University’s Harold G Koenig, MD, tells Newsmax Health.

An exhaustive analysis of more than 1,500 reputable medical studies “indicates people who are more religious and pray more have better mental and physical health,” Dr Koenig says.

Special: Prayer Changes Your Brain in 4 Amazing Ways

“And out of 125 studies that looked at the link between health and regular worship, 85 showed regular churchgoers live longer.

“There’s a lot of evidence out there.”

Dr Koenig – director of Duke’s Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health and the author of several authoritative books on faith and healing – says a striking study published in the Southern Medical Journal demonstrated that prayer has a remarkable effect on patients with hearing and visual deficiencies.

After prayer sessions, “They showed significant improvements based on audio and visual tests,” Dr. Koenig said.

He added: “The benefits of devout religious practice, particularly involvement in a faith community and religious

commitment, are that people cope better. In general, they cope with stress better, they experience greater well-being because they have more hope, they're more optimistic, they experience less depression, less anxiety, and they commit suicide less often.

"They have stronger immune systems, lower blood pressure, and probably better cardiovascular functioning."

The proof of the power of prayer is overwhelming, says researcher and writer Tom Knox, a one-time atheist who became a regular worshipper after doing in-depth study of the medical benefits of faith.

Special: Can Prayer Heal You? Dr Crandall Discovered the Truth.

"What I discovered astonished me," admits Knox. "Over the past 30 years a growing and largely unnoticed body of scientific work shows religious belief is medically, socially, and psychologically beneficial."

Study after study backs up the benefits of having faith, especially in prolonging life. In 2006, population researchers at the University of Texas discovered that the more often you go to church, the longer you live.

"Religious attendance is associated with adult mortality in a graded fashion," says Knox.

"There is a seven-year difference in life expectancy between those who never attend church and those who attend weekly."

The American Journal of Public Health studied nearly 2 000 older Californians for five years and found that those who attended religious services were 36 percent less likely to die during that period than those who didn't.

A study of nearly 4 000 older adults for the U.S. Journal of Gerontology revealed that atheists had a significantly

increased chance of dying over a six-year period than the faithful.

Crucially, religious people lived longer than atheists even if they didn't go regularly to a place of worship.

The American Society of Hypertension established in 2006 that church-goers have lower blood pressure than non-believers.

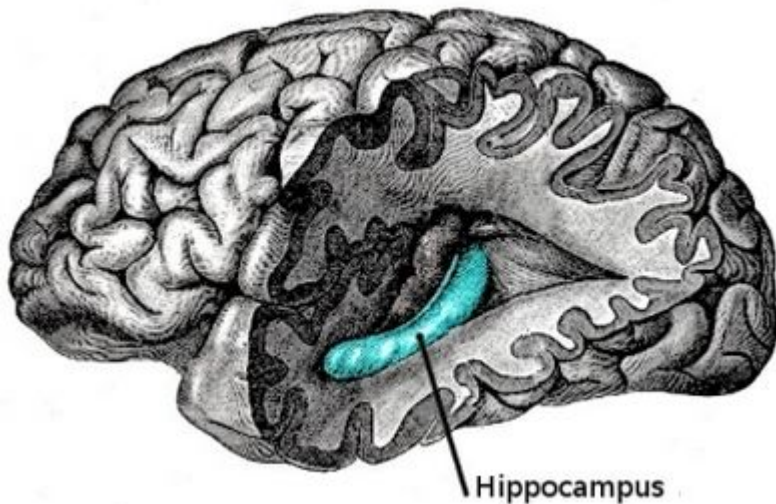
Scientists have also revealed believers recover from breast cancer quicker than non-believers, have better outcomes from coronary disease and rheumatoid arthritis, and are less likely to have children with meningitis.

Research at San Francisco General Hospital looked at the effect of prayer on 393 cardiac patients. Half were prayed for by strangers who had only the patients' names. Those patients had fewer complications, fewer cases of pneumonia, and needed less drug treatment.

They also got better quicker and left the hospital earlier.

Concluded Knox: "Atheists can sneer at faith all they like, but they can't assume science is on their side."

Teen marijuana smokers damage brain, impair long term memory and learning



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[Christian Examiner](#)

New research reveals that teen pot smokers damage the actual shape of their brains, causing long term memory problems as adults.

According to the study conducted at [Northwestern University](#) and published March 12 in the journal *Hippocampus*, researchers evaluated 97 people from a prior study whose pattern of substance use was to smoke cannabis daily for about three years as teenagers. The individuals were assessed for long-term recall and found to score 18 percent more poorly than young adults who had never smoked the drug.

Authors of the study indicated the research was conducted to further evaluate evidence over the past decade that heavy marijuana smokers were found to have an abnormally shaped hippocampus – that portion of the brain’s temporal lobe where memories, emotion and learning occur.

“Cannabis use has been associated with episodic memory (EM) impairments and abnormal hippocampus morphology among both healthy individuals and schizophrenia subjects,” the scholars wrote, “research is needed to evaluate the relationship between cannabis-related hippocampal morphology and EM among healthy and clinical groups.”

Ultimately the study showed teens who heavily used marijuana demonstrated memory problems in their early twenties. It also indicated a notable difference persisted even after two years of not smoking.

One of the report's senior author's Dr. John Csernansky, who chairs psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine and Northwestern Memorial Hospital said "The memory processes that appear to be affected by cannabis are ones that we use every day to solve common problems and to sustain our relationships with friends and family," the science news publication [EurekaAlert](#) reported.

Another study evaluating the impact of cannabis published in [The Journal of Neuroscience](#) last April collected MRI scans of recreational marijuana users that also found exposure to the drug appeared to alter the volume and shape measures of different parts of the brain as well.