

# PE pastor running Comrades for smiles



Pastor Matthew Cullis on the road.

As 20 000 runners gear up for the 2018 Comrades Marathon on June 10, Port Elizabeth pastor Matthew Cullis aims to make the most of his third Comrades attempt by raising money for a cause close to his home and heart.

Before Matthew's son, Joel, was born with a cleft palate, he never imagined that he would be raising funds for reconstructive surgeries on babies and children affected by

cleft lips and palates across South Africa, let alone that he'd be running marathons.

After a sports injury he had stopped all forms of exercise and had gained a considerable amount of weight.

“I broke my collarbone playing rugby. During my recovery period I began gaining weight, feeling impatient, and found myself depressed and stressed about finances. A close friend confronted me about this, and that's when I decided to run my first 5km race.”

Motivated by the medal he received he ran his next few races.

“I showed up to my first 42.2km race in rugby shorts and three year old tekkies. I was wearing glasses as well. I went from completing a 5km run to running a full marathon that December. At the 27km mark, my legs were cramping and I was convinced I couldn't go any further, but I did.

“When I reached the finish line, I felt like I had nearly died.”

Three years later Matthew attempted his first Comrades Marathon.



Matthew Cullis running his first marathon in 2013 .

This year will mark his third attempt at finishing the world-

famous race, and though he wasn't able to finish the first two, he's not giving up on reaching the finish line.

"I'm not giving up on finishing. Comrades is a massive challenge, but my son has faced an even greater challenge. Families who are not on medical aid and have children who are born with cleft lips and palates face such a great challenge.

"There is no comparison between that and my third attempt at Comrades. I'm doing this for my son, and to prove that you can keep going, even when the challenge seems too big. Have a go!"

Matthew admits that running races – and losing weight as a result thereof – has had a great impact on his preaching, marriage and overall wellbeing.

"I was unhappy with myself. When the weight started coming off I felt more confident, and this had an impact on my preaching. Around people, with my wife and even in my relationship with God, the way I felt about myself and my weight-gain was getting in the way. It was bugging me. When the weight came off, my life improved."

As he prepares for the 2018 Comrades Marathon Pastor Matthew Cullis, who is running in support of The Smile Foundation, regularly updates his Facebook followers on his Comrades journey and the total funds raised for the reconstructive surgeries.

If you would like to support him, visit his profile on <https://www.backabuddy.co.za/champion/project/iron-man-for-smile>

Find out more about The Smile Foundation and how you can support this initiative at <http://www.smilefoundationsa.org>

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# NBC Superbowl commentator stands by his comments on star quarterback's faith



Tony Dungy former player and coach looks on from the field prior to Super Bowl LII between the New England Patriots and the Philadelphia Eagles at US Bank Stadium. (PHOTO: John David Mercer-USA TODAY Sports)

*Originally published in [Urban Christian News](#)*

NBC commentator Tony Dungy has been attacked over his remarks that Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Nick Foles would 'play well because his Christian faith would allow him to play with confidence'.

Dungy, a former head coach for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Indianapolis Colts, described Foles' strong Christian faith on air during Super Bowl LII.

Foles is outspoken about his faith and has said he wants to be a pastor for high school students after he finishes his NFL career.



Congratulations to the Eagles. Nick Foles told me last week that he felt the Lord had him in Philadelphia for a special moment and he played like it tonight.



10:21 PM - 4 Feb 2018

After the game, Dungy reported that 'Foles told me last week that he felt the Lord had him in Philadelphia for a special moment and he played like it tonight.'

Some critics ripped into Dungy on Twitter, accusing him of 'preaching on air'.

'Really think the LORD is into football? Get a grip,' wrote one critic.

'Why would He not be?,' replied Dungy, who spent much of Monday patiently replying to the scorn heaped upon him by online critics.



Nick Foles raising the Super Bowl trophy after the Philadelphia Eagles beat the New England Patriots. (PHOTO: Matthew Emmons-USA TODAY Sports)

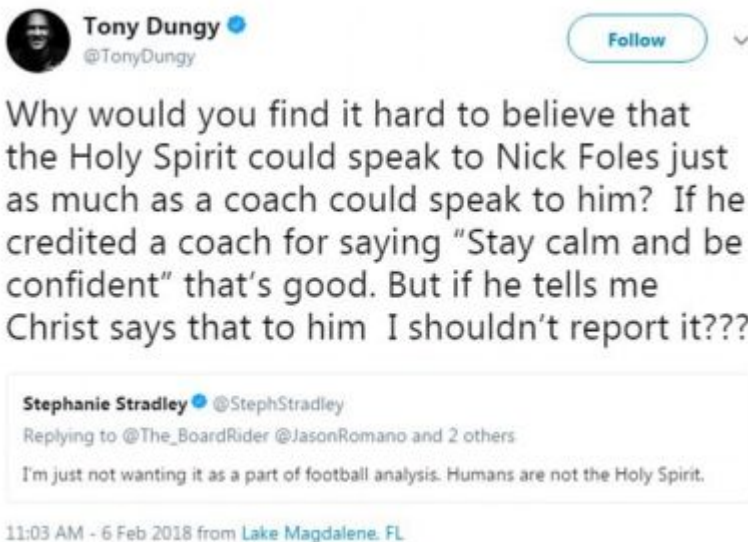
Some accused the former coach of somehow discrediting NBC with his remarks about faith. 'Unbelievable you would use your employer, @NBCSports, to spout this nonsense on the air,' one wrote.



'NBC pays me to express my opinion,' replied Dungy. 'And it was my opinion that Nick Foles would play well because his Christian faith would allow him to play with confidence. And that he's a good QB. I think I was right on both counts.'

'Why would you find it hard to believe that the Holy Spirit could speak to Nick Foles just as much as a coach could speak to him?' Dungy continued.

'If he credited a coach for saying 'Stay calm and be confident' that's good. But if he tells me Christ says that to him I shouldn't report it???'



After the Eagles' upset victory over the New England Patriots, Foles said he gave 'all the glory to God' during the nationally televised awards ceremony.

Many were surprised by the moment, with one Twitter user writing: 'It's just so rare for people to thank Jesus after they win. Amazing!!'

To Christian critics who said he was trivialising the religion by involving it with mere sports, Dungy replied that they had missed the point.

'This was much bigger than the score of a football game,' Dungy wrote.

'How many young boys are going to look up to Nick Foles because of what he did in this moment? When they do they'll see something about LIFE!'

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# How the Queen – the ‘last Christian monarch’ – has made faith her message



*By Catherine Pepinster – Originally published in The Guardian, via Virtue Online*

To the royal household, it is known as the QXB – the Queen’s Christmas broadcast. To millions of people, it is still an essential feature of Christmas Day. To the Queen, her annual broadcast is the time when she speaks to the nation without the government scripting it. But in recent years, it has also become something else: a declaration of her Christian faith. As Britain has become more secular, the Queen’s messages have followed the opposite trajectory.

A survey of the broadcasts made during her 65-year reign reveals that for most of the time the Queen has spoken only in passing of the religious significance of Christmas. There have been references to presents linking contemporary Christmas to the three wise men, for instance, alongside trips to Commonwealth countries, family events such as weddings and funerals, and there were observations about contemporary



society. In 1966, for example, she spoke of the progress of women, and in 1972, she commented on Britain joining the European Community in language that would make any Remainer proud.

But for the past 17 years, her messages have taken on a different tone, with the Queen explaining her own personal faith – “the anchor in my life”, as she described it in 2014.

Last year she said: “Billions of people now follow Christ’s teaching and find in him the guiding light for their lives. I am one of them because Christ’s example helps me see the value of doing small things with great love, whoever does them and whatever they themselves believe.”

The turning point in the content of the broadcasts was the millennium. Her broadcast in 2000 was devoted to an account of Christ’s life and teaching which, she said, “provide a framework in which I try to lead my life”.

This personal commentary has continued ever since. According to Ian Bradley, professor of cultural and spiritual history at the University of St Andrews and the author of *God Save the Queen – The Spiritual Heart of the Monarchy*, “this truly makes her Defender of the Faith” – a reference to the title that all monarchs have used since it was first bestowed on Henry VIII in 1521 by Pope Leo X before he broke with Rome. Indeed, Elizabeth II’s faith impresses the papacy today, so much that one senior Vatican official described her to me as “the last Christian monarch”.

Explanations for these overtly Christian messages vary. Some royal watchers suggest that it was the Queen’s decision to use the 2,000th anniversary of Christ’s birth as an opportunity to speak openly about Christianity. Others saw the hand of George Carey, then archbishop of Canterbury. Bradley sees the influence of Prince Philip at work. “After her very personal account in 2000, she was encouraged to continue because I’m

told she received 25 times more letters than usual from the public in response to that Christmas message than others, and she had huge support from the Duke of Edinburgh.”

But Stephen Bates, a former royal correspondent and author of *Royalty Inc: Britain's Best-Known Brand*, believes it was the death of the Queen Mother that changed her. “She loosened up after her mother’s death. The Queen Mother kept a beady eye on her and now she is more relaxed,” he said. “She expresses more of what she feels. I think this openness about her own commitment is part of it as well.”

Before 2000, the Queen’s most explicit commitments of faith were made during a 1947 radio broadcast, when she spoke of dedicating her life to service, and ended it by saying, “God help me to make good my vow” and at her coronation service.

Accession to the throne also meant she became supreme governor of the Church of England, the established church, and since then her public life has been inextricably shaped by religious occasions: being seen by TV audiences at church at Christmas and Easter, distributing Maundy money on Maundy Thursday and attending the Remembrance Sunday service at the Cenotaph.

But it is the Christmas broadcast where the personal, as well as public, is evident. No government official is involved. Instead, those who cast an eye in advance over what she has written will be her private secretary, now Edward Young, as well as the Duke of Edinburgh. Lord Chartres, the recently retired bishop of London, has long been the go-to theological adviser to the royal family and is believed to proffer advice as well. Regular themes include forgiveness, reconciliation, compassion and, most often, service.

Lord Williams of Oystermouth, who, as Dr Rowan Williams, served as archbishop of Canterbury from 2002 to 2012, said that at times Lambeth Palace was consulted. “We were occasionally asked for any thoughts we might want to throw

in.”

Last week, the BBC admitted that it has been reflecting a secular version of Britain and needs to do more to hold up a mirror to faith in Britain. According to Williams, the Queen has been bridging the divide. “I think that as there has been less overt Christian ‘messaging’ in the general cultural environment, the Queen has deliberately decided to fill the gap,” he said.

The recent messages always refer to Britons of other faiths, too. Williams also sees a link between the recent Christmas messages and a landmark speech the Queen made in 2012 at Lambeth Palace at the start of her diamond jubilee year, when she described the Church of England as, in effect, an umbrella under which other faiths could shelter.

“I think it is related to her position as supreme governor and in line with her speech at Lambeth in 2012 about the Church of England’s responsibility to be a positive gatekeeper for faith at large in the nation, without sacrificing its particularity,” he said.

The tradition of the royal Christmas message was begun in 1932 by the Queen’s grandfather, George V, and continued under her father, George VI. “George V wasn’t particularly devout but the Queen’s father was,” said Bradley. They began as radio broadcasts but became televised in 1957 and have been recorded at Buckingham Palace – once, famously, by David Attenborough in 1986 in a stable at the Royal Mews –Windsor Castle and Sandringham in Norfolk.

With the Queen now 91, thoughts turn to the succession. The Prince of Wales has become more public in confessing his own faith in recent years. Last week, at a service for persecuted Syrian Christians, he said: “We must do what we can to support our fellow Christians.” It looks likely, then, that as king he will follow his mother and make his Christmas message a

personal credo.

## THE CHANGING MESSAGE

**1952**

'Let us set out to build a truer knowledge of ourselves and our fellowmen, to work for tolerance and understanding among the nations and to use the tremendous forces of science and learning for the betterment of man's lot upon this earth.'

**1966**

'In the modern world the opportunities for women to give something of value to the human family are greater than ever, because, through their own efforts, they are now beginning to play their full part in public life.'

**1972**

'Britain and these other European countries see in the Community a new opportunity for the future. They believe that the things they have in common are more important than the things which divide them, and that if they work together not only they, but the whole world will benefit. We are trying to create a wider family of nations and it is particularly at Christmas that this family should feel closest together.'

**2000**

'To many of us our beliefs are of fundamental importance. For me the teachings of Christ and my own personal accountability before God provide a framework in which I try to lead my life. I, like so many of you, have drawn great comfort in difficult times from Christ's words and example.'

**2013**

'For Christians, as for all people of faith, reflection, meditation and prayer help us to renew ourselves in God's love, as we strive daily to become better people. The Christmas message shows us that this love is for everyone. There is no one beyond its reach.'

**2014**

'For me, the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, whose birth we celebrate today, is an inspiration and an anchor in my life. A role model of reconciliation and forgiveness, he stretched out his hands in love, acceptance and healing. Christ's example has taught me to seek to respect and value all people, of whatever faith or none.'

**2016**

'Billions of people now follow Christ's teaching and find in him the guiding light for their lives. I am one of them because Christ's example helps me see the value of doing small things with great love, whoever does them and whatever they themselves believe.'

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## **Justin Bieber sends powerful whiteboard message about Jesus to his fans**



Justin Bieber performing on his Purpose tour in 2016. (PHOTO:

[GQ/Kevin Mazur](#))

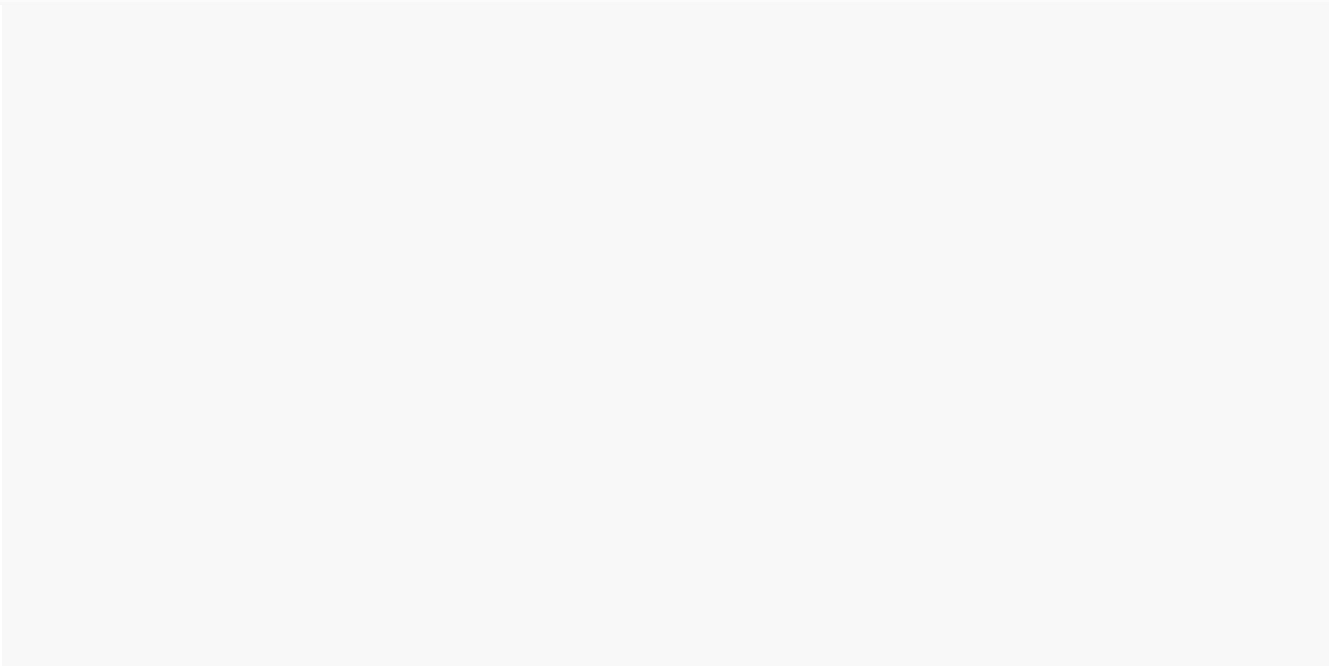
Originally published in [Faithwire](#)

Pop star Justin Bieber is once again speaking out about Jesus, with the singer posting a photo on Instagram of a message that he recently wrote on a white board – a proclamation that encourages his fans to turn to God in their times of need.

“Do you feel you have [exhausted] all options? Do you feel helpless? Do you feel like you’re never good enough?” the message [reads](#). “What if I told you that there’s a God that’s willing to meet you wherever you’re at? What if I told you he could take away your pain, shame, [guilt] and fears.”

Bieber concluded the written message with the hashtag #Jesus. And the singer wrote in his Instagram description: “Jesus is changing me from the inside out everyday!”






Jesus is changing me from the inside out everyday! AND I MISSPELLED GUILT and exhausted

*A post shared by [Justin Bieber \(@justinbieber\)](#) on Dec 14, 2017 at 7:39pm PST*

This is hardly the first time Bieber has spoken out about his Christian faith. This past summer, the singer used some of his down time to worship Jesus just weeks after abruptly cancelling the remaining dates of his world tour.

Bieber posted a short Instagram video back in August that showed him among a group of people singing and dancing to what appears to be Christian worship music. The caption reads, "Nothing more fun/cool than praising our God."





Nothing more fun/cool than praising our God

*A post shared by [Justin Bieber](#) (@justinbieber) on Aug 21, 2017 at 9:48am PDT*

And just a few months earlier in June, Bieber had tears in his eyes as he delivered a powerful message about God at One Love



Manchester, a star-studded event held to remember and raise funds for the victims of the May 22 terror attack that unfolded at singer Ariana Grande's concert.

Bieber encouraged the audience to chant "love" and delivered an encouraging message about hope and holding on to one's faith in the midst of difficulties and pain.

"I'm not going to let go of hope. I'm not going to let go of love. I'm not going to let go of God. Put your hand up if you're not going to let go," [he said](#). "God is good in the midst of the darkness. God is good in the midst of the evil. God is in the midst, no matter what's happening in the world, God is in the midst and he loves you and he's here for you."

You can read plenty more about Bieber's faith proclamations [here](#).

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## UK teens give church a wake-up call



Woman praying in church (PHOTO: [CBN News](#)).

*By Heather Sells – Originally published in [CBN News](#)*

The head of youth evangelism for the Church of England says he and his team are “shocked” by new survey results that show a growing number of UK youth say they’re practising Christians. That’s according to a recent story in The Daily Telegraph.

The new numbers, from the UK-based research company [ComRes](#), show that [one in five youth](#) between the ages of 11 and 18 describe themselves as active followers of Jesus. Also, 13% say they are practising Christians who attend church.

Previously, research by church statistician Dr Peter Brierley in 2006 showed that just 6% of 11-14-years-old youth attended church and 5% of teens between 15-18-years-old did so.

[Jimmy Dale](#), national youth evangelism officer for the Church of England, told The Daily Telegraph that the latest figures astonished his staff. “There was disbelief among the team because it was so high,” he said.

Hope Revolution Partnership and the Church of England commissioned the research. Another study by the international Christian ministry [Youth for Christ](#), shows similar results.

“What is really exciting for us is that there is this warmth and openness that we are seeing among young people. They are really open to faith,” said Dale.

Another surprising finding – the number of teens who said they decided to follow Christ after visiting a church or cathedral. 13% said they made their decision after such a visit. Another 13% said going to a church wedding, funeral, baptism or christening prompted their decision.

Not surprisingly, 45% growing up in a Christian family

influenced them. 17% cited going to a religious school and 15% cited Sunday school attendance.

In recent years church officials have [debated shutting down cathedrals](#) or opening them only on special holidays like Christmas and Easter to reduce ongoing operations and maintenance costs.

The new research may prompt a change in views about the value of the historic buildings. "It's a real wake-up call for the church," said Dale. He added: "We've got lots of young people who are coming into churches with school groups and that's a really integral part of them becoming a Christian."

About 16 000 Church of England buildings are still operational.

The Bishop of Worcester, John Inge, is the lead bishop for church buildings and said the findings demonstrate the significance of the buildings. "This shows the power of church buildings," he said.

"They give a sense of stability and also the sense that the Christian faith has inspired people to build these extraordinary buildings."

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**Rock & Roll legend Carlos Santana talks about Christian faith after seven suicide**

# attempts



Carlos Santana talks about his Christian Faith (PHOTO: [The Gospel Herald](#)).

*By Mark A Serit—Originally Published in [The Gospel Herald](#).*

Mexican-American musician Carlos Santana revealed how believing in Jesus Christ helped him to overcome the chains of depression. When his wife Deborah left him after 34 years of marriage, suicidal thoughts haunted Santana. In an interview with Rolling Stone, he admitted he attempted suicide seven times. It was only through God's grace that his life was spared, he said.

He explained going to a local church, hearing accusing voices saying his life was very miserable. But it was Jesus' voice that gave him hope to live and brought him renewed joy that he never found in music.

Aside from the breakdown of his marriage life, Santana carried the weight of his turbulent childhood years.

Santana openly talked about growing up in a dysfunctional family where his father abandoned him. At the age of 10, he

was repeatedly molested by a friend's father who bribed him into silence. The pedophile's actions instilled guilt and fear in the boy. It had taken years before Santana forgave his molester. With the help of God's grace, the burden of his past was finally lifted.

"I was able to remove the anger by forgiving that man... Forgiveness, man, forgiveness is incredibly liberating. And I'm here to tell you, with all my heart and spirit, that it can be done. You can be freed," Santana said in an interview with *Rolling Stone* in October 2008.

Santana came to a point where he realized that his life is in the hands of God, not his own. His dark past helped him to trust in God's plan for his life. His father's abandonment of their family, the family friend who molested him and his tumultuous marriage life made him realize that it is only through God's grace that a man can survive. "You have to go through the darkest night of the soul to get to the brightest light of the day," the 69 year old guitarist pointed out in an article in *Plain Truth*.

Many rock musicians are reluctant to talk about their spiritual life, but Santana openly expressed his faith in God. In fact, before concerts, he leads his band in fifteen minutes of prayer. He said it is like a doctor washing his hands before doing surgery.

Santana had a plan to retire as a musician in 2015 to become a pastor. He said he want to help people who are undergoing troubles in their life. He still doesn't know how the plan is going to unfold, but he said: "God is not done with me."

Carlos Santana is a Mexican-American musician who has 10 Grammy Awards. He is also number 15 on *Rolling Stone's* list of the 100 Greatest Guitarists of All Time. He his name was inaugurated in the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 1997. And in 1998, he recognized in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

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# Millions prepare to celebrate ‘forefathers’ of Christianity in Uganda



PHOTO: [CBN News](#)

*Originally published in [CBN News](#)*

Christians in the East African nation of Uganda are preparing to celebrate Martyrs Day on June 3 2016.

The day commemorates the martyrdom of 45 Ugandan men who converted to Christianity between the years of 1885 and 1887.

The story goes that the king of the country at that time was so outraged by their decision to convert that he ordered the mostly young men to be burnt to death.

The men, whose ages were between 14 and 50, are referred to as the ‘forefathers’ of Christianity in Africa.

Twenty-two of the men were Catholic, the rest were Anglican.

Ugandan authorities estimate that nearly 2 million people will attend memorial services this Friday, including the country's president, Yoweri Museveni.

The celebrations theme this year is, "The truth will make you free."

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## **Auction of 1980 Bob Dylan letter about Christian faith**



Bob Dylan

*Originally published in [Christian Today](#)*

A rare letter from Bob Dylan in which he makes frequent references to his faith is being auctioned online and may be sold for more than \$20 000 (R317 000).

Written on Park Plaza paper in April 1980 to a friend named 'Steve', the letter says Dylan is "up in Toronto singing and playing for about 3 000 people a night in a downtown theatre".

Dylan goes on: "The Spirit of the Lord is calling people here in their beautiful and clean city but they are more interested in lining up for Apocalypse Now than to be baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost – Wanna thank you for that Bible as it is helpful in discovering a few phrases from and shedding more light on what the King James version reads – God will lift up your heart as you begin to realize that 'He thru Christ has reconciled [sic] man unto Himself' (2 Corinthians)."

Steve, he says, is in "basic training and boot camp and I thank God you are and your commitment runs deep and you will be used to minister and break the hold of darkness in those you become face to face with".

He encourages Steve to pray and press on, "Always in the name of Jesus Christ Son of God, Manifest in the flesh."

The letter has the original envelope and is described as being in "good to fine condition".

The Toronto visit was for the legendary Massey Hall run as part of the Bob Dylan Gospel Tour after his conversion to Christianity. A year earlier he had produced his brilliant Slow Train Coming album, winning a Grammy award for the song 'Gotta serve somebody'. At Massey Hall he addressed crowds on the prophecies in Revelation, linking them to Russia's invasion of Afghanistan and an increasingly unstable Middle East.

Bidding at RR Auctions ends tomorrow, May 19.

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# Queen Elizabeth credits God's love for her record long reign



Queen Elizabeth II in the Music Room of Buckingham Palace after recording her 2008 Christmas message.

*Originally published in [The Gospel Herald](#)*

Queen Elizabeth of the United Kingdom has revealed that throughout her reign, she felt God's presence and faithfulness. In her new book, she detailed her enduring Christian faith.

Mail Online UK reported that the Queen is set to release a new book on her 90th birthday in April. The book is to be entitled "The Servant Queen and the King She Serves." and will revolve around her Christian faith. The book will be published by combined efforts of the Bible Society, as well as the churches' grow HOPE and the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity.

## **God's faithfulness**

Excerpts from the book revealed that the Queen talked of her

gratefulness to God's steadfast love while she rules over England and for the prayers she receives from the people who support her. She wrote that she "indeed seen his faithfulness."

She added that she was able to become the longest-reigning monarch in British history because of God's love."The extent and pace of change has been truly remarkable," she wrote. "We have witnessed triumphs and tragedies," she added.

Her longest reign as the monarch is being celebrated by residents of care homes across Dorset, Western Gazette reported. Colten Care Homes provided each of its 1 000 residents with a 140-page magazine detailing the Queen's achievements throughout her reign, starting with the Queen's coronation in 1953 up to the present. The magazine, entitled "Celebrating the reign of our Queen" included photos and stories from the past 60 years. Some photos include the Christmas celebrations held at Sandringham as well as other family events that took place at the Buckingham Palace.

According to the marketing manager of Colten Care Homes, Chris Golding, the magazine is their way show their love on the Queen's upcoming birthday.

### **90th birthday**

"We felt the magazine was a lovely way of celebrating The Queen's record-breaking reign as well as her forthcoming 90th birthday," he said. "The feedback from our residents has been excellent, not least because they recall so many of the events and occasions featured in the magazine."

For those who want a copy of the magazine, it is also being sold for £6.99 at W H Smith and other high street outlets. Queen Elizabeth II was hailed the longest-reigning British monarch since 9 September 2015 because she already surpassed the reign of her great-great grandmother Queen Victoria.

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# Queen Elizabeth II's remarkable reign – and her faith

She has met the Beatles. She speaks fluent French. She has survived 12 US Presidents and she even has a Facebook page. She served in WWII, driving a truck for the Women's Auxiliary Territorial Service where she was known to change a flat tire or two. On Wednesday (September 9, 2015), Queen Elizabeth II added on to her diverse list of accomplishments by becoming the longest-reigning monarch in British history with 63



years, 7 months and two days under her reign, reports [Christian Telegraph](#).

As Queen Elizabeth II, now 89, surpassed her great-great grandmother Queen Victoria, who previously held the record for longest reigning British monarch, Christian publications and columnists have honoured her for her steadfast Christian faith.

The [Christian Institute](#) writes: She has often used her traditional Christmas message to speak of forgiveness, Jesus' sacrificial life, the fact that no one is beyond God's love and the example that she herself takes from Jesus.

Last year the Queen said: "For me, the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, whose birth we celebrate today, is an

inspiration and an anchor in my life.

“A role-model of reconciliation and forgiveness, He stretched out his hands in love, acceptance and healing.

### **Christ's example**

“Christ's example has taught me to seek to respect and value all people of whatever faith or none.”

In 2012 she highlighted that Christmas is the time of year when we remember “that God sent his only son ‘to serve, not to be served’”.

“He restored love and service to the centre of our lives in the person of Jesus Christ”, she added.

The previous year she said: “God sent into the world a unique person – neither a philosopher nor a general (important though they are) – but a Saviour, with the power to forgive.

“Forgiveness lies at the heart of the Christian faith. It can heal broken families, it can restore friendships and it can reconcile divided communities. It is in forgiveness that we feel the power of God's love.”

Libby Purves, writing in The Times earlier this week, also noted the Queen's consistent comments on her faith.

Purves picked up on comments she made back in 2000 when she told the Commonwealth: “For me the teachings of Christ and my own personal accountability before God provide a framework in which I try to lead my life.

“I, like so many of you, have drawn great comfort in difficult times from Christ's words and example.”

[Christian Today](#) Contributing Editor Mark Woods writes that the Church of England is lucky to have Queen Elizabeth as its head.

He writes: "In recent years she has worn her faith more openly, as we have seen in the Christmas broadcasts in which she speaks directly to the nation. Last year she said: 'For me, the life of Jesus Christ, the prince of peace, whose birth we celebrate today, is an inspiration and an anchor in my life.'" In 2012 she said: "This is the time of year when we remember that God sent his only son 'to serve, not to be served'. He restored love and service to the centre of our lives in the person of Jesus Christ.'

"The previous year she said: 'God sent into the world a unique person – neither a philosopher nor a general...but a Saviour, with the power to forgive.' Forgiveness, she said, 'lies at the heart of the Christian faith. It can heal broken families, it can restore friendships and it can reconcile divided communities. It is in forgiveness that we feel the power of God's love."

"Today, Queen Elizabeth passes Victoria's record as our longest-serving monarch. We should be glad of her example of loyal service, and glad that she is not ashamed of the gospel. What sort of spirituality her successors will bring to their role is open to question; Charles, who famously said that he would like to be a defender of faith rather than of 'the faith', appears to have a rather more pick-and-mix approach to religion."

[Christian Telegraph](#) reports that the British Ambassador to the Holy See, Nigel Baker, commemorated the occasion of Queen Elizabeth's record reign landmark with deep admiration. "I think for me, what really stands out, is her deep sense of service to Britain and the British people," he stated, saying "I think it's that sense of service and duty that springs forth from her faith."