

Stranded in Space, Christian Astronauts Rely on Their Faith

Abdu Murray had a knack for dismantling the faith of Christians—until he didn't.

The now-Christian apologist was born and raised in Detroit to Muslim parents who brought him up in the Islamic tradition. In the 1980s, when Murray was grappling with things of faith, he saw cultural Christians—a fad still very much in vogue at the time—as “low-hanging fruit.”

It was easy, he said on a recent episode of CBN's “Faith vs. Culture,” to argue with those whose faith was, in his estimation, paper-thin and hardly robust enough to withstand critique.

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“Cultural Christians were abundant,” Murray said. “They were low-hanging fruit for me, and I thought Islam was the truth and everyone should believe true things and not false things and I looked at Christianity as a system of belief that was wrong-headed, even though it might have been right-hearted.”

He saw Christians as people who wanted to recognize God's greatness, but failed to do so correctly. He believed the central tenets of Christianity—Jesus coming to earth in human form, His death on the cross, and the concept of the Trinity—“insulted God's greatness.”

Along the way, Murray met his match. He came across Christians who knew their stuff, believers who had studied Scripture, whose faith was dyed-in-the-wool and battle-tested – a reality

Murray wasn't anticipating.

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"There were some Christians who did know what they were talking about and gave me some great answers to my objections," he said. "[W]hat I had to figure out was: 'Do I believe something because it's tradition, or do I believe it because it's true?'"

Murray recalled trying, as he framed it, to "knock the faith out of" a couple of Christians. As he prepared to argue with the two believers, he said he came across Luke 3:8.

The New Testament passage reads, "Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham," (ESV).

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Obamas Lead DNC Night 2,

Harris Campaigns Across Wisconsin

Dr. Mary Neal is an accomplished spinal surgeon whose Near-Death Experience has inspired millions. Her story, told in Angel Studios' new film "After Death," unfolded on a South American river when she became submerged while kayaking and says she visited heaven.

"My husband and I are avid kayakers," Neal recently told CBN Digital. "We've kayaked for decades all around the country [and] internationally."

So, they joined friends in Chile for a special trip for her husband's birthday but, while they were making their way down a river, the jovial occasion was obliterated.

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Neal ended up going over a waterfall and experienced something she could "never have dreamed up."

"The boat and I were immediately submerged under eight to 10 feet of water," she said. "I didn't panic. I set about trying to free me or free the boat ... but the weight of the water and the force of the current was too great for me to do anything."

As she pondered her options she came to the conclusion she would very likely die, finding herself forced to face the unthinkable. Neal said she somehow mustered the strength to ask God for His will to be done.

"The moment I asked that, I was immediately overcome with this very physical sensation of being held and comforted and reassured that everything would be fine," she said.

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And this is where Neal's story takes a wild turn: she then said she found herself in heaven.

"I never felt alive and then dead, conscious and then unconscious," Neal said. "I felt conscious and then more conscious, alive and then more alive."

She added, "I was being held by Christ."

While in heaven, Neal said she was still herself but that she was her "best" self. At first, she thought it was a hallucination based on her trauma and said she was doing "self-assessment examples" in heaven.

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4 Supermoons to Shine After Rare Solar Eclipse

Get ready for four bright celestial events in the coming months as the season of the supermoons kicks off next week. It's a quartet of supermoons that includes a partial lunar eclipse, coming during a year where the U.S. already paused to

mark a rare solar eclipse.

Earth's constant companion will put on a show, growing brighter and brighter starting Monday as it draws closer to our planet than normal.

According to NASA, the August full moon is a supermoon – and in this case, it's a "Blue Moon". It happens on August 19 at 2:26 PM EDT. At that point, the Moon will be 224,917 miles away from us.

The Moon will appear full for three days, from Sunday morning through early Wednesday morning.

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"The first recorded use of 'Blue Moon' in English dates from 1528. Speculations on the origin of the term include an old English phrase that means 'betrayed Moon' (because it led to mistakes in setting the dates for Lent and Easter). Or it may be a comparison to rare events such as when dust in the atmosphere makes the Moon actually appear blue," NASA explains.

Then the string of lunar spectacles extends to September when a supermoon will coincide with a partial lunar eclipse. The Moon will be nearly 3,000 miles closer to Earth the night of September 17.

During that September supermoon, you'll be able to see the mini-eclipse in much of the Americas, Africa, and Europe. Earth's shadow will cover part of the Moon, looking like someone took a small bite from a round cookie.

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Then, in October, the Moon will appear to be bigger and

brighter than at any other time this year. It will be 222,055 miles from Earth.

The supermoon spectacle concludes with one more appearance in November, shortly after the presidential election.

These events occur on schedule due to the Moon's shifting, oval-shaped orbit. For some skywatchers, you might only see the moon as an ordinary-sized full moon. But it will be closer than normal.

It's actually more about the brightness of the moon than a major increase in the visible size – a supermoon can be 30% brighter than average.

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'Evangelicals for Harris' Leverage Billy Graham's Image

CBN News has learned that a newly formed group, Evangelicals For Harris, will drop their first media spot Wednesday in an effort to win over some "on-the-fence" Conservative Evangelicals in swing states who are lukewarm when it comes to Donald Trump.

The videos will start on social media and eventually make

their way to TV in certain swing states. Specifically, and most interestingly, Evangelicals For Harris will be targeting conservative Christian media websites. The group already has over 200,000 Evangelical Christians who have signed a pledge to volunteer and vote for the Harris/Walz ticket.

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Donald Trump won a hefty majority of the conservative evangelical vote. However, typically elections are won at the margins, especially in the seven key swing states. Evangelicals for Harris is using this strategy in hopes of eventual victory. If history has something to say, it may work.

In 2008, Barack Obama received 26% of the White Born Again Evangelical Vote and won. In 2016, Hillary Clinton received 16% of the White Born Again Evangelical Vote and lost. In 2020, Joe Biden received 24% of the White Born Again Evangelical Vote and won. So if Kamala Harris gets 20% or more of the White Born Again Evangelical Vote, Trump could very well lose the General Election to Harris.

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Meanwhile, evangelist Franklin Graham is blasting the group for using an image and soundbite from his late father the Rev. Billy Graham.

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Ohio Church Fires Deemed Arson as Nationwide Attacks on Churches Increase

On July 24, a significant anti-Israel demonstration took place in Washington D.C., where protesters raised a Palestinian flag and defaced monuments in response to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's address to Congress. Now, the focus shifts to Chicago, which is set to host the Democratic National Convention.

Chicago Alderman Raymond Lopez and some fellow city council members have expressed concerns about potential unrest. Lopez said, "All I have to think about are the 2020 riots that happened after the murder of George Floyd. Our police department was caught completely off guard by the organized chaos that descended upon our city."

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Chicago resident Angel Ramos reflected on the riots, saying, "They let them destroy the buildings and steal whatever they wanted."

Alderman Nicholas Sposato also voiced his apprehensions, saying, "I'm scared to death, to tell you the truth. I am very concerned, very worried. I believe there are going to be professional anarchists coming into this city who are planning on doing nothing more than wreaking havoc upon us."

Most of the convention activities will occur within the security perimeter of Chicago's United Center, where Vice President Kamala Harris will rally delegates in person. A virtual roll-call vote earlier this month made her the Democratic presidential nominee.

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Nathan Gonzales of Inside Elections noted, "Democrats have gone part of the way down this path before with Hillary Clinton, but this has a very different feel to it. There is a bit of whiplash. The Democrats went from almost the depths of despair with Biden at the top—even though they liked him—to now such high energy and optimism about what is possible."

Gonzales explained that the focus of the campaign will shift with Harris as the nominee, moving away from concerns about President Biden's age and ability to concentrate on the opposition. "Now that Harris is at the top of the ticket, it allows for a normal conversation or exchange of ideas in a campaign about who might be too liberal or too conservative or too MAGA. It's just more normal than it was when Biden was running for reelection," Gonzales said.

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Olympic Athletes Witness Hundreds of Salvations

Behind the scenes, there was a huge prayer and evangelistic movement with “hundred upon hundreds” of salvations according to Frank Shelton, a four-time chaplain at the summer games. His team of volunteers was part of a multi-national initiative to pray with athletes, coaches, and spectators throughout France.

“We had the honor to see souls saved on the street,” Shelton wrote to me in an email. “Some of the athletes I met shared worship was happening on their own time, and I saw video footage of them praising God near the Olympic Village. We all witnessed the USA dominate, but {what} was so beautiful was how so many gave glory to God.”

Shelton acknowledged the outrage over the opening ceremony but had this to offer.

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“I reminded all those disgruntled at home after the opening ceremony that if we have to wait for the ‘perfect conditions’ to share the Gospel, we will never get started,” he explained. “As Christians called to share the faith, we must resemble a dedicated fireman or a running back. Why? We just need an opening to run in and through when everyone else is running out or quitting.”

For Shelton, it all boils down to understanding the call to reach everyone with the Gospel and that regardless of power, prestige or position, we are all “like sheep gone astray.”

He shared the following picture to summarize the ministry outreach in Paris. It shows a chaplain for track and field

walking and conversing with track star Grant Holloway.

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Frank wrote that another chaplain said, “God just opened the door for me to start a Zoom Bible study with some of the Olympians long after we leave Paris.”

What if the last two weeks were only a sampling of something bigger and better the world has to offer? What if the post-Olympic blues could be replaced with an eternal high and an everlasting hope?

While offering a break from reality and providing a glimpse at a world in harmony, the games can't compete with the greater picture of peace and unity outlined in Scripture.

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Fruits and Vegetables with the Most Pesticides in 2024:

The Dirty Dozen

Summertime is the perfect opportunity to increase consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, since so many are in season, readily available, and at a lower cost than at other times during the year.

Nutritionist Jim White told CBN News only about 12% of adults eat enough fruits and vegetables, which is problematic.

“We need them for vitality, for immunity, for antioxidants, to live better every single day,” he said.

White recommends washing fresh fruits and vegetables right before eating them. While some people prefer to use baking soda, vinegar, or even a store-bought produce spray, White says simple tap water is all that’s needed.

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“The big important thing is about twenty seconds, you want to take your time,” he said, “Some people just run it through really quick and it just doesn’t get enough of the pesticides and the residue and the dirt.”



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A produce brush can also help remove any dirt on thicker surfaces. You should still wash a rind that you don’t plan to eat, because bacteria can get transferred to the edible portion, possibly causing illness such as salmonella, E. coli, and listeria, all of which can make a person very sick. Common symptoms include nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. In severe cases, these illnesses can require hospitalization.

Health experts say in a perfect world all of the fruits and

vegetables we consume would be chemical-free. Unfortunately, that's not practical for many consumers, so it can be helpful to know which conventionally-grown produce contains the highest level of pesticides and which has the least.

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According to the Environmental Working Group, a non-profit organization that monitors agricultural toxins, the 2024 Dirty Dozen, the 12 fruits and vegetables most contaminated with pesticides are strawberries, at the top of the list, followed by spinach, greens (kale, collard, mustard), grapes, peaches, pears, nectarines, apples, peppers (bell and hot), cherries, blueberries, and green beans.

Conversely, the EWG also identifies its Clean Fifteen—the fruits and vegetables least contaminated with pesticides. Topping the list are avocados, followed by sweet corn, pineapple, onions, papaya, sweet peas (frozen), asparagus, honeydew melon, kiwi, cabbage, watermelon, mushrooms, mangoes, sweet potatoes, and carrots.

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