



# THE Rock

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

A Magazine of Pollards Hill Baptist Church

## Still Mighty at 80

*And no signs of slowing down*

## Mum's the Word

*Exploring a most important relationship*

## I Have a Dream

*57 years after Martin Luther King*

## Tougher than Tough

*Bossing those challenges*



**New Year  
New Focus?**



# It's New & Improved

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the maiden edition of The Rock magazine.

Well, actually, it's not quite the maiden (as in absolute first) edition, rather, it is the maiden edition of the new and improved version of Rock magazine and it is an absolute delight to welcome you as a reader, just at the point where we celebrate the 80th anniversary of Pollards Hill Baptist Church (PHBC).

It is indeed an exciting time for us as a church family, because as the new pastor of the church, I see us reviewing certain aspects of our journey into what we sense that God is calling us to do and be in the community of Pollards Hill. This Magazine is a publication of PHBC and all of the written content has been provided by members and friends of the church.

The origin and intent of the magazine's name, alludes to Jesus Christ, the solid rock on which we stand and whether you attend church or walk on by, believe in God or perhaps not God, dance the Waltz or Gangnam style, listen to Kanye or Celine, we genuinely hope that you will enjoy reading this magazine and it will be a blessing to you.

Please feel free to share it with whoever, wherever, because you just never really know who could benefit from the stories, articles and other stuff it contains.



Rev. Deji Ayorinde (Pastor)





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# We serve a God of second third and ...chances

So often we read stories in the Bible and forget that we are reading about real people with real day to day problems, just like us. Some of them survived against all odds and in their time, went on to achieve greatness. Some of them we meet only once in passing and wonder what happened during the rest of their lives and what legacy they left. Others, though apparently insignificant in their time and perhaps viewed with derision by the community they lived in, were such important players in the orchestra of the Christian life. So much that their own lives became weaved into history and unknowing to them, played a part in God's redemptive plan for mankind. Rahab was one of these people.

## What would Rahab say to us if she were here today to share her story?

Would she tell us how she tried to save her own skin by insisting that the spies looked after her and her family when they captured the land or would she tell us about an emotional and spiritual journey which started long before the spies even went into her land.

*I knew trouble was coming for months, in fact, maybe I'd known it for years. We all knew the stories about God's people and how they were conquering lands all over the place. Apparently they had been slaves in Egypt and God had used a man called Moses to deliver them from the Pharaoh of the time, to give them a new start. There were even stories of them crossing the Red Sea safely and the Egyptians all drowning as they tried to pursue them. Some of us didn't believe the stories –but I did.*

## Why Pray?

What if prayer was the cord to turn a famine into a feast?

What if prayer was the cord to save a loved one's life?

What if prayer was the cord to end all strife?  
The catalyst to ignite that latent flame into an inferno of hope and peace

What is prayer was that cord?

The cord we could weave into life's situations

A cord so strong it defies gravitation

But reaches to the heavens

And transforms a nation.

What if prayer was that cord?

Sometimes we find ourselves busy

Far too busy to pray

But what if.....?

That prayer released the resources

To see God's glory

To experience healings

To fan the flame of love and understanding

To restore peace

And change a nation

What if prayer is the testimony the world needs?

What if?

What if?

What if?

Would you pray

More regularly,

Fervently

Humbly?

Expectantly?

But prayer is that cord

It offers hope

It brings us into the Father's presence

It fills us with awe

And it changes us inside out

Yes prayer is that cord.

*It was a real surprise when later, we started hearing stories of their God being angry with them and many of them dying in the wilderness because they had disobeyed him. These later stories made us feel a lot better I can tell you. They didn't seem so invincible anymore. It was a real surprise when later, we started hearing stories of their God being angry with them and many of them dying in the wilderness because they had disobeyed him. These later stories made us feel a lot better I can tell you. They didn't seem so invincible anymore.*

*I lived in Jericho quite close to the Jordan and sometimes I would hear the music and singing as they celebrated their feasts. I suppose I should have been frightened but no, I wasn't. That's the thing you see, I couldn't afford to let fear into my life. I live alone and I needed to be strong to survive. Most 'respected' people avoided me, I was not good enough to be seen with them, so I kept to myself and made a living the only way I knew. I was a prostitute.*

*Some evenings when no one was with me I would go onto my roof and just listen to their music, it always calmed me. I felt guilty as I listened, it's like I knew what I was doing was wrong but I felt that I had no choice.*

*It was on one of these evenings that I first noticed the two men. Straight away I knew they were spies and that they had come from the other side of the river where the people of God were camping. I don't know what made me go down to the front door but I did.*

*When I opened the door something about them made me invite them in. I know its risky inviting complete strangers into your house right? Well, I gave them some supper and found myself making a bed for them with the stalks of flax on my roof. It's a good thing I did, for before long there was a knock on the door and some messengers from the king were standing there. They tried to intimidate me, but I looked at them calmly and told them that the men had indeed come earlier but because I did not know where they were from, and because I did not want them at my house, they had left. I don't know why I lied to the king's men, they were supposedly my people after all. My survival was linked to their survival. If we were conquered, I too could become a slave to this nation of God's people! Something inside of me instinctively made me want to protect the men though.*

*"Go after them quickly," I said, "Hurry, you might still catch them!"*

*After the messengers left, I hurried to the roof to report to the spies. I told them that I knew who they were and that the whole of my country and even those communities beyond our borders were afraid of them. I told them that I knew that their God had given them our land and that he was the God of heaven and earth. Looking back now I really don't know why I said those things, they just came out of my mouth.*

*I made them promise that my family would be spared when they invaded our land. That's a joke, my family hadn't spoken to me for years- ever since I started working. They are ashamed of me, and who can blame them? They are my family and I love them. I don't want my sister to do what I've had to do to survive, and my parents are getting old, I need to look after them. Surprisingly they both promised and told me to make sure my family was with me in my house when they invaded and that I needed to tie a scarlet cord at my window so that the house would be recognised.*

*I let the spies down through my window on a rope as my house was on the city wall and told them to hide out for three days until the king's men grew tired of looking for them. I knew they'd be safe and I knew I'd be safe. I trusted them, I knew they'd keep their word and I trusted their God. My only problem was how was I going to convince my parents, my brothers and sisters to come to the house of a prostitute.*

*The big showdown came about a week later. We were all quite perplexed when we saw the people marching around our city wall holding something on a pole and blowing their trumpets. They did this every day for six days. Lots of people laughed at them but I didn't. I knew something spectacular was going to happen. On the seventh day they marched around seven times and then there was a deafening crescendo of trumpets and voices so much so, that my family tried to hide themselves. And then it was all over. The walls came down like a pack of cards.*

*The spies were true to their word and my entire family was saved. We went to live among the Israelites and for much of the time we were treated well. I am so glad I got to know their God. I am a different person now. I have been given a second chance - a new beginning."*

# A Modern Day Miracle

**T**he Lord is doing a new thing in Pollards Hill Baptist Church. We have been blessed with a new Minister, Pastor Deji who has a heart to follow the Lord, both in the church and in the community. Exciting things are happening! Maybe God is also doing something new in your life – whatever it is, we know that His plans are good.

As we are excited about what God has in store for us at Pollards, I would like to invite you to pause for a moment, step back and look around in the wider world. Is God doing something there? The world seems to be in turmoil: we hear of wars, famine, acts of terrorism, weather extremities and natural disasters. It is sometimes hard to pick one specific thing that God might be doing.

I would like to suggest that in this chaos, there is something that can be clearly seen by those who have eyes to see – and this concerns God's old covenant people, Israel. God is gathering His people from the four corners of the world and bringing them back to the land that He had promised with an oath to Abraham and his descendants from Isaac (Genesis 17:8,19,21; 1 Chronicles 16:16-18 and many other scriptures).

History does not know any other nation that has been driven out of their land to survive and thrive, these nations are usually absorbed by the surrounding peoples. However, the Jewish people, having wandered around in foreign nations for 1900 years have been returning to the land of Israel since the beginning of 1900s. There is no explanation to that other than the God of Israel is still keeping His promises to the whole nation of Israel, even in their unbelief. In fact, this is what He is saying in Ezekiel 36:24-26:

*"For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."*

In Hosea 3:5 He says:

*"Afterwards the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the last days."*

Jeremiah 31: 35-36 tells us:

*"This is what the Lord says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar – the Lord Almighty is his name:*

*'Only if these decrees vanish from my sight,' declares the Lord, 'will Israel ever cease being a nation before me.'"*

We can go on and on with these prophecies – all the prophets have spoken about the restoration of Israel in the last days and we are witnessing this happening. Isn't it miraculous to see God work like that, fulfilling His Word as events are rapidly unfolding and the stage is being set for the Messiah's return?

Israel became a nation state in May 1948. Its existence has always been challenged by the surrounding nations. There have been several wars, none of which were started by Israel. Much bigger nations have tried to wipe them out, but they have not succeeded. How is that possible? Is it because the God of Israel is fighting for them? There is so much hostility around Israel which takes immense proportions considering how small a country it is. Psalm 83:2-4 tells us something that could be taken from some modern politician's speech:

*"See how your enemies growl, how your foes rear their heads. With cunning they conspire against your people; they plot against those you cherish. 'Come,' they say, 'let us destroy them as a nation, so that Israel's name is remembered no more.'"*

But God has something different to say in Amos 9:14-15:

*"I will bring my people Israel back from exile. They will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them," says the Lord your God."*



Jesus said in Matthew 23: 37-39 while He was weeping over Jerusalem:

*"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"*

Looks like the time of desolation is coming to an end. The Jewish people are returning to the land – this year the increase of Aliyah (returning) has been 30% compared to last year (World Israel News). They are prepared by God Himself who is giving them a new heart so that they can recognise Jesus as their Messiah and really declare: 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord'.

As we are working and praying in Pollards Hill for God's Kingdom, let us not forget to recognise the new thing God is doing with His people, Israel. Paul asks his readers in Romans 11:15:

*"For if their (Israel's) rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?"*

God's desire is to bring life and restoration to His creation. It often comes through struggles and hardships, but, what a wonderful thing it is to look forward to.



*So we fix our eyes, not on what is  
**SEEN** but on what is **UNSEEN**  
since what is  
**SEEN** is **TEMPORARY**  
but what is  
**UNSEEN** is **ETERNAL***

**2 Corinthians 4:18**



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**BLACK TIE EVENT**



On the 28th August 1963 Martin Luther King Junior delivered his now famous "I have a dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C. His speech was a cry from the heart to end the racism against black people that permeated American society. Today, fifty six years later, there is another evil stalking our young men here in Great Britain. As Christians, we know there is another way- God's way- and we pray and yearn for a move of God's Holy Spirit in our communities.

We know that Martin Luther King was a Christian and were he alive today looking at the young casualties of knife and gun crimes in Great Britain, his cry from the heart speech, may have read like this:

**I Have A Dream** - I have a dream that the God-centred values of love and justice will become the norm in our societies; that the injustices of hatred, poverty and lies will once and for all be eradicated and that God's justice and freedom will reign. That the bells of tolerance, respect and understanding will ring out bringing a message of hope, reconciliation and peace.

**I have a dream today** - I have a dream that one day, here in London, we will see a change in our young people. Where before, killing with knives and guns were almost a daily occurrence, this will be replaced with positive self-esteem, dignity and a respect for life knowing that God alone gives life.

**I have a dream today** - I have a dream that on the streets where blood has been so readily spilt, works of art depicting and reflecting tolerance and acceptance will blossom, flower and flourish.

**I have a dream today** - I have a dream that where gun shots once rang out fuelling fear, anger, frustration and hate, flags with a message of hope, forgiveness and togetherness will sway in the wind of love and reconciliation as God gives us the vision for a new tomorrow.

**I have a dream today** - I have a dream that the knife, which strikes terror into the hearts of our young will become a symbol- a catharsis and a catalyst -allowing love and healing to bubble and take root in our communities. That our young people will earnestly seek God and they will walk in the light of His love.

**I have a dream today** - I have a dream that communities will no longer wake up to the daily nightmare which ominously stalks our young, shrouding them with amorality which robs them of opportunities to thrive and be the best God made them to be.

**I have a dream today** - I have a dream that individuals will live the African proverb which says, "It takes a village to raise a child", that we will stand together in unity; being mothers, fathers, aunties, uncles, brothers, sisters and grandparents; we will value and nurture every child as though they were our very own.

**I have a dream today** - Do you share my dream? We can make this dream a reality by coming together as the Church of Jesus Christ, being His hands and feet, sharing ideas as to how we can move forward in God's grace and wisdom to put an end to the senseless killings. We can wrestle our youth away from the monster of evil and despair, show them an alternative world view, a different lifestyle, one which celebrates the life that God has given them and offers a new hope for the future.

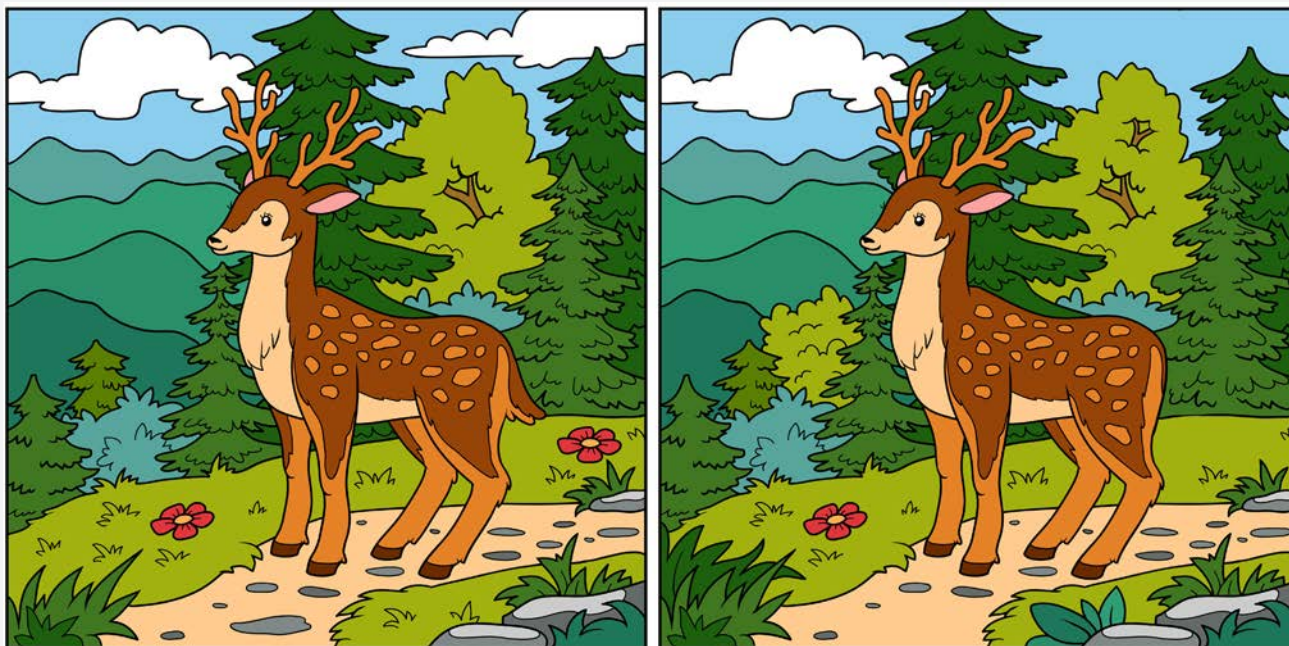
As Christians we cannot pretend there are easy answers to this problem, what we see happening on our streets is the consequence of a much deeper problem- a problem which threatens to rock the very foundations of family and societal life. Christian children are not immune. Our children attend the same schools, use the same transport to get around, visit the same shops and so even if we are confident that they are not part of the growing gang movement, they are still vulnerable.

I stand on God's word that children are a heritage from Him, they are to be a blessing in our old age, and they should be respected and nurtured, so that makes us -the biological and church family- accountable. Since as stewards, we are to be held accountable to the Living God we need to ensure that we do everything in God's power to support and encourage our children.

Let's ask God for wisdom, discernment, sensitivity and boldness as we come together to tackle this evil in our society.

***'Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?' [Esther 4 v 13]***

# SPOT THE 10 DIFFERENCES



## BIBLE NAMES WORDSEARCH

D T N O X C U S S S F V A T N W M I G R W C E R B B V G R H  
 X X C Y N V L U W Z N C R E Z V A S N A M O R K O Y N A W U  
 I R Y O H D C D S C T A L M O S T N Z A A T J J U V S K S F  
 F U V C H I X O V S O E I Q P S T F C L R S Y B J L K R S Z  
 Z X D N T N G X I J U V G P I X H V P J Z S X O D Q L B Q I  
 C O G I P F Q E W M N H O J P H E R U Z E M S O X S N F X Y  
 D S V S A Y M A A J E F Y P O I W X L T Q H J T C X G H M Y  
 M E S T I N W S J B L C C S Y K L B N R U X Q W U G S N I J  
 L I B X I O H O L Y H P P V A M V I R A S Y P I E U D R O T  
 D C D S Q T X D Q B Z W P B W Z L I H S N Y L W S C M M Y O  
 A J Y P A G U B G F J U C S A L I R K P A Z E H I C J F O W  
 Z V G B Q I R S H R L D Z U V D W W P W I O C C A N G V O C  
 G U Z A B Z W Z Q G M M K B R D V A I V S C H M P I J I I W  
 A X Z U S O A G S X Z F Z Q G D I N W V S V Q I J N M W U W  
 E A R E P Z H A E E C O S P F W E H W Y O B P P Z L H G I R  
 S Q H R P V P N U N G F S Q M J W U O Q L Q S G L V Q B J J  
 L V X N R D G Q B C E D J R G A H G U R O R C G R R V I R D  
 S N A I H T N I R O C S U N L J N K B T C S S L U S Q Z Y V  
 E S T H E R R A R H Q M I J Q S W H V M T M A Z T F G H O S  
 L C G G X Q F Z L G X O X S G Z J N E H E M I A H M W H I H

ACTS  
 COLOSSIANS  
 CORINTHIANS  
 ESTHER  
 EXODUS

EZRA  
 GENESIS  
 JOB  
 JOHN  
 JOSHUA

JUDGES  
 LEVITICUS  
 LUKE  
 MATTHEW  
 NEHEMIAH

PHILIPPIANS  
 ROMANS  
 RUTH  
 SAMUEL  
 TITUS

# GOD'S PLAN FOR SALVATION

Right through the Old Testament we see God working out His plan for the human race. The Bible tells us that it is God's wish that everyone knows Him, say sorry to Him for things we've done which makes Him sad and receive His forgiveness (2 Peter 3v9). Before God created men and women He had His plan of redemption – His son Jesus.

Having recently celebrated Christmas, which for Christians, is a recognition of the most precious gift from our heavenly Father, we now look towards Easter and the cross of Jesus which is our guarantee of acceptance as heirs and children of the living God.

As you engage with this short rap I would like to encourage you to think about who Jesus is, what He has done for you and what He expects of you. School, college and university life can be a real challenge but the good news is we do it all in God's strength.

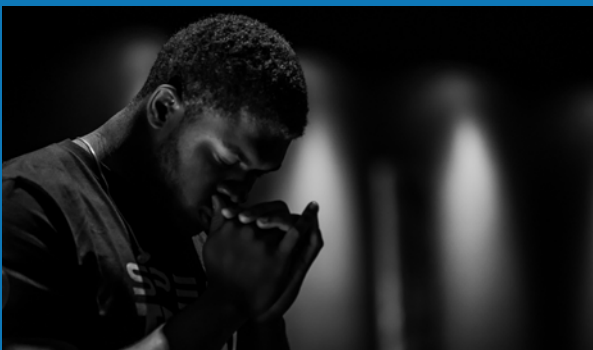
## Jesus Rap

Did you know that Jesus is the Messiah  
Who came from heaven so we could live better?  
Unemployment, sickness, poor relationships,  
I'm here to tell you that Jesus is higher.  
Higher than you and higher than me  
Is Jesus the Messiah who died on a tree.  
Died in our place so we could be free,  
Died to reconcile friends and family.  
He died for you and He died for me,  
Can't you see that Jesus is He?  
Jesus is He, Yes Jesus is He.  
Jesus, Jesus is He.



## Questions to think about

1. Who do you say Jesus is?
2. What does it mean to be free?
3. How could we, in practical ways share the message of freedom in Jesus?



Father,

Thank you that Jesus is our Messiah. Thank you that He came to heal, renew and restore us and make us more like Him. Thank you that You care about the tiniest detail of our lives and that nothing is impossible for You.

Amen

# A Most Important RELATIONSHIP

The TV commercials come thick and fast as Christmas approaches, advertising the latest toy that every boy or girl believe they must have. The cry could be heard from households across the land: 'Mummy, Mummy can you buy me that for Christmas?!' It reminds me of my own childhood as I recall the first most important relationship of my life; that between my mother and me. I understand that not everyone can identify with this type of relationship in always a positive way. However, it remains a vitally important foundation in our world and for the life of every child; so much so that I consider it more than worthy of the space that I am about to give it here in this article. Perhaps you can identify.

The bonding continues at first cry and the announcement by the nurse: 'It's a boy,' or 'It's a girl,' or 'It's twins!' There is a 'unique-to-women' joy, after the anxious wait and painful childbirth. The days following the birth is filled with both happiness and thoughts of both aspiration and apprehension: Will I be able to cut it as a mother? I want him to go to a good school; perhaps university; become a doctor or a teacher. The future is exciting, with thoughts of what baby could be.

She looks dotingly at the helpless bundle of joy in her arms, bright eyes staring back at her; vulnerable and self-centred...demanding. It will take her full commitment; as much patience and love as she possesses. Her mind is made; settled: this is what I was born to do, surely. I want to be a good mother! He's here; he's mine; my responsibility. No sacrifice can be too great...and I will protect him with my life.

The night's silence is broken by a high-pitched noise. She stirs and turns to him: 'it's time for his bottle.' He replies, 'Already, it's only 2.00am!' 'I'll be up in a few hours and don't want to be late for my job interview.' He stumbles blurry eyed out of bed anyway, through the darkness, down the stairs into the kitchen. He knows and understands that she has had a hard day; she's tired; I must play my part, he reminds himself; be a good husband and father.





She lays in the darkness bone tired, but happy as she reflects: He smiled a lot today; and did I hear him say: Mamma?

The journey isn't easy. Doubts, perhaps tears and uncertainty set in: Am I doing it right? He's toddling and a handful. At times I feel as if I'm on my own; he's not doing enough to help me and I'm almost full-term. I must eat for two and make sure I rest properly; I really need a rest! He reassures her that he will do more, as much as he can. She's satisfied with his response to her crisis moment. She knows that he loves her and their child as much as she does. He cannot remember the last time they spent quality time together.

She feels the need to take a step back and re-evaluate her life...find her-self. Five years is a long time out of work; the mind can go numb. Two children later, she doesn't regret it. You know what? she smiles to herself, If I had to, I would do it all again. This is the greatest thing ever, she muses. The joys and pains of caring for my children; it is all worth it! Hearing their first word and watching them take their first steps. Seeing them slowly grow-up and develop a personality and identity of their own is... priceless.

The Bible informs us that: 'Children are a heritage from the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is a reward. Happy is the Man that hath his quiver full of them: They shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with their enemies in the gate,' (Psalm 127: 4-5). In the times that we live, children are not often thought of in this way... 'a heritage or reward from God.' Yes, it was probably worse in Victorian times and the preceding years which led to laws that shout loudly: 'children have rights too!' We live in a world of privileges and great technological advancement. Our lives are certainly better for it. Despite this, children continue to be the victims of infanticide all types of abuse and neglect; and are exposed to parental discord. There are policies being passed by governments that confuse identity, reverse, erode and eat away at the concept of childhood and the child's right to be a child; to be what God created them to be.

***"You know what? she smiles to herself. If I had to, I would do it all again. This is the greatest thing she muses."***

There is perhaps no better time for mothers' (Dad's, you too): to embrace and value more than ever your God-given role to parent your children, to establish with them a relationship with Godly purpose. The relationship between you and your child is a unique one. Who understands them better than you do? The fictional mother in this article understood this and embraced her calling to motherhood with all its difficulties and demands. She learnt that it takes patience, time and commitment to be a successful mother. She also discovered that although motherhood can be challenging, it can also be rewarding work.

With the current attack on the family and childhood, who will man the trenches on the frontline and take a stand? It is you mothers! The call is for you to love and serve your family and commit to raising your children. You can teach them true life values of Godliness, love, faith, kindness, respect, obedience, discipline and determination. From the cradle to adulthood you can begin to lay a strong foundations that will serve your child throughout their life. Who can argue that the future of a healthier society and world, does not depend on this most important relationship?



# IS ANYTHING TOO HARD IMPO

***T***he central message in many of the Old Testament stories is without doubt the triumph of good over evil and serves to remind us that God's timing is always perfect. Indeed, as Joseph said "What you meant for harm, God has turned it around for good."

*How then, might a modern narrative play out in society today? Can a modern interpretation embed those core messages of yesteryear? Can our modern way of living resonate with those stories of the past, and will the outcome of our experiences serve to remind us that whatever happens God is in control.*

Times were hard for the Nelson family. Crisis after crisis, like a tottering pack of cards, they had watched their lives disintegrate. First, Mrs Nelson suffered two miscarriages over a three -year period, then Mr. Nelson lost his job and finally the house, which had been their home for the last ten years was repossessed, so the family had to move in with Mr. Nelson's aging parents. Could life get any worse? They wondered, as they stared at each other across the small table. The silence said it all.

Four years ago, this was unimaginable. The family had owned a thriving engineering business, making bolts and screws, which were in great demand on the small island. Their clients included prestigious manufacturing companies, but as competition from North America and Europe grew, they were forced to close workshops and lower prices, but even that could not save them as the cheaper goods flooded the market. Now, as the reality of it all dawned on them, it became increasingly clear that they needed to make a decision.

"So what are we going to do?" Bukka finally asked,

"We don't really have a choice." Femi said firmly, holding the paper in her hand.

A few days ago, Femi had seen an advert in the local paper asking for adults between the ages of 25 and 40 to register with an agency recruiting for the Mother Country. Femi had kept the paper waiting for the right time to tell Bukka about it.

"What's that in your hand?" Bukka asked, reaching towards her. This was it, she summoned up her courage.

"The agency in town is recruiting workers to go to England to help rebuild after the war." she blurted out.

"Femi I've told you, I'm not leaving this island!"

Femi knew how much her husband loved the island and besides, his parents would be devastated if they left. She also knew how much the last workshop in town meant to him. Even though it had been months since the last order came in, Bukka had been there every day oiling machines and waiting.

Femi dug her heels in. "Look Bukka," she said, 'We can't continue like this, you need to sell that last workshop , we can't live on memories of the good old days!"

"But our life is here, my parents are here, the children's friends are here. We go away we are nothing Femi. Nothing!" Bukka said, raising his voice slightly.

The words reverberated in her head. She stood up and looked straight at him.

"I will never be a nothing!" she said, screaming with tears streaming down her face, "My children will never be a nothing!"

Bukka stood up and held her. He could feel her heart beating fiercely against his chest.

This was one of the things he loved about his wife of 15 years - she was a fighter. His ancestors had arrived on the island as slaves over 200 years ago and out of the sea of despair they had finally managed to carve out a life for themselves.

# FOR THE LORD?

# POSSIBLE

His great grandfather had bought some land, farmed it and from the proceeds he had sent his children to school. Bukka's grandfather had been a police constable and instilled in his children the same principles of hard work and education. As a Christian, Bukka's parents had taught their children the importance of loving God, respecting and caring for the family. How could he leave everything he had worked for, everything his grandparents had achieved? How could he turn his back on his family at a time when they needed him?

'Bukka we have to do something, we have to give it a go.' she said sobbing. He relented.

'Okay Femi, the island will still be here and my sister and her husband can keep an eye on mama and papa. I'll close up the business in a few weeks.'

It was a cold November morning when Femi, Bukka, Swali and Tiro arrived at the small basement room which was to be their home for the next 3 years. It wasn't at all what she expected, so stifling her surprise, she said to the children, "Okay you two, start unpacking."

Those early days were harder than either Femi or Bukka had imagined. Femi had gotten herself a job in a hospital laundry and Bukka was working as an apprentice with an engineering firm and attending evening classes. Juggling work and home life was difficult as there were no family members to support them, much of the time Swali was responsible for Tiro, making sure that his chores and homework were done. Life in England challenged the family in many, many ways. The most heart-wrenching pain however, was what the children had to endure - the name calling in the school playground, and the racism from teachers.

One evening, as Femi trudged home in the snow, she heard a cheery "Good evening my sister."

Turning around slowly she saw someone she had seen before, but had never acknowledged.

'Good evening', she responded, slightly taken aback.

"I'm Mrs. Johnson, how are you?" said the stranger.

"Very well, thank you." Femi replied cautiously.

"I would like to invite you to a new church my husband and I started attending six months ago," she said as she held out what appeared to be an advert to Femi.

Without thinking, Femi reached out took the paper, making the point of folding it, before carefully placing it in her bag. After saying thank you, she walked off reminding herself that church was not for her. What did the church folks do when her mother had died in childbirth and six months later her father had died of a broken heart? She had been left an orphan. A church 'sister' had taken her in and had worked her like a slave until she ran away. She wanted nothing more to do with church folks. Even though Bukka had been brought up in a Christian home and had attended church regularly back on the island, he never described himself as a Christian and they had been fine for years- that is, until the downturn in the business.

When Femi turned the key in the door that evening she was met by a crying Swali and Tiro.

"Mum we don't like it here, can we go home please?" She knew instantly that something must have happened to upset the children.

***"Life in England challenged the family in many, many ways."***

## IS ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR THE LORD? (CONT'D)

"What happened?" she asked urgently.

Slowly and tearfully the children related the story of their daily walk from school to their front door, of children following them, the taunts and threats, of adults seeing what was happening and simply ignoring them. Only one lady, Swali told her mum, had stopped to intervene and had walked the children home, standing by the gate until they were safely inside. By the time the children had finished their story Femi was in tears herself, she drew the children to her and held them, all three sobbing together.

Later that evening, in their tiny one-roomed lodgings, Bukka repeated his message, reminding them that things were bound to change and that as soon as he had finished his engineering course they would go back to the island.

And things did seem to change. The children seemed a little more settled and told their parents about the lady, who had every day since the first incident, walked behind them each evening on their way home. There were less stories of being bullied until three months later Femi came home again to a crying Swali. Her heart sank.

"Ok, so what's happened now?" she asked quietly.

"Mum, we were talking about what we wanted to be when we were older and I said I wanted to be a psychologist and the teacher laughed at me!"

"Why would she do that?" Femi pressed for an answer.

"She even said she was sure that I didn't even know how to spell the word!"

That was the last straw. Femi decided then and there that she wasn't going to wait for Bukka to finish his course, she was taking the children back to the island. She waited for Bukka to arrive.

"But it was your idea for us to come here, you said we could make a life for ourselves!" he reminded her.

"Yes, but not at the expense of our children!" she continued, "They are unhappy, when was the last time you saw them smile?"

"Femi, be reasonable, please let me finish my course and we will make a decision then, our children are resilient, we've bought them up to be strong they'll get over this."

Without thinking, Femi picked up her handbag and threw it at Bukka, storming out and slamming the front door.

That evening, she walked the streets of South London, crying and praying.

"What have we done that you've brought us to this?" she asked God repeatedly.

When she returned to the house, the children were asleep and Bukka was on his knees praying and crying. She knelt with him and for the first time they held hands and prayed together.

"I found this when I picked up the things which fell from your bag." He looked at her as he held up the paper with the name of the church Mrs. Johnson had given to her months earlier. "Perhaps we should give it a go." He quietly said and Femi nodded in agreement.

Bukka started humming a song he had learnt at Sunday school over forty years ago, and before long the children had woken up and all the family were singing.

That Sunday when Femi, Bukka, Swali and Tiro walked into the hall where the church was kept, Mrs. Johnson welcomed them with a warm smile.

"We have been praying for your family and we knew you would come."

Swali and Tiro chirped "Hello", greeting Mrs. Johnson like a long lost friend.

"Good morning children, I see you've brought your parents to church."

"Mum this is the lady who has been walking us home." Tiro explained.

"We don't know how to thank you." Mrs Johnson. "You have been so kind to our children."

Mrs. Johnson introduced Bukka and the family to her husband who was the pastor, and to other members of the congregation. For the first time since they had arrived in England they felt at home. That afternoon they were invited to dinner with the Johnson family in their small terraced house.

After dinner, as both family relaxed in the front room, they related their stories of survival. They spoke openly about the harsh realities of being an immigrant, an unwelcome outsider. The Johnson's family had grown up and no longer living at home, and Mrs Johnson spoke about their experiences of being bullied at school.

"So what are your plans, Bukka?" Mr. Johnson asked.

"Well, I will finish my apprentice and my course in nine months and the plan is to go back home." "It's been a struggle living

in the one-room, the children really need their own rooms but we could never afford to buy anything." Mr and Mrs Johnson then told him about a group of like-minded people who had pooled their monies and month after month, a different family had managed to raise a deposit for a home. Indeed, that was how they had acquired their home. He told them it was called a 'partner' and that he was starting one, as the lady who had started the first one was moving to Birmingham where she had recently bought a house.

They listened, hardly believing what they were hearing and looking at each other they chorused. "Yes of course we'd would like to join it!"

Mr. Johnson asked the family to hold hands and he prayed for them. He prayed that the Lord would strengthen their marriage and build a hedge of protection around the family. He prayed for divine favour in every area of their lives. By the time Mr. Johnson had finished praying both Bukka and Femi were crying with joy.

"It's like a burden has been lifted." Bukka told Mr Johnson as he opened his eyes.

"See you tomorrow children," Mrs Johnson said smiling, as she waved the family goodbye at the front door.

Things did change. The tension about going to school changed. The children began to make friends. Some of the children, they later found out attended the Johnson's church. One of the mothers volunteered to take Swali and Tiro home after school and keep them until Femi or Bukka had finished work.

In time, Bukka finished his apprentice and started working with a local firm. Femi began training to be a nurse and the family became more and more involved in the life of the church. Under the watchful eye and mentoring of Mr and Mrs Johnson, Bukka found his faith again and Femi for the first time dared to believe in the God of second chances.

And that would be a great place to end this story. "But what about the house and the children?" I hear you ask.

Yes, Bukka got his partner money and with his work as a mechanical engineer, he secured a mortgage and the family moved into a three bedroom house near Oval.

The children went on to university and Swali is now an educational psychologist and Tiro is about to finish a degree in education. He hopes to enter the teaching profession next year.

**Often we don't know how God is working in our lives and when we experience those "valley" seasons we are so caught up in the negative that we forget to believe with our hearts. The truth is, if we truly know in our heads and believe in our hearts that God sent His only son for us, how can we not believe that He is there every step of the way, in the good times and bad times? God has promised us that He will never leave us and we serve a promise-keeping God.**

**In all things He works for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28.**

## Write the Vision – Make it Clear

Write the vision make it clear  
That's what God whispered in Habakkuk's ear  
But what is God saying to you  
What dream, what vision to come true?

God has a plan He wants to share  
A plan that shows He really cares  
A plan of salvation for one and all  
Come on let's be a part of God's call  
To spread the word to all who will hear  
God's salvation plan deserves a big cheer

And we all have our part to play  
God's vision His dream will show us the way  
Our Creator has already prepared work for us  
He planned our days in advance before we were dust  
So we need to listen for God's still small voice  
And walk in obedience, let's make that choice  
He's not in the wind nor in the earthquake  
A still small voice is all it should take  
Some say, 'God doesn't speak to me'  
Wait in His presence and you will see  
My sheep know my voice  
Jesus tells us that plain  
So when we hear nothing let's listen again  
We need to be quiet and sit before God's throne  
To discern the voice of God alone

We have a great God His visions will be great  
You may think 'they're too much for my small plate'  
But if God has told you that's what you should do  
He'll release His power to bring you through  
Just trust in Him with all your heart  
Be of good courage and make a start

You'll see in the end there'll be nothing but gain  
God's kingdom will flourish and you won't be the same  
God will shape you and mould you and bless you and  
people will see  
You becoming more like Jesus in preparation for  
eternity

# HOPE COFFEE CLUB

*A brief history*



**H**abakkuk 2:2-3 NKJV- Then the Lord answered me and said: write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry?

In April 2010, the Lord spoke to me to minister to the elderly and feed the hungry and needy in the community.

The aim of the ministry for the elderly was to create an environment that brought them together in a friendly, relaxed atmosphere with refreshments where the message of hope would be shared. I shared the vision with my pastor at the time, Rev. Jerry Stanton of Pollards Hill Baptist Church and asked if I could use the church hall to make the vision happen. He prayed about it and came back after a few weeks to confirm his support of the vision and permission to use the church hall. The Hope Coffee Club started on 25th January 2012 with only 2 people from the community together with a handful of Pollards Hill Baptist Church members. It has since grown to 30 regular attendees. Several residents from two local care homes also attend the coffee club occasionally.

The coffee club runs every Wednesday from 10am to 12pm and breaks over the holidays. Activities include sitting exercises, storytelling and quizzes. There's also a time of reflection, where there's prayer, worship and sharing of the word of God. In addition to the weekly refreshments, hot meals are provided during the Christmas, Easter and summer holidays. All the activities, food and services are provided free of charge. God has been faithful in His provision to the coffee club. Although there have been many challenges in seeing the vision come to fruition, it has taken an unshakeable faith, perseverance and determination to get to where we are now.

Many close friendships have been formed through the Hope Coffee Club. The members look out for and spend time with each other outside of the coffee club. Two individuals so far have also given their lives to Christ as a result of attending the coffee club. To God be the glory! This was no surprise as the Lord is interested in both the social and spiritual wellbeing of all souls. We are believing that more people will come to know Christ through this ministry.

I would like to conclude by saying a big thank you to everyone who has and continues to help run this ministry. This includes the practical, spiritual and financial support needed to make the Hope Coffee Club what it is today.



## POLLARDS HILL BAPTIST CHURCH

### **Celebrating 80 Years of God's Faithfulness!**

For 80 years this church has been positioned in this spot  
And during this time it's fair to say the place has changed a lot  
No more roaming fields you see when out the door you step  
But Pollards Hill housing estate the shops and a place to bet

A number of schools have been built to teach the local children  
A medical centre across the road looks after our health and wellbeing  
The congregation has also changed no longer one colour, one nation  
But people from all parts of the globe worship God here for salvation

Who'd have thought when this church was built just after the First World War  
That it would still be standing here a beacon of God's light and more  
Coffee mornings on a Wednesday Tots'n'Tinies Tuesdays too  
They have been going for many years but God will bring things that are new

Like our Pastor who wants to see a harvest, that's his constant chime  
A harvest of souls for Jesus a reduction of violence and crime  
In order to achieve this the church family will have to do their part  
To reach out to the community and show them that God has a heart  
A heart that cares about them and is there through any trial or test  
No matter what it looks like our God is never at rest

His ever - present help is available all they have to do is call  
The promise God has always made is that He's there for one and all

This 80th birthday's a celebration a salute to church family past  
To anyone who's played a part in making a church that will last  
But it's also a cheer to the future to what God will be doing next  
Of new beginnings and new hope we're believing in God for His best

# SAVE the date

Dates for your diary

*Here are a selection of dates from the church calendar. Please make a note of them. We would love for you to join us, if you are able.*

*Oh, feel free to tell someone about these dates too.*



## 19TH JANUARY

Come and join us as we kick off the 80th anniversary, celebrating God's faithfulness to us.

SUNDAY 10:30AM

## 1ST FEBRUARY

Our 80th anniversary celebrations continue with a concert featuring the London African Gospel Choir

SATURDAY 6:30PM



## 15TH FEBRUARY

Celebrating the covenant of marriage with the Married Couples' Dinner Dance.

SATURDAY 6:30PM



## 8TH MARCH

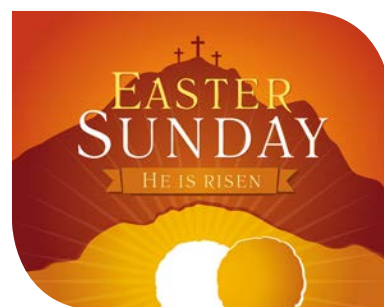
Start of a new preaching series: Double Edged Reality.

SUNDAY 10:30AM

## 5TH APRIL

Start of a new preaching series: Victorious - A New Life Dawns

SUNDAY 10:30AM



## 12TH APRIL

Come and celebrate the greatest day in history - Easter Sunday, as we declare that He Is Risen!

SUNDAY 10:30AM

In addition to the upcoming dates (left page), we also have a number of regular events that take place in the life of the church. If you see something you'd like to come to, just let us know. We would love to have you join us.



### SUNDAY WORSHIP

Of course, we meet every week. Our regular service takes place on Sunday mornings.

SUNDAYS 10:30AM

### TOTS'N'TINIES

Got a toddler? Come and join other parents and toddlers at the weekly group.

TUESDAYS 12:00PM



### HOPE COFFEE CLUB

Our weekly time of fun and fellowship for the elderly and those who have retired.

WEDNESDAYS 10:00AM



### LADIES' EXERCISE

The ladies meet every week to have fun as the calories burn. It's a great way to make new friends.


WEDNESDAYS 1:30PM

### PRAYER MEETING

In addition to weekly prayer, we also have a monthly session on the first Wednesday.

1ST WEDNESDAY 7:30PM





THE ROCK

# FAITH,

*A Christian*

It's the dawn of a new decade. A time that often sparks the desire in most of us, for a fresh start. However, the world is currently faced with increasingly unstable geopolitical tensions and economic instability, making it increasingly difficult for people, including Christians, to feel secure or have any semblance of hope for the future of our planet.

# POLITICS & PROPHECY

## *response to an unstable political & social climate*

In the United Kingdom alone, we ended 2019 on the heels of a contentious General Election whilst still being caught in the midst of long-winded, ever-changing Brexit negotiations. Throughout the world, we got to witness increasing conflicts amongst nations and races. Leaving the question- as Christians in the U.K or elsewhere, how do we respond to the constant uncertainty we are facing, as we embark on uncharted territory in the upcoming years?

One way we can aim to tackle this is by reminding ourselves to be centred on the Kingdom of God. Though each new piece of legislation or law passed, topped with wars, conflict and social unrest can seem daunting- it is important to remember that none of these events are in isolation. Everything from climate change to the continual threats of authoritarian regimes, widening societal and class divisions which have been amplified by various economic crises and inequality; the rise of Populism in Latin America and throughout the world, the UN's prediction of the possibility of a Global recession in 2020- catalysed by currency gyrations, trade wars and the possibility of a no-deal Brexit all tie in with Biblical prophecy about the state of the world, before the second coming of Christ.

In Matthew Chapter 24, the disciples asked Jesus what signs would indicate the coming of the end of the age. He responded by telling them that in the Last Days there would be much deception, teamed with wars and rumours of wars, nation rising against nation and kingdom versus kingdom.

***“Everything from climate change to the continual threats of authoritarian regimes...”***

Something we can begin to see, if we take an honest look at the world surrounding us. There is trouble rising on all fronts, but we can rest assured knowing our Saviour forewarned us about what is to come and that He will be our guide through it all. He will bestow us with wisdom, protection and strength to navigate through such times.


If we glance at the political and social climate Jesus was born into under the Roman Empire, we can see it was an oppressive society. Under King Herod, the people were heavily taxed. Some scholars believe that people had to give 50-60% of their produce in taxes. Herod ruled over Judea, Samaria and Galilee and his leadership was often likened to a police state or a military dictatorship, a prime example of authority abusing power. There was also a rise in social banditry during that period. With many anti-authority figures revolting against the political powers of the time, claiming to offer some form of salvation. Yet during this confusion and strife, the true Saviour was born. The One who would free Man from the bondage of sin.

So, what can we take from this? How do we respond to such perilous times, that may strike fear in our hearts? We must go back to the Word of God and see what He has to say. We must take time to reflect and seek His guidance, even in what may seem like the smallest decisions.

Lastly, let us remember the words Jesus gave us in Luke 21:28:

***“Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near”.***



A full-length portrait of Karl Lokko standing on a red carpet. He is wearing a light beige blazer over a black V-neck shirt and dark blue jeans. He has a short beard and is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a white step-and-repeat banner with logos for 'WE' (in blue squares) and 'virgin atlantic' (in grey text with a red Virgin logo).

THE ROCK

# KARL LOKKO

## A Man for our Time

What is it that makes Karl Lokko an outstanding individual? Is it his imposing 6-foot plus frame, or is it the broad beaming smile that greets you when you meet him? Could it be the inspiration he is to his community and the work he does among young black boys once involved in drugs and gang violence? He is a poet, musician-rapper, teacher-preacher and now a pastor at his home church, Word of Grace Ministries in Lambeth. He is a friend of billionaires and an advisor to royalty and politicians. Karl Lokko is a welcome role model for today's young people.

A young man of prayer, faith and courage, his early life is characterised by the bondage of ancestral occult influences and violent conflict on the mean streets of South London. But God in his love and mercy rescued him from all of that and has shown him a far better way of life. On behalf of The Rock, Joshua Haywood, close friend of Karl, was able to arrange an interview with him to ask some fun and serious questions about his life.

**TR:** What's your favourite football team?

**KL:** Liverpool.

**TR:** Liverpool: top of the league at the moment. My Dad supports Liverpool.

**KL:** That hasn't happened in how long?

**TR:** In a long time. I feel like they are due to win it; it's either them or Leicester. They are at the top.

**KL:** Wow, yeah, I mean...life!

**TR:** What's your favourite food?

**KL:** Burgers.

**TR:** Any kind of burger or just burger?

**KL:** It has to be a good burger. It has to do things, be a bit adventurous. It has to have something like caramelised onion; it has to do something; then we are good for it.

**TR:** Who has been your greatest influence?

**KL:** In my life, in terms of a person? When you say influence, do you mean in terms of what they have done or what they have done engaging with me directly or what they have done and I have engaged with their narrative?

**TR:** I would say both. Because it might be a person you have never met but an individual who has influenced you and impacted your life in such a way. So, either way directly or indirectly.

**KL:** Pastor Mimi who I have met and Nelson Mandela who I have never met.

**TR:** Why Pastor Mimi?

**KL:** Everyone else was influencing me to be more than or less than I am. She came in at a juncture where there could have been no more life.; when I was on the verge of lunacy or insanity; or on the verge of incarceration and on the verge of losing my life. That's why. Nelson Mandela's biography was the first book not thicker than the Bible that I had ever read. It gripped me; every part of me; his life and motivation. I had trouble crying, but I cried when he died.

**TR:** Did you like school?

**KL:** I did you know; I was a bit of an academic. I enjoyed school because I was good at it. I was in the top set in every class getting high marks. I enjoyed that. Then I enjoyed it for a different reason in terms of finding myself and approaching school in a particular way. I also enjoyed it for the wrong reasons; but I enjoyed school.

**TR:** What was your childhood like?

**KL:** In terms of my upbringing at home, it was brilliant. I was very fortunate, not financially fortunate obviously

but in terms of love and attention I had that, which was great. Both Mum and Dad were in the picture which was obviously a blessing.

In terms of the fullness of my childhood, the road was a hang and definitely became a parent to me; the street was definitely a parent and as a result not the best parent. That was tough. A lot of the time I was losing friends and friends losing their freedom and losing myself and losing innocence as well; it was also tough, living a certain way committing certain deeds and certain acts of violence definitely marred me. I'd say it was both loved filled and trauma filled.

**TR:** Why did you become a Christian?

**KL:** Primarily because I believed. I believed that Jesus Christ died for our sins; I actually believed that. It was belief in that, which made me identify with being a Christian. Whether it be baptism as an infant I was glad I had been baptised, or in the Anglican Church I identified with being a Christian. I had no problem when I was at Catholic school or in services, when they would say pray or say our father prayer, I had no problem because I identified and believed. When the Islamic wave erupted within my community and influenced all the parts of London and other parts of the UK, I had a certain level of immunity in regard to my philosophy; because I believed and identified as a Christian. In terms of living as a Christian: that came when he revealed himself to me personally. It wasn't so much like training your child in the way they should go and they won't depart from it. My initial connection with Christ was more fluent; a training; through environment and exposure. After he showed himself to me; that he is not just far away I thought if he is close, we can be close. Perhaps he can help me live a certain way. Initially I saw it as he is up there, and we are down here. So I thought, I had to do what I had to do. When I realised that he was close, I said maybe we can work together.

**TR:** What is your immediate ambition and goal in life right now?

**KL:** Income and impact in many different ways. Income and Impact is good. I have my bias; we all have our biases. I want both but I certainly put impact before income.

With my impact I want to promote my bias. But definitely income and impact. I know that with income you can make impact. I do want to change the world. I know it sounds a bit presumptuous, but I also know that I'm here for that.

# An Interview with Alan Styles

*Alan Styles, an elder in Pollards Hill Baptist Church has been attending since it began 80 years ago. We catch up with him to find out about his experience of the church.*

## What is your earliest memory of Pollards Hill Baptist Church?

My earliest memory is coming to Sunday school at Pollards Hill Baptist Church, in the 1940s, just after the war. We had about 400 children in Sunday school, long before people had television and cars were common. Families went to church and children went to Sunday school! The church was not suited to having 400 children therefore some children met in the local school, community centre and in the old part of the church, where the pulpit is currently situated. In those days, Sunday school was in the afternoon as there was a morning and evening service. I remember in 1947 when we had heavy snow in the winter, I was brought into church on a sledge, there were no buses and we didn't even have any pavements!

## What has been the most significant change in the area of Pollards Hill over the last 10 years?

The amount of traffic and the difficulties in parking! There are an increased number of people in the area, which is great, but one of the downsides is that there is far more litter in the street. On the other hand, in this church particularly, the number of Afro-Caribbean people who have come into the church, in my opinion, has really lifted the amount of devotion and dedication.

## How do you think the church has met the needs of the community over the years?

It's not a competition and we have other churches in the area, but I have always felt Pollards Hill has worked very well in the community. We have always been evangelical, focused on getting out there to meet the people and as Christians, that's something I think we should all be doing, all the time. There used to be a local newspaper called Mitcham News and Mercury and we still have cuttings of reporters who attended our anniversary services and reported of how relevant the church was in the community.

## What has kept you in Pollards Hill for so long?

My parents were originally members here, they were present at the very first service and brought me into the church, along with my sister. I was baptised here and I stayed because I love the church and I love the area. A lot of people I know have moved away, they didn't like the fact what was once like a countryside is now very different. I love the countryside too but we still have Mitcham Common and Bellenden Park. Given that we are part of south London, we have more green area where you can run and walk than anybody else! Most of all, having been in the church all the time, if I can contribute to the life of the church and help out, this is what I will continue to do. I feel like if I went to another church, especially some of these middle class churches, where everybody can play the piano better than I can or sing better or preach better, I won't be needed. I also have all my friends around here.

## In your opinion, what does the church need to do to stay relevant and thrive in Pollards Hill?

At the moment, to continue as it is and to build on that. I would like to see the church be even more involved in the community. One way of doing that is by joining up with the other churches and encourage them to join us in working within the community. I have been the Chairman of the Churches Together in Pollards Hill for some years and it has been very difficult to encourage the other churches to seek the same outlook in the community as we have. We need to build on that and I would like to encourage other members of the church to join in with the Churches Together. As Christians we ought to be seeking to bring other people to know and love Jesus. In other words respond to His commandment to go ye into all the world and preach the gospel.

## What would you say is the most significant testimony of Pollards Hill Baptist Church over its 80 years?


The fact that it is still thriving after 80 years, it is still working in the community, trying to change lives and bring salvation to people around us. One of the things that I think is important is that every single member is of the same mind in doing that. In any church, you always get the 'hangers-on', people who just come for the Sunday service, then go home but are members of the church. I'd like to encourage everybody to do what we all seek to do which is to go into the community, join with our neighbours, and be friendly with everybody. The most important thing is to love people.

## What is your desire for the next 80 years and beyond for Pollards Hill Baptist Church?

I would love to see the church grow, I don't want to see competition between the churches. Churches that are so insular and won't join with other are wrong. I'd like to see our church not only do outreach within the community but alongside other Christians.

# WHAT A BLESSING IT IS WHEN OUR CHILDREN BLESS US

Sitting in church at our last service led by the young people, I was overwhelmed with pride and joy as they led us in worship through their choice of songs then reminded us of our responsibility as parents through the reading of the scripture. Gavin later delivered the Word with confidence, poise and humour and when some of our younger young people took part in a sketch to illustrate the importance of building good relationships within families, everything fell into place and it became very clear to me that God is doing a new thing at Pollards Hill Baptist Church. Notice I said, 'God is doing a new thing'.



So  
often  
in the past,  
our young people  
were referred to as the  
'church of the future', but this  
is not how God sees our young. He  
sees them in the here and now and he  
says,  
" See I am doing a new thing! Now it  
springs up; do you not perceive  
it? I am making a way in the  
desert and streams in  
the wasteland.  
Isaiah 43:19

And who do you suppose God is using to do this? The church of today! People of all ages with a heart for God and don't be surprised if quite often, the youth will form the vanguard- the force which will be urging us to work alongside God and be the difference for our community needs.

When Timothy was instructed by Paul, about how the church should conduct itself, Paul said, 'Command and teach these things, don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.' 1 Timothy 4: 11

Our young people are the church of today and God is pouring out His Spirit and anointing them afresh for new things. The youth are uniquely positioned as they form the bridge between the old and the young. They have a closer and sometimes a clearer understanding of exactly what it means to be young in today's society, and they can look ahead with God's wisdom to see the possible challenges awaiting them. They can see where greed and selfishness has left its stain on communities and they are acutely aware of the legacy left to them yet in all of this, there is energy, innocence and vision in our youth.

As the Youth stand on the threshold of a new tomorrow they need to be prayed for, affirmed and encouraged so that as God pours out His Spirit they will be eager recipients and like Samuel respond by saying "Speak Lord your servant is listening." And like Isaiah " Here I am Lord send me."

Our children are a blessing to us and to our communities. Thank you Lord.

# WHAT IS SICKLE CELL DISEASE?

Sickle Cell Disease is a group of genetically inherited conditions of the haemoglobin resulting in reduction of healthy red blood cells to carry oxygen around the body. It is not an infection and is not contagious. Individuals are born with it and remain the same throughout life. The haemoglobin gene is passed on from parents to children in the same way as skin colour, eye colour and other genetic information is passed on.

**Unusual haemoglobins, HBS, HBC, HBD, HBE**, a combination of any one of these with the sickle cell gene( HBS) result in Sickle Cell Disease. For example HBSS, HBSC, HBSD, HBSE.

**The usual haemoglobin is known as HBA**, an individual with no unusual haemoglobin inherits HBA from both parents, written as HBAA.

## Who Has Sickle Cell?

Anyone can carry the sickle cell gene but it is more common in people of African ancestry:

1 in 4 West Africans

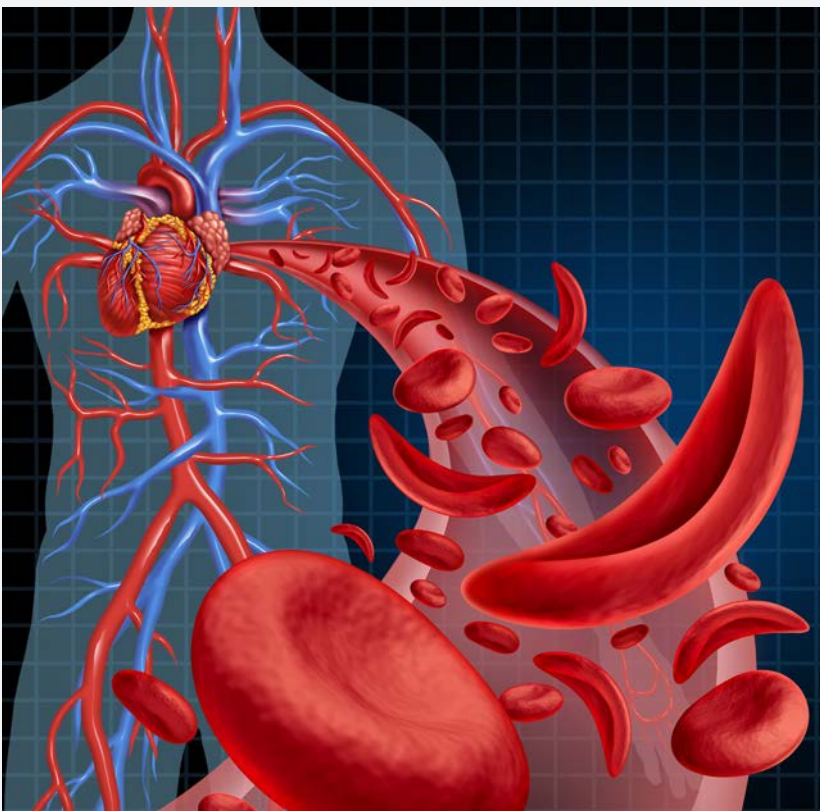
1 in 10 African Caribbean

It is also found in people from the Indian Sub-Continent, the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

If a person inherits one unusual haemoglobin it is known as carrier or a trait and is written as follows, depending on what combination is inherited

**HbAS, HbAC, HbAD, HbAE.**

Under everyday living conditions a carrier does not present any problems. However, there are reported problems in high altitudes and in very severe weather conditions of carriers of the sickle cell gene (HbAS).



## How Do I Know if I carry the Sickle Cell Gene?

You can know by having a specific blood test known as Electrophoresis

All pregnant women are offered screening at first antenatal booking

All babies are offered new born screening (blood spot) at 5 days of age

The earlier you know the better, ideally before pregnancy

Why is it important to know if I carry the sickle cell gene?

You can only tell that you carry the gene by having a blood test

It is possible to have a milder form of sickle cell disease without knowing.

If both you and your partner are carriers of the sickle cell gene there is 1 in 4 chance in each pregnancy that you could have a child with sickle cell disease.

## What is Sickle Cell Disease?

### HbSS, HbSC HbSD HbSE

Sickle Cell Disease is a serious condition when an individual inherits two unusual haemoglobins (1 from each parent) The most common and severe is Sickle Cell Anaemia Hb SS

The most common symptom is unpredictable, excruciating painful episodes known as crisis and often starts from as young as 6 months of age and can last up to one week. Any part of the body where blood runs can be affected. Individuals are prone to infections and life changing complications of vital organs of the body and frequent hospital admissions, interrupting education, work, social life and psychological wellbeing.

In spite of these challenges most people with Sickle Cell Disease live fulfilled productive lives and contribute to society significantly as parents and professionals such as doctors, lawyers, teachers nurses and many more. Early diagnosis is important to ensure appropriate management and support in order to reduce complications. Lifestyle changes, good medical management, social and psychological support, avoidance of triggers for a crisis are essential to improve quality of life and life expectancy.

Fortunately, through research and advancement in care, people with sickle cell disease can expect to live long lives with improved health outcome. There is no universal cure but for some there is bone marrow and stem cell transplant.

For more information contact the Sickle cell Society

[www.sicklecellsociety.org](http://www.sicklecellsociety.org)

Email: [info@sicklecellsociety.org](mailto:info@sicklecellsociety.org)

Tel 0208 961 7795



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