

THE Rock

VOLUME 2 | ISSUE 2

A Magazine of Pollards Hill Baptist Church

Faith, Politics & Prophecy

Viewing worldwide chaos through a Kingdom lens

Operation Christmas Child

Bringing joy to children of the world

Passing the Baton

Key values for equipping the next generation

Rose Hudson-Wilkin

The Church of England's first Black woman bishop

Taking Time from TECHNOLOGY

A PHBC MEDIA PUBLICATION



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Holding on **to hope**

Dear Friend,

Welcome to this edition of The Rock. We pray you will find the content engaging and thought-provoking as you encounter in these pages a faithful God who has journeyed and continues to journey with us.

This issue, reflects and reinforces the last two motto verses of PHBC. The first given at the end of 2019 was from 2 Corinthians 4:18 'For we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.' COVID 19 came hard on the heels of the church receiving this verse and through eyes of faith we looked beyond COVID 19 fixing our gaze firmly on Jesus our eternal salvation.

Our motto verse for 2020, 'Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess for He who promised is faithful.' was taken from Hebrews 10:23, and without doubt, the last eighteen months has served as a reminder to us that God is indeed faithful, and also that we are children of the Most High, kept secure under His shadow as we hold on to the hope He has placed in each and every one of us.

This issue seeks to establish some regular features on Faith, Politics and Prophecy, Testimonies, Poetry, Israel, Outreach, Children's Corner and Health. Some of the articles will challenge us, but as we present our bodies as a living sacrifice the Holy Spirit works in us helping us to grow in wholeness physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

To God be the glory.

The Editorial Team





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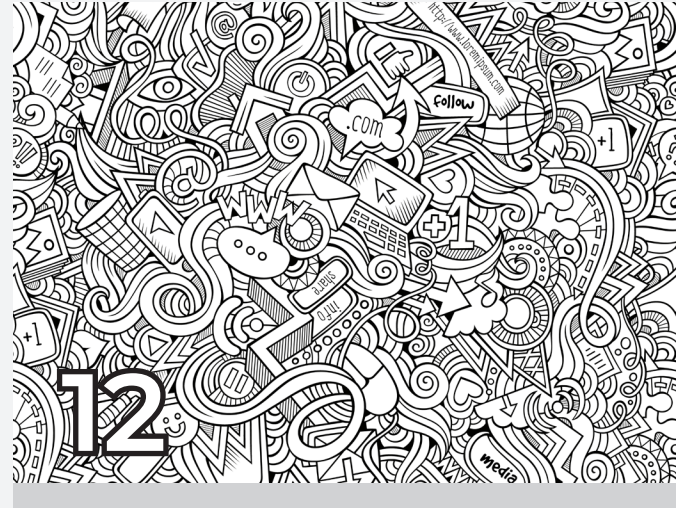
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LIKE LIGHT

By Frank Haywood

It was just another day for Hiroshi Nakata as he hurried onto the busy Metro heading for work at the office in mid-town Tokyo. At the other end of the carriage, he catches sight of his good friend, Shinzi Osaka, sat next to a young woman, both engrossed in conversation. He smiles and thinks to himself my religious friend: always trying to convert other people to Christianity. The first stop is twenty minutes away, so he rises from his seat and makes his way towards Shinzi. The young woman appears serene but tearful as she bows her head, eyes closed, as if in deep thought. Shinzi too has his eyes closed and praying. Hiroshi's gaze drops for a split second, then looks up as he draws nearer to where Shinzi and his female friend were sitting. Suddenly, he stops dead in his tracks and stares at two empty seats, as he realises that they are... no longer there.

Maria Tambo lay awake in bed cuddled close to her husband as he drifted to sleep. She runs through the evening's church service in her head. She has always enjoyed the singing and friendliness there; and the pastor always preaches a good sermon. Her husband Nelson became born again about a year ago, but she feels that she is not ready to do the same; not yet. He has changed and certainly seems happier, calmer, and nicer; but she did not think that she was ready for that type of life. Her future lay ahead of her and becoming a Christian, she thought, would only mean having to give up all the fun things she liked to do. Without warning, Maria is suddenly startled as it feels as if she is cuddling thin air. Where's Nelson? she thinks to herself, where did he go? Sudden panic grips her and she calls out his name in the dark as she feels around the bed for him, but there is no answer, there is no one. She reaches for and turns on the bed-side lamp; but he was not there, he had mysteriously vanished into thin air.

Tara and Tracy have been friends for as long as they could remember. As children they went to the same school. But both had now left school and not surprisingly, worked at the same clothes store in the city. They describe their relationship as close, but they did disagree about one thing...God.

Just Ask

By Pauline Barnes

Ask without doubting,
Ask always knowing
That our God will surely hear.
Ask with thanksgiving,
Ask the God of the living
And feel His presence near.

Ask without doubting,
Ask always knowing
That our God is a rewarder of those
Who seek Him sincerely,
And want to love dearly
Their friends, as well as their foes.

Ask without doubting,
Ask always knowing
God holds us in in the palm of His hand.
He plans for us a future
Because love is His nature,
And He asks us to take a stand.

A stand against injustice
To listen and obey,
To act in compassion as we walk in His way,
To support the needy,
To protect the weak,
To be on earth His hands and His feet.



For Tara, God was a myth made up by the rich and powerful to control others. Tracy on the other hand had grown up in a devout Christian family, who loved and followed Jesus. She had always shared with her friend the reason for her faith and her experience of knowing Christ. But, Tara refused to believe. Tracy especially liked to talk about the return of Jesus to the earth and warned her friend that He could appear at any time; and that she would be lost if that happened. And this was their conversation as they had lunch together one afternoon.

"You know, Tara" said Tracy, "it could happen at any moment, even now, while we are talking." "It won't" replied Tara. "If he was coming back, where is He? it's been two thousand years, and nothing's happened" She argued. "I don't bel..." Before the full sentence could leave her lips, Tara stares speechless and open mouthed across to where Tracy sat, dismay mixed with fear spreading slowly across her face. Her friend was no longer there. She had disappeared, quicker than the blink of an eye. Tara suddenly realised, that for her it was now too late.

In 2003, as I slept, I dreamt. I found myself in a large green field. I looked as far as my eyes could see and watched as in the distance black storm clouds fast approached. I turned and began to run for shelter as fast as I could; before the downpour caught up with me. I finally saw a huge empty aircraft hangar and ran into it for safety. I stood at the entrance of the building as the storm reached where I was. I looked up to the sky and saw looking down at me, a gigantic face covered and veiled by the black storm clouds. He then spoke these words directly to me: 'Tell my people that I am coming soon.' I immediately woke up from my dream. There was no doubt in my mind, that the Lord Jesus had appeared to me with this message for His people, which I now share with you.

The three quite chilling, but fictional stories at the beginning of this article represent the sudden and unexpected return of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to planet earth, which he talks about in the book of Luke Chapter 17 verses 20-37. In verse 24, He likens His coming to that of lightning: ***"For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in his day."*** A fact about lightning is that you really do not know when or where it is going to strike. He also compares it to the time of Noah and the time of Lot when people lived their lives doing the things they normally did, oblivious to what was coming. God in his mercy removes these two people and their families to safety, then rains destruction down on the wicked.

Unfortunately, there are those who believe that it will not happen in their lifetime, as it has been two thousand years, they say, since Jesus first promised it. And it may not be in our lifetime, but can we afford to take that chance, by assuming that He has delayed His return? Didn't the apostle Peter predict that this would be people's response? Yes, there have been those in the past who believed He would return according to their calculations and got it terribly wrong. Despite this we must be ready for that moment when He comes as silently and as unexpectedly as a thief at night and removes from the earth those who are ready and eagerly wait for His return. The truth is that it could happen at any time.

Knowing this, what should our attitude be; and what did the Lord Jesus say? I leave you with his words: ***"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for you know not when the time is. For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or a midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, watch"*** (Mark Ch 13: v 31 – 37).

Meet the Leadership Team at PHBC

By Evadney Campbell

It feels like it's too late to be introducing the leadership team of PHBC. Given that 2020 however was primarily a lost year which has resulted in many of the church's congregation still not being familiar with all the leaders it feels the need is still very much there.

Throughout the pandemic the Leadership Team of PHBC, all of whom were finding their feet also found themselves having to deal with issues many were not immediately confident of handling. But Pastor stepped up and set up the PHBC radio – phbc.org.uk/radio. Through this medium, members were able to fellowship not only with each other but with many across the world and continue to do so.

As stated in Micah 5 v 4: ***"And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God"***.

As a result of the restrictions placed on everyone during the height of the pandemic, we had to get used to meeting and worshipping in this new way – virtually. This has left many feeling isolated and vulnerable. It is at times like this that our leaders must take the lead and all at PHBC have taken on their roles and responsibilities with firm commitment. As we have been ordered, Galatians 6:10 ... seize any opportunity the Lord gives us to do good things and be a blessing to everyone, therefore let us look after each other at all times. This message has been taken on board by all leaders. As one of the new leaders, responsible for communications, I will give you a brief introduction to the team. We are all here to serve you, therefore, if you would like the support of any member of the Leadership Team, please visit our website where you will find further details of each of our areas of responsibility.

As mentioned, I am the deacon for Communication. My name is **Evadney Campbell** and I am responsible for overseeing how the church ministers through communication. This includes our internal and external media and communications, including flyers, magazine, social media and website content.

Ann Bowen-James is the Church Secretary and Deacon responsible for Administration.

In this role, she has 4 main areas of oversight. They are as follows:

- Administration – general day to day administration and HR
- Safeguarding – managing procedures and keeping records.
- Facilities – management and maintenance of the building and other resources.
- Compliance – ensuring adherence to external regulatory and legal requirements as well as internal policies.

Babs Martin is another new leader. She's responsible for Pastoral Care.

In this role she has a number of areas of oversight including the Welcome Team, Visitation Team, Welfare Team and Hospitality.

Babs encourages us to be Jesus' hands and feet as we share His love through encouraging and supporting our members and the wider PHBC church family. Babs enjoys baking, swimming, gardening and eating out.

During these challenging times when so many of our members have been isolated, so many have experienced loss as a result of the corona virus pandemic and are fearful, Babs and her team are always on hand to offer comfort and assistance. This is a responsibility they've continued to maintain as so many continue to isolate.

Another vital area of the church is to ensure all finances are handled with integrity. This lands firmly in the lap of Sister **Hawa Turay**. Hawa is the Church Treasurer and deacon responsible for Finance. She is responsible for overseeing the church's accounting, reporting and banking procedures as well as for financial forecasting.



Pauline Barnes is the new deacon responsible for Worship. She oversees various teams in the life of the church, including worship, stewards and the multimedia team, as well as coordinating our regular and special services. Pauline also leads the team responsible for the content and compilation of our church magazine.

Carys Marke is the deacon responsible for Community. Her areas of oversight include various life groups of the church, she also serves as coordinator of our services around enabling and inclusivity. Sister Carys also oversees with a team of helpers, the newly established Women's ministry.

Frank Haywood is the deacon responsible for Faith and Formation. His areas of oversight include the prayer team as well as small groups and teaching sessions such as Baptism Classes, Discipleship Classes and Home Groups. Frank's role as Deacon for Faith and Formation includes a number of areas, overseeing and promoting this most important aspect of life at Pollards Hill Baptist Church is one which is seen as the heart of the church. In addition to the prayer life of the church, Frank is also responsible for overseeing small groups and teaching sessions such as Baptism Classes, Discipleship Classes and Cell Groups.

Many of us have had our faith tested during this period. But as we all know, as Christians, we must hold on faithfully to our belief that our Lord is in the midst of all things and has this under control.

If you need encouragement, feel free to contact us via the website – phbc.org.uk and let us know your prayer request.

"God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts which each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfil its divinely ordained functions."

Alongside Pastor Deji and Pastor Jasmine, together with a multitude of others in the church, the PHBC Leadership team is committed to using their gifts to serve the church and the community.



By Babs Martin

Ears are fascinating organs! We take them for granted but within the first trimester they are fully formed and functional. Although it takes a further 9 years for all the bones to harden, a baby can hear sounds in the womb. These familiar sounds, like mum's voice, help the baby settle when distressed. Our ears continue to work throughout our life and are one of the final senses to fail when we pass away. Our loved ones can hear our voices and connect with us right to the end, even if they are unable to speak.

Ears work hard - they never go to sleep, even when we do. They provide an alerting response to sound even when we are asleep, which explains why the quietest sound like a dripping tap or a strange noise in the middle of the night can annoy us. Then, as soon as we know what it is, we are able to ignore it or fall back to sleep. It also explains why sounds like music we don't enjoy (in my case heavy metal) are annoying even if quiet, whilst we can play our favourite song at maximum volume and it doesn't seem loud to us.

To protect themselves, ears have a couple of defense mechanisms to keep them healthy and our hearing safe. The one you are probably most familiar with is wax, our body's defense to keep rubbish out of our ears. Wax works as a lubricant to keep ears moist and watertight. Wax also acts as a 'sweeper' to remove any debris such as dirt, sand and small objects that may inadvertently enter the ear. Ear wax has a natural cycle of moving around the ear collecting all the rubbish and then falling out of the ear after about a month as a small ball. However objects such as a cotton buds, hair pins or anything else pushed into the ear stops the natural cycle and causes the wax to build up.

Our ears work hard for us, so it is important that we look after them if we want to preserve our hearing. Our ears are fundamental to our communication and being connected. Technology has significantly improved hearing aids and hearable devices, reducing the stigma around using hearing aids and wearing headphones in public.

If you are experiencing hearing problems or have any concerns about your hearing why not visit your GP or local audiology centre to see what support can be offered to you.

That's why it's important to never put anything inside of your ear. The best way to keep your ears clean is to simply wipe the outside of your ear with a flannel to remove any wax or grease as part of your daily cleansing routine. If you do see some wax on your flannel that is a good sign that your ears are functioning normally.

There are some people who naturally have smaller or unusually shaped ear canals and older people, often men, who have hairy ear canals which mean that it is more difficult for the wax to exit the ear which causes wax build up. Some people notice their ears are itchy or that they don't hear as well when this occurs. Advice from your GP about wax removal is recommended in these circumstances.

Hearing loss occurs when there is damage to the ear organ. The ear is made up of three parts - the outer, middle and inner ear. The outer two sections mainly collect, amplify and transmit sound to the inner ear and

hearing nerves where it is interpreted by your brain as speech, music etc. The inner ear also includes the semi-circular canals-balance organs which tell us where we are in space. When they don't work properly, we can experience dizziness.

Generally, any damage to the outer and middle ear is known as a conductive hearing loss and can usually be fixed by medication or surgery. Conductive losses like infections and 'glue' ear are common in children. They are often treated by antibiotics and grommets respectively.

Damage to the inner ear is usually permanent and cannot be corrected by surgery or medication.

The most common form of hearing loss is presbycusis, which is hearing loss due to ageing.

Effectively the hair cells in the inner ear wear out due to continued use and damage, such as exposure to loud sounds. The body does not replace these hair cells once they are lost. Most of us can expect to experience this kind of hearing loss from around the age of 55. Hearing aids are usually recommended to improve hearing. If you are concerned about hearing loss, speak to your GP.



The Joy of the Lord Is My Strength

By Sandra April

When darkness looms and life's full of gloom

The Joy of the Lord is my strength

When times are bright and my heart is light

The Joy of the Lord is my strength

When I feel strong and can do no wrong

The Joy of the Lord is my strength

When I sit in shame having sinned again

The Joy of the Lord is my strength

When times are tough and the going gets rough

The Joy of the Lord is my strength

When bad news comes it's not much fun but

The Joy of the Lord is my strength

When people mock and sneer and jeer

The Joy of the Lord is my strength

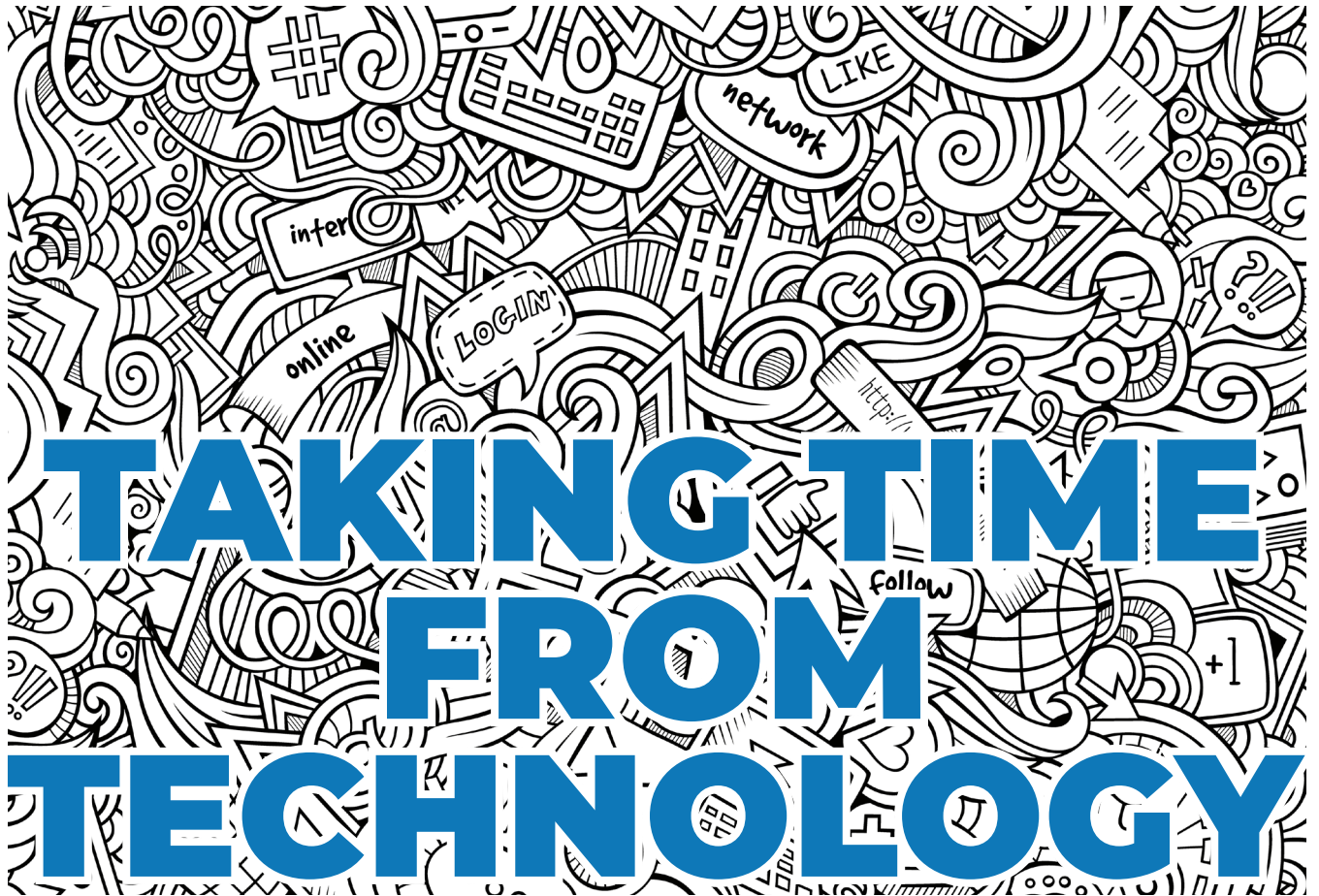
No matter what position I'm in

The Joy of the Lord is my strength

When they counted me out I'll stand up and shout

The Joy of the Lord is my strength

THE JOY OF THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH



Developing a healthy relationship with media outlets, social media, and entertainment.

By Sharlin Laueuillee

From the dawn of mankind, man was intrinsically coded with the yearning for fellowship and community. The Lord forged Adam from the dust, acknowledging it was not good for man to be alone. Knowing this, He created a helpmeet for Adam, his wife Eve, giving them dominion over the earth and the mandate to be fruitful and multiply. This was the very first example of human community and socialising.

Evidently, when God created us, He intended for us to be social beings, constantly in interaction with one another. So naturally, we feel the desire to be included. We desire the security of being integrated into a group. We desire to relate to others. We desire to be in regular contact with other humans, whether we are meeting with a friend for lunch, or greeting a shopkeeper on our way home from work.

This desire by itself, is perfectly healthy and normal. We also see it reflected in the formation of the Church, which is also referred to as the Body. A body is a unit of individual parts,

interconnected, to create one physical structure. The parts, though individual, all have a different function and constantly need to be connected to function correctly, like us. However, at times, our desire to always be connected can come at a cost. Every so often, that desire is misplaced, and we yearn to be linked to what we ought not to be, leading to compromise or timewasting. All because we want to be included.

Those of us who were teenagers in the late 90's and early 2000's, grew up in a peculiar era. Unbeknownst to us, we stood on the cusp of two worlds. One world, where technology was limited to a television, a desktop computer (without internet) and a games console with basic graphics. In another world, the technological possibilities were infinite. A world where you could converse with people across the globe in the blink of an eye, a foreign concept to us in our childhood. Amid these developments, we began to see a shift from face-to-face human interaction to the emergence of social media platforms and the vast increase of online content. Community and social interaction began to change right before our eyes.

A 2018 article from The Telegraph reported that we now spend on average of an entire day online, every week. Their findings, which were compiled from research collated by Ofcom revealed that the growth of individual smartphone usage was the main contribution toward the rise in these figures. In 2008, 17 per cent of the British population used smartphones, by 2018 that number was 78 per cent. The study revealed Britons were so addicted to their phones, that they checked them every 12 minutes. An addiction, that often can get swept under the carpet and is currently normalised.

In the space of a decade, we witnessed a dramatic shift in the fabric of our society. New technological advancements opened the door for much good, making everyday life more convenient, whilst simultaneously creating pitfalls. On one hand, we were now able to call family members and friends overseas at no cost. On the other hand, we are now faced with the ability to be constantly marketed to, influenced, and tempted. Yet, it is far too simplistic to forego outlets all together. All things can be used for good. In this new world, as Christians, we need to figure out how to manoeuvre with the ever-changing technological winds, with wisdom. We need to learn how to filter the influx of information thrown at us daily through a Biblical lens, developing a healthy relationship with media outlets, social media, and entertainment. Here is a list of three things to be mindful of when navigating platforms:

1. BE WARY OF MINDLESS SCROLLING

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are known to induce mindless scrolling which can last for hours on end. Have you ever logged into one of these platforms and seen something which you took an interest to, the next thing you know, you are browsing through the comments for half an hour? Just when you think you are done, oh look! Another interesting video or picture. Then, the cycle continues. Before you know it, the whole evening is gone, and it is bedtime. Sometimes we find ourselves saying we do not have enough time to spend with God, yet we can spend endless hours on social media, browsing the internet, watching television or Netflix. There is no checklist for time we need to spend with God daily, but we know that what we absorb has an impact on who we are or who we become. There is nothing wrong with being on social media, watching movies or television but balance is important.

In the moments we start to mindlessly scroll for too long, we should try to redirect our focus back to Christ. It could start with something as simple as listening to worship music and reflecting on what He has done for you. It is also important to mention that sometimes, mindless scrolling can be a result of a deeper issue. You may be exhausted and just want to "switch off" at that time.



IN THE SPACE OF A DECADE, OUR SOCIETY HAS CHANGED.

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New technological advancements opened the door for much good, making everyday life more convenient, whilst simultaneously creating pitfalls.



Maybe you have had a long day finishing coursework or working on a project and you just want to chill. If this is the case, bring it to God. Express exactly how you are feeling. He really does care and can provide you with healthier alternatives when you need down time. You may find that looking at funny videos and pictures helps you to unwind at the end of a long day. If this is the case, set yourself a time limit, or be wary of when you are going overboard. If you realise you are beginning to overindulge, you may need a media fast.

2. BE 'BEREANS' - TEST EVERYTHING

Due to the constant influx of information, we are receiving, it is extremely easy for us to be casual and not intentional about what we are learning through various outlets. Our need to always be connected can lead to a heightened exposure to detrimental content, so it is crucial for us to test everything we receive by God's standard. Regardless of the source. When Paul and Silas preached to the Jews in Berea, they tested their teachings by examining the scriptures daily.

TAKING TIME FROM TECHNOLOGY (CONT'D)

Like them, it is imperative that we believers examine every statement and ideology that is pedalled to us, by the word of God. Regarding Christian content online or in the media, we can ask questions such as: What fruit will this produce? How does this lead to Christ? Is this edifying for growth? Does this line up with God's heart and will for His children and is this doctrine sound? Regarding 'secular' news and content, we should be careful of accepting counter-biblical philosophies and narratives, just because it is widely accepted in pop culture.

3. UNDERSTAND THE DANGERS - KNOW THE ENEMY.

Ephesians Chapter 6 verse 12 tells us:

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

Imagine an army trying to win a war. To do so, they would need to create a strategic battle plan. So, they decide that the best course of action would be to befriend their opponent. Their unsuspecting opponent in turn has their guard down. They appear harmless, not like the threat they are and at the opportune time, when least suspected, they strike. Taking down their rival. The truth about war is, the many wars are won, by underhanded tactics, from an opposition that doesn't fight fairly.

We are in a war. We would be naïve to believe that Satan will not use deception to influence us or others through unexpected means. Scripture tells us that he disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) and it is

important, we keep this in mind. We are not called to be fearful of Satan, but we cannot be ignorant of his devices and how he attempts to influence the world.

Media provides the opportunity to spread a message worldwide, in seconds. It provides the opportunity to influence and shape the thoughts of people. If in the wrong hands, it is easy to develop a narrative which can be harmful. That is why it is important that we be on guard constantly for attacks that can come through a medium that in and of itself, is innocent. Something that is often used for our entertainment, or relaxation. We should clothe ourselves in the Armour of God, so we are able to withstand the fiery darts of the enemy (Ephesians 6:10-18).

So how do we develop a healthy relationship with media platforms and technology? The answer is that we should be vigilant, remaining sober and alert (1 Peter 5:8). We do not need to forsake them all together unless, that is personal preference. However, although it is fine to use social media, we cannot continue to be constantly tossed back and forth with ever-changing cultural trends and fads. God has called us to be in the world but not of it. He created us uniquely, to influence and impact others' lives. Something that begins to fade the more we are trying to fit in. In the end, how we individually navigate on social media will be different for everyone. Some of us may desire to not use it at all. Some may use it heavily and some may need to create boundaries in their usage for their own well-being. Either way, let God be glorified, keeping Him in mind as we connect.



SPOT THE 10 DIFFERENCES

You'll have to look closely to find all of them.



SUPER BIBLE WORDSEARCH

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FAITH
GOLIATH
GRACE
MOSES
SERPENT
DEUTERONOMY

GALILEE
GOOD FRIDAY
PAUL REDEEM
LAST SUPPER
GALATIANS
ETERNAL LIFE

CHURCH
BETHLEHEM
REDEEM
SANCTIFY
PSALMS
PARABLE

AROSE
CRUCIFIXION
FORGIVENESS
MAGDALENE
RESURRECTION
SINS

ASCENSION
DISCIPLES
HEAVEN
NICODEMUS
ROMANS
THORNS

CROSS
EASTER
JESUS
REDEMPTION
SALVATION
TOMB

PASSING THE BATON

By Pauline Barnes

My favourite track sport as a teenager was the relay race and I always preferred to run the middle leg. I did not like to start or end the race. Possibly because I felt that the pressure in these positions was greater. I soon realised that every position was significant because if the baton did not make it to the end of the race, we would not qualify let alone be 'winners' regardless of how fast each runner was.

Some of us now find ourselves living in a season where the years behind us are greater than those before us and we want to leave behind material resources, and a set of positive values from which others can benefit.

It is vitally important to the spiritual, physical and emotional health of the next generation that our value system forms the core of our baton. Our baton built of layers comprising: Love, Integrity, Faith and Prayer, should be securely held, transparently obvious and accessible in a way which engages, by raising questions in the minds of those looking on, and inspire them to keep going. The apostle Paul speaks of this by telling us that he 'presses on to take hold.' He presents a racing analogy to us and we can visualise his focus and sheer determination to win his race.

Our young people are living in a very different reality from the one I grew up in, and in their own way they are trying to make sense of that reality. Without community and support from their family, they may find themselves drifting aimlessly and are therefore more than happy to attempt any attractive looking proposition on offer. That it is why it is so vitally important to pass on a set of values to our young so that they are well equipped for their life journey. **Love** is the first component of the baton that we need to get securely into the hand of the next generation. Love forms the bases of and affirms our relationship with God and all our other relationships.

I often observe the way children greet their parents at the end of the school day. Some children race across the playground and literally throw themselves into the arms of waiting parents, whilst others drag themselves across the playground and are sometimes barely acknowledged by their parents. What signals are we as parents sending to those God has entrusted to our care?

Love starts in the home. Love is a value and appreciation that is not necessarily linked to our immediate feelings and as such it transcends personal beliefs and is ever hopeful, always looking for the best in others. The love between parents and children is a pivotal one because it is from this love that a strong, healthy relationship is forged. Children get a sense of security, affirmation, and develop the capacity to take risks in a secure setting. They learn to value themselves and gain a better understanding of who they are. As they receive love, they are better positioned to see and accept the love of the wider family members, and this enhances their sense of self. Love is like the navigation system through which we view the world and respond to it. It provides the physical muscle our children need in a sometimes demanding, confusing and conflicting world.

The next component of the baton is that of **integrity**. Sadly today, integrity has been tainted by the world system and is undermined by bitesize messages of self-importance and individualism where the mantra becomes 'It's all about me,' and 'I'm worth it.'

Jesus' life demonstrated integrity when he lived on earth by the way He treated those around Him. He did not treat people differently because they were richer, more sinful in the eyes of onlookers, came from His home town, or indeed even because they were a conquering power.

Looking at the life of Jesus we see integrity clearly demonstrated as a behaviour that doesn't change depending on who we are with, or where we are. A person of integrity is one who seeks to deal honestly and has strong moral principles for which they are known. In today's world that may seem anachronistic, as truth is no longer an absolute but rather a changeable abstract. When Jesus was questioned over 2000 years ago by Pilate, He said 'Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.' Pilate almost dismissively, immediately responded with 'What is truth?' suggesting that truth is relative and may carry different shades of meaning for different people.

The aspect of integrity that we should be passing on is that truth is an absolute. We should speak and live the truth even when it is difficult to do so. We also need to show that we are not cardboard cut-outs but people who encounter difficulties and sometimes struggle to line our faith up with the realities of life. We will get things wrong as we make judgment calls as to how best to deal with challenges. Integrity, however, should be our default setting - our personal internal check - so that onlookers are seeing a general consistency in the way we behave as we demonstrate to those around us a model of Christian living which sends out powerful life messages.



Our third baton component is that of **faith**. As Christians our faith journey might look like a graph of peaks and troughs, but even when we are in those valley places, we learn to take God at His word, so that His power can be demonstrated in and through us. That is perhaps the essence of faith; trusting and holding on regardless, unswervingly as Paul puts it in Hebrews 10:23, knowing with all our heart that God will come through for us.

To take God at His word though, we must know the Living Word, and it is this knowledge of the Word which informs our thought processes and accelerates our actions, thus sending a clear message to a younger generation as they see our faith demonstrated through words and actions irrespective of circumstances. From this, we can see that faith is not a stagnant concept, it is a live, dynamic, organic force, which drives us to make choices about how we live, and to be a difference and make a difference wherever we find ourselves.

PASSING THE BATON (CONT'D)

The final component of the baton is **prayer**. The disciples urged Jesus to teach them how to pray because they must have seen something in Jesus, they felt they needed: a very close relationship with the Father.

How then in a practical way do we pass this on to the next generation? Sometimes prayer needs to be in the quiet place, just you and God, but it also needs to take place in a space where others can see and feel it happening. Young people need to see that prayer is not confined to the church building, but it is a way of life. In prayer they see our vulnerabilities and our reliance on God. They see us sharing moments of pain, joy and of our accomplishments with God.

Sometimes I find myself saying almost apologetically "All I can do is pray," as though prayer is a last resort when in fact it should be our first course of action. The idea that prayer is the most important weapon in the Christian's armoury needs to be reiterated over and over again, and the young need to see that happening powerfully in the home.

These four components to our baton LOVE, INTEGRITY, FAITH and PRAYER of course do not exist in isolation. Like the runners in a relay race who form the team and the baton is passed smoothly from one to the next, these components are so interlinked that it is often difficult to see where one ends and another takes over. Each one supports, extends, explains and exemplifies the others, proclaiming and demonstrating to a watching world, a model of Christian living which says "Do as I do, live as I live, treat others the way I do."

As we navigate with LOVE, let's set our default to INTEGRITY, accelerate confidently with FAITH, arm ourselves with PRAYER and head towards our finishing line!



The advertisement features a white smartphone displaying the PHBC RADIO app interface. The app screen shows a 'PHBC RADIO' header, an 'OH AIR' status with a red play button, and a list of features: 'Contact the Studio', 'Schedule of Shows', 'Instagram', 'Song Requests', 'Twitter', and 'Facebook'. To the right of the phone is the PHBC RADIO logo, which consists of a blue circle containing the text 'phbc' in a script font and 'RADIO' in a bold sans-serif font below it. Below the logo is the tagline 'Sharing the love of Jesus'. Further down, the text 'BROADCASTING 24 HRS A DAY' and 'FROM LONDON TO THE WORLD' is displayed in large, bold, blue and white capital letters. At the bottom left, there are two buttons: 'Available on the App Store' with the Apple logo and 'GET IT ON Google Play' with the Google Play logo. To the right of these buttons, the text 'DOWNLOAD IT FREE FROM THE APP STORE' is written in bold white capital letters. The background of the advertisement is a grey gradient with blue geometric shapes on the left and an orange geometric pattern at the bottom.

LIFE GROUPS IN THE CHURCH



Little Church



Young People



Young Adults (20+)



Women's Ministry



Men's Ministry



Senior's Ministry

COME ALONG AND JOIN IN



Family Worship Services

- Sundays at 10:30am: For the whole family, and communion every first Sunday.



Tots 'n' Tinies

- Tuesdays at 1:00pm: A group set up for parents and carers of children under 5.



Cell Group Meetings

- Tuesdays at 7:00pm: A place to ask, learn, share, grow and be supported in small groups.



Prayer Meetings

- Wednesdays at 7:00pm: Includes prayer meeting every first Wednesday.



Young Adults Group (20+)

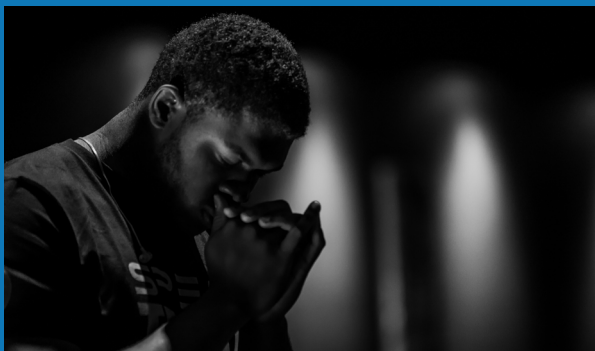
- Wednesdays at 7:00pm: A time to discuss, debate, learn and get real about real issues.



It Will End in Praise

- Quarterly on Saturday 7:30pm: A time of open worship as we rest in God's presence.

NEED PRAYER?



If you have a prayer need and would like for someone to pray for you or with you, you may send your prayer request to the PHBC Prayer Team via the link below.

Is anything too hard for the Lord? Absolutely not!

<https://www.phbc.org.uk/prayer>

Health Day AT PHBC

By Babs Martin



On 10th October 2021 PHBC hosted their first health and well-being clinic. The event was open to members of the congregation and the local community. Almost 20 people attended the clinic to take a series of health measurements including BMI and blood pressure to determine their risk of developing diabetes and other health issues. Afterwards, participants had the opportunity to discuss their results with a qualified health coach to develop an action plan for lifestyle changes to improve their health and well-being.

The health clinic is a collaboration between the Wandsworth Community Empowerment Network (WCEN), Wideway Medical Centre, Tamworth Health Centre, and Pollards Hill Baptist Church. WCEN works with community groups and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to respond to local health inequalities and engage hard to reach communities to improve their health and well-being. This model is based on current evidence that shows some people are more likely to take responsibility for their health needs if they can engage and journey with people who look like and are familiar to them, rather than professionals.

PHBC has three qualified health coaches to support the clinic and as one of the coaches, I am really looking forward to helping people with their journey to better health, physically and mentally. The lockdown has been a very challenging time for everyone and has taken quite a toll on people. This is a fantastic opportunity to give back and celebrate with people as they reach their goals for a better them. Cathy, one of our health coaches, reflected that it was great listening to participants and signposting them with appropriate information and advice. 'The feedback I received about my support was really positive and helpful,' she said.



The clinic was also supported by several volunteers from the church community and neighbouring health clinics. Volunteers commented that they enjoyed supporting the session, and participants shared with them how helpful and useful they found the session.

Participants also have an opportunity to join the Decathlon programme. This is a 10-week course designed to provide a more individualised coaching and health education programme for seeking additional support to manage their health conditions such as pre-diabetes. Participants are referred to the programme by health coaches at the clinic.

The clinic is expected to run 3 or 4 times a year at PHBC. Look out for the dates of our next clinic in early 2022 via our website, church billboard and at participating surgeries. The clinic welcomes you to come and start your journey to a healthier you.

AN INTERVIEW WITH Bishop Rose Hudson-Wilkin



By Sunmi Ayorinde

Rose Josephine Hudson-Wilkin is a British Anglican bishop, the first black woman to be a Church of England Bishop. Her roles have included Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Common, Church Army and parish ministry. We were privileged to put some questions to her about her Christian journey. She took us back to where it all began...

Tell us about your journey to ministry. When and how did it all begin?

I was born and brought up in Montego Bay, Jamaica and baptised into the Anglican church approximately at the age of 3 months. I was fortunate that the church where we worshipped did not have a priest leading us on a Sunday and this meant that young people were encouraged to take part in leadership in the church. At the age of 14 years, I felt a real call to ministry (at a time when women were not allowed to be ordained); years later this was realised in 1994 when women were first allowed to be priests. I have had the privilege of serving in parish roles, in many different places including the West Midlands, the London borough of Hackney and also more recently as Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons (including being one of the Chaplains to Her Majesty the Queen). I am presently serving as the Bishop of Dover in the Diocese of Canterbury.



What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

In my spare time, I enjoy being with the grandchildren, playing scrabble, entertaining, travelling, playing tennis and badminton.

What has been the biggest challenge on your journey to becoming a Bishop?

I have always believed (and still do) that no one has a right to become a bishop; it is the Church that must call you to serve in that capacity. I cannot recall ever having a desire to be a bishop. I did believe very strongly though, that women should be bishops! It seemed inconceivable that women would continue to be kept away from being involved in leadership within the church. I believe it would not remain sustainable for the life of the 'organised church' for women to be absent from visible leadership. But there was something else that I thought was unrealistic - why were minority ethnic people also missing in a significant way from the leadership of the Church?

This was a question that I regularly asked. It was evident too, that people from a minority ethnic background, were not to be seen in leadership across the spectrum of society. Each institution, including the Church, must ask why they are not there. When women were allowed to be bishops, more than ten women were consecrated before someone from a minority background was deemed acceptable for leadership. People from a minority ethnic background are rarely looked at with the kind of mutual respect which signposts that they have an equally significant contribution to make!

What do you think is the biggest barrier for people coming to faith in Britain?

I see the main barrier to be something of a lack of confidence in the Gospel. There is a privacy around faith, in this country we say, "this is something personal and private." How much further from the truth is this! (in my opinion). When we become Christians, we begin the process of learning what it means to be a follower of Christ, a disciple. Prayer, the reading of scripture, generosity and evangelism becomes a way of life that is expressed in our worship.



An Interview with
BISHOP ROSE HUDSON-WILKIN
 (continued)

The way we live with one another, the way we care for the most vulnerable and more importantly, the way we love all God's children and take care of the world we are entrusted to be stewards of. Time spent moralising, creating 'in' and 'out' boxes, fighting amongst us – this has left the faith most unattractive to those looking on; a self-inflicted barrier for people coming to faith in Britain.

What should the churches' response be to the Coronavirus pandemic?

The Churches' response has rightly put the welfare of the people of this nation at its heart. It has sacrificed its core way of being (regular acts of worship and direct contact as we receive the sacrament). There have been many voices crying out for churches to remain open. However, we recognise the need to be responsible and to lead the faith communities in noting that our core membership is often older people, many of whom will have some underlying health issues. In the initial stages, I remember thinking perhaps we could refrain from having a gathered congregation but keep our churches open for people to go in and pray. We have learnt however, that we do not know everything about the virus. It is believed to remain on surfaces for some time and unlike supermarkets with paid staff, churches with elderly volunteers, would find it difficult to clean everything down after each wave of visits.

Prayer and acts of service have become the heartbeat of the life of the church in a real and new way. Many taking turns to stay in touch with those who have underlying health issues, with those most vulnerable in the community. This has engendered a new kind of support and care within the community. Foodbanks, telephone 'visiting', priests in Chaplaincy roles have also been on the front line in our hospitals and prisons. I am pleased that the leadership of the Church kept its nerve – often taking much abuse from those both within and without who took a different view and falsely claimed that the church was "shockingly absent". Far from being absent, we are finding what I can only describe as imaginative ways of being very much present in the community where we continue to serve.

Many who worshipped regularly, are learning how to be church at home, learning in effect to practice their faith in their homes instead of slipping away into that special building consecrated and set apart (where it was perceived as the place where people could go and be holy). Church leaders are learning how to be church using digital means and the reports coming back are that many are pleasantly surprised at the wider audience being reached.

What mark would you like to leave or how would you like to be remembered?

would like to be remembered as someone who practised what she preached! That she was compassionate and stood up for those most vulnerable.

If you were not in ministry, what would you be doing instead?

think I would be a teacher had I not been in ministry.

How has becoming the first Black female bishop changed your life?

The change has really been one of leadership responsibilities as I presently have the responsibility of oversight for a whole diocese.

Tell us something that people would be surprised to know about you.

have always wanted to learn karate!!!

OPERATION Christmas Child

By Sandra April

The church family at PHBC has a long history of supporting the Samaritans Purse Operation Christmas Child (OCC) shoebox appeal. This appeal sends shoeboxes to children across the world packed with Christmas gifts. The story of Jesus is shared with the children as part of the gift giving ceremony and children are invited to attend a discipleship course to learn more about following Jesus and accepting Him as their Saviour.

As co-ordinator for PHBC shoebox collection, I have had the privilege of undertaking a variety of roles to support the OCC shoebox appeal. This has included: delivering church shoeboxes to a drop off location; volunteering at a processing centre; and witnessing the delivery of shoeboxes to children in Peru.

This year for the first time PHBC has opened its doors to be an OCC drop off centre, allowing members of the community to drop off their boxes. Over 50 boxes were dropped off by a school, a church, and individuals from the local community during the national collection.

Altogether over 100 shoeboxes were collected for shipment to children across the world as part of the OCC appeal thank to the generosity of PHBC church family and the local community. It is hoped that each box will bring joy to the child that receives it and that each child will come to know and accept Jesus as their Saviour.

I thank God for the continual support and generosity of those people who faithfully pack shoeboxes and to those volunteers who have supported the church to be a drop off point for the community this year. God has done a new thing this year which I am sure He will continue to build on in the future.



TOTS 'N' tinies
A friendly group for parents/carers with children under 5

share
Play
Laugh
Grow
Learn

Tots 'n' tinies is back!

YOU ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US

EVERY TUESDAY - 1:00PM - 2:30PM
AT POLLARDS HILL BAPTIST CHURCH

020 8675 6799

Tots'n'Tinies is a group registered with Pollards Hill Baptist Church.
Full contact details on www.phbc.org.uk



phbc

HOPE
Coffee Club
(for the over 55s)

EVERY WEDNESDAY

10:00AM - 12:00PM
POLLARDS HILL BAPTIST CHURCH
WIDE WAY, CR4 1BN
020 8679 6755

FREE

Pollards Hill Community Funday **A MAJOR SUCCESS!**

By Evadney Campbell

“

The health and wellbeing area, and vaccination clinic were a great addition to the event, and it was good to see GPs in a relaxed environment.



The community came out in force and mingled with dignitaries for the Pollards Hill Community Fun day, held over the Bank Holiday weekend, on Saturday 28th August 2021. The event, was organised by Pollards Hill Baptist Church in conjunction with Moat Foundation and East Merton Primary Care Network, and supported by local stakeholders. It was hailed as a resounding success.

The free event attracted over fifteen hundred residents from Pollards Hill and the surrounding areas, with participants enjoying a variety of activities aimed at the entire family, including bouncy

castles and face painting for the children, all designed for not only giving the community a chance to forget challenges caused by the pandemic, but at improving the welfare and health of the community. To this end, volunteers at the wellbeing area and vaccination clinic had a very busy day.

The team from East Merton Primary Care Network had the audience moving with their periodic dance sessions throughout the day, an initiative which was well received.

“**There was such a positive community vibe.**”

Patrons particularly enjoyed the food and drink, with long queues at each food stand throughout the day, and feedback from the community was overwhelmingly positive with many exclaiming shock at the scale of the event, and thrilled that everything was available for free.

Pastor Deji Ayorinde, Lead Pastor at Pollards Hill Baptist Church has had a long-held vision of creating a community fun day. He said: “The pandemic, and subsequent lockdowns have taken a toll on virtually all in our communities where the impact of loss has been keenly felt. The purpose of the Community Funday, which we originally intended to host at the end of August 2020, was a means of galvanising the community through the shared experience of wellbeing and I think we achieved this.”

Watch out for the next one billed for August 2022.

“**AMAZING THAT EVERYTHING WAS FREE, INCLUDING THE FOOD.**”



“**There were lots of different ages and cultures. A nice mix of the community all together.**”





THE ROCK

FAITH, I

Viewing Worldwide Cr

By Sharlin Laueuillee

In the previous Faith, Politics and Prophecy article, we explored the effects of increasingly unstable geopolitical conditions, climate change, growing racial tensions and disputes, Brexit negotiations, and the prediction of a coming global recession in 2020. From the end of 2019, it became evident that the world's future was marked with an air of uncertainty and a sense of unrest. Many were left with the bothersome feeling that the earth was on the brink of its boiling point. Yet, the promise of a new decade ensured a sense of hope across the board. It was now time for 2020 vision. As the year ended, everyone began to envision, daydream, and prepare for the endless potential possibilities the following year held. However, many of us did not anticipate what would happen next. The world was on the verge of a worldwide pandemic.

2020 was supposed to be a fresh start. Many perceived it to be a time of great exploits and new beginnings. Yet, as the year rolled in, shock pulsed throughout the globe..

POLITICS & PROPHECY

Analysis Through A Kingdom Lens

Things seemingly began to spiral out of control. 'This is not what we expected of 2020! This is not what we were prepared for!' was the cry of many hearts. Confusion arose. Causing the vision of many-believers and unbelievers alike, to become blurred. All the normalities of everyday life, which we had once taken for granted, were evaporated in an instance. The Coronavirus pandemic resulted in border closures, lockdowns, and the world as we know it, shutting down. The limited social contact and being restricted to the confines of our homes, resulted in many questioning if they perceived what God was going to do in 2020 incorrectly. In the U.K, 2020 finished with another lockdown. Leaving numerous people feeling as if the year was wasted or unproductive but to God, no situation is a waste, and He often takes a bleak situation and used it to bring forth His glory. So how do we see the events of the past year and a half through a kingdom lens?

Worldwide, the new decade commenced with 20/20 vision- it was the pinnacle of promise! After all, when we think of 20/20 vision, we often consider it to be picture-perfect; possessing the ability to see everything clearly. However, what we are seldom told is that 20/20 vision is not perfect. If an Optometrist informs you that you have 20/20 vision, they are referring to your visual acuity. In layman terms, this measurement concludes that you can see an object with clarity up to 20 metres away (or 20 feet in the United States)- in comparison to other people. This means that in fact, your eyesight is not flawless. If you are trying to look at an object that is at a further distance, your vision will begin to blur. For us as believers, though in comparison to other people our vision is clearer because of God's saving grace, our vision is still not perfect.

So how does this tie in with current world events? The answer is that 2020's vision remained 20/20 vision. The Lord has graciously given us the ability to plainly see the work He begun to do at the beginning of 2020 and is still presently doing. However, there is a limit to what we understand in totality. The only One with perfect vision and understanding of everything is God Himself. Throughout history, the Lord has always given revelation and instruction to His people. He would prophetically give them a specific assignment, detailing a specific outcome. Nonetheless, studying scripture shows to us that His people often did not know the full picture of how every detail would come to pass. Likewise, for us, could it be that we have not fully comprehended how God's plan will come to pass in the Earth? If we thoroughly analyse the Bible and various historical resources, we will be faced with the tremendous revelation of the Sovereignty of God all throughout human history. Amidst turmoil and chaos, He is still at work. Nothing can thwart His plans or overthrow His Kingdom. This includes war, famine, sickness, disobedience, failing economies, political instability, authoritarian corruption, injustice, or any scheme of the enemy. All these fail in comparison to His power. His word will never return to Him void.

To imagine a seemingly hopeless situation leading to victory, all we must do is think back to Jesus' resurrection. For a moment, try to put yourself in the shoes of the disciples when they received the news that Jesus had risen from the grave. Can you fathom their excitement? Can you imagine their disbelief or confusion? Can you imagine the conflicting thoughts? Though they were aware of the prophecies regarding the Messiah and knew the promises of God, they had just seen Christ die. By human perception, things would have looked bleak. Hopeless. Destitute. Then suddenly, a semblance of promising hope. It would have felt surreal. Yet, it was happening right before their eyes! Lowly hearts would have begun to be restored. Things did not happen as they expected but God's plan remained at play.

Over a period of forty days, after the resurrection, Jesus goes on to discuss the Kingdom of God with His disciples and gives them the instruction to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the Father's promise- The Holy Spirit. Unbeknownst to them, they were about to begin building a structure that would shake and influence the world, culture, and history forever - the Church.

Yet, as Jesus prepared His disciples, they asked Him an interesting question:

"So, when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts Chapter 1:6)

FAITH, POLITICS & PROPHECY (CONT'D)

To understand the importance of this question, we should know the history of Israel and their scattering- which will be addressed in more detail later in this article. Israel was strewn and afterward, God's people yearned for the reuniting of Israel, which was prophesied. However, what was happening here was something much deeper. The Lord was about to commission them to go out into the whole world and preach the gospel, giving the opportunity to reconcile all men on to Him; yet their strong desire for a specific outcome, which they felt should happen now blinded them to what was really transpiring. Something we can all fall victim to. Their desire was not wrong but rather misplaced. With their 20/20 vision, the disciples focus on a singular promise of God, made them temporarily lose sight of the bigger picture.

Another example of how God can work amid chaos from a Biblical perspective can be found in the living conditions of Israel and Judah. It is important to remember that many of the prophets lived in hostile environments. They often had to commit to God's calling during perilous and unstable times, on a socio-economic and political spectrum. Several were placed into positions of influence, having to address and counsel those in positions of power, according to the Lord's will. It is easy to read books like Jeremiah, Nehemiah, Daniel, and books in the New Testament and forget that God's people were exiles in a foreign land after the dispersion of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah. They were under the governance of some of the world's most prominent brutal and authoritative regimes. To appreciate their courage and its relevance for us in these last days, it is crucial to understand where they came from and what transpired historically at that time. Considering this, will help us recognise the significance of our place in History today and how world events are not outside the reach of God's majestic hand regardless of the current circumstances or issues.

Jeremiah was an Israelite priest who was chosen by God to declare His word to a rebellious generation. He worked and lived in Jerusalem during the final decades of the Kingdom of Judah and prophesied that because of their rebellion against God, injustice, and idolatry; the Lord would allow a nation to rise that would come to destroy Jerusalem and take the Israelites into captivity. Prior to this happening, in the eighth century B.C, The Northern tribes of Israel were conquered by the Assyrian empire and Judah was spared because of the mercy of God. However, in time they forsook God's covenant and rebelled against Him which led to Babylon conquering Judah. Through various political struggles and victories, Babylon arose, and a siege was launched on Jerusalem, that Jeremiah lived through to witness.

Throughout history, the Mesopotamian Empires of Assyria and Babylon were known for their vast array of technology, extreme brutality, strength, and war. Nevertheless, both kingdoms were not ever lasting. In due season, the Neo-Babylonian empire was conquered by the Persians.

The first Persian Empire was founded by Cyrus the Great around 550 BC. It stretched from Europe's Balkan Peninsula in the West to India's Indus Valley in the East. A vast stretch of land, leaving the Persian Empire recognised to be one of the world's first superpowers. One of its most famous Kings was King Xerxes who reigned from 486-465 BC. He was renowned for being a cruel, yet weak King - a reflection of how the Empire would begin to fall apart. Due to internal affairs, conflicts, revolts, and conspiracies everything began to crumble internally. The geography of the Empire consisted of the land being divided into separate sections named Satraps. Each individual Satrap had a King designated to rule over it, but all Kings had to report to the head King of the Empire. The head King was non-coincidentally called the King of Kings. The fall of the Empire came when the individual Kings started to become greedy. They began to steal and hoard the riches for themselves instead of equally spreading it amongst their subjects. The Government grew weaker and separate Satraps started to rule on their own accord, creating their own foreign policies, outside of the King of Kings authority.

This birthed conflict, which in turn created serious economic problems for the structure. The government shifted to a dysfunctional dictatorship, which led to the costly defence of Persia's lands and depleted the empire funds leading to heavier taxation. Persian taxes then led to economic depression, which led to revolts, which then led to more oppression. Crop production decreased, resulting in less trade and subjects eventually leaving. Due to the detrimental decisions of the leaders, they were eventually conquered by Alexander the Great. The fall of this Kingdom was prophetic. Ignoring the authority of the King of Kings led to their demise because of their own decisions.

As you study history, you begin to discover how fragile every kingdom is. One poor political decision can result in the fall of a mighty kingdom. If we could place ourselves in the shoes of these people,

we can only begin to imagine what they may have been facing during this time. There would have been high times of political tension and upheaval. We could only speculate that perhaps they were under pressure to make certain decisions because subjects were also hungry. Maybe even at times they thought they were making the best decision but just like us, what you are going through is no excuse to be disobedient to the true King of Kings.

So, where does God fit in unstable circumstances? What does this crisis mean for the Kingdom of God? Through an analysis of history and prophecy, we can see that God is sovereign and is still working, even when it may not seem evident. Israel was scattered but this did not hinder God's Kingdom. The Messiah still came, despite an unpredictable and dangerous political climate. Colossal, corrupt empires rose for a season but also fell due to the corruption from within. Just as Daniel prophesied regarding King Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel Chapter 2, several Kingdoms would arise after Babylon but the final kingdom, the Kingdom of God, would overpower them all.

The will of God is the establishment of His Kingdom, something that will never be thwarted. Sometimes in life, it will be hard to fathom how it can come to pass but God is still there amidst tragedy, anarchy, and chaos. There will be times when it may look like evil is prevailing, but we should constantly remind ourselves how the story will end; hold fast to Revelations 21:1-5. We saw it on it on the cross when He reconciled man back to Himself. Jesus bore our sins and was crucified, so that we would not perish but be in right standing with God. In the days ahead go and be prepared. The Lord will be with us and prepare us for what is to come. 20/20 vision still stands, well beyond the year 2020. View everything through a Kingdom lens, including the pandemic and political instability.

THE GOD WHO LOVES ME

By Sandra April

I trust the God who loves me,
I trust the God who cares.
Even in unprecedented times
I'm not running scared.

I know the God who keeps me
In the palm of His hand.
Shielded under His wings
That's where I will stand.

Secure in the knowledge
That All power belongs to Him,
And that He will be with me
Whether I sink or swim.

His hand will lift and rescue
When the time is right,

We can depend on Him
No matter what the plight.

Faith is the substance of things hoped for
Evidence of what is not seen,
We ask in faith for healing
And clearing of Covid 19.

We'll always remember the year of 2020 and 2021,
The years of shattered hopes and dreams,
But I hope that we'll also remember
Our God who is not visibly seen.

He has kept and protected us
That's why we're here today,
We'll give Him all the praise
Because He made a way.



THE ROCK

A P H B C P u b l i c a t i o n

www.phbc.org.uk