

# THE Rock

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 3

A Magazine of Pollards Hill Baptist Church

## How to Best Support Your Child at Primary School

### Seeing through Single Eyes

Two perspectives on living the 'single' life

### Calling all Teens

Having fun, learning life with people your age

### Life as an International Student

5 helpful tips to making it in a new environment

### Faith, Politics & Prophecy

Is it possible to see God in the midst of war?



# The next generation

Dear Reader,

It is an absolute pleasure to welcome you to the third edition of The Rock, through you having it in your hands or because you are reading the digital version online.

The articles and content are supplied by members and friends of Pollards Hill Baptist Church, and this magazine is intended as a means of sharing views, perspectives and stories as they may be relevant, both to the church and the community of Pollards Hill.

In the song, 'Greatest Love of All', Whitney Houston sang about the virtue of teaching children so they can lead, as well as the essential sense of value and validation needed to help them be all they can. With the pressures of the current cost of living challenges, it can be difficult to find the time, let alone understand what part to play in our child's education. Our cover article has a particular focus on supporting children from the pre-school years and early learning right through to the point of taking SATs.

Our regular features include the Children's Corner with something for the young and the young at heart, as well as the discussion piece, 'Faith, Politics and Prophecy' which, in this issue, explores the idea of war from the perspective of the Christian faith.

I would like to offer my thanks to you and regular readers of The Rock, and trust that there is something in here that you will find useful or enjoyable.

I would be delighted to hear your comments or suggestions and I encourage you to write to us if you have any feedback on anything published in this issue. Correspondence should be sent to [rockmagazine@phbc.org.uk](mailto:rockmagazine@phbc.org.uk)

We look forward to serving you.



**Rev. Deji Ayorinde**  
(Editor-in-Chief)



# Contents

- 06**    **Educate, Develop, Succeed**  
It's not too late to start the business you dream of
- 12**    **Faith, Politics & Prophecy**  
Who's who on the PHBC leadership team
- 16**    **Calling all Teens**  
Teen Time at PHBC
- 18**    **Supporting Your Child in School**  
From primary school and beyond





18

## 22 Challenge of Autism Spectrum

A parent shares her experience

## 25 Children's Corner

Something for people of all ages

## 26 Seeing through Single Eyes

Being female and single in the church

## 30 Life as an International Student

5 tips for a successful student life



22



30

# ***EDUCATE, DEVELOP,***

By Veronica King



Do you want to start a business but don't know how?

It's not your fault, because!

- You did not grow up in a family that have a business
- You thought only people who are rich can start a business
- No one has ever told you that you can start a business
- You thought you have to be a certain age to start and run a business

First off... Did you know that the UK is one of the easiest countries in which to start a business? The laws are not as draconian (difficult to navigate) as other countries. With that said, starting a business is not the easiest thing to do, because there are many parts to it. Especially if you don't know how to go about it!

Secondly, you can start a business at any age, from any professional background, and you don't have to have lots of money. In this piece I'll give you some easy to understand and easy to action steps you'll need to take to start a business.

## **Let's get going**

To have a successful 'start-up' you must first know what you want..., why you want it..., and how to go about getting it (the writer's own experience).

## **Why?**

Because if you don't know what you want then you will not be able to move forward in your life, never mind run a business.

1. When developing your business idea, it is critical that you know where your business is going, so you will need a business plan. This sets out what you want to happen in your business in six months, 12 months, or in three years.

2. You must know who your business is for – your clients, and what it will do for them, how it will change their lives – make it better, and easier, and create change for them and their families.

If you don't know who your customers or clients are you will not be able to get the right people coming to do business with you.

3. You must get yourself known, liked, and trusted – marketing. The marketplace is very competitive. Every business is in the

# SUCEED

marketplace is promoting their businesses, so that the right people will see their message and come to THEM to buy goods or services. The more you are seen in the marketplace the quicker your customers/clients will come to know you. When you deliver a good service, on time, and of good quality, and give great value your customers/clients will trust you. They will even recommend you to their friends and family.

4. You must put some processes in place – to turn your business plan into a reality. All businesses operate with systems and processes, and you will be no different. So, you will need a marketing plan and a 'cash flow'/financial plan, which should be included in your business plan. These systems and processes are what will help you to stand out/provide a valued service, and help you with your vision for the short, medium, and long term goals. It will enable you to take the necessary actions and implement them via the use of an action plan.

## My Story

Who am I to be telling you all of the above?  
How do I know this?

I have experienced all of them, in the businesses that I have started and run.  
I started my current business at aged 62 when I made the decision to retire. My business was a continuation of what I did in the workplace for employees who were senior managers, whom I coached on their career progression up the corporate ladder.

I decided to start my business as a Business and Executive Career Coach. My business experience came from having run three businesses before, one in which I did a great deal of business development coaching, training, and speaking. Because I hold a Diploma in Coaching (in addition to my other academic qualifications), the decision to start in this sector was not a difficult one to make.

## I understand that it may not be the same for you.

Because I was experienced at start-ups, I kept things simple. Having the practical experience of putting processes and system in place, I began with marketing myself and getting known as my first activities. I also went down the most affordable route to marketing myself, when I started my business, and you can do so too!

I attended a large number of what is commonly known as network gatherings. My intention was to find out what was happening with other businesses that would possibly become prospects (a potential customer/client) and clients (a purchaser of a product or service). Although everyone else was trying to sell me their services, I did get my own clients after attending a few networking events. I also got clients through word of mouth (referrals) and from a Coaching company I worked with.

## Was it easy to start?

It was easy to decide on a business name, put processes in place and establish myself on social media, and become Members at two Chambers of Commerce around my local areas. I attended networking events they organised too, and even spoke at some of them, and I got known locally and in the Coaching industry. However, running the business day to day, and growing the business at the same time was not easy. In fact, it was very challenging at times. Speaking to strangers simply petrifies most people, but networking is a skill that can be developed and helps with building your confidence. And quite frankly putting yourself out there is a part of selling yourself (getting known) and selling your business all at the same time, moreover, when you're building your business on a budget.

## Educate, Develop, Succeed (CONT'D)

Developing personal confidence, resilience and focus is a must for growing and building a business. In addition, having the right 'Mind-set' will help you to succeed. This is where I overcame much of the challenges. I got a Business Coach that helped me to keep focused on moving forward to where I wanted to be. Working with a Coach was the most rewarding thing I've done for my business.

My Coach also helped me to maintain my passion for helping people realise their own dreams, whether starting their own business, changing, or progressing their careers. My mission was to make the change I wanted to see for people everywhere.

Since starting my business, I have become a co-founder of a new business, and was able to integrate parts of my original business in it, so that we provide a holistic service. Working with businesses that are worth thousands and helping them to move to positions where they'll be worth millions.

We have also built new partnerships and collaborate with other established businesses.

It has been worth all the challenges. We are resilient, forward thinking, and have hope of a brighter future for our clients and ourselves.

*Veronica King is a Business and Executive Career Coach, the Founder of EDS Coaching and Consulting, a service providing solutions to business owners in the legal and allied professions, and Co-Founder of atstartnow.co.uk and Online Training Platform providing business mentoring and start-up coaching with resources for start-up and new businesses.*

**Cakes by JK Corner**

Sweet and Delicious!

Try Me!

Discounts Available

**Musical**

**Football**

**Birthday | Baptism | Engagement | Anniversary | Graduation**

**CONTACT US**

☎ 07802 307 071

Price from £35  
Minimum 5 days notice

# The Canvas

By Mecheal Pryce

My sight fails in more ways than one  
 It fails to see the blank canvas.  
 Beneath the vibrant colours hides the mudge of indiscretions  
 The fingerprints of truth and the DNA of blood sweat and tears  
 That has been concealed by the canvas over many years  
 Now a new year and new day choice is given  
 What do I choose to believe and see  
 It is ultimately my decision  
 That's entirely up to me  
 So I paint a picture of encouragement, self revealing self evident  
 In self belief  
 I question: does the canvas really capture me?  
 At dawn I breathe fresh clean air in  
 And my sight connects to see patterns unfolding  
 as thoughts race through my mind  
 I close my eyes and embrace the sun with a smile  
 The senses on my body wakes then tickles my abilities  
 A light breeze calmly whispers to thee  
 saying I am the great I am; be still and listen to Me

I have given you a new beginning  
 a brief for a new painting  
 Trust your instincts, your intuition and your spiritual capabilities  
 Your sight has now fully returned  
 By grace You've been reborn with new vision  
 You are not what you've been nor what you have previously learned  
 Stay true to yourself  
 Be good to yourself  
 Stick to My brief and paint your canvas with strong conviction  
 Let Me be your eyes for you  
 I will take your hand and guide you  
 Trust in Me and you will be forgiven for all that canvas had kept hidden  
 All the muges of indiscretions will no longer be a binding authority  
 Because with Me there will always be many new beginnings.  
 A new day a new way to express My will and My perfect vision

# The Weather

By Sandra April

Why let the weather affect your mood  
 When you see storm clouds you start to brood  
 You say to yourself what a miserable day  
 Let me tell you that's not the way  
 Your mood should be determined by what's within  
 The love of Jesus cleansing from sin  
 When you hold those thoughts you can only feel joy  
 When your thoughts you with God employ  
 When its raining and wet you think you can't go out  
 It dampens your mood makes you want to shout  
 But remember water is required for life  
 People living in drought have nothing but strife  
 When there is drought nowhere is green  
 Green calms your nerves and takes away mean  
 So when you see the land all lush and green  
 Remember the days when you were not seen  
 And on those days when it's bitterly cold  
 Snow's on the ground and you feel so old  
 Think back to the days when snow was fun  
 You'd get the sledge out, come down hills on your bum  
 To build a snowman was essential sport  
 And the throwing of snowballs until you were caught  
 Sunny days are days that many folks like  
 To laze in the sun perhaps go out on your bike

Some would say sunny days are a mood lifter  
 At that point I would like to differ  
 God is the one who lifts your mood  
 Focus on Him and you will not brood  
 On those supposedly 'miserable days'  
 When the weather's not great why not sing His praise  
 You'll soon find the way from gloom and doom  
 To feeling that God has lightened the room  
 God says that there is a season and time for everything  
 To feel down sometimes is not a sin  
 But remember from whence cometh our help  
 He's there not just on sunny days but all days and all weathers  
 So it is time to get smart, get clever  
 Don't let the weather colour your mood  
 In weather you don't like don't just sit and brood  
 Don't focus on the weather which changes in days and seasons  
 Focus on God who changes the seasons and the times  
 Your relationship with Him is what should determine your mood  
 With God on your side you don't need to brood.

# When Prayer is More Than Just Words

By Pauline Barnes

When prayer becomes more than just words  
Something changes  
A drum roll of the heart,  
The spirit is engaged,  
The soul is excited,  
God responds and  
Miracles happen!

You see, when prayer becomes more than just words  
There is a shift in the spiritual realm  
Which creates an alignment between heaven and earth  
And allows God's Spirit within us  
To tap into  
The supernatural power of God.

You see, when prayer becomes more than just words  
Our eyes are opened,  
Our hearts are quickened,  
Our souls hunger and thirst,  
Our spirit responds  
And God is glorified.  
You see, when prayer becomes more than just words

We move to a different plane,  
It's not about us, but the power of God in us!  
Mountains becomes mounds,  
Problems becomes challenges,  
The impossible becomes possible  
When prayers becomes more than just words.

You see, prayer is not an Aladdin's lamp  
To pick up in desperation,  
Prayer is not a talisman or a lucky charm.  
Prayer is not scripted words to read and say 'Amen,'  
Prayer is not a last resort  
It IS a way of living.

You see, prayer is organic, with a life force of its own.  
Prayer is powerful, more powerful than is known.  
Prayer brings us together as one  
And shakes principalities...

The impossible becomes possible,  
When prayer becomes more than just words.



Eden Beauty

## Relax, Refresh, Revive

Professional skin service completely tailored to your skin's needs.

Beauty therapy that is kind to your purse and really works.

Contact Us Today:

 07957 289 087



## 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.



# FAITH, I

## *Seeing God in The Mid*

By Sharlin Laueuillee

It's 6.30am. Your body begins to rise from its slumber whilst you listen to the distant yet increasing sound of your alarm churning in the background. A minute passes and gradually your eyes open. You slowly roll over, reaching for your phone which is placed on the bedside cabinet. As you pick it up, you notice new notifications. You check them. A few emails, a few missed calls, a few messages, and a few news alerts. You skim through as you slowly manoeuvre out of bed, making your way to the kitchen to get yourself a cup of tea. Whilst the kettle boils, you reflect on the many tasks you need to complete. An influx of information weaves its way through the neurons of your brain. Whilst yawning, you turn on the television for background noise as you continue to get ready. Time passes and you decide to check your phone. It's now 8am and time for you to head out the door. How did the time pass so quickly? You wonder to yourself. Immediately you grab your things and scurry toward the train station.



# POLITICS & PROPHECY

## 1st of War

Fortunately, you've arrived just in time and managed to get a seat on the train. Feeling hot and flustered, you take a deep breath and try to unwind. You draw for your phone again and check through your alerts. You respond to text messages, WhatsApp, and emails. You scroll through various social media apps. You check the news again. You make a quick call. You check the time, it's 8.30am. How is that possible? Then you come to the sudden realisation - for the first two hours of your day, you've been constantly bombarded with information.

In the previous Faith Politics and Prophecy article, we covered viewing worldwide crisis through a Kingdom lens. We explored how the breakdown of internal affairs, conflicts, revolts, conspiracies, a governmental shift to a dysfunctional dictatorial regime, heavy taxation and a depletion of funds led to the downfall of one of the world's most infamous empires to date - The Persian Empire. We determined that when the leaders of a nation are greedy or refuse to submit to the proper authority, it ends in chaos and the eventual result was another nation taking over and the loss of power.

From a Biblical standpoint, we see this play out. God often gave a directive to the Israelites. He would command that they follow His laws and gave them much grace and mercy when they erred. However, due to their continuous rebellion against Him, He permitted other nations to rule over them for a season. One of these seasons was the Israelites' slavery in Egypt. We know the Egyptians set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens whilst they built treasure cities for Pharaoh (Exodus 1:11-ESV). In other Bible versions, the word oppressed is used. The Egyptians, enemies of the Israelites, oppressed them continually to the point they groaned in their slavery, which led to where we are today. Though the circumstances are different, the attack of the enemy remains the same; to oppress and weaken us. He has bombarded us on all fronts socially, politically, and economically with negative reports, in hopes of dwindling our faith and this is what we will address in this article.

In Luke Chapter 22 verse 31, Jesus warns Peter that Satan desires to sift them all like wheat. We see this again in the book of Job where Satan approaches God, requesting to test Job's faith by causing him to lose most of what he has and afflicting his health. In both examples the tactic of the enemy is to bombard individuals with difficulty, to see if they will turn from God.

Oftentimes as Christians, we forget we're in a war. In this Information age, we are constantly busy and occupied. Our way of life and the world we are living in, seems to move faster and faster as time passes. Moments of stillness and rest have become a luxury rarely afforded. By the time we fulfil our daily duties and responsibilities, we often crash out without any, or little thought to what is taking place spiritually in the world. Because we are so exhausted, overworked or overwhelmed, we find it difficult to even look up (to God), or look around and consider what may be taking place spiritually. Though scripture warns us that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but with principalities and powers, against the rulers of darkness in this world and spiritual wickedness in high places (Ephesians 6:12) we still often find ourselves in the trap of addressing things at face value. However, though we may feel too weak to fight, or may be too distracted, it still stands that we're in a spiritual war. Though we stop, the enemy does not, and this leaves us vulnerable.

During the 13th and 14 centuries, the Mongolian Empire- the second largest Empire in world History, managed to conquer most of continental Asia alongside parts of Eastern Europe and the Middle East. One of the main reasons they were able to achieve this triumph was due to their success in combat. The Mongols lost very few battles and when they did, they returned to fight again. During their battles, one military tactic the Mongols used was feigned flight. By this, they would pretend to withdraw or be routed to lure their enemies into a position that left them vulnerable. As the enemy forces would advance toward them, believing they were victorious, the Mongols would corner them into a trap before going on the offensive and showering their adversaries with armour-piercing arrows. They also implemented psychological warfare and surprise attacks. Oftentimes during a battle after the Mongols backed their opponent into a corner, they would regularly leave a gap for some of remainder enemy forces to escape. The rivals would flee, thinking they got away from trouble and whilst their backs were turned, the Mongols would pursue and slaughter them thus winning the war.

## FAITH, POLITICS & PROPHECY (CONT'D)

Interestingly, warfare tactics used physically can often reflect the spiritual devices the enemy uses. The Mongols allowed their enemies to be weakened or vulnerable before attacking, which is what Satan also does. When Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Spirit and fasted, Satan waited until He was hungry to approach Him. We are currently on the cusp of worldwide chaos, leaving us extremely vulnerable; mentally, physically, spiritually and emotionally. During this time where we are more susceptible to attacks, we need to aim to be prepared. Consider to yourself, what times are you at your weakest? When are your defences down? What or who are you listening to? What do you watch? What do you read? What impact does the constant absorption of information have on you? Does it make you fearful? Does it make you distracted? Does it make you react in the flesh or make you defensive? These are questions that we will continually have to ask ourselves as we journey through the upcoming days.

Scripture tells us that because of the increase of sin and lawlessness in the last days that the love of many will grow cold (Matthew 24:12). In a day where corruption is constantly exposed at all levels, injustice grows, the recurrent witness of political turmoil and the devaluation of authoritative figures, murder, hatred, greed and selfishness increases, the enemy desires to see us think and react as the world does but we do not belong to the world. We are a part of an imperishable Kingdom, something we should begin to constantly remind ourselves, especially in the midst of war and tumult.

As we know, the Mongolian Empire did not last forever. Despite their cunning tactics and advanced military exploits, they were eventually defeated and now exist as a memory we reflect on in our history books, but how did the Empire decline? Similar to empires before, it was torn apart by ineffectual leadership, corruption, and local people protesting against non-tax-paying Mongol elite, but one interesting detail is that the enemies of Mongol eventually ended up adopting similar weapons and duplicating their combat tactics to use against them. One being surprise attacks.

So how is this relevant to us today? The truth is we can also defeat the enemy with surprise attacks by displaying the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and by being a living example of the Sermon on the Mount. In a world where we will face constant troubles, Satan doesn't expect us to love our enemies or to continue to give to people with our substance, with our time and with our gifts. He would expect us to live with 'an eye for an eye' rule. He wouldn't expect us to forgive. In the centre of trials, he would expect us to retreat and give up and lose faith in God. In the moments where we may be weak and weary, weighed down by the troubles of life he doesn't expect faith as small as a mustard seed to sprout through. When the world thinks and speaks one way, he does not expect us to continually pursue putting on the mind of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. He doesn't expect us to practice self-control and to gird our loins. You see, all of these weaken Satan's foothold and every time we execute one of these actions, unbeknownst to us there is a victory in battle.

The world may seem dark as iniquity grows and the days may come when we feel as if we are hard pressed on every angle (2 Corinthians 4: 8-18) but God is still present in the midst of war. Every political decision made; every world event is not outside of the remits of God's Hand. From the beginning of mankind to our present age, to the rising and falling of Kingdoms, God has preserved His word and His people. When the enemy tried to obstruct Him, even by orchestrating the murder of our Saviour Jesus Christ, he was still defeated as Jesus rose again. Satan will continue to influence the world, full of wrath because he knows his time is short (Revelations 12:12) but now we look to how the story ends, as our hope:

***Then I saw a New Heaven and a New Earth, for the first Heaven and the first Earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be no more mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away" And He who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also He said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."- REVELATIONS 21: 1-5***



# AWARD WINNING FEMALE DJs

FEMALEDJAGENCY.CO.UK

## PORTFOLIO INCLUDES:

- GLOBAL BRANDS
- BEAUTY BRANDS
- FASHION BRANDS
- SPORTS EVENTS
- SUMMER FESTIVALS
- CORPORATE EVENTS

AS SEEN  
IN FORBES  
MAGAZINE

## CONNECT WITH US

INSTAGRAM - CHINA L'ONE  
LINKEDIN - CHNA L'ONE  
FACEBOOK - CHINA L'ONE  
TWITTER - CHINA L'ONE





**By Jasmine Richards**

We at PHBC invite you to Teen Time, a weekly group where teens between the ages of 13 and 17 gather to have fun, play games and learn important life lessons from the Bible. So far, we have tackled issues such as confidence, image, prayer, relationships, heaven and earth, decision making and much more!

We meet and have free time for the first 45 minutes, where you can play football, basketball, table tennis, volleyball, boardgames or just chill and chat. After this we have our discussion time where we discuss the important stuff and then we finish off with a home-cooked meal together.

We've gone to Chessington, enjoyed a night of bowling and, whatever we do, we always have food! Maybe you're not sure if it's for you, but you'll only know once you try it! So come down to PHBC, make new friends, have some fun, and learn important life lessons with people your age.

**Mondays 6:30pm - 8:30pm** (excluding school holidays)

“ I find Teen Time a safe place where youth have a time for Bible studies as we continue to learn about God and Jesus and also a place where you can meet new people. We start off the session by reading some scripture and then discussing what we've read, which is then followed by a prayer. However, it is also a time for us to unwind and we have free time to interact with one another and play games like Uno and some sports such as badminton. Plus, we always get a hot dinner which is always filling!

As a bonus, we sometimes attend fun -filled day trips, which I thoroughly enjoy.”

**Monique**

"Teen Time is one of the many things I enjoy about PHBC. I enjoy Teen Time because we get to take part in the many fun activities and go over scriptures from the Bible. I feel that Teen Time has really made me feel more a part of the church family as I'm with other teenagers who enjoy being part of PHBC."

**Lola**

"Teen Time, Free time, Me time, Social time, God's time (Much of these don't rhyme but they are all words that define Teen Time).

Teen Time is an enjoyable session focussed on us teens. An opportunity to slightly get away from the real world around us and to focus on God, our personal development and to relax and have fun with our peers. It's a lovely way to make new friends, better our social life whilst learning about God and developing ourselves. I've been a part of Teen Time for over a year and it's been a wonderful



experience and a lovely journey. It's a shame that soon my time there will come to an end.

Teen time went from having sessions fortnightly to having weekly sessions and the more I go, I try to create memories and enjoy the last couple years of my youth.

I'm very grateful that Pastor Jasmine put up a voice for the youth and started this club and I'm also very grateful for the lives of the ladies who have taken time out of their day to set up the sessions for us and also for all the people who have taken time out of their day to prepare the scrumptious food we eat and enjoy. We are also grateful for all the people who have substituted to keep our sessions up and running when the main host couldn't make it. I love Teen Time. We love

Teen Time!  
Why not give it a try?"

**Gabriella**

**Give children the keys for  
successful learning in:**  
**READING WRITING MATHS**  
**CREATIVE ART**



A creative  
& unique  
learning  
program



**REGISTRATION  
IS ONGOING**

Term time: 4.30-7pm (Mon-Fri)  
12-3pm (Sat)

Holiday time: 12-3pm (Mon-Sat)



**AGES**  
5-11yrs

**Learning  
Keys**

07927770962 / 07718959870



[learningkeys.org.uk](http://learningkeys.org.uk)



# HOW TO BEST SUPPORT YOUR CHILD AT PRIMARY SCHOOL

By Sharlin Laueuillee

**F**or some parents and children, the thought of starting school, or indeed changing to another can be daunting. This is especially true when a child has not been to a nursery, or when at age eleven, they are leaving a relatively small primary school for the often much larger secondary. This article aims to give some practical ideas as to how to support your child's learning during this phase of their lives and beyond.

One key idea that I will be reinforcing throughout the article is that the education of your child is a contract (sometimes unwritten) between you as a parent or carer and the school, and as such, there are responsibilities - shared yet unique to both parties. You may choose to look at this as a triangular relationship of child, parent and school.

## The Pre-school years.

The education of children starts long before they enter the 'educational system', therefore education is not the exclusive responsibility of any school. As responsible parents or carers therefore, it is essential that you do not simply hand your children over at the school gate to be 'educated' by the 'experts'.

Children learn at the fastest rate between the ages of 0 and 5 years. They acquire an auditory vocabulary of about 50 words by age 1, 1000 by age 3 and at least 10,000 by age 5. (Shipley and Mc Afee 2015) Children could become disadvantaged if they are not immersed in an atmosphere of talk in the home. It is really important to ensure that your child is exposed to a

range of experiences and not just those deemed to be 'educational'. Positive and engaging talk experiences are the foundation on which those later essential skills are built, and so they provide rich opportunities during and after the experience. As useful as digital devices are, they cannot compensate for real talk, for talk pre-supposes a relationship, and one cannot have a relationship with a device. Much better would be a board game where there is casual talk happening as adult and child engages.

I cannot emphasise enough how important it is to have books and for you to be reading to your child/ren and with your child/ren. Children are never too old to be read to; I know many eleven year-olds who love to snuggle up and have books read to them. I do appreciate that there are parents for whom English is not their first language and so find reading a challenge. In this respect, audio books are a great resource right across the age group.

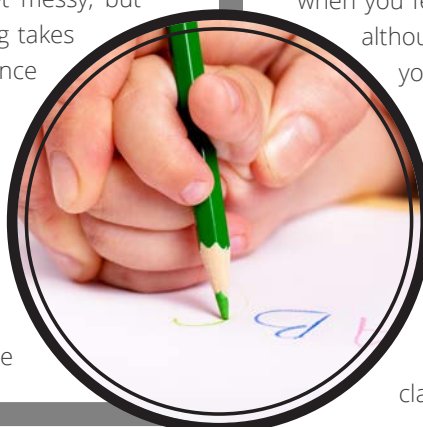
We are fortunate to be living in a city in which there are so many museums –and (for the time being) many are free! And as well as the museums, there are the many historic buildings and the Thames Embankment. Transport around London is relatively easy, and though now more expensive than a few years ago, it provides great access to London and the surrounding areas.

### The Early Learning Landscape

When walking to the shops or on a bus ride, an adult might point out house numbers, bus numbers, changing colours of autumn, shapes of clouds in the sky, different shapes in the natural and made environment etc. By drawing your child's attention to the world around them, they are supported in their natural curiosity and their learning is enhanced as they learn to notice, think and ask questions about the world. This way of capturing children's imagination as they are learning makes learning more fun for both adult and child.

Once in the Early Years unit at school, learning is continually being built on by the wealth of experiences available to your child. Please do allow and encourage your child to explore all the experiences available. I say this because there may be some parents who do not like their children to get messy, but learning is a messy business and new learning takes place when we have the freedom and confidence to explore.

Some children acquire the tripod pencil grip quite early, others take a little longer to transition and it is perfectly fine for young children to hold pencils with the whole of their hand (using the fist grip) until early reception; they soon get the hang of being more



### ASK TEACHERS WHAT TOPICS THEY WILL COVER.

“

If, for example, children will be doing topic work on the Fire of London, take them to The City of London and show them where it all started.



comfortable and having more control when forming letters using the recognised pencil grip.

Before introducing your child to writing tools, introduce them to their hand as a tool for writing. Finger writing (forming shapes/letters) in the air, in sand and in water is fun, fun, fun. In my discussions with an Early Years teacher, she emphasised that children need to develop core muscles before writing. It is important to pay attention to how a child sits and support themselves and that they have opportunities to simply hold things in their hands and manipulate them. She also suggested that when you feel your child is ready to form letters—although tracing has its place, encourage your child to use rhymes to remember how to form letters. eg letter 'b' down up a little and around. There are lots of videos available online for you to watch with your child.

### Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Some children may begin Reception class with Educational Health Care Plans

## HOW TO BEST SUPPORT YOUR CHILD (CONT'D)

(EHCP) already in place and this informs the receiving school about resources –human and otherwise – that needs to be available to support the child. Other children arrive at school and perhaps they did not attend a nursery, they do not have the paperwork to signpost and access the help they will require. If you suspect that your child will need additional support, please make your concerns known early on in their nursery or school life, as these plans can take up to two years to come through.

Most schools now buy in specialist services of a speech therapist and educational psychologists, for example, but because of the large numbers of children on waiting lists, getting your child assessed can take time, so it is wise to keep asking about what support is available for your child. Don't be afraid to keep asking, as in my experience, those parents who keep the pressure up are usually the ones whose requests are accommodated.

### The Later Years

One of the things I've noticed is that generally parental involvement in their children's schooling decreases as the child gets older. There may be several reasons for this. As children gain independence some begin to travel to school on their own, also parents may have gone out to work again.

Opportunities to have quick conversations in the playground are therefore now minimised and some schools are still not allowing parents through the gate (following Covid restrictions) so many children are collected at the school gate. Although these situations make it more difficult for informal conversations to take place, parents can request a meeting outside the usual parent meeting times where they can speak with teachers about areas of concern.

It is a good idea to ask teachers what topics they will be covering over each half-term and if, for example, children will be doing topic work on the Fire of London, taking them to The City of London and showing them where it all started would arouse their interest, be an exciting stimulus and give them preparatory information before the topic is introduced in class.

It's a great idea to begin teaching number rules, (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, but just bear in mind that there are new methods and vocabulary which perhaps as parents, you are not familiar with, and so children could easily become confused with different

methods at the start of their learning. Of course much later, it is good to show children just how numbers work, and how different methods can be used to arrive at the same answer. Also, ask the school to organise meetings where new methods of working can be demonstrated to parents so that you become more familiar with what your child is doing in class. This is especially true for maths. Email headteachers and SEND lead don't just speak to someone on reception and leave it there.

Homework is a must. Please support your child in this by ensuring that it is completed. Homework given is meant to reinforce work done in class, so it is never something new unless it is a piece of research your child's teacher may want them to carry out in preparation for a new topic. Keeping an eye on homework also informs you as parent/carer as to what your child is currently doing in class and again, provide opportunities for conversation. Keep an eye on what your child is watching and listening to. As your child gets older you may choose to give them a mobile phone but please do remember 'parental controls' are there for you. Similarly, you might allow your child to have a television in their bedroom but do monitor this.

Please don't ever feel intimidated about going into your child's school. Teachers are there to support you. They are humans and sometimes make judgements which may equate your absence with a lack of interest in your child's education, so it is always good to be seen. Also, if you have the time, become a part of a fundraising team or the P.T.A. and show your support. You might have a skill that you could share with the school but be prepared to undergo safety checks as part of the school's 'safeguarding' process. If your child has a skill (musical, athletic, drama etc) share that with the school as I know there are some schools who put on concerts just to showcase the different skills/creativity of pupils in their school.

Throughout your child's life at school, it is important to pay attention to their developing sense of self. Children are so different, and their personalities can be so easily crushed by unkind and thoughtless comments. It is vitally important to find opportunities to praise your child and give the occasional treat. If your child feels that they are being bullied at school or elsewhere, please take them seriously and speak to the responsible adults around your child.

At the end of Year 6, children transition to secondary school. Depending on the school your child is in, there will

be varying amount of support from the Headteacher. Some Heads will sit with parents from Year 4 and start the discussions, others leave everything up to the parents. In whatever way the Head in your child's school approaches transition, it is YOUR responsibility to start visiting schools early so that you can eliminate the ones you do not want. Remember that you need to look at more than Ofsted results, as schools can change and a school rated outstanding might not be outstanding two years later, so you could be looking at a report which was done over 5 years ago. Try to visit schools during the working day (not always possible I know) so you get a feel for the ethos of the school, expectations about work and behaviour. Don't be a spectator, speak to adults AND students, that way you get a more balanced view of the school.

### Standard Assessment Tests (SATs)

SATS take place in May and children are tested on the whole of what they have learnt since Year 3. I point this out because you may feel that your child has struggled with the year 6 curriculum and won't stand a chance. This is not so, as there are questions reflecting what they have learnt since the start of Key Stage 2.

Finally, there are practice tests (some of which are free online) in bookshops to support the necessary revision.

Finally, SATs is just one possible indicator of a child's potential. Every child is different and so learns differently. Some will achieve expected standards at the end of year 6 others, when they get to secondary schools. Wherever your child is in the learning landscape, just appreciate their efforts and encourage them continuously.

Keep the conversation going with your child and teacher, it pays dividends.



The advertisement features a white smartphone displaying the PHBC Radio app interface. The app screen shows a blue header with 'PHBC RADIO' and a red 'ON AIR' button. Below this are several menu items with icons: 'Contact the Studio', 'Schedule of Shows', 'Instagram', 'Song Requests', 'Twitter', and 'Facebook'. To the right of the phone, the PHBC Radio logo is displayed, consisting of a blue circle with 'phbc' in script and 'RADIO' in bold. Below the logo, the text 'Sharing the love of Jesus' is written. Further down, the text 'BROADCASTING 24 HRS A DAY' and 'FROM LONDON TO THE WORLD' is prominently displayed in large, bold, blue and white letters. At the bottom left, there are two buttons: 'Available on the App Store' and 'GET IT ON Google Play'. At the bottom right, the text 'DOWNLOAD IT FREE FROM THE APP STORE' is written in bold, white letters on a dark background.



# ZOOMING IN ON THE CHALLENGE OF AUTISM SPECTRUM

*An interview with Babs about her experience of obtaining a diagnosis, and of parenting her daughter living with Asperger's Syndrome.*

## **What were the first signs that your child was neurodivergent?**

Back in the day, neurodivergent wasn't a term I knew. I didn't have a label, but Renae would just do really strange things. Up to about the age of one and a half she wasn't talking so much. Renae did everything very quickly and was ahead of the game when it came to her milestones. She was drinking from a cup at 3 months, never really crawled and was walking by 9 months. So that made me think this is a clever little child, but then I would expect her to do some really basic things for her age, she wouldn't be able to do [them], but the complex things she would figure out herself, and that would really bother me. I would always need to explain basic routines to her, and I can't remember examples, but that's when I would think, something is not quite right.

Routines were really important to her and she didn't like when things would change. If I had to change anything she would have a massive meltdown which was way more than what you would expect as the usual disappointment from a child. Reflecting, I learnt that having a routine was her way of controlling her environment and bringing some predictability to her life. To manage this myself I learnt not to tell her anything in advance or make promises unless I was absolutely certain they were going to happen.

When Renae started to write, she could write perfectly backwards. She would do all of the letters in the right order but as if it was a reflection in a mirror. Over time it was all these little things that didn't add up. She was very sociable and my understanding of autism at that time was that people with autism find social situations difficult and are not very sociable. I now know that is more a presentation of autism in males. She was more sociable than the rest of the family! It's only recently that I know about things like masking. I just kept having that nagging feeling that something wasn't quite right.

## **What is masking?**

Where someone learns to mimic social norms and behaviours. Renae would learn to use certain phrases in situations, look at how other people behaved and try to mimic that. It wasn't something that came naturally to her. So, if she was in a new situation and wasn't able to lateralise those things, she would struggle. What I understand from talking to Renae now [that] she is older and able to articulate her feelings, [is that] the process of masking is really anxiety provoking and takes a lot of energy out of her. It is literally like being in 'fight or flight' mode all the time.

### At what stage did you try to get Renae diagnosed?

Renae struggled through school. In primary school she found it quite difficult with reading in particular, but she was really articulate. Renae loved maths. I think that's where it started. I would say to the teachers, there is something wrong, I don't know what it is, and they would always say she's doing much better than everybody else, so she's fine. But I kept saying yes that's OK but that's not her normal. You're just comparing her to the other kids, but that's not where she should be. It took a really long time for me to be heard. Renae was in Year 6 before the school finally agreed to arrange an appointment with an educational psychologist. The assessment was inconclusive. I had to continue pushing through secondary school. I can't remember if the report even followed her to secondary school.

In Year 8, I thought, "I need to get her assessed, this can't continue." The first lot of assessments were around dyslexia because she was still having lots of problems with reading and writing. The assessment was very clear that she was dyslexic, and the assessor said we think there might be something else going on which I needed to get checked out. So, the next thing I did was to take her to see a specialist speech and language therapist and the same thing came back. It wasn't until she was in Year 9 [that she was diagnosed]. I had to pay for all of this privately because all the waiting lists on the NHS were too long - more than two years to see a psychologist - [and] when she saw the psychologist they diagnosed her with Aspergers. Which for me was, OK, now I have a label, I can do something with that.



### Having gone through that experience, what do you think could have been done to get a diagnosis sooner?

I think the first thing is to believe the parents. Actually, if I'm saying something isn't right here, at least take the time to investigate it. A lot of time was wasted just because nobody believed me. Renae went through stuff she didn't need to because the right things weren't put in place for her. If I was a parent who couldn't have afforded those assessments she might not have been assessed. By the time Renae got to Year 9, I was saying we absolutely need to get this sorted because if support isn't in place for Year 10 it will impact on her exams. It was me pushing all the time. So please listen to the parents. If we are saying this isn't quite right, listen and respond. I think that's the major thing.

### Are there any resources you would suggest for parents or professionals?

When I went to visit the psychologist there were lots of questions they were asking me which I couldn't answer because I hadn't taken notice of them, or made a note of them at the start. I would say take pictures, take videos, write things down that you notice because you might need to draw on it later. I felt a little silly some of the time because I couldn't remember details, because I didn't think there was a need to document it at the time.

There is a wealth of resources on the internet, including local support groups. Research is helping discover new information about supporting people living with autistic spectrum disorder.

## Zooming in on the Challenge of Autism Spectrum (CONT'D)

### What has Renae and the process of getting diagnosed taught you?

Renae has taught me never to give up. She is a very resilient person and doesn't settle for less. Life hasn't been easy for her but she's always striving, always trying to do better. Renae's taught me that if you know something isn't quite right, keep pushing. Find people that can support you, help you. There was a period of time that I was talking to all the professionals that I knew to get advice and support because I knew I couldn't find it anywhere else. Use the resources that you have around you to help you. Don't be shy about your struggles. It's not that you tell everybody your business, but think about who can help you and share with them. Sometimes you will be surprised at what comes back, and what you can use to help you move forward.

### What advice would you give to other parents of children with Asperger's?

They are a blessing. What I find to be an absolute joy about Renae is, I don't always understand it, but she has a particular view on the world that I don't see. It has taken me a while to get to that. I would get really frustrated about the fact that she would pick up on every fine detail, because I guess my irritation would be "Why would you see that?" But actually, that's the way she has been wired and although it can be quite difficult and uncomfortable, it can also be really helpful.

Renae can zoom in on things I wouldn't even notice. Yes, I think she is a real blessing. I've learnt to embrace the challenges rather than tell her off. I've learnt to take a step back and think what's actually going on here? Could I see this in a different way? How is Renae seeing it?

My advice? Keep going. Love them for who they are. There's nothing 'wrong' with them, they see the world in a different way and we need the diversity.



## COMPASSION CARE

### HELPING HURTING HEARTS

Compassion Care offers prudent, deliberate counsel directed by God's word to deliver and save the client. We provide compassionate, Godly and professional counselling services to help individuals, couples, and families overcome a wide range of challenges.



- Individual Counselling
- Parental Therapy
- Couples Therapy
- Spiritual Therapy

CONSULTATION  
COST  
APPLIES

**Call today for a 15mins Free Consultation!**

☎ 07985 131 457

✉ [compassioncaring@outlook.com](mailto:compassioncaring@outlook.com)

# FIND THE 10 HIDDEN OBJECTS

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



FIND 10 HIDDEN OBJECTS IN THE PICTURE



## SUPER BIBLE WORDSEARCH

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

BRETHREN	COURAGE	COMPASSION	CHRIST	EMMANUEL	JESUS
ENEMIES	FORGIVENESS	JUDGMENT	KING of the Jews	LAMB of God	LIGHT of the World
LOVE	MERCY	PATIENCE	LORD	MASTER	NAZARENE
RECONCILIATION	REVENGE	SALVATION	RABBI	REDEEMER	SAVIOR
SINNERS	TRANSGRESSIONS	TRESPASSES	SON OF DAVID	SON OF GOD	SON OF MAN

# SEEING THROUGH SINGLE EYES

## A Q&A with two church members on their experience of being single

Oftentimes in Christian culture, we focus on the process of how to court, marriage and raising a family but how often do we consider the experiences of those who have been single for a prolonged period? Whether they are awaiting a Godly spouse or content with being single long-term, what are their experiences with singleness and what advice do they have to offer for others on this journey?

This piece consists of a Q&A with two church members Monique Porter, in her 30's and Evadney Campbell, in her 60's to provide varying viewpoints from different age ranges.



***So Evadney & Monique, how long have you been single?***

**EVADNEY:** I've been single now for over 5 years though in real terms, I have not been in a long-term relationship since 2015.

**MONIQUE:** I have been single for about 3 years.

***If you had to sum up your 'season of singleness', how would you describe it? How has the journey been for you, honestly?***

**EVADNEY:** Being honest, it's been fine, though there are times when it feels lonely. When I was ill, I really did feel lonely, and fearful. Not having someone personal who cares for your wellbeing when you're at your lowest makes you feel vulnerable and the older I get, the lonelier it feels.

**MONIQUE:** It has been a very challenging season, not because of being single. It has been because without the distraction of a relationship not meant for you, there is a sudden rush of conscious time that is yours and yours alone.

This can be scary in the beginning, overwhelming in the middle and then scary all over again. It is an easy thing to wrap your life around others, it is so hard learning to wrap your life back around you, as God intends you to do, with purpose.

I was in a near decade long 'relationship', I have had to relearn me, relearn my wants, my likes, my boundaries, the vision that God has of me. I have had to learn to forgive myself most importantly, and both speak and act kindly to myself. There has been no one harder on me for my perceived failures than me. Learning to trust in the voice that God gives us has been the second hardest, and it is all linked to self-forgiveness.

What a journey, but I have faith and hope it will be the greatest season so far.

***Has remaining single after this time impacted your relationship with God in any way?***

**EVADNEY:** I'm not sure, there are times when it brings me closer to God as I trust He has His reasons for allowing me to remain single but, there are times when I question whether it is His will for me to be on my own forever; those times, I find it difficult to trust there is a positive reason.

**MONIQUE:** It has only improved and strengthened it, not without highs and lows. The distinction between your will, and the Lord's will – can be grey. But I simply put it back to God and ask that in my infancy He continues to take all control and protect me, even from me.

***At times, have you ever felt lonely? If so, how have you dealt with it?***

**EVADNEY:** Definitely, as I've mentioned earlier, I felt particularly lonely when I was coping with my cancer treatment with no 'special' person. My family and friends were there for me but there were times I felt a bit sorry for myself. The way I cope during these times is to focus on the things I'm passionate about; being of service to others.

**MONIQUE:** Loneliness in the present rarely touches me, I have been contented in my own company since I was a child. I treasure down and alone time. The point by which it can bring anxiety, is when considering the future.

***What do you think is the greatest challenge that women in your age range in the church face when it comes to meeting a spouse?***

**EVADNEY:** Finding someone who is also a believer so would therefore understand your views and beliefs around intimate relationship. Also, for me, I would love to meet someone who whilst a believer is not a zealot.

***Have you tried any alternate ways to meet people e.g dating apps? If so, what has your experience been to date? How do you filter through all of the people?***

**EVADNEY:** No.

**MONIQUE:** Yes – As God continues to work on me, 'Moral destroying, wilderness of strange egos and entitlement'. At this point the filters are just a distraction, little that they reveal can be trusted. Sad but true.  
Preferences: 36-50/ Christian/ Over 5'9"

***Would you say you know what you're looking for, when it comes to discerning a Godly spouse? What do you desire?***

**EVADNEY:** Someone who though have strong belief in God, is also liberal in their thinking. I still want to be able to have a laugh and to enjoy a full life, not just a life governed by the church.

**MONIQUE:** A man of God-fearing faith.

A man that sits comfortably in his leadership role, and understand innately the definitions of provision, guidance and protection.

A man that seeks God before himself.

A man that innately understands the gift and privilege of submission.

A man that wants to be a husband as much as he wants a wife.

A man living in his Godly purpose.

A God-fearing father.

***Have you found being single challenging at any time? If so, why?***

**EVADNEY:** Not particularly; no more than already mentioned above.

***If you had to give any advice to a woman that may be struggling with being single, what would you say?***

**EVADNEY:** Try to find a way of loving your life as it is. Do not put your life on hold waiting for the right person. No one can fill your life. Trust God, that the right person will come along, at the right time. Go on, live your life to the fullest until then.

***What has a prolonged period of singleness taught you about God? Have you learned any lessons in this time?***

**EVADNEY:** For me, I think for the most part, it has brought me closer to God. As I read and study my Bible, I'm trusting that God knows what's best but, there are times when I question Him about the fact that I'm on my own. At those times, I ask if He's going to let me be on my own for ever, but those are only times when I'm feeling particularly lonely and feeling sorry for myself.

***What has given you hope during this time, to keep on trying?***

**EVADNEY:** When I read about people who are older than I am, or my age group who've met their life partners, then I think there's still hope for me!

***What do you think the church worldwide, could do to assist people who are single?***

**EVADNEY:** Not sure to be honest. I'm not one for online dating and I can't think what other way the worldwide church could help without using some form of online dating.

***Evadney, do you have any words of advice/ wisdom for younger women on how to navigate being single?***

**EVADNEY:** I wouldn't say 'navigate being single'. There's nothing wrong with being single. It's a state of mind. There are millions of people who're happy being single and you must be happy with being single before you will be able to have a successful relationship. If you think only when you have someone in your life that you will be complete, you will continue looking. Navigate feels negative and I don't think being single is always something negative.

***Any more comments or things you would like to add?***

**EVADNEY:** No.



### By Pauline Barnes

Please note that this article is called 'Who Controls You?' NOT 'What Controls You?' This is deliberate as I believe that behind every 'what' there is a 'who' and the choice is one of two; the Holy Spirit and ourselves or others.

When contemplating who controls us, perhaps the most important thing we can do is to acknowledge that we are responsible for the decisions we make, that we have a choice in how we respond to situations, and that choice determines the level of frustration or contentment we experience, not just from having made the choice, but also importantly how we feel having made the choice. We are often quick to blame others for our behaviour thereby shifting the responsibility, but in doing so, we are also transferring authority from us to others, and giving those we blame, significant power over us. We are now saying that that person determines our feelings and reactions - a dangerous thing to do. Once that transfer of power takes place, our reactions become retaliatory and because our emotions are under 'new management', others now determine our emotional state. We depend on others for validation, so our emotional gauge rises and falls at the whim of others.

We are told in Proverbs that is better to be a patient person than to be a warrior and it is better to be someone with self-control than someone who takes a city. It also says that a soft answer turns away wrath. In today's society, it is not considered 'cool' to be of a gentle spirit and so it is easy to see why those with a gentle nature might be easily coerced, and so find themselves forced into particular ways of behaving to be accepted by a social group.

We give thanks for those young people with a network of family and friends to whom they can be accountable. A network of accountable peers and adults can also be a buffer to some of the challenges encountered at this time. As the nuclear family decreases in size and influence whether through divorce, separation, distance, death or in other ways, there is an urgent need to fill the gap with other responsible adults so that the next generation can be supported. Whilst agencies such as schools can be part of this supporting network, I believe that churches have a vitally important role to play in this regard.

Currently, some of our young people are finding that navigating life is a minefield of emotional decisions as they struggle to find acceptance. At a time when they are perhaps most vulnerable, the peer group which controls them becomes the barometer with which they measure their self-worth. It is crucially important that they are covered not only with a blanket of prayers, but also that parents/ carers and young people themselves, are given practical tips on how to survive these life-changing years. If you are a young person reading this, I would like to speak directly in the following four paragraphs.

Part of the growing-up process is the need to begin to make sensible decisions. Some of the decisions you will make will have little impact on your future life, others though will have a monumental impact and so it is crucially important that as you begin to take on responsibility for decision making, you scout out older family members who have been there for you,

those who have shown by their involvement in your life to date, that they want the very best for you.

I am suggesting that you utilise the wisdom of those who are close to you and that you have these difficult conversations with them. Yes, you are growing up in a different world from the one your parents grew up in, but there are constants. For example, your parents may have been coerced into beginning to smoke or to drink alcohol, for you today, it might be coercive control to force you into drugs or knife crime, but whatever the purpose of the control, you need to have your response ready. A response which should clearly indicate to the person wanting to control you that you have a mind and can think for yourself. A response which sends a message that you are not alone and even if you are from a 'single parent family', there are others standing with you.

Try to exercise caution and be alert as to where you spend your time and with whom. So often we hear about someone being in the wrong place when something negative has happened. When you find yourself in the wrong place, it is easier for those wishing to take advantage of you to exercise coercive control. Choose your friends carefully. Think about what you have in common with those you call your friends. Do they encourage you to behave in ways which makes you uncomfortable? Use that as a red flag. Deep down you will know or have a sense when something is not right. Act on what your conscience is telling you and if there is a hint of uncertainty, don't engage.

I remember seeing a video in which a drug dealer was being interviewed and he spoke very candidly about how he targeted young people. Immediately, the Scripture which describes the devil as a prowling lion looking for those he can devour came to mind. Knowing therefore that there are people out there who actively seek to destroy the potential that God has placed in you, be aware that 'all that glitters is not gold.' And that there is always a price to pay.

Churches need to be places in which young people (or anyone for that matter) coming in feel safe, validated, are encouraged and certainly not met with judgemental attitudes. But that applies to those coming in, and many of the young people we need to meet are not coming into the church building and so the challenge for us as church, is how to reach and engage positively with young people.

The problem with writing about an issue like this, is that it is all too easy to give soundbites of impractical ideas which looks good on paper and that's as far as it goes. I really believe that the time has come for us to stop and take stock and acknowledge our responsibility. Someone said 'If you are not part of the solution then you are part of the problem.' The challenge for us as church, is to identify ways in which we can be part of the solution.

Looking back on church history, we see the integral involvement of church and community. Education and the Health Service are to name but two ways in which the Church identified a need and addressed it. To some extent also, the drive behind the abolition movement in this country was driven by Christians individually and collectively. So, we see a history of the Church engaging at local and national levels to bring about a change.

The church needs to be young at heart if they are to reach the young today. That means being in places where young people are likely to be. Over the last decade or so it has become more difficult for this to happen as schools close their doors to Christian leaders. In the past, assemblies were taken by a local Priest or Pastor, that is happening less frequently today. It seems to me that the church needs to create its own space outdoors for this to happen. Activities such as PHBC annual Fun Day is an example of this. Young people are seeing the church in their space and natural conversations can be had. Churches now need to come up with other creative ways of engaging the young in their space.

Parents, please speak to your children so that you have an idea of what is going on in their lives. So often parents have indicated that they are very much out of the loop in terms of friends, where children are after school and generally how they are getting on and the things which concern them. It is difficult because teenagers can be incredibly secretive with parents- its just not 'cool' to speak to your parents in that way. I believe though that if you wait until your child is in their teens to get involved than that is far too late. Those conversations need to be taking place at an early age so that it happens naturally later.

The Bible reminds us to train up a child in the way they should go so that when they are older, they can utilise that training. Part of that training is teaching them to make sensible decisions and to take responsibility for those decisions. Part of that training is to make them aware of the pitfalls of life and when they make a decision which has an adverse effect, it should be used as a learning opportunity. Remind your child that life will always offer choices and sometimes the choice we make can be life changing. Remind your child that they are a work of art with a great potential inside them- a potential that needs to be looked after, nurtured and celebrated. Remind them to listen to that inner voice.



# Life as an International Student

By Nneoma Ekwegh

**M**oving to a new country or city can be quite unnerving; there is a lot of excitement but also some uncertainty that comes along with such a move. I have found myself living far away from home and familiar surroundings quite a number of times in my life.

All through scripture we see over and over again people who had to move city or country either because God told them to like Abraham in Genesis 12:1-4, or they moved due to personal needs and challenges like Moses in Exodus 2:11-15, Ruth and Naomi in Ruth 1, and Jacob in Genesis 27:42-46 and Genesis 42.

There are things I have found to be helpful for me whenever I have moved to a new city or country.

**Find a church:** A church in a new environment is about finding a place that offers community, fellowship and possibly new friendships as well. Do some research on the churches around you, ask questions around and then pop in one Sunday to get a sense of the members and the atmosphere. Being in a new country can leave you feeling alone and isolated, so ensure it is a church that has a generous dose of warmth and love to give you that feeling of belongingness.

**Build a solid network of friends:** This requires you to be open and friendly, Proverbs 18:24 (NKJV) says, "A man who has friends must himself be friendly". This reminds me of the riddle which comes first, the chicken or the egg? Sometimes we are so focused on other people walking up to us to say hi, we forget we can walk up to that someone and say hi! Having friends in a new country is essential, through them you can learn about life in your new environment, they can tell you where to shop and get the best bargains, they will help you figure your way around the new city, and also cheer you up when you are feeling homesick. However, you must be careful when choosing friends. Be prayerful and observant before committing to someone or a group of people.

**Connect with other newbies like yourself:** No one understands how unnerving and often confusing it can be living in a new country like a fellow newbie. You can share funny experiences about confusing bus stops and getting on the wrong train! Such friendships are a source of comfort and encouragement.

If you have relocated for school as an international student, find out from your university about other international students like you, most universities have associations and groups for international students. If you moved for work find out if there are any expat associations where you can meet fellow expatriates.

**Stay Busy:** Whether it is with work, school or both, stay focused on the reason for your move. Also discover new hobbies or kick-start old ones, a new city or country is also an opportunity to learn new skills or put old ones to use.

**Have faith and be courageous:** For those moments where you would feel lonely and uncertain, I want to share these two scriptures with you. In Joshua 1:9 (NLT) God says, "I command you-be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged. For the Lord your God is with you wherever go."

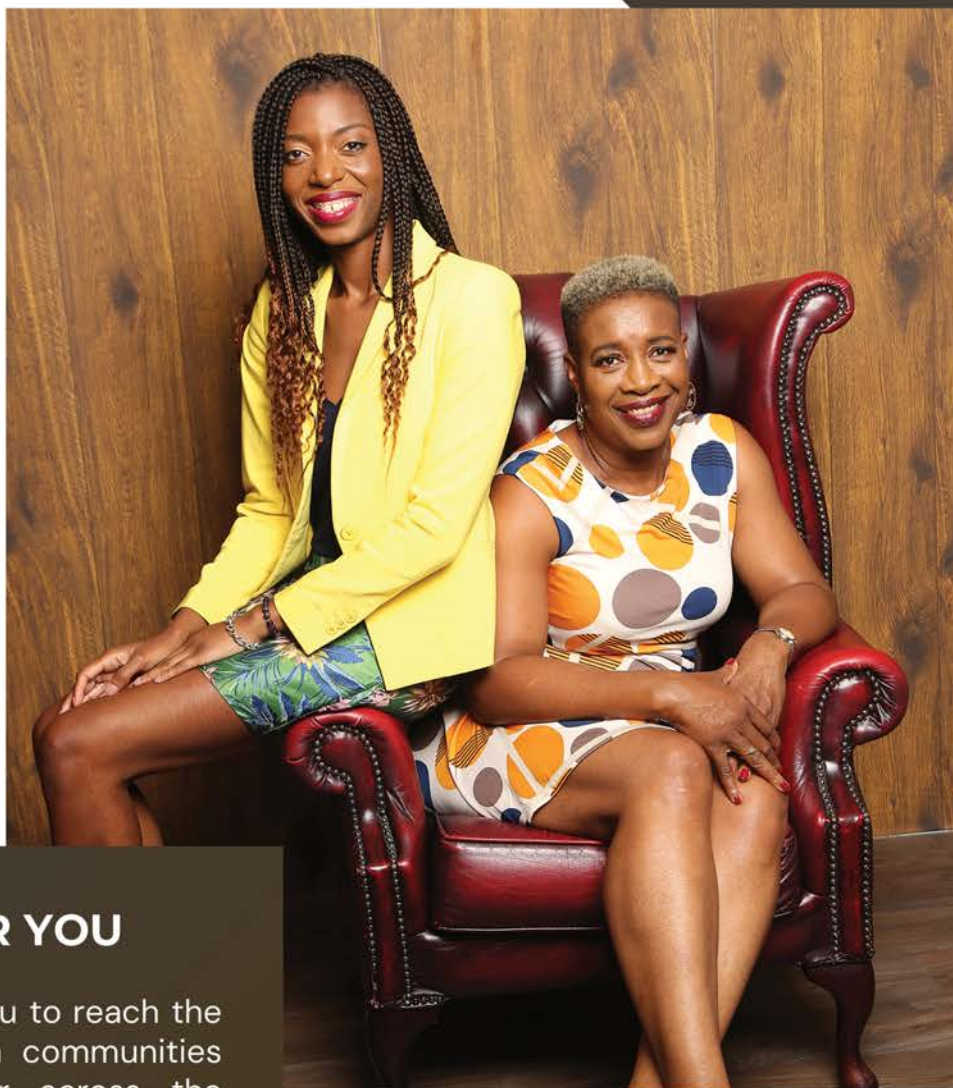
In Matthew 28:20 (NLT) Jesus says, "Be sure of this I am with you always, even to the end of age."

# Grow Your REACH



SHILOH PR

Shiloh PR – the Public Relations and Media Training Agency set up by mother, daughter partners, Evadney & Karen Campbell.



## WORKING FOR YOU

Shiloh PR will help you to reach the African & Caribbean communities here in the UK or across the Caribbean. We will also help you to perfect your interviewing skills, create your own PR campaign, if you're on a budget or act as a sounding board as a consultant.

**CONTACT US :**

**+44 (0) 7716 289 717**

Award winning Evadney is a former BBC journalist whilst her business partner Karen has decades of experience in PR and social media for a number of iconic brands.

Whether you have a product or service and believe in real diversity then reach out to Shiloh PR. Integrity and honesty are in their DNA.

 @Shilohpr

 @shiloh\_pr



# THE ROCK

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

[www.phbc.org.uk](http://www.phbc.org.uk)