



**CHRIST CHURCH
CROUCH END HILL
LONDON N8 8AX
CROSSLINKS**

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A MAGAZINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE HILL



**RELAX IN GOD'S HANDS
IT IS THE SAFEST PLACE TO BE**

Vicar's ten - minute reflection

HAPPY NEW YEAR



"I am the new year. I am an unspoiled page in your book of time. I am your next chance at the art of living. I am your opportunity to practise what you have learned during the last twelve months about life. All that you sought the past year and failed to find is hidden in me; I am waiting for you to search it out again and with more determination. All the good that you tried to do for others and didn't achieve last year is mine to grant-providing you have fewer selfish and conflicting desires. In me lies the potential of all that you dreamed but didn't dare to do, all that you hoped but didn't perform, all you prayed for but did not yet experience. These dreams slumber lightly, waiting to be awakened by the touch of an enduring purpose. I am the new year." *(Author unknown)*

We have entered a new year-we have not passed this way before. We don't know what the future holds but we know that God has the future in his hands. Facing the future can be inspiring, challenging and exciting. It can also be awesome, fearful and dreadful. But we must bear in mind that Tomorrow is a blank page to be filled in by the passing of time and events-tomorrow means hope and opportunity.

There is something about the word "new" that just absolutely screams opportunities and possibilities. I mean, no matter how bad you've blown it, no matter how bad things may have become, no matter what may have happened, how worn out something has got, all of that can assume a new meaning when you use that magic little word "new".

Life can seem terribly dreary. Familiar patterns are repeated over and over again. Ruts appear. Dishes keep getting dirty. Bills keep coming. The house always needs something done to it. And as we grow older, our bodies signal the rapid passing of time. Energy levels decline. Aches and pains come from nowhere. From being unthinkable, one's own death is seen as a real possibility.

And as we grow older, our bodies signal the rapid passing of time. Energy levels decline. Aches and pains come from nowhere. From being unthinkable, one's own death is seen as a real possibility.



Emotionally we can feel trapped by what has gone before. Previous actions, mistakes, and evils close in on our minds. We can be haunted by what has happened. The depressing patterns of petty frustrations and useless arguments scar and desensitize us. We can become numbed wandering through the day trying not to feel anything.

We can choose to feel trapped by the past, dulled by routines, or look at what is happening as the opportunity for one of the many new beginnings in life. God's providence is overseeing all that happens, but that does not mean He is causing specific events to occur good or bad. He is concerned with how we respond, for that determines what good He can then bring about. **Retirement, for example, is not important, but how a person then uses his or her time is. The response can be gloomy, for the loss of co-workers, status, or income; or it can be of renewal more time for friends, family, church work, or others. A newness of life can be born in any situation any time, anywhere.**

In 1519 the Spanish explorer Hernando Cortes led an expedition of 600 men to conquer southern Mexico. One by one he had his eleven ships scuttled and sunk, till only one was left. When his men found out, they loudly upbraided Cortes. He asked his men what kind of man would need the ships, except cowards. He said if any man was so cowardly, he could board the last ship and leave. Cheers drowned the complaints, and he then suggested that they sink the last ship. By that single action he committed himself and his force to either succeed or die trying, for they had nothing to go back to. For all practical purposes 2013 is behind you. You cannot undo a single action. You cannot take back a single word. Before you is a new year-full of hope and promise if you so desire.

We have entered a new year-we have not passed this way before. Let's keep our eye on God and His word.

Tony Campolo told a story about some ducks which I find very appropriate for this reflection: "Every Sunday, the ducks in a certain town waddle out of their houses down Main Street to their church. They waddle into the sanctuary and squat in their proper pews. Continued on page 8

MARRIAGES TESTED BY FIRE

MARRIAGES TESTED BY FIRE DO NOT HAVE TO BURN



Are the vows we make before God and in the company of witnesses really vows? Can marriage really be for a lifetime? Is it possible to stay committed when everything inside you wants to run? I daresay it is possible to stay committed when you want to run away.

Marriage under Fire

The sanctity of marriage is under fire now more than ever before. Marriage has always been a target for Satan because marriage is God's idea. God's ideas and plans are automatic targets for the devil...

Marriage between a man and a woman in today's culture seems like a dirty word. It is more acceptable in some circles now to refer to your wife or husband as your partner. The word partner is "cool" but if it is used in order to disguise or do away with the real thing, I have my objections.

What happened to the integrity of vows that we have made before God and in the company of witnesses? We promise to be committed for better or worse, in sickness and health, for richer or poorer, and until death parts us. Do we lie? Or are we cowards? Having been married for years now, I can tell you that every one of those promises has been tested, shaken, ripped, and turned upside down in my marriage, but we are still happily married.

Fires Are Destined to Refine, not Incinerate

Fire is an intense element, and the more extreme the heat, the more likely it is to incinerate and leave nothing but ashes. All marriages will face fires. It is what we do in the fire that determines whether it will result in refinement or incineration. If you intend to obey God's command concerning marriage, your commitment will be tried under intense heat. Matthew 19:8 shares God's heart concerning marriage: "Jesus replied, 'Moses permitted divorce only as a concession to your hard hearts, but it was not what God had originally intended.' " Hard hearts, —hard, meaning not soft, unyielding to pressure, oppressive, harsh, bitter, and resentful, cause divorce.

Marriages Tested by Fire

It is amazing how our hearts can become like bricks toward the one we vowed to love until death.

Many types of fire can refine marriage. Financial struggles can draw a wedge so deep the Nile River could flow through with ease. Surviving financial struggle requires forgiveness, patience, longsuffering, and grace, none of which are easy. But when we vow to have God's heart on marriage, we will be surprised at what we can do.

Family interference can create cracks in the foundation of our marriages. When one extra person other than God is in the middle, the cord can unravel like weakened yarn. Keeping family in proper perspective in relation to our spouse can suffocate the flame of disaster. There should be only a threefold cord in marriage: you, your spouse, and God. Ecclesiastes 4:12 states, "A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken."

Child-rearing and childlessness can really test the strength of your commitment to each other. Each of us comes from a different background, and it really impacts our parenting style. An unwillingness to develop a shared parenting style can create an atmosphere for a "world war", and children are often caught right in the middle. Vowing to let nothing separate you from your spouse, can help you weather the storms of parenting.

Childlessness for any reason, either through the inability to conceive or through loss, can place enormous weight or strain on any couple. The death of a child can result in the death of a marriage. But I have seen God redeem and cradle marriages that have suffered the pain of childlessness.

According to Scripture, infidelity allows for a marriage to dissolve. But even in unfaithfulness, God can refine two people to the degree that their worst nightmare can become their greatest testimony. Infidelity is the worst blow to a marriage, but it does not have to be the fatal blow. If we are willing to forgive and extend grace, we can recover from infidelity. There is nothing too hard for God. Continued on page 12.

GLEANINGS FROM MY QUIET TIME

YOUR STORM SHELTER. Thursday 26 Nov Life everyday

Emotion- based faith is like a broken crutch; it won't support you in life's storms. It's fair weather Christianity and it doesn't work. God's Word stands sure; it's greater than surrounding conditions and will enable you to outlast any storm. 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. . .' (Colossians 3:6 NIV). Keep a rich deposit of Scripture within you at all times so you can make a withdrawal when you need it. Withstanding life's storms depends on your willingness to ' . . . hear these words . . . and put them into practice. . .' (Matthew 7:24 NIV). So, memorise the Scriptures; read them until, if you're cut, you bleed Scripture.

RELAX (Everyday with Jesus 24 Jan)

The word 'impossible' does not feature prominently in a Christian's vocabulary. When God breathes into situations then the aspirate transforms the word to **Himpossible**. The storms may come but they can never separate the person whose heart is in touch with our heavenly Father. Some think being a Christian in today's world is to be part of a failing faith. On a plane once, a man said when he discovered I was a preacher and a writer, 'it must be very difficult trying to help people maintain their faith in a world such as this.' I replied: 'I'm not the one responsible for this. God is.' I don't think he understood what I meant, but I am sure you do. We are secure because God is secure. So relax.

GOD IS WITH US

There are times when all we can do is affirm as an act of faith, that we are not alone, whatever our emotions may say. At other times, we walk through seasons when we feel and hear nothing. Like Jeremiah, who speaks of God as a comforter and later insists he has no one to comfort him, (Lam. 1:16), we can bounce between assurance and despair, faith and hopelessness. But one of the most repeated promises of God is that His presence will be with us. We are not promised a life of ease, riches, beauty or popularity. But we are repeatedly assured that we will never be alone again. And a whatever our emotions say, God is with us. Immanuel.

WHAT'S ON: JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2014

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Order</u>	<u>Theme</u>	<u>Texts</u>
19/01	1030hrs.	(AA)	Bring them to Jesus	John 1:35-45
	1700hrs.	(EW)	Meet Jesus-The Resurrected One	John 20:24-31
26/01	1030hrs.	(HC)	Come Follow Me	1 Corinth. 1:10-18 Matt. 4:12-23
	1700hrs.	(EW)	Being a living sacrifice	Rom. 12:1-2
2/02	1030hrs.	(MP)	What is success - 1 (Faithfulness)	1 Corinth. 4:1-12 Num. 20:2-12
	1700hrs.	(EW)	I Am - Present in your suffering	Exodus 1
9/02	1030hrs.	All Age Youth Sunday		
	1700hrs.	(EW)	I Am - Your Deliverer	Exodus 2
16/02	1030hrs.	(MP)	What is success - II (Serving)	John 13:1-16
	1700hrs.	(EW)	I Am - Your God	Exodus 3
23/02	1030hrs.	(HC)	What is success - III (Loving)	John 21:15-17
	1700hrs.	(EW)	I Am - Your God	Exodus 4

Note: (HC) - indicates Holy Communion (Common Worship); (MP) - Morning Prayer; (EW) - Evening Worship(AA) -All Age/Parade Service; (HA)- Healing and Anointing. There is Holy Communion Service every Sunday at 8am (unless otherwise indicated) using the Book of Common Prayer.

Happy New Year

Continued from page 3

The duck choir waddles in and takes its place, and then the duck minister comes forward and opens the duck Bible. He reads to them: 'Ducks! God has given you wings! With wings you can fly! With wings you can mount up and soar like eagles. No walls can confine you! No fences can hold you! You have wings. God has given you wings, and you can fly like birds!' All the ducks shout, 'Amen!' And then they all waddle home."

A positive change begins with our mindset. *Thinking too little of yourself!* Being afraid to do what you know you need to do! Not willing to pay the cost and make the commitment! But the problem is not really what you do but what you are becoming! This year I want to challenge you on what you can become!

It all begins by making a commitment to be the kind of person that God created you to be. God did not waste His creative acts on you to just be a nothing or nobody! You need to wake up to your potential! You can make a difference! God is expecting you to make a difference! And the difference begins with you!

You need to wake up to your potential! You can make a difference! God is expecting you to make a difference! And the difference begins with you!

Let us learn from Nehemiah! He was a man who was not heard of though he had been in the same empire with Daniel, Haggai, Esther. He was a contemporary with Ezra and Malachi, but it was not till Nehemiah was older in his life that he awakened to God's purposes for him. He woke up one day and decided to make a difference.

"O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favour in the presence of this man. I was cupbearer to the king." (Neh 1:11. NIV). Concluded on page 9

Happy New Year

Continued from page 8

He was just the king's cupbearer! He prayed and made himself available to be used by God and he made a difference in his generation. The failure of the past did not deter his determination to get things right with God. He started humbly on his knees and God gave him direction. You also can make a difference for God.

What this means is that life is never pointless. While we will certainly go through times when we feel our life is dry or our lot hopeless, the Lord can put flesh on our bones, breath in our lungs. All our routines which seem so fixed and limiting, all the painful baggage we carry from the past need not defeat us. For every day the Lord is providing us with new beginnings small, almost imperceptible opportunities to renew our lives. If we are not utterly downcast, if we have not given up, if we will be open and affirmative to what He has said then new life may grow. Seedlings are planted which, though they may not bear visible fruit until the next life, will give us strength and renew our spirits. And the prophecy of Isaiah will come true for us: "But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not be faint" (40:31). Amen. Dele Agbelusi

He prayed and made himself available to be used by God and he made a difference in his generation. The failure of the past did not deter his determination to get things right with God.

Memory Verse

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.



Isaiah 40:31 (Living Bible)

LAUGHTER LINES

THE GREATEST LIE



A Minister was walking down the street when he came upon a group of about a dozen boys, all of them between 10 and 12 years of age. The group had surrounded a dog. Concerned lest the boys were hurting the dog, he went over and asked "What are you doing with that dog?" One of the boys replied, "This dog is just an old neighborhood stray. We all want him, but only one of us can take him home. So we've decided that whichever one of us can tell the biggest lie will get to keep the dog."

Of course, the reverend was taken aback. "You boys shouldn't be having a contest telling lies!" he exclaimed. He then launched into a ten minute sermon against lying, beginning, "Don't you boys know it's a sin to lie," and ending with, "Why, when I was your age, I never told a lie." There was dead silence for about a minute. Just as the reverend was beginning to think he'd got through to them, the smallest boy gave a deep sigh and said, "All right, give him the dog." From Alicia Coop

COLOURFUL IMAGINATION

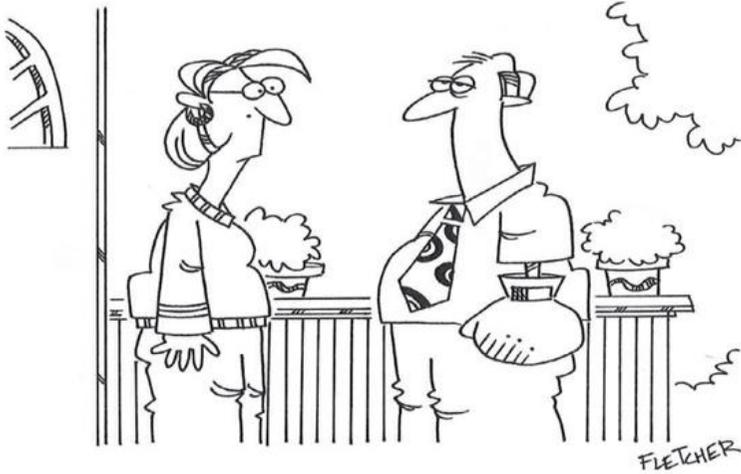
My nieces Jessica, age five, and Stephanie, age three, were chatting with their mom when Stephanie asked, "Mommy, does God really make rainbows?" "Of course he does," my sister replied. Jessica nudged Stephanie and explained, "Only God has such big crayons." Shirl Cooke

A CHILD DEFINES EDEN

One day, my son Jonathan came home from preschool with a picture of Adam and Eve he had coloured. He began to tell me the story of creation, and it seemed as though he had his facts down pretty well. "Adam and Eve disobeyed God because they ate the fruit God told them not to eat," he explained. Impressed by how much he knew, I pointed to the picture and asked, "What's this place called?" Jonathan replied earnestly, "The Garden of Eating." Laura Groves, Today's Christian Woman, "Heart to Heart."

LAUGHTER LINES

(UNRESOLVED CONFLICT) - LET US SLUG IT OUT



© 2012 Dennis Fletcher. More at LeadershipJournal.net/Cartoons

"The pastor said it's unhealthy to live with unresolved conflict ... is your husband home?"



© 2012 Dennis Fletcher. More at LeadershipJournal.net/Cartoons

"...And the church unity workshop has been postponed until all the deacons can agree on the date, time, and colour of the participants' name tags."

UNITY INDEED!

Marriages Tested by Fire

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Let No Man Put Asunder

We often forget that we are not in control of our lives. Bearing this in mind, we did not join ourselves to our spouse; God did. Since God did the joining, how can we do the separating? Matthew 9:5-6 illustrates God's heart concerning the sanctity of marriage: "And he said, 'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together..." An irreconcilable difference is a cover-up for unforgiveness and disobedience to God's Word. We often separate ourselves from our spouse, not just in living quarters, but in our hearts through bitterness and unforgiveness. God is never pleased with this sin. Yes, unforgiveness is a sin.

It takes courage to remain one flesh and not to allow the fiery darts of Satan to rip us from the covenant we made before God. A covenant is a vow. Marriage is a vow to God and your spouse. Eccl. 5:4-6 shares some very valuable insight on making vows to God: "When you make a promise to God, don't delay in following through, for God takes no pleasure in fools. Keep all the promises you make to him. It is better to say nothing than to make a promise and not keep it. Don't let your mouth make you sin. And don't defend yourself by telling the Temple messenger that the promise you made was a mistake. That would make God angry, and he might wipe out everything you have achieved." This is pretty strong and discerning.

Domeniek writes: "When marriages are viewed from the standpoint of vows to God, staying together becomes a little easier. Many things have come to tear my marriage apart; we have walked bare-foot through many fires, but God has graced us. He has taught us how to love unconditionally and how to forgive, and we have managed to keep our marriage together through each test. We have committed to let no man put asunder what God has joined, and that includes us. We are committed to marriage for a lifetime."

Adapted from an article written by Domeniek L. Harris

JUDGE'S MARRIAGE SHOCK

A high court judge (in the U.K.) has resigned after being rebuked for expressing support for traditional marriage. Sir Paul Coleridge was given a warning by the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Thomas, and the Justice Secretary, Chris Grayling, for judicial misconduct in giving speeches and writing newspaper articles protesting against cohabitation, pointing out the impact of family break up on children, and calling for greater support for marriage.

Sir Paul was responsible as a judge for family cases and could have served another five years. He was effectively forced out of his position but he claimed to have the support of all but 'one or two' of his colleagues. He has set up the Marriage Foundation as a think-tank to promote 'healthy, stable relationships' and undertake research to demonstrate the importance of marriage.

Culled from Church of England Newspapers January 3, page 1

NEWS FROM IRAN

Farsi-speaking Iranian Christians have suffered a new setback after it was announced that they will no longer be allowed to attend one of the major churches in Tehran, following increased government pressure. "The squeeze on Christians inside Iran continues. Even while [President Hassan] Rouhani spoke about religious freedom during a Christmas message, the clamp down on Christians, especially Muslim Background Believers, has increased," Jerry Dykstra, director of Media Relations at watchdog group Open Doors USA, shared in an email to The Christian Post on Friday.

According to [Mohabat News](#), a source in the Iranian capital revealed that St. Peter's Church has been forced to stop allowing the majority Farsi-speaking Christians to attend. Some of those members are said to have been attending the church regularly for over 20 years. They reportedly include Sunday school teachers, ministers and elders of the church, who were told they cannot attend St. Peter even for service.

Dykstra suggested that one of the reasons for this government pressure is that millions of young Iranians, including students, could be disillusioned with the situation in their country and may be looking for meaning in life. "That is a threat to the regime," Dykstra told CP.

BY [STOYAN ZAIMOV](#), CHRISTIAN POST REPORTER *January 3, 2014*

MAKE ME LIKE JOE

A drunk named Joe was miraculously converted at a Bowery mission. Prior to his conversion, Joe had gained the reputation of being a dirty "wino" for whom there was no hope, only a miserable existence in the ghetto. But following his conversion to a new life with God, everything changed. Joe became the most caring person that anyone associated with the mission had ever known. Joe spent his days and nights hanging out at the mission doing whatever needed to be done. There was never any task that was too lowly for Joe to take on. There was never anything that he was asked to do that he considered beneath him. Whether it was cleaning up the vomit left by some violently sick alcoholic or scrubbing the toilets after careless men left the bathroom filthy, Joe did what was asked with a soft smile on his face and with a seeming gratitude for the chance to help. He could be counted on to feed feeble men who wandered into the mission off the street, and to undress and tuck into bed, men who were too out of it to take care of themselves.

One evening, when the director of the mission was delivering his evening evangelistic message to the usual crowd of still and sullen men with drooped heads, there was one man who looked up, came down the aisle to the altar and knelt to pray, crying out for God to help him to change. The repentant drunk kept shouting, "Oh God, make me like Joe! Make me like Joe! Make me like Joe! Make me like Joe!"

The director of the mission leaned over and said to the man, "Son, I think it would be better if you prayed, 'Make me like Jesus!'" The man looked up at the director with a quizzical expression on his face and asked, "Is he like Joe?"

Our goal should be to let people see Jesus in us, to be a reflection of him. Someone has said, "You may be the only Jesus a person ever sees." What do they see? Let us be an accurate reflection of Jesus, who "being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant..." (Philippians 2:6-7). (From Everything You've Heard is Wrong by Tony Campolo, [Dallas: Word, 1992], pg. 73)

HEAVENLY CORRESPONDENCE

E-MAIL FROM GOD (38)

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From: **GOD, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER**

To: **You, My beloved child**

Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way...to finding...Your true self.
Matthew 16:24-25 THE MESSAGE

Subject: **LEAVE THE DRIVING TO ME**

My Dear Child,

I'm about to give you a hard assignment. Take your hands off the handlebars. This bicycle (your life) only needs one driver, and I want you to leave it to Me. If you can do that, I promise you the ride of your life!

We will pedal together through surprising and difficult places. You'll sometimes say to Me, "No, Father, this is too scary!" But I'll just answer, "Hold on, and trust Me. This is the way." What you're signing up for is not a self-help program. There won't be any New Year's resolutions, or turning over a new leaf, or patching up your old self. The real you and I are going on a great adventure, and I'm the only One Who's got the map. So hang on!

Your Guide,

God

Adapted from 'e-mail from God for Teens'-Clonigers

TEXT FOR THE YEAR (Isaiah 41:10. NLT)

Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

FINDING OUT ABOUT ...CHRIST CHURCH?

Tel/Fax: 020 8340 1566

We are a family of men and women, boys and girls who are resolved to live for God in a world that has largely chosen to ignore Him.

We believe that it is God's world and that He has given the answer to all human problems in Jesus Christ. As a body of believers, we offer to all who come, regular opportunities for worship and service that point the way to God as our strongest resource in all aspects of life.

We will be pleased to welcome you to any of our activities.
You will find a warm welcome at Christ Church.

Times of worship and fellowship are shown below:

- Sunday** - **8.00 am.** Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
- **10.30 am.** Main service with Crèche facilities
There is all-age/parade service once every month - usually the third Sunday of the month unless otherwise indicated.
- **5.00 pm.** Evening worship

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT A GLANCE

- Sunday** - Choir practice in church (9.30 am)
Monday - Prayer meeting in church - 20th Jan, 3rd and 17th February
Wednesday - Fellowship Meal in church (6:30 pm) followed by,
Bible Fellowship (7.15 pm) - Resumes January 15
Thursday - Homework Club (5 pm-7 pm) Resumes January 9
Friday - Scouts meeting in church and hall (6.30 pm)
- Music Team practice in choir vestry (6.00 pm)
Saturday - Intercessors prayer meeting in church (7-8 pm)
Enquiry/Counselling/Prayer Lifeline - please phone 020 8340 1566
Editorial Board: Sheila Wheeler, Iyabo Agbelusi, Dele Agbelusi
Vicar: - Revd Canon Dele Agbelusi
Church Wardens: Peter Green, Jibola Fapohunda, Charles Murphy
Lay Ministers: Richard Mercer, Iyabo Agbelusi
Organist: -Position vacant

YOUR COMMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOME

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