

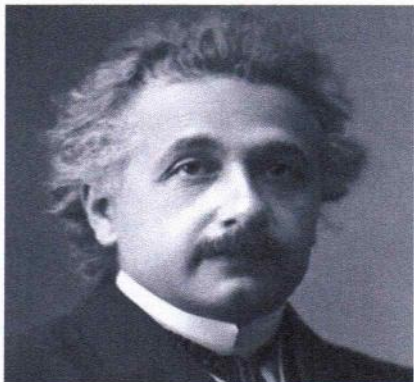
Bournville, Cotteridge, Kings Norton & Stirchley



Points



The bi-monthly mini-magazine of Churches Together in Birmingham 30



**Looking
Forward**

Looking Ahead

...but firstly a look back ! It was 1942. As a child I walked to school carrying a gas mask. Food was rationed. There was a small measure of chocolate each week and bananas were just not seen. My father, as a Devon farmer, was in the Home Guard. He used to speak of seeing the sky lit up at night over Plymouth when the bombs fell.

Something else was happening: a book entitled 'Christianity and the Social Order', written by Archbishop William Temple, was published and sold 139,000 copies. Temple had a consuming desire, as a Christian Leader, to help our nation plan ahead wisely. He consulted with two eminent economists: professors J.M. Keynes and R.H. Tawney. Their joint work contributed much toward two significant Acts of Parliament: The Education Act of 1944 and the National Health Service of 1948.

At the present time we live in days of great world turmoil and tragedy. Nationally our recent years have been marked by much political dissatisfaction because of a Referendum which the Prime Minister who called it said was a 'mistake'. The following general election was hardly a model of honest politics and took place in a country with deep social inequalities. Now, when we seek to open better chapter with a strong Government we are sharing in much heart-rending pain and sorrow. What are the positives which we, as Christians, are called to embrace, along with other faith communities in the COVID19 diminished situation?

I offer the following thoughts:

FIRSTLY, we are called to be disciplined in our daily prayers for all people working in Hospitals, Hospices, Care Homes and caring out in the community. Sadly, the casualty rate among such people has been high. WE pray that all working in such situations may have P.P.E required and necessary for their safety. Together with them, we pray for the vast company of those bereaved by COVID19.

SECONDLY, let us be highly committed to promoting racial harmony as people of all nations and traditions are treated with respect. Sadly, there is too much evidence that this is not always the case. Personally, I know that my modest work in the local Hospice is immeasurably enriched by my encounters with a variety of people.

THIRDLY, let us remember that small acts of kindness, like a phone call or Email to a senior person living alone, possibly in a rather obscure location can be God's gift to them or it could be a sensitive conversation in an encounter with a person coping with domestic abuse, which sadly is increasing. Age must not be a deterrent to ongoing caring ministry as NHS fundraiser Captain Tom Moore has reminded us.

FOURTHLY, let us continue to be supportive to the crucial work of Greta Thunberg, so ably supported by the Ex- Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, in the challenge of combatting Global Warming.

Our symbol as Christians is of a cross of a risen, triumphant Jesus. We, as his followers seek to follow Him in deeds of sacrificial love, kindness and compassion day by day. Let us rejoice in our high calling, living with a world perspective of endeavour.

Rev. Donald Sampson

...I am a child of God. 1John3:1

Racism is an affront to God. It is born out of ignorance, and must be eradicated. We all bear the responsibility and must play our part to eliminate this scourge on humanity.

Outrage and sorrow are not a sufficient response to racism and inequality in society. It starts with self-examination and listening to the people whose lives are affected by discrimination and hate.

"We cannot turn a blind eye to these atrocities and yet still try to profess to respect every human life. We serve a God of love, mercy, and justice." we all have a responsibility for actively promoting racial justice.

racism – in any form – is a sin against humanity, and a sin against God, who created all people in God's own image and likeness.

'There can be no peace without justice; no love without trust; and no unity without equality. prayer is inseparable from action.

The words of the church leaders in response to the death of George Floyd RIP.

The Recipe for Resilience

One virtue which is much needed today is *resilience*: the ability to bounce back. It's a vital trait when events have, in various ways and to varying degrees, knocked over or crushed so many people. Now, as we glimpse – faintly and far away – the light at the end of the tunnel and with it the ending of this dreadful period, we are all beginning to raise questions about the future. Most of these questions hinge on resilience. How quickly, if at all, are we, our country, our jobs and our churches going to bounce back?

Of course, resilience is a virtue that's not just for a crisis, it's for life. Any realistic view of existence acknowledges that life is full of events that appear from nowhere then either trip you up, wear you down or knock you over so you end up on the floor counting your bruises. Under such circumstances we need to get up! Think of a badly injured athlete forcing themselves to finish a race. Resilient people triumph over disease, disappointment and deceit and a thousand other things. They are the stuff of legends, the focus of films and the heroes of life.

It's not just individuals who need resilience. Countries, organisations and cultures all need the ability to bounce back. In fact, I'm pleased to work for the most resilient organisation in the world: after two thousand years of being endlessly trampled on by every imaginable enemy, Christianity is alive, well and thriving today.

Before I give you some suggestions on the recipe for resilience, I need to warn you that it's wise to ask some questions before bouncing back. We all have things in our lives – unhealthy habits, unhelpful prejudices, unresolved issues – that are not wanted on the voyage of life. First, resilience needs to be *reflective* because after any crisis we need to review what has happened and what we can learn from it. Einstein is supposed to have said that 'the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result'. In fact, resilience may involve at least a rethink and possibly repentance. Second, our resilience needs to be not just reflective but *selective*. So, at the moment, many people are saying how much they want to see 'everything to return to what it was'. *Everything*? No! Let's try to ensure that when we emerge out of this long, dark tunnel, we've left some unwanted baggage behind.

That said, what's the recipe for resilience? I think we need to balance several things.

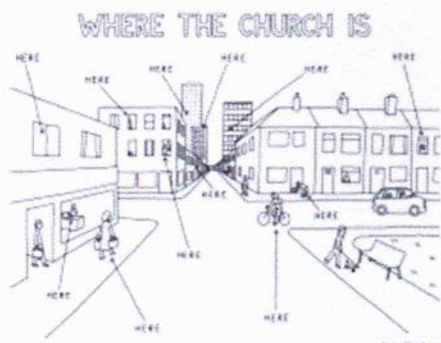
First, there needs to be a balance between both *hope* and *realism*. Hope is essential to getting up off the floor after some hard blow; without it we may as well stay there. Hope is one of the great virtues of the Christian faith (1 Corinthians 13:13). The only safe and unbreakable hope comes from putting our faith in the God who, in Christ, has defeated all evil. Yet matching our hope there needs to be a realistic view of life that accepts that conflicts and challenges are inevitable. It's an attitude that encourages people to make preparations well in advance. Resilient individuals put their armour on before the battle starts.

Second, there needs to be a balance between *toughness* and *flexibility*. Toughness is obviously important but resilient people know there are times and places where we need to be flexible. To survive a crisis often needs elasticity; the ability to bend not break before returning to our original shape when the crisis is over. In a gale, flexible willow trees may survive better than sturdy, rigid oaks.

Third, there needs to be a balance of both *independence* and *dependence*. It's hard to give anyone else resilience; once someone has decided that they will lose a battle, then that's what they will do. You've got to want to get up off the floor! That said, resilience is much easier if there is someone there to help you get on your feet. I feel that one of the most important roles of any church or church leader is to try to help people bounce back after the blows of life. Ultimately, the one who helps us all to get to our feet after we've been knocked down is God himself.

God is not only in favour of resilience, he has personal experience of its value. After all, what better example of resilience is there than Jesus breaking gloriously free of the seemingly unbreakable chains of death? Let's let that biggest of all bounce-backs inspire and encourage us all!

J.John



Reflection on the Trinity

In many versions of the bible the Trinity, comprising of three persons but one god, is often described as a *mystery*.

A mystery is a secret for which no answer can be found. However examination of the original text which uses the Greek word *Musterion*, suggests that *mystery* is a transliteration from the Greek into English - a literal translation with little thought for the true meaning. Many scholars now consider that *Musterion* is better translated as a *Sacred Secret*, that is a secret that can only be understood through divine revelation and to someone who is in a state of grace.

A mystery cannot be known or resolved; it's a closed book. A brick wall. But a "Sacred Secret" can be explored and understood with God's grace. For this God gave us the Bible, and in particular His New Testament, to develop our understanding and bring us closer to Him.

God revealed his *Sacred Secret* to His apostles in Mathew 13:11 and to others in Ephesians 1:9 and Romans 16:25b and 26a. We also are invited by God into his presence to better understand His revelation, though this is a concept which is difficult to put into words and is beyond our vocabulary. What we can do is read and reflect upon the Good News.

Rublev, a fifteenth century artist wrote "The Trinity" in his icon depicting three similar characters (the Trinity or 3 facets of God). We are encouraged to reflect on them and invited to join the Eucharistic table to complete a perfect circle. Thus we are drawn closer to God.



John Stevin – adapted from a homily by Father Jim Lawlor, Immaculate Conception, Glasgow.

Most needed items

Blue long-life Milk, Tinned Macaroni Cheese, Tinned Tomatoes, Tinned Spaghetti, Long-life Fruit Juice, Rice and Jam.



Cov-19 emergency changes



- B30 Foodbank has been operating a delivery service from the B30 warehouse since 29th March.
- Clients are now referred to us by e-voucher. There are no red vouchers. Cotteridge Church is closed.
- Only those who do not have money to buy the next three days food should be referred to B30 Food bank
- B30 Foodbank is working with The Active Wellbeing Society and The Project to receive telephone requests for help. A big thank you to them both.
- Our versatile volunteers are now packing bags of food at the warehouse and arranging deliveries.
- Many thanks to Bournville Village Trust who are delivering food for us. Jess, Dan and Ann and the team at BVT you are brilliant !
- So many people to thank in these challenging times ... but most importantly...

Thanks to our donors who continue to supply us with food and cash. Without you we could not continue to provide emergency food for local people in crisis.

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B30 Foodbank Statistics: May 1st 2019 - April 30th 2020

Total number of people fed in the last 12 months
9278

Total number of adults fed in the last 12 months
5586

Total number of children fed in the last 12 months
3692

Total number of Kgs of food received in the last 12 months
100165Kgs

Total number in Kgs of food given out in the last 12 months
89395 Kgs

Total number of voucher holder agencies who refer clients
269

CHURCH CONTACTS

For details of worship and/or activities at any of the churches please contact the people below:

- St. Andrew's Methodist Church
Revd. Nick Jones - 453 9497
- Bournville United Reformed Church
Revd Leonora Jagessar - 472 0730
- Society of Friends, Bournville
Claire Bowman - 07753 635438
Room Hire, 471 2155
annegiles57@gmail.com
- St. Francis Church, Bournville
Canon Peter Babington - 472 1209
or Church Office - 472 7215
- Rowheath Pavilion Church
Revd. Matt Wilson - 433 3912
Office - 458 1711.
- Society of Friends, Cotteridge
Chris Martin- 475 2088
- The Cotteridge Church
Revd. Mike Claridge - 433 5176
Revd. Roger Collins - 459 4009
or Church Office - 433 5518
- Church of the Ascension
Revd. Catherine Grylls - 443 1371
- Birmingham Vineyard
Jeff & Becky Stamps - 622 1230
- Catholic Church of Ss Joseph and Helen
Catholic Church of St Pauls
Father David Barry - 458 1236

"Points" is published by Churches Together in Birmingham 30 for the exchange of ideas and news. Opinions do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the churches as a group or individually.

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Next Issue's Focus will be

What will the new normal be?