Bournville, Stirchley, Cotteridge & Kings Norton

Points

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

Migration

February 2023- no 122

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Reflection on One Family's Experience of Migration

The theme of this issue of Points has made me think about my own family's experience of moving from one country to live in another. The records of the family trees of my late wife and myself going back for at least 200 years display a clear pattern. By the early 1800s most of our forbears were living in villages or small country towns. With the industrial revolution they came to live and work in cities and large towns in and around Manchester, Birmingham and London. Then, because of a slump in the UK economy and/or better prospects elsewhere they were willing to migrate, principally to the USA and Australia. In fact on my wife's mother's father's side there are now far more relatives living in Australia than in the UK.

In the second half of the nineteenth century members on both sides of my family went out to India as missionaries, teachers and colonial administrators. After the first world war there was migration to Africa; one branch of the family bought land and became settlers, another branch had little capital so had to take whatever jobs that were going. In the 1930s my father went to work in the Colonial civil service in what was then Malaya where I spent part of my childhood. In the 1970s I went to Nigeria to assist in a programme run by the Christian Council of Nigeria.

Here are the migration experiences of one English family. Why then did its members migrate? For the most part, I should say, in search of a better life, in terms of one or more of these factors: financial gain, career advancement, quality of life, contribution to the well-being of the country to which they went. Did anything prevent them? Not much.

It was only after parts of the British Empire became independent that they started to want to have their own people in jobs, to retire expatriate civil servants and to contemplate immigration quotas.

Many of our family members stayed on, a few returned to UK, and some others moved, for example, from newly independent African countries to Australia and New Zealand. In comparison with many other families in the world none of us has had the experience of being a refugee and in most cases the experience of migration has been successful and enjoyable.

On reflection my family has been privileged. Consequently I am reluctant to deny the others the good experiences of migration I have had myself.

What has your experience been, and what do you think?

John Nightingale

Steadfast Love

Migration is as old as the hills. Defined as “the process of people travelling to a new place to live”, thousands of people for thousands of years have migrated from the land where they were born; occasionally for adventure, but more often to flee famine, persecution or war, and to seek food, safety and security. Today, thousands of people are still migrating for similar reasons, we call them displaced people, refugees, and some of them make their way to the UK.

We are challenged by Paula Gooder to think about refugees and how we welcome them. Paula points out that we might think about ourselves as noble or generous in allowing these people into our land but episodes in the Old Testament encourage us to reconsider. In the Book of Ruth we follow the story of Ruth, born in the land of Moab, whose polytheistic people were ancient enemies of Israel.

When famine comes to Moab, Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi find themselves widowed and starving. Ruth’s love and loyalty to her mother-in-law keep her by Naomi’s side as she chooses to accompany Naomi back to Israel and live with her there, a refugee. Together they travel the 50 miles from Moab into Israel over rugged and steep terrain. Although it is a short trip today, it would have taken Ruth and Naomi 7-10 days on foot.

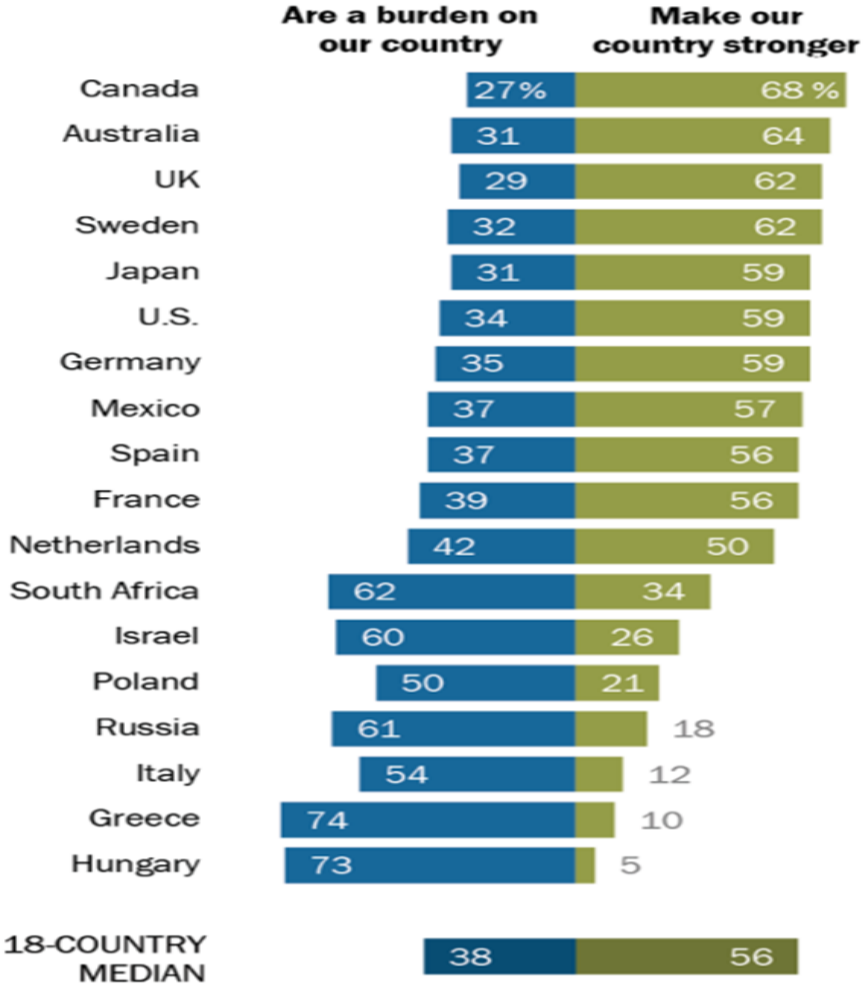
One of the striking things about Ruth is that when she lived in Israel with Naomi, a phrase that was used to describe how she lived was ‘steadfast love’. Paula reminds us that steadfast love was at the heart of the covenant; it is what God asked for from his people, although throughout the Old Testament we see time and time again that God’s people struggled to achieve it. Yet Ruth, a stranger, a foreigner, a refugee came into Israel and demonstrated how to live with this depth of steadfast love. Ruth came, and was to the people of God as they should have been, she was an example, she was a gift to them.

Furthermore, at the end of this story we discover that Ruth became the ancestress of King David. The ‘greatest king of all of the kings of Israel’ actually was descended from a refugee. Finally, we discover that refugees therefore are not to be just put up with, refugees come and they give us a gift, they show us how to be as people. Therefore, if we regard refugees as people like Ruth then we may actually discover that they give us more than we give them.

With thanks to Dr Paula Gooder

Half or more in many destination countries view immigrants as a strength

Immigrants today make our country stronger because of their work and talents OR Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs and social benefits



Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey. Q54a.
"Around the World, More Say Immigrants Are a Strength Than a Burden"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The Concert

Four young East Germans playing Bartok in Leamington Spa.
Comfortable middle-class, mostly elderly audience,
torn from upholstered seats in the warm self-indulgent Pump Rooms,
ornate with chandeliers, portraits and Georgian décor:
Dragged with haunting melodies, with discords screaming with anguish,
back fifty-odd years,
as the endangered Bartok fled, risking turbulent waves,
for a haven across the ocean.
But the torment dogged his flight.
Memories of pounding feet, harsh commands,
still silences splintered by tormented cries,
yet interspersed with snatches of now impossible happiness.
Journeys to the unknown, to the unfaceable, to death and worse.
The music searing our souls, dragging us,
inwardly protesting,
from our comfort,
to search deep within our collective past.
Guilt, fear and pity, surfacing intermingled.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken us?
Where were you in all this unending torture?
Were you visiting the sins of the parents unto the fourth generation
Were you there in the heart of Bartok as his anguish gushed on to the paper?
Are you here in the musicians, tearing their hearts out
as they bow and pluck these torturing sounds from the past?
Are you here in us as we listen, captive in the horror pent up in these notes?

Are you here in the tears dripping unchecked from an old man,
reliving memories perhaps?
Here in the frozen stillness of those too young to remember,
experiencing vicariously that never-to-be-forgotten horror?

Are you here, binding us together,
Jews and Gentiles, Germans and British, young and old, rich and less rich,
pilgrimaging together along the torn lane of feelings?
Is this the heart of the cross, this shared suffering?

Let us here learn and heed your commands,
as the music dies into silence
and the time comes to part, never to be held in this oneness again.
Let us love one another as you have loved us,
united in the language of music, unimpeded by national barriers,
united by the past in the present, going forward into the future.

Dear God, let it be a future where such things can happen no more.
Let us not forget this little sharing in the cup of suffering,
but henceforth walk your ways, Spirit-filled,
to bring peace to your stricken world.

Where do People move to?

	Country	Immigrants (mill)
1	United States	51
2	Germany	16
3	Saudi Arabia	13
4	Russia	12
5	United Kingdom	9
6	United Arab Emirates	9
7	France	9
8	Canada	8
9	Australia	8
10	Spain	7

The Year of the Pig

In about 1980, I was working for a World Health Organisation (WHO), collaborating laboratory. This is the story of two of our students. And this year, a family of Hongkongers told me their story.

Alfred

Alfred came from Zimbabwe. Mugabe had just come to power, and under his authoritarian regime, there was widespread human rights violations. Alfred said little about that, and we never pressed him on the matter. Alfred was in his mid 20s and a delightful man.

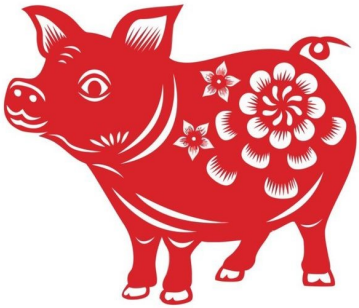
It was Christmas Day 1981; Alfred had come for lunch. Unusually for Christmas day there was snow on the ground - Alfred had never seen snow! After lunch Mrs Mowgli and I decided to show Alfred around Bournville. We found him a pair of oversized wellies and set off to Bournville Green and around the pond. It was cold. We got to talking about the weather, trees, and Bournville Village. Quite out of the blue Alfred asked: 'Do you know what to do if you meet a snake in one of those trees?' I pleaded ignorance and explained that we didn't have too many tree snakes in Bournville. He told me what to do anyway – just in case. He said he also came from a village and his father was the Chief. His people knew all about the animals (including tree snakes). I said: 'Does that make you a prince?' Quite unassumingly he said: 'Yes'. So, there we were - Christmas Day, plodding around in the snow, with an African Prince (in oversized wellies), being taught what to do if we ever met a tree snake. Totally bizarre.

Hong

Hong came from the Chinese Province of Wuhan.

Once again it was Christmas time – Christmas Eve in fact. As usual we had a party (not a particularly wild affair, I should add). Friends, and colleagues were there including the WHO students. We had all the usual Christmas fare: Mulled wine, bread and cheese, pickles, mince pies, and Christmas cake. Someone whispered in my ear: 'Hong's eaten a whole jar of pickled onions'. Two thoughts flashed through my mind - 'Hong's found weird English food he really likes', and: 'He's going to be ill'. I'm pleased to say, Hong wasn't ill, and thereafter was deemed 'Pickled Onion Champion'.

Some weeks later I arrived at work, the day Hong departed for Wuhan, to find a parcel on my desk. It was a width of Chinese silk - pale yellow, with embossed flowers - absolutely beautiful. There was a simple note which read: 'From Hong'. One of those unforgettable moments.



A couple of years later a small package arrived in the post containing a bronze medallion bearing the image of a pig. It was the Year of The Pig in the Chinese calendar. There was a brief note which read: 'Best wishes – Hong, Wuhan'.

The silk was eventually made into a Christening robe for our youngest daughter. Her name was embroidered on the cotton lining. Last year her son was born. He was Christened in it, too, and his name added.

1989 was the year of the Tiananmen Square protest and massacre. I heard from a colleague in America that Hong had been asked to support the protest, but thankfully realised the danger to himself and his

family. My colleague managed to get him a visa and a job in America, and, as far as I know, that's where he and is family still live.

Hongkongers

This brings me to the present. Earlier this year I met a family of Hongkongers purely by chance, simply because we share an interest – we like making and sailing model boats. The UK Government have a Welcome Programme to assist Hongkong British Nationals (Hongkongers), build new lives in the UK. The family moved to the UK about two years ago, and they really like it here. In all innocence I asked if they ever visited friends in Hong Kong. I got an emphatic: 'NO'. Then I remembered the 'Umbrella Movement' of 2014 and the '2019-20 Hong Kong Protests' - Perhaps they can't go back!

There you have it: Three countries. Three stories. Even with its faults, I wouldn't leave the UK. And of the people I met: All quite different. All offering a richness of culture, experience, and generosity of spirit – Priceless.

Mowgli,

Dear Lord

I thank you for these feet, these eyes, these hands;
I pray that wherever I go I will be able to see you in the world around me,
and to always see honestly; let no sight be too terrible to bear;
let nothing and no-one be ugly;
I pray that whatever I touch will remind me of your eternal presence in all things;
let nothing be repugnant to me;
And I pray that with every step I take I will be getting closer to you;
God, take me home. And let my home be everywhere.

Farish Noor's A Nomad's Prayer, 2009.

Moses

Moses: keeper of the flock in Midian.
Wanderer in the barren wilderness,
traversing vast tracks of aridity
of stone and more stone,
or rocks and minerals.
Haphazard yet beautiful heapings,
ancient beyond imagining,
scorched under the relentless noontide sun,
Vast.
Awesomely silent.
All encompassing.

Moses, keeper of the flock beyond Midian.
Observant Moses.
Moses of Horeb, of Sinai.
Magnetised by the bush which was burned but not consumed.
Drawn by the voice which ordered feet unshod.
Moses, keeper of the flock of Israel.
Ear tuned to hear God's voice.
Obedient despite the questions, the excuses.
Faithful to the demands of God's call.

Moses, shepherd of God's flock of Israel.
Leading them through the valleys of temptation.
Temptation to linger and not press on in the heat.
Temptation to turn back when the water bags were empty,
the food all consumed.
Temptation to worship other gods in the vast emptiness.
Moses, guardian and guide of God's flock of Israel.
Mindful of their needs.
Patient with their grumblings.
Leading on and on.

Moses, inspirer of God's flock of Israel.
Leading them from Egypt to Sinai/Horeb.
Back to the birthplace of the vision.
Back through vast tracts of aridity.
Still obedient to God's call.
Unafraid to climb the mountain,
With the people waiting below.
Unafraid to spell out God's laws
to a disobedient people.

From Glimpses of God by Ros Murphy

M - Most of us are migrants having moved from our birthplace to somewhere else for economic or family reasons. I moved from Sheffield where I was born to Birmingham as my husband had a job here.

I - International migration is common. My parents' generation were encouraged, after the war , to migrate to commonwealth countries like South Africa, Canada or Australia to boost the economies of these countries.

G - Going - people are constantly going to different places for a better life.

R - Refugees are people who migrate ,usually to escape persecution in their homeland.

A - Our ancestors migrated from their rural farms and agricultural work to the big cities which sprang up during the Industrial Revolution.

N - Early man was nomadic, taking their flocks of animals to new feeding sites and then eventually crossing continents to populate Europe and Asia.

T - Technology enables people to live where they want and work from home for employers , who could be anywhere in the world.

Foodbank

Last month we received in 1620k and gave out 3032k
feeding 370 clients on 171 vouchers

MOST urgent needs are **TOOTHPASTE, GENDER NEUTRAL SHOWER GEL, AND COOKING RICE**

Urgently Needed

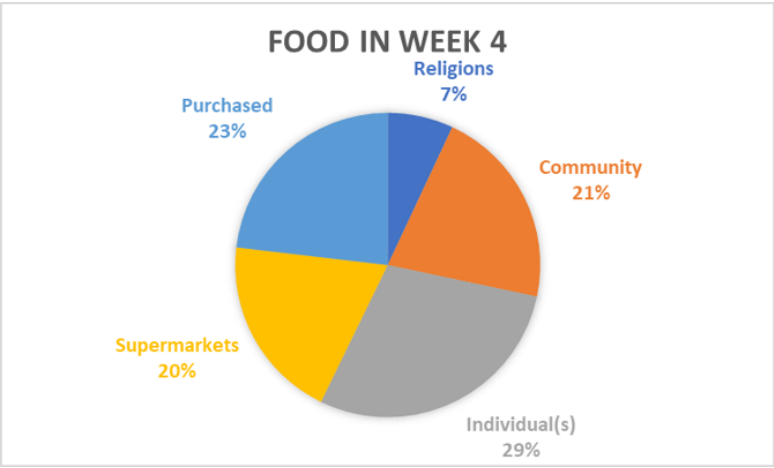
Baked beans, rice, pasta sauce, tinned fish, tinned fruit in juice (not prunes or grapefruit), sweet biscuits (not multipacks), tinned spaghetti, jam or honey, liquid or bars of soap, nappies (sizes 4, 5 and 6), laundry powder or liquid, tinned tomatoes, strong carrier bags.

Items lower in stock:

Tinned rice pudding, long-life fruit juice (not needing refrigeration), tinned/carton ready made custard (not powder), tinned meat (ham, corned beef, pork sandwich, pulled pork, chicken), liquid/bar soap,

Please do not donate:

Tinned potatoes, teabags (40's or 80's), crisps, decaffeinated drinks or fruit infusions, bottled water, large bottles of lemonade or coke, any food or toiletries containing alcohol, cooking ingredient or sauces, instant potato, tinned macaroni cheese, fresh products (including vegetables, fruit, meat, eggs and bread), non-dairy items, gluten-free items, coffee beans, loose tea, large boxes of teabags (120's or more), very large bags or boxes of porridge and cereal, cocoa powder, tampons, make up hair accessories, perfume or aftershave



HELPING LOCAL PEOPLE IN CRISIS

A Franciscan Benediction

May God bless you with discomfort
at easy answers,
half-truths, and superficial relationships,
so that you may live deep within your heart.
May God bless you with anger
at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people,
so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.
May God bless you with tears
to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger and war,
so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them
and turn their pain into joy.
And May God bless you with enough foolishness
to believe that you can make a difference in the world,
so that you can make a difference in the world,
so that you can do what others claim cannot be done
to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.
Amen

attributed to the earliest followers of St Francis

Quiz Night

Friday 10 February @ 7 pm

In SS Joseph & Helens Church Hall

Come along and join a team

Or bring your own team of six players

£3 per person

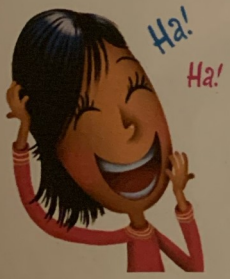
A great way to get your weekend off to a fun start

Bring your own refreshments

Teas and coffees available

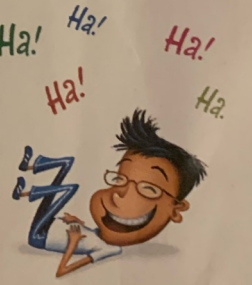
Sample question

What is the ancient art of herb folding called?



Answer

Origano



All proceeds will go to a local charity

further details contact Tess Singleton on 0121 458 1657

You are invited ...

Places of Welcome

Pavilion has a session every Friday in the Rowheath Terrace Room.

Bournville Parish Church, St Francis meets every Thursday morning 10.30 am – 12 noon in Church.

Warm Spaces - where people can gather for free in a warm, safe, welcoming place and enjoy a hot drink and some company.

Cotteridge Church
Mon-Thurs 8.30 am – 5.00 pm
Friday 9.30 am– 1.30 pm

Quiz

SS Joseph and Helen
Quiz – Friday 10 February, 7 pm in Church Hall (see poster on previous page).

RSCDS Birmingham

Join our

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON CLASS

from 7 September 2022 for fun, friendly Scottish dancing.

Every week from 2.00-3.30pm

Bournville Quaker Meeting House, 65 Linden Road, Birmingham B30 1JT

A rota of teachers will take the class.

Please contact Fiona Thomson on 07791 863522 or fthomson69@gmail.com for more details.

Click on the different links below to find out what's happening in your church

(Crl + click on link)

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https://b30.foodbank.org.uk/

https://www.birminghamchurches.org.uk/news/

https://ctb30.org.uk/

CHURCH CONTACTS

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

- St. Andrew's Methodist Church
  Revd. Farai Mapamula - 427 1747
- 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
  Rev Canon Richard Wharton - 472 7215
- Rowheath Pavilion Church
  Inter regnum
  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
- Ascension Stirchley
  Revd. Catherine Grylls - 443 1371
- Catholic Church of Ss Joseph and Helen
- Catholic Church of St Paul's
  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

Kings

Deadline for articles: 22 March