

Bournville, Stirchley, Cotteridge & Kings Norton



Points



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

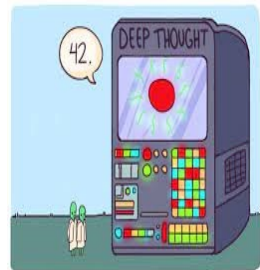
What is Really Important?



Important or Not

Professor Stephen Hawkins, probably the world's most famous scientist, spent most of his career studying space and time, in particular, Black Holes. His book 'A Brief History of Time' graces numerous library shelves - few people understand it - I certainly don't. Douglas Adams, author of 'The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy', asks a similar question: 'The Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything.' Adams writes: 'After 7½ million years, the super computer, Deep Thought, gives the answer as 42. Any the wiser? I fear not...

On the 11 July 2021, Richard Branson was finally launched to the edge of space aboard his Virgin Galactic space plane, beating fellow billionaire Jeff Bezos by a matter of days. You too can travel to space and claim the title 'astronaut', for a mere £325,000!



Courtesy breakingsmart.com

Turning now to another billionaire, Bill Gates, of The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation: As of 2020 the BMGF is reported to be the second largest charitable organisation in the world (Novo Nordisk, Denmark, being the biggest). The BMGF, is also the second largest funder of the World Health Organisation; the largest still being the US, after President Biden (In his first day in office), reversed President Trump's decision to suspend funding.



A lady currently in the news is Dame Sarah Gilbert. She was little known until becoming instrumental in the development of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine against the Coronavirus.

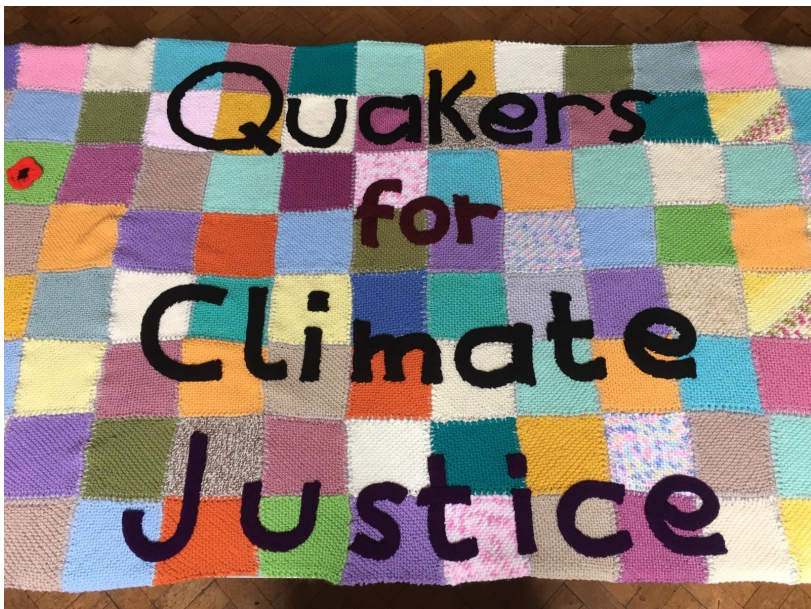


More recently, Professor Gilbert became the subject of one of six new Barbie Dolls celebrating women in medicine. Additionally, she received a standing ovation at this year's Wimbledon. Praise indeed...

Last, but not least: I know a lady who is a welcomer at the local Food Bank. She makes the clients tea. That's it - that's what she does...

Here are a couple of questions: Firstly, which of these people do you think are the most important. Secondly, which would you choose as a neighbour.

Mowgli



Visit The Bournville Christmas tree and see the Tree Cosy

Will we remember?

During the pandemic, which we are all still going through, particularly during the lockdowns, we all had plenty of time to focus on what was important to us but will we remember these thoughts when the pandemic is less invasive in our lives and will we use these thoughts to shape our future lives instead of going back to the life we had before the pandemic?

So what were these things that we found important? Top of the list for me would be the love and kindness of family, friends and neighbours, not to forget the delivery people like the milkman and the postman. Where would we be without these people?



We discovered the importance of nature in our lives; observing trees and plants and listening to the bird song. Of course we realised how fragile all our lives are and we prayed for health and strength to withstand the disease and we all followed instructions on how to keep safe by wearing masks, sanitizing and social distancing.

I think a lot of these measures will continue long into the future. We realised how much we missed hugging the children and grandchildren, having face-to-face contact with people and meeting people socially.

We also saw ourselves within the world picture where we realised that everyone is affected by the pandemic and in the longer term, climate change. It is very important that we do not forget that we are all responsible for stopping climate change by making our lives more sustainable and that we keep up with the immunisation programme to keep everyone safe not just

ourselves. We now know that resources are finite and that we should live according to our needs and not our wants, so we need to try to remember all these important things as we move forward, reordering our lives to make things better in the future.

Above all we need to make sure that we are following Christ's way and doing our best to make his kingdom come.

Linda Mann

Looking Inwards or Outwards

Since the time when humans were living in caves and foraging for food, first from plants and then by hunting, finding enough to stay alive was of prime importance. Not being consumed by wild beasts or succumbing to extreme temperatures would have come a close second. A consultant once commented dryly, "Stress! People think they are stressed? Try living in mediaeval times and not knowing whether the harvest would provide you with enough food to survive the winter; now that was stressful."



In 2021, for most of us in the western hemisphere, these are now rarely life or death preoccupations. We have assumed them as basic rights, so what now is most important? For many thoughts turn to quality of life; How does my life compare with those around me? How successful is my progress through life? When will I be able to travel abroad/ resume my social engagements? There might no longer be the need to strive for survival, but still a preoccupation with "self" remains.

Those who look beyond the limited sphere of their personal lives will identify greater and potentially more crucial concerns clamouring for precedence; poverty, human rights, sustainability, climate change and many more. For every right brings a responsibility and these are weighty issues that we ignore at our peril.

So what do we consider really important?

Over time, our concept of what is important evolves. When we were young our world focussed inwards; understanding our place in it and discovering how we fitted in, comparing ourselves with others, seeking to emulate, to compete, to succeed.

As our experience expands with time and we begin to look outwards, we form connections with those living in the world alongside us, and discern our own responsibilities. Though well-intentioned, it is nevertheless easy to think that our small, individual inroads into redeeming the troubles of the world are insignificant as an attempt to rescue the world.

Yet it now seems to me that change can start with a single person; by listening and relating to another, reaching out and interacting with more. There may be arguments and disagreements, but when communication ripples out, conversation and discussion can follow, leading sometimes to acceptance, support and amelioration.



So what is really important? For me it is listening, reaching out, and above all - communication.

Sally Slevin

***Above all, keep loving one another earnestly,
since love covers a multitude of sins.***

1 Peter 4:8

A simple phrase at first glimpse. Or is it?

Peter lived during a time of Roman occupation in his country and where the indigenous citizens were subjugated.

However, his response was not to complain about how hard life was, rather he said we must love each other. Peter did not mean in a friendly and sociable way, but to love deeply in a way that was committed. Think of someone training for the Olympics. They would spend many hours each day improving themselves and constantly striving to be the best. This is the level of dedication that we should be striving for.

The second part of the sentence seems to suggest that we can wander about doing lots of sinning and then wipe the slate clean by doing good.

Once again this is not what Peter meant. He realised we were born with sin and capable of sin, so we must show total dedication to love in order to help us overcome our human frailties.

In the last eighteen months of Lockdown we may have become very insular and introspective. We now need to overcome this imposed attitude and make a conscious effort to return to helping others, especially those less fortunate than ourselves. There are many who have struggled mentally, physically, emotionally, medically or financially.

How many people do you know and how can we show our love in a committed, earnest way?

John Slevin



Time Waits for no Man (or Woman)

I have been known to start lecturing to an empty lecture hall just to make one of my favourite points about studying..... It doesn't matter how clever or stupid you are, how poor or wealthy you are, how old or young you are, you cannot increase the time you have and you cannot get time back.

For most people (unless you are a theoretical cosmologist, or Dr Who) time only exists in the present. Once it has been spent, you cannot retrieve it. Once it has gone, you cannot relive it. You cannot save it in a bank to enjoy it later. So, the point I was trying to make to my students was that time is the most important thing about studying. If the lecture was due to start at 9.00a.m., then that's when it started and (in the days before the internet) that's the only time you could be a part of that particular learning process.



Students aren't known for their punctuality, and I was often sorely tempted to send a message that there was going to be a reward of £100 for every student who was in their place at 8.55a.m. for a 9.00 lecture, just to show that, although time is finite, in another way, as Hippocrates pointed out, time is a created thing. To say "I don't have time" is often to say "I don't want to". If you want to do something enough, then you make time.



That means that for me, I always feel that time is of the essence. I blame my father for my slight obsession with punctuality. If he said we were going to leave the house at 10.30a.m. for Church, then 10.30 it was. Not 10.29 or 10.31, but 10.30. If you were early, you were wasting time. And if you were late, he left without you.

The saying "it's never too late" makes no sense to me. There are obvious occasions when it is far too late. Try catching a train which departed half an hour ago. Try saying good bye to an ill friend who died the previous day. Try planting cauliflower seed in December. Try resurrecting a church membership with the median age of 80. Much better is "It's never too early."



And that's what our politicians never seem to learn. From 2010-2020, austerity policies by the (Conservative) Government has meant we have 500+ fewer Sure Start Centres, 773 fewer libraries, 763 fewer Youth Centres and 471 fewer schools. All these have desperately affected our children and

young people. These are lives and opportunities which can never be regained.

So to me, what is really important is time. Now, don't get me started on climate change!

Helen Gale

Thought For Today

Gently walk through a park with a yellow tennis ball in your hand.

Swing your arms in a relaxed manner and count each easy swing of your arms.

When you reach 'ten' throw the ball as far as you can in front of you.

Keep walking casually forward.

Are you worried you will lose the ball?

No!, it's bright and you saw, more or less, where it landed

The ball is now your future focus, albeit twenty seconds in the future.

The decisions you make today will have an influence.

What is really important is that you make decisions now if you want something to happen.

Go on then, throw the ball – make a decision – make something happen.



Last week we received in donations 1178kgs. Last week we gave out 1952kgs of food 1754 to 153 people on 75 vouchers and 198kgs to other foodbanks or similar.

Urgently needed

sugar 500g (not larger)	cereal
chocolate and snack bars	tinned fish (not tuna)
potato smash	pasta sauces
gender neutral shampoo	tinned tomatoes
disposable razors	tinned rice pudding
strong carrier bags	long-life fruit juice
toilet rolls	rice
washing up liquid (not family sized bottles)	jam/honey
porridge	crisps
UHT semi skimmed milk	laundry power/liquid (not family sized)
pack/pot noodles	gender neutral roll-on deodorant
ready-made custard (tinned or carton - not powdered)	liquid or bar soap
Low in stock instant coffee (not decaffeinated)	

Cotteridge Quaker Community Fund

The Cotteridge Quaker Community Fund exists to provide grants for projects and initiatives which improve the environment and social community of Cotteridge. We aim to make Cotteridge an even nicer place to live in for everyone.

For grant applications and queries email:

cqcfund@gmail.com

Churches Together Choral Evensong

Sunday 7th November at 6.30 pm

The Cotteridge Church

All are welcome. An outstanding opportunity for us to come together as Christians to share fellowship with beautiful music and reflective prayer.

Music includes Bach, Howells, Smith and other great composers.

All Church choirs and singers who may be interested in joining the choir to sing on this occasion are welcome. Rehearsals at Cotteridge Church, every Thursday at 6.30 pm.

Contact Editor for further details.

Bournville Christmas Festival

Saturday 27th November

2.00 pm - 5.00 pm

St Francis Church will be contributing with Open Church and a with Nativity Trail

There will be outside stalls including crafts and cards, cakes and preserves, teddy tombola and family games.

Carols on the Green

We are planning and hoping that Carols on the Green will take place this year on Christmas Eve on Bournville Green at 6 pm.

Save the date! Look out for Churches Together new website coming soon with further information.

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

(Ctrl + click on link)

<https://www.facebook.com/rowheath.pavilion/>

<https://ssjandh.org>

<https://bournvilleparishchurch.org.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/BournvilleParishChurchStFrancisOfAssisi/>

www.ascensionstirchley.com

<https://www.facebook.com/AscensionStirchley/>

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Religious-Organization/Bournville-Quaker-Meeting/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Cotteridge-Quaker>

<https://cotteridgequakers.org.uk/>

<https://www.thecotteridgechurch.org.uk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/TheCotteridgeChurch/>

<https://www.birminghammethodistcircuit.org.uk/church-page/st-andrews-b30>

<https://www.weoleyhillchurch.org.uk/links.php>

<https://www.birminghamvineyard.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/vineyardbham/>

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

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

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
Rev. Farai Mapamula - 427 1747
- Bournville United Reformed Church
Rev. Leonora Jagessar - 472 0730
- Society of Friends, Bournville
Claire Bowman - 07753 635438
Room Hire, 471 2155
annegiles57@gmail.com
- St. Francis Church, Bournville
Interregnum - phone Church Office - 472 7215
- Rowheath Pavilion Church
Rev. Matt Wilson - 433 3912
Office - 458 1711.
- Society of Friends, Cotteridge
Chris Martin - 475 2088
- The Cotteridge Church
Rev. Mike Claridge - 433 5176
Rev. Roger Collins - 459 4009
or Church Office - 433 5518
- Ascension Stirchley
Rev. 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

It wouldn't be Christmas without....