

Oscailt

Oscailt since January 2005 has become the monthly magazine for Irish Unitarians. Originally it was the calendar for Dublin but due to popular demand by non members this new format was born and continues to grow and flourish.

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Front Cover: An early morning picture of the church shortly after the scaffolding was removed 2006.

(photo P.Spain)

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Oscailt

Our magazine title, ***Oscailt***, is inspired by the account of the **Healing of the Deaf and Mute Man** in St. Mark's Gospel, Chapter 7. Jesus commands the mans ears to open up with Aramic word "Ephphatha" - open ! The Irish word *oscailt*, (from the verb *os-cail*, to open), means an opening, or, metaphorically, it could mean a revelation or a beginning.

Equanimity:

Even-Mindedness

When we lost our brother, Martin, in 2020, his beautiful qualities were acknowledged and praised by many. He was even-tempered and cheerful, thoughtful and kind, peace-loving and helpful. In the throes of his painful final illness he showed consideration for others, including all the hospital staff, and concern for the people he would leave behind. His last words, in true selflessness, were God Bless All. Pondering on a virtue that might be ascribed to Martin to sum up so many admirable qualities, equanimity came to mind. Equanimity is the quality of being calm, even-tempered and non-reactive, especially in the face of difficulties.

The term “equanimity” first entered the English language in the seventeenth century. It is derived from the Latin “aequanimitas,” which means “aequus” (equal) and “animus” (mind). The Oxford English Dictionary describes it as “calmness and composure, especially in a difficult situation”. The French call it *equanimite*, meaning evenness of mind. The Sanskrit term is *Upeksha*. Thich Nhat Hanh, Vietnamese Buddhist monk, exploring the word *upeksha* in *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching*, included in its meaning "non-attachment, non-discrimination, even-mindedness. *Upa* means 'over,' and *iksh* means 'to look.' It is the ability to look over the whole situation and to see the bigger picture.

It is difficult to capture the true essence of equanimity in any language. Equanimity is a myriad of virtues in one package. Reactivity needs to be eliminated if equanimity is to be maintained. A disposition to look favourably upon the behaviour of others is an antidote for frictions in life, to look at people with fresh eyes every time we meet them, rather than harbouring aversion towards perceived enemies. Evenness in relationships is the key. Excess attachment to people and things leads to clinging and a fear of loss. Equanimity is non-reactive. It is the capacity to not be unduly caught up with what happens to us. Its inner calm, acting like ballast in a ship, ensures stability and endurance in turbulence.

Non-attachment is based on acceptance of what is happening

in the present moment. The mind rests in an attitude of balance and an acceptance of situations, and of people, as they are. An awareness of impermanence facilitates the letting go of what cannot be changed. Instead of controlling the uncontrollable we reach a state of acceptance of transience in all things including relationships.

In her book *Comfortable with Uncertainty*, Pema Chodron, Tibetan [Kagyu](#) teacher, said "To cultivate equanimity we practice catching ourselves when we feel attraction or aversion before it hardens into grasping or negativity. The Buddha taught that we are constantly being pulled in one direction or another by things or conditions. These include praise and blame, pleasure and pain, success and failure, fame and disrepute. The wise person, the Buddha said, accepts all without approval or disapproval. Rather than striving directly towards the ideal of balance and non-reactivity we can turn our attention to how our balance is lost and how reactivity is initiated. We get distracted and excited by pleasant objects or situations, or worked up into a state of agitation when confronted by unpleasant objects or situations. When we become aware of the obstacles, and can let go of them, we can aspire to attaining equanimity, through practices that cultivate calm, concentration, and mindfulness.

With acceptance of situations equanimity is strengthened. Before reflecting deeply upon the qualities, and essential ingredients, of equanimity I had considered it to be an innate virtue, or a birth-given trait. I had considered equanimity to be for the most part unattainable, that some people, like our brother Martin, were blessed with the quality. But equanimity will grow if we are open to it and to the virtues which are its foundation stones.

Fran Brady

Eustace Street Quaker Meeting.

Nollag na mban

Women's Christmas

Little Christmas

These are my own ideas, you do not have to agree with them.

Thursday 6th January 2022 is the feast of the Epiphany. The day marks the twelfth and final day of the celebration of Christmas. For some people the only significance to the day is that this is the day to dismantle the Christmas tree. In Christianity there are many different elements associated with this particular feast. In the early Christian Church the feast of the epiphany was spread over eight days. In addition to the visit of the Magi, it commemorated the baptism of Jesus by John in the river Jordan it also commemorated the wedding feast of Cana.

The Irish name for the day is Nollag na mban or Women's Christmas. Traditionally the day was meant to be a day of rest for women; the women relaxed, while the men and the children prepared and served a meal. In keeping with how celebrations evolve over time; Nollag na mban is gaining in popularity. But rather than depending on men and children to do the cooking; many women gather to dine out and celebrate in female company.

In religion the baptism of Jesus and the Wedding feast of Cana have fallen from significance; now the date celebrates the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus. The word epiphany has different meanings. When used in a general way it means the sudden realisation of a truth or that moment when the solution to a problem suddenly becomes clear.

In the Christian faith epiphany means the revelation of God the Son, as a human being, in the person of Jesus Christ – God became incarnate in the person of Jesus. Epiphany is firmly and deeply rooted in Trinitarian theology. The celebration also has darker somewhat anti Semitic meaning. In the story of the Magi it is the outsiders, the gentiles, who perceive the true nature or divinity of Jesus while Herod the Jew, intends to kill the infant. Herod tries to

deceive the Magi and he is willing to inflict slaughter on innocent children in his attempt to destroy the infant Jesus.

This particular theology does not sit easily with Unitarians as ever we can unpick the theology to find a valuable meaning in the story.

The most obvious lesson we learn from the story is about following one's star. The Magi or rightly called wise men searched the sky for many years before they saw the star; when they did see the star they were ready to make that momentous journey. Useful questions we can pose are:- Do I live with the expectation that my life is destined to follow a mundane pattern. Or do I live with the belief that every day reveals something new if I have my eyes open for it. If perchance I happen to see my star beckoning do I accept the challenge or do I allow my star to pass me by?

Am I prepared to leave my comfort zone to make a different journey? The journey of the wise men was not like a comfortable cruise to an exciting destination. There were times during that journey, when like the Israelites in the desert of Sinai they regretted having left behind the old comfortable ways; where life was easy but utterly predictable and unchallenging.

When the wise men returned from their journey they were so utterly changed that they felt as strangers in their old lives. Changes in life patterns are part of the fabric of every life. How we accept change determines our perception of happiness.

So I ask how have I allowed change influenced my life.

The story of the visit of the Magi gives rise to many wise questions we can usefully ponder. Addressing these questions will prompt us to living more thoughtful lives. These questions are not the really important ones; they are like woolly New Year resolutions. You know the fleeting thoughts that comes after too much pudding and too many chocolates you think "In the New Year I will eat more healthily and get more exercise" there is no real substance there. Sticking with the easy points is opting out of the real issue.

The kernel of Epiphany is that God took human form in the person of Jesus; Epiphany is that Jesus was born to die as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity for my sins. The life and death of Jesus was

the culmination of a God's plan to redeem humanity after their fall into sin in the Garden of Eden.

This theology says that throughout history God directly intervened in human affairs. Do we believe that at one time God directly intervened in the world; do we believe that God still intervenes in human affairs.

Examples of God's interventions are that God spoke directly to Moses from a burning bush, that God send ten plagues to the land of Egypt and miraculously ensured the safety of the people of Israel as they walked through the Dead Sea and in the process destroying a large part of the Egyptian army.

God's intervention in human affairs calls into question the nature of God. We are taught that God is goodness, God is just, all powerful and merciful. God's mercy ensured the redemption of humanity; that redemption was bought through the suffering of Jesus on the cross. In this version of God's nature it appears that love and mercy are in conflict with God's sense of Justice and retribution.

The Bible is filled with tales of the extraordinary interventions by God in the affairs of humanity. We may ask if God is so involved in the world; why God has been so silent over the past two thousand years. Why does the God of Justice permit injustice to flourish perennially through the ages. I believe that there is no evidence that God intervenes directly in the world; I question the literal truth of the accounts of God's intervention in the world throughout history.

The reformation placed the Bible as the centre of authority in the Christian faith. I believe that Bible stories are to be read as metaphor and symbol. Unitarians the right when we re-interpret the stories. It is to be expected that sometimes the stories have outlived their usefulness. The Bible is the history of the Jewish nation; it is in part the story of the Jewish search for their understanding of God. The Bible says that humanity is made in the image of God; there is a quip says that "humanity was quick to repay that compliment" and this is how it must me. God is the great unknown; but an unknown that draws humanity to it like a strong magnet.

Ideas about and images of God are just that; human ideas and human imaginings. Ideas of God develop over time in re-

sponse to human discoveries and knowledge of our universe; the images and symbols change. God is not found in a book no matter how exalted that book is. God is impossible to define by theology. When the council of Nicea proclaimed the divinity of Jesus; this was stating a belief that was fairly commonly held at the time. The Greek Gods of Olympia often fell in love with humans beings; the children of God and mortals had the attributes of the God parent. Some of these offspring went on to become Gods themselves. If the Council of Nicea were to reconvene today I think Arius' belief that the nature of Jesus was human would prevail.

In Western Monotheistic Religions God is attributed with **all** virtues. Truth, Justice, Goodness are some of the virtues attributed to God. In the Hindu faith God is sometimes portrayed in Trinitarian terms. The Hindu trinity names the facets of God as God the Creator, God the Sustainer, and God the Destroyer. I think this is a truer image of what God may be.

If we accept that human nature is an image or a reflection of God's nature; then an image of God as being creator, Sustainer and destroyer is a more accurate reflection of life. We humans have the capacity for extraordinary goodness and we have an exceptional capacity to be destructive. We can and do destroy ourselves, we can and do inflict pain and destruction on one another. We can and do nourish the earth and we can and do destroy it. Yet no matter how destructively we behave; something we can call it conscience will always call us to task. The urge to be creative and sustaining is also strong within humanity.

The Native Americans tell a story that demonstrates the conflict between good and evil. A young man spoke to his grandfather about feeling pulled between good and evil. He said he felt as if there were two dogs fighting for control of him. One dog was kindly the other dog was vicious and destructive. The young man wondered which dog would ultimately gain control. The old man told him that everyone felt these conflicting pulls and that whichever dog he fed most would become stronger and so be the victor.

When we live a reflective life, aware of our nature and

the pulls within that nature we are feeding the kindly dog. Following a religious faith can also feed the kindly dog; we must be careful that we never follow a faith blindly. Religions can and do incite their followers to hating others.

Returning to the story of the journey of the Magi; at the journey's end the wise men found an infant. A child exactly like every other child; they recognised the divinity within the child; remember this divinity is within each one of us. God is not found in burning bushes or in pillars of smoke God is found in the quiet and simple things of life. God is most easily found in nature, in a star studded night sky and of course in one another.

Rev. Bridget Spain

Minister Dublin Unitarian Church

Dublin 4th January 2015

The rabbit who hated carrots

Many years ago, even before most of people in this church were born,

There was a lovely white rabbit called Bobby. But he wasn't a happy bunny. None of the other rabbits would talk to him. Even the girl rabbits didn't giggle or blush (and rabbits do giggle and blush, in this story anyway) when they saw him like they did with the other boy rabbits. And he was left out of all the rabbit games.

Bobby was very lonely and so he hopped along to the only friend he had, to Scrubber, a wise but lazy and smelly cat who was ignored by all the local animals. Even the dogs avoided Scrubber.

Tell me, said Bobby as he sat on his hind legs (just that little bit away to avoid the Scrubber smell), why will no one play with me? I don't look any different (in fact I've a nicer tail and can hop with the best of them).

Ah said Scrubber, they don't like the way you do things, they don't like particularly that you don't eat carrots. They think that to be a real rabbit you have to love carrots!

But I am a real rabbit, said Bobby, and I hate carrots—they make me sick. I want parity of esteem. Of course, you are a real rabbit, said Scrubber. But you're a Dissenting rabbit with your own mind. You are like those rabbits in Stephen's Green. A brave little rabbit who will not be forced to eat carrots. Sometimes it can take courage to be different, and one day the other rabbits will see this. In fact, I think, one day they'll make you Chief rabbit.

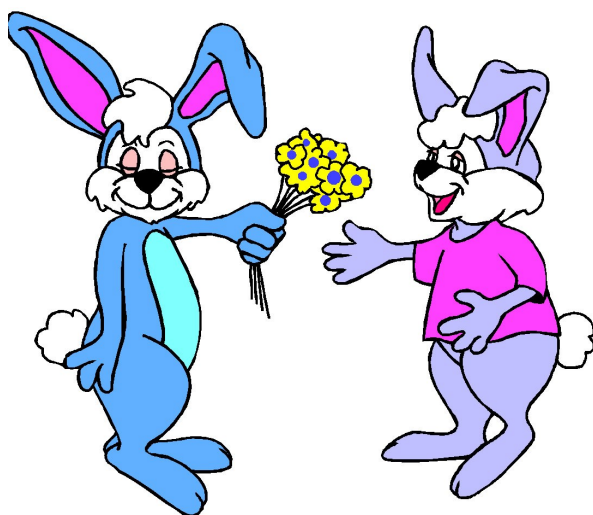
Then you, said Bobby, could be Head Cat if you cleaned up a bit and stopped guzzling fish. Come Scrubber my friend, he said, let's be brave together and face our rabbit catty worlds.

So as Bobby and Scrubber hopped and trotted off through the long grass, Scrubber explained. "You see," he said, "You can be a rabbit who loves carrots, a rabbit who loves them sometimes, or a rabbit who does not love them at all. This is what the Animal-Rabbit Agreement says, remember it was signed by

Bertie Rabbit, Tony Rabbit and Peter Rabbit”

And look, said Scrubber, look over there. And just a metre away, Bobby saw Floppsie, the prettiest girl rabbit of them all, Floppsie who for two summers had wanted to burrow away with Bobby, even if he was a carrot hater. Go say hallo, said Scrubber, you’e got to take risks if you want to make friends. And so, late that afternoon Bobby and Floppsie chased rainbows, until the earth moved, and the sun went down.

Paul Murray



Johannes Gutenberg

Johannes Gutenberg, it is thought, was born in the year 1400, other say in 1398, in Mainz; unfortunately there is no record of his birth or baptism. It is most likely that he would have been baptised because at that time Mainz was part of the Holy Roman Empire and his family were Catholic.

Gutenberg's father was a wealthy cloth merchant, it is also recorded that he was goldsmith to the bishop of Mainz. And so his son followed his father's craft as goldsmith, is certainly where Johannes got his knowledge of metallurgy, which was to stand to him in later life.

Goldsmith and engraver at that time went hand in hand, like a horse and carriage; this was the most prestigious job one could have. Between engraving on metal but mostly on wood there seemed to be endless opportunities and jobs.

An engraver was a very skilled craftsman, when a block of wood came to be engraved for printing he first had to ensure that it was of an exact thickness all over. He had to polish it, both sides and dress it, 'in size' (thickness) so it would not be too thick for the printer. As you can imagine this was very time consuming and laborious. Then the prepared block was engraved with what ever the client wanted, some verse or image usually for the church that could be printed from over and over.

Depending on the quality of the engraving, silk cloth or paper was rubbed onto the engraved block to make an image on the medium. By dampening the paper it could be pressed, in a printing press, onto the block to make a cleaner image. As an engraver Gutenberg I am sure was under continuous pressure particularly if he was 'neat and clean' at his job. I am sure he thought there has to be an easier way to reproduce images, other than from blocks of wood.

The art of printing in 1380 was not new and neither was the printing press. The ideas had been imported to Europe from China and Persia (Baghdad, Iran today) adapting a fruit press or grape press, to press the paper onto the block to be copied. The Chinese had even toyed with movable type in 500B.C. (there is a record of movable type made from pottery clay in use about 3000B.C. in Chi-

na) the different letters were made from pottery clay, pressed into uniform moulds but when fired some disintegrated and some when subject to the pressure of pressing the paper onto the type page also broke up. The other problem was that there was no consistency of the pottery clay so when fired some shrunk at different rates compounding the consistent height needed of type to get a clean print. Type height could not be guaranteed.

Gutenberg had to improve the printing press to accommodate his idea of uniform type height. He also made a limiter, to limit the amount of pressure the printer could exert on the page of type, so not to crush it or deform it. All printing presses at that time had no limit as to the amount of pressure that could be exerted, there is a record of squashing the lead letters flat. But he is most famous for inventing the adjustable mould to cast the individual letters. So that after printing a pair of pages, the type used in the pages, could be distributed (dissed) back into the cases and reused.

The black letter that Gutenberg used was modified from examples of handwriting of the time. All of the hand writing at the time was written using a quill and gall ink. The stroke of the quill down is always the widest part of any letter. The line perpendicular to that is thin. But quills were never held in that manner, the user held them at an angle, which was called the 'accent'. Gutenberg adopted this style of type face because individual letters could be adapted to make as many letters as possible fit one setting of the casting mould. Instead of 'circular' shape b,d,o,p,q, as in the type face you are reading, the letters were squashed in, to facilitate the size of the mould. The mould was uniform in two planes, being able to ensure that the type height of every letter was exact, also uniform in depth being able to accommodate letter ascenders and descenders on the same body, the third plane was adjustable to accommodate wide and narrow letters 'm', 'w', and 'i', 'l'.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Above is a modern example of black letter font 'Old English' this is similar to what Gutenberg adapted and used, if you want to you could make a measurement of all the letters and decide which would necessitate a mould change in width. I would only change for l, m, w. If you look carefully you will see that the 'x' height (xx) of

the design of the letter is large, therefore resulting is short ascenders and descenders.

The next problem was to overcome the inevitable shrinkage that occurs with every metal that cools down to solid from molten. This is where his knowledge of metallurgy stood him in good stead. Gutenberg had experimented with different alloys of metal over the years and through trial and error eventually came to an alloy that gave a sharp cast of the letter and overcame the shrinkage. The alloy was made of a mixture of lead, tin, and antimony that alloy melted at the same low temperature as that of lead. Tin gave an even fluidity making for a sharper cast, the small percentage of antimony prevented shrinkage when cooling. Antimony possesses the same property as water it expands slightly on cooling. Egyptians are famous for cleaving great slabs of granite by using nothing more than wooden wedges and water. They would drive the wedge into a crack to widen it, then pore water into the crack and leave it over night to freeze, and continue in this fashion until the rock cleaved along its fault line.

Metal foundries from 1500 to resent times mixed their own printing type alloys but adopted the type height set by Gutenberg therefore fixing the bed to roller height of the modern letterpress printing machine. The standard he set in type height paved the way for all metal foundries to be able to make their own design of type faces available to printers who had no capacity to cast their own type. One of the oldest commercial type foundries was Caslon 1739, Frys, Monotype, the company of Stephenson and Blake type foundries (1818 - 2004) only closed in 2004 when the current Mr.Blake retired, after four generations of type casting.

The next problem that Gutenberg encountered was the ink that was in use was mostly water based. Water and metal are not happy bed fellows, water based inks rolled off the metal type. His first attempt to resolve this problem was to use artists oil paint. But the pigment was not ground finely enough to give a good impression onto paper. The best indelible ink was made from the cocoon from the Gall Wasp after it lays its egg in the Oak tree but was water based. So once again Gutenberg set about improving the pigment quality and the way printing ink was made. He made different concoctions using a mix of soot and linseed oil, it's recorded that he even tried butter as a carrier base. If you look at an old engraving of a print works you will notice a lad with what looks like a ball hang-

ing from each hand. This is muslin cloth spread with the ink on the inside and gathered together into a ball, like the shape of a small Christmas pudding, his job was to dab the balls onto the type to 'ink-up' the image. This lad was called the 'printers devil' for obvious reasons, he was usually black with ink from head to toe.

Printing at that time was a very dirty business, even in 1961 when I started to serve my time to be a compositor. I remember one of my first jobs before closing for the night was to wash out the ink ducts on the printing machines. The duct part was made from hardened steel as was the roller that it lay against, the edge of the duct itself was as sharp as a scalpel blade in order to trap, regrind and filter out large pieces of pigments in the ink. You could see the build up of large pigment pieces after a days printing. All inks were still made with pigments and were only suitable to letterpress printing and not offset. If you wanted to trace and see the difference in print quality from pigments to dyes, next time you see National Geographic magazines 1888-1940 colour pictures are printed using pigments, during 1950's the change takes place, from 1960 onwards the quality of colour reproduction is improved month on month, to the present day 'heat set litho' (offset).

I served seven year apprenticeship to train as a 'hot metal compositor' (1962-1969) probably among the last to pass through Bolton Street School of printing. Type is cast of an alloy of mostly lead so when you get to the larger sizes of type 60 point, certainly 72 point which were few and far between, a capital M or W could weigh as much as 1lb (one pound in weight). From 72 point to the largest sizes, the letters were and still are, made of wood, usually beech, 12line was the biggest size that there was in that printers. 12 inch letter or figure, usually used on posters, announcing 'SALE'.

The unit of measure in printing is the 12pt em, about $\frac{1}{6}$ of an inch, $6 \times 12\text{pt ems} = 72\text{pt} = \text{one inch}$, which is also called one 'line'. The reason the word line is used is because all the small boxes that make up a type case are removed, there are just lengths of wood to keep the individual letters lined up.

During the time of Gutenberg the compositor at the print works cast his own type and usually tried to mimic hand writing, so there were great flourishes and lots and lots of ligatures. Like Wh, Th, fi, fl, ff, ffi, ffl, ampersand '&' in common use today, developed to a ligature from the handwritten Latin letters *e* and *t* (Latin *et*

for *and*) were combined.

Latin enjoyed the status as *lingua franca* the language of the gentry, the church, the law courts and judges. The ability to be able to cast your own type to any design the compositor wished, accelerated the development of European vernacular languages to the detriment of Latin.

No printer in the past could have or would have the space for all the options that you have on any computer today. Because he would have to have a pair of cases, one for the capital letters the other for the lowercase letters. The pair of cases gave their position on the random to the type in that particular case of type, uppercase and lowercase. The upper case was positioned on the upper part of the stand and contained the capital letters, in the right half of the case and small capital letters on the left half of the case. Also around the edges small boxes contained th, st, nd, rd, and fi, fl, ff, ffi, ffl, pairs of single and double quotations, ‘, “, different pairs of brackets, and the other sorts you find on your keyboard. The other case the ‘lower case’ on the lower part of the stand, closest to the compositor, with the smaller letters we now call ‘lowercase’.

I never needed to count how many different type faces I have on my computer, there are 301. In the case room where I served my time there were 120 case of type in the case room alone, three stands six foot tall from floor up had 34 cases of type in each stand. If I remember correctly there were only twelve different type faces there in total. On one of those stands 6pt. 8pt. 10pt. 12pt. 14pt. in standard or normal face, also bold and italic in the same face, a pair of cases for each made 30 cases. There was no bold italic then, like on the computer today. There were at that time 20 different sizes in one face of type, if you had a family of that type face, normal, bold and italic. That is 120 cases for that one type face alone.

What you have at your finger tips on a modern computer, is an extensive case room, with some add-ons you can make your own art, books, leaflets, posters, the list is endless, its thousands of times beyond anything Gutenberg could ever have dreamed of. Nearly all of the terminology used on computers today is derived from the case room, the printing trade and the great inventor, Johannes Gutenberg of Mainz.

P.Spain



Above a picture of part of a case room, cases of type left and centre, on the right a small gally rack above it the chases with jobs waiting to be printed.



**Dublin Unitarian Book Club's
choice for November 2021.**



Prisoners of Geography

by
Tim Marshall

Ten maps that tell you everything you need to know
about global politics.

In the introduction to his book Tim Marshall says

"The land on which we live has always shaped us. It has shaped the wars, the power, politics and social development of the peoples that now inhabit nearly every part of the earth. Technology may seem to overcome the distances between us in both mental and physical space, but it is easy to forget that the land where we live, work and raise our children is hugely important, and that the choices of those who lead the 7.5 billion inhabitants of this planet will to some degree always be shaped by the rivers, mountains, deserts, lakes and seas that constrain us all – as they always have."

Marshall divides the world into ten regions and there is a chapter for each one, they are Russia, China, USA, Western Europe, Africa, the Middle East, India and Pakistan, Korea and Japan, Latin America, and finally the Arctic. He explains, in his opinion, how the physical geographical features alongside history and politics affect how some people live prosperously in the world while others do not, how some countries are Superpowers like the USA, while others strive for Superpower status like Russia and China. Politics and history are brought into each chapter and Marshall analyses how colonialism, tribalism, war, culture and now technology affected how countries developed in the past and continue to develop and evolve into the 21st Century.

The tag line of the book is 'Ten maps that tell you everything you need to know about global politics'. The maps are regular maps showing the regions' borders with their neighbouring countries and some important physical features like mountains, rivers, seas. They don't work with the text in any particular way and certainly don't tell you everything about global politics. However, this book is a good baseline for those interested in global politics as it gives an overview of the bigger picture of today's world and what shaped it. There are a few 'Aha' moments and it certainly sparks interest despite reading like a long lecture and Marshall's

very western take on the world.

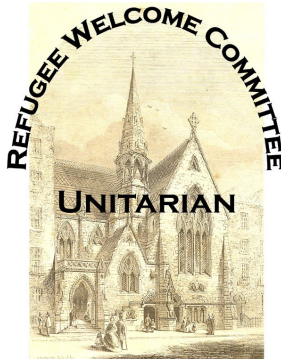
The last chapter is on the Arctic and is the region of the latest battleground between some countries for its rich resources and trade routes which ironically have become more accessible due to climate change and the melting ice cap. "There are nine legal disputes and claims over sovereignty in the Arctic Ocean, however unlike the scramble for Africa in the 19th century this race has rules. There are International laws in place regulating territorial disputes, environmental pollution, laws of the sea and treatment of minority peoples".

All is not lost according to Marshall, he says "In our newly globalised world we can use technology to give us all the opportunity in the Arctic. We can overcome the rapacious side of our nature and get the great game right for the benefit of all." Unfortunately many of the world leaders do see it as a 'great game' and so will continue to defer climate action like India, violate human rights such as the Uighers in China, invade other countries such as Russia and the Crimea, interfere in other countries such as the USA, the list goes on.

The reader could certainly be overwhelmed by the scope of the book and feel depressed from its overall message that humans will always have wars, will continue to exploit and compete for the earth's resources, he says "we are still imprisoned in our own minds, confined by our suspicion of the 'other', and thus our primal competition for resources. There is a long way to go."

Indeed there is a long way to go and humanity has many challenges ahead. We had a long discussion relating to those challenges such as climate change and its effects and repercussions on the world and despite the enormity of the problem we did not come away feeling despondent as we can see how the present generation are very aware of the issues, they are engaged and actively keep us reminded of our responsibilities to the world, the environment and all its inhabitants. There is always hope.

Alison Claffey



Update from The Unitarian Refugee Welcome Committee

It has been an eventful couple of months for our committee. Having set up in late 2019 with the hope of supporting a refugee family in early 2020, it was only in November this year that we finally got to take on the task for which we were formed. We secured a one-bedroomed accommodation in Raheny with the help of a very benevolent couple and so we were in a position to support a single refugee who had recently arrived from Afghanistan.

It has now been seven weeks since meeting and having the privilege of getting to know this young woman. Through the generosity of our Church congregation and friends, we have been able to support her in her move from emergency refugee accommodation in Mosney to her new accommodation and we were able to set her up with all the necessary items needed for her to feel at home. The money generously donated has enabled the group to support the sponsored young woman by supplementing her income and paying rent while waiting for State supports to come on stream; providing clothes and footwear suitable for Irish weather; buying a Leap card and credit; buying household items and providing for health and social care needs.

Different members of the committee have accompanied her on her first shopping trips, to the local Intreo office, to ar-

range her public services card, to the Garda National Immigration Bureau, to the post office, the hairdressers and to the local doctor and dentist. We have also had some very enjoyable visits to the National Gallery, Trinity College, The Chester Beatty museum, and the cinema. We have taken trips with her to Dun Laoghaire, St. Anne's Park, the Phoenix park and had walks on Three rock mountain, Dollymount beach and Howth head. With every trip we learn more about this young woman whose life has changed so suddenly and who is adapting to her new situation with a determination which we find admirable. The group have committed to supporting this young woman for a two-year period as she finds her feet and gets ready to strike out on her own in her new life in Ireland.

The Managing Committee of the Church has agreed that February 2022 will be designated Refugee Month in our Church. While we realise that attendance numbers are limited in the Church, we are planning collections for the four Sundays in February.

If you cannot attend the Church, we request that you consider giving a donation through online banking to our bank account, details as follows:-

Account Name: Unitarian Refugee Welcome Committee
IBAN No : IE71 BOFI 90135184435967
BIC No: BOFIE2D
Bank: Bank of Ireland, Montrose.

*With sincere thanks from all the members of
the Unitarian Refugee Welcome Committee*