

Finding the Missing Peace



By Stephen G Baker

Milestones in life are of great significance. I am delighted to be writing in the 10th anniversary edition of this magazine. Congratulations to Jon and his team for producing consistently (and on time) an excellent magazine.

I have just had the privilege of attending the 'passing out ceremony' of a group of Year 6 boys and girls. It was their last day at Primary School and in six weeks or so they will be launched into the rather bigger world of secondary education. It was most enjoyable. They were celebrating what they had achieved and the people that they had become since they arrived in the school. Approximately seven years ago they faced a whole new world – some of them were anxious and all them faced the unknown. Now they have to do it all over again! Life's like that. We just seem to get comfortable, find our slot and then things change.

As a Christian I have the assurance that despite the changes in life I have an anchor. My anchor is none other than Jesus Christ – He provides the hope, 'both sure and steadfast', 'which hope we have as an anchor of the soul'. An anchor is a heavy object attached to a cable or chain and used to moor a ship to the sea bottom. When life is changing, we need a fixed point of reference, an anchor to keep us steady. One of the reasons for my being at the 'leavers assembly' was to wish the children well and to give them the gift of a Bible.

The reason I give them a Bible is that there is no other document known to humanity that can give us stability and the fixed point of reference that we need in life. To be confident in this life we need peace, contentment and confidence that our life has real significance. I believe the only way this is possible is to get to know God, our creator.

But it would not be enough just having a Bible, reading the Bible or even agreeing that the Bible is the Word of God. To anchor us through life we need to trust God.

It is the Bible that shows us our sin, that tells us of God's love and patience with us and that teaches us that 'Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures,' 1 Corinthians 15. 3,4.

And it is the scriptures that announce, 'Be known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man (Jesus) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins,' Acts 13. 38, 39.

My prayer is not that you accept the accuracy of the Bible but that you come to know the God of the Bible and His Son, Jesus Christ. Then you will know true stability and an anchor for your soul.

**Listen, watch or read more on my webpage,
www.findingthemissingpeace.co.uk**



The Pet Column

By Abbas Hussain of Principal Pets

Birds Make Wonderful Pets

Birds make great pets and caring for them can be extremely rewarding for the whole family. In addition to being beautiful to look at, birds are inquisitive, intelligent and have a great capacity for learning. Most are highly sociable and can develop strong bonds with their owners.

Most birds would prefer a companion of their own, but if kept alone will often bond with their owner. The enjoyment of caring for pet birds can last a lifetime, with larger birds sometime living for 60 years and small birds living for around 15 years.

Bird Cages

Birds are naturally acrobatic and need enough room to hop from perch to perch, swing, play with their toys and fly a little. The size of the cage is also dependent on how much time the bird will spend in the cage. For small birds a cage of 30x45cm might be sufficient if the bird will spend a lot of time out of the cage. The cage should be significantly larger if there is more than one bird, or the bird will spend all its time in the cage. Also, be aware of the spacing of the bars on the cage. You don't want the bird to be able to get their head through the bars or they may hurt themselves.

Enrichment

Enrichment is the catchphrase today for those concerned with the proper care of animals in our keeping, covering all creatures from our companion dogs and cats to captive animals in zoos. We assume the only animals not requiring enrichment are wild animals, whose daily struggles to survive and thrive keep them quite occupied.

A wild bird has a busy life. Wild parrots, for example, spend over half of their waking hours foraging and eating. Scientists believe that social interaction consumes another 25% of their waking hours; crucial to survival, feather maintenance takes up the last quarter of their waking hours. Additionally, there is the constant threat of predator attacks from all directions. As a result, I think we can concur that wild Parrots do not have time to be bored.

So, to keep a caged bird from getting bored, we need to supply plenty of toys to enrich their lives. These can include things to forage and puzzle feeders to keep their attention. Change toys regularly and introduce new puzzles to keep your birds from getting bored. It may also be worth looking at perches around your home with window views and maybe toys, so when your birds are out of the cages they have areas around your home to keep their interest. This may also stop them getting territorial around their cage.

A Balanced Diet

The range of birds is enormous, and they all have different dietary requirements. Most companion birds, such as budgies, finches, cockatiels and parrots, are hard-billed and are seed eaters. While seeds are a popular choice, they may not provide all the nutrition a pet bird needs. Bird food products are carefully formulated based on studies of feeding habits of the birds in the wild. These should be supplemented with low energy fresh foods to provide stimulation and foraging opportunities.

Some human foods can be harmful to birds, such as dairy products containing lactose (milk and cheese), avocados, onions, chocolate and red meat, and should not be given to birds.

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