



NEWSLETTER Number 3

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SPECIAL LAUNCH ISSUE!

The Clean Slate Campaign goes public

This issue of our campaign newsletter marks the moment at which we move out of our preparation phase into **FULL CAMPAIGNING MODE!** During the first three months of the year, word about the Clean Slate Campaign has spread in ever-widening circles around the country. But it is just a beginning! The bonfire has been laid – now it needs to go up in flames!

150 people have so far signed up as ‘ambassadors’ for the idea. The campaign depends on the initiatives you take – large or small, every action counts – to make the idea of cleaning our slates known to those around you. Thank you in advance for all you are doing. Please write in and share your news and stories with us! Our aim is that by the end of 1999 over one million people will have signed the ‘Clean Slate Promise’.

Best wishes *Edward Peters*

Stories of people cleaning their slates

Hardly a day goes by without our postbag bringing a story of someone who has been cleaning their slate. Here are some which have come since the last newsletter.

A 90-year-old grandmother gave the ‘Clean Slate Guide’ to her home carer from the local Social Services. This woman put the Clean Slate Promise on her pin board at home, with the words she had written on it: “Must be punctual!” She also gave the Guide to her 13-year-old daughter. They had a frank talk and the daughter wrote out her own secret promise – still unknown to her Mum.

Someone’s promise: “I promise not to undergo a personality change when I get behind the wheel of my car. I shall attempt to avoid hiding behind the anonymity of my vehicle and being impatient and intolerant of other road users. I have been conscious that I have been intolerant of the elderly, of slow vehicles and horse riders, of road works and unexpected delays. I shall try not to subscribe to the time pressured bully culture of the road. This should also have the advantage of making me a safer driver. This is a promise which I can execute on a daily basis and which will be an ongoing challenge well into the next millennium.”

I have had a very cool attitude towards a young niece (unmarried) who has had a baby and is consequently living on Social Security in a nice SS-provided flat – all paid for of course by taxpayers! I have enough sins of my own in past years to be aware of without such criticism of my niece. I have yet to see her to arrange a meeting and correct my hypocritical attitude – and wipe my slate clean.

A friend introduced me to the Clean Slate Campaign when we were discussing giving something up for Lent. I thought about it and decided that my ‘clean slate’ would be to try to do in a day all that I planned to do. One evening I was thinking over whether I had carried this out and I remembered I had planned to ring my sister who broke her pelvis some time ago and still has great pain in her legs. I looked at the clock – 8.30 pm – ‘oh no, I’ll leave it until the morning,’ I thought....and then....‘what about my clean slate?’ So I rang. It took a long time

before she answered, and her voice sounded strange. ‘Sorry, darling,’ I said, ‘did I wake you up?’ There was a long pause and she said, ‘No, you didn’t wake me up, you stopped me taking an overdose.’

Are you a terrible person? I am! Terrible at everything to do with being the person one knows one should be. Until a good friend sent me the Clean Slate Guide. ‘Aha!’ I thought. Hope! One step. Just one practical step. What shall I do? I know! I’ll make a promise to be nicer to myself in 1999, and then in 2000 be able to be kinder to others because I’ve stopped hating myself. There’s the promise. Now to work. But having made the promise a lot of ideas are unlocked. Less of the booze, less of the cakes, more of the exercise, more of prayer and meditation, more time for the God I say I believe in. Oh, a long way to go! But keep tuned in. Now-not-so-terrible will keep you informed of her progress. (Cathy Whitby)

HURRAH!

We are thrilled that Mrs **PHOEBE GILL** is going to be working as Campaign Co-ordinator from Easter onwards. Until recently she has been helping develop people and initiatives in a run-down area of Swindon. Her skills and energy will make a huge difference to the success of the campaign. One of her responsibilities will be to keep the website updated.

My promise: ‘Although deeply involved in the Ministry of Reconciliation, I still have two people in my life to whom I am not reconciled. This is not for want of trying but in both instances the persons concerned have rebuffed my attempts at explaining and apologising. I promise to continue my efforts at reconciliation, and hope to wipe my slate clean during 1999. (Nia Rhosier)

We have spent the last six weeks cleaning our slate, in that we have tackled all the old letters, articles, cuttings, Christmas cards, etc, that have cluttered up drawers, boxes, etc – in fact cleaning up the mess before we pass on to the next world! Haven’t quite finished because it throws up so much practical, emotional and spiritual trauma!! (Jo Purvis)

Snippets of news from the campaign

The Clean Slate Guide has been translated into **Welsh** – 'Ymgyrch y Llechen Lân' – and copies printed.

The editor of **Food Marketing and Technology**, Ian Healey, has written an editorial about the campaign. "If millions of people respond practically to this idea, the creative energy released will bring unimagined benefits to all concerned. The positive effects will go beyond 1999. Any readers with ideas or decisions of their own are welcome to pass them on to us to share with and inspire others."

The **Millennium Co-ordinator** for a Council of Churches in one of Britain's major cities has written to sound out the possibility of a key-note speaker from the CSC for a major inter-faith event in the city.

Howard Grace writes from **Newbury**: "A mixed group of 14 Christian friends came to our home late March to meet Krish Raval and hear about the Clean Slate Campaign. A deep and searching discussion developed when we acknowledged that one slate cleaning step can trigger off a whole new direction in a person's life. We discussed practical steps but also Krish's perspective as a Hindu caused us to ask where the ultimate spiritual battle line in society lies. Are we on the same or opposing sides? And are Christians and Hindus on the same or opposing sides to an agnostic with a conscience? We discussed the inner struggle which goes on in every human heart. It was noted that inter faith dialogue is helpful but actually working together on a common action within which each can be true to deeply held beliefs is the real challenge. The evening leaves me with the sense that the Clean Slate idea has at its heart the fundamental spiritual struggle."

A **local councillor** in Wales requested 66 copies of the Guide to give to all the county councillors and community councillors in his area.

In the March 1999 issue of the **West Parley Parish magazine** (Dorset), Tony Watts writes: "Two things about the campaign impress me particularly. The first is the list of patrons. I always look closely to see who are the patrons of a charity or campaign but I have never *enjoyed* reading such lists as I did this one. ... That such a diverse range of people should all appear on the same list is in itself enough to cheer my heart and inspire a sense of hope about the new millennium. The other striking aspect is how easy it is for everyone to take part. ... So watch out for more details in Church – and do join in and do tell your friends. If everyone takes part what a change there will be!"

Elsa Vogel is speaking about the campaign to the Women's Institute in her Birmingham parish on May 18th.

Miles Paine writes from **India**: "The CSC has attracted considerable interest wherever we have been. A friend in the north-east proposed similar action at the 62nd session of the Nagaland Baptist Council held in Kohima on 24 January. This was then adopted as their official millennium programme and they propose to report it at the international Baptist gathering in Australia next January."

An Edinburgh **school principal** writes: "It seems to be an admirable initiative and I have copied the Guide to my colleagues in the Joint Management Team. It seems to me to be an initiative which could profitably apply to all of us who are involved with the schools – pupils, parents and teachers."

The editor of **The Door**, the Oxford diocesan newspaper, mentioned the campaign on **Radio Oxford**.

A retired person writes: "I have already used **40 Guides** with friends and acquaintances, some of whom have taken several to pass on to others. My hairdresser took 8 to pass on to her clients, and said she may ask for more."

From Edinburgh: "We have a **convent** in our road with five nuns who are delighted with the Campaign Newsletter, and would like you to know they are cleaning their slates."

The **Diocesan Officer** for Parish Development in an Anglican diocese has written some ideas about the campaign: "It is going to be very important that the ideas do not remain just on the Internet or in booklets but actually get into the heart of local communities. One could imagine what an impact it could have for issues such as race relations, support for asylum seekers and campaigns for the homeless and marginalised. It would be a pity if the whole campaign stopped at the level of individual promises. Action needs to follow which will have a profound effect on the injustices felt in our local communities across the boundary of race and religion."

Finance

As well as "seed money" from MRA, YWAM and the Council of Imams and Mosques, the Campaign has just received its 100th contribution. They range from 20p to £1,000, and we are truly grateful for each one, as well as to those who have contributed professional services worth close to £30,000. All this has kept income just ahead of expenditure. At the time of writing we have £3,500 in hand. As the Campaign becomes more publicly known, expenditure on travel, printing and communications of all sorts will inevitably rise. We are looking for groups and individuals who can raise or donate £1,000 each.

Slate-cleaning stories - continued

"Last year I sent for two books and a magazine from a publishing house. However, this order was followed by a flood of promotional material through my letter box, not just from the original firm, all containing tempting blandishments, e.g. tropical holidays, money prizes, 'free' gifts etc. My slate will continue to be cleaned as I am returning, unopened, all correspondence of the above nature to the sender, or consigning it to the rubbish bin."

"I want to report that I have signed the promise and taken one step – to apologise for a jealousy." (Lorna Laird)

"I have recently had a hip replacement operation, and also have a bad heart. I have come through successfully. I had 75 'get well' cards, and my sister suggested I wrote a poem to say thank you. Here is the poem. But could I enclose a Clean Slate Guide in each letter?"

'Tis Easter time,
When I will soon rejoice
In better health, and, hopefully,
In better voice.
My pain has gone
And I can walk.
But also now, I can but talk
And thank you all
For what you've done.
The nurses, yes, and carers too
But there was always, always you
Who have sent me cards,
I knew your care,
Your thoughtfulness
And, yes, your prayer.
It helped me through,
To persevere. On this I'll muse.
And now, new life before me, there
Can only be one hope, and this I'll do.
I'll clean my slate for future use."