



NEWSLETTER Number 5

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CLEAN SLATE CAMPAIGN GOES NATIONWIDE

LIVERPOOL

One of the campaign's patrons, Canon Nicholas Frayling, hosted its Chairman, Edward Peters, for a two-day visit to Liverpool. As well as arranging a meeting in his church, at which ideas for developing the campaign on Merseyside were discussed, Canon Frayling arranged for Edward and himself to be interviewed on Roger Philips' lunchtime programme on Radio Merseyside. Gerald Henderson took Edward to meet Dr John Taylor, last year's President of the Methodist Conference, who invited Gerald to address his area synod about the campaign in September. The Merseyside Ecumenical News has carried information about the campaign.

SCOTLAND

All delegates to the Church of Scotland General Assembly in May received a copy of the Clean Slate Guide in their pigeon hole. Rev Anthony Craig spoke about the campaign in an assembly debate. "Most Millennium projects are understandably joint or community efforts," he said. "The Clean Slate Campaign ... is quite deliberately offered as something for individuals to do to mark the Millennium. ... Wiping the slate clean is an eminently Christian idea. This campaign is a door-opener to faith. It is a challenge to us as Christians to help people, when they do take a step to wipe their slate clean, that they write something worthwhile on their clean slate." Edward Peters will be visiting Scotland from 21-25 June.

OXFORD

On May 19th, Oxford University chaplains were briefed about the campaign at their lunchtime meeting. Earlier the University's Catholic Chaplain indicated his interest in making something of the campaign during the autumn term.

DORSET

Peter Hinton discussed the campaign with his PCC (Parochial Church Council) in Gillingham, Dorset. Ideas of how the church might use the campaign are being considered, perhaps putting an article in the parish magazine and following up with a Guide through every door.

CARDIFF

Annand Jasani will carry an interview on the campaign in her BBC Radio Wales programme on 18 June.

NEWCASTLE

Hari Shukla, another patron, hosted Edward Peters for a two-day visit to Newcastle-upon-Tyne at the end of May. Former Director of Tyne & Wear's Racial Equality Council, Hari invited leaders of the area's ethnic minority communities to meet Edward at a public meeting in the Civic Centre. The meeting was attended by about 30 people including representatives of the trade unions, city councillors and a candidate for the forthcoming European elections. Earlier in the day Edward was interviewed by BBC Radio Newcastle, as well as having discussions with the station's heads about the possibility of Radio Newcastle adopting the campaign. Other meetings were with campaign patrons Sir Stanley Bailey and Professor Janet Walker who will join Hari Shukla and other Newcastle patrons for a gathering in late June to lay plans for developing the campaign on Tyneside. Phil Turner, Principal of West Gate Community College, which has achieved a remarkable turnaround after being on the point of closure, also welcomed Edward and discussed ideas of how the campaign could be utilised in his and other schools.

NOTTINGHAM

The Nottingham Council of Churches and Nottingham Interfaith are organising an evening to discuss the Clean Slate Campaign and see how they can plan a millennium event incorporating the Clean Slate idea. Edward Peters visits Nottingham on 14 June. Since the last newsletter there have been five more radio interviews, all BBC local radio.

FINANCE

As of the end of May we have £2,000 in hand. This is enough to take us through June at minimal expenditure levels, but does not allow us to print all the campaign materials we would like. To carry out the activities already committed to this year needs £4,000 per month. The biggest costs at the moment are for the travel and subsistence of those doing the leg-work of the campaign, and the fees (at a fraction of the going rate) of our marketing consultant, who is also an enthusiastic campaigner.

Many readers have already given generously, and we are not asking you to dig deeper. But we do ask for your prayers that sufficient money will be contributed, and for your ideas. For instance, you may know of individuals or foundations who could be approached, or of people who would like to hear about the Campaign and could donate or raise something. If so, we would really like to know (you can ring us on 01865-510734), and to work out with you what action to take. Thank you!

MEDIA

Rachel, the Radio Suffolk presenter, responded to the suggestion of her station running with the campaign, by speculating on a weekly 'Clean Slate Morning' on her show. Steve, of Radio Northampton, was enthusiastic about the campaign, repeatedly saying how much he liked the idea. As well as the Merseyside and Newcastle interviews mentioned overleaf, Edward Peters was also interviewed on Radio Thames Valley's 'Berkshire Breakfast' programme by Jeremy who wanted to explore some of the deeper implications of apology and slate cleaning.

Dick Godfrey of the Newcastle Journal recently wrote about the Clean Slate Campaign in his column:

"Last year, I devoted a column to the idea of apologising for things in our past of which we now feel ashamed.

It was prompted by the very important work being done by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa and I suggested it could usefully be transposed to a personal level.

It struck a chord and a number of people wrote and spoke to me of their enthusiasm for the conscience cleansing approach.

I would like to say that a nationwide movement which has been launched along these lines is a result of my efforts. But rather than stock up another chunk of guilt, I won't.

However, the Oxford-based Clean Slate Campaign does exist and I am pleased to record its existence. Its basic premise is admirably simple. It wants each one of us to clean our personal slate either by apologising to somebody we have offended, or to decide to change an aspect of our character with which we are, if we think deeply about it, unhappy, in what might be described as a Millennium Resolution.

I have already decided that I shall cease to be as assertive and domineering in the home as I know I am inclined to be. Humility will not come easy but I shall give it my best shot.

I am throwing this column open to those brave souls who wish to come clean. I know you are out there. Perhaps an appearance in this column will effect a reconciliation, who knows. Do write. You know it will do you good."

CLERGY

Both the Bishop of Hereford and the Bishop of Reading have given their blessing for their clergy to receive a letter outlining the possibilities of the campaign for church congregations. Meanwhile a sheet with Biblical themes and ideas is being prepared as a resource for Bible study groups which want to explore the clean slate themes. Let us know if this would be useful for you.

EDUCATION

Eleven education authorities have so far requested copies of the Clean Slate Guide for distribution to schools and youth centres in their areas. We are working on resource sheets for use in both secondary and primary schools. They will be available for the autumn term.

CLEAN SLATE LETTERS

The following excerpts from letters show different ways in which people are thinking ahead to make cleaning their slates a daily practice:

"I have signed the promise; I've got to honour it. Maybe instead of thinking why aren't THEY doing something about that tatty phone box or grotty piece of land by the corner, I could tackle it. Maybe I could burn those few letters written to me in anger years ago and filed away just in case they are needed. Maybe I could commit to getting to know my neighbours better and enter the new millennium feeling more part of my immediate community. Each of these is a real possibility and now I am compelled to do something."

"My contribution to the Campaign is to 'do it now' rather than constantly to say as hitherto, 'I'll do that in a moment', for the trouble is in a moment never comes!"

"I think the challenge of the Clean Slate Campaign is beneficial for all of us and enables even the busiest of us to take a fresh look at how we plan our days. For those of us who live alone, and can so easily say 'Yes' to other people's initiatives and demands - it is even more of a challenge."

"My decision - I will now count to ten every time I am feeling like a confrontation with anyone."

A teenager told us of how the CSC has helped sort out a problem at school: "I had argued many times with a certain girl who I didn't like very much, but I wanted to be friends with her - or at least on speaking terms. So one day after school I told her how I felt, and explained that I was sorry for what I had done and said to her. She apologised to me too, and now every time I see her, instead of glaring at her we smile at each other. It feels SO much better now!"

"Recently I lost my temper with a woman in a council department. The next day I took a box of chocolates to her office!"

WEBSITE

WWW.CLEANSLATE.ORG

Our website has undergone a major upgrade. It now contains the following information:

- Latest news of the campaign, updated at least weekly
- Text of the Clean Slate Guide and list of patrons
- Stories of slate cleaning
- How the campaign began, and how it is financed
- An invitation to be an 'ambassador'
- A list of available resources
- Links to other sites

The website also invites people to take part in a new **Interactive Forum**. Please visit the site and take part - and ask your friends to visit!