



NEWSLETTER Number 10

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THE CAMPAIGN GATHERS MOMENTUM

It has been an exciting month since our last newsletter. The campaign has received considerable national publicity, which we summarise here. There has also been a gathering of our patrons, of which we enclose a separate report.

NATIONAL MEDIA COVERAGE

November 7: BBC1's *Heaven & Earth Show*, which goes out on a Sunday morning to an audience of just over one million, featured the campaign, including an interview with Edward Peters.

November 9: Libby Purves wrote her weekly column in *The Times* about the CSC. She gave stories of what people have done to clean their slates – “you get an endearing snapshot of people willing to throw out resentments and prejudices and present a smiling, open face to the new century. ... The humble, private notion of apology and restitution and a fresh start needs encouraging in the private domain, not least because in the public domain it is virtually extinct.”

November 10: Indarjit Singh spoke about the campaign on BBC Radio 4's *Thought for the Day*. “As the turn of the century draws near, more and more people seem to be looking to smaller projects that recognise the importance of the individual in effecting change as a way of celebrating the new millennium. ... The idea of forgiveness and the seeking of forgiveness is central to any of our religious traditions.”

November 13: Sports writer Ian Wooldridge wrote his column in the *Daily Mail* about the campaign. “...what was it that united five prominent sportsmen to endorse this venture called Clean the Slate Campaign? ... To mark the millennium, you simply list the ghastliest things you have done in your life and write to or ring up the other party to effect a reconciliation. In my case, this would fully occupy me between now and New Year's Eve. ... I would definitely apologise to Graham Kelly, former Football Association chief executive, about whom I once wrote a hurtful article without knowing all the facts. ...[the CSC] seems a thoroughly decent idea.”

November 25: *BBC News Online*'s website carried a feature with a link to the CSC website.

December 2: *The Daily Telegraph* carried a four-column photo and report from the previous day's media event, under the headline ‘Start Millennium with a clean slate’.

LOCAL & REGIONAL COVERAGE

November 12: A main feature in the *Oxford Mail* showed the paper's support for the Oxford Clean Slate Week. There were further articles in the same paper on December 3 & 6.

November 25: Edward Peters was interviewed on *The Oxford Channel* (Oxfordshire local TV).

November 29: John Chambers gave Thought for the Day on BBC Radio Scotland. “It's always harder to let go of the past than cling to it. Confession and forgiveness are major elements in all world religions. It's good for us, it helps us clean up our act and move forward uncluttered by the past.”

December 1: The Lord Mayor of Liverpool & Canon Nicholas Frayling were interviewed about the campaign on BBC *Radio Merseyside*.

December 1: John Chambers was the guest on The Lesley Riddock Show on BBC *Radio Scotland*.

There has also been coverage on the following local radio stations: BBC Radio Cleveland, BBC Radio Newcastle, BBC Radio Thames Valley, Fox FM.

Other press coverage has included *The Oxford Times* and the *Jewish Chronicle*.

INTERNATIONAL COVERAGE

November 24: Michael Henderson's article in *The Christian Science Monitor*, entitled ‘The road of forgiveness’, featured the campaign.

December 3: Edward Peters was interviewed on the *BBC World Service*, ‘The World Today’ (audience estimated at 20 million).

HELP NEEDED WITH FINANCES

Well over 200 individual gifts, ranging from 20p to £1,000 have formed 75% of the £25,000 raised by the campaign so far. An estimated further £35,000 has been given in kind. We are exceedingly grateful for all who have had a part.

To meet our campaign commitments up to the end of the year (including winding up its affairs early in the new year) we estimate that a further £2,500 is needed. Any contributions would be greatly appreciated.

CLEAN SLATE STORIES

Every time I thought about the Clean Slate Campaign, one lady's name came to mind. During a discussion I had spoken to her harshly and hurt her. I knew that I owed her an apology, but every time I approached her to say I was sorry, something or someone intervened. When this had happened several times, I thought again about the incident. I realised that I had not been a little unkind, I had bullied her. I saw too that, given power, I had often been a bully - not a pleasant picture of my character, but a true one. I needed to repent and change. A few days later I found myself alone with this lady and I asked her to forgive my bullying. Had my earlier attempts to speak to her been successful, I would have apologised on a superficial level, and would have failed to see my true character. (Anon, Scotland)

It started when I was a student. I was low on money, but everything was available in the shops, so I started stealing. The culture around me was all about buying. I also found defying the authorities exciting. It continued even when I was no longer a student. I think it was a bit like taking drugs: it didn't feel right, but once you're into it, it didn't feel right to stop either. Then I was caught. My name was given to the police. I was banned from one store for two years. I was told that if I was caught again, my name would go down on the records. Shop-lifting no longer seemed worth the risk. In a way being caught was a relief. I had to stop.

Some time later I told a friend about this and he said I should pay back the shops for the goods I'd stolen. I found this embarrassing. In spite of the fact that my financial situation had improved, I said I couldn't afford it. But slowly I did begin paying them back. I'd give cash to a friend - on two occasions it was £200 - and he'd take it to a shop and say, 'This money is repayment for stolen goods. It's from someone who wishes to remain anonymous'. Some shops wouldn't take it; others did. All the shop managers said it was 'very unusual'. One shop assistant said, 'This restores your faith in human nature'.

I felt liberated. When my friend showed me a leaflet from the 'Clean Slate Campaign', I thought it was great. I found it encouraging. There is still more on my slate to clean. I am giving my personal story anonymously to the 'Clean Slate Campaign' in case it might be helpful to others.

One can turn a new page, and be completely renewed. And that is fantastic. (Anon)

NEWS

Countless churches have used the clean slate theme - ministers have preached on it, parish newsletters have written about it. Here is a sample, from Rev Tony Price, writing in the *Marston Times*: "A new millennium can provide an opportunity for profound thinking about new beginnings. But how can there be a new beginning without clearing away some of the rubbish of the past? This is the thinking behind the Clean Slate Campaign [which is] quite simple and can appeal to adherents of

any faith or none.... Now then, where's that book I've been meaning to give back to its owner?!"

The Lord Mayor of **Liverpool**, Cllr Joe Devaney, has sent a letter to all members of Liverpool City Council encouraging them to support the campaign. 99 members of Liverpool City Council, in an unprecedented unanimous vote, have passed a resolution acknowledging and expressing regret for the city's three centuries of involvement in the slave trade.

Antony Powell, a student in Computer Science at **York** University, sent an email to everyone in his department saying 'Hit the new millennium with a clean conscience', and pointing them to the CSC website.

CLEAN SLATE WEEK IN OXFORD

A special week, focusing on the Clean Slate theme, was held in Oxford (Nov 29 - Dec 5) and supported by the Lord Mayor and local media. Local TV station *The Oxford Channel* interviewed Edward Peters, and three days later broadcast street interviews with Oxfordshire residents about what they want to do to clean their slates. *Fox FM* broadcast news items, and *BBC Radio Thames Valley* interviewed one of the winners of the schools competition, Sabrina Cardoso of Frideswide School. *The Oxford Mail* carried two articles: one about the symbolic burning by children and staff at Edward Feild Primary School in Kidlington of pieces of paper on which they had written the things they wanted to leave behind in the old millennium; the other about the tea party held by the Lord Mayor of Oxford, Cllr Val Smith, as the prize for the 12 winners of the clean slate schools competition.

Posters were put up in all university colleges, and leaflets were handed out in the centre of the city throughout one day, causing considerable interest among passers by. Edward Peters addressed the Oxford City Rotary Club about the campaign.

On the Friday evening, children from Edward Feild School presented highlights of their work with the clean slate theme, at a public meeting for parents and other guests. It was a powerful presentation of music, art and poetry. Local MP Evan Harris spoke.

Several local churches marked the Clean Slate theme in special ways.

STILL AVAILABLE!

Millennium greeting cards, at a cost of 30 pence each, plus £1 p&p for every 10 cards ordered (min £1).

Would you consider ordering some to send to your mailing list, as a way of getting the campaign message out?

T-SHIRTS! £6 each, or 5 for £25, plus £1 postage. M, L or XL. Great Christmas presents!