

FOCUS ON FAITH

with Paul Eddy



Clean the slate for millennium

"YOUR lives will be held back by the baggage or hurts and wounds - unless you wipe your personal slate clean through forgiveness, and asking to be forgiven."

With evangelical fervour, Edward Peters launched his Clean Slate Campaign in Bournemouth last week, to a packed meeting at Richmond Hill United church.

The nationwide campaign came about because of the hurt Edward had caused his friends, and how in turn, they had hurt him.

"Having fallen out with some friends who I thought were bad-mouthing me behind my back, I responded in similar fashion," he told the Echo.

"But I wasn't happy about this breakdown of friendship and it was on my conscience that I should apologise for my part. This led to a restoration of friendship.

"A little while later I discovered a friend of mine had harboured a grudge against me for 15 years for something I'd done.

"It made me think how easy it is to carry around unfinished business from the past, and some kind of baggage or other.

"I woke up the next morning after hearing about this friend, thinking wouldn't it be great if we could leave some of this baggage behind in the old millennium and enter the new millennium with a clean slate. I

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thought 'how about a Clean Slate Campaign?'

Edward accepts that British people are not good at opening up and talking about their feelings.

"Some things are best left untouched," he confessed, "but there are no set rules.

"But when you harbour a grudge, or offend someone, and the pain is mutual, an apology can be healing for both parties."

Edward believes that cleaning up the past will always clear up the future, and "trust is built when there's honesty, mistakes acknowledged, and apologies made."

Cllr Keith Rawlings, deputy mayor of Bournemouth attended the event.

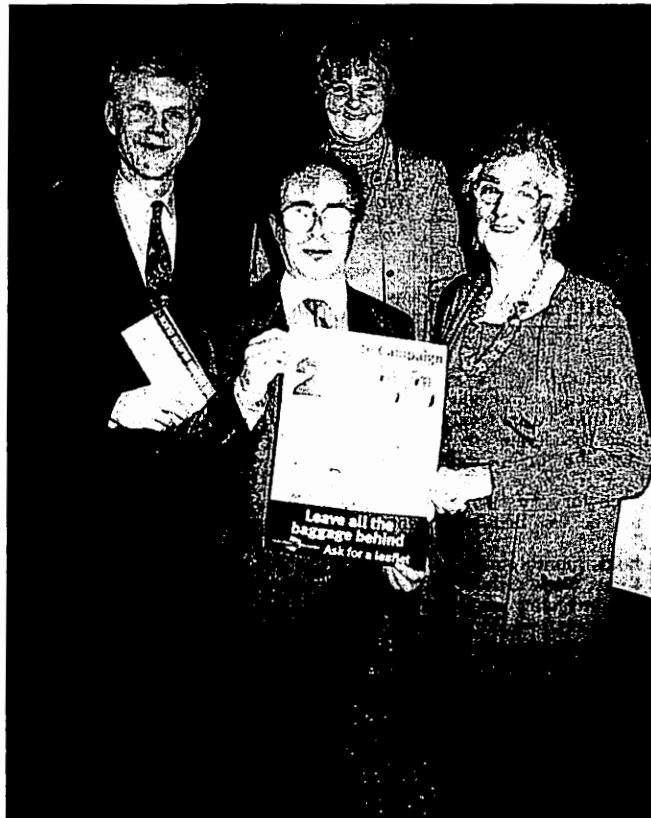
He said: "I think it's a worthy campaign, but needs to be adopted by people in society at large, not just those connected with churches.

"But I take my hat off to Mr Peters for the way he's taken an old-fashioned Biblical idea, and presented it in a fresh and modern manner."

Another councillor in the audience, Pamela Harris, added: "We all do things, or say things, for which we are sorry afterwards.

"I'm extremely intolerant, and if people are stupid, I can get stupid as well.

"I'm going to try to wipe my slate clean



NEW START: Edward Peters with Jo Purvis in the front row. With them are Dr Donald Norwood and event organiser Leone Beale



and try to be more patient in the new year."

Event organiser Leone Beale, of Wimborne Road, said that the campaign offered a refreshing opportunity to speak

about the things that really matter in life: forgiveness, honesty and relationships.

She said: "For me, I've had to wipe fear out of my life. Particularly fear of speaking up on sub-

jects that really matter to me like my faith.

"As a result of the campaign, I've been given a new confidence to go out and speak publicly at meetings about God."

But what will come of the campaign at the turn of the year?

"It will come to an end, but the theme is timeless," said Edward. "Wiping the slate clean could become the habit of a lifetime."

All Saints in the theatre

THE Dramatic Society of All Saint church, Southbourne, is to present the musical Peter Pan next month.

The production is to be staged at the De La Salle Theatre, St Peter School, Southbourne from January 14-16, and from January 20-22 2000.

Tickets are priced £5 for adults and £4 for children and senior citizens.

For further details, call St Herring on 01202 568545.

Invitation to festive lunch

A BOURNEMOUTH church has thrown open an invitation to as isolated or lonely people living Winton: join us for Christmas Day lunch.

Winton Evangelical church Calvin Road is hosting a Christmas banquet to be followed by an afternoon of fun and games.

Any member of the public wanting company on Christmas Day should call Alison Whyte on 01202 530265 by next Wednesday afternoon.

Christmas tea with Brethren

LEADERS of Drummond House Brethren assembly in Drummond Road, Boscombe, are hosting Christmas tea tomorrow at 5.30pm before their evening carol service.

Members of the public are welcome. Details on 01202 391137.

Churches united

CHURCHES Together Southbourne are holding a special Millennium Service on December 31 at All Saint's church.

The united event starts 11.30pm, and will conclude 12.15am.

Stewards needed

SPRING Harvest, Europe's largest Christian event, is in need of volunteers to act as stewards at the Minehead site from April 14-28 next year.

If you can help, call 01825 76911

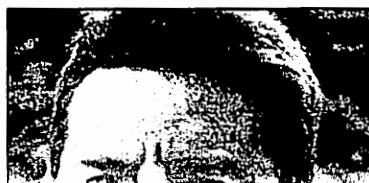
Arts initiative

GREEN Pastures Centre Christian Healing in Poole has been given a grant of £6,000 by the Rt Chaplain's branch to develop a creative arts initiative as part of the counselling work.

Priest starts communion debate

A POOLE cleric has opened up a national debate within the Church of England on whether lay people should be allowed to preside at Holy Communion.

Rev Dr Ian Paul, curate at St Mary's church, Longfleet, believes there is nothing in the Bible preventing lay people from presiding at communion, and that in every other area of church life, the



"Even if there is something sacramental in ordination as a sign of Christ's headship, how is it that every other area of teaching and pastoral responsibility can be delegated, except presidency?"

To date, only those in Holy Orders (ordained) are licensed to carry out the communion (the Sacrament).

This has caused problems for churches

Focus on Faith will be back on January 8, 2000. There will be no editions of the Daily Echo on