

No-one's perfect so time to stop judging

During a recent break, my husband and I decided to spend some gift vouchers we had received at Christmas.

We treated ourselves to three DVDs, which we selected after reading several reviews, receiving recommendations from friends and, I have to admit, because they were in the reduced section.

The films we bought were 'Milk', 'The Kite Runner' and 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas', which, considering they were released in 2007 and 2008, you may well have seen yourself.

'Milk' recounts the political career and personal life of Harvey Milk, California's first openly gay elected official. The film opens on Milk's 40th birthday and details his growing passion for justice and equality, not only for gay people but for all minority groups at a time when prejudice and violence against gays was openly accepted as the norm. Milk was eventually murdered by a fellow politician in 1978, so this film is a modern-day illustration of a man whose courage led him to die for his beliefs.

'The Kite Runner' is based on the bestselling novel by Khaled Hosseini and recalls the childhood friendship of Amir and Hassan in Afghanistan when the country was on the verge of war. Following a kite-running tournament in Kabul, Amir betrays Hassan and brings about the fracturing of their friendship. Amir and his father subsequently flee to America as the Soviets invade in 1979, and it is not until 20 years later that Amir returns to Taliban-ruled Afghanistan in an attempt to set things right.

'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas' is also based on a bestselling novel, this time by John Boyne. Set in the 1940s, it portrays Bruno and his family as they move from Berlin to the countryside. Bruno's

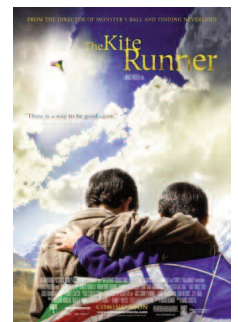
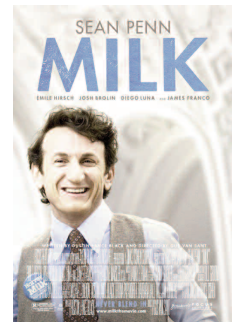
father is a Nazi officer, posted to a concentration camp as its commandant. Much against his mother's wishes, Bruno ventures into the woods and discovers a barbed wire fence. He cultivates a friendship with Shmuel, who lives on the other side of the fence, but with tragic consequences.

What amazed me about these three randomly chosen films was the common theme of the persecuted and victimised; the gay community in 'Milk', the Muslim refugees in 'The Kite Runner', and the Jewish people in 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas'. These films caused me to reflect on who we possibly prejudice against in our society today; those who live with H.I.V., the mentally ill, those from other faiths or cultures, those who seek asylum... I could go on.

In the Bible, we are told that Jesus intentionally spent time with the victims of prejudice; the outcasts of society. I invite you to spend a little time reflecting upon those you find challenging, because prejudice is often borne out of fear or a lack of education, and therefore one way of addressing this is to become better informed about them.

Let's think for a moment that our prejudices could not harm someone else - for the scenarios in those three films all reveal prejudices that ran out of control - we only have to observe the actions of certain political parties today to see how easily prejudice can escalate into hate, and hate into violence.

None of us are perfect, so we should not judge others. I believe we could all potentially be the subject of someone else's prejudice, so let us challenge our own and, with a little education, time and reflection, attempt to overturn them.



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A marathon effort



Carol Hayes is one special lady. She recently completed her 19th London Marathon in aid of St Christopher's Hospice.

And this remarkable 60-year-old, who has raised more than £6,300 for the local charity, is already contemplating number 20.

"It was great to see the St Christopher's cheering team at Mile 25. I was in need of friendly faces and you really spurred me on to the finish," said Carol, one of 36,000 runners to pound the streets of the capital last month.

"The crowds were fantastic as usual and gave me the nickname of 'flower lady' this year!"

Carol, whose sunflower outfit is inspired by the national hospice symbol, finished in an impressive 4 hours 41 minutes.

"I know how important St Christopher's work is - so many people in my community have had contact with the hospice," she added.

"When my mum was ill I tried to get her into St Christopher's as I knew how good the care was there, but sadly we ran out of time. It means a lot to me to be able to raise funds to help their work continue."

Liz Sowden, community fundraiser at St Christopher's, hailed the achievements of Carol.

"Carol has been an inspiration to those on our London Marathon team who took part for the first time," she said. "We are so grateful to all our runners for their hard work training and fundraising."

To find out about running the Virgin London Marathon 2011, or taking part in another event for St Christopher's, contact Liz Sowden via email at e.sowden@stchristophers.org.uk or by calling 020 8768 4575.

St Christopher's Hospice was founded in 1967 by Dame Cicely Saunders as the first modern hospice.

St Christopher's combines care, education and research to provide skilled and compassionate support to people approaching the end of their lives.

St Christopher's serves a diverse population of 1.5 million in five south London boroughs - Bromley, Croydon, Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark.

Each year St Christopher's cares for 2,000 dying people 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The inpatient unit has 48 beds and on any one day a further 850 patients are cared for in their own homes.

Care addresses the needs of each person as an individual - physical, emotional, psychological, social and spiritual - and those of families and friends, extending into bereavement.

It costs £14 million each year to deliver these services free of charge to patients. Less than a third comes from the NHS. £9 million must be fundraised.



Need a little help to go green?

Want to know how you can do your bit for the environment?

Then come along to St Bartholomew's this month for information and advice about saving energy.

The church has joined

forces with the Energy Savings Trust (EST) to stage an Eco Event on Saturday, 29 May (1-4pm).

As well as finding out about renewable energy and numerous ways to save water,

there is a plant sale, barbeque and cake stall, plus a few freebies from the EST.

You can also buy second hand garden tools and books, and play a game of giant 'energy' snakes and ladders.

Christian Aid Week, 9-15 May

What is Christian Aid Week?

Christian Aid Week is seven amazing days of fundraising, action and prayer. It's a time when communities all over the country get together to raise funds to make real and lasting changes in the lives of some of the world's poorest people.

The beginnings

The week started out as the churches' response to the horrors of the refugee crisis in Europe after the Second World War.

The different churches in the United Kingdom and Ireland got together and started fundraising - sending the money through partner organisations who were best placed to make a difference on the ground.

Christian Aid Week

It has now become the country's biggest 'house-to-house' collection - with 300,000 volunteers going from door to door every year delivering envelopes and picking them back up from householders in the week.

The Christian Aid Week envelope

The envelope gets everywhere. Hand-delivered by volunteers and landing on over 10m doormats, it raises about £9m each year - and nearly £1m in Gift Aid alone.

The envelope is an iconic symbol of the generosity of people in the UK and Ireland - giving money to those who need it most.

And now...

The week continues to go from strength to strength. This year we hope to raise over £14m - enough to effect massive change. 300,000 people will go door-to-door in their local communities - making sure that the Christian Aid Week envelope reaches as many people as possible.

Christian Aid supporters will also hold thousands of events - plant sales, book sales, sponsored walks, bridge crossings, talent competitions and much, much more.

With 22,000 churches all working together, it's no wonder the week is such a success.

And it's not just the churches who are involved - schools, workplaces and individuals are all getting involved - whether through fundraising or by giving directly.

A tale of two slums

Christian Aid's essential purpose is to expose the scandal of poverty, and nowhere is this more evident than in the urban slums of Nairobi, Kenya.

Two million people, half of Nairobi's population, live in informal settlements crammed into just one per cent of the city's residential land. They have no access to adequate housing, clean water, sanitation facilities, schools or healthcare, and live in constant fear of eviction.

Christian Aid Week 2010 focuses on the work of one of our partners, Maji na Ufanisi (MNU) in two very different slums: Kiambiu and Matopeni.

And through this we can see not only the importance of clean water, but the impact community organisation can have as people strive to make their own lives better.

Matopeni: 'In the mud'

Even by slum standards, life in Matopeni is desperate. Its drains are rat-infested and filled with stagnant water. Its only drinking water is unfit for human use and a source of typhoid and other diseases. The lack of hygiene is the most visible sign of a poverty that is entrenched by exclusion.

Matopeni literally means 'in the mud' in Swahili, but locals have nicknamed it 'The Secret Slum' reflecting their sense of isolation from and neglect by the rest of society.

The Kenyan government effectively ignores it despite it lying in the shadow of civil service buildings. Thankfully, there are organisations like MNU that, while lobbying the government on their behalf, recognise the massive potential slum dwellers have for change.

Kiambiu: a clean start

Kiambiu is a bustling, friendly community. In fact, the atmosphere here could not be more different to Matopeni. Its pathways and drains are cleaner, and the bright blue concrete sanitation blocks rise up like temples to cleanliness over the cramped tin shacks.

As recently as 10 years ago, Kiambiu was one of the least desirable slums in all Nairobi. That it has changed so drastically is thanks to the people who live there.

MNU helped galvanise the community in the late 1990s, bringing local residents together, and encouraging them to clean up their neighbourhoods.

Now community groups Kiambiu Usafi and the Kiambiu Youth Group are carrying the flame, managing the slum's five sanitation blocks, and offering hope for a new future. Thanks to MNU, Kiambiu is a model of slum self-help - one that people in Matopeni plan to follow.

Christian Aid has supported Maji na Ufanisi since it began in 1999. We provide core funding of £20,000 per year to contribute towards their running costs.

Blessing's story

Blessing was just the latest victim of the cycle of sickness and poverty.

When she contracted typhoid at the age of six, she became very ill. "She was coughing. She was vomiting. She even had some diarrhoea," recalls her father, Charles.

Matopeni's open sewers, rat-infested and full of stagnant water, mean diseases like typhoid, cholera and tuberculosis are everyday risks.

"Children are the ones who are most affected when there is an outbreak of typhoid," says Catherine Kithuku from community group Arise and Shine.

"But people don't understand - maybe you don't have money to go to the hospital or maybe you just assume my baby has normal diarrhoea and maybe there is a problem."

Blessing's father had to go to two clinics before he found out what was wrong with his daughter. And even then he couldn't afford her treatment, and had to borrow from friends and family.

Now Blessing is on the mend, but as long as Matopeni has no clean water, the cycle of sickness will continue.

It really isn't an exaggeration to say that clean water would revolutionise life in Matopeni.

As Catherine Kithuku says: "If we



get proper taps, proper water points where people can go and fetch clean water, the life of Matopeni will never be the same again."

In the meantime, people are required to be constantly vigilant about their water supply. Many aren't, using the more convenient but considerably more contaminated tap in the settlement.

But even when people take precautions, there are no guarantees. For instance, Blessing's family avoid Matopeni's tap and fetch their water from Majengo slum two kilometres away. Even then they must use some of their income to pay for sterilisation treatments.

Yet, ironically, Charles thinks it was untreated water that made Blessing ill when she was at school.

For the people of Matopeni, the wait for clean water has already gone on too long.

Where
does the
money
go?

**Your money saves lives.
Here's how:**

Christian Aid works with local organisations that we know are best-placed to tackle the poverty they see every day, respond during emergencies and challenge their governments.

So in the slums of Kenya, we support Maji na Ufanisi (MNU).

In turn MNU works with smaller community groups to help people in Nairobi's slums clean up their water supplies, transform their neighbourhoods and gradually work their own way out of poverty.

Last year, each Christian Aid Week collectors raised an average of £30/€32 each.

This could help pay for a month's salary for a sanitation block worker in Kenya, who clean the block, collect a nominal fee from people using it and ensure it's well-maintained.

Your donations in 2008/9

80% of our spending in 2008/9 was on charitable activities. The rest paid for the general running of the charity, including things like fundraising - and we couldn't run without fundraising!

Charitable activities

Long-term development projects £43.6m (46%)
Emergencies £16.8m (18%)
Campaigning, advocacy and education £14.9m (16%)
Total spending on charitable activities £75.3m (80%)
Other expenditure
Fundraising £18m (19%)
Governance £0.9m (1%)
Total expenditure £94.2m

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Ascension Day Thursday, 13 May

This is the day, 40 days after Easter, when St Luke describes Jesus' exaltation to heaven, the final resurrection experience. He sends out the disciples to carry on his work. The church regards this as an important day of celebration. Locally, we unite with our friends at St Philip's Church, Coombe Road, and our Ascension Day Sung Eucharist will be there at 8pm

Choral Evensong Sunday, 16 May, 6pm

Our choir will be leading a cathedral-style version of the Book of Common Prayer Evening Prayer. All welcome.

Education Sunday 23 May, 10am

This is our annual celebration of our local schools and the different roles of people in them. All who are teachers, parents, pupils or governors are invited to attend and recommit themselves to the pursuit of education. This will be an All-Age service and our special guest preacher is the Rev Anthony Buckley, Chaplain of Alleyn's School, Dulwich.

Service times for St Bartholomew's

Sundays:

8am: Eucharist 10am: The Parish Eucharist
6pm: Evening Service or Sunday@Six
(Note: 6pm service is monthly, check for details)

Weekdays:

Morning Prayer: Monday – Friday 9am, Saturday 9.30am
Evening Prayer: Monday – Saturday 5.30pm
The Eucharist: Wednesday 9.30am, Thursday 12.45pm

From the Parish Registers

Baptisms

4 April - Jacob Lucas and Jacob Akenti
25 April - Jeane Houlden

First Communions

Easter Day, 4 April
Jade Kibazo, Stephanie Newlove Mensah, George Radcliffe, Theo Dax, Luke Gordos, Nicander Walugembe, Louis Kwesiga.

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A member of staff is
available for consultation
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in the church.
Vicar's day off: Monday.

Co-editor:

If you have a comment
or contribution
to make,
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Clichés, I try to avoid them like the plague!

"You're as old as the hills," my dad said to me the other day. "That's rich coming from you!" I replied, matching his cliché with my own.

The conversation turned but remained with me, until I found myself sitting at my computer.

"Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today," I thought, so I found myself typing the word 'cliché' into my Google search engine.

Now I know what you are all thinking. This is going to be of those humorous articles in which every other line is a cliché.

Wrong, totally wrong. In fact, you are barking up the wrong tree completely. I am now about to amaze you with some fascinating facts about clichés and the Bible instead.

The King James Version of the Bible has been enormously influential in the development of the English language.

It ranks with the complete works of Shakespeare and the Oxford English Dictionary as one of the cornerstones of the recorded language.

In fact, after Shakespeare, the King James - or Authorised - Version of the Bible is the most common source of phrases in English.

The King James in question was James I of

England, who was also James VI of Scotland.

He didn't write the text of course, he merely authorised it, hence the name that the book is best known in the United Kingdom (King James Version, or KJV, being more commonly used in the United States of America).

The King James Version was translated by 47 biblical scholars, working in six committees.

It was first printed in 1611 and was by no means the earliest English translation of the Bible.

It was pre-dated by several other partial or complete translations, notably John Wyclif's translation from 1382 and William Tyndale's in 1528 - the latter forming the basis of a large proportion of the KJV.

What raises that version above other versions of the Bible in terms of its linguistic impact is the fact that the language used has persisted into the present day.

Many of the phrases used are still commonplace. Just take a look at some of the many phrases that originated in the Bible (most, but not all from the King James Version) on the right-hand side of this page.

Co-editor Richard Dax

Finding yourself lost and coming back to Jesus was the theme of last month's children's Sunday at Six service at St Bartholomew's.

Father Michael's sermon was based on the famous parable: "Which of you men, if you had one hundred sheep, and lost one of them, wouldn't leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one that was lost, until he found it? When he has found it, he carries it on his shoulders,

rejoicing. When he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I tell you that even so there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance."

Luke 15:3-7

To reiterate the message of the parable, the children raced

enthusiastically around the church looking for metaphorical sheep! Michael then asked: "Who are the lost sheep? Why did Jesus seek for the lost sheep? How did the sheep get back? Did Jesus simply lead them back? What do we do when we lose Jesus?"

After singing songs, the kids went home happy in the knowledge that Jesus is a shepherd who always cares for his flock.

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush
A fly in the ointment
A multitude of sins
An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth
As you sow so shall you reap
Ashes to ashes dust to dust

Baptism of fire
Blessed are the peacemakers

By the skin of your teeth
Can a leopard change its spots?

Coat of many colours
Eat drink and be merry

Faith will move mountains
Fall from grace
Forgive them for they know not what they do

From strength to strength

Give up the ghost
Good Samaritan

How are the mighty fallen
It's better to give than to receive

Lamb to the slaughter
Living off the fat of the land

Love of money is the root of all evil

Man does not live by bread alone

Many are called but few are chosen

No rest for the wicked
Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings

Sour grapes
The blind leading the blind

The salt of the earth
The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak
The writing is on the wall

Three score and ten
To cast the first stone
What God has joined together let no man put asunder

Parish picnic

This year's parish picnic will take place in Crystal Palace Park on Sunday, 17 July.

The annual event is fantastic family fun and, if the weather permits, we will have food, drinks and a barbeque this year.

There will be games for the children and a relaxing time is guaranteed for all.

It is a great way to get to know people while enjoying the sunshine - hopefully!

Look out for further details!

Advertisers needed urgently

Sydenham Life is a non-profit-making magazine that serves the parish of Sydenham.

Each edition costs £400 to produce - and that money is generated entirely from advertisements.

In recent months, we have struggled to break even. Not surprising given the current economic climate.

If you have a business, you may be interested to note that Sydenham Life is distributed 10 times a year to more than 3,500 homes in the area.

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