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Christian Aid Week 13 – 19 May

Why do I bother?

A personal view by Pete Kelsall

It makes a real difference, effectively.

Christian Aid works in partnership with some of the poorest and most vulnerable communities across the world. Lives and communities are transformed as people are given the opportunity to change their own situations. Local people with local solutions to local problems are empowered to effect a change.

It's a witness in our community

Taking the red envelopes around the local streets and then knocking on doors to see if people want to make a donation is a witness. It shows that there is a lively, confident church that is prepared to put in time and energy on behalf of others.

It's a mission to our community

When we deliver and collect those envelopes it gives people who are not yet part of the Kingdom of Heaven an opportunity to share in bringing good news to the poor.

It releases funds for God's work that are not otherwise available

We can hold collections in church and sales, coffee mornings but, generally speaking, that taps into the resources we already rely on for the ongoing work of the church. People in church only have a finite amount to give. By inviting our neighbours to give we tap into a resource to which the church does not otherwise have access.

What could put me off?

It's demeaning to walk the streets asking for money

Correct. I once heard a bishop from South America say how amazed he was that perfectly respectable British people would go round their neighbours begging for money so that his community would be better fed. I once read in a book that we are called to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. Christian Aid Week collectors do not usually die on the job but if some of my reputation and ego has to be sacrificed for the benefit of others; so be it.

People in big houses with good cars on the drive refuse to give

Correct. That's their choice. I have no idea what is going on in that family or what state their finances are in. There are causes that I choose not to support and I respect a person's decision to choose not to support Christian Aid.

People are rude when I call at their door

Some people are. That is their choice. I can choose to hold on to that or I can choose to forgive and let that go. It's not easy to let go.

The total doesn't seem worth it, I could have given that much myself.

Maybe, but generally speaking it's money Christian Aid would not have got otherwise. If I gave that much to Christian Aid, I would not have it to give to other work in God's Kingdom. If I've really got that much to give away, I can add it to the total and double the amount I just collected. Bonus!

It's horrible delivering or collecting envelopes in the rain

Correct. I have no smart answer to that!

A tip that helps us (it won't be appropriate for every street)

We print off a little slip to go in each envelope that says something like:

"This envelope was delivered by your neighbours Anne & Pete Kelsall from *our address* We'll call back on Monday between 6pm & 8pm to see if you want to use it to make a donation. If you do not want to be disturbed just leave it where we can see it. If we miss you, you can post a donation in this envelope through our letterbox. Thank you"

If you live in Aldridge, Walsall and you want to help deliver / collect, please contact me through my website

If you live anywhere else, contact your nearest Christian Aid office

There's a list of them here: <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/aboutus/contact/index.aspx>