



Pastor's Page

"Wayne's World"

I was just about to post off my application for a visa when the doorbell rang. Looking out of my study window I didn't recognise the top of the head of the person ringing my bell! (You'd be amazed at how good I am at identifying people from their crowns!). On opening the door I beheld a slightly built middle-aged man accompanied by a large black Alsatian-looking dog. As he talked (the man, not the dog!) I was greatly distracted by the activity of this four legged friend as it attempted to invade my house! "Do you know where the vicar lives?" the man inquired. Well I suspected that he meant me but the pedantic part of my brain said "I'm not a vicar I'm a Baptist minister, but instead I actually said "the Vicar of which church?" He then pointed towards the Pershore Road saying "you know the one over there near the Bus Stop" I nearly carried on the façade but by now the dog had cut loose from its lead and was on its 4th circuit of my living room! So I said "Do you mean Selly Park Baptist Church?" "Yeh, that's the one" he replied. I said "well I'm the minister and do you mind getting hold of your dog?! "He's harmless" he replied to which I said "he may be but I'm really not happy with him running loose all around the house". He then wrestled the dog to the ground put the lead on him and stationed him in the porch. "Can I talk with you?" the man then said "I've got lots of problems". I invited him in minus the dog! (The dog stayed in the porch following his final sprint - up the stairs to the bathroom – really!)

I felt a lot more relaxed with the dog safely out of sight, and I offered my visitor a drink. As I was making the tea I discovered that his name was Wayne and that I'd met him before. He began a long tale. As I listened I thought "I've heard this kind of story umpteen times and the punch line is usually something like - can you lend me £----- to help me out". So I listened and waited and listened some more and then eventually asked "How can I help you Wayne?" The punch line was as I expected. I have to say though the amount he asked for was less than I had anticipated. I was relieved and was on the verge of giving him the money when I decided to stop and check myself. "Why was I going to give him the cash?" Well, I have always believed that Jesus' words in the 'sermon on the mount, are to be taken literally. "Give to the one who asks you and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you" (Matthew 5:42) I've heard many Christians argue that you should never give money to people 'on the street' because you don't know what they are going to use it for. They may be feeding a drug habit or a gambling addiction and by giving money you're not helping them at all. This makes sense but is this what Jesus said? I also recognised that for me giving money is usually the easy way out as then the person goes and you can get on with your day! So, I decided to offer to go with Wayne to buy his food with him. He refused on the grounds that he couldn't carry it all back on the bus to Quinton! I also offered to go with him to put money on his electricity card - he refused that too. He pleaded for the money but I refused.

As he and the dog left I felt sad and very nearly ran after him with the money, but I resisted. I then went upstairs feeling guilty believing that I had treated this poor man harshly and unkindly. I prayed for him. I'm not sure if I dealt with him as Jesus would have done but one thing I do know is that I didn't tell him about Jesus! For this reason alone I hope I will see Wayne again.