

## Christian Perspectives: Can you find a pair of glasses?

I have a basket of children's books in the bathroom in my house. When one of my grandchildren go in they choose a book to read as they sit on the 'throne'. The book most often chosen is titled Gandhi's Glasses. The book opens as young Asha she goes through her day at school. She comes across many situations which bother her but as Asha says 'what can I do I am only one person, I am only a kid.' Bulldozers are beginning to tear up the park where the kids play, school bags have been left on a walkway blocking the path for a boy in a wheelchair, kids litter the school yard by dropping their snack papers all around on the ground. Asha feels helpless, 'what can I do I am only one!' Then just as afternoon recess was about to begin one of the teachers, a Mr Singh, tell the children 'after recess I'll be teaching the class about my role model, a man named Mahatma Gandhi so come with your thinking caps on.'

No doubt Asha was curious to hear about Gandhi. When Mr Singh's class began he asked the students 'what can anyone tell me about Gandhi?' One of Asha's classmates spoke up, 'I think he was from India and wanted to help people.' 'That's right' said Mr. Singh 'Mahatma Gandhi wore round golden glasses and had great influence on social change around the world.

He helped others see how they could make the world a better place through peace and social justice. I know as a kid it's hard to believe that you can make a difference, but as Gandhi once said 'In a gentle way, you can shake the world.' Asha thought to herself, 'wow imagine one person can make such a difference.'

Later that day as she was packing her bag out fell a special pair of gold rim glasses. She immediately thought of Gandhi. Curiously she put them on and was immediately taken back in her day. As she saw the bags blocking the walk way she started to remove them. Before she knew it others were helping her and soon the walk was clear for the wheel chair. At recess as the school yard became cluttered with trash she began picking it up. Again before she could turn around others were helping her. When she thought about losing the park Asha asked her friends 'do you want to lose our park?' The kids got together and marched into the park carrying signs they had made saying NO PARK NO PEACE and GET THE BULLDOZERS OUT OF OUR PARK. Wearing these golden Gandhi glasses somehow in a mysterious way empowered Asha. She no longer thought 'what can I do I am just a kid?' but rather her eyes were open to see what she could do.

Have you ever been in a situation where you were uncomfortable with what was happening around you but have felt 'what can I do, I am only one.' It can feel very disempowering. I am sure we all have had that sense some time in life. What would happen if, after hearing stories of Jesus, particularly stories of his healing ministry a golden pair of glasses tumbled out, you picked them up and put them on. No longer did you see a world that was in need of healing but rather a world that invited you in to be co-creators - healers with Christ. I think of those who had the insight and courage to build the new building of Family Transition Place years back The person or people who, with children who were not able to use the equipment in the regular play ground saw a way to build a play ground that was inviting for children who were other abled. How about all those folk who were able to see their way clear to reach out to those in refugee camps, to offer sponsorship and then tremendous support in so many and varied ways as the families arrived in our communities. Churches in our area have sponsored The Blanket Exercise, designed by Kairos an ecumenical faith group, where white folk can experience how Aboriginal People's had their land taken from them by settlers.

I do believe that the Spirit is around us permeating all we do, all we think if we are open to receive such energy. This energy can come to people drawn together for a common cause, or to an individual in the midst of the darkness of night. Some might say that it is just human insight that helps us see new ways, opportunities, responses to many of the challenges of life.

Others of us would hear the echo of the words, 'I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.'

How miraculous the world would be if we all were able to put on the Gandhi glasses, the Christ glasses, the Mohammed glasses, the Buddhist glasses, the Humanitarian glasses.

Penny Lewis

Christ Church, Bolton