

Impressum

Klaus Bung: Two Good Samaritans

Length: 1,804 words = 9,938 characters = 6 pp A4 single-spaced

e: klaus.bung@rochdalewriters.org.uk

© 2026 Klaus Bung

Date: 2026-07-02, Mk1.0

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

Hospice adventures: Our author travels to a hospice late at night and returns early in the morning. On each occasion, total strangers show exceptional kindness and go out of their way to facilitate his travels. The author, magnet-like, seems to attract kindness. One of the Samaritans is well-spoken, the other is not, which goes to show that charity is not a privilege of the middle classes. It does not matter what comes out of your mouth, but what your hands do does. The story concludes with some reflections on the use of politically correct language in biblical times (Luke 10:25-37).

Klaus Bung: Two Good Samaritans

This morning, at about 6.30h, on my way home from the hospice where I had spent the night, I was waiting for bus 99 at Longleigh Lane request stop near Bostall Hill, Abbey Wood, South East London. I was completely alone except for the many cars driving by on their way to work. The weather was beautifully cool and sunny. As so often, I used the waiting time to do my 15 or 20 push-ups (Liegestütz). I had to do it at the bus stop and not in some secluded place lest I miss the bus.

A while after I had finished the push-ups, a technician's van stopped next to me, and the driver asked me whether I was alright?

He had seen me when driving past me in the opposite direction and thought I had collapsed and was vainly trying to get up. He had taken the trouble to turn his van around, drive back, and stop next to me on the wrong side of the road, to check if I needed help.

I explained the situation, thanked him profusely for his kindness, and gave him my website address.

In the afternoon, I received the following e-mail from him:

from:
Sam Riton <sam.riton@gmail.com> (anonymised)

Time: 8.39h

Subject: I met you at the bus stop

Good morning, Sir,

I have to write to you after meeting you briefly today. I didn't know what to expect after turning my van around and driving back up the hill but seeing you in the distance back on your feet it was a relief. Little did I know that you were actually performing press ups which isn't what I'm used to seeing on my way to work! Remarkable and you're an absolute legend. Like I said to you when we met, you've made my day and it's indeed a great pleasure to meet you. I wish you very well and keep up the training Dr Klaus. You're inspiring

My kindest regards,

Sam

I replied:

from: Dr Klaus Bung (PhD, Cambridge)
e: klaus.bung@rochdalewriters.org.uk

to: Sam Riton <sam.riton@gmail.com>

Dear Stephen,

Thank you for your kind words, and even more for your kind deed. You are a fantastic example of the Good Samaritan, and right now I am trying to formulate my reflections on that experience (because I had another Good-Samaritan experience last night, on my way *****to***** the Hospice). Right now I am just about to leave to go to the hospice again to spend another night there. I have a close friend who is a patient there.

God Willing, you will find my reflections on-line in a few weeks' time (with altered names to protect everybody's privacy, but you will know who is meant). I will send you the link when the story is ready.

If I forget, under the pressure of work and events, please send me a reminder.

God bless you.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Klaus

I am not criticising the Priests and the Levites (Luke 10:25-37) who drove past and did not stop for me. In fact, I am grateful because I did not want them to stop: I wanted to do my push-ups undisturbed. So what for them was a moral short-coming was a blessing for me.

But I cannot praise Sam, the good Samaritan, enough. It takes a lot of trouble, and determination, to turn a fast-moving van around on a busy road and to drive back, more trouble than stopping a biblical donkey.

It is great to see such examples around when the general impression one gets from the news is that the world is full of selfish people - and so probably it is. But the exceptions matter, for example those provided by the despised Samaritans, the outsiders in the times of Jesus.

ON MY WAY *TO*** THE HOSPICE**

Only 12 hours before meeting Sam, I had met another modern Samaritan, an off-shoot of the ancient Samaritans, who also did not care about Michael Gove's correct grammar.

She gave me a similarly striking experience of unexpected, and unsolicited, kindness.

After a busy day, with work that **had** to be finished that night no matter how long it took, I was on my way to the late-night bus stop. It was about 23.00h, and I was waiting at a set of traffic lights which was green for the drivers and red for me.

A car driver stopped when it was green for him and beckoned me to cross. There being no other cars around, it was, of course, safe for him to do so. Why did I need, or how did I merit, this kindness?

A few minutes later, at about 23.15h, when I was alone at the bus stop of bus 53, which runs day and night, a woman pulled up and offered me a lift in her car. She lived in the vicinity of Abbey Wood and offered to drive me straight to the hospice, even though that meant making a detour.

I accepted, mainly in order not to reject her kindness, since I knew there were still enough buses running to take me comfortably to my destination.

In the car, we exchanged some basic information.

She looked about 50, was born to Jamaican parents but had never been in Jamaica, had six children, five boys and one girl. Her first name was Marlene, not anonymised, but not Marlene Dietrich.

What did she do for a living?

She "had been retired", i.e. retired against her will.

And before retirement?

She had done so many things to get by, anything under the sun to make a living. Worked as a cleaner, as a shop assistant, taught English as a supply teacher, anything.

So I could not pin a simple job label on her.

But, I thought, who, well educated enough to teach English at a school (perhaps as a teaching assistant), would accept a job as a cleaner?

She was too old to be still a university student, so she was perhaps an actress waiting for her next role, or a budding author

like Rimbaud, a poet, or some other kind of artist. I would never know.

As we were approaching Woolwich, her phone rang. It was her 19-year-old son. Let's call him Chris. He was somewhere in the vicinity of the big Woolwich Tesco's and wanted a lift.

His sister had been admitted to King's College Hospital in Camberwell, he didn't know why and wanted to find out, and he also wanted a lift to an all-night shop to buy balloons to decorate the flat of his best mate for the forthcoming birthday of his mate's girlfriend's birthday.

He didn't know that his mother had me in her car. She had to take me to my destination first before turning the car in the opposite direction to attend to her daughter. She was not shocked by her daughter being in hospital. Was this a regular event?

Her son was conveniently near to us, and she could pick him up outside Tesco's before delivering me.

She knew all the back roads, even in the darkness, managed to locate her long-haired son, and he got into the back of the car showing no surprise at finding me there.

Now mother and son could get down to talking business.

"This chap is Klaus. He missed his last bus, and I offered to drop him off at the hospice in Abbey Wood. So that's where we have to go first. Then we can go to Camberwell and find out what your sister has been up to."

"But please drive past the Afghan shop in Plumstead. I want to buy balloons."

"What do you want to buy fucking balloons for?"

"My mate's girl friend. It's her fucking birthday, and we want to decorate his room to give her a surprise."

"I am not going to stop at no fucking shop for that. You don't have to go shopping for fucking balloons at midnight. Can't it wait till fucking morning? They won't have no fucking balloons anyway. You need a daytime shop for that."

"They will have them. They have fucking everything."

"I ain't going to stop there. This is fucking ridiculous. You go out at midnight to buy balloons for your mate's fucking girl friend, and you can't tidy up your own fucking room. It looks like a fucking pig sty. Don't think I am your fucking slave to clean it for you. Fucking tidy up your own room first before going out at fucking midnight to buy balloons for your mate's fucking girl friend."

BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS

That was colloquial Samaritan at its best. It would have been similar in biblical times. No wonder, the Pharisees, sticklers for religious correctness and classical Hebrew, did not like it.

But Jesus did. For him the Samaritans provided examples for values that actually matter.

I am sure Jesus, fully human as he was, swore like a trooper when, whip in hand, he drove the money changers and traders out of the temple. They wouldn't have believed he meant business had he confined himself to parliamentary language.

"You fucking bastards, get out of my fucking father's house before I fucking kill you," is what he actually said.

Unsurprisingly, "the whole crowd was amazed at this language" (Mark 11:18), but the Evangelists censored him. (Matthew 21:12-13; Mark 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-48; John 2:13-22)

Jesus loved the Samaritans, and he spoke colloquial Samaritan fluently. Most other Jews understood Samaritan but, like Michael Gove today, they cringed when they heard it.

QUIET CONCLUSION

We had reached the drive way leading to the hospice. It was pitch dark because the street lights of the drive way had failed.

The darkness and silence were total. The drive way was flanked by forest on either side, and the branches of the large trees overhung the road.

I had to walk carefully because I could hardly see the ground, a very rare and beautiful experience.

eof