MESSENGER

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ADRA-UK Afghan Refugee Appeal

by Raafat A. Kamal
ADRA-UK director

THE NEED. According to the United Nations, Afghanistan is one of the poorest countries in the world. It is a place that makes sub-Saharan Africa seem relatively well off. Three-quarters of the nation’s 26 million people cannot read and an equal number have no safe drinking water. Afghanistan has few hospitals or schools and one in four children dies before the age of 5. In addressing its many problems, an official of the World Bank recently gave the perfect description, “Afghanistan is rocks and stones; you name it, they need it.”

The present war is just one of the many reasons for the suffering of the Afghan people. Afghanistan has suffered a three-year drought that has been largely ignored by the Western media, where five million Afghans depend on food aid. There are reports of people subsisting on locusts, animal feed and grass. In Islamabad I spoke to an Oxfam worker who had recently been evacuated from Afghanistan. “The greatest fear for the majority of Afghans is not bombs, but lack of food,” he said. When an Italian reporter asked one little girl in an Afghan refugee camp what she most wanted in life, she just said, “bread.”

On 4 September, before the dramatic developments of 11 September, the United Nations had already issued a report entitled ‘The Deepening Crisis’. This report highlighted the needs of the five million people who were already severely affected by three years of drought and many years of fighting, and emphasised the desperate and worsening humanitarian situation faced by Afghans across the country. The horrific events of 11 September undermined the relief efforts which were already under way, and today the survival prospects for millions of Afghans are

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Peace on Earth
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WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS IS JESUS!
Adventist talks to Muslims about Second Coming
by John Surridge, BUC Communication director

O n Sunday 28 October Pastor Peter Roennfeldt, Ministerial and Global Mission director at the Trans-European Division, presented the Seventh-day Adventist understanding of the doctrine of the Second Coming at a Muslim interfaith seminar held at the Islamic Centre of England in Walthamstow. The seminar was entitled, ‘Second Coming - The Return of Christ and Mahdi’, and speakers were invited from Evangelical, Jewish, Anglican, and Muslim, as well as Adventist, traditions. Among the lecture topics were: 'The Signs of the End of Time', by Hojatul Islam Val Muslemi Shirazi; and 'Global Peace at the Time of Christ and Imam Mahdi’, by Ayatollah Araki.

Adventist representation had been invited several months ago by the seminar organiser Professor Ali Haydar, who is a director of the Department of Interfaith Dialogue at the Islamic Centre of England. In his thirty-minute presentation on ‘Adventists and the Second Coming of Christ’, Peter Roennfeldt highlighted the history of the Adventist Church, including the Great Disappointment. ‘Our beliefs are based on the Holy Books, the Torah, the Zabur, and the Inji’, he said. If we can all work from the word of God, as revealed through His servants the prophets, we will have a sound basis for further discussion and dialogue.

Referred throughout the talk to ‘the text’, to the ultimate ‘sign’ is Islam appearing personally in power and great glory, in the clouds, surrounded by countless thousands of His angels.

The 200-strong, mainly Muslim congregation had already heard presentations on the Muslim understanding of the Second Coming, where Jesus will be accompanied by the Imam Mahdi. However, having heard several presentations from radically different perspectives, they were grateful in their accep- 

tance of Pastor Roennfeldt’s words. ‘I respectfully submit to you,’ he continued, ‘that in the writings of the Inji there is no reference to another person present at the second coming. Isa alone is the Saviour!’

A number of Seventh-day Adventists attended the seminar, including ministers, lecturers from Newbold College, and students on Newbold’s Islamic Studies course. Dr Ron Emmerson, a member of the Newbold church, said, ‘This was an excellent conference, I have learned so much. At this time of tension between Islam and Christianity it has also provided a great opportunity to break down barriers and build bridges.’

The preparations are extremely unpleasant – because they know, deep down, that things can change out of all recognition in an instant.

Time magazine tells how only the far-gone refugees in the US are still on the same plane that they came in from Great Britain. And the impact of the A300 on Queens did nothing to help that The world has become a big, scary place, and we are poorer, too. Ask anyone in the industries related to aircraft, including tourism.

But there is a sense in which the Express columnist was right. The terrorists who scored a partial success on 11 September would have been terrorists still if their efforts had ended in failure. The world was a profoundly evil, scary place before 11 September. CIA statistics indicated that the greatest threat to peace of the world came from the Russian mafia, and delinquent regimes believed to have access to nuclear and biological weapons. The CIA was wrong. The greatest threat came from Al-Qaeda. But while the media and those rogue regimes have not gone away since 11 September. Nor has the number or virulence of terrorists been diminished by the attacks on Afghanistan or gone away since 11 September. The CIA believed that the greatest threat to the world neither knows nor understands. Let’s grasp it and

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Wake up to the evil that has always been with us

Martin Samuel, who writes in the Daily Express, says that nothing has changed since 11 September. He discovered that his wife had ordered Highland Spring with her silver top and told her, ‘While the Muslim population of Great Britain is pulling its water from the same well as us, you would have to be hottest from the planet to Dopey to sling anything down there in the name of Allah just yet.’

That’s what Samuel wrote a month ago. If his wife had waited a couple of days, she might have ordered surgical gloves for use when the postman came, not bottled water from the milkman. No one would be ‘loopy’ enough to loose Anthrax on the population, said Samuel. No, really? While the population was still tucking into its crisps, while newspapers still more gave space to a new hairstyling on Friends to than to a downed Swedish jet, and while the ratings of ‘Who wants to be a Millionaire?’ were as high as ever they were, nothing had changed, argued Samuel. If your man had had the hours of thousands who had responded to the international crisis by ordering World War II gas masks, I would have taken his point... or... up to a point. But as it stands his argument reminds me of the nothing-can-really-change mentality that people hold on to – almost in desperation – because they know, deep down, that things can change out of all recognition in an instant.

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The danger of the nothing-can-change mentality is that it flies in the face of history. *Most* of the British population refused to believe the stories of what Hitler was doing in the death camps, until those camps were liberated in 1945; it couldn’t happen – but it did. *Many* refused to believe that Stalin had liquidated twenty million of his fellow countrymen in the 1930s; until the evidence was incontrovertible: it couldn’t happen – but it did. *Before* 11 September few would have believed it possible that one Saudi billionaire and his terrorist network could strike at the heart of the American government and economy. It couldn’t happen – but it did.

Ours is a fear-filled world, and Western hearts are failing because of what may be coming upon the world. Two years ago I preached a sermon on the day of which I mentioned the possibility of nuclear and biological weapons falling into the hands of terrorist networks and delinquent regimes. I even mentioned the possibility of men like Osama bin Laden holding the West to ransom. At the end of the service some of my friends, embarrassed, avoided shaking my hand at the door. One who did shake hands, reminded me that I was meant to be a scholar but that, that day, I had sounded as if I had seen too many James Bond movies. An honest spectacle asked me where I came by such fanciful ideas. One day the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the heavens... . It cannot happen – but it will.

Strange things can aid the spread of ‘this Gospel of the Kingdom’. Colin Morris, a former head of BBC Religious Broadcasting, says, ‘We no all share the vulnerability of those in the richest country on Earth who can no longer get on an airliner, go to a prominent building or even handle a letter without fear.’ The consequence of this? Even in so-called post-Christian Britain, people ‘who aren’t usually religious’ were seeking ‘a place away from the remorseless battering of disturbing news’ - in church! Were these just ‘self-Christians’, like those who filled the churches immediately after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales? Colin Morris indicated that that rather depended on what the visitors found in the churches... .

Meanwhile, the New Testament continues to make un-comfortable reading alongside our morning newspapers. We can love our enemies and still insist that they receive their just desserts for breaking the law. But is the war against terrorism only about justice?

Jesus said some uncomfortable things about turning the other cheek, waking the second mile, giving our shirt to the man who steals our coat and praying for (not bombing) our enemies. It’s in times like these that the teachings of Jesus appear downright disturbing. ‘Purblind utopianism’, say the sceptics, ‘would end in chaos if we followed ideas like that.’ Dare I mention here that the alternative course being followed by the politicians is not exactly proving outstandingly successful.

‘We have nothing to fear but fear itself,’ said F. D. Roosevelt. Fear itself is what the teachings of Jesus strike at. In its place Jesus offers those of us caught up in the crossfire a peace that the world neither knows nor understands. Let’s grasp it and invite others to receive it.
Irish Mission Session

by Douglas McCormac, Irish Mission Communication sponsor

I know that some people will think that I am completely nuts, but I think that Mission sessions don’t come around often enough. A session is one of the few occasions when we hear about what is going on in other parts of our small island from the people who are making the changes. And so it was that on a weekend in October delegates and visitors began to gather in Belfast for their triennial session, a weekend of spiritual revival, fellowship, reports and stories of miracles in people’s lives; a weekend of reflection – all of it and more as we celebrated what God had done through His people in Ireland over the past three years. In what were his final duties as Mission president, Pastor Alan Hodges opened the meeting on Friday evening, welcoming all those who had already arrived and introducing his old friend and colleague Pastor Paul Clee. Pastor Clee is the Sabbath School director for the Trans-European Division. Presented from the British Union were Pastor Cecil Perry, Pastor Eric Lowe, Victor Pilmour and Dean Papasianou. Pastor Clee opened God’s Word that evening.

Sabbath

As the sun shone down on Sabbath morning many more members had arrived for the weekend, and the day’s programme began with a lively sang service just to wake everyone up.

This weekend was an opportunity for outgoing Mission president Pastor Hodges, and his wife Thelma, to say one last farewell, although it would surely not be the last time they would be in Ireland. Alan and Thelma have served the Irish Mission for thirteen years. But Ireland was not unknown to them before that period. Thelma was born and raised in this great land. And Hodges was the BUC’s director for the BUC before that period. Thelma was born and raised in this great land. Hodges was the BUC’s director for the BUC before that period. He had also been a guest speaker and padre at many camps and weeks of prayer in various parts of northern Europe. Curtis and Vickie Murphy were married in June 1973 at Camp Hill and they have raised five children: Adam, Lydia and Abigail. Curtis was first worked in the commercial world. By 1980 he responded to the call of ministry and began attending Newbold College. In 1985 his ministerial internship began in Manchester. He has served as Sabbath School, Youth and Communication sponsor for the NEC and been district leader. He has also served as guest speaker and padre at many camps and weeks of prayer in various parts of northern Europe. Curtis and Vickie Murphy will be bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Mission office, and we welcome them both to Ireland. God’s own country. At the same time we want to say one last farewell to Alan and Thelma and wish them all the best for their future.

Divine Service

The task of uniting the people through God’s word on Sabbath morning was given to our own Irish Mission president and NEC president Pastor Cecil Perry, who did not disappoint. Pastor Perry reflected on the events of 11 September and their consequences, and spoke about the fibre nature of the world in which we live. In a rousing sermon he concluded with the great hope that we all hold as Adventists – that we are no longer aliens, strangers or pilgrims in a foreign land, but citizens of the Kingdom of God.

A fabulous Sabbath lunch was prepared by the ladies of Belfast Church and due to the number of people who attended lunch was served in the church hall that lies behind our own building and is owned by the Presbyterian Church.

Singing

The afternoon session began with a rousing song service led by Pastor Murphy. He was assisted by Ian Irvine, a member of the Belfast church. Even Pastor Murphy was rapped helping out when Pastor Murphy played on the guitar and harmonica to close the song service.

Pastor Clee spoke to us from the book of Acts in a talk that was entitled, “We all want our church to grow.” Using the Acts model for Church growth, he encouraged everyone to work together to encourage one another as we seek God’s special blessing on the work of their organisations. He also encouraged the delegates to pray for questions and discussion. Some of the suggestions that were made: Pastor Clee suggested we split into groups looking at such areas as youth, administration and evangelism, and then have a short brainstorming session and then get together at the end to share the ideas with the whole group.

After about thirty minutes, each group was invited to share its ideas with everyone. Many recommendations were suggested and will keep the Mission Executive busy for the next three years! One thing that came across very strongly was the need for a church in which members and pastors listened to one another. There was no shortage of enthusiasm or of people wanting to be involved. There was a very strong force seeking to be proactive, dynamic and spiritual; a church that was reaching out to the community and ensuring that resources were there to fulfil this very important commission. The Nominating committee was able to bring its final report to the delegates. The nominees for the various departments were as follows:

- Youth – Nathan Stickland; Trust and Stewardship Services – Reg Scan_win; Children’s Sabbath School – Ann-Kathleen McCall; Personal Ministries – Curtis Murphy; Women’s Ministries – (Northern Ireland Mariann Culy and the South) Betty Sisson.

The Sabbath Executive was to be appointed by the Mission Executive. The Executive Committee: Curtis Murphy (chair), Dean Papasianou (secretary-treasurer), Nathan Stickland; Mike Logan; Lyn Sharpe, Anita Chiper, Francis Moody, John McMamara and Irene Dickies.

The Sabbath Session had completed its work, it was held for Pastor Perry to register words of thanks for all those who had contributed to the weekend and to making it the success that it was. To the ladies in the kitchen, and especially to Ethel McCormac who had co-ordinated that work; to Ed Johnson who had brought the books over from the Stanborough Press; to Pastor Clee, who was the special guest speaker and chair of the Plans committee; to Alan and Thelma Hodges for the work and encouragement that they had done (including a presentation of flowers to Thelma and accepted by Alan in her absence); to all who had helped with the wonderful music and the vast pool of talent that there was in Ireland, Pastor Murphy then brought the meetings to a close with a few words from the floor.

Dublin Youth Weekend

Douglas McCormac, Irish Mission Communication sponsor

Dublin is a city of culture. It is also the city to which revellers from all over the country come for a weekend of parties. It is partly in the spirit that Irish Mission youth, together with youth from England, came to Dublin in the last weekend in October.

A group of 18-20 somethings, some of whom had not quite made it to 20, stayed over at the Dublin church. BUC Youth director Pastor Paul Hodges co-ordinated the event, which challenged the group with a radical vision for the postmodern era.

Social activities included a trek to the Wellington monument in Phoenix Park. The Executive Committee: Curtis Murphy (chair), Victor Pilmour, Curtis Murphy, Robert McCarron, Lorraine Broomfield, John McMamara, Niall Sisson, Douglas McCormac, Rudka Puska, Anita Chiper, Nathan Stickland, Mike Logan, Francis Moody, Evelyn Wilson, Mary Lynch, Mary MacAuley, Angela O’Riain and Mart de Groot.

Sunday Session

On the morning the report from the Recommendations committee was brought before the delegates and the committees were presented and voted on.

Nominating committee: Alex Hill, Edward Raymond, Paul Candless, Edward Doherty, Oliver Martin, Nathaniel Broomfield and Paul Nesbitt.

The Licences and Credentials committee: Pastor Eric Lowe (chair), Pastor Curtis Murphy, Eileen Irvine, Eddie MacAllugagh and Pastor Alan Hodges.

The plans committee: Pastor Paul Clee (chair), Victor Pilmour, Curtis Murphy, Robert McCarron, Lorraine Broomfield, John McMamara, Niall Sisson, Douglas McCormac, Rudka Puska, Anita Chiper, Nathan Stickland, Mike Logan, Francis Moody, Evelyn Wilson, Mary Lynch, Mary MacAuley, Angela O’Riain and Mart de Groot.

Sunday was a day of hearing the various department reports and thankfully we didn’t have to endure all being read verbatim. Brief statements were made by each department, and it was deemed more beneficial to give the maximum for questions and discussion. Some sponsors were questioned more.
O nly six days after returning from Florida, Irish Mission Youth sponsor Nathan Stickland hosted the annual summer camp for the young people of Ireland at the Enniskillen Youth Centre.

The small group of twenty young people, with nearly half of them coming from the Ballinacliff church, had the privilege of having Bob Holbrook, General Conference Pathfinder director, as their main speaker.

In addition to tackling some of the Pathfinders’ Bible study, they took part in a range of other activities. The Centre is a favourite haunt for campers and it is where we go to get a good soaking with canoeing and banana boating.

On Thursday evening the campers had a boat tour of the lakes, because Enniskillen lies in a boat tour of the lakes.

On Saturday evening, the small group of twenty young people, who had been led into our community, were blessed with sunshine as the community events were being advertised and the parents agreed. We then booked a local marching band called Cheeky Monkeys, realising that they would attract the community to the event.

The day finally arrived and we were blessed with sunshine as the community started to emerge because the main area was well stocked, and supervised by Vanessa Wash and Carol and Martin Louis. Bouncy castles and the marching band were turned up. Joy Baily, who is an artist, did the painting: altogether she painted seventy-one faces.

The marching band set off around the streets surrounding the church hall, playingousing tunes. Soon people came out of their homes, to be given leaflets informing them that this was taking place.

The band looked and sounded great. By the time the band returned, children and parents were following it, and before we knew what had happened, the crowds began to swell until the community surrounding the church members. It was a sight to behold! By then we knew that the day was a success.

As the sun shone its warmth on us, a prearranged ice cream was pulled into the car park.

Musical items were then presented by the McQuarrie family from Great Brick-kiln Street church, All Sounds of Melodies from Oxford Street and Melanie Jeanie earl, daughter of Pastor and Mrs Jude earl. These items were received with enthusiasm.

After grace, parents and children were led into our community hall, where they partook of the refreshments that had been laid on for them by Jenny Clark and her team.

The hair show took place after lunch, and there were →

Novel outreach in Bilston

We were faced with a challenge in the Bilston area of Wolverhampton. How could we as a church reach out to the community? Many of our outreach efforts met strong challenges. We decided that we would try something with the children, so planned to have a children’s hair show held on August Bank Holiday. From past evangelistic outreach programmes we found that we needed to be able to speak the language of the community to benefit them. If they didn’t know why, we should come to our programmes!

On the church sisters, Eileen McKenzie, decided to put on a hair show where the children could take part. This involved giving a talk in the community, Stacey Walsh, one of the children from the community who regularly attends Bilston church, came with us. We knocked on doors and approached the children who were playing and asked them to take us to their parents, so we could ask if they would allow their children to take part in the hair show. We took thirty-five to forty names and phone numbers. A lot of interest was generated and the parents agreed. We then booked a local marching band called Cheeky Monkeys, realising that they would attract the community to the event.

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Plymouth helps homeless

O n Sabbath 6 October the members of the Plymouth church and the children of Fletwood School celebrated a great harvest festival.

The church was beautifully decorated with flowers, fruit, vegetables and other food products that had been very generously given by the parents of the schoolchildren and the church members.

The service was mainly taken by homeless people under their care.

After the service the parents and church members spent a little while enjoying light refreshments and a chat with each other.

Later that day the food was shared among four Charities:

**The Big issue for the homeless**, the Ship Hostel for homeless people, the Chekina Mission for homeless people, and the Salvation Army Mayflower Care Home.

In addition, several small parcels were given to members of the community.

Leytonstone: eight baptised

**O**n 22 September eight people committed their lives to the Lord in the first baptismal service to take place inside the Leytonstone church. Previous baptisms had taken place at our sister church in Stoke Newington.

From right to left in the photograph: Dr Richard De Lisser, newly-baptised members Michael Marius, Michelle Lemonnus, Reina Monrose, Kyra Balcombe, Patricia Stephen (back), Selina Phillips, Anna Kakaite, Rakael Pollard Whyte with evangelist C. B. Ming and some members of the evangelistic team.

The baptisms were the fruitage of a two-week campaign led by evangelist C. B. Ming, entitled ‘Family Affairs’. Dr De Lisser, our resident minister, conducted the baptism in a portable pool.
ADRA-UK representatives visit Child Survival Project in Haiti
by Raafat Kamal, ADRA-UK director

On Sunday 7 October the writer, and Mrs Alva Davis, ADRA-UK consultant, flew to Haiti in order to visit organisers and beneficiaries of a major Child Survival Project. ADRA-UK has received considerable funding (£250,000) from the UK Government’s Department for International Development (DFID) for this project, but it is also the largest project to be funded from this year’s ingathering campaign (£70,000).

Poverty has a new meaning in Haiti where 93% of the people lack the basic raw materials to run their lives. Food, water, sanitation, shelter – all are lacking. However, we were able to visit the Child Survival Project, and there we witnessed the wonderful work of forty-five dedicated health workers. Targeting a population of 80,000 poor people in Diquini, on the outskirts of Port Au Prince, these workers are running vaccination programmes, health rallies, health education courses, school health education classes, feeding programmes, and clinical work.

To give you an idea of the need, we witnessed families living in cramped conditions in old abandoned factories with poor ventilation, no lights and poor sanitation. Each family of eight to ten members was living in quarters divided by curtains into just five square metres of space. In one area we saw the population of 12,000 fighting over the one water connection in their area. We witnessed forty schoolchildren crammed together in a hot, half-built ‘classroom’ of just six square metres, again with poor ventilation and no lighting. The infrastructure is in a terrible condition. The roads are almost non-existent and the water, telephone and electricity systems are in poor condition. People have to buy their water at a high price and it is only available for the few.

Despite the difficulties, it was wonderful to see how our Church is flourishing in Haiti. We have 320,000 members and they are operating a hospital, a university, secondary and primary schools, a printing press and even an AWR radio station (on which I was privileged to speak). They are also helping out in the community of Diquini, particularly the ADRA Child Survival Project staff, who go out five days a week, at considerable personal risk, to meet the needs of the community.

We were invited to meet with a number of officials in the Diquini area as well as leaders of the Union Conference and the Adventist Hospital. In partnership with the Church, ADRA-Haiti, ADRA-UK, and DFID are giving hope to this community and beginning to address the actual needs of the people.

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