

Nigerian peace pioneers visit Britain



THOMAS BUEHLER

TWO PIONEERS of peace from northern Nigeria will be visiting Britain from 4-13 December. Pastor James Movel Wuye (right) and Imam Muhammad Nurayn Ashafa are living proof that it is possible for the perpetrators of violence to become instigators of peace.

Both Wuye and Ashafa have suffered in the clashes between Christians and Muslims in Northern Nigeria, which have killed tens of thousands and devastated whole communities. They were active in rival militias. They now work together for reconciliation, as co-founders of the Muslim-Christian Interfaith Mediation Centre in Kaduna.

They will be in Britain for the launching of *The Imam and the Pastor*, a film about their work produced by FLTfilms and made by a skilled and dedicated team over the course of two years. After its world premiere at the United Nations in New York and showings in Washington, the film will be launched in Parliament in London on 6 December, at an occasion hosted by John Battle MP, the Prime Minister's envoy on interfaith matters. The first public screening in Britain, co-sponsored by the Nigerian High Commission and IofC, will be at Friends House in London on 9 December. Other events will take place in Liverpool, and at St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation in London.

When Wuye and Ashafa visited the IofC conference centre in Caux, Switzerland, two years ago, they spoke about their journey from hatred to peace-building. 'We were programmed to hate one another, to Islamise or evangelise at all costs,' said Pastor Wuye. 'This threatens the very existence of Nigeria.' It took him three years to overcome his hatred and

to start to trust Ashafa. This began when the Imam visited Wuye after his mother died. 'He was radiating love, but I'd been blinded by hate and pain.'

'In our hearts we were weeping, but we were still full of hate,' said Imam Ashafa. The turning point for him was hearing another Imam preaching about the power of forgiveness and the example of the Prophet. 'Now we are working to create space, not just for peace, but also for the transformation of society.'

The film is a powerful case study of African grassroots action to establish the conditions for social stability and community development. 'We are most grateful for a generous gift which has given us the working capital to help make this and further films possible, for the financial sacrifices of everyone in the film team and for all the gifts which have helped to fund *The Imam and the Pastor*,' says producer/director Alan Channer.

The public showing of 'The Imam and the Pastor' will take place at 7pm on Saturday 9 December at Friends House, Euston Rd, London NW1 (opposite Euston Station). Leaflets are available from 24 Greencoat Place, phone 0207 798 6000 or email: reception@london.iofc.org

The information in this article corrects and supersedes that in a recent letter which some readers will have received from 24 Greencoat Place.



Initiatives of Change

Welcome to *Initiatives*—published three times a year by Initiatives of Change UK to catch you up on what IofC is doing in and from the UK. We hope these four pages will give you information and inspiration—and a chance to share your own news of how you are making a difference. Please write to us at *Initiatives*, 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD or email: newsletter@uk.iofc.org

JUST A SMALL MATTER?

YEARS AGO, soon after I had decided to seek and follow God's leading in my life, my boss asked me to arrange for a French girl to come to England for a month's work experience in our office.

On the day of her arrival I was just setting off to meet her train, when the thought came to my mind to buy some flowers and leave them as a welcome in her accommodation. I rejected this idea, feeling I had already done plenty in making all the arrangements. However, the thought persisted, so I somewhat grudgingly gave in.

The door was opened by an agitated landlady who was at that precise moment taking a phone call from the immigration authorities at Newhaven. They had detained the girl as she had no work permit. Taking over the telephone, I was able to explain the special circumstances of her visit, and all was well.

If I hadn't arrived at that very moment, the girl would have been turned back to France, and I would have waited in vain at the station.

A vivid reminder of the importance of heeding the inner voice in small as well as big matters.

Patricia Ducé

Church in Kiev



ELIZABETH LOCKE

European Saeima

SAEIMA is a Latvian word meaning 'gathering' but this first Europe-wide get-together on lofC's future took place outside Kiev in Ukraine. For those of us from Western Europe, what an eye-opener it was to see Europe from a Ukrainian perspective.

We were 85 people from 17 countries from the age of 81 down to a delightful one-year-old. Twelve came from the UK.

We made new friends and enriched old friendships. To look at the past and the future, and to hear about the work of lofC in each country, helped us gain a new vision of what we could do together.

Our Ukrainian hosts were most hospitable. On a clear, sunny, ice-cold day we visited Kiev and saw the golden domes and intricate artistry of several churches and an ancient monastery. And who could forget a wonderful evening of Ukrainian dancing and crafts?

Breakout groups gave an opportunity for everyone to be heard and for common themes to be identified. We discussed such diverse topics as transparent teamwork, interfaith dialogue, how all generations can work together, and learning from things that have gone wrong as well as best practice.

Several ideas emerged—a realistic proposition for an Action for Europe training programme like Action for Life, plans for specific parts of Europe, a thinktank for young professionals, and convergence of thought linking cultures and faiths in a dialogue of civilisations.

Elizabeth Locke

In transition

ONCE AGAIN in its 75 years of active existence, lofC-UK has choices to make about the direction it is meant to take. They are not about changing the core values: the search for God's leading, care for people and the will to make a difference in the world. These remain as relevant as ever. However, one area in which we need to do better is in the framework we offer to those who are excited to 'discover' lofC and want to become more active in our work.

A 'Transition Group' (TG) has been created to oversee a consultation process which will result in organisational change. To this end the TG has outlined a shared vision to stimulate thought and discussion. It believes that lofC-UK should be characterised by:

- an inclusive fellowship, made up of people who seek to make what they know of God and absolute moral values central in their lives
- a supportive community life that nurtures spiritual growth and professional development
- an organisation which delivers transparently made decisions based on a search for divine purpose
- a way of working, in partnership with others, which offers a satisfying role to all who wish to be involved
- clearly-defined goals that are agreed upon, reviewed and adhered to.

If you would like to come to an Exploration Day on 18 November in Newcastle on how to achieve these aims, please contact the TG convenor, Jacqui Daukes, at Greencoat Place. Email: jdaukes@london.iofc.org

Next steps

IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE that I have enjoyed British hospitality for five years. It has been a privilege to work with lofC-UK. In my first year I spent four days a week in Cambridge working with Patrick Colquhoun on his charity Medical Support in Romania, and one day helping with the management of Greencoat Place in London. For the past four years I have been with lofC's international website team in Oxford as a web designer and visual programmer. Each summer I was an office manager at the lofC centre in Caux, Switzerland. Through these experiences I have grown so much, and whatever the future holds—whether it means working full-time with lofC or not—I will always be involved in some way.

Thank you for the memories, the opportunities and the care you have given me. I will miss Britain terribly but sense that moving back to Canada is the step in faith I need to take for the next phase of my life to happen. As novelist Richard Ford says, 'Leaving reminds us of what we can part with and what we can't, then offers us something new to look forward to, to dream about.'

Eve Wojciechowska



EDWARD PETERS

Eve Wojciechowska

Seventh wave

MICHAEL HENDERSON was recently interviewed for a San Francisco radio station, 7th Wave Network, which broadcasts not over the air but through listeners' computers.

Michael's book, *Forgiveness: Breaking the Chain of Hate*, had been recommended to the programme's host, Victoria Post, who is blind. A friend had a spare hour to read it to her. She was in tears at times, and five hours later was still there. Victoria told her listeners, 'It is one of the most incredible books I have ever read.' She wants to get the book put into Braille.

MRA Productions Fund

FOR MANY YEARS The MRA Productions Fund (set up in 1949) was a vehicle for funding films, publications and plays for MRA. Later it became owner of *For A Change*, FLTfilms and Grosvenor books. Six years ago, to simplify structures, these undertakings plus most of the Fund's investments were transferred to the Oxford Group/lofC (Charity No 226334).

The much reduced MRA Productions Fund remained in existence to see if it might still be needed. The four trustees have now resolved to donate what remains to the Oxford Group and to wind up the Fund. We are obliged by the Charity Commission to advertise this fact.

Any interested person who wishes to make representations regarding this Resolution may do so by 31 Dec 2006 by writing to the Charity Commission for England and Wales at the following address: Charity Commission Direct, PO Box 1227, Liverpool, L69 3UG, quoting Charity Number 226511.

Email: tom.jones@uk.iofc.org

Changing Course in Yorkshire



HOWARD GRACE

On course for change

ALTHOUGH at first there didn't seem to be much happening, something was stirring beneath the surface of my cool, calm identity. It was only after the Changing Course ended that I realised I had a new sense of inspiration and purpose.

Back home in London I found myself having conversations with power, grace and intention. Instead of steam-rolling over others, conversations felt like a proper dialogue. I was actually listening!

Foundations for Freedom has been running such courses in Eastern Europe since 1993. This UK version was led by David Curtis and Zoryana Borbulevych and set in the Yorkshire Dales. Fifteen participants came together to explore the big questions of life—what does it mean to be human, what do we like and dislike about our relationships and society, and what is the point of having standards?

At first I resisted the practice of 'quiet time' like crazy. Just trust yourself and trust the journey, I told myself. That was the beginning of learning to listen better—to myself and to others.

I noticed how much I'm invested in the personality I've been until now, and how that limits my freedom to explore new ways of being. I was also reminded that, whatever our background, when we come with respect and an intention to listen, there is a commonality to our experience of being human, beyond even our learned beliefs about life.

Jon Wright

Schools for satisfaction

WHY ARE so many young Westerners unsatisfied and depressed? Why do they feel helpless or apathetic about social issues?

We share a desire to help young people discover their unique contribution to the world. This led us to accept Howard Grace's invitation to visit school sixth forms in the UK. We use skits, story-sharing, discussions and interactive exercises to explore the difference between instant gratification and a deeper sense of fulfilment.

The heart of our presentation is sharing personal experiences. Roshan talks about how her self-confidence used to depend on whether she had a boyfriend or not and how she has learnt to seek confidence within. Chris shares about a personal struggle, which

touches on a pressing social issue. 'I hope that through sharing my mistakes I can help others to make the right choices,' he says.

During one discussion, a student described lasting satisfaction as 'when you work for what you get, then have the joy of making someone else happy'. The response of teachers, too, has been encouraging. One said, 'It was great to have a discussion on some deeper spiritual issues not usually spoken about in school.' Another told us that she had never seen the sixth form so attentive.

We want to continue doing similar work in our own countries.

Roshan Gul (New Zealand)
and Chris James (Australia)



HOWARD GRACE

Roshan Gul and Chris James (above in a school in Slough) took part in Action for Life 3, a nine-month lofC training programme based in India. Copies of the report are available from 24 Greencoat Place, price £3.00 including postage.

For your diary

AT 24 GREENCOAT PLACE, LONDON SW1P 1RD

Wednesday 22 November

6.30pm for 7.15pm

Challenges facing Higher Education today— can a university be a catalyst for social change

Greencoat Forum with Professor Gerald Pillay, Vice-Chancellor and Rector of Liverpool Hope University

Sunday 26 November

11am-6pm

Open House

Discovering the Renewal Arts experience
Email: elisabeth@renewalarts.net

Wednesday 6 December

5.45pm for 6.30pm

Towards a deeper silence

Oasis evening, a time for prayer and refreshment

Saturday 9 December

3pm

Mother Goose

Christmas Pantomime by Paul Knight followed by Christmas tea

Tuesday 13 February 2007

6.30pm for 7.15pm

Building peace in Sierra Leone—a personal reflection

Greencoat Forum with Keith Neal, a retired teacher with experience of building bridges with people in India, China and Africa

**AT FRIENDS HOUSE, 173 EUSTON ROAD,
LONDON NW1**

Saturday 9 December

6.30pm for 7pm

The Imam and the Pastor

First public screening in the UK (see p1)

AT ST ANDREW'S, EDENBRIDGE, KENT

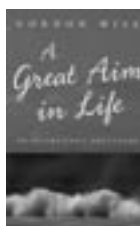
Saturday 3 March

10.00am to 4.30pm

Quiet day

Opportunities for prayer, exercise, creativity, silence and regeneration. Details from Greencoat Place

New books



A Great Aim in Life

Gordon Wise's sweeping memoir of his work with MRA/IofC since the late 1940s. Wise, an Australian, served with MRA in Asia for many years, before making his home in Britain.

'A story of enduring friendships and personal challenges, and of learning about leadership, responsibility and humility.'

Published by Caux Books.

£12.50 plus postage, from IofC Books, 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD. ISBN 2-8803-7513-4



Beyond Belief

In this touching collection of reflections, written for her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, Frances McAll draws on her faith and on her life as a medical doctor in China

and Hampshire. 'I am so glad to be able to express all that has meant most to me in my life,' she writes. 'My wish is that the book may be one more faith-building tool in God's hands.'

£3.00 (post free in the UK), from John Faber, 2 Batworth Park House, Crossbush, Arundel, BN18 9PG. ISBN 1-85239-040-9

God's Politician

Garth Lean's classic biography of William Wilberforce will be republished on 22 January, for the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade.

Published by Darton, Longman and Todd, price £8.95, ISBN 0-232-52690-7, available from bookshops

In the Press

Visit www.uk.iofc.org/people/lives for obituaries of people associated with IofC: David Channer (*The Independent*, 29 September) and Ken Stewart. Shorter versions of this obituary appeared in *The Herald*, Glasgow and *The Irish Times*.

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I would like to receive more information about Greencoat Forums.

I would like to receive more information about a specific activity or programme of Initiatives of Change. Please specify:

Please send me a copy of the Caux programme for 2007.

I would like to make a donation to Initiatives of Change. Please find enclosed a cheque (payable to Initiatives of Change).

Please post to Enquiries, Initiatives of Change, Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD.



Initiatives of Change

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