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Record response to Asia tsunami disaster

John Surridge, Communication director, BUC

As we go to press the total death toll within the countries affected by the Asia tsunami is pushing 200,000 and many victims are still not accounted for. However, the world is responding. Governments, Aid Agencies, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are working together to ease the immediate suffering and to rebuild shattered lives and communities.

The Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) has been heavily involved in the relief effort. Within days of the disaster ADRA had set up a command and control centre at the ADRA-Asia regional office in Bangkok, Thailand, with numerous additional personnel being flown in from around the world. Experts in planning, human resource management and communications, dramatically increased the capacity of the office which was then able to co-ordinate the work of the

ADRA offices in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and India. Further support and planning staff were recruited for these regional offices and temporary staff was taken on to assist in the daily operational work.

Relief

Among the many different relief operations that ADRA undertook in the first few days of the disaster, the following stand out: In Indonesia ADRA co-ordinated a team of medical experts from regional hospitals to provide medical services along the coast near Banda Aceh. ADRA-Indonesia partnered with a local NGO and recruited local volunteers to provide assistance in the delivery of food, water, medical supplies, and essential non-food items to camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). In co-ordination with the health department of the local government, ADRA-Thailand provided protec-

tive wear for workers assisting with the retrieval, transport, and storage of bodies. Supplies included 7,000 face masks, 1,000 pairs of gloves, and 100 aprons. In Sri Lanka ADRA set up a water purification unit producing up to

50,000 litres a day, and imported specialist equipment to deal with the many bodies that had begun decomposing. Also in Sri Lanka ADRA distributed large quantities of medical aid, including oral rehydration packets, anti-diarrhoea medication, surgical supplies, antibiotics, and other relief aid for local hospitals. 7 >



Reuters/Daren Whiteside, courtesy www.alertnet.org

Response to the Tsunami

by C. R. Perry, president, British Union Conference

The violent earthquake and ferocious tsunami waves that ravaged the rim of the Indian Ocean, killing thousands and destroying buildings and vegetation, have torn mercilessly at the heart of humanity. Everyone with a heart of compassion has been touched by the magnitude of the disaster and our utter vulnerability before the uncontrollable forces of nature.

The response to the international appeal for help and generosity of nations and peoples demonstrate that we share a common humanity; one that can feel the pain of the wound in another's heart.

As a Church we grieve with the families that have lost loved ones. We are very deeply moved by the plight of the children who have been orphaned and the millions of adults who have been displaced.

In response to the mega-disaster, donations to ADRA-UK will amount to nearly £100,000 if funds keep coming in at the present rate. ADRA-UK is committed to forwarding the funds to ADRA-

central command in the region.

On the question, 'Where is God when disasters strike?' sceptics would want us to believe that God was absent or does not exist.

Any sincere enquirer, including the Christian, asks a similar question. We all seek answers to explain the phenomenon. To associate the God of righteousness, compassion and love with the tragedies that befall us poses for many a difficulty. Disasters proceed from evil and how could a loving God allow them?

An atheist who was very indignant with a Christian who had tried to console him over the loss of his little child said, 'If your God was a God of love where was he when my son was about to die?' Back came the answer from the Christian, 'God was where he was when his own Son died on the cross of Calvary. He spared not his own Son.'

In a sinful world tragedies are inevitable. The whole creation groans, waiting to be delivered. The earth has 'waxed old like a piece of garment'.

The movements of the tectonic plates in the Indian Ocean are the result of an aching earth whose shelf life is coming to an end.

God's great plan of redemption for the universe is more comprehensive. Based on his time-line he is waiting for the accomplishment of purpose before the earth is

remade. God's love is not in question when situations go badly because he has already demonstrated his eternal love on Calvary.

The scope of his mercy encompasses all peoples. 'Those on whom the Tower of Siloam fell were not worse than others,' said Jesus. They were victims of an unfortunate tragedy that could have befallen others. This does not invalidate the place for miracles or supernatural intervention.

To attribute disasters to God's vengeance or to represent them as a demonstration of his impotence is to misunderstand who God is. A hurricane or earthquake is not an act of God as insurance companies would want us to believe. The Scripture is plain in portraying a God who is willing that none should perish but that all should have eternal life.

Mankind and the Earth bear the consequences of sin and they must run their course. Decay has set in and the ageing process has affected all things, including the forces of nature that hold the Earth harmoniously together. The law of sin is at work and its eventual extinction will bring about a new order of things; chaos will give way to order, and death to life.

We are instructed by Jesus Christ to be ready for his coming when he will restore all things to himself. 'Behold I make all things new.'

Where was God?

As soon as the tsunami took place the ADRA-UK and BUC Communication staff began to use the Internet to sensitise us to the scale of need. The consequent generosity of our members, like the generosity of the communities of which they are part, has been remarkable. Nevertheless many have asked the WHY? and WHERE WAS GOD? questions. I have posed these questions to a number of thought leaders within the Church and here publish a sample of their replies:

Pastor Don McFarlane

Like millions in this country I am still numbed from seeing the effects of the tsunami in South-east Asia.

As I addressed my local congregation in Luton following the disaster I sought to answer the question that I realised that many sitting before me were silently thinking: 'Where was God?' I wouldn't be truthful if I said that that was an easy question to answer. However, in an interesting way, disasters such as those resulting from the recent tsunami confirm the word of God and his existence as opposed to refuting them.

God *did* predict in Genesis that suffering would be a result of sin. Should there be no suffering in the world, one would need to question the veracity of God's words. The good news is, though, that God has planned a new world that is free from tsunamis, hurricanes, wars, terrorism and every negative experience. In that he is the supreme Judge, it is possible that many who lost their lives in various natural and man-made disasters will be resurrected to eternal life.

Having said that, I am aware that the sense of loss suffered by relatives and friends is too great for human comfort. Should the tsunami disaster serve to emphasise that as human beings we

are powerless against the forces of nature and therefore need to find shelter in a God who created nature and is more powerful than all that nature has to unleash, then there would be some point to it. Dying in a disaster is a horrible experience for anyone. Dying without Christ is the *most* horrible.

Pastor Egerton Francis

The question must be considered in the context of the conflict between good and evil. From the emergence of sin, evil had adversely affected humanity and nature. In humanity we see hatred, murders and wars. In nature we see natural disasters, which generally bring death.

The Bible speaks of natural disasters of the past – a flood (Genesis 6, 7), disaster by fire (19) – and it prophesies natural disasters in the future (Matthew 24:29; 2 Peter 3:6-10; Revelation 6:12, 14). Jesus says, 'My words will never pass away.' (Matthew 24:35.) These events confirm the reliability of Scripture.

Believers interpret these disasters as fulfilments of Scripture and in the context of the great controversy.

Should God intervene to prevent all catastrophes, the true nature of evil would not be seen. Evil must run its course. Today we are saddened, as is

God, by the devastation of the tsunami, but he assures us that evil and its effects will finally be eradicated. We can have confidence in God and his word and thank him for revealing these things to us in advance. God is still in control.

Helen Pearson

Where was God in the Tsunami? I don't know. But I believe that at a time like this, polite responses to the question just won't do. They did not do for Jesus at the heart of his suffering in the garden and on the cross. We must continue to ask our questions and express our anger and outrage and pain and bewilderment – just as Job did. We must cry out, 'Help thou mine unbelief', when we need to. God can handle our doubt and darkness.

I feel no need to try and put a 'sorted' Christian spin on this event. To do so suggests that I must defend God – and that I am capable of doing so! This is not about the challenge to have the cleverest theology. It is about the challenge to have the most courageous and authentic humanity.

For me, the greatest challenge in this global bereavement is to exercise not my logic but my compassion – for those suffering in Asia and nearer to home. It is about the challenge to do the very little that I can to help and then to stand honestly and silently in the darkness alongside my traumatised brothers and sisters and wait with them for the voice of God. It is about being willing to experience with them the *not* knowing, *not* understanding, *not* having all the answers. Unless I am willing to stand in that place and offer the gift of my silent presence, all my pronouncements about God are like cheap comfort at a funeral.

Dr Laurence Turner

There are no simple solutions when thousands die in the Asian tsunamis. Even the faithful have doubts – 'Where was God?' Yet this doubt is not the opposite of faith. Doubt is actually faith searching for answers when none seems to be available. When our cherished views about God and the way he operates in the world are challenged, we feel disoriented. For example, the Psalms certainly have comforting images of shepherds leading us through green pastures, and eagles bearing us up on their wings, but life is not always like that. So such comforting verses are far outnumbered by psalms of disorientation which question and challenge God (see Psalms 22, 44, 88). Why does he reward the wicked, but punish the righteous (73:3, 14)? Why is he asleep and not awake (44:23)? Why is he not near, but distant (22:1)? Yet remarkably, these psalms which begin with questions and doubts almost always conclude with praise (13:5, 6). They conclude with praise *because* they begin with doubt. True faith does not look for clever arguments, but rather takes the doubts of faith to God himself. This means that God is waiting to hear our doubts and questions, in public worship and private devotion. Why? Because doubt is not satisfied with glib answers, but is often 'the midwife at the birth of a more compelling faith.' (Robert Davidson, *The Courage to Doubt*, page 36.)

There are many aspects to what has happened. We see large generosity in men like Michael Schumacher who has given £5,000,000 to help with relief. We also see great evil in those who burgled the homes of those reported missing. We reflect on other tragedies which exceed the tsunami, like the terrors in the Sudan and the awful massacres in Rwanda. Our faith informs us that disasters of the tsunami kind will increase and indeed will be greater in scale. If nothing else, these terrible things should drive us to the Scriptures and to

Catherine Anthony Boldeau

In such times of destruction and devastation, God gets mixed publicity. Many wonder how God, said to be loving and caring, can permit such an act of cruelty. They question why a 'good God' sits

The General Conference President says

Over the past days we have seen an unprecedented humanitarian disaster unfold in southern Asia. It is a tragedy on a scale that is difficult to comprehend. We see its continuing impact in the grief of those who mourn their loved ones; in the helplessness

of the children who have lost parents; and in the desperation of survivors left without adequate food or water.

It is a distressing irony that this disaster occurred in a region of the world that is not well-equipped to cope with an emergency of this magnitude. The men, women and children who have been caught up in this tragedy are, for the most part, poor and already well acquainted with hardship. It is good for us to remember that in the midst of this pain and suffering, these people are not forgotten by God. Each one is precious to him.

How do we, as followers of Christ, respond? Now is our heavenly Father so that we may be merciful, doing what we can to help the afflicted. We remember God is not uninvolved in the world but active in it, doing all it is possible for him to do in order to save as many as possible. To co-operate with him in this enterprise is to do what he calls us to do.

Sharon Platt-McDonald

With no scientific evidence that man's interference with the planet caused this catastrophe, the accusing finger has pointed to nature itself and ultimately to God.

Among the spectrum of responses is the belief that the random nature of Earth's destructive power highlights mankind's powerlessness and God's inability to do anything about it.

We hold to the belief that God was right there. His omnipresence dictates that. We know that he knew this event would happen. His omniscience establishes that. The question is about his *omnipotence*. How could an all-powerful, benevolent God allow something so catastrophic to happen, particularly to the vulnerable and impoverished?

Despite the charges and challenges levelled at God, he remains God. He is still in control. Why he allows such traumatic events to happen is inherent in his deity. Our ability to comprehend this is indicative of our humanity.

Amid the chaos and carnage, the world can find hope. We can become the heart and hands of God, demonstrating his benevolence by responding with compassion in positive and practical ways as we embrace the hurting.

Where was God when the tsunami struck? We saw him in the miracle of those who survived; the heroism of the rescuers; the generosity of a big-hearted world reaching out to respond altruistically.

Where was God when the tsunami struck? We saw him in the miracle of those who survived; the heroism of the rescuers; the generosity of a big-hearted world reaching out to respond altruistically.

Eddie Hypolite

'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?' The cry of Jesus from the cross has today become the hopeless cry of millions throughout the tsunami-hit regions of the world.

The phenomenon of sin and the chaos it inflicts on nature, causing it to turn on humanity at a moment's notice with the same destructive and unpredictable force with which we turn on

each other, is an unnerving reminder of the fragility of life. It's clear to me that nothing catches God by surprise and nothing happens on his eternal shift for which he does not take ultimate responsibility. I don't claim to know why God allows these acts of nature's destructive force to happen. I do know that the Word of God is true and he still remains a loving God, and this isn't the allowing of a callous and twisted deity.

God remains in the same place he was the day his Son uttered that cry, right there by his side as he is ours; working in and through the horrors of these events, bringing redemption to and out of human suffering.

Karen Holford

Tragedies are a fact of life on our broken Earth. God never wanted it to be this way. He longs for the day when there will be no more tsunamis.

Where is God when the complexity of the suffering silences all our words? He is where he always is: with each person on Earth. He cries with their pain, mourns their losses, and perhaps suffers more than we can imagine because he has the power to still the waves, but for some mystery too complex for us to understand, he doesn't. We pray for healing and sometimes there is recovery and sometimes there isn't, but we continue to be mortal.

Faith tells us that God uses incredible tragedies for incredible purposes. He doesn't stop the suffering, but he does comfort our pain (2 Corinthians 1:4, 5), and uses the broken pieces of our lives to create beauty, if we let him have the pieces.

However, for me the most important question is not 'where is God?' but 'where are we?' We are God's hands, heart, voice and face in this tortured world. We are here to show the world his love. We can't stop the tsunami, but we can choose how we respond to the pain and suffering. We can help to show the world that God is alive and caring. What are you going to do about it?

Dr Jonathan Gallagher

We are *meant* to ask 'why?' When we see our brothers and sisters drowned or maimed and then, after the carnage, raped or exploited, we *should* scream 'why?'

not the time to ask 'Why?', or to search for explanations – some answers we may never have before our Lord returns. Now is a time to act; to reach out to our fellow human beings with compassion; to be Christ's visible symbols of hope in a situation where fear and hopelessness hold sway. This is what we are called to do. I trust that each one of you will do what you can to support the ongoing relief work with both your prayers and your resources, whether it is through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, or through other organisations engaged in this effort.

Pastor Jan Paulsen

If not, what kind of beasts are we, to remain unmoved by such pain that is made worse by seeming to be meaningless?

Yet in a world that is supposed to be just a mindless swirl of neutrons, protons, and electrons, what would you expect? 'The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference,' says Richard Dawkins, noted promoter of evolution.

'Blind, pitiless' existence? On the face of it, a raging tsunami confirms such a view in the minds of many.

But does it? Why should we even think that it is unfair, or meaningless, or evil, unless we have some idea of fairness, meaning, and good?

If the universe reveals only blind, pitiless existence, why should we ever look for good, or think we could see, why would we ever think there was anything other than the darkness? C. S. Lewis says, 'If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning: just as, if there were no light in the universe and therefore no creatures with eyes, we should never know it was dark. Dark would be without meaning.'

The very fact we scream why, and rage against life's unfairness, and ache for something better, points to the believability of good – love, truth, compassion, care, giving. We see the results of evil, and rightly hate it. Jesus pointed to the truth when he spoke of the corrupted weeds in the wheat field, saying, 'An enemy has done this.' Don't you think the heart of a God of goodness would be far more wounded than ours over this world of sin and death, of cruelty and carnage, of which tsunamis are just the latest example.

So why does God wait to end it? For us to choose the good, to reject the evil, and come home to our loving Father who wants to re-create this fallen world, and restore us in his image to the true and good beings he intended. For the results of selfishness and sin to be fully revealed. For the cosmic conflict over good and evil to be ended, so that he can say 'It is finished', and call those who will to come home, home forever with a God who truly loves.

Bristol: ten baptised

In the four months following our September Christ for Life campaign ten people have been baptised among the Bristol churches.

The campaign targeted those who already had some Bible knowledge, and Dr Walton Rose, who pastors a church in New York, was guest speaker. His distinctive style was witty and intelligent and laced with charm and humour. The campaign was accompanied by a vibrant praise team and captivating musical items.

Of the ten baptised, eight joined Bristol Central and two North Bristol. Pastor Richard Daly, who shepherds both flocks, is giving studies to more candidates.

A church is planned in the southern part of the city where the



churches are already full. In the meantime Bristol Central caters for additional members by way of a live video link.

COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT

Baptism in Galway

A congregation of about 110 adults and 25 children assembled at the Galway church to witness a baptism on Sabbath 2 October. The little church at Galway was packed, with people sitting along the hallway.

Tapiwa Dennis Sakaïke was baptised, and Zeljko and Gordana Petkovic who come from Croatia were received into membership by profession of faith. Tapiwa, 11, is a student in first year at the Athlone Community College.

In his opening remarks Pastor Ashley Kongari summed up the significance of the day, 'Today is a grand occasion for all of us here in the church.' He went on to talk of the true biblical doctrine of baptism by immersion and the importance of the fruit of the Spirit.

Tapiwa, Zeljko and Gordana have all demonstrated the fruit of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Tapiwa's baptism united believers from Limerick, Foyne, Hospital, Shannon, Birr, Ennis, Roscommon, Athlone, Ballinasloe, Longford and, of course, Galway who gathered for the special occasion of this young Christian's life.

OLIVER MARTYN

Wheely good!

by Bronwen Atkinson

Last year a member of Stanborough Park church received an email from Alex

Elmadjian, who is Communication and Media Services director for the Middle East Division based in Nicosia, Cyprus. Alex had just visited South Sudan and wrote, 'Most of the Sudanese travel on foot and cover vast distances to get food or water. A bicycle is a most valued commodity there. Cyclists can go further to search for work, or to sell their produce or to give a sick relative a ride to a clinic.'

As a former member of Stanborough Park church, Alex was sure the members would buy cycles for Sudan to give mobility to those with caring or counselling roles in their communities – the elders and women's ministry workers. £50 would buy one bike.

The Sabbath School took the request to heart and on 20 December Pat Walton was entrusted with the banking of £1,100 – the first stage on its journey to the Sudan. In all, twenty-two bikes had been paid for. Sabbath School superintendent Gillian Huzzey said how pleased she was with such a grand total.



Gillian Huzzey and Pat Walton

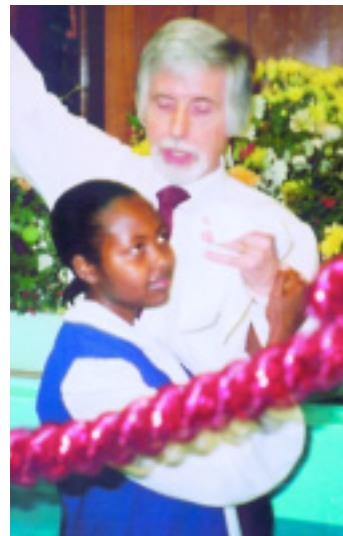
Toy service

by Bronwen Atkinson

Over four decades since it was started by the late Alf Kelly, the toy service at Stanborough Park church still continues to bring joy and happiness to hundreds of children who might otherwise have a very dismal Christmas indeed.

On Sabbath 11 December the chairman of Watford Borough Council, Councillor Robert Gordon, attended the service with his predecessor Councillor Ellie Burtenshaw to receive the toys on behalf of Watford children. As well as a big display of soft toys and games, more gifts were brought onto the platform by the little ones and collected into sacks – all of which were distributed by the Social Services before Christmas.

Councillor Robert Gordon with Pastor Vine, Brian Combridge, Councillor Ellie Burtenshaw and Kish Poddar
Photos by Johnson Wong



and an enquiring mind. Sabbath morning 20 November was the day she publicly testified to her personal journey of faith to become a child of God and a member of the Hove church family when Pastor Hill baptised her.

Clarisse's testimony is powerful: 'I have had many problems in my life. I believe Jesus is in my life. It is unbelievable how I escaped from

prison where maybe I was going to die. Many others died but I am still alive. So I thank God. I never want to forget about it. I want to forgive those who did all that to me. I have my life, even though I don't know what happened to my family.'

Hove church is enriched by Clarisse's arrival; her story of courage is an inspiration to us all.

PASTOR LESLIE HILL



Soul Symphony

The evening of 27 November saw 'Soul Symphony', the Hope Community Choir, receive the W. W. Bell Baton Award for their winning performance in the Beckenham Festival. Held annually, the Beckenham Festival is one of the largest competitive performing arts festivals in the south-east of England.

Soul Symphony, a choir of fifteen, mostly non-Christian teenagers, was formed in August 2004 following a series of auditions held within the Beckenham community. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the musical direction of Chris Brookes, Soul Symphony has gone from strength to strength. It is now very much a part of Hope Community Adventist church, a church plant spearheaded by Bobby Bovell, associate pastor of Croydon church.

Following the winning performance, the writer commented, 'The months have flown by since our first audition session. In that time each member of Soul Symphony has grown in confidence, musical ability and understanding of



Baptism and wedding

Emmerald Marunda was from a non-Adventist background, but went to a Seventh-day Adventist school in Zimbabwe, and committed his life to Christ there and was baptised as a youngster. When he returned home, his family influence kept him from attending church, and he subsequently drifted away from his relationship with Christ.

When Emmerald came to England he spent some time in Middlesbrough, and attended the

God. Talent, youth and the Holy Spirit are a powerful combination. It's my hope that these talented teenagers will continue to develop and mature as individuals, a group and children of God.'

JENNIFFER BAILEY, director of Contact Ministries at Hope Community

Middlesbrough church occasionally, yet he never fully recommitted himself to the Sabbath.

Eventually Emmerald met Melody Taruvinga (also from Zimbabwe) in Bradford, fell in love with her and, since Melody was a committed Adventist, fell in love all over again with the Sabbath. After several years in a spiritual wilderness, Emmerald was baptised into Christ and welcomed into fellowship at the Bradford church on Sabbath 20 November by visiting pastor, Paul Lockham, Executive secretary of the North England Conference, assisted by local minister Jeff Couzins.

Eight days later, on 28 November members and friends at Bradford church gathered to witness the uniting in marriage of Emmerald and

Melody. Pastor Ian Sweeney was the officiating minister, assisted by Jeff Couzins.

JOHN MCGOLDRICK

Golden wedding

Kettering church shared Norman and Wendy Hopkin's happy 50th wedding anniversary on Sabbath 29 October, with a cake-and-flowers reception at the church and, later, a potluck lunch.

They give invaluable, conscientious service to the church, Wendy being our head deaconess and Norman the Lay Activities leader.

Besides their other interests, Wendy has a prison ministry and Norman works in Romania.

PASTOR B. K. ROBINSON



Clarisse's story

The journey began two years ago in Burundi. At 15 Clarisse was taken to a plane bound for Heathrow, having lost all her family in the hostilities. She imagined herself being taken to a British family to live as an asylum seeker.

Instead she was instructed to get on a train and at the end of the line get off and go to the nearest police station. She spoke French and was totally alone in a strange land. The train terminus was Brighton.

It was a bitterly cold February day when the Hove church first set eyes on Clarisse. Her foster parent, Trish, brought her inside. With smiling wide eyes she said, 'Ah, ma famille!'

For the past ten months the writer and Clarisse have studied the Word together. Her questions were deep, borne from hard experiences

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ADRA-UK helps women and children in Pakistan

by John Surridge, Communication director, BUC

In early December BUC president Pastor Cecil Perry and ADRA-UK director Mr Raafat Kamal, returned from a week-long visit to Pakistan where they had been evaluating three ADRA-UK projects. Most of the funding for each of these projects came from ADRA-UK's annual door to door appeal, known to those within the Adventist Church as Ingathering.

The first of these projects was a major improvement to the educational facilities at the Pakistan Adventist College situated on the outskirts of Lahore city in the district of Sheikhupura. This educational facility began life as the Pakistan Adventist Seminary back in 1923 and now has around 700 students, 150 of whom are Muslims. As a result of funding from the 2002 and 2003 ADRA-UK appeals a number of new buildings have been added to the college. These include a two-storey building housing the new science department, with five classrooms as well as biology, chemistry and physics labs. All of these are fully furnished and well equipped. In addition three staff houses have been built to house teachers for the science department.

These improvements, as well as extra training for two teachers which has also been funded by ADRA-UK, have enabled the Pakistan Adventist College to secure crucial government accreditation, allowing them to offer a full FSc educational programme. This will be of great benefit to the students of the college who come from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds.

Sustainable funding for the Pakistan Adventist College is being encouraged by the establishment of a major livestock farm, also funded by ADRA-UK. 'It is difficult to describe the scene to people who have not visited the facility,' said Raafat Kamal. 'We have thirty young buffaloes and cows,

and they have their own pond to swim in so that they can keep cool in the heat of the day. They also have their own shelter and a vet is used to make sure they stay healthy and receive the proper vaccinations. Students are trained as they work with these animals, and when they are eventually sold the money generated goes towards a fund which will support the education of poor students.'

On Wednesday 24 November Pastor Perry attended a special opening ceremony for the new college development, which was attended by current staff and students as well as the first group of applicants for the new FSc programme. As guest of honour, and representative of all those in the British Union who had helped to raise the funds for these projects, Pastor Perry delivered the inaugural speech, cut various ribbons, and opened the ceremonial curtains which marked the official opening of the new facilities. 'It was a real privilege for me to be involved in this project and in the opening ceremony,' he said on his return to England. 'The contrast between our comfortable lives here and the abject poverty that we have observed in some parts of Pakistan is hard to overstate. This is a country where we can make a significant impact on the lives of others, as demonstrated by what ADRA-UK has achieved here. Looking at the wonderful new facilities, and seeing the joy in the faces of those who will use them, my mind went

back to the faithful work of our members as they go door to door



every spring, collecting funds for humanitarian projects just like this. I wish every one of those collectors could see what I have seen in these last few days. The money has really been used to change lives and it will bring benefits to the community here that could last for generations.'

While they were in Pakistan Pastor Perry and Raafat Kamal also visited an Adult Literacy project which was funded from the 2003 ADRA-UK appeal and run in co-operation with the Women's Ministries department of the Pakistan Union. Literacy among women in Pakistan currently runs at just 23%, with this figure dropping to less than 10% in Christian communities, and much work is needed in this area. The Adult Literacy project runs some forty centres, half in the north of Pakistan, and half in the south, each of which is teaching around thirty women to read and write. Practical benefits are already being seen as the newly educated women are able to read road signs and instructions on medicine bottles, help their young children to read and write, have better job prospects and earn more money for the family.

It is hoped that some video material from this trip will be available in time for the 2005 ADRA-UK Annual Appeal.



ADRA Heroes at home

Bosire

My name is Bosire and I am seven years old. I go to the Irvine Adventist church in Scotland. During the spring I grew leeks in my garden to get money to buy a water slide. Then I saw Darfur children on the TV. They were sick and without food. I was very scared and my mum suggested that I could sell my leeks and give the money to ADRA to send to the Darfur children, instead of buying a water slide. One autumn Sunday morning I harvested the leeks with Mum's help. In the afternoon I knocked at my neighbours' doors and sold them the leeks. I got a total of fifteen pounds from the neighbours. The remaining leeks I sold to the church members and got another fifteen pounds. I gave the money to my mum, who then wrote a cheque to ADRA. Since then, some church members and neighbours have donated more money to my project and my mum will send another cheque for fifty pounds.



Note: Since Bosire sent this article in a further £50 has been donated to his very personal appeal.

Reg La Touche

Reg La Touche decided to help raise money for Grenada by sleeping in a tent outside IVAX Pharmaceuticals, the company he works for in London. Reg, who was brought up in Grenada and has fond memories of the country, got creative and was able to raise over £1,000 which was then sent to help the hurricane victims. 'The nights were very long, cold and windy, as we are near the docks,' he said. 'The thing that got to me most, though, was the loneliness - that bit was tough. What kept me going was the fact that people had hugely supported me and I know it was for a good cause.'



◀ Tsunami response continued

Donations

Back home, just two days after the tsunami struck, ADRA-UK launched an appeal and some 1,500 potential donors were contacted by email. Over the next few days thousands of pounds were raised through credit card donations on the ADRA-UK website www.adra.org.uk and thousands more came in through postal donations. By 5 January ADRA-UK had sent approximately £50,000 directly to the disaster area.

The worldwide structure of the Adventist Church allowed us to respond to the disaster more quickly than many other organisations. Here in the UK and Ireland good communication networks enabled most of our ministers and many of our members to be contacted within a couple of days, and allowed a full appeal to be made in our churches on Sabbath 1 January. On hearing of the disaster the South England Conference immediately made a donation of £10,000 and, although we don't yet know the full scale of the response from the churches we have heard of single churches raising more than £7,000. One church of just twelve elderly members raised £2,000 and many similar stories are sure to emerge as time goes on.

Conrad Vine

Although ADRA-UK is co-ordinating the Asia Tsunami Appeal and is very active in fundraising for the affected areas, this is by no means its only contribution to the relief effort. The ADRA-UK office has a vital function in submitting proposals to the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID).

On Sunday evening 2 January, ADRA-UK director Raafat Kamal submitted two concept note applications to DFID for ADRA projects in the areas of water and health, and also mass grave management. If approved these projects will receive DFID funding of just over one million pounds. Further concept notes and proposals are being prepared for other projects in Sri Lanka and Indonesia, the most affected countries.

ADRA-UK has also taken a major initiative in the tsunami disaster by sending their special consultant, Mr Conrad Vine, to co-ordinate the relief operation of the ADRA network in Sri Lanka. Two days after the disaster struck, Conrad, who has a great deal of development and relief experience from his time with ADRA in Tajikistan and Azerbaijan, was put on the waiting list for a standby flight to Sri Lanka, and on Friday 31

December he flew into Colombo.

Reporting from the disaster area soon after his arrival Conrad said, 'Our role is to liaise with donors, the Sri Lankan government, other aid agencies, and the front line assessment teams to define precisely the short and medium-term interventions. The situation is fluid, with hourly assessments coming in from a range of sources, some credible and others not so credible, and as the data comes in, we check with other agencies to see whether they are addressing the particular problem. If not, we assess whether we can realistically do something, and if so, we prepare proposals. We have to be honest. There is always pressure to win funding, but we can only propose what we can actually deliver, and from country to country the skill-mix differs.

'Here in Sri Lanka we have a world-class team of water, geology and hydrology experts who between them manage mass water distribution and well-field systems around the world, so we are focusing on the rehabilitation of the water systems. My work is to turn their technical jargon of aquifers, flushing systems, geological strata, soil acidity and nitrate pollution levels into proposals that donors can understand.'

Much to be done

Although progress is being made in the relief operation there is still a great deal that needs to be done and ADRA, supported by its donor offices around the world, will be continuing their work for a long time to come.

ADRA-UK staff and leaders of the Adventist Church are very grateful for the overwhelming generosity that church members in the UK and Ireland have shown so far. The donations you have already given are greatly appreciated, but more money is still needed.

Credit card donations

can be made on the ADRA-UK website at: www.adra.org.uk/help/donate_form.html.

Cheques can be sent to: ADRA-UK, Stanborough Park, Watford, Herts, WD25 9JZ. Make your cheques payable to 'ADRA-UK' and include a note stating that the donation is for the 'Asia Earthquake Tsunami Appeal'.

Whichever way you give, if you are a UK taxpayer please ensure that you Gift Aid your donation. This can be done by ticking the appropriate box on the website, or by including a signed note with your postal donation saying 'Please Gift Aid this donation'.

For further information contact: ADRA-UK, Stanborough Park, Watford, WD25 9JZ. Tel/fax: 01923 681723. Email: director@adra.org.uk.



In short, 'Mind the Gap' is Level 3 in the cycle of the LIFEdvelopment.info concept.

The title was inspired by the warning given on the London underground system about the gap between the train and the platform. 'Mind the Gap' is wise counsel not only for London tube users, but also for the rest of us. Our lives have become fragmented and the gaps we thought were unimportant seem to be widening and taking over our lives.

For most of us, our lives are not as satisfying as we had hoped. We wake up, go to work, come home, and somewhere in there get to socialise, pay our bills, do our housework and go back to work again. And if we're lucky we have a number of healthy family relationships that give us joy.

But what about the other things in our lives?

What do we believe in, what gives us purpose, how do we deal with our pain? How do we cope when everything in our lives seems to be spinning out of control? What's happened to our relationships? Do we like who we have become? Why don't we feel satisfied? What's missing in our lives? Where do we fit? 'Mind the Gap' acknowledges these gaps in our lives and strives to help us bridge them.

How do I find out more?

A full description of 'Mind the Gap' can be found in the introductory Study Guide, which will accompany the DVD set when it's released.

Together the DVDs and Study Guide will form a valuable resource that can help you to introduce Christian principles to your unchurched friends.

What should I do?

It is not too late to invite your friends around for a meal and then watch the 'Mind the Gap' series on the Hope Channel. You have a choice of viewing time, as the programme will be transmitted twice each evening. Please check the timetable. Have enough copies of the Study Guide so that everyone can have a copy and you can discuss the topic together.

Alternatively, your pastor and LIFEdvelopment co-ordinator may be planning a programme at the church. Invitations can be sent out to friends in the community, inviting them to a social gathering at the church where refreshments are available and opportunity is given to watch the programme together on the big screen.

How do I get a satellite receiver?

If you would like more information on having the equipment installed, we will be happy to put you in touch with an installer who will give you up-to-date details of costs. In addition you may wish to purchase a 'Mind the Gap' resource pack, which will include the ten programmes plus a Study Guide. Send your orders to the address in the box.

Other resources are available for

**'Mind the Gap' Schedule
On the Hope Channel
Programmes start at 7 & 8pm GMT**

Date	Programme Title
Monday 7 February	FAITH – To Believe or not to Believe
Tuesday 8 February	BIBLE – Just Another Book?
Wednesday 9 February	PRAYER – Is There Anyone Out There?
Thursday 10 February	JESUS – Man – God – Myth?
Friday 11 February	JESUS – DEATH & RESURRECTION – Fact, Fiction, or Fantasy
Monday 14 February	JESUS – SECOND COMING – The Greatest Rescue?
Tuesday 15 February	THE HOLY SPIRIT – The Wind of Change
Wednesday 16 February	HUMAN NATURE – Is it beyond our control?
Thursday 17 February	HEALING – Turning Wounds Into Scars
Friday 18 February	COMMUNITY – Created for Community?

For further information, 'Mind the Gap' packs, extra copies of Study Guide, other LIFEdvelopment resources, details of Satellite Installers, write to:

**LIFEdvelopment.info Office,
Stanborough Park, Watford, Herts,
WD25 9JZ**

**Telephone: 01923 672251
Email: ask@lifedvelopment.info**

You can also find lots of information about LIFEdvelopment.info on the BUC website at: www.adventist.org.uk

the first two levels and more will become available during the next twelve to eighteen months – so watch this space.

Why are we doing all this?

LIFEdvelopment.info is Adventist evangelism for the 21st Century. We need to reach people with the everlasting Gospel before Jesus comes. The British Union, supported by the Conferences and Missions is seeking to meet the situation of 21st century society, where the secular, postmodern mind seems almost immune to Christianity. God has given us the privilege of having a part in finishing his work. Join us and let us work together in sharing the Light of the World with men and women across Great Britain and Ireland.

NEC Personal Ministries and Sabbath School training weekend
11-13 February

The Hayes Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire
Application forms are available from PM or SS leaders and local pastors or by phoning/writing/emailing the NEC PM department, rmorgan@necadventist.org.uk.

ABC BOOK SALES

January	
30 West Midlands	10am-2pm
February	
6 John Loughborough	10am-2pm
27 West Midlands	10am-2pm

Messenger

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Sunset

Sunset times are reproduced with permission from data supplied by the Science Research Council.

	Lon	Card	Nott	Edin	Belf
Jan 28	4.43	4.55	4.42	4.38	4.54
Feb 4	4.56	5.08	4.55	4.53	5.09
11	5.09	5.21	5.09	5.08	5.23
18	5.21	5.34	5.22	5.24	5.38

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