



Friendly bond & Collective vision



A welcome address by Bishop Humphrey

Mr. Per Ivan Johnsen, Regional Representative (Asia), Norwegian Mission Society (NMS) paid a visit to the Peshawar Diocese, from 5 -7 Oct, 2011.

The Rt. Revd. Humphrey S. Peters, along with the Diocese of Peshawar welcomed the distinguish guest. Mr. Johnsen went to see various projects and appreciated the outcome of those programmes and projects.

The Rt. Revd. Humphrey Peters in his welcome address to Mr. Johnsen, shed light on the purpose of his visit to Pakistan. He said that Peshawar Diocese is grateful to the NMS for their friendly bond and collective vision/mission to spread the Word of God.

The Bishop further informed that the Norwegian Church is also exploring possibilities of working together in other developmental projects as well.



Mr. Johnsen expressing his views

Mr. Johnsen in his speech thanked the Peshawar Diocese for their warm welcome and traditional hospitality. He said, "NMS and Peshawar Diocese are good partners."



Mr. Johnsen expressing his views

In his speech, comparison made by him was that, in Norway, which have a Social Democratic Government, provides basic facilities to its citizens, i.e. Education, Health, Social Security, Housing etc., as their basic human rights. Whereas, the Diocese of Peshawar, Church of Pakistan is also responsible for fulfilling the basic human and social needs of their communities, within their limited resources.

Mr. Johnsen also mentioned that, the NMS is looking forward to work together in the areas of common interest.



Rev. Ejaz Gill, vice president (clergy) praying for the occasion

After his speech, the clergy, and the Diocesan staff was served with Dinner, and both the honoured guest and the Bishop mingled with people, and had informal chat with the participants.

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Thanksgiving & Prayer Requests



Diocese of Peshawar is grateful to God for His blessings and Mercies and also to the Donors/Partners for their financial and prayer support.

Please Pray for;

1. The War on Terror is still going on, kindly pray for those who are determined to eradicate this menace for good.
2. The Diocesan Relief Work in Pateka, Balakot, Earthquake victims (2005), and for the Flood victims (2010) in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.
3. Now a days, Pakistan is facing the Dengue Virus threat, hundreds of people are suffering from this fatal epidemic, and many have died. Kindly pray for the victims, and eradication of the cause.
4. Pakistan, Minorities and Inter-faith harmony in the region.
5. Kindly pray for newly Bishop elect of Hyderabad, 'Revd. Kaleem John', and the Diocese of Hyderabad.
6. Pakistan, as terrorism and the War against it has intensified after the death of Osama Bin Laden.
7. Monsoon rains have caused floods in Sindh, and some parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province once again, hundreds of villages are destroyed, and people are in dire need of help.

Special Prayer requests;

Please remember Christian community of Parachinar, as their salaries have once again been stopped, and they facing scarcity of food commodities; and the prices are beyond their reach.

Intolerance in the curriculum

There have been several shocking incidents over the past week or so that go only to highlight the kind of intolerance we are facing in our society and the manner in which this is spreading. Worst of all the spirit of hatred has also seeped into classrooms, and is being used to poison the minds of children.

This process will of course lead to the emergence, even before our watching eyes, of yet another generation persuaded that it is acceptable to discriminate on the basis of beliefs or other factors, or that minority groups are inherently inferior to the majority – deserving no place in mainstream society.

Just a few days ago, 10 Ahmadi children, seven of them girls, were expelled from a school in the Hafizabad area, simply on the basis of their religious identity. The incident took place soon after preachers promoting anti-Ahmadism had visited the town and lashed out with familiar vitriol against a religious group that has been thrust out of the mainstream and then subjected to years of vicious discrimination.

The feeble plea by the principal of the private school, that he did not wish to turn away the children from the school doors but had no choice in the face of threats made by villagers, just goes to show how weak we have become.

No one has answered the question of the distraught father of three of the girls driven away from school who asks how his daughters will now receive an education. Beyond the representatives of the Ahmadi community in Rabwah and some human rights groups, no one has spoken out in their support.

The issue has not been discussed by furious media anchors, even though the Constitution of our land lays down in unequivocal terms that every citizen has a right to education and cannot be denied this under any circumstances.

Such silence is perhaps the most dangerous element of all. The streets and other public places have been left to bigots, such as those who have been on

the streets demanding the immediate release of Mumtaz Qadri, the man sentenced to death for the murder of Salmaan Taseer.

Precisely the same silence prevailed after yet another horrendous incident at a school a few weeks ago when an eighth-grade Christian girl was turned out of a POF-run school in the town of Havelian after making a minor spelling mistake in an Urdu paper.

Her teacher interpreted the mistake as an act of blasphemy, publicised the matter – which essentially revolved around one dot in a paragraph about a 'naat' – and as clerics staged protests the powerful POF management chose not only to expel the girl, but also to transfer her mother, a nurse at a hospital.

Such incidents have occurred elsewhere too. Ahmadi children have been punished in schools, their faith ridiculed and admission denied simply on the basis of their religious beliefs. Amidst all this, we talk of 'the silent majority'. But do we really know what people believe and think?

The provision that all citizens are equal needs to be turned into reality and not just a clause in a document that fewer and fewer people seem to be very bothered about.

How do we begin this? Schools are a good place to start. Government schools are perhaps the best, given the number of children attending them and the control the administration should have over them. Through curriculums and training for teachers, both children and those entrusted with the delicate task of educating them need to learn to think differently.

This is not an easy task of course. But it has been done elsewhere; Ireland, where Protestants and Catholics were deeply divided in the north for so many years, is one example where attempts towards greater harmony through schools have met with some success.

There are other examples in the world. We need to emulate them and move towards building a place where people are ready to speak out for what is right and refuse to allow extremist elements – who attempt to validate their intolerant ways by citing a distorted version of religion – to dictate how we live and what we do.

Church in the midst of Fundamentalism



A scenic view of the Hangu valley

Hangu is situated in the south of north-west Pakistan. It is about 40km away from Kohat. Hangu was a tehsil of Kohat, but in 1998 it was announced a district in Kohat Division. It is a beautiful city in southern districts of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Samana, a place for nature lovers, is also situated in Hangu district. The whole district is famous for its greenery. There are four mountains around Hangu namely, Wara Samana, Kata Kani, Pora Ghar and Shalmaz Pir. There are lots of natural springs in Hangu. Snowfall also occurs in winters.

Hangu is a small city of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. It has one civil hospital, two government high schools for boys and two government schools for girls. There is a Government Degree College for boys and girls as well. Numbers of private sector educational institutions are also contributing to promote the social sector educational ratio. Most of the people of this area are bangash and orakzai (both are Pashtun tribes).

There is a Police Training College (PTC) in Hangu, which is the second oldest training center in the Asia. Orakzai Agency headquarter is also situated in Hangu.



Destruction caused by the blast in Hangu bazar

On Aug 22, 2008, at least 16 terrorists (including 2 Chechens) were killed by the

Pakistani security forces in a skirmish at Hangu. The terrorists belonged to Darra Adamkhel, and their group included suicide bombers. The Hangu police also arrested two Afghan terrorists in Thall area and seized two Kalashnikovs, one rocket-launcher and one pistol from them.

On 10 December 2010, a suicide bomber struck and at least 11 persons were killed and 22 others were injured. The blast was carried out near an under-construction hospital.

On March 24, 2011, a suicide bomber blew himself up just outside a police station killing 5 people immediately and injuring another 25. The target appears to have been the police station itself. However, fool-proof security outside the police station made it difficult for the attacker to enter the compound and encouraged him to blow himself up while approaching the gate. Had the security personnel not demonstrated such bravery, the damage could have been much higher.



Bishop Humphrey with the Christians of Hangu

The Peshawar Diocese has an active sub-Parish in Hangu, administratively it comes under the Kohat Parish, and is run under the supervision of Revd. Shahzad Murad, the Priest In-charge.

There are about 60 Christian families in Hangu, living side by side with the Muslim majority. The Christians living in Hangu are poor and are involved in menial jobs, mostly in Police Training College, and in the Cantonment.

As the town of Hangu, and its surrounding areas are vulnerable to the Taliban's activities, the Christians of Hangu also feel highly insecure. In March 2011, in a suicide bomber attack, the houses of Christians were damaged, and a member of the Christian community was killed, whereas, two others were seriously injured.



Map indicating Hangu and its neighbourhood

But the Hangu Christians hold a strong faith, and worship the almighty God whole heartedly.

They perform their duties with sincerity, especially in a Muslim majority environment; they are a great witness of Lord Jesus Christ.

At the moment, the Christians of Hangu have no Church to go to, thus they worship in a rented house. The Bishop during his recent visit to Hangu felt dire need for a Church building.

And for this purpose a piece of Land has been acquired for the Church building.



Worship Service in a rented house, Hangu

Bishop Humphrey and the Diocese of Peshawar are determined to erect a Church building. For this purpose, the local congregation, and the Diocese of Peshawar have started a fund raising campaign.

It is an uphill task, which cannot be achieved without the help of our friends, and partners. We strongly believe that God's help is only a prayer away. And the power behind us is far greater than the task ahead.



Youth Activity
A Silent Revolution



Welcome address by the Bishop

The Youth Desk of the Peshawar Diocese has launched a 'Career Counseling Programme' for the young Christian students. It provides guidelines to the young students, how to choose respective subjects for their planned future profession or career.

It has been over a decade now that a silent Educational revolution is in progress among the young Christian students, thus, a large number of students have started reaching the higher educational levels. Since their parents are mostly uneducated, or less educated, so they lack proper guidance from their parents. Keeping in view the situation, the Diocesan Youth Desk has taken the initiative to provide a proper 'Career Counseling Programme'.



Students at the Programme

This year, the 'Career Counseling Programme' was organized on 29 September 2011, at the Diocesan Centre, Peshawar with the collaboration of Pakistan Fellowship of Evangelical Students (PFES). About 150 young students from various Christian schools and colleges attended this programme, and received proper guideline for their future studies, regarding their Career.

The Rt. Revd. Humphrey S. Peters, in his inspiring opening address quoted references from the Holy Bible, and advised the youngsters to work hard to achieve their goals in life, as their personal development will contribute to the country's development. "Live a life in the fear of God, and the Fear of God is the beginning of knowledge", he further added.



Bishop Humphrey with the Resource Persons

The young experts and professionals from various fields were invited as speakers/facilitators to inspire and motivate the youth to come forward and, to work hard to achieve their set targets in life.



Dr. Khushbakht Peters talking to the participants

The following young experts from various field were invited as resource persons:
Dr. Khusbakht Peters (Medical), Mr. Ravish Jabbar (Engineering), Mrs. Noureen Altaf (Christian Ministries), Mr. Zia Pervez (Teaching), Mr. Augustine Jacob (Sales and Marketing), Miss Sarah Asghar (Computer Sciences), Miss Farah Emmanuel (Law), Mr. Bakhtbuland Peters (Business & Accounting). All the experts through their lectures, and power-point presentations, equipped the youth, how to pick subjects, as per their planned career.

The Diocesan Youth Officer, Mr. Insar Gohar in his concluding remarks said that we encourage the students to study hard for whatever field/career they have chosen for their future. "Thus, dedication, sincerity and honesty are the key to success. As the Word of God says, "If you are honest in less, God will make you in charge of many things." He added.



The Bishop among the participants

In the end, the organizers thanked all the participants for making this programme a success. The participants also applauded for the Speakers/Facilitators, the Peshawar Diocese and the PFES for their kind support.



Students from various educational institutions

The administrators of different schools asked the Diocesan Youth Desk to organize this kind of programmes more often, and if possible, organize these activities in their own schools/colleges, where a large number of students could be reached and inspired.

The programme ended with the closing remarks and prayer by the Archdeacon S. P. Asghar, who appreciated this wonderful effort of the Diocesan Youth Desk and PFES. He said that we need to organize this kind of activities on regular basis. And he blessed both the participants and the organizers.

Confirmation Service in All Saints Church, Peshawar
200 youngsters ready to Serve



A view of All Saints' Church

The All Saints' Church, of Peshawar Diocese is a famous historical landmark of the old city of Peshawar. It was built in 1883, and has a unique architectural design. It looks like a mosque from the outside, and a Cross erected on top of the building bears a unique witness. The All Saints Parish is one of the largest in terms of membership.

On, October 2, 2011, in a graceful Service, held at All Saints' Church, the Rt. Revd. Humphrey S. Peters blessed and confirmed 200 youngsters as full fledge members of the Congregation.

The Service started with a procession entering into the church, and the candidates who were about to be confirmed were ahead, followed by clergy and the Bishop. The members of the congregation threw flowers on the Procession, and sung Psalm 24, along with the choir. It was a beautiful sight.



Confirmation Service in progress

The Confirmation Service started with prayer led by Revd. Altaf Gohar. Then, the Priest In-charge, Revd. Ijaz Gill presented the candidates to the Bishop for Confirmation. The Bishop administered Oath to the candidates, and asked them a few questions, which were answered by them. During the service, a special sermon about Confirmation was delivered by the Archdeacon S. P. Asghar.

He quoted the verse (Acts 1:8), i.e. *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* He further said, "You are prepared today to present your lives to Lord Jesus Christ, and will be His witness in Peshawar, and all over the world."

After the Sermon, Bishop Humphrey led the Confirmation ceremony and blessed the Candidates one by one, and welcomed them to join the Holy Communion as confirmed members of the Church. The Bishop encouraged them to grow in faith and maturity as they are taught the foundations of Christian belief and life.



Bishop Humphrey blessing the youth

After the Service, the parents, parish committee members, and the congregation congratulated and garlanded the newly confirmed members. Later, a fellowship dinner, organized by the Parish Committee of the All Saints' Church was served for all the participants. There was Love, Peace and Joy in the air. Halleluiah!

Junior Church Activity
Developing Teaching Skills



Activities in progress

October 7, 2011: The Diocesan Junior Church Desk, with the collaboration of 'Pakistan Sunday School Ministry', Guranwala, organized a Sunday schools "Teachers' Training Programme".

About 40 Sunday schools teachers from various churches/denominations, and schools participated in this programme, and received the 'Flannel graph Training'.



Participants of the workshop

The programme started with prayer by Revd. Altaf Gohar, the regional coordinator, Pakistan Sunday school ministry, followed by a devotional thought, shared by Mr. Insar Gohar, the Diocesan Youth Officer. He quoted the versus (1-Timothy 3:1-5), he said that it is our responsibility as the Sunday schools teachers to prepare the children for the Kingdom of God.

Mrs. Noureen Altaf, the Junior Church Coordinator briefed about aims and objectives of the training course. Mr. Naeem Younas, representative of the Pakistan Sunday schools ministry, led the 'Training Course'. He taught the participants, how to use the flannel graph while teaching. He involved the participants through practical work, and asked them to prepare stories/lessons for teaching. The participants in response, prepared different lessons, activities, and stories by using the Flannel graph pictures.

The Rt. Revd. Humphrey S. Peters, Bishop of Peshawar was invited as the chief guest. In his speech, he encouraged the Sunday school teachers, and emphasized on strengthening the faith of the children. "It is a good way to teach the children through stories and songs, and through other interesting activities as well", he further advised.

The Bishop thanked the Pakistan Sunday School Ministry for organizing such a beneficial programme. He also appreciated the efforts of the Diocesan Junior Church Desk for promoting the Sunday school ministry.

The programme ended with a prayer by Mrs. Reena Patrick, the Diocesan Women Coordinator.

Faith Friends celebrate Eid



Various faith leaders in Eid Party

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Faith Friends and the Diocese of Peshawar never miss a chance to promote religious harmony.

Pakistan Council of World Religions (PCWR)/Faith Friends invited all the religious leaders, and friends to celebrate Eid festival.

On Christmas, the Christian community members arranged a party for the Muslim majority, members of the Hindu, and Sikh communities were also among the invitees.

These gestures promote friendship at personal and at the organizational levels as well. Thus, people respect each other's religious beliefs.



Participants of the programme

Recently, on September 21, 2011, the Faith Friends organized an Eid Milan Party, held at the famous Aquaf Hall, Peshawar. People from all walks of life, and religious leaders from all the major faiths of the province participated to celebrate Eid. Minority members of the Provincial Assembly, i.e. Prince Javed, Asif Bhatti, and Kishore Kumar were especially invited to attend this function.

The Rt. Revd. Humphrey S. Peters send his greetings to the Muslim Community through his special representative, i.e. the very Revd. S. P. Asghar, Archdeacon, DoP. At this occasion, Namroz Khan, Minister for Aquaf, Religions and Minority Affairs was the chief guest.

Whereas, Qari Roohullah Madni, Revd. Joseph John, Mr. Haroon Sarb Diyal and Mr. Muazam Julion participated in the programme as representatives of the Faith Friends, Pakistan.



Session in progress

Similarly, the Faith Friends also organized an Eid Milan Party on Sep, 17, 2011, at the University Guest House Peshawar.



Revd. Titus congratulating the participants

The Christian community was represented by the Revd. Joseph John, Revd. S. P. Asghar, Revd. Tanzeel Zafar. The Revd. Dr. Titus Presler, Principal, Edwardes College, Peshawar was especially invited to the Eid Milan Party.



Participants in informal chat

It is a good and encouraging sign that various religious festivals are celebrated by faith friends, which is a source of inspiration for the promotion of religious tolerance. This in turn leads to celebrate and accept each other on the grounds of similarities, rather than alienating each other on religious differences.

Promoting Religious Harmony through Essay writing



Revd. Joseph John presenting certificates

This summer, the 'Faith Friends' organized an 'Essay Writing Competition' for the college/university students, only. The main objective of this exercise was to promote, and create a culture of religious harmony, and tolerance. Thus the topic of the Essay writing was "Peace: A key to Social and Economic Development." A large number of students from Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Sikh communities participated in this competition and submitted their essays to relevant authorities. The venue of this programme was University of Peshawar.



Participants from various faith communities

The Revd. Joseph John of the Peshawar Diocese was chosen to be the 'Examiner' of the essay competition. He was also honoured to distribute Certificates to the top position holders.



Meeting of the board for essay writing

At this occasion, Prof. Dr. Azmat Hayat Khan, the Vice Chancellor, University of Peshawar was the chief guest. In his address, he appreciated the efforts of the 'Faith Friends' to promote peace. He also appreciated the participation of the university students in this competition.