

Caught in a revolution: Tripoli priest Hamdy Sedky Daoud

by [Amy Frykholm](#) in the [November 1, 2011](#) issue



Hamdy Sedky Daoud is a priest at the Anglican Church of Christ the King in Tripoli. A native of Egypt, he studied at the Evangelical Presbyterian Seminary in Cairo and has a diploma from Chichester Theological College in England. During the uprising against Muammar Qaddafi, Daoud tried to address issues of power in Libya and the feelings of hopelessness and helplessness that affected his congregation, most of them foreigners. Daoud was reached by e-mail.

How long you have been at Christ the King and what are your ministries there?

I have been at the church since March 2008, and I have been the priest in charge for three years. I serve a multinational congregation—we have Indians, Pakistanis, Nigerians and Egyptians worshiping with us. We also had many Westerners before the uprising.

We used to have two main English services on Friday and Sunday every week. On Friday after the 10:30 a.m. service we have had an Asian fellowship and worship time, conducted by our Indian priest, Father Vasihar Ehen Baskaran, and an African fellowship conducted by our Nigerian lay ministers. On Friday evening we used to have an Arabic worship service for Egyptians, Syrians and Lebanese, which I conducted. During the week we used to have Bible studies and prayer meetings in English and in Arabic.

It was lovely to see many nationalities in the church; it is a small picture of the church in heaven! Now we have only English and Arabic services, and with reduced numbers.

What happened to your congregation during the civil war?

Many of our foreign members went home. Some people lost their jobs because many companies, schools and embassies closed down. I praise God for those who stayed with us during the conflict. I continued to make pastoral visits, and, in addition to the lectionary, I preached from the epistle to the Hebrews. I found this epistle very relevant and encouraging for those who live and suffer in what to them is a strange land.

What have been the most difficult moments during the conflict?

One was when a Nigerian girl from church came to me asking for money to help her travel to Italy by ship. She told me that this was her last hope. I also knew a Nigerian man who had a bullet in his shoulder and was very afraid to go to the hospital lest he be accused of supporting the government. He endured the bullet in his shoulder for three weeks. Finally, he had it removed in the hospital with the help of the Indian nurses from our church.

Amid the violence, people were unable to come to church because of their fear or lack of transportation and fuel, and they had no Internet for communications. But God was always inspiring us through his word. He gave me the relevant words for preaching. He has given us the strength to face our testing time and uncertainties with faith and hope.

The revolution in Egypt that ousted President Mubarak displayed a lot of cooperation between Christians and Muslims. Has it been similar in Libya?

Yes. We as Christian leaders showed our fellow Libyans our love and solidarity by praying for them continually. We urged our people to stay and do their best at their work, especially doctors, nurses and teachers. Nobody asked us to close our churches or evacuate. We should appreciate our Libyan brothers and thank God for their tolerance of our different faith during their difficult situation.

What do you see in the future for Christian-Muslim relations?

We are very keen to continue our Christian-Muslim dialogue. We believe that dialogue narrows the gap between people of different faiths. We also trust that dialogue should work for the development of people and help provide for social needs.

What do you envision for the future of Libya? How do you see the role of Christians?

Muslims in Libya have always been moderates, and I am expecting that to continue. Libya was the first Arabic Islamic country to initiate interfaith dialogue, and I pray that it will continue to be a very good example to the Islamic world.

I thank all the saints of Christ who lifted us up with prayers before God's mercy seat. We have been encouraged every day to come to the Way, Christ, and we have found his mercy for forgiveness and grace for survival.