

Bible Teacher Issues “Call for Conversation” To Arafat

An American Bible teacher recently preached the gospel to Yasser Arafat—the second time R.T. Kendall witnessed to the Palestinian leader in 18 months. On Nov. 20, Kendall met with the 74-year-old head of the Palestinian Liberation Organization at Arafat’s compound in the West Bank town of Ramallah.

“Rais [the Arabic word for president], there is something I want you to think about,” Kendall, minister at famed Westminster Chapel in London for 25 years until his retirement in 2002, recalled telling Arafat. “It has been revealed to me that Jesus Christ is very important to you.” Kendall said Arafat replied: “Very, very important.”

Kendall, who began praying for Arafat daily in 1982 after hearing evangelist Arthur Blessitt talk about his visit with the Palestinian president, said he knew Arafat had dreams about Jesus. Arafat told Kendall he had a dream in 2002, when the Israelis took over his compound. “On the third day of the siege ... a lamb led me to Bethlehem,” Kendall recounted Arafat saying. “There I saw the Virgin Mary holding Jesus. I kissed Jesus. When I woke up I was so moved that I ordered a lamb to be slaughtered and taken to the priests at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem for them to have a feast.”

Kendall then said: “I want you to confess that Jesus actually died on the cross for your sins. Not that He was delivered from the cross, but that He actually died.” However, a translator objected to his “call for conversion.” “But Arafat

lifted his hand to the translator to suggest that it was all right for me to continue," Kendall said.

After he explained to Arafat the benefits of becoming a Christian, Kendall noted that the translator objected again. Later, Kendall asked Arafat: "Will you do me a favor? Will you consider this?" Arafat said that he would. Kendall, who first shared the gospel with Arafat in July 2002, told Charisma he prayed for Arafat and gave him a copy of his book Total Forgiveness.

"Whether I did any good on my two visits to this torn, frail but unusual leader, I don't know," said Kendall, whose meetings with Arafat were arranged by the Rev. Andrew White, archbishop of Canterbury's envoy to the Middle East. "I only know I never tried so hard in all my life to lead a person to Jesus Christ."

Eric Tiansay