

Bible Lands

Winter 2014/15

Magazine of the Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association

www.jmecca.org.uk



Jerusalem



Egypt & North Africa



Cyprus & the Gulf



Iran



THE GAZA STORY – pages 3-5

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THE JERUSALEM AND THE MIDDLE EAST CHURCH ASSOCIATION

(JMECA)

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The site has information for each of the four Dioceses with links to the websites of each one and regular updates of Middle East news.

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Al Ahli Hospital Gaza

'A beacon of light'



"In all the tragic events of the fifty day conflict, with its tremendous cost in human lives and suffering Al Ahli hospital stood tall as a beacon of light letting the people of Gaza know it was and is there for them at all times and especially and unflinchingly in the worst times."

"Jesus the servant came to serve and not to be served and that is exactly what you do and especially during this conflict. This is the work of God in Christ which he is doing through you and our partners to bring healing."

"Many children have been left without parents including the children of a young Ahli nurse who died when protecting her children, who have minor injuries. They will now be raised by their grandmother, the family's sole survivor."



Bishop Suheil

"Gifts received from members and friends of this association now exceed £72,000 and have been forwarded to the bishop for the hospital."

Shirley Eason, Administrator JMECA



"The greatest good is to do the best things in the worst times."



Al-Ahli Hospital Gaza

Bishop's Appeal & Response

This Anglican foundation in Gaza City which provided critical healthcare during the recent fighting is facing a future treating severe injuries and trauma.

In a message to the Anglican Communion, Bishop in Jerusalem the Rt Revd Suheil Dawani said serving the immediate needs of the community in Gaza "remained a high priority" for Al Ahli Arab Hospital and its staff.

The bishop was writing primarily to thank the Communion for the "outpouring of support from our development partners, churches and individuals" after a humanitarian appeal for Al-Ahli Hospital on July 15th.

Thanks to support from the Anglican community worldwide and other supporters, Al-Ahli was one of the hospitals able to continue to treat men, women and children injured during the two months of violence that killed 1,663 Palestinian and 67 Israeli civilians and soldiers.

Once described as a 'haven of peace' in the middle of one of the world's most troubled places, the hospital has become a key centre for those impacted by the horrors of war.

"As so many buildings and homes in Gaza have been destroyed, many people still seek shelter and food for themselves and their families. With water and sanitation infrastructure damaged in many places, Al-Ahli is also working hard to help contain the spread of communicable diseases and other hazards of polluted water and inadequate hygiene facilities."

Half of all the hospitals there were damaged or destroyed in the violence, Al-Ahli was not one of them, but it did lose staff. One of the hospital's nurses, Nivine Attar, was killed at home after her night shift at the hospital. She died on Sunday 10th August as she tried to protect her two daughters – aged 2½ years and six months – during a bombardment of the area around her home. The girls are now orphans.

In the latest update from the hospital, it recorded receiving 4,300 patients; treating 45 patients a day for burns (50% of those were children) and 120 people per day (again mainly children) were affected by the lack of sanitation, water, and food. Children in particular were suffering from chest infections, rashes and scabies.

Bishop Dawani said, the terrible news coming out of Israel/Palestine, Iraq and Syria could cause people to lose hope but he went on, "When we look more carefully at our communities – our schools,



Hospital
Director
Suhaila Tarazi

hospitals and other places of healing, as well as places of worship – we see promising signs everywhere of the Spirit moving hearts with love to help others."

Humanitarian Appeal for Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza

On 15 July, as the bombardment in Gaza intensified, the Diocese of Jerusalem issued a humanitarian appeal for Al-Ahli Hospital, where staff maintain an around-the-clock presence, receiving wounded people and providing them with critical medical care.

Like other hospitals in Gaza, Al-Ahli Hospital is experiencing shortages in medicine, fuel for electrical generators, food for patients and their families, and food parcels for many in the community seeking help.

The airstrikes have also caused structural damage to the hospital, including to its ventilation system in the operating theatre and the emergency room. In addition, windows have been broken in many buildings, as well as in the new diagnostic centre

The Bishop says: "In the last few weeks, our partners from all over the world have answered our call, and we still hope to achieve our goal of raising just over \$500,000 to help Al-Ahli Hospital treat victims of one of the worst conflicts in Gaza's history. While it is hoped that a ceasefire will end the violence, an end to the fighting will not bring an immediate end to the suffering in Gaza or to patients at Al-Ahli who are severely wounded or have lost their families. Al-Ahli is also working hard to help contain the spread of communicable diseases and other hazards of polluted water and inadequate hygiene facilities. As they continue their work, Al-Ahli Hospital is entirely grateful to partners from all over the world who have answered the call for assistance"

Members and friends
of this association have
contributed £72,000

www.jmecca.org.uk open
for further donations

Bishop Suheil's visit following the war

*Reported by Canon John Organ,
Chaplain to the Bishop, September 2014*

Bishop Suheil visited Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza and met with staff and patients. Hospital Director Suhaila Tarazi briefed the Bishop on what had transpired during the war and on the situation now, since the ceasefire.

Working around the clock and confronted with challenges ranging from lack of electricity to flying shrapnel, the hospital won the hearts of the Gazan people once again, by providing services when other agencies closed because of the dangers.

Doctors introduced patients to Bishop Suheil and were proud to show how exceptional medical care has led to healing and wholeness.

Patients expressed tremendous gratitude for the hospital's care and warmth, with many expressing how their religion (almost all patients are Muslim being treated in a Christian hospital) was never an issue but indeed a sign of our shared common humanity, recognising that we are all children of God. Their comments affirmed Bishop Suheil's conviction that through the institutions of the Diocese, the Gospel is being proclaimed through compassionate care.

Two of the youngest patients, a brother and sister, who were rescued from under the rubble of their destroyed home and brought to the hospital, displayed a playfulness as they walked the campus grounds, which contrasted greatly with their first week at the hospital when they were traumatized and afraid.

Speaking at a training day in the hospital for professionals providing psychosocial support, Bishop Suheil affirmed their crucial role in helping those impacted by trauma and loss, and the importance of their services in helping these people find meaning again in their lives following the life-changing experiences that they had witnessed during the war.

The hospital was only lightly damaged during the conflict. Shrapnel had penetrated the wall of a ward of the operating theatre, but fortunately, no patients were injured and were quickly moved to another ward. A water line and some steam pipes were also damaged but the hospital's work continued despite these setbacks.

The immediate financial support received from donors such as The McCabe Educational Trust, kept fuel, medicines, and essential supplies flowing enabling the hospital to function efficiently right through the conflict, treating the injured and offering psychosocial support in an impressive and efficient manner.

The many hundreds of families seeking food, water, and safety in the hospital compound were all met graciously and with kindness. We are proud of the way the Ahli staff bring together medical skill and compassionate concern.

Bishop Suheil also visited those areas of Gaza worst affected by the air strikes and artillery. Large apartment



buildings have been reduced to rubble, along with other properties. Standing beside the damaged homes, the sense of loss is palpable.

Tragically, it has been reported that sixty extended

families were completely lost during the conflict and almost every family on the strip has suffered directly.

Many children have been left without their parents, including the children of a young nurse of Ahli, who died when her house was hit. Her two children survived with minor injuries. They will now be raised by their grandmother, the family's sole survivor.

Gazans have known much conflict in recent years, but when discussing their experiences of this latest war, many told Bishop Suheil that this conflict was the worst. They could not believe the relentless, and seemingly indiscriminate bombing, which left them feeling helpless, with no place to find safety.

And yet, while unsure of the future, there is, however faint, a hope that Israel and Palestine will find a way to live together. Our prayer is for peace, justice, and a meaningful life for both peoples.

Signs of hope are everywhere. We watched a family renovating their home and trying to move forward. A local restaurateur was setting up an area of the beach as an outdoor cafe in the hope that Gazans would once again enjoy some sense of normality and recreation.

In all of the tragic events of the fifty day conflict, with its tremendous cost in human lives and suffering, Al Ahli Hospital stood tall as a beacon of light letting the people of Gaza know it was and is there for them at all times, and especially and unflinchingly during the worst times.

At the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, in St. Phillip's Church, located on the hospital grounds, Bishop Suheil spoke of the servanthood of Jesus, who came to serve and not to be served. The Bishop said to the hospital staff gathered, that this is exactly what they did, and especially during the conflict.

They gave their all for those needing their care. This, he said, is the work of God in Christ, who through you, and our helping partners, extends healing to others.

Bishop Suheil prayed for the staff, patients, and all the people of Gaza, that there would be lasting peace with justice.

The hospital's work and our ongoing support of this work continues.

Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf

www.cypgulf.org



Bishop Michael Lewis explains that the Diocese of Cyprus & the Gulf covers Oman, the Yemen, the seven United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq and the whole of Cyprus. "In every part of the diocese, except in Cyprus and Iraq, the congregations are largely expatriate, made up of Christians from Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and the African continent. Many do not come from an Anglican

background but find a welcome church home in our Anglican congregations. Through some intricate and special relationships, the Diocese is often responsible for churches and congregations which are not Anglican, some of which are still working out their relationships to the Bishop and Synod. Worship is largely in English but in some locations we have liturgy in Arabic, Syriac-Aramaic, Tamil and Urdu. Bishop Azad Marshall of Iran has a particular ministry to the Urdu-speaking congregations within our diocese."



Staff Changes

The Bishop in Cyprus and the Gulf, the Rt Revd Michael Lewis, has announced the following changes to the diocesan staff:

The Venerable Bill Schwartz

He will serve full-time as Archdeacon in the Gulf. His present principal post as Senior Chaplain, The Epiphany, Doha, Qatar is currently being advertised and his successor sought.

Bill and Edith will continue to live in Doha as he ministers across his archdeaconry.

The Reverend John Chapman

Parish priest at St Martin Sharjah in the Parish and Chaplaincy of Dubai with Sharjah and the Northern Emirates, has resigned his post and will be licensed in the autumn as Chaplain of the Anglican church of St George, Barcelona, Spain, in the Diocese of Gibraltar in Europe.

Mr Harry Ching

He is to be Reader and Lay Chaplain to the congregation of St Mark Famagusta, Cyprus. Educated at Cheltenham College and the University of Kent, Harry was Chaplaincy Assistant at King's College London and subsequently Youth Officer at St John's Cathedral in Hong Kong. He is scheduled to complete his Master's programme at Ming Hua Theological College, Hong Kong. He will work initially

under the local supervision of Canon Paul Maybury within the parish and chaplaincy of Ammochostos, South East Cyprus.

The Reverend T. Velvet John

He is to be Chaplain of Christ Church Aden and Director of the Ras Morbat Clinic. Velvet, originating from the Diocese of South Kerala in the Church of South India, is currently Dean of Certificate, Graduate, and Postgraduate Studies for TAFTEE (The Association for Theological Education by Extension) and also Associate Pastor of St James, Bangalore, and an executive member of the Bangalore Medical Ethics Committee. He is married to the Revd J Vijaya John and they have two adult children. They expect to arrive in Yemen in November and the bishop plans to license them in December.



Bishop Michael views the turmoil

Cyprus and the Gulf Bishop Michael Lewis

***“There is such heaviness,
such unremitting sorrow in my heart.”***

Romans chap 9

There are four dioceses in our Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. Between us we cover a region where at this moment anguish is acute. Not every country is in turmoil, but we’re certainly full of heaviness and sorrow and anguish for those that are.

In Egypt an inept and partial Muslim-Brotherhood government squandered its chances, and we hold our breath to see how the military strongman who swept it away intends to rule. Frankly it looks ominous. Somalia remains as weak a state as you could imagine, and the vicious Al Shebab terrorise everyone who baulks at their puritan Sunni fundamentalism. Libya, violently freed from the Gaddafis, now seems to be on the verge of being split and enslaved by militias with aims unclear apart from grabbing ports and oil. On Iran, the jury is out. Under a new president is it finally taking steps in from the cold, or, under its more powerful supreme religious leader, is it bluffing? Meanwhile in that country the active harassment of Christians, Anglicans among them, amounts to state persecution – a big word, and not one that we like to use so readily as some do. Syria, a nation of mostly gentle, cultured people, is going through the most prolonged agony, and now it is years, not months. A much feared dynasty isn’t giving up easily, and its opponents turn out to be a mixture of the reasonably well intentioned and the positively dangerous and fanatical, and, of those last, many are not Syrians. Most topically, what’s happening in Gaza – a pathetically unequal and unconscionable conflict in which ordinary non-combatants are apparently calculated to be tolerable collateral in the pursuit of war aims – is only part of a willful humiliation of the Palestinian people and a shocking neglect of hard-headed, adult, sustained diplomacy.

All these are in our wider province. In my own diocese, the Yemen drifts in and out of the news as the years roll on: a dictator gone, but not really gone; and three separate insurgencies for the few good politicians and soldiers to contain, let alone disperse. And lastly and so painfully Iraq, where the stated ambition of the ultra-extremists of IS seeking a restored Sunni Caliphate far harsher, far more frightening, far more blinkered and absolute, and in fact more deeply unIslamic, than anything in Haroun al Rashid and the Thousand and One Nights, never mind the last actual Caliphate, the Ottoman Empire. In our region at this time Christians aren’t the aggressors. At this time, it’s some of those who profess to follow one of two other great monotheistic world religions who are at the forefront of terrorising and killing.



When I visit Baghdad I almost always call on a Shi’a Muslim Grand Ayatollah. He’s about my age, 61 or so, but looks at least twenty-five years older, mainly because under Saddam Hussein his body was revoltingly tortured. Now, with the Shi’a in the ascendant in Iraq for eleven years, you could imagine he’d be exultant at a redressing of the balance of power. But far from it! He could speak verbatim St Paul’s words. “I tell you the truth. It’s no lie. I swear by my conscience. There’s such heaviness, such unremitting sorrow, in my heart – for my co-religionists who are Sunni Muslims but really for all Muslims, Shi’a too; and for all believers, Muslims and Christians and Jews, who make free with ‘religion’ and ‘God’ but miss the point; who get him wrong; who traduce his nature and his will.”

In some places Christians are specially singled out, but mostly they take their place among the poor of the land, Muslims and Christians and Jews, who long and sigh for peace. But of course at other times, too many times, Christians also have killed and terrorized, have been puritans and fanatics and absolutists. Whenever and wherever the point is missed, whenever and wherever religion is perverted, God is traduced: his will and his nature traduced. Our hearts should be heavy and sorrowful.”

*Edited from a sermon preached by
Bishop Michael in August.*

Canon Andrew White Leaves Baghdad

Canon Andrew White, the self-styled ‘Vicar of Baghdad’, has left the city and does not see an imminent return likely. He reveals that ‘my dear friend the Archbishop of Canterbury’ has told him to leave. ‘My profile is too high, I am British, I am very pro-Israel which would place me at incredibly high risk’, he states. He is sad to leave but says the Archbishop has made the right decision.

(Church Times, Oct 10th)

Retreat House, Katafiyio

www.cypgulf.org/retreats



Question: Who lives in a house like this?

Answer: No one, but yet, lots of people!

This house is Katafiyio, a restored village house in Kapedes in the foothills of the Machairas Mountains in Cyprus. The house has all the character it had when it was originally built in the mid-1800s but now has modern facilities. No one lives in the house permanently. It belongs to the Anglican Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf and it is their Retreat House and operates under the leadership of Maggie Le-Roy, the Retreats Facilitator.

The name 'Katafiyio' means 'Place of Refuge', and that is what this place is intended to be, a place of safety, of rest, where people can have time to reflect and pray and ponder and be renewed and refreshed. People use the house for day conferences/retreats and some stay anything from a few days up to a fortnight. To judge by comments made by guests as they leave Katafiyio, it is living up to its name.

All kinds of people come to Katafiyio:

- There have been people working with Christian and aid organisations around the Middle East who appreciate time away from the tensions of work and

local politics;

- clergy who come for a time of refreshment, perhaps before or after a meeting in Cyprus;
- individuals and couples from Cyprus, the UK and Europe who come for guided retreats as they seek God's continuing purpose for their lives;
- individuals who come on self-guided retreats which may involve long times of prayer or a combination of prayer and relaxation;
- Church and mission leaders come either for retreat or for planning days; individuals or couples come for counselling, etc.

The house is roughly the same distance from Nicosia and from Larnaca. People from Cyprus can travel easily by car or bus. From further afield visitors can be picked up at the airport or use a hired car which allows a bit of local exploration during free time.

Hastings McIntyre, Caretaker, Katafiyio



Father Sean Semple ... supported by JMECA

Fr Sean Semple M.Th; B.Soc.Sci is currently the Associate Priest of St Helena's Anglican Church, Larnaca, Cyprus; and a registered Advanced Level Pastoral Therapist with the South African Association of Pastoral Workers. He writes appreciatively of support from JMECA.

I left school in Durban, South Africa, aspiring to be a clinical psychologist. Towards the end of my undergraduate studies I had a growing sense of call to ordained ministry, and instead of pursuing post-graduate psychology I read theology and was accepted into ministerial formation.

A decade of parochial ministry developed my pastoral skills but also highlighted how limited a pastor can be in ministering to the brokenness of parishioners. It is unethical to work beyond one's training or competence and I was frequently presented with pastoral challenges in which prayer and presence were essential but not always sufficient interventions. Clearly, the clergy can and should refer some pastoral situations to mental health professionals, but in practice such referrals are impeded by concerns that the psychologist or psychiatrist's worldview will

be critical of Christianity or that such professionals will have limited insight into a life of discipleship (this more so in the case when clergy are referred for counselling).

Also highlighted during these years was the cost of not assessing ordinands' intellectual capabilities, personality features or resilience factors during the discernment process. There were clear instances of individuals who after ordination faced severe personal challenges in ministry that could have been identified at an earlier stage through psychometric assessment.

After being appointed and working as the Bishop of Natal's diocesan pastoral consultant, I was convinced of the need to have a "both-and" rather than "either-or" approach to psychology and Christian ministry. Acting on this conviction and having limited educational opportunities in South Africa, I enrolled in a M.Sc. (Clinical Psychology) degree at the University of Nicosia in Cyprus. These studies have been kindly supported by JMECA and the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf. In 2015 I hope to return to stipendiary ministry as a priest who is also a psychologist; as someone who can employ psychological insights and modalities within a Christian framework; as a more effective pastor and resource to the diocese in which I am appointed.

Diocese of Jerusalem



The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, a diocese of the worldwide Anglican Communion, extends over five countries, including Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Israel, within the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. There are 27 parishes that minister to the needs of their communities, centered on the

Cathedral Church of St. George the Martyr, in Jerusalem. The diocese supports 35 institutions, which include hospitals, clinics, kindergartens and schools, vocational training programmes, as well as institutions for the deaf, the disabled and the elderly, reaching out to interfaith neighbours in mutual respect and cooperation.



St George's Towards World School

International Baccalaureate to be established – a model for others?

Academic economists and international development agencies state that an educated population is essential for economic growth and, more generally, for a higher quality of life. Much progress has been made in improving the quality of education in Palestine.

As an active member in the national education sector, the Diocese of Jerusalem has identified the development of schools as one of the top priorities, fully aware that the children of today are the nation's men and women of tomorrow. Therefore the Bishop, together with the schools management committees, have agreed to establish an International Baccalaureate (IB) Programme at the Diocesan schools starting with the Saint George's School in Jerusalem as a pilot so as to extend the programme across the 20 schools of the Diocese within the next few years.

Establishing IB programme at Saint George's School will create an environment that encourages children to enroll and complete quality education, through the provision of more interactive teaching, and implementing recreational activities that encourages creativity and acquirement of life skills. The programme offers a comprehensive curriculum and gives students a solid base in all areas of knowledge.

The IB aims to develop enquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

IB students become active learners. All courses encourage students to understand how they learn, how they connect learning, and how they apply learning.

The IB program is essential to raise and upgrade

(Continued overleaf) ►



A recent Graduation Day

the education standards at the Diocesan schools to that of the International schools and this will increase the opportunities for our children to find the highest standard universities which at the end will ensure graduates who are capable of competing for the best jobs.

There are special requirements that a school must meet to be eligible for IB accreditation. These include the standard of the school facilities, the classrooms' equipment, the teaching tools, curriculum, teachers' capacity, administration, etc. The bishop has contracted the Revd. Dr. Laurence Hilditch under the direction of Dean Hosam Naoum who have conducted an assessment and analyzed the current situation and have identified the requirements that need to be met to implement the IB programme at the school.

Following the assessment, the plan of action included

three main challenges: Equipping and furnishing new classrooms, hiring new teachers and providing the current classrooms with the required advanced teaching tools. A capacity building programme for teachers is to be designed. By implementing the plan, Saint George's School will complete the preparatory phase and be ready for establishing the IB programme.

In order to implement the plan so that the school qualifies to become accredited for the IB programme, financial and technical support are needed from generous donors.

We believe that investing in this development will improve the quality of education at the Diocesan Schools.

Sawsan Aranki-Batato
Diocesan Development Officer

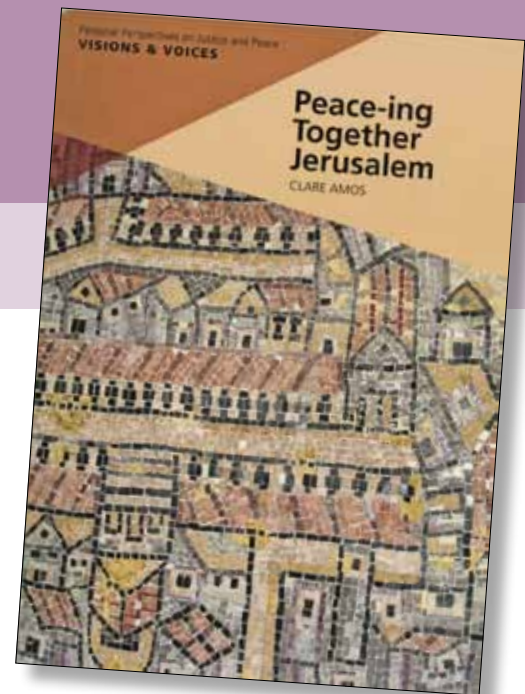
Peace-ing Together Jerusalem

Clare Amos

WCC Publications, 110 pages, pocket size
ISBN 978-2-8254-1636-5 £7.00

Even in secularising Britain Jerusalem holds great symbolic power, witness the singing of William Blake's poem to Parry's music as the English National Anthem at the recent Commonwealth Games. In this essay Dr Clare Amos, currently Programme Executive for Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation at the World Council of Churches (and formerly on the staff of USPG and the Anglican Communion Office) has provided us with a fascinating overview of the significance of Jerusalem in the Bible and in history.

Beginning with a reflection on her own experience of the city in the 1970s, where she eventually became Director of Studies at St George's College, she moves on to explore Jerusalem in Scripture and Christian history. She outlines four themes, found in the last chapters of Revelation, which she believes encompass most streams of Christian reflection on Jerusalem – the Renewed and Heavenly City; Jerusalem the Dwelling Place of God; Jerusalem – the Centre of the World and fourth Jerusalem, the rejecting and Suffering One. Her final chapter sketches out ten practical implications arising from the theological and personal reflections of the preceding two.



Jerusalem, she argues, is a sacrament of what it means to be human in that it shows up visibly and physically the best and worst of the human condition. It is a symbol of our highest desires and yet a reminder of how this best can go tragically wrong – a symbol of peace and a symbol of conflict.

This excellent book has the feel of mature distillation of much biblical and theological wisdom and long personal experience of a city highly significant within the traditions of its Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities. I found it brought new understanding and insight in short and very readable compass to be read and returned to.

John Clark, Chair JEMT

Golden Jubilee of The Holy Land Institute for the Deaf

Jerusalem
Bishop Suhel Dawani

50th anniversary in Jordan

Yvonne Bergwerf, secretary of the Netherlands Friends of HLID, shares her love of the work

This year the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf in Salt celebrates its Golden Jubilee! Who could have guessed in those first days that the Institute would grow and play such an important role in Jordan and the whole region?

The institute was established in 1964 by the Dutch Father Andeweg, and opened by His Majesty the late King Hussein of Jordan. The school operates under the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem with the Bishop as chairman. Children of all religions are welcome, and most are Muslims, as are many of the staff. The institute was the first for children with disabilities in Jordan and is highly respected for sharing its experience with many other schools throughout the region.

My first visit was in 1967, when the school was still



small. It had started in the former CMS mission hospital, and the accommodation was very poor. Lessons were given in barracks, heated with oil stoves in winter with buckets on the floor to catch the rain pouring in, while in the boarding house there was no adequate heating. Sign language was not taught, children were supposed to learn to speak and lip-read. Besides the regular subjects children were taught practical skills like shoe repair and basket weaving. Many of the pupils came from the West Bank, and stayed in the boarding house for months at a stretch.

With the coming of Brother Andrew as the new director in 1977 the school, that had been close to closure, started to grow and gain trust. The school and the vocational training department expanded. The school now offers education and vocational training for around 150 deaf boys and girls in the age of 4 to 20 years. Some 120 of them stay in the boarding houses. In 2001 the institute was the first to open a unit for deaf-blind children, where at present care is provided for 10 children and two adults.



The children do not only learn subjects and skills, but the taking care of each other is valued highly. Older children are responsible for the small ones, and several of the bigger ones take care of the deaf-blind children at meals and during breaks. They all communicate in sign language, which is their first language, but in school they later learn both Arabic and English.

Every morning after breakfast a short service is held in the chapel, where many of the children and staff come together. Many are Muslims but come to the chapel, and also to the Sunday school, where they are told about Jesus and his love for children in particular.

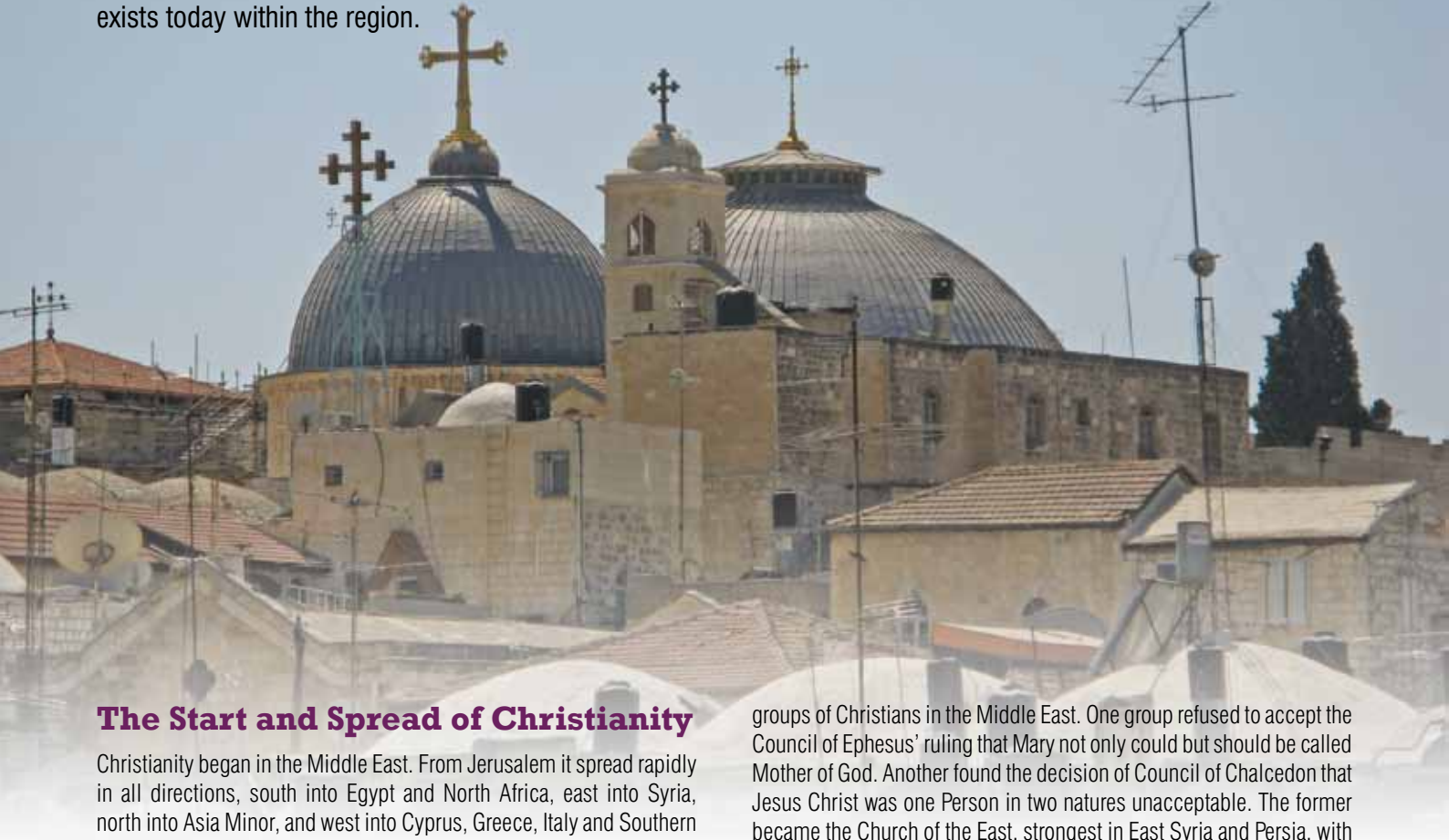
The institute does not keep its know-how to itself. There is a teacher training department where hearing and deaf teachers for the deaf from Jordan and surrounding countries are taught. In the Jordan valley two CBR centres are opened with classes and vocational training for disabled children and women. There is an audiology department which provides hearing aids and ear moulds.

The Jubilee celebrations started in April, when a reception was held at the Institute with Prince Mired bin Raad, cousin of the king, as guest of honour. Also present were the mayor of Salt, various prominent members of society and members of the supporting committees from the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Japan. How wonderful to know that many people in so many countries are concerned for the wellbeing of the deaf children in Jordan. It is with great joy that I go there every year to help out in the office, and be part of that wonderful family of children and staff, sharing in their loving and caring for each other.

The Christians of the Middle East & North Africa

Long History and Present Plight

The history of the Christian Church in the Middle East and North Africa with its numerous internal disputes and external influences is complex, as all the present conflicts in the region have underlined. We are grateful to The Reverend Canon Hugh Wybrew, a former Dean of St George's Cathedral in Jerusalem and a Director of JEMT, for this overview of the major events of the past 20 centuries which have resulted in the multi-faceted Christian Church that exists today within the region.



The Start and Spread of Christianity

Christianity began in the Middle East. From Jerusalem it spread rapidly in all directions, south into Egypt and North Africa, east into Syria, north into Asia Minor, and west into Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Southern Europe. Its early church centres were Alexandria, Antioch and Rome. They were joined in the fourth century by Constantinople, and in the fifth by Jerusalem. The bishops of these major cities in the Roman Empire came to be called patriarchs. Each patriarchate gradually extended its influence over the surrounding territory.

Disputes and Splits within the Church (5th Century)

Doctrinal disputes in the fifth century provoked splits in the Church. Disagreements concerned how Jesus Christ should be understood as both human and divine. The third and fourth ecumenical councils, of Ephesus in 431 and Chalcedon in 451, attempted to resolve these doctrinal disputes. Their decisions were not acceptable to significant

groups of Christians in the Middle East. One group refused to accept the Council of Ephesus' ruling that Mary not only could but should be called Mother of God. Another found the decision of Council of Chalcedon that Jesus Christ was one Person in two natures unacceptable. The former became the Church of the East, strongest in East Syria and Persia, with its centre at Seleucia-Ctesiphon in present-day Iraq, south of Baghdad. It was also present in southern India. Its missions reached as far as China before it was decimated in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by the Mongols. Those who refused to accept the Council of Chalcedon formed a family of Churches, in Syria, Armenia, Egypt, and Ethiopia, known today as Oriental Orthodox. Neither group is in communion with the Eastern Orthodox Church or with the Roman Catholic Church.

The largest of the Oriental Orthodox Churches is the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt. The great majority of Christians in Ethiopia belong to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, historically closely linked with the Copts. The Syriac Orthodox Church is to be found in Syria, Turkey, Iraq and other parts of the Middle East. The Armenian Orthodox Church is the historic church of the Armenian people. The Church of the East,



Roman Catholic



Syriac Orthodox



sometimes known as the Assyrian Church, has its modern headquarters in Chicago. Probably the majority of its members now live in the United States, while others survive in Iraq and elsewhere.

Muslim Conquest, Crusades and the Roman Catholic Church (7th-13th Century)

After the Arab Muslim conquest of the Middle East and North Africa in the seventh century, Christianity slowly declined in those regions. By the tenth century Christians constituted some ten percent of the population of the Islamic Empire. Into this situation at the end of the eleventh century came the Crusades, which brought with them the Roman Catholic Church. Dominant in the regions of the East Mediterranean where the crusaders established short-lived states, the Roman Catholic Church remained as a minority after the last Crusaders left at the end of the thirteenth century. During the crusader period, in the thirteenth century one group of Eastern Christians, the Maronites, entered in its entirety into communion with Rome. The Maronite Church is the largest Christian group in Lebanon.

Eastern Church members join with the Roman Catholic Church (15th-20th Centuries)

Later, at various times, some members of all the Eastern Churches entered into communion with Rome. In the early eighteenth century the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch split, and those who entered into communion with Rome in the Middle East are known as Greek Catholics or Melkites. Syrian Catholic, Armenian Catholic and Coptic Catholic Churches were formed from their corresponding Oriental Orthodox Churches, while the Chaldean Catholic Church was formed from the Church of the East. It is the largest church in Iraq.

The Arrival of Western reformed traditions (19th Century)

The reformed tradition came into the Middle East in the nineteenth century. American Presbyterian missionaries worked in Egypt, Lebanon and other parts of the region. The Church of England and the Prussian Lutheran Church jointly set up a bishopric in Jerusalem in 1841. It came to an end in the early 1880s, and separate Anglican and Lutheran bishoprics were set up towards the end of the decade. The original purpose was to convert Jews to Christianity. In that aim it largely failed, but it attracted a small number of existing Christians, mostly Orthodox or Greek Catholic, in what is now Israel, the Occupied Territories and Jordan.

Uncertain Future for Christianity in the Middle East (20th-21st Century)

All the Churches in the Middle East are losing members through emigration. There is growing hostility to Christians throughout the region, in part a consequence of the rise of a more assertive form of Islam, in part a reaction to Western political influence in the Middle



East. The West's failure to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the American-led invasions of Iraq are widely perceived as instances of the Christian West's hostility to Islam. Large numbers of Christians fled from Iraq after the Second Gulf War, and a steady stream of Christian emigrants from all the churches has raised fears that Christianity could become extinct in its original homelands, including Jerusalem itself. Recent events in Iraq and Syria have made the extinction of Christianity in those areas more probable. Wherever ISIS, or the Islamic State, has conquered territory, Christians are given the choice of conversion to Islam, payment of a tax, or death. Almost all are choosing to leave.

All the Eastern Christian Churches and the major Western Churches are represented in Jerusalem, whose holy places have been the goal of Christian pilgrimage since the fourth century. The largest communities are the Greek Orthodox, the Greek Catholics, and the Latins, as Roman Catholics are known. The Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land is responsible for the holy sites belonging to the Roman Catholic Church. Some of the other Eastern Churches have small communities in Jerusalem, while others are in effect diplomatic representations. There are small communities of Anglicans, Lutherans and other reformed traditions in the city.

Editor's Note: The independent Anglican bishopric in Jerusalem was set up in 1887. Its arrival was welcomed by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, and relations with that Patriarchate and all the Orthodox Churches in Jerusalem remain good. Other dioceses in the Middle East followed: Iran (1912), Egypt (1920), and Cyprus and the Gulf (1976), the latter created at the same time as the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East embracing all four dioceses. This magazine tells the story of this small Anglican community. It has developed a great many much valued and essential institutions which serve the whole community. Numerically small, the Anglican Church has earned a wide respect for its reconciling ministry in the midst of a much troubled region.

Pictured Above: The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, also known as the Church of the Resurrection, which has been visited by Christian pilgrims since the 4th century and is used as a place of worship by the six Churches pictured below: Greek Orthodox; Roman Catholic; and Armenian, Syriac, Coptic and Ethiopian Orthodox.

Coptic Orthodox



Greek Orthodox



Ethiopian Orthodox



Armenian Orthodox



St George's College, Jerusalem

www.sgcjerusalem.org

Jerusalem
Bishop Suheil Dawani

The need for places of prayer, learning and reconciliation has perhaps never been greater. The summer of 2014 has been dominated by deeply disturbing news of ongoing conflicts in Gaza, Iraq, Syria, and many other places. The fault-lines and divisions are profound.

Jerusalem has long been a place where peoples, empires, faiths have all collided – often destructively with terrible consequences, but also creatively offering new understandings. It is a place which is central to the story of Judaism, stands at the heart of the founding events of the Christian faith, and plays a key role in Islam. Little wonder then, that it is a potent symbol of both deep human conflict, and new possibilities of harmony and peace.

Just outside the Old City in Jerusalem is St George's College. It is part of the complex that includes St George's Anglican Cathedral and the home and offices of the Bishop in Jerusalem. It is one of the gems of the Anglican Communion and has an extraordinary ministry of pilgrimage, hospitality, prayer, learning and reconciliation. It is located in a three storey building which can house up to 42 pilgrims/ participants at any one time. It has a 21,000 volume library (one of the largest English language libraries in the Holy Land), a refectory, common room, chapel, and rooms for discussion and lectures.

It was originally founded in 1920 as a theological school for Palestinian seminarians. However the political complexities and troubles of the Middle East made that original vision impossible. So in the 1960s a new and broader vision was developed for



College roof garden

educating clergy and laity from the worldwide Anglican Communion and elsewhere in the Church. Over the years it has run countless short courses which have been life-changing for many who have attended. Those who have been lucky enough to attend a course will have been introduced to the Holy Land in a way which educates, informs and challenges. Many go on the shorter 'Palestine of Jesus' courses which give an introduction to the Land of the Holy One. Others go on different courses which offer a bit more time for reflection and quiet space. This is all done in a context of prayer, hospitality, and connection with the local Churches and communities.

The College has a dedicated staff which includes the Dean and the Course Director. It is governed by a Foundation and Executive Committee which is chaired by the Bishop in Jerusalem, but includes representatives from the UK, US, Australia and New Zealand where there are regional support committees. The British Regional Committee works to make the



College common room

College better known in the UK and, supported by a grant from JMECA and individual donations, offers bursaries to support those going on courses at the College who would not otherwise be able to afford it.

The College now stands at a real time of possibility for the future. In addition to the regular courses, it is developing more courses to serve the current needs of the global Church, the local Church, and the wider world. In the last two years there have been retreats for the clergy of the Diocese of Jerusalem, courses for ordinands and curates from around the world, a Christian-Muslim dialogue course, and courses which have included clergy and laity from India, Zimbabwe and other parts of the Anglican Communion.

The unique context of St George's College means it can be a place where clergy and laity from Link Dioceses across the Anglican Communion can meet and share in a deep experience of pilgrimage. Those in training for, or at an early stage in ordained ministry can be shaped for life by profound encounters whilst on courses. Jerusalem as a meeting place, not only for Christians from around the world, but also for Jews and Muslims, offers huge possibilities for interfaith engagement. All these courses draw close encounter to the local Church, and the College hopes to be a growing resource for the clergy of the Diocese of Jerusalem.

Our complex, conflicted, and confused 21st century world is in real need of centres of meeting, reconciliation, learning and prayer. St George's College is one such place with unique potential. As you pray for the peace of Jerusalem please also remember, use and make known its extraordinary ministry.

*+Richard Cheetham Bishop of Kingston
and Chair of the British Regional Committee of
St George's College, Jerusalem*

Note: The British Regional Committee www.stgeorgescollegejerusalemtrust.org.uk provides further details including the possibility of bursaries for those who might need them to attend a course.

Dean of the College: Reverend Dr. Graham Smith
Director of Studies: Reverend Dr. Rodney Aist
www.sgcjerusalem.org

Chair British Regional Committee:
Rt. Revd Richard Cheetham, Bishop of Kingston
www.stgeorgescollegejerusalemtrust.org.uk



College from cathedral tower



Bishop Cheetham

Revd. Dr. Smith

Course Dates 2015

Palestine of Jesus	January 13 – 26
Palestine of Jesus	February 3 – 16
Palestine of Jesus	March 3 – 16
Sharing Perspectives: Christians & Muslims in the Holy Land	March 19 – 26
Risen with Christ	April 8 – 14
Palestine of Jesus	May 12 – 25
St. Paul and the Early Church	May 20 – June 2
Palestine of Jesus	June 23 – July 2
Palestine of Jesus	July 7 – 16
Palestine of Jesus	July 23 – 30
Abraham and his Children	August 19 – Sept 1
Palestine of Jesus	September 8 – 21
Ways in the Wilderness	October 1 – 14
Palestine of Jesus	Oct 21 – Nov 3
Palestine of Jesus	November 10 – 19
Optional Jordan Excursion	November 20 – 23
Palestine of Jesus	December 9 – 18

Costs and terms from www.sgcjerusalem.org

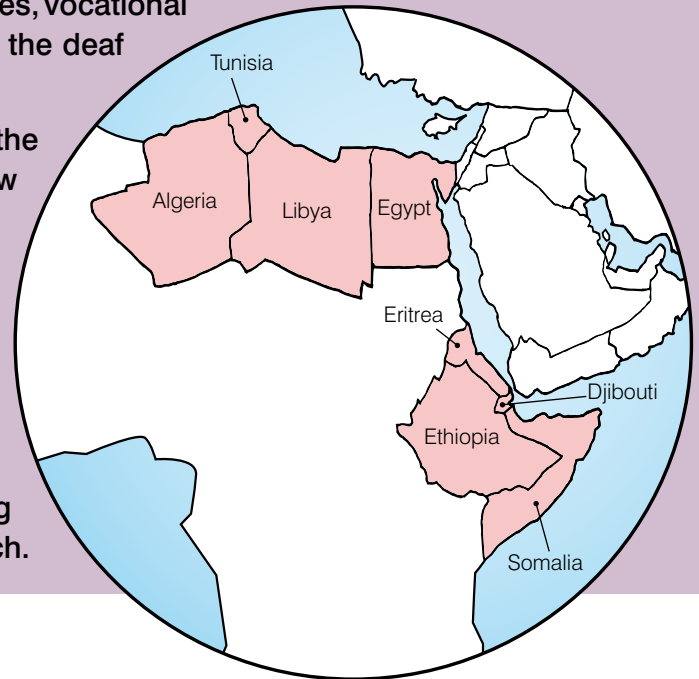
The Diocese of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa



Since its beginning in 1839, the Diocese has been committed to serve others as Jesus did. We are committed to serving all people holistically, regardless of their religion or social status. Numerically we are small, but in this strategic part of the world, we have a great opportunity and responsibility to be ambassadors of our Lord Jesus, demonstrating in 'Word and Deed' what our faith means to us. The Diocese supports over 30 institutions which include hospitals, clinics, nurseries, schools, a theological seminary, micro-enterprise ventures, vocational training programs, as well as institutions for the deaf and the disabled.

The five goals of the Diocese are: to reach the unreached with the Gospel of Christ; to grow Christ's church by making disciples and equipping leaders; to serve our neighbours; to work for unity among all Christians; to dialogue with other faith communities.

Support from The Jerusalem and Middle East Church Association (JMECA) to the Diocese in recent years has been directed to helping with mission work, ordination training for Egyptian candidates and medical outreach.



Staff Changes

The Bishop is pleased to announce the following appointments:

Dr. Maged Mousa,
General Director of EpiscoCare
episcocare@gmail.com

Dr. Maged is a medical doctor and has great experience as the Director of a geriatric centre from 1993-2006 and the General Director of the Upper Egypt Society for Education and Development from 2006-2013. He is also a member of the National Union of NGOs. Under the restructuring of EpiscoCare, he is responsible for managing the four directors within EpiscoCare: Training & Quality, Development, Human Resources, Finances, as well as relating to the Directors of the Episcopal Training Centre and Refuge Egypt.

Ms. Gihane Kolta, Director of Development within EpiscoCare
episcocare@gmail.com

Ms. Gihane has six years experience as the Director of Education for the Upper Egypt Society for Education, implementing educational and early

childhood development projects. She holds degrees in Education and in French, and has worked in Egypt, Lebanon, France and Spain.

Mr. Chris Rupke,
Director of Refuge Egypt
director@refuge-egypt.org

Mr. Rupke is volunteering for the Diocese and brings 35 years of experience in the development of all Canadian contract operations in the municipal and industrial fields of pollution control and water treatment, as well as 7 years of working in Sudan implementing water, sanitation, health and livelihood projects for the European Union and the Canadian Government.

Mrs. Beverly Rupke, Manager of the Diocesan Guest House
gsthouse@gmail.com

Mrs. Rupke returns to volunteer for the Diocese after 11 years of working in northern Sudan and 3 years in South Sudan, and having worked as the Dean's Secretary and Joint Relief Ministries between 1994 and 1998. She says "It is a joy to be back here."

**Ms. Silvia Wagih Grace,
Coordinator in the Diocesan
Partnership Office**

silvia@dioceseofegypt.org

Ms. Silvia has 5 years of studies in media and communications, and 3 years working in Public Relations. She is excited to be working with the Diocese and says, *“This job is about people and about helping those in need; that’s what I’ve always wanted to do... to be in a job to make lives better, giving a hand for the helpless.”*

**Mr. Wagdi Roubil Ayad,
Site Manager for the Cathedral
and Diocese**

wagdiroubil@yahoo.com

Mr. Wagdi will supervise the workers who maintain the Cathedral and Diocesan compound. In addition, he is responsible for researching and purchasing. He has over 30 years of experience in working as an accountant, loans operator, and bank supervisor.

**The Rev. Drew Wayne Schmotzer,
Priest-in-Charge of the English
Speaking Congregations at
All Saints Cathedral**

Drew was ordained priest in 2008. He received his Masters of Divinity from Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry, USA and is currently working on a Masters in Early African Christianity. He served at St. Luke’s in Akron, Ohio and at Trinity Cathedral, Pittsburgh before coming to Egypt. He has been the Chaplain to the Bishop since 2008 and has served in various capacities within the Diocese, including teaching at the Alexandria School of Theology, serving as the English Speaking Secretary of the Synod and the Executive Board, and assisting with the Anglican Communion – Al Azhar Dialogue. He has served as the Chaplain to the Red Sea since 2010, the Rector of St. Mark’s in Menouf from 2012-2014, and the Interim Rector of St. John the Baptist Church in Maadi from 2013-2014. Drew is no stranger to All Saints Cathedral having served there in an assisting capacity since 2008.

“Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son came not to be served but to serve: Bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister in his Name to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy; for the love of him who laid down his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.”

**The Rev. Dr. Michael Dobson,
Priest-in-Charge of St. John the Baptist
Church in Maadi**

Michael was ordained priest in 2012. He received his Masters of Divinity from Regent College in Vancouver in 2011 and holds a PhD in Education from the Open University in Milton Keynes, UK. He is married to Janet who has worked for over 20 years in administration and teaching, and they have two children: Gordon William (17) who is studying kinesiology and sports physiotherapy, and Emily Ruth (15) who is in secondary school studying French. They come after serving in various churches in Vancouver, with a particular focus on refugees and interfaith activities. He is excited to be coordinating the ministry amongst all of the congregations (Egyptian, Sudanese and English) at St. John’s, in addition to helping within the wider Diocese.

Alexandria School of Theology

www.alexandriaschooloftheology.com/

Bishop Tom Wright at the Graduation

The 6th Commencement Exercise of the Alexandria School of Theology was held at All Saints Cathedral in July. We joyfully celebrated 5 students graduating with a Diploma in Theology, and 15 students with a Bachelor of Theology.

Bishop Tom Wright, the noted New Testament scholar spoke from John 21 about Jesus’ commission to Peter to *‘tend my sheep’*. He encouraged the students to put Jesus first, and to follow where he calls us: “You must follow Jesus, even into the dark, even where you don’t want to go. Because this isn’t about you or me. It’s about Jesus himself. He went into the dark for us, and he has now led the way out to the light, and calls us to follow. This is the call we hear today: to follow the Good Shepherd wherever he leads, and to share, as he calls us, in the work of feeding and tending the flock. That is what we are trained for: and that, most importantly, is what we are forgiven for. May God bless you, and bless all of us”

During his visit, Bishop Tom Wright also gave two public lectures on “Jesus and Tomorrow’s World” and “Scripture and the Authority of God”.



Horn of Africa

Area Bishop: Rt. Revd. Dr. Grant Le Marquand

The Diocesan Bishop, Rt. Revd. Dr. Mouner Anis, writes:

The Anglican Church in Ethiopia is growing. It is a great example of what God is doing throughout Africa. In 2000 we had 8 churches, now we have over 80. This growth is great news! However, much of this growth is numerical with little depth in the knowledge of the Word of God, and with few trained clergy. The greatest need of the Church in Ethiopia, and indeed in all Africa, is theological education, spiritual formation and leadership. In 2012 God sent the Rev. Dr. Grant LeMarquand to become the new Area Bishop for the Horn of Africa with a vision to meet the need by starting a school of theology.

Building upon our experience with the Alexandria School of Theology in Egypt, we decided to start two new campuses in Africa: St. Cyprian's College in Tunisia and St. Frumentius' College in Ethiopia. The main goal of these campuses is to form local leaders for the church through providing theological training and spiritual formation.

There are currently 16 clergy serving in 80 churches in Ethiopia, only one of whom has formal theological education. St. Frumentius' Anglican Theological College will train existing clergy, and new lay and ordained leaders, who will be able to transform the church and address the spiritual and cultural challenges in society.

I believe that St. Frumentius' College will transform the Church in the Horn of Africa, as we seek to develop a mature and fully indigenous church. It is due to open in January 2015

For more information, <http://frumentiuscollege.dioceseofegypt.org/>

Gambella Anglican Centre

A large church will be constructed at the Gambella Anglican Centre, which will serve as the St. Frumentius College Chapel, as well as the church building for the St Barnabas' congregation and for an English speaking congregation. This future multi-purpose building is designed to be used for conferences, teaching and worship, and will seat well over 500. The church will be a circular shaped building based on a traditional Ethiopian design. The building of the church has three phases:

1) Laying the foundations

The ground is uneven, and the lower parts need to be filled so that the ground is at the same level. The floor will be constructed from local stone and cement,

possibly using some of the quartz rock on the property as paving stones. The pillars of the church will be erected.

2) Building the walls

An arched wall will surround the main worship area. This will allow the air to flow in the church, but still be protected from the rain. The church will always be open for people to use. A verandah will surround the arched walls, which will provide circulation space and overflow seating.

3) Constructing the roof and furnishing the church

A roof will be built on the arches, and the seating, altar, vestry, and baptistery will be added. The baptistery will be outside the church in the style of ancient North African churches.



The Theological College

The St. Frumentius' Anglican Theological College will open on the grounds of the Anglican Centre. The college will initially offer a 2 year Certificate programme for 20 residential students and is expected to expand in the future. The new college is affiliated with, and builds on the experience of the Alexandria School of Theology in Egypt.

The Gambella Anglican Centre already has some facilities for the new college. However, some buildings need renovating (a classroom, library, and principal's residence) and other facilities need to be constructed (classrooms, college chapel, dormitories and bathrooms, a security fence).

Budget

The total cost of the project is **\$288,680 USD**. We have already raised **\$85,000**, and we are seeking to raise the remaining **\$203,680**.



Artist's Impression of St. Frumentius' College

Grey Buildings: existing buildings which will remain as they are.

Pink Buildings: existing buildings which need renovating.

Red Buildings and Church: yet to be constructed

Gambella Refugee Crisis

In Gambella, the refugee situation caused by the fighting in South Sudan continues to worsen. The official UN figures (July) cite 100,364 registered South Sudanese refugees in the Gambella region. Estimates predict between 150,000 to an unbelievable 300,000 arriving by the end of this year, nearly doubling the population in this already under-serviced area.

Akula Refugee Camp

A forest of tiny 'pup-tent'-like dwellings fronted by cooking fires and filled with children. The tiny faces peeking out to stare at the "Kawaja" (white folks) walking by, break into sudden and delighted smiles as we greet them. Dozens of little hands try to hold mine as we wind our way to the 'church' – a large tree around which 3,000 Christians from many denominations are gathered. The new refugee camp of Akula, now one month old, is already sheltering 33,000 with more arriving daily.

Some share their reflections:

"We should not be surprised at the calamity which has fallen upon us. It says in the Bible that these things can happen. But be encouraged, for nothing, not even this, can separate us from the love of God."

"It was quarreling that brought us here. We must forsake quarreling."

"My sister died on the way. Her children were suffering from dehydration so they were brought here for medical care without being registered. Now they are with me, but they are not registered, so I cannot get food ration cards for them. Pray that I can get rations to feed them" "My husband Jacob has been missing since December 15th. I can get no news. I pray to know if he is alive or dead"

Sadly, poignantly, many try to make sense of overwhelming evil: *"It was our greed, it was our idolatry"*

Bishop Grant's preaching:

"Jesus hates suffering and death. He wept at the tomb of his friend, Lazarus. a couple of weeks later, he gave himself to die on the cross and to rise again, defeating suffering and death. Because Jesus rose from the dead we know that one day there will be no death, there will be no suffering – God will wipe away every tear from our eyes. and on that day people from every tribe will be together around the throne – white people and Chinese and Arab and Nuer and Anuak and Dinka and Murle – so we should get used to being together now!"

Child Mortality in Gambella

In 2013, the Mothers' Union leaders in Gambella started a training program to address four challenges that they identified: health, poverty, inter-tribal tension and spirituality. In order to address these challenges, the Mothers' Union is providing theological and practical skills to women across 70 villages and refugee camps. This is done through a 'train-the-trainer' programme, which trains 3,000 women and empowers them to affect change in their own communities.

This year the Mothers' Union teaching event looked at the causes of recurrent diarrhea. The Gambella region far exceeds Ethiopia's infant/child mortality of 90/1000 live births. Diarrhea is one of the five major causes of infant and childhood death. We practiced making Oral Rehydration Solution using a technique that required neither measuring spoons nor expertise, but is reliable and reproducible. Oral Rehydration Solution has saved hundreds of thousands of precious lives since the widespread use starting in the 1970s.



Practicing making Oral Rehydration Solution

Eddie Ozols of Anglican Aid Australia, the major donor for our Mothers' Union training programme, asked our Anuak priest, Darash Thatha, how many children's funerals had he held last year, and how many had he held this year. "Fifty funerals last year, none this year" he said.

Friends of the Diocese of Iran Conference

'The Bible and the Church in Iran' was the theme of the tenth twenty-four hour conference of the Friends of the Diocese in early September. First held in 1998 these, now annual, conferences are significant occasions to bring together those who used to work in Iran, along with younger attendees both British and Iranian to hear news and pray specifically for Christians of the diocese and more widely.

In advance of the launch and dedication of the 'New

Millennium translation' of the Bible into Persian later in September, the Conference heard from the Revd Sam Yeghnazar of Elam Ministries of the remarkable role that the Scriptures play in introducing Iranians to faith in Christ and nurturing Iranian believers whether in Iran or in the growing number of Iranian Christian fellowships in many parts of the world.

The sixty attending also heard of latest developments in Persian language Christian television ministry and chaplaincy to Iranian Christians in the British Isles. The Conference concluded with a Communion service in Persian and English.

Obituary

Canon Nusratullah Sharifian R.I.P.



Canon Nusratullah Sharifian, the only Iranian priest of the Episcopal Church functioning in Iran, died in Isfahan on 15 October 2014, shortly after returning from a visit to the USA. He was 89 and had continued in ministry until his death. His funeral took place on 19 October.

From a Muslim background he had served as a youth worker for St Luke's Church, Isfahan, before being sent, with the Revd Khalil Razmara, by Bishop Hassan Dehqani-Tafti to train for the priesthood at the United Theological College in Bangalore.

Ordained deacon in September 1965 and priest a year later, he began his ministry, under the Revd Arastoo Sayyah, in St Andrew's Kerman, the only Church in the city, serving there from 1966-70 and again from 1976 until after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. (The Church, sadly, was demolished by the authorities in 2011). He retired to Isfahan but returned to pastor the Isfahan congregation at the request of Bishop Azad Marshall following the retirement of Bishop Iraj Muttahedeh in 2004. Apart from a short break to study English in Britain (where he found the cultural differences very strange) he has served in Iran as a priest for all of forty-nine years.

In August 1980 he was imprisoned along with three other Anglican Iranian Christians and three missionaries and released in February 1981 following visits by Terry Waite. Prison was an extremely testing experience, but with great courage he remained in Iran to continue his ministry.

With the retirement of Bishop Iraj Muttahedeh in 2004, Sharifian was the only Iranian priest ministering among the four congregations of the Episcopal Church. Based in Isfahan he would travel to Shiraz as needed to lead worship while the Revd Christopher Edgar, from Pakistan, ministered in Tehran.

The last years in Iran have not been easy. Restrictions on access to churches and close monitoring of worshippers has had a chilling effect on attendance and required courage and wisdom from those in leadership, which Sharifian exemplified.

His colleague the Revd Khalil Razmara comments that 'Nusratullah enjoyed his ministry in Iran. He loved to preach the word of God to many people. His place is empty (as we say in Persian). But it is a great joy that he is now with his Lord and that he died in Isfahan.'

Praying round the Province



The Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East,
home to the three Abrahamic faiths
and the centre of the world's political conflicts,
asks for your prayers.

1st **The Presiding Bishop of the Province**, The Most Revd. Dr. Mouneer Anis.

● **THE DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM**

2nd **The Bishop**, Rt. Revd Suheil Dawani and his wife, Shafeeqa. For wisdom as he leads the church in Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. His administrative staff and Very Revd. Canon Hosam Naoum, the Dean.

3rd **The clergy** serving the parishes and institutions in Israel, Palestine, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon and the congregations who keep the faith and sustain the churches in troubled times.

4th **The hospitals**, and centres that tend the sick: Diabetic Clinic Ramallah, St. Luke's Nablus, Alhi Arab hospital Gaza, Penman Clinic Zebabdeh.

5th **The schools** that prepare the next generation: St. George's Jerusalem, the International School Jerusalem, Arab Episcopal School Ramallah, Vocational Training Centre Ramallah, Christ's School Nazareth, St. John's School Haifa, The Ahliyyah School for Girls, the Bishop's Kindergarten and the Bishop's School for Boys Amman, The Schneller Vocational Training Institute Amman, St. Saviour's School Zerqa, St. John Baptist School for Integration of the Blind Irbid, St. George's School Lod.

6th **The centres** that give hope to the hurt: Princess Basma Centre for Disabled Children Jerusalem, Holy Land Institute for the Deaf Salt, The Jofeh Community Rehabilitation Centre Jordan Valley, The Father Andeweg Institute for the Deaf Beirut, St. Luke's Centre for the Mentally Disabled Beirut, the Home for the Elderly Amman, The Episcopal Home for Children Ramallah.

7th **The guest houses** that provide hospitality and refreshment for pilgrims and all visitors, St. George's Jerusalem, St. Margaret's Nazareth, St. Andrew's Ramallah, Schneller Institute Amman and Christ Church Jerusalem.

8th **The peace work** the Peace and Reconciliation Movement, The Kids4Peace programme, Sabeel and the people from all sides who seek peace and pursue it.

9th **The international courses** at St George's Jerusalem, the Dean, Revd. Dr. Graham Smith and the Course Director, Revd. Dr. Rodney Aist.

*Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed,
Kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all thy people the true love of peace*

● **THE DIOCESE OF IRAN**

10th **The Bishop**, Rt. Revd Azad Marshall, Revd. Christopher Edgar and others who take leadership roles.

11th **The political leadership** of the nation. The well being of all people in Iran.

12th **The congregations** of the Episcopal Church in Isfahan, Tehran and Shiraz. The cities where congregations have worshipped in past years- Kerman, Yezd, Ahwaz.

13th **All involved** in ministry among Iranians through media, literature, witness and leadership training.

14th **The Diaspora** of Iranian Christians scattered in many nations.

*Guide with thy pure and peaceable wisdom those who take counsel for the
nations of the earth, that in tranquillity thy kingdom may go forward, till the
earth is filled with the knowledge of thy love.*



Praying round the Province

**Blessed Lord, who faced the time of trial
have mercy on our failings and out of our weakness
bring your strength**

● THE DIOCESE OF CYPRUS AND THE GULF

- 15th **The Bishop**, Rt. Revd. Michael Lewis and his wife, Julia, and his Administrative staff.
- 16th **The Dean** of St. Paul's Cathedral Nicosia, Very Revd. John Tyrrell and his wife Carol.
The Dean of St. Christopher's Cathedral Bahrain, Very Revd. Christopher Butt and his wife Tricia.
- 17th **The Archdeacon of the Gulf**, Ven. Bill Schwartz and his wife Edith.
The Archdeacon of Cyprus Ven. Dr. John Holdsworth and his wife Sue.
- 18th **The clergy of Cyprus** serving the people of Kyrenia, Larnaca, Limassol, Ayia Nape, Paphos, Famagusta and for the faithful who serve those churches, the work of the Katafiyio Retreat House.
- 19th **The clergy of the Gulf**, serving the people of Dubai, Sharjah, Oman, Jebel Ali, Ras al Khaimeh, Aden, and the scattered congregations of the Arabian Peninsular who keep the faith privately.
- 20th **The church in Qatar**, and for Archdeacon Bill Schwartz who leads the mission of the Epiphany Centre.
- 21st **The congregation of Baghdad**, led by Canon Andrew White and Reverend Faiz Jerjas. The people of Iraq, of all faiths, and all the Iraqi Christians who are sheltering in other lands.
- 22nd **The political leaders** of the ten jurisdictions, in Cyprus, in Iraq and in the Gulf States, that all may seek and make just and stable governments.

*Almighty and everlasting God, creator and giver of all good gifts, mercifully hear our prayers
and grant to this diocese all things needful for its welfare*

● DIOCESE OF EGYPT with N.AFRICA and THE HORN OF AFRICA

- 23rd **The Bishop**, the Most Revd. Dr. Mouneer Anis and his wife, Nancy, and the Interim Dean of the Cathedral, Rt. Revd Derek Eaton and his wife, Alice.
- 24th **The Bishop in North Africa**, Rt. Revd Bill Musk and his wife, Hillary, and all those who have borne brave witness in Libya
- 25th **The Ethiopian mission**. The Bishop in the Horn of Africa, Rt. Revd. Dr. Grant LeMarquand and his wife, Wendy and all who seek to build a serving church.
- 26th **The clergy** who serve the church day by day in Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Ethiopia and Eritrea, and the congregations who sustain them.
- 27th **The Institutions** that serve the community: The Harpur Hospital in Cairo, Health Centre in Sadat City, the Episcopal School Menouf, the work with the deaf, with refugees, with prisoners and in other areas of welfare and social need.
- 28th **The Theological School** in Alexandria with its Principal Revd. Canon Dr. Samy Fawzy Shehata, all his staff and students, that it may be a place of sound learning and good fellowship.
- 29th **The political leaders** of the many and diverse nations that form the diocese, that Government may be just and sound.

*Strengthen the faithful, protect the children, comfort the sick, uplift the fallen
bring us all to be of one heart and one mind within the fellowship of thy holy church*

- 30th **The Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association**, its Chairman Mr. Richard Owens, the chair of Trustees Mr. John Clark, the Administrator Mrs Shirley Eason and all whose gifts, past and present, sustain it.

THE LAST WORD

From the JEMT chairman, John Clark



These are uncertain days in many parts of the Middle East. On June 10, three weeks after the circulation of our last issue, the city of Mosul in Northern Iraq fell to forces of the self-styled 'Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)' now known as IS. Tens of thousands of Assyrian Christians and members of other minority faiths, like the Yezidis fled from their homes to comparative safety as refugees in Iraqi Kurdistan. In Mosul itself 45 Churches and Christian religious institutions, many of great antiquity have been destroyed. A month later Israel launched Operation Protective Edge against Hamas' rockets and tunnels in Gaza and fighting continued for seven weeks, wreaking great destruction and death.

JMECA has made a grant towards support of the Assyrian refugees. But as this issue of *Bible Lands* illustrates we have also had an overwhelming response to our appeal for funds for the Al-Ahli Hospital, run by the Diocese of Jerusalem in Gaza. More than 400 donations

totalling some £72,000 has been received, the largest response to any recent appeal. JMECA and the Diocese are most grateful for the gifts that have been made.

But beneath the headlines there is an astonishing amount of positive news from the Episcopal Churches of the Middle East as they reach out to their wider communities through the schools, hospitals, community medicine, care for the deaf and other children in need. This issue of *Bible Lands* naturally includes a significant article on the Gaza hospital and the heroic labours of the staff, but it also reports on plans to raise the standards in all schools in the Diocese of Jerusalem.

Within the Diocese of Egypt, North Africa and the Horn of Africa we focus on plans to develop a new training centre in Tunis and a theological centre in Gambella (Ethiopia) to train leaders for the burgeoning congregations in Gambella in ways that are more locally appropriate.

Our editor has told me that there hasn't been room for all the initiatives that seem to be developing in the churches as a response to various crises. This is where our website www.jmecca.org.uk is valuable for it can include reports as they are received. Do check it out regularly. *Bible Lands* serves an equally important purpose as a journal of record and reflection, distilling key issues, reports and trends in the life of the Province.

The articles in this issue also provide information that is the background to the Good Friday and Easter Offering that we launch each year to raise additional interest and support for the Churches in Jerusalem and the Middle East. This is a tradition that began almost a century ago, which we are seeking to re-invigorate. There will be material on our website and sent out by email to encourage parish and individual Easter gifts.

The Apostle Peter in his first letter advises Christians under pressure to 'commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good'. One of the lessons from the Province is that amidst the pressures of life the congregations and the institutions continue to do good. So as you see the news of the Middle East on the television and read reports in the press there are unlikely to be reports of what the churches are doing. But they are there beneath the headlines continuing to do good as they seek to follow Christ in their community life and service. They deserve our prayers and our continued support and they challenge us to continue to do good where we are set.

John Clark

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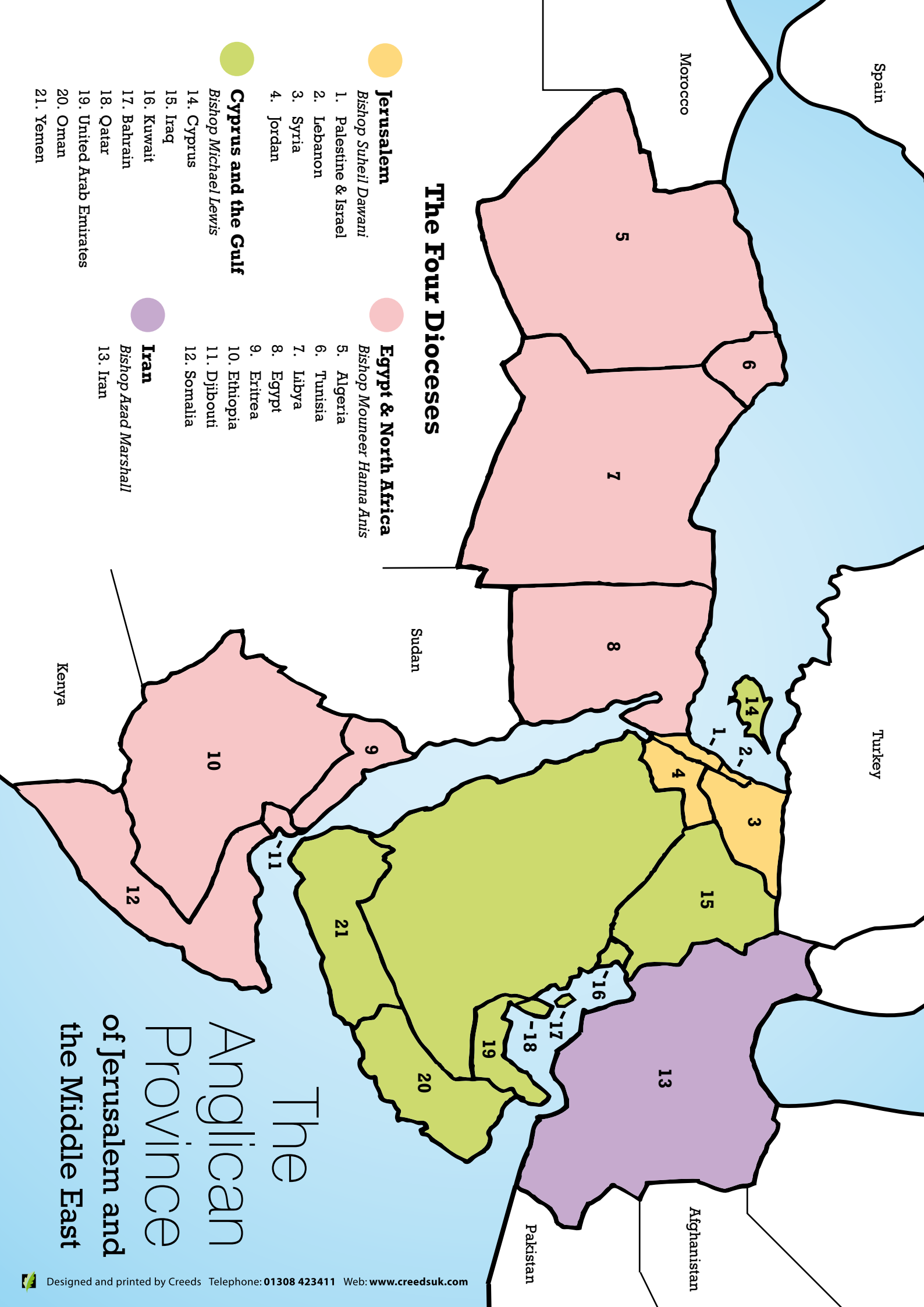
Jerusalem Development Project at St George's – President Abbas' Support. October 16th.

President Abbas met with Bishop Suheil and Ambassador Liu Aizhong, China's Head of Mission in Ramallah, to discuss St. George's Development Project. President Abbas indicated his full support for the project, which will sustain the Diocese's institutions of health care and education that serve the wider Palestinian community. Also attending were the Diocese of Jerusalem's Chief of

Operations, Ibrahim Faltas, Dr. Hisham Nassar and Canon John Organ; Alan Gover of White and Case LLP; and Qian Wei, Counselor in China's Representative Office.

We hope to provide full details of the building project which now has the approval of all the necessary parties, Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian in the next edition of *Bible Lands*.





The Four Dioceses

Jerusalem

Bishop Suheil Dawani

1. Palestine & Israel
2. Lebanon
3. Syria
4. Jordan

Egypt & North Africa

Bishop Mouneer Hanna Anis

5. Algeria
6. Tunisia
7. Libya
8. Egypt
9. Eritrea
10. Ethiopia
11. Djibouti
12. Somalia

Cyprus and the Gulf

Bishop Michael Lewis

14. Cyprus
15. Iraq
16. Kuwait
17. Bahrain
18. Qatar
19. United Arab Emirates
20. Oman
21. Yemen

Iran

Bishop Azad Marshall

13. Iran

The
Anglican
Province
of Jerusalem and
the Middle East