

Bible Lands

Winter 2012/13

Magazine of the Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association

www.jmecca.org.uk



Jerusalem



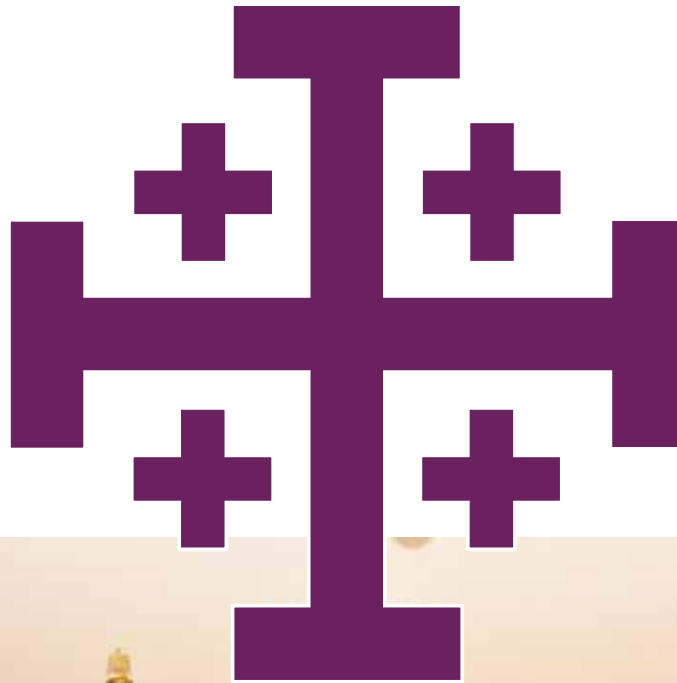
Egypt & North Africa



Cyprus & the Gulf



Iran



Egyptian President pictured encouraging Christian leaders – see page 15

and

Moslem-Christians relations affirmed in Jerusalem – see page 3.

THE JERUSALEM AND THE MIDDLE EAST CHURCH ASSOCIATION

(JMECA)

Founded in 1887

'To encourage support in prayer, money and personal service for the religious and other charitable work of the Episcopal church in Jerusalem and the Middle East'.

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Views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Association; therefore only signed articles will be published.

JMECA Website www.jmecca.org.uk

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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Moslem-Christian Relations Affirmed



Celebration of the Iftar Feast at St. George's Jerusalem

The Iftar feast at St. George's Guest House has become a tradition in Jerusalem. At the end of Ramadan, Bishop Suheil Dawani welcomed many dignitaries, clergy and friends to the Diocesan Guest House for the fast breaking meal of Iftar. This is the 5th. year in which the community has gathered to break fast together.

On behalf of the host, Bishop Suheil, Dr. Hisham Nassar welcomed Muslim and Christian leaders to St. George's Guest House. Dr. Nassar acknowledged, with deep respect and appreciation, the presence of Patriarch Theophilos III the Greek Orthodox Patriarch; Bishop Joseph Alzeriei, of the Latin Church; Archbishop Arstakhos of the Roman Orthodox Church; Archbishop Nouran Manoogian, representative for the Armenian Church and Father Antonios Al-Orshalimi representative for the Coptic Orthodox Church. He also welcomed the Director of the Islamic Waft, Shiek Azzam al-Khatib and the Palestinian Prime Minister, Salaam Fayyad, with leaders from the business and social sectors of Palestinian society. He commented on the historic significance of the gathering and its importance not only for interfaith understanding and goodwill but because such events strengthen the whole community.

In his address, Bishop Suheil expressed his gratitude to his distinguished guests for their acceptance of his invitation to come together in a spirit of friendship and brotherhood to share Iftar during the holy season of Ramadan. He stated that such occasions give concrete expression, *'to our daily prayer for peace and justice for all people in the Land of the Holy One.'* The bishop's commitment to peace and justice inspires his efforts to bring together leaders from diverse backgrounds who work for the common good. He emphasized that the institutions of the Diocese of Jerusalem, which encompass five countries, provide education and health care for thousands of people, regardless of race or religion.

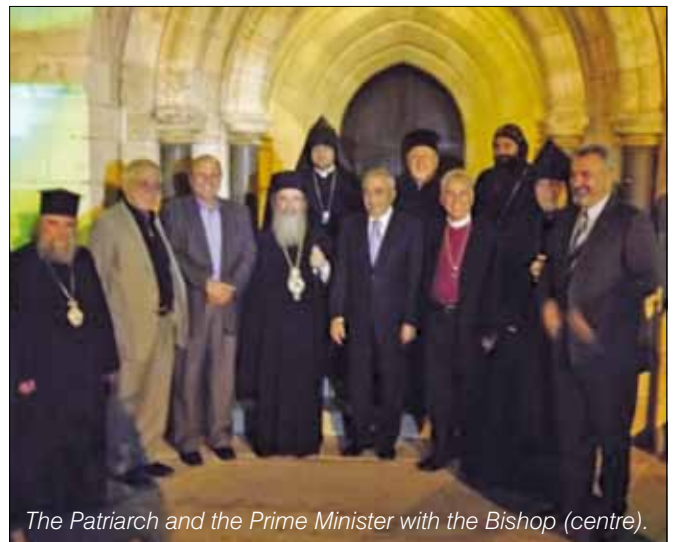
The bishop was followed by Shiek Azzam al-Khatib, the Director of the Islamic Waft. He thanked Bishop Suheil for gathering Muslim and Christian leaders together to share the Muslim Iftar. He stated that the *'gathering serves as a reminder to the whole world that Christian and Muslim Palestinians live together as brothers.'*

The Prime Minister of Palestine, Salaam Fayyad, also thanked Bishop Suheil for bringing together leaders from the political, religious, economic and social sectors of

Palestinian society, both Muslim and Christian, to share Iftar, and to celebrate and encourage the longstanding brotherhood and friendship between them. Prime Minister Fayyad said, *'The experience of our people is one of friendly co-existence, love and mutual respect. Together we celebrate the religious diversity of Palestine, which is our historical legacy, and one which every Palestinian can be proud of.'*

The Prime Minister stated, *'while our social-political context is not ideal, and there are many challenges before us, together, as Muslims and Christians, we serve the needs of our people, and work for the day when all Palestinians live freely and with dignity.'* The Prime Minister thanked Bishop Suheil and the Diocese of Jerusalem for their determination to preserve the Palestinian fabric of society, especially here in Jerusalem. He went on to express his concern about the dwindling Christian presence in the Holy Land, which he sees as a dangerous trend. He said *'Christianity began here in Palestine, it is the birthplace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and here are to be found its most sacred sites.'* He encouraged Palestinian Christians, who are living in other parts of the world, to return to visit the holiest sites of their faith, located in their homeland of Palestine, and indeed to live here once again.

Bishop Suheil's hospitality and the presence of the Greek Patriarch and senior representatives of all the churches, with the Director of the Islamic Waft and the Prime Minister was a welcome celebration of interfaith friendship and also a profound affirmation of religious diversity and the strength of Moslem-Christian relations in Palestine.



The Patriarch and the Prime Minister with the Bishop (centre).

Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf

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."



Diocesan Staff

The Bishop reported to the Friends annual meeting and detailed the staff of the diocese at that date.

Deans and cathedrals: the Very Revd Christopher Butt has been in post at St Christopher's Cathedral Bahrain since Michaelmas 2009 and the Very Revd John Tyrrell at St Paul's Cathedral Nicosia since November 2009. Dean Butt is assisted by Fr Stephen Thanapaul, who is also Mission to Seafarers port chaplain in Bahrain. Dean Tyrrell is assisted by Deacon Carol Tyrrell. Both cathedrals host congregations of other denominations and traditions.

Archdeacons and archdeaconries: the Ven Bill Schwartz continues as Archdeacon in the Gulf, combining his role with that of Chaplain of Qatar, and the Ven John Holdsworth is Archdeacon in Cyprus, combining his role with that of Diocesan Executive Archdeacon and Chaplain of St Helena Larnaca. The licensed clergy of the Gulf meet once a year at a common venue for prayer, discussion, planning, and time together. Those of Cyprus meet several times a year. Each gathering is convened by the respective archdeacon.

Chaplaincies/parishes: in the Gulf, there continue to be chaplaincies, with councils: in Iraq Baghdad – two locations: Canon Andrew White and Fr Fa'iz Jerjees. Kuwait (Ahmadi and Kuwait City: Fr Harrison

Chinnakumar), Saudi Arabia (Dhahran, Ras Tanura, Udhailiya, Abqaiq, Riyadh, Jeddah: Fr Wally Schilling and Fr Rocki Proffitt), Bahrain (Manama, Awali: Dean Christopher Butt and Fr Stephen Thanapaul), Qatar (Doha [two locations], Dukhan, al Khor: Archdeacon Bill Schwartz and Fr Jebaraj Devasaghayam), Abu Dhabi (Abu Dhabi, al 'Ain: Canon Andy Thompson), Dubai with Sharjah and the Northern Emirates (Jebel Ali, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras al Khaimah, Fujairah: Fr Ruwan Palapathwala, Canon Stephen Wright, Fr Ernest Victor, Fr Nelson Fernandez), Oman (Ruwi, Ghala, Sohar: the Revd Christopher Howitz), and the Yemen (Aden). In Cyprus the chaplaincies are Larnaca (Archdeacon John Holdsworth), Limassol (Limassol, Pissouri: Canon Derek Smith), South East Cyprus (Ayia Napa, Deryneia: Fr Simon Holloway), Famagusta (Fr Zinkoo Han), Kyrenia (Fr Richard Frost), Nicosia (Nicosia, Troodos: Dean John Tyrrell), and Paphos (Kato Paphos, Tala, Prodromi: Fr Andrew Notere, the Revd Kay Watters). Currently the only vacancy is the chaplaincy of the Yemen, where the Revd Peter Crooks has served two recent terms as locum priest and director of the Ras Morbat Clinic and may offer another. The politics and security of Aden need to be clearer before a permanent chaplain is appointed.

Your prayers are asked for all the staff in a volatile part of the world.

Four Bishops write to the UN Secretary General

Bishop Michael is one of four bishops of the Province who have written to the Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, suggesting that an international declaration be framed that would outlaw 'the intentional and deliberate insulting or defamation of persons, symbols, texts and constructs of belief deemed holy by people of faith'. This arises directly from the notorious film, published in USA, which mocked and insulted the prophet Mohammed and caused worldwide anger among Moslems which led to many deaths.

There have been several such publications in recent years and each one sets back the reconciling work the Christian churches are attempting to do among their Moslem neighbours. This magazine has several features which show the good relations being established by Bishop Suheil in Jerusalem (page3) and by the President and church leaders in Egypt (cover picture and page15). It is a shame that such wild, ignorant and malicious slanders can undermine this work and put so many innocent people at risk of their lives. The letter was initiated by the Presiding Bishop of the Province, the Most Reverend Dr. Mouneer Anis, and was also signed by the Bishops of North Africa and the Horn of Africa. The letter concludes: "we see that the way ahead for peaceful coexistence and religious harmony is through mutual respect and love. Such, sir, is the motivation behind suggesting this declaration."

Editor

Ecumenical Encounters

The Bishop reports:

"In almost all Gulf churches and some Cyprus churches Anglican premises are made available to groups that would otherwise struggle to find a place to meet and worship. In Cyprus the bishop has regular contact with Orthodox, Armenian, Maronite, Latin, Lutheran, and some Evangelical leaders; in Iraq with hierarchs of the Chaldaean and Armenian Catholic and Armenian Orthodox Churches, the Syriac Orthodox Church, and the Assyrian Church of the East; and in the Gulf with the Latins, some Byzantine Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, and a variety of Evangelicals, as well as with local representatives of the Mar Thoma Church and the Church of South India in particular. Attempts are being made to relate more intentionally to the Church of South India. In one location, Oman, our presence is predicated on a partnership with the Reformed Church of America. On 6 March 2012 in Abu Dhabi the bishop and Archdeacon Schwartz attended an exploratory meeting of Gulf church leaders, to see whether matters that are apparently not at present of central concern to the Middle East Council of Churches can be addressed sub-regionally or indeed whether the Gulf might in future move towards being an officially separate ecumenical region."

The nature of the diocese requires multiple interfaith encounters, especially with the majority religion,

Islam. The bishop is a board member of the al-Amana Centre in Muscat, Oman, and has been a regular attendee at the Doha Interfaith Conference. The diocese was proud to have been the location, in Qatar, of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Building Bridges seminar last year. The bishop is a member of the International Commission for Anglican-Orthodox Theological Dialogue. It is working on shared Christian understandings of the nature and purpose of human beings.

Aden's Clinic and Yemen's New Hope

The situation in Aden at the Clinic and throughout the Yemen has changed. The new interim President, Adrabbah Mansour Hadi, faces awesome problems – political, economic and humanitarian. There is grinding poverty and widespread hunger and the country faces the threat of economic collapse. But the long and irresponsible rule of the previous President, Abd-al-Saleh, is over and the dire prediction of the country's descent into civil war have been averted, up to now.

The hope is that Dr. Adel Wahba from Egypt and Dr. Jihong from Korea returns to the Clinic and complete much needed intensive bouts of cataract surgery and the further training of the Clinic's own eye team.

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 church supports 33 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.



The Bishop's Cathedral Staff Complete

Bishop Suheil has completed his cathedral staff and is happy with the three appointments that will support him at his Jerusalem base. The new Dean of the cathedral, the Very Revd Canon Hosam Nahoum was installed in May. The new Dean of Studies at the College, The Revd Dr. Graham Smith of the American Episcopal Church, was installed this time last year. Now the Revd Canon John Organ from the Church of Canada is installed as the personal chaplain to the bishop. These three senior clergy have between them the wide international vision of the Anglican Church which is necessary in Jerusalem, where pilgrims gather from every nation under the sun, and also the local pastoral knowledge and skill to serve the Palestinian population.



Very Revd Canon Hosam Nahoum

The Revd Dr. Graham Smith



Revd Canon John Organ

The Bishop

Princess Haya Award for HLID

The Holy Land Institute for the Deaf (HLID) based in Salt, Jordan has won the Princess Haya Award for Special Needs Education. It was selected from a long list of nominations from the Middle East region and it recognises the 'motivation of all those who pledge their lives to helping people with special needs.' The award was made by Princess Haya, daughter of the late King Hussein and wife of the Vice President of the United Arab Emirate of Dubai. With the award comes the prize of almost 40,000 Euros.

Amman Hosts Lecture Series

The Church of the Redeemer in Amman is hosting a series of monthly lectures and the first was by the eminent Biblical scholar Revd. Dr. Stephen Sizer. He spoke about Zionism, especially of the misunderstanding of God's Biblical promises and the rise of the modern state of Israel with disastrous consequences for the local Palestinian population.

Subsequent lectures have been by Bishop Suheil and the Latin bishop, Rt Revd Maroun Lahham.

Bishop Suheil Appoints Development Officer



Introducing Sawsan Batato

Sawsan, the newly appointed Development officer, has a Masters degree in Industrial Pharmacy from the University of Montpellier in France. She possesses technical knowledge and advanced experience in international public health standards and practices. She has extensive experience in development programmes including needs assessment, design, planning and development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programme outcomes. She is also well versed in the presentation of fundraising proposals, their analysis and evaluation. She is also experienced in developing and implementing training programmes.

Sawsan has participated in the development of the national health strategy as well as the EU country strategy, and has actively participated in local thematic focus groups and international conferences. She has worked in international organizations with many responsibilities managing various development programmes including Health, Education, youth and women's programmes.

The diocese is confident that with her high educational background and expertise Sawsan will be a great asset to the diocese in successfully leading development programmes.

Sawsan Batato writes about her new post:

Programmes Development Department at the Diocesan Office in Jerusalem

Bishop Suheil believes that the more countries and organizations invest in development the more they are proactive in responding to emergencies and disasters, both man-made and natural. With this principle in mind, the bishop has established a Programmes Development Department to promote and support the Diocese of Jerusalem and its institutions with programming to improve the quality of life of the people in its geographic area.

The programmes development department is led by experts who have extensive experience in leading programmes in such sectors as Health, Education, Youth and Women. The main objectives of establishing the department are to develop a long-term strategy for development, improve aid effectiveness, develop protocols and procedures for the different sectors, and to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the different programmes to ensure efficient implementation. The programmes will be developed

and designed on evidence-based analysis of the actual needs and priorities.

The four main sectors of the diocesan focus are as follows.

Health Care: Through its primary health care centres, secondary and tertiary hospitals, which are distributed all over the West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, the diocese is providing high quality health care services to all people, making no distinction between religion and race. People receive high quality services through experts and skilled medical staff, where the diocese is investing significantly in building the capacity of the staff. Furthermore, the health care centres serve needy patients and offer jobs for those people with certain disabilities who cannot find work elsewhere.

Education: Through diocesan schools and vocational training centres, also distributed all over the West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria, the diocese is providing high level of quality education, using updated teaching methods and materials and through highly educated and experienced teachers - and at affordable costs.

The Empowerment of Women, which is an essential part of Bishop Suheil's vision. Several regional meetings and conferences are held each year in different areas. The diocese is investing in building the capacity of women in the community to enable them to be active members in developing the community and to have the capacity to actively contribute to decision-making on a high level in the community.

Youth. As they are the next generation of hope for clergy, lay leadership, institution management and peacemakers, young people are valued members of the diocese congregations. The diocese supports them in faith development, mutual respect and cooperation in parish and ecumenical programmes. Parishes and ecumenical cooperative programmes include children's Christian Education, Bible studies, youth choirs, social events, and trips. Regional diocesan youth conferences and summer camps bring them together to expand their horizons, explore faith in their lives, develop self-confidence and teach leadership skills.

These four ministries serve to sustain and strengthen the Christian presence in the Middle East

Gaza Hospital Crisis

UNRWA ends funding and puts hospital at risk

Diocese to create a new strategy for survival

Sawsan Batator explains the new situation at Al-Ahli hospital:

The political situation and the resultant economic crises in Gaza have negatively affected the wellbeing of its citizens. Most of its residents are denied access to such basic needs as food, healthcare and education. Gaza's unemployment rate reached 45.4% in 2011 with approximately 53% of the population living below the poverty line.

This has negatively impacted the general health of the residents, and there is a significant increase in the incidence of chronic diseases. Consequently, the demand for health care is dramatically increasing in Gaza. Without the support of international aid and intervention, it will be very hard to make any improvement in Palestinian health indicators, and the vulnerable and oppressed will suffer the most.

Al-Ahli Hospital is one of the leading healthcare ministries of the Diocese of Jerusalem and it is known and respected as a provider of the highest quality health care for all the people of Gaza. The hospital was built in 1882 by the Church Missionary Society. In 1982 it became a healthcare ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and is the only Christian hospital in the Gaza Strip, with 90% of their staff being refugees.

Despite the hardships and harsh situations in Gaza, Al-Ahli continues to provide quality healthcare to all in need regardless of their religion, color, ethnicity or political affiliation. The hospital provides medical services including general surgery, general medicine, pediatric, obstetrics, gynecology, orthopedics, ENT, urology and plastic surgery, as well as a 24-hour emergency and ambulance service. Other services provided include physical therapy rehabilitation, laboratory, radiology, and health promotion. Due to the current deterioration of the economic situation, Al-Ahli Hospital provides free medical treatments and food assistance for the poorest families including vulnerable children, and frail elderly.

The main objectives of Al-Ahli hospital are: provide adequate medical care services to the impoverished ill and the victims of the current violence, reduce the disability and mortality from acute and chronic illnesses, make the medical services accessible to all



the needy, ensure gender equality and equity, improve the health of the deprived mothers and children suffering from malnutrition, and provide high quality standards of service.

Although there is broad recognition of the role that Al-Ahli Hospital has played since the 1950s in delivering quality medical services to refugees in the Gaza Strip, UNWRA, the UN body charged with delivering health and education services to Palestinian refugees, has given notice that it will cease funding of Al-Ahli Hospital as of January, 2013. Indeed, it had intended to cease funding immediately but was persuaded to provide a 6 month bridging contract to the hospital, in order to allow the Diocese of Jerusalem to find the additional financial resources needed to keep the hospital open and responsive to the needs of the people.

The rationale provided by UNWRA for its decision to end funding was due to its implementation of a tender process for medical services. Due to the increasing number of private health sector providers that are being established in Gaza, UNWRA chose another healthcare provider and therefore ended its contract with Al-Ahli Hospital, even though Al-Ahli Hospital was known affectionately as UNWRA Hospital and has provided the very highest quality of medical service to the people of Gaza for many decades.

Immediately following UNWRA's decision to end funding to Al-Ahli Hospital, the Diocese of Jerusalem announced its commitment to keeping the hospital open, and to make every effort to ensure that its medical ministry to the people of Gaza Strip continues. The diocese is working closely with the leadership of the hospital to aid its transition from financial dependence on UNWRA and will take the necessary steps to ensure quality medical services are provided to the residents of Gaza, who look to the hospital for their health care needs. The diocese has engaged a credible consultancy firm to assist with the development of a new strategic plan for the long-term sustainability of Al-Ahli hospital and its service to the people of Gaza.

St George's College Jerusalem

Jerusalem
Bishop Suhel Dawani

The Dean, Dr. Graham Smith, reflects on some experiences in his first year:



Whenever I stop to ponder what has been happening at St. George's College, what comes to mind are the reflections of pilgrims on what they have seen. As we approach the season of Advent, I am reminded of two powerful incidents.

The first took place at the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth. Visiting the place that honours where the incarnation began, you are struck by the many artistic offerings from all over the world, of the Blessed Mother with child.

I love to ask every pilgrim to find the Madonna of their national origin and then explain it to the rest of us. On one particular pilgrimage, a woman of Polish origin found the rendering of Mary given by Poland. It is displayed outside on the southern wall and is strikingly different from so many of the other icons. Instead of Mary holding her child, she is surrounded by children from many other nations. The woman understood the story behind the icon and began to cry. The children were orphans from the Nazi and Russian invasions, when their parents were killed and people from the surrounding nations took them into their homes. This woman knew the story, because she was the child of two of those orphans. Her parents, two of the orphans, had met, married and given this woman the gift of life. When you are on pilgrimage such holy encounters leave a deep impression!

A second reflection on Advent comes from our course "Ways in the Wilderness". John the Baptist described himself as a voice crying in the wilderness. This pilgrimage offers each of us both the opportunity to view the actual wilderness of the bible and the opportunity to think about wilderness experiences in our own lives. As our group sat in a Bedouin tent looking east into the quiet and stark beauty of the Negev, we began to appreciate more of the wilderness than we noticed at first sight. There was more life than we first noticed. There was food for the wildlife and the sounds of birds. There was light and shadow, shapes and stark contrasts. The strong heat of the sun changed to softer sounds of the wind. It was almost as if God was saying, *"be still, wait, watch and pray. I am in charge. I will bring change and make a way for you in the wilderness."* Perhaps this is the kind of stillness and pastoral counsel we should give as pastors to those who are going through a wilderness experience in their own lives. God is in charge. The circumstances

of our lives will change if we trust God to bring that change and guide us through the wilderness. The land of the Holy One is filled with such divine messages.

St. George's College is uniquely situated in the Land of the Holy One near the Holy City. It is a place of pilgrimage and transformation through prayer, study, reflection and discovery. We offer the highest quality of teaching and spiritual reflection. Our chef prepares gourmet meals. Travel, restaurants, and visiting holy sites are superbly organized. In the past year we have renovated all of the guest rooms.

We invite you to come as our guests to experience the Holy Land, to walk in the steps of Jesus and to meet the "Living Stones" in the Church today.

Course Programme 2013

Palestine of Jesus – Seminarians	\$3050
Tuesday, 15 January – Monday, 28 January	
Palestine of Jesus	\$3050
Tuesday, 05 February- Monday, 18 February	
Palestine of Jesus – Lenten Journey	\$3050
Thursday, 28 February – Wednesday, 13 March	
Islam or Islams Today	\$1750
Wednesday, 20 March – Wednesday 27 March	
Palestine of Jesus – An Eastertide Journey	\$3050
Thursday, 4 April- Wednesday, 17 April	
St. Paul and the Early Church	\$5760
Tuesday, 14 May- Monday, 27 May (Entire Course in Turkey)	
Palestine of Jesus	\$3050
Tuesday, 4 June – Monday, 17 June	
Youth Course	\$1550
Tuesday, 2 July – Tuesday, 9 July	
Palestine of Jesus	\$3050
Wednesday, 24 July- Tuesday, 6 August	
Palestine of Jesus	\$3050
Thursday, 15 August – Wednesday 28 August	
Children of Abraham	\$2310
Friday, 6 September – Wednesday 18 September	
Ways in the Wilderness	\$5200
Tuesday, 1 October – Monday, 14 October	
Palestine of Jesus	\$3050
14 days: Thursday, 24 October – Wednesday 6 November	
Woman in the Holy Land	\$2260
10 days: Tuesday, 12 November – Thursday, 21 November	
Palestine of Jesus – Advent in the Holy Land	\$2260
Tuesday, 10 December – Thursday, 19 December	

For more information dean@sgcjerusalem.org

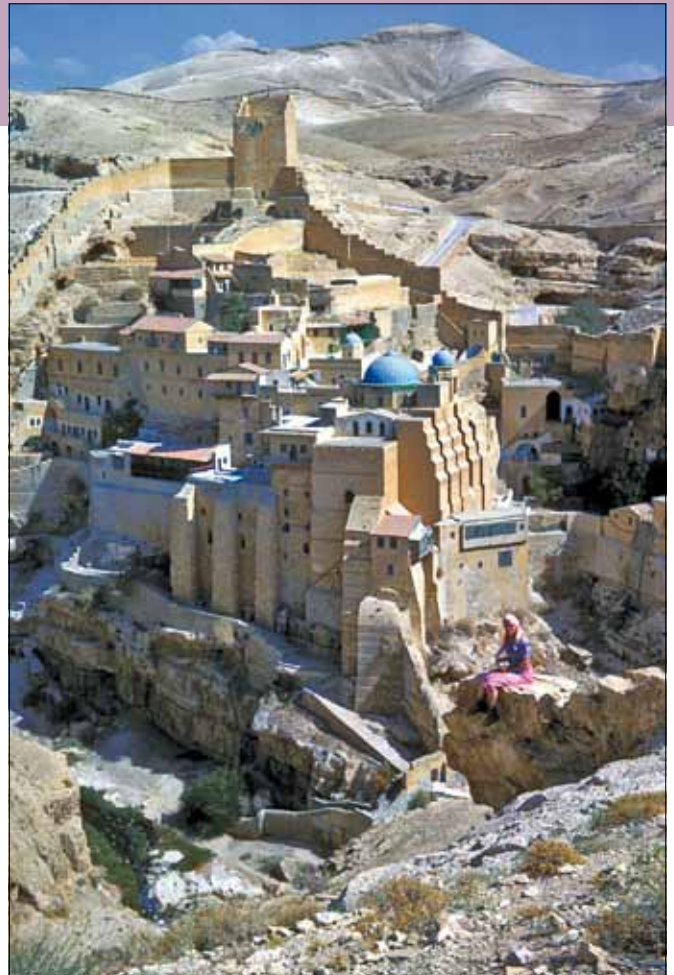
The Monastic Tradition of Mar Saba

Rev James Harris is a parish priest and area dean in the Church in Wales with a growing interest in the development of Christian-Muslim Relations. Having recently completed an M Phil on the subject, in which the history of Mar Saba monastery and its martyrs featured, James spent part of a sabbatical visiting Mar Saba. Grants from JMECA and the Anglican and Eastern Churches Association contributed towards this sabbatical travel, which also included an introductory Arabic language course. Inspired by the writings of Hans Küng on inter-religious dialogue, James hopes to pursue this area of research further.

The Orthodox monastery of Mar Saba, overlooking the barren Kidron valley, lies in the Judaeen wilderness a few miles south of Bethlehem, at the end of a winding road. It is not the kind of place that you just pass by, unless you are a bird or the pilot of an Israeli military helicopter. With its tightly packed cluster of whitewashed buildings, some with blue domes, it is a striking sight for the few who see it. It is surrounded by a wall, contains a couple of watchtowers and some of it overhangs a steep precipice. It looks like a castle. The history of this ancient monastic foundation, whose origins lie in the fourth century CE, are as bloody as that of many castles. The cave church of St Nicholas, within the walls of the monastery, contain several skulls and bones, the relics of martyred monks, some of whom perished during the seventh century Persian invasion of Palestine, others of whom were slain during a raid on the monastery by plundering tribesmen in the early ninth century, when law and order in the Abbasid caliphate had broken down. Despite these and other upheavals, the monastery has been the home of deeply ascetic monks from the fourth century to the present day.

The monastery of Mar Saba, whose most famous resident is perhaps the Church Father, John of Damascus, came to my attention recently while I was working on an M Phil about early Christian-Muslim relations. The monastery was the source for an incredible output of Christian writing in Arabic, as well as other languages, in the eighth and ninth centuries. As well as producing martyrs of its own, it was the place where accounts of martyrs' deaths were written down. Palestine contains the ruined reminders of so many Byzantine monastic foundations that did not last long in the aftermath of the Muslim invasion. The monastery of Mar Saba not only survived, but became a theological powerhouse as Melkite Christians came to terms with the new world order in which they had to survive without the support of the Byzantine Christian state.

I was grateful for the opportunity of having such a deep insight into such a different way of being the Church, as well as being able to experience something of the timeless silence of the desert. As I munched my fasting diet of raw vegetables and looked out from the remote monastery onto a barren landscape dotted with old hermits' caves, I found myself, as a Welsh Christian, inevitably thinking of



St David and other Celtic saints, building their monastic cells and living simply in colder, wetter, greener but no less demanding surroundings.

The sense of peace on the edge of the wilderness can be deceptive, however. There were the military checkpoints, the security fence, the settlements and the palpable unease in Jerusalem, where faiths bump into each other in and around the old city but do not seem to engage. There is much religion there, but little peace. One of the few Palestinian Christians who visited the monastery for spiritual direction while I was there spoke of how many Palestinian Christians had left to make a new life in other lands. The monks, for their part, drew comfort from the tradition of a promise made by the Virgin Mary to St Saba that the monastery would remain until Judgement Day. From what I could discern of their faith and commitment, it seemed clear that they were determined to make sure that this monastery, which had weathered storms in the past, would indeed remain until then.

Diocese of Iran

One Hundredth Anniversary

2012 marks the centenary of the formation of the Diocese of Iran and the bi-centenary of the death of Henry Martyn, the forerunner of Anglican missionary work in Iran. He lived in Shiraz for eleven months from 1811-12 to translate the New Testament into simple and direct Persian.

But it was not until the consecration of the Revd Charles Stileman in July 1912 as the first Anglican Bishop in Iran that a diocese could be formed. CMS had begun work in the country in 1869 when the Revd Robert Bruce on his way to India stopped in the Julfa suburb of Isfahan to help Armenian Christians at a time of famine. He was charged by CMS with revising Martyn's translation and eventually produced a translation of the whole Bible in 1895.

Between 1875 and 1900 CMS began medical and educational work in four southern Iranian cities, Isfahan, Yazd, Kerman and Shiraz. Small congregations were formed and these cities (along with some outlying villages), with the addition of Tehran in the 1950s, remained the focus of diocesan work during the twentieth century until the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

Bishop Stileman retired because of ill-health in 1915 and after the First World War was succeeded in 1919 by Bishop James Linton who made the development of an Iranian Episcopal/Anglican Church and the training of clergy and lay leadership his priority. This policy was continued by his successor Bishop William Thompson who in the early 1950s ordained a number of young Iranian men from Jewish, Muslim and Zoroastrian backgrounds to lead the congregations. And it was from among their number that the first Iranian Bishop, Hassan Dehqani-Tafti (in 1961), and his successor, Iraj Muttahedeh, were consecrated.

During the 1960s and 70s Iranians took on the leadership of the Church, its congregations and institutions. The Church developed a more Iranian character. Bishop Dehqani-Tafti was a notable poet, hymn-writer, author, pastor, preacher and leader. He became the first President Bishop of the newly created Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East

in 1976 handing on that role after ten years. The diocesan medical and educational work and its ministry among blind people flourished and were well received as they sought to express the values of the gospel in practical care.

With the 1979 Islamic Revolution came what Bishop Dehqani-Tafti called 'the hard awakening'. A week after the February revolution the Revd Arastoo Sayyah was murdered in Shiraz. In the following months the diocesan hospitals and other institutions in Isfahan and Shiraz were expropriated and other diocesan property seized. In October there was an attempt on the life of Bishop Dehqani-Tafti and his wife, which they miraculously survived. On attending meetings of the Anglican Communion later that month, he was advised by trusted colleagues inside and outside Iran to remain outside the country.

In 1980 his Secretary, Jean Waddell, was wounded by intruders and a week later the bishop's only son, Bahram, was brutally murdered in Tehran.

Today congregations of Christians continue to worship regularly in Tehran, Isfahan and Shiraz. They may be few in numbers but they deserve the prayers, support and encouragement of Christians across the world.

The bishop's remarkable prayer for forgiveness for his son's murderers was widely circulated and moved many. In August 1980 seven members of the Church were arrested including the Revd Iraj Muttahedeh and released in February 1981.

Bishop Dehqani-Tafti remained outside Iran for the rest of his life. He devoted himself to completing his time as President Bishop, to support for the church in Iran and to writing extensively in Persian to provide resources for Iranians including a three volume study of 'Christ and Christianity among Iranians'.

He retired in 1994 to be succeeded by Iraj Muttahedeh who had been consecrated to be Assistant Bishop in Iran in 1986. With the retirement of Bishop Muttahedeh in 2004 the President Bishop invited Bishop Azad Marshall, from Pakistan and an Assistant Bishop in the Province, to be Vicar-General of the diocese and to visit regularly. In 2007 Bishop Azad was installed as Bishop in Iran. Although not able to reside in the country he visits as often as possible to provide encouragement and pastoral oversight.

Today congregations of Christians continue to worship regularly in Tehran, Isfahan and Shiraz. They may be few in numbers but they deserve the prayers, support and encouragement of Christians across the world.

Editor



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JMECA

Supporting the
Episcopal Church of
Jerusalem and
the Middle East

www.jmecca.org.uk



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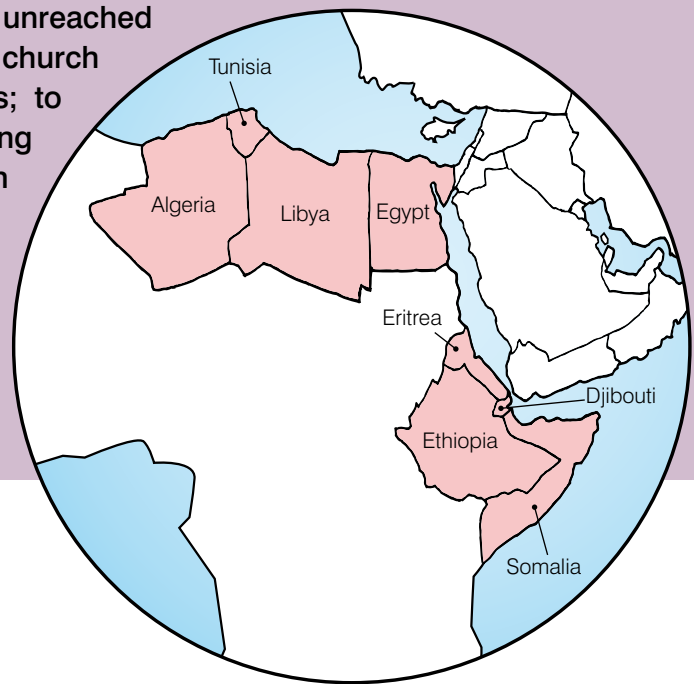
- 1 WEST BANK – St. Philips Kindergarten, Nablus
- 2 EGYPT – Centre for children with special needs, Menouf
- 3 EGYPT – Harpur Hospital, Menouf
- 4 JORDAN – Mainstream School with partially sighted children, Irbid
- 5 JERUSALEM – Centre for disabled children, Mount of Olives
- 6 YEMEN REPUBLIC – Eye Clinic, Aden
- 7 EGYPT – Refugee Centre, Cairo
- 8 IRAQ – St. George's Church, Baghdad
- 9 GAZA – Al-Ahli Hospital
- 10 JORDAN – Holy Land Institute for the Deaf, Salt
- 11 ETHIOPIA – Graduation Day, Gambella

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.



Many Changes in Diocesan Staff

Mrs. Clair Malik decided to step down from the position of the "Director of the Deaf Unit" in Old Cairo which she held for 30 years. One of the great fruits of her committed service and vision is the Vocational Training Centre for the Deaf in 6th of October City which was opened on 24 July. It was a real joy to see that one of the lecture rooms at this centre was dedicated to her. We are happy that Mrs. Clair will continue to work with us as the "Diocesan Consultant for Education."

The Rev. Farag Hanna is now the Director of the Deaf Unit and interim-supervisor of the Vocational Training Centre in 6th of October City, in addition to his responsibilities as the priest-in-charge of the Church for the Deaf in Old Cairo. Please pray for Rev. Farag as he starts his new responsibilities so that God may give him wisdom and grace.

Mr. Essam Louis Ibrahim has been a professional woodworker and tutor at the Deaf Unit since 1987. He devoted his studies, his work, and his life to those with disabilities, especially those who are hearing-impaired. The Diocese wishes him all the best in his future and thanks him for 15 years of service!

The Rev. 'Rick' & Anne Belser have returned to the Diocese of Egypt, only not to Egypt this time but to Ethiopia! Rick is filling in as the locum at St. Matthew's in Addis Ababa, until Rev. Roger Kay and

his family return from their "home assignment" with CMS Australia. We are very grateful to The Diocese of South Carolina for lending them to us!

The Rev. Samuel Iskander the former director of "Spiritual Ministry" in our Community Development Centres, has left to work under Rev. Vasihar at Christ the King Church in Tripoli, Libya where he worked many years ago. Please pray for him and his wife Honi as they settle into this new job and obtain the necessary visas and paperwork.

Deacon Osama Abd-el Messih the deacon-in-charge of St. Mark's Anglican Church in Menouf has been asked to take over the 'spiritual' work Rev. Samuel Iskander has been doing. His farewell service in Menouf was in September when he moved to Cairo.

The Rev. Drew Schmotzer the Chaplain to the Bishop, is now also the interim priest-in-charge of St. Mark's Anglican Church in Menouf until a permanent pastor is appointed.

The Rev. Hesan James, an assistant priest at St. Michael & All Angels in Heliopolis is now an assistant priest at All Saints Cathedral in Zamalek and studying at the Episcopal Training Centre. He has completed his studies at the Alexandria School of Theology.

Great hopes for Egyptian Christians

Bishop Mouneer reports on President Mursi's landmark meeting with church leaders:

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

President Mohammed Mursi, the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, invited the Heads of Denominations in Egypt in order to dialogue with us. The two-hour long meeting was attended by 13 bishops and pastors representing the Coptic Orthodox, the Catholic, the Greek Orthodox, the Anglican, and the Protestant Churches. I, and all my colleagues, appreciated the fact that the President called us twice in less than two months to talk and listen to us. This never happened in the last 30 years.

The President shared with us the reasons behind his recent decisions to dismiss the military chiefs and the cancelling of the constitutional declarations they made. By these decisions the President put an end to the military ruling of the country which started since 1952. He also shared his hopes that the new Constitution would represent the hopes and views of all Egyptian regardless of their religion, ethnic background and political views. This will guarantee the support of the vast majority of people to the new constitution.

President Mursi expressed his deep appreciation of our assurance that we pray for him in our churches. He also assured us that his Islamic faith commands him to be gracious and just with people of other faiths.

The President then gave the opportunity for each of one of us to speak frankly about current situation in Egypt and our hopes for the future. We shared the following points:

1. The need to alleviate the current sectarian congestion that leads to recurrent clashes. Ignorance and wrong teaching are behind such congestion. This requires the propagation of the sound and moderate religious teaching of Islam as taught by Al Azhar. There is also a need to improve the religious speech (sermons and teachings) in order to build up the thought of the people.
2. The need to care for the education of the new generations so that they become more tolerant and good citizens. We suggested that common values should be taught in schools.
3. The importance of applying the rule of law on everyone, especially when sectarian clashes happen.
4. The importance of working to relief the suffering of the people by improving the economy, health care and restoring order in the society.

We told the President that we are aware that he received a heavy responsibility at a very difficult time in Egypt's history and we all need to be patient and hard-working in order to see the desired fruits.

The President assured us that he is working to achieve the dream of Egypt: to be a democratic and modern country where the rights of citizenship and the constitution are held up high.

In the end, we came out of the meeting very encouraged and determined to do our best in order to see the Egypt that we dream of.

Please pray for our President, for all religious leaders, and for our beloved country Egypt.

May the Lord bless you!

+ Mouneer Egypt



President Mursi, eighth from left, with the church leaders.

News of Sadat City Hospital

DR. STEPHEN MANGAR was assisted by JMECA with a grant from the Bishop Cragg Trust fund. Here he reviews his placement at All Saints Cathedral Cairo and observes progress at Sadat City Hospital



The Episcopal Anglican church in Egypt represents a minority of Christians operating in a predominantly Muslim country, where the law prevents the public proclamation of Christianity and evangelisation of Muslims.

As a doctor I undertook a placement at All Saints Cathedral, with direct involvement of supporting medical ministries at Harpur Memorial Hospital and Refuge Egypt, in order to assess the impact of this important missional component of the church.

Despite its relatively small constitution, the Anglican Church in Egypt makes an important contribution to serving the whole community, and clearly has an impact on a significant number of Muslims and Christians alike for which it is well received. There is a sense of joy for those serving in this ministry which reaches out to the vulnerable and marginalised, and such missional focus in turn provides a vehicle for sustenance and growth of the church through evangelism and discipleship.

Developments at the Sadat City hospital

This satellite hospital was opened in 2010 in Sadat, an industrial city built over three decades ago, 90km north west of Cairo, and serving a population of 300,000 people of which 20% come from a Christian background. The initiative is a joint venture with the foundation stone laid in 2004 by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the deputy of the Grand Imam of Egypt, and with on-going support from both business and religious leaders. It aims to provide high quality affordable healthcare, basic healthcare services to people in Sadat and surrounding villages, many of whom work in factories. The main clinics I attended were primary healthcare, obstetrics and gynaecology but there were at least 8 types of specialist clinic. The most utilised services were General Practice, Paediatric, Ophthalmic and Dental clinics. Surgical cases are still performed at Menouf.

Unlike Menouf, there was ample space for development, but the hospital was very much a work in progress, with limited facilities at present despite being a new venture. For example the hospital only had basic x-ray equipment, and would have benefited greatly from having imaging equipment such as a CT scan. Only basic blood tests could be done, and blood transfusions could not yet be administered. These would be needed in a hospital undertaking general and obstetric surgery and providing emergency capability.

Dr Awad, the hospital Director was clear about the ambition for the hospital. He wants to bring the healing presence of God to the suffering patients and to go deep into the community bearing the light of Jesus. Clearly the hospital has huge potential, and like any other new initiative it needs more funding to realise this. The hospital already serves the needs of the community well, with a significant number of Salafi Muslims attending the hospital for treatment.

One of the main criticisms about medical personnel engaging in mission is the ethics of preaching to a captive and vulnerable audience, thus using medicine to make converts. My own observations at Harpur did not bear this out, Christian witness here was not just about evangelism, or about Christians assuming a role of moral superiority, but rather more about serving others; *evangelism in action*. I thought the medical community at Harpur acknowledged and managed to achieve a balance between meeting the spiritual and medical needs of the patients by practically demonstrating God's love through serving the needs of the community. I witnessed a real love with no hidden agendas with care and compassion for Christians and Muslims alike. The numbers of doctors and ancillary staff were small, but nevertheless were extremely dedicated and clearly for the hospital to grow and flourish in the future attracting doctors who are committed to the ministry and willing to work for less money than they would be paid at other hospitals will be an on-going challenge.

Developments Continue...

It is astonishing that in spite of instability and so much uncertainty, the small minority of Anglican Christians continue to serve and thrive

Training in Anglicanism

There is a lot of confusion among the many branches of the Christian churches about the distinctive place of Anglicanism. In the summer Bishop Mouneer initiated a training day on Anglicanism for members of the churches in Cairo. Approximately 150 people participated. He shared reflections on the history, theology, ecclesiology, practice, mission and evangelism of the Anglican Church and concluded the day by leading an instructed Eucharist at All Saints Cathedral. It was an encouraging day as people came to understand their faith and our Anglican expression of Christianity in a more complete way. They also had opportunities to ask questions and receive feedback. The bishop intends to duplicate this training throughout the churches in the diocese, and he has encouraged clergy to also give training throughout the year.

Egypt Council of Churches

During the summer Bishop Mouneer hosted the Egypt Council of Churches in the Diocesan Guest House. It was a wonderful opportunity to bring the Coptic Orthodox, the Coptic Catholic, the Evangelical (Presbyterian) and the Anglican churches together to discuss ways of working in partnership and advancing the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Representatives of other churches, including the Armenian Catholic and the Roman Catholic churches also attended, as well as Mr. Guirguis Salah the Secretary General of the Middle East Council of Churches.

The Egypt Council of Churches was formed by the late Pope Shenouda III of the Coptic Orthodox Church, after meeting with Bishop Mouneer who proposed the idea based upon the model of the Middle East Council of Churches and other national councils, such as the Sudanese Council of Churches. The event was a suitable memorial for the late Pope Shenouda and it is hoped that the partnerships will develop.

New Vocational Training Centre

Bishop Mouneer, alongside a Coptic Orthodox priest from 6 of October City, Mr. Essam (Manager of the current VTC in Old Cairo), Mrs. Clair Ghais (then Director of the Deaf Unit) and Rev. Farag Hanna (Priest-in-charge of the Church for the Deaf), officially opened the new VTC building in 6th of October City. The new Vocational Training Centre provides for metal work, wood work, electrical work, plumbing, car

mechanics, handcrafts, as well as training in business.

The current VTC is relocating to 6th of October City and purchasing new equipment and preparing new vocational training departments.



Horn of Africa

Ethiopia's Prime Minister and its Patriarch died within two weeks of each other in August. Meles Zenawi had been a powerful reforming Prime Minister and His Holiness Abune Paulos, Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox church, had ruled for twenty years in what was perceived as an effective political partnership. The Patriarch's death at the age of 76 was sudden and unexpected. In his colourful life he had been imprisoned during the Mengistu regime and sent into exile in the United States. When he was chosen as Patriarch in 1992 he was the first from the Tigray region. He replaced a Patriarch Merkerios who had supported Mengistu and the circumstances of his dethronement are still disputed. Merkerios set up a rival synod in exile but Abune Paulos was recognised as the Patriarch by all the Eastern churches although he had many political enemies. The late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, was from the same Tigray region. Rev Rick Belser, then interim priest in charge at St. Matthew's Addis Ababa, wrote "I have letters of condolence from Bishop Mouneer and from the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Rowan Williams, which I will read to the assembly and pass to appropriate representatives of Abune Paulos' family."



Horn of Africa

Bishop Grant arrives at Gambella

Bishop Grant and his wife Wendy will be based in Gambella – two days hard drive from Addis Ababa by car! Gambella is geographically and culturally very different from the Ethiopian highlands. Malaria, TB, water-borne diseases, tribal conflict and flooding are regular features of life in Gambella.

The work of the Anglican Church began in 1996 in refugee camps in the region. Since then, through building relationships with indigenous peoples, Anglican Churches have been established among the three major tribes, the Nuer, the Annuak and the Opo. There are now 53 church congregations in the Gambella Regional State, largely following the Baro River (a tributary of the White Nile) and clustered in Mission Centres.

Each Mission Centre is served by a paid, ordained leader and a theology tutor, who visit the outlying village churches under their care and gather the people together regularly for meetings with prayer and study.

While the bishop's arrival was awaited the area was well served by Rev Iri and Kate Mato who write:

What an amazing experience it has been for us to be here in Gambella and so unexpected too. We had finished our seven years in Tanzania and were packing to go home to New Zealand last November when within an hour we received an email from Bishop Mouneer followed by a phone call from Steve Maina of CMS New Zealand asking if we would serve in Gambella, from February until September. Knowing how CMS supports Bishop Mouneer and his great work, we quickly decided that this was a call from the Lord and immediately replied that we would go. Then came the hard part of explaining to our four children and six grandchildren that we would not be staying in New Zealand but would only be home for a few weeks.

Those few weeks saw us visiting our family, gathering up documents and applying for our Visa and by February we were in Gambella. We found it to be so very hot, we could scarcely breathe but gradually we acclimatised and with the help of the staff, set about organising things in readiness for Bishop Grant's arrival. The old builders' shed was demolished and old building materials removed from the site, new furnishings made ready, the Bishop's house painted, the grounds planted and contacts built up with the Anglican priests of the region. Here many of the priests



live far away; some up to three days travel from the Gambella Anglican Centre. It has been great to meet these servants of God who struggle daily in far flung villages with minimal facilities and many difficulties. We thank the Lord, Bishop Mouneer and the New Zealand CMS for the opportunity to serve in this part of God's vineyard. Now, perhaps we are going home to our family or maybe God has another plan for our lives: Jeremiah 29:11

Bishop Grant and his wife Wendy wrote as they left USA to take up the appointment:

My father, Michael, who could neither carry a tune, nor dance, none the less would happily prance and leap about our childhood home, regaling us with stories of how Michael the Mag-snif-icant, aka 'Twinkle Toes', would sing and dance before the crowned heads of Europe - much to their (and frankly our) amazement.

As we get ready to leave with full hearts and full suitcases, and perhaps not exactly twinkling toes, the scripture, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news" comes to mind. I feel as if Jesus is kneeling and washing my feet with your prayers and with your love mingling with His.

We are truly blessed to be sent out with your ongoing prayers and support, and we will carry you in our hearts and prayers as we journey.

Special thanks to our partners who have pledged financial support – we are now at 80% of goal! What a joy to partner with each other and with Jesus in His love for Africa!

Please pray –

- for peace in the midst of all the myriad details of moving
- for full financial support
- for listening and loving hearts
- and for feet shining and prepared with the gospel of peace!

*With our love and prayer
Wendy + Grant*

Obituaries

His Beatitude the Armenian Apostolic Patriarch of Jerusalem, Torkom II

Poet, musician and writer who was for 22 years the 96th Patriarch.

His Beatitude passed to his rest on 12th October at the age of 93 and in the 23rd year of his patriarchate. He had been in a coma since suffering a stroke in January.

He was born at the time of the Armenian genocide in a refugee camp near the desert town of Baquba, north of Baghdad, where he went to school. He was transferred to the theological seminary in Jerusalem and was ordained deacon at the age of 19. For ten years he served in the Jerusalem patriarchate but in 1946 he began his long association with the Armenian Church of North America where he served in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and New York where he was instrumental in building the first Armenian cathedral in America. For 24 years he was Primate of the Eastern Diocese until he returned to Jerusalem in 1990 as the Patriarch. As a musician, choral conductor and composer he greatly influenced the Armenian Divine Liturgy, as a poet he published under the 'pen name' of Shen Mah and translated all Shakespeare's 154 sonnets into Armenian, as a writer he published a detailed guide book of the holy places in Jerusalem as well as studies of the Armenian genocide. Beyond the Patriarchate he was known for his ecumenism. He served on the executive of the National Council of Churches in the United States and had been chairman of the 'Religion in American Life' foundation. Following the devastating Armenian earthquake of 1988 he was instrumental in co-ordinating the international effort to mobilise financial and material support for the rehabilitation process, a task which he continued to the end of his life. The election of a new patriarch will take place 40 days after the death, around the time this magazine is circulated.

Very Revd. Professor Robert Davidson

Academic who founded the Scottish Palestinian Forum

Professor Davidson, who died in September, was born in Fife in 1927 and had a distinguished career as an academic who became Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1990. The 'Very Reverend' title is given to teaching elders on their retirement as Moderator. Professor Davidson was a graduate of St. Andrews to which he returned as lecturer in Hebrew and the Old Testament. He became Professor of Old Testament Studies at the University of Glasgow and was Principal of Trinity College from 1981 until his retirement ten years later. He published a large number of Biblical studies and theological papers and was honoured with a considerable array of academic awards. On an academic visit to Israel that included Gaza, the Golan and the West Bank, he became the only Moderator to be tear-gassed, an experience he viewed with his customary equanimity. In his retirement years he was the founding Chair of the Scottish Palestinian Forum, and gave the movement wise leadership and a great amount of time until his retirement from the position in 2004. Before that retirement he chaired an influential theological study which produced the report on '*Theology of Land and Covenant*,' an academic Biblical study of issues concerning the 'Promised Land' which has far reaching political significance. His reputation and the affection in which he was held made him a powerful advocate for justice for the Palestinian people.

Revd. Dr. David Brewster, 1930-2012

Priest, lecturer and J.E.M. secretary

David Brewster, whose priestly ministry began in 1958, was best known as a parish priest in Oxford and Winchester dioceses and as a lecturer at Lady Spencer-Churchill College Oxford and later for several years in Christchurch New Zealand. However, earlier in his ministry he served in North Africa as chaplain in Tunisia. On his return to England in 1965 he accepted the post as secretary of this organisation, then known as the Jerusalem and the East Mission (JEM) which he served for a year. It was a difficult and formative time for this Association and also for the Province, which then bore little resemblance to its present shape and structure. His commitment and scholarly energy were greatly valued.

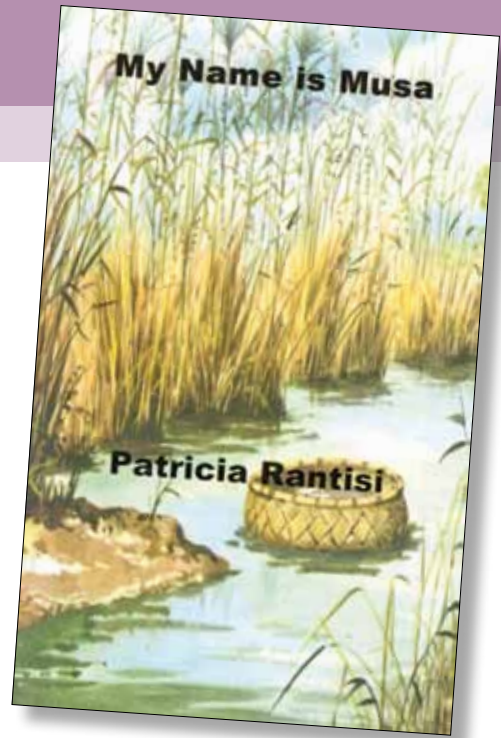
MY NAME IS MUSA

Patricia Rantisi

FeedARead.com Publishing – £7.99 – 394 pages

This novel could only have been written by someone with profound experience of the Israel/Palestine conflict and Patricia Rantisi certainly has that. For 37 years she lived in Ramallah and worked at the children's home run by her husband the late Audeh Rantisi, an Anglican priest. She has since published a revised version of his autobiography '*Blessed are the Peacemakers*'.

In this latest publication she tells a story that pulls the heart strings and gives hope as she reveals goodness as well as confusion among people on all sides of the conflict. The story is built around a British Jewish couple who holiday in Israel, the guests of friends whose home is in a settlement built on disputed land. While they are strolling along a river bank they find a wicker basket caught in the rushes, with a baby inside and a tag saying 'My name is Musa'. The story tells of the care the Jewish couple take of the Arab infant and of the passionate emotions involved when health and adoption issues arise with painful complications of religion, culture, health, finance and broken marriages. And the end of the story? Well it is unfair to give endings away, but let's say that as



Musa grows up, the author, like all good story tellers, leaves us wanting more. It is a hard hearted reader who fails to be moved and an ignorant one who fails to understand more of the legalism, bureaucracy and prejudices which make reconciliation even more difficult. This is a strong and deeply human story filled with compassion, and realism.

Tim Biles

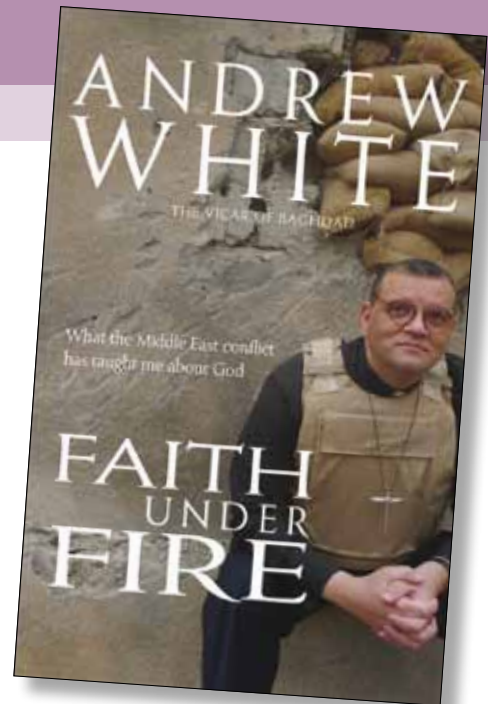
FAITH UNDER FIRE

By Canon Andrew White

Monarch books – ISBN 9781854249623 – £8.99

Andrew White, the self-styled 'Vicar of Baghdad' encounters daily tragedy alongside a troubled congregation midst a city in turmoil. The book searches for what he has found about God in such circumstances. What happens to his faith when a young girl in his congregation dies, after much hope and prayer? Every time he returns to Iraq he may be saying goodbye to his family for the last time. What do they think? He suffers from MS. How does he remain cheerful despite his physical weakness, and its progression? He meets regularly with men who wish to use him. What has kept him free from cynicism? What does he say to God, alone in his study, late at night? Can he see the hand of God? Looking ahead, can he be optimistic about the future? Where are his sources of spiritual energy? These are the questions he asks himself and shares with readers. The book won the 'Ultimate Christian Library Award' for 2012.

Canon White is now limiting his engagements. He is curtailing his fund raising activities which have frequently taken him to America and many other



places outside Iraq. His mobility is now restricted. "I cannot do what I once did. I hate letting people down, but I have got to be aware of my own limitations and leave the funding to the Almighty." Readers of this book will understand the toll of stress.

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. The Cathedral staff and Very Revd. Canon Hosam Nahoum, the Dean.

3rd **The clergy** serving the parishes 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: 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 of Studies, Reverend Dr. Graham Smith.

*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 and his wife Lesley, and for his pastoral visits to Iran.

11th **The leaders**, Revd. Canon Nosratullah Sharifian and Mr. Baba Mohammadi in Ishafan, Revd. Christopher Edgar in Tehran, Mr. Ashrafi in Shiraz, and their faithful people.

12th **The congregations** of Ishafan, Tehran and Shiraz that they may contribute well to Iranian society and live full and free lives.

13th **The plans** to develop an Inter-faith Centre for dialogue in Tehran, that they may be fruitful.

14th **The Government**, the Supreme Leader, the President, the Governors and all in authority.

*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 building work and the appeal for funding.
- 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. Emad Azmi, 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

John Clark, the JMET chairman, reflects:



Turmoil, conflict, sectarian killing and the threat of war dominate newspaper headlines about the Middle East. These are, indeed, difficult and uncertain days. But beneath the press news Christians across the region are working to different values, to build bridges and counter the threats to community life. We highlight a number in this issue. Bishop Suheil's account of the celebration of the Iftar feast at Jerusalem's St George's Cathedral, Bishop Michael's account of the many congregations that use the Episcopal church buildings in the Gulf, Bishop Mouneer's hopes for better relations between the Muslim majority and Christian minority in Egypt, and the editor's account of one hundred years of the Diocese of Iran all tell of a different approach from that which dominates the news.

Nevertheless the Churches in the Middle East need increased support in prayer and in finance. You will receive this Bible Lands before Christmas but we also wanted to tell you that JMECA is renewing its encouragement to parishes to donate a Good Friday or other Easter offering to support the Church in the Middle East. We will be emailing bishops, parishes and supporters in the New Year to encourage additional gifts for that support – and the information in this Bible Lands gives some idea of the ministry and social outreach to which your gifts contribute.

Bible Lands is a journal of record about the Episcopal Church in the Middle East. Our Editor provides an excellent range of reflective articles and news highlights in a magazine that is easy to read and to keep – and that can be kept on a coffee table and shared with others. It is the only magazine of its kind. It is complemented by our website www.jmecca.org.uk which is regularly updated with news about the region between the issues of Bible Lands, background to the Churches we support, other information and ways of making donations.

Information about the Good Friday offering will be added to that website – but in the meantime why not give a special Christmas donation to support the Church in the Middle East.

Thank you so much for your interest, prayers and support.

www.jmecca.org.uk

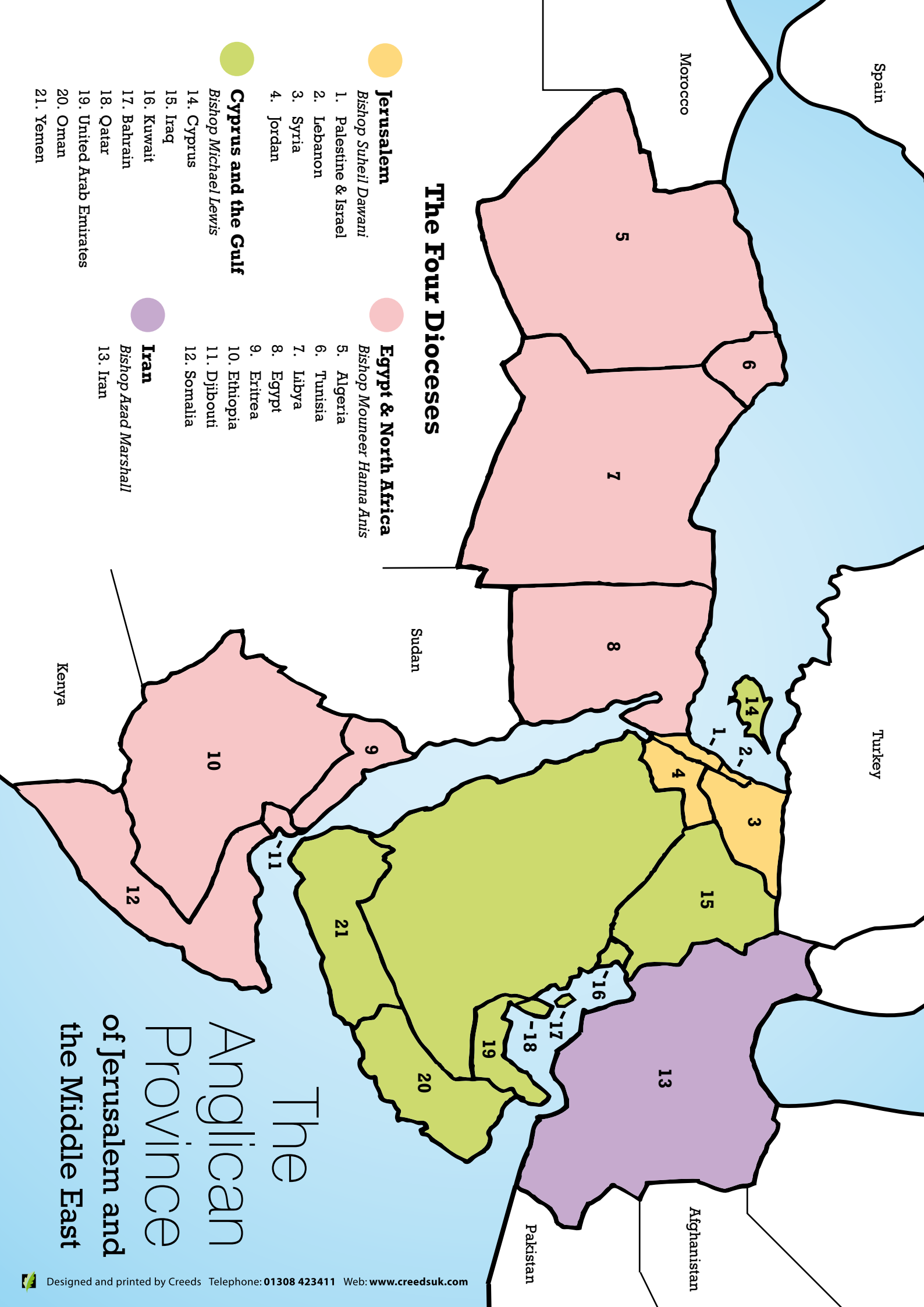
STOP PRESS STOP PRESS STOP PRESS

Jo Henderson ordained in Abu Dhabi

It was an historic day for the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf when Jo Henderson was ordained as a deacon at St Andrew's in Abu Dhabi, the first ordination in the UAE. Jo Henderson came to St Andrew's church more than 6 years ago and her talents in Christian ministry were quickly recognised and affirmed. She was licensed as a Reader in 2007 and since then has been ministering regularly to the Anglican community in Abu Dhabi.

Canon Andy Thompson, Senior Chaplain of St Andrew's in Abu Dhabi, said *"Jo Henderson is a popular member of the St Andrew's community and is well known for her warmth, compassion and infectious laughter. Her calling to the ordained ministry has been consistently affirmed and recognised by an array of people and we rejoice that we are witnesses to culmination of this calling by hosting her ordination service."*

Bishop Michael Lewis presided at the ordination and during his sermon he reminded Jo and the congregation that ministry was *"Not about her – but a continuation of the rich and diverse ministry of the global Church"*.



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