

# Bible Lands

Summer 2018

Magazine of the Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association

[www.jmecca.org.uk](http://www.jmecca.org.uk)



Jerusalem



Egypt & North Africa



Cyprus & the Gulf



Iran



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# 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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The next issue will be published in November for Winter 2018/19.

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

*Front cover photo: Armenian monastery, Bethlehem.*

## JMECA Website [www.jmecca.org.uk](http://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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# Editorial

**Mr John Clark, chairman of Jerusalem and the East Mission Trust (JEMT) writes:**

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In this issue of *Bible Lands* Stephen Need, our editor, draws on news and reports from all four dioceses. It is particularly important at a time when the conflicts in parts of the Middle East are so dangerous and the suffering so intense that we maintain links with and information about the situation and activities of Christians of the Anglican Communion and more widely across the region to assist our prayers and practical support. The last two pages of this issue which highlight **Praying Around the Province** are particularly useful.

The news of the Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre is symbolic of the important practical social outreach, often pioneering, of the **Diocese of Jerusalem** through its thirty-three schools and medical and other centres. It is through such ministry, which can also be found in the social enterprises in the **Diocese of Egypt** to which JMECA Trustee Dr Matthew Rhodes refers in his article, that effective engagement and witness takes place, emphasising that the Christian community has a significant role in wider society. And it is for his role in interfaith developments over many years with the Muslim Community and with the Coptic Orthodox Church in Egypt that Bishop Mouneer received recognition with an award from the Archbishop of Canterbury.

We don't often hear about the Anglican presence in Libya, so it is particularly good to have a two-page spread on the ministry of the **Church of Christ the King in Tripoli**. As a matter of interest, the Chairman of JMECA, the Revd Huw Thomas, has been interim chaplain at Holy Trinity, Algiers since October last year and has been much encouraged by his time there. We may have more news in a future issue.

The report and Bishop Michael's Presidential Address from the Synod of the **Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf** lays out a vision for the congregations of numerically the largest diocese in the region with an emphasis on positive interfaith relations with the Muslim community as a key element.

Visits to the region are important and can provide varied perspectives. The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the USA was in Jerusalem for Holy Week. Dr Clare Amos, a JMECA Trustee, has been a frequent visitor with long experience of the region, particularly Jerusalem, so her report on three recent visits is particularly valuable. JMECA also makes grants for ordinands to study at St George's

College and welcomes the reports that students such as Phil Nightingale provide. John Wilkinson who died earlier this year was a most influential figure in the story of **St George's College** and his contribution is well recognised in a full obituary.

The **Diocese of Iran** remains one of the most isolated in the Anglican Communion, but its new Vicar-General has arrived to settle in the country and provide oversight for the three congregations.

This issue contains a note about a grant from the **Williamson Family Trust** in memory of the late Colin Williamson. The trustees' generosity is an example of the importance of **donations, bequests and legacies** to JMECA. These funds are used to provide support to the Christians of the Middle East well beyond the life-time of the donor.

From contacts with other organisations readers will be aware of the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) that come into effect on 25 May. Please see details about the implications for *Bible Lands* on p.18 of this issue.

Finally, there's an interesting section of **Book Reviews** and short notices at the back of this issue. Andrew Mayes reviews a book by Mitri Raheb of Bethlehem about a conference in Cyprus. Stephen Need reviews Naim Ateek's latest book on Palestinian Liberation Theology. And Jill Need tackles a book on Holy Land spirituality by Andrew Mayes. The short notices include a guidebook to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and a short volume of stories about Iranian Christians. Plenty here to keep readers happy over the summer! If anyone would like to review a relevant book for *Bible Lands*, please contact the editor.

*John Clark*



# 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.



## The Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre (JPBC)

By Elaine Moller

A two-part article covering the background and work of this well-known Jerusalem institution.

### Part One: Outreach and Rehabilitation

Established in 1965, the Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre, located on Jerusalem's Mount of Olives, is a charitable, non-governmental, non-profit organization entrusted under the Anglican Episcopal Church within the Diocese of Jerusalem. Motivated by its vision for all Palestinian children with disabilities to have increased access to quality health services and inclusive education, the centre provides comprehensive rehabilitation services designed to meet the needs of children with disabilities from across the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem.

The centre as it is today is the result of decades



of development and change. Throughout its long history, it has worked to meet the shifting needs of the community it serves as well as remaining committed to providing the best possible care and education. In 1993 JPBC was identified by the Palestinian Ministry of Health as one of four national referral centres and is presently the leader in providing rehabilitation.

Since that time the centre has continued to develop its specialized services and in 2010, with funding from the EU, it has included Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASDs) as one of its most important programmes. Within three years of prioritizing autism, the centre became one of the pioneering institutions in this treatment in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. It has applied professional activities with autistic children and contributed to increasing the promotion and protection of the rights and entitlements of children



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with disabilities. In order to serve them, a number of physical changes have been made to the centre's rehabilitation unit, including a new classroom, two therapy rooms and a sensory room.

Further work continued through a second phase of an EU funded project in 2015-2017, extending the scope of work to include Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) as well as providing the staff with training from local and international institutions. Within a year, some children with autism were admitted to the centre to receive occupational therapy, speech therapy and psychotherapy, as well as treatment sessions in the sensory room.



The centre is also a member of the East Jerusalem Hospitals Network and is the first and only rehabilitation centre so far in the West Bank and Gaza to receive accreditation (in December 2015) by the Joint Commission International (JCI) for quality health services. As the number one institution providing specialized medical rehabilitation, JPBC is guided by the fundamental values expressed in the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Accordingly, we are committed to meeting and exceeding the international standards of care.

In 2017, as part of the centre's outreach, 1,343 children were assessed by the rehabilitation medical staff through 60 visits to several cities including Hebron, Jericho, Ramallah, Qalqilya, Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarem and some of the communities surrounding Jerusalem. Thus, the centre provides capacity building and support to intermediate level centres in the West Bank. The aim of this programme is to provide the professionals and therapists working in the field with up-to-date knowledge, best practices and expertise.

As a result of these outreach efforts, 667 children were treated in the rehabilitation centre in 2017, out of which 490 were from the West Bank and Gaza. The children that receive services are those with Cerebral Palsy, Neuromuscular Diseases, Pediatric Limb Deficiencies, Congenital Malformations, Post

Musculoskeletal Traumas, Neurodevelopmental Disorders and Communicative Disorders including Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and ADHD.

Children living in the West Bank and Gaza lack easy access to the centre and are entered into a comprehensive inpatient programme. As part of this intensive 2-3-week programme, children are provided with treatments which are supplemented by a 'Mother's Empowerment Programme' designed to train mothers in home therapy techniques as well as providing psycho-social support and education. In 2017, 490 mothers of children with disabilities received training and support.

In addition to providing the highest level of treatment and care, JPBC is home to an inclusive school. For the 2017-18 school year, 406 children enrolled, 37% of which have some form of disability. JPBC also provides vocational training through the 'Sheltered Workshop' designed to support and provide a space for children to gain skills and socialize together. At this time, 24 adults are enrolled in the vocational training program. And in 2017, 28 clinical students from Palestinian Universities took part in the clinical training program.



The Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre has been recognized by the Palestinian Ministry of Health as a National Rehabilitation Centre and also referred to as an important Resource Centre in the field of rehabilitation. Although we face many challenges today, we remain committed to our mission to empower children with disabilities and integrate their families into their communities. We continue to work hard to expand our services and improve the quality of life and the futures of children with disabilities living in Palestine.

*Elaine Moller is Programme Officer at JPBC  
Visit JPBC at [www.basma-center.org](http://www.basma-center.org)*

*Part Two of this article will appear in the next edition  
of Bible Lands.*

*Photos: JPBC*

# Diocese of Jerusalem

## Presiding Bishop Michael Curry visits the Holy Land



The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America (ECUSA), the Most Rev Michael Curry, made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land during Holy Week this year. His focus was visiting some of the Holy Places for prayer and meditation and meeting with local Christian leaders and congregations.

Like the Archbishop of Canterbury in May last year, Bishop Curry arrived in Amman, Jordan where he visited St. Paul's Anglican Church and met local Christians including Iraqi refugees. Then, making his way across the Jordan River, he stopped to visit the baptismal site near Jericho before continuing up to Jerusalem.

On Palm Sunday Bishop Curry preached a resounding sermon in St. George's Cathedral in Jerusalem on the theme 'There is another way'. Focusing on Jesus' ride into Jerusalem on a donkey he contrasted Pilate riding in on a horse: humility as opposed to worldly power. And connecting this with the recent procession of young people into Washington DC demonstrating against guns, he made the powerful point that the world can be a different place if we follow Christ's example. On Palm Sunday evening the bishop was installed as a Canon at St. George's Cathedral.



Accompanied by a number of assistants from ECUSA and travelling with the Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, the Most Reverend Suheil Dawani, Bishop Curry visited Bethlehem where he prayed in the cave of Jesus' birth in the Church of the Nativity and met with the Greek Orthodox Archbishop. In Nazareth he met with local leaders and with young people at Christ Church School. In the West Bank he visited the church and clinic at Zebabdeh.

He attended Holy Week Orthodox liturgies in Jerusalem including the Greek Foot Washing on Maundy Thursday. And in the early morning of Good



Friday he walked the Via Dolorosa with local and international Christians. One of Presiding Bishop's



appointments was with His Beatitude Theophilus 111, the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem, from whom he received the gift of a pectoral icon.

Another visit was to

the Anglican Ahli Arab hospital in Gaza.

Throughout the pilgrimage Bishop Curry's focus was on peace, reconciliation and education. The visit has refreshed the longstanding good relations between the Diocese of Jerusalem and the American Episcopal Church. The Holy Week pilgrimage was the Presiding Bishop's first official visit to the Holy Land since being elected in 2015.

## News from St George's Close, Jerusalem

Miss Pauline Collier and the Rev David Longe have left St. George's Cathedral Close in the last few weeks after serving the diocese in two major roles. Pauline has been the Archbishop's PA for two years and David has been his Chaplain for three. Pauline has returned home to Essex and David to be Rector of seven parishes in Norfolk! We thank them both for giving so generously of themselves and wish them well for the future.



# Diocese of Jerusalem

## A report on a course at St. George's College Jerusalem, July 2017

As a young child growing up through Sunday school I was fascinated by the fact that the location of all the Bible stories I was told of was somewhere I could actually one day visit. However, for various reasons, cost being one of them, I had never visited the biblical land of Israel or as some call it 'the fifth gospel'. So it is with great thanks to JMECA and the British Regional Committee of St George's College that I was able to attend the 'Footsteps of Jesus' course in July, 2017.

After arriving at the college to a welcome reception on the first evening, the thing that struck me the next morning was the intense heat. It was difficult to operate in 40°C even with the conveniences of modern life and technology. To consider that that was the actual context in which the biblical stories often took place certainly lent humility as I realised what a basic struggle it would have been with the soaring heat.

Jerusalem is a striking and beautiful city, resembling something of an old jewel that reflects its light in many different ways. Divided up into its four quarters it presents a charming variety of cultures. Sadly however, I landed on the day of quite a significant attack which caused tensions that mounted during the two weeks of the course. Some Muslims had killed two police officers on the Temple Mount. As a result the Israeli police had imposed heavy security measures, creating a real sense of what the tension must've been like between the occupying Roman Empire and the Jews of the city at the time of Jesus.

One thing I hadn't been so aware of prior to the trip was how much of Jesus' ministry actually took place in Galilee. We saw Nazareth and Capernaum as well as experiencing a wonderful boat trip on the Sea of Galilee. Travelling even further north to Caesarea Philippi, the Course Director, Hector Patmore, pointed out that Jesus rarely visited large towns of his day out of a desire to show the distinction between earthly and heavenly kingdoms. There was a significant difference in feel between the north compared to Jerusalem, with the towns (evidenced by archaeological digs) being smaller in scale than the Jerusalem of the New Testament era.

Hector provided inspiring reflections during our trip north and we were well 'herded' by the unique and inimitable Bishara Khoury of the Palestinian 'Living Stones' community!

Returning to Jerusalem we were given an informative lecture preparing us for a visit to the Old City. During the last two days visits included the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Stations of the Cross and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre which provided a unique insight into Jesus' final days and was a moving time of spiritual reflection.

Travelling back to the UK on the five-hour flight I had much time to take stock of my amazing experiences. I will certainly never read the Bible in the same way again and certain things like the 'Psalms of Ascent' being in relation to the height of Jerusalem and the 'wilderness' of Jesus' Temptations being experienced as a reality will inform my future understanding of those passages of scripture. Further, the trip was invaluable in providing an understanding of how Jerusalem is such an unhappy crossroads for Islam and Judaism. I learned lessons from the Church's engagement with those faiths that will be so useful for my forthcoming

ordained ministry.

It was mentioned at the start of the course that we were not tourists but pilgrims and as we journeyed together and formed friendships the spiritual bond of that pilgrimage was certainly felt. I am very grateful to the British Regional Committee of St. George's College for enabling this trip and would strongly recommend others to apply to them for help.

*Phil Nightingale*



St George's College, Jerusalem provides short-term study-pilgrimages combining visits to Holy Places and historical sites with worship and reflection.

People from all over the world participate. For scholarships in the UK, contact the Rev John Angle at [hopebethlehem@btinternet.com](mailto:hopebethlehem@btinternet.com). In North America, contact Ms Barbara Warder at [nac.sgc.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:nac.sgc.treasurer@gmail.com). And in Australia / New Zealand, contact Ms Vicki Crofton at [vickicrofton@hotmail.com](mailto:vickicrofton@hotmail.com). For grants from JMECA please visit [www.jmecca.org.uk](http://www.jmecca.org.uk).

# Diocese of Jerusalem

## Jerusalem – a tale of one city and three visits



**I have been privileged that over the years since I first lived in Jerusalem in the 1970s the city has called me back there many times, for refreshment, learning and dialogue. But in the last 5 months (between November 2017 and March 2018) I have made three visits. They were all quite short, and they were each for a different purpose. Perhaps these different reasons, however, say something about the multifaceted nature of Jerusalem.**

**The first visit** – in late November 2017. I was honoured to be invited to accompany as theological mentor a group of potential ordinands linked to the Diocese in Europe. The young people who were the core of the group were all participating in what is called the CEMES (Church of England Ministry Experience Scheme) in which they explore their vocation to ordained Anglican ministry while working in a parish, or in the case of the Diocese in Europe, a chaplaincy. The study visit to the Holy Land – partly made possible by a grant from JMECA – was the result of the vision and hard work of the Diocesan Director of ordinands, Canon William Gulliford. William noted, “I know what impact the opportunity to visit Jerusalem as a young man made to me, and how it affected the path of my own ministry. I wanted these young people to have a similar privilege. It is an important way that the church can invest in the future, and I am really grateful to the trusts and organisations who generously gave grants to make this possible.” Having shared the experience of the young people as they participated in this life-changing visit I would want to echo William’s words.

**The second visit** – in early January 2018. With my husband Canon Alan Amos. Alan and I first met in Jerusalem in 1977 when I was Course Director of St George’s College. We were introduced by the column in the middle of St George’s courtyard by Clive Handford, then Dean of the Cathedral. We got to know each other properly in the course of a walk to the monastery of Ain Fara (the upper reaches of

the Wadi Qelt). It felt, therefore, very appropriate to celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary on 7 January this year by making a joint visit to Jerusalem, staying of course at St George’s – though slipping out for a celebration meal to the American Colony hotel. We were grateful to receive a special blessing from Archbishop Suheil in the Eucharist on 7 January. Sadly we also noticed how the hardening of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in the years since 1977 meant that the walk we took all those years ago would now be much more difficult to accomplish. We also carried away a sense of the despair that has permeated East Jerusalem in the aftermath of the announcement by President Trump regarding US policies in relation to the city.



**The third visit** – in late March 2018. I have been a member of the Anglican delegation which meets for dialogue with representatives of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel since this process started in 2006. After an interlude of a few years our Anglican team met again in west Jerusalem with the Jewish rabbis that are our counterparts for an intensive couple of days of dialogue. It was a good conversation digging deep into our respective theological roots –and focused on the topic of migration. We also discussed matters of practical contemporary concern: we don’t steer away from difficult issues. It is important that Archbishop Suheil is a member of the Anglican delegation.

For me, these three visits between them sum up the different strands that make Jerusalem so important, and so challenging for Christians. It is a place that offers incomparable insights into the roots of our faith for those training for Christian ministry. It is a place where theological and practical dialogue needs to take place between representatives of the three Abrahamic faiths. And it is a place that because of both its beauty and its sorrow touches deeply the hearts of many, and certainly my own.

Clare Amos

Photos: Edoardo Fanfani



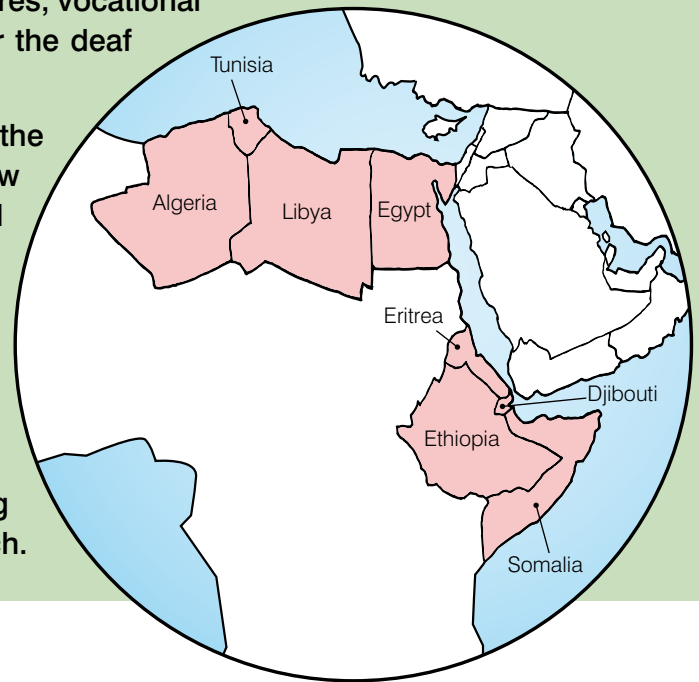
# The Diocese of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa



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.



## Bringing the Good News... from Christ the King, Tripoli, Libya



At the Church of Christ the King, Tripoli in Libya we are committed to living out our key purpose: serving our local and global communities and seeking to provide them with Christ-centred, hopeful care. Only the message of Jesus can bring this to a dark world.

## Our Focus

We remain committed to the centrality of preaching God's word, the word of life that inspires us, challenges us and changes us. Our **evangelism and follow-up team** reach into the corridors of the unreached African diaspora and invite them for worship and prayer. Special Bible study programs and mid-week prayers are organised for discipleship.

Twelve members recently took adult baptism including two sons of this soil. During July 2017, we baptized four children and seven adults of the Nigerian Community. At Christmas we visited our members' houses through our carol singers, organised by our youth. Weekly church attendance has grown by 5%. We welcomed three new Ambassadors who visited our church. And the Apostolic Nuncio, a papal representative, His Grace Alessandro D'Errico, visited us on November 25, 2017.



Our **children and youth programs** are aimed at equipping young people with a sense of value and purpose. In 2017 our programs highlighted three main areas of support: coping with stress, school and study problems and family conflict. These programs provided positive peer and leadership support with the aim of strengthening a young person's resilience as they learn to navigate important issues such as

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

unemployment and school drop outs. This year our church identified two school dropout kids and encouraged them to continue their education by paying their school fee and providing materials.



The Church of Christ the King continues to render hope to those who need help both in our church and in the city, encouraging each one of us to be more generous with our time, talents and resources. The church is continuing her charity work through our **Mission House Project**, serving less privileged Africans refugees, and our **Single Mother project**, providing legal assistance through the Nigerian embassy. Our Spiritual ministry continues through our newly launched online services through the church Facebook account. We're also a church committed to taking the gospel to the lost world around us. This happens in a number of ways through Bible study and outreach programs, midweek groups and guest events.

## Harvest Festival

Our annual Harvest celebration attracts many of the expatriates working in Libya. The church becomes a central platform to meet, celebrate and witness to people belonging to other faiths too. Last year it was on Sunday 27th September. The Church was suitably decorated and gifts were on sale after the service. As usual, our vibrant multi-ethnic community brought in their national cuisine. The event was a sell out with over 80 people attending the feast which included a variety of cultural food from all communities. The wonderful social gathering and auction sales also raised an amazing LYD 5,267 for church funds this year. We enjoyed friendship and fellowship together. This year our overall church finances break even. Our council had to draw on reserves to fund deficits and this is likely to happen again in 2018 as the dollar rate soars above 10 LYD per USD. With this sharply in focus, the council continues to work on examining budgetary priorities.



## Arabic Congregation

We thank God for bringing us ten Arabic community members. These families worship along with us and we have a bilingual order of service for them.

## Our Medical Mission – Mariam Medical Centre

By the grace of God, we inaugurated Mariam Medical Centre on November 7, 2017. MMC is accountable for the overall public health, promotion and medical care service of Sub Saharan refugees living in Tripoli, Libya. It aims to make sub-Saharan settlements viable by improving the basic health status of Nigerians in exile through its Primary Health Care Centre for disease prevention, promotion of healthier lifestyles and a cleaner environment. It currently manages and finances one health centre in Tripoli.

MMC's major challenges are in providing adequate health care to the community, particularly in urban areas. The Church of Christ the King, Tripoli opened a Free Medical Consultation for Basic Hygiene and Family Health Awareness Program every Tuesday between 9.00 am and 12.00pm. Within a month, around fifty patients have consulted the doctor. One of our prayers for 2018 is to see even more people receive help through our medical evangelism efforts.



## Proposal and Costing

Dr. Amir El-Kashdi, the medical officer of MMC, has been asked to identify the health-related problems prevalent in the proximity of the old city. After the discussion with him, a project proposal with a cost estimate was prepared. Just for arranging rooms for doctors and medicines it will be approximately USD \$6000 for the short term (from November 2017 – June 2018). With the advice of Dr. Amir, we would like to take further steps to organize this project on a larger scale after acquisition of our annex building.

Despite these challenges, the project report gives us many reasons for optimism. We are thankful to God and to all who have helped us, in particular Rt. Rev. Dr. Mouneer and Rt. Rev. Dr. Samy. We thank everyone for their support and sacrificial work.

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

## Rev Canon Dr Matthew Rhodes of JMECA made a visit to Egypt recently and has sent the following report...

One of the most rewarding aspects of my ministry in the UK recently has been the development of a relationship between my church and local Muslims. The initiative for this came from leaders of our local Islamic association. Local leaders from both religions have met to talk about different aspects of our faiths. More importantly, we have developed friendships and understanding through joint activities. Recently we have taken part in a walk for peace as well as a sports day and picnic.

Increasing understanding between Christianity and Islam seems particularly important at this point in the world's history. Both faiths emphasise the importance of peace but are also shamed by those who perpetrate violence in their names. There is therefore an onus on Christians and Muslims to develop dialogue and find ways to be a blessing to their communities.



On a recent visit to Egypt, I was thrilled to learn that interfaith dialogue and collaboration, which has become so important to me, is also taking place in that country. 'Together for Egypt', arose out of the recent upheaval in Egypt and was initiated by members of the Christian community. It was a series of dialogues between Christian and Muslim leaders and it ran between 2013 and 2015. Following its success, 'Together We Develop Egypt' came into being, bringing together Christian and Muslim young people to explore ways in which they could help their communities.

In Old Cairo, young people at the Church of Jesus Light of the World initiated a scheme to improve their local environment. Together for Egypt aims to be as inclusive as possible, and those with disabilities play a leading role in its activities. Members of the Christian deaf community invited young Muslim people who

were also deaf into their church. For many of them this was a new experience and they were surprised by the warmth of the welcome that they received. Together the young people cleaned up the local street, painted and planted trees. Their efforts attracted the attention of the media and inspired a local school to get involved in maintaining the local environment.

In Ismailia, Christian and Muslim young people decided to develop a mobile library for local children. They undertook a feasibility study and were able to purchase suitable books, sometimes using their own money. Through working together they were able to develop a real sense of collaboration and team work. During Ramadan the group distributed food as a way of telling people about the scheme. They were able to develop valuable partnerships with other organisations but more importantly they helped to break down barriers of prejudice between the two faith communities.

Today the Gusour (Bridges) Cultural Center, based at the Diocesan Offices in Zamalek, enables young people to encounter one another through the arts. It holds concerts and film nights as well as classes in a wide variety of activities including singing, drumming, guitar, calligraphy and painting. Gusour tries to help young people to express themselves in new ways. Gehan, a young Muslim woman, took part in a storytelling workshop. It gave her the opportunity to tell her story of having had breast cancer. When she repeated her story at the Gusour graduation ceremony it was taken up by the media and since then Gehan has become a voice for others who suffer from the disease. Gusour is helping to break down barriers that few might even have imagined.



It was a pleasure to meet Michael, the Director of Gusour, who has a real passion for its work. He was very committed to encouraging a new generation of young people to break down barriers and fulfil their potential. Having heard about the inspiring work of Gusour and Together, I returned to the UK with a renewed desire to promote interfaith dialogue and collaboration.

*Matthew Rhodes*



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

## Bishop Mouneer receives Awards



Bishop Mouneer Anis has received two important Awards recently. First, on 21st February, he was given the Hubert Walter Award for Reconciliation and Interfaith work. Hubert Walter, after whom the Award is named, was an Archbishop of Canterbury in the twelfth century and was himself involved with reconciliation and interfaith relations. The Award from the Archbishop of Canterbury comes in the form of a medal bearing a scarab beetle, possibly symbolising the Resurrection of Christ. In the picture, the Award is made on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury by

the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, the Rt Rev Josiah Idowu-Fearon.

In line with his work in these areas, Bishop Mouneer recently hosted an important gathering of the Anglican Global Interfaith Commission at the All Saints' Garden Conference Centre in Cairo. This included meetings with Pope Tawadros 11 and the Great Imam Ahmed Al-Tayeb, among others.

Second, Bishop Mouneer has received the I Can Award from the Disciples of Jesus Christ Organisation founded by Mama Magie Gobran. This award recognises Bishop Mouneer's work with underprivileged children in the slum areas of Cairo.

Bishop Mouneer is Bishop in Egypt and was Primate of the Province 2007-2017. He was consecrated in 2000 and is the third Egyptian Bishop in Egypt. We send him many congratulations on receiving these Awards.

## Lord Brian Griffiths visits All Saints' Cathedral, Cairo

In February 2018, Lord Brian Griffiths visited All Saints' Cathedral as part of his visit to Egypt where he gave a sermon named "Stranger at a strange land". Lord Brian had also his friends, the Wareings and Phillips, come to Cairo to learn more about the Diocese's ministries, especially Refuge Egypt and EpiscoCare. They heard stories from EpiscoCare's micro-finance participants,



and from Sudanese and Syrian refugees. They also received a tour of the Diocese compound and visited the Deaf Unit and Coptic Cairo. Along with Bishop Mouneer, Lord Brian took part in the round table "Policies for Stability & Investment" which was moderated by Dr. Mostafa El-Feky.

In his reception, hosted by Bishop Mouneer and attended by the Director of Alexandria Library, Dr. Mostafa El-Feky, Lord Brian praised our government for the courageous decisions that most governments fear to take. He also said that the economical and political strategies Egypt is following are "very good". Lord Brian had meetings with several governmental leaders and advisers. In those meetings he gave lots of advice that would help improve the financial situation.

## Provincial Standing Committee gathers at Garden Conference Centre in Cairo



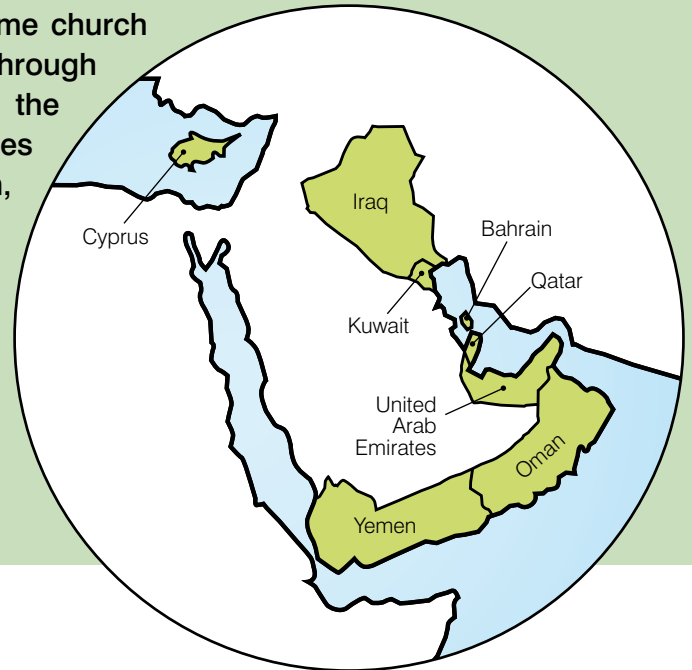
The standing committee of the Anglican Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East met recently at All Saints' Garden Conference Centre in Cairo. The meeting was attended by representative bishops of the Dioceses of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa, Cyprus and the Gulf, and Jerusalem.

The Agenda of the meeting included the development of a provincial canon law, updates on certain problems, provincial youth work, provincial clergy conference, and a review of structures – province and constitution.



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 Synod in Larnaca – Doing God & Doing Good

The annual Synod of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf took place at the Golden Bay Hotel, Larnaca from 5th – 9th February this year. The theme was 'Doing God and Doing Good' focusing on love of God and of neighbour. There were several keynote speakers including the Archdeacon of Exeter, the Ven Christopher Fulcher, Canon Andy Bowerman of the Anglican Alliance, and the Venerable Robert Jones, Archdeacon of Worcester. The Synod included sessions addressing future planning, personnel, finance, vocation training, discipleship, revision of the diocesan Constitution, clergy discipline and the diocesan website. About 120 people attended. We print Bishop Michael's Presidential Address here in full.



### Bishop Michael's Presidential Address

Before anything else, the Diocese of Cyprus & the Gulf exists to offer worship to God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit in the lands where our congregations are set. Worship is the first and non-

negotiable task, duty and identifying characteristic of Christians.

Worship should be a joy. There will be a measure of particularity in our worship because of the particular – not to say sometimes peculiar – people we are in particular places. That particularity should be a joy alongside the common joy of our link, bond and unity as a diocese.

Three years ago, Synod explored and articulated our common diocesan identity. Two years ago, Synod focused on our common diocesan mission. Last year,



Synod discussed our common diocesan discipleship. So what's to be common, what aspect of our link, bond and unity is to be delved into and celebrated in 2018?

It's something like our common service but it's more that that might be thought to mean. The thematic title this year is 'Doing God & Doing Good'. In the course of the week others will unfold those at-first-hearing enigmatic words, both in the spiritual addresses and in the discussion groups that are now a firmly established element of Synod.

Suffice it to say now that the purpose of this theme is to demonstrate that love of God and love of neighbour are scripturally and doctrinally inextricable; that love's not much if it's not practical; that lovingly serving others and one another and lovingly working for the transformation of society into something better and more divine are part of lovingly worshipping God. They are therefore at the heart of our primary reason for existing as a diocese and indeed as Christians.

"Social liturgy" is an even more enigmatic and suggestive phrase. Perhaps it's simpler to remember that for Christians the word service is pregnant with at least two meanings. That's what the theme of this

year's Synod is about.

The Anglican Communion, as those who have been at Synod in these last years will know well, has five thoroughly publicised Marks of Mission, though I wish we'd just called them Marks of the Church. Look them up. This year, we're starting to engage with Marks Three, Four and even Five.

As always, we meet against the background of the rest of our lives. 2 Corinthians 4 isn't to be quoted lightly; no scripture is. But for many in the region that we serve, in almost all of the countries God has led us to and for some – perhaps many – of us in the parishes and chaplaincies of this diocese, the resonances are strong.

"We're afflicted," says Paul, uncompromisingly and truthfully. "We're perplexed; we're persecuted; we're struck down." Speaking not just for himself but for others who keep the faith of Christ whatever may come, he qualifies each acknowledged setback and assault: "but not crushed, not driven to despair, not forsaken, not destroyed." And he continues: "we always carry in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our bodies."

He has prefaced all he says by saying we have this treasure – "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, in earthenware vessels, in clay jars." In other words, human beings are breakable, fragile, and existence is fragile, Christians are fragile, the Church is fragile; but that means it's clear that what we have "belongs to God and doesn't come from us." (2 Corinthians 4:7)

Politics, not only in our region but throughout the world, and sadly especially in great nations that should be stabler and wiser like the USA, Russia and the UK, is febrile. Politicians are either faltering or all too certain. Those who should speak and act often don't and those who shouldn't do.

War and its aftermath, displacement, disease, famine and fear stalk the earth. Some economies are holding up but many aren't. Even those with jobs wonder for how much longer they'll have them since patterns of employment are changing. Citizens of nations of our region and, equally, the migrant expatriates that most of us at this Synod are, are given plenty of reminders of our fragility.

But with Paul we're called to remember that we have a treasure, God in Christ, that doesn't come from or depend on





us and is the reason we worship.

Therefore (2 Corinthians 4:16), "we do not lose heart." Or do we? Do, say, the deliberations of our church councils reflect, and will this Synod reflect, confidence in the way and love of God revealed in Christ, while being realistic and truthful about challenges, dangers, resources, money and all the rest? Are we ready to be sustained by the Spirit no matter what?

I see many who are. It may be invidious to select places and people but, at St George's Baghdad, I and all who visit see not just persistent faithfulness but genuine joy that begins and ends in worship while, on the way, taking in love of neighbour spelled out in the most explicit forms. And in Aden, now yet more troubled and uncertain politically, socially, financially than in recent years, I know that those who through employment or need come into the ambit of Christ Church Tawahi, virtually all Muslims, find they have come into a place that does God by doing good with not a thought of conceptual division.



In the mouths of some, 'do-gooders' has become a derisive term. Perhaps those who use it derisively suspect those who set out to do good are hypocrites with other motives or believe themselves morally better. For Christians certainly, we seek to do good only because God is good and has called us to share in his goodness. Let our worship be service and our service worship.

*Bishop Michael Lewis*

*Photos: David Hammond-Williams*

## Six New Canons for Cyprus and the Gulf



In the first half of this year, Bishop Michael Lewis installed six new canons in the diocese: three in St. Christopher's Cathedral, Bahrain (pictured here) on Friday 23rd February and three in St. Paul's Cathedral, Nicosia on Thursday 3rd May. They have varied backgrounds and various futures!

One is a lay canon, Mrs Angela Murray who was also awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours List at the beginning of 2018. Angela has spent many years in Bahrain and is well known for her writing and service to the community and to charity. She is currently working on a history of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf.

The other two are: Rev Stephen Thanapaul who has

served at the cathedral in Bahrain as well as Chaplain to the Mission to Seafarers in both the Gulf and India; and Rev Jebaraj Devasagayam who serves at the Church of the Epiphany in Doha, Qatar. He has worked in theological education and leads the Tamil language worship at the Church of the Epiphany.

The canons in Nicosia are: Rev Brian Elliott who has been an army chaplain for forty years and serves as an honorary assistant priest at the cathedral in Nicosia; the Rev Paul Burt who was a school master at Winchester College, has worked in a number of parishes and as Senior Chaplain to the Mission to Seafarers in Dubai. He is now the parish priest at St. Paul's Church, Paphos; and the Rev Bertrand Oliver who is French and has served as Vicar of All Hallows by the Tower in London in addition to work in Cyprus. He is soon to become Dean of Montreal Cathedral in Canada. We congratulate them all and wish them well for the future.

## Ordination in Kuwait

On Saturday 27th January this year Bishop Michael Lewis ordained Rev Zhu Peijin priest at St. Paul's, Ahmadi, Kuwait where she will now serve her curacy. Congratulations to Zhu.



## News from the Diocese of Iran

In the last issue of *Bible Lands*, we reported that the Revd Dr Albert Walters from Malaysia had been appointed Vicar-General for the diocese in succession to Bishop Azad Marshall. The procedures for him to receive an entry visa enabling him and his wife to obtain the necessary work and resident permits took some time. The couple arrived in Tehran at the end of February 2018, three weeks before the thirteen-day Iranian New Year holiday from 20 March and have settled into the church apartment where they will live. He has begun his ministry of presence and encouragement and is now set to learning Persian.

There are three congregations of the Episcopal Diocese of Iran, one each in the cities of Tehran, Isfahan and Shiraz. They meet for worship each Sunday evening. They are led by three deacons who will now have Dr Walters available to provide oversight, training and encouragement. There are limitations on who can attend public worship and the congregations are not many in number but faithful in their attendance and faith.

Dr Walters sends warm greetings to readers of *Bible Lands* and his gratitude for all interest, support and prayer for the congregations, their members and the deacons – and for himself and his wife as they settle in and seek the Lord's leading as to key priorities for their ministry.

## The Friends of the Diocese of Iran – Annual Conference 8-9 September

Although it is almost four decades since most expatriate personnel left Iran at the time of the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the Friends of the Diocese of Iran continues to share news, to meet and to support the congregations in the country and share news of wider ministry among Iranians across the world.

On the second weekend of September each year the Friends holds a twenty-four-hour Conference at the London School of Theology, Northwood, Middlesex, usually attended by more than fifty residential and day visitors. The theme for the 2018 Conference (8-9 September) is **Resourcing Iranian Christians** and among the expected speakers is David Yeghnazar, the dynamic young leader of Elam Ministries. Further details from Barbara Shaw at [bjshaw64@gmail.com](mailto:bjshaw64@gmail.com)

## Excerpt from the Sermon preached by Bishop Iraj Muttahedeh at the consecration of Bishop Guli Francis-Dehqani

On 30 November, 2017 Canon Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani was consecrated Bishop of Loughborough in Canterbury Cathedral with Christians from Iran well represented at the service. The former Bishop in Iran, the Rt. Revd. Iraj Muttahedeh, preached and reminded the new bishop of the heritage from which she came. He spoke of the example of her father – Bishop Hassan Dehqani-Tafti – and of the murder of Guli's brother Bahram:

*...criminals hi-jacked him while driving and tragically they killed him. His death, though a great loss to his family, the church, the society and humanity, yet produced much fruit. Bishop Dehqani was in Cyprus at the time. He sent a moving prayer to be read at the funeral of his son. The prayer ended with the following words:*

*"Oh God, when Bahram's murderers stand before you on the Day of Judgment, look at the fruits that the Spirit has produced in us and forgive them."*

*This is how God deals with the mystery of sin and suffering in the world. The response of Bishop Dehqani's family was in line with God's character. The plea of forgiveness filled up the chasm that Bahram's murderers had created between him and themselves.*

*Bishop Dehqani's approach to mend the religious prejudices that exist between different faiths went even deeper. Before the revolution each year at Christmas he invited the dignitaries of the city of Isfahan to the church hall for a reception. When the reception was over he asked them to join the service that was held at the church if they chose to come.*

*Most of them attended the service. When he preached he took his text either from their Holy Book, or one of the Persian poets, to expound the mystery of incarnation.*

*He was able to see clearly the footprints of God in all the ways that capture the imagination and emotions of being human, religious or nonreligious. For him the costly mystery of incarnation was not only a past historical event, it was God's self-emptying event that goes on in the very fabric of life. Bishop Dehqani did not hesitate to empty and humble himself daily in the ministry of reconciliation entrusted to him by our Lord. His life-style resonates with the life-style of St Paul, reflected in his first letter to the Corinthians 9.20-23.*

# Obituary

## The Revd Dr John Donald Wilkinson

The Revd Dr John Wilkinson who died on January 13th, 2018 aged 88 played a key role in establishing St. George's College, Jerusalem in the early 1960s. He was later Director of the British School of Archaeology (now the Kenyon Institute) in Jerusalem. Known internationally for his academic work, John will be remembered most for his translations and commentary on texts written over the centuries by Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem, especially *Egeria's Travels* (1971).

John Donald Wilkinson was born in Wimbledon in 1929, the first child of the Rev Donald Wilkinson (Principal of the Bishop's College, Cheshunt) and Hilda Mary Wilkinson (herself the son of a cleric). John had a younger sister, Mary, who died in 2004. After graduating in Classics from Merton College, Oxford he trained for ordination at Cuddesdon Theological College near Oxford. Ordained deacon in 1952 and priest in 1953, he served a curacy at St. Dunstan and All Saints, Stepney.

In 1961 John went to Jerusalem as tutor at St. George's College. He was instrumental in planning the residential building that still stands today and himself carved the foundation stone for the new building in English and Arabic in 1962. The courses John designed in those days set the pattern for the future: lectures in the college, visits out in the field with a biblical and archaeological focus, and encounters with local Christians, Jews and Moslems.

John left Jerusalem in 1963 to become General Editor of SPG (later USPG). He had already met his future wife Alexandra (Alix) Helen McFarlane who had been digging at Jericho with Kathleen Kenyon in the 1950s. They married at St. Bride's Fleet Street in 1966. Alix was an Egyptologist who later wrote books on Egyptian gardens and Jewellery. Together they became well known in Jerusalem and across the Middle East. John returned to Jerusalem in 1969 as Dean of Studies at St. George's College. He would often be seen celebrating the Eucharist at St. George's Cathedral where he was a canon (1973-5).

In the mid-70s John returned to London where he became Priest in Charge of Holy Trinity and All Saints, South Kensington and the Bishop's Director of Clergy Training. It was during this time that he worked on *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (1977); and *Jerusalem as Jesus Knew It* (1978, and published in 1983 in the USA as *The Jerusalem Jesus Knew*). The second book was subsequently used by hundreds of students at St. George's College.

John became Director of the British School of Archaeology in 1979. One of his long-standing interests was the development of church buildings and their relation to synagogues. He received his PhD from the University of London and the Courtauld Institute of Art on this subject and his thesis was published later as, *From Synagogue to Church. The Traditional Design. Its Beginning, its Definition, its End* (Routledge, 2002).

After leaving the British School of Archaeology in 1984, John spent time at the Ecumenical Institute for Theological Research at Tantur near Bethlehem and at the Centre for Byzantine Studies at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington DC. He later returned to London as a non-stipendiary priest at St. Mary Abbot's Church, Kensington and St. Cyprian's Clarence Gate. Having become interested in Georgian pilgrims to the Holy Land during this time, he travelled to Georgia where he met Mzia Ebanoidze with whom he published two books: *Pilgrimage to Mount Athos, Constantinople and Jerusalem. Timothy Gabashvili* (2001) and *Petre Konkoshvili: Travels to Jerusalem and Mount Athos* (2014). When Alix died in 2011, John married Mzia in Tbilisi.

For those who have known St. George's College over the years, John Wilkinson sums up the purpose, ethos and mood of the courses. His love of Jerusalem and its pilgrims across history was infectious and he taught with enthusiasm and skill. He had a wonderful sense of humour and enjoyed eating out! He was a true 'scholar-priest' who will be sadly missed and always remembered with love and affection. There were no children and he is survived by Mzia. May he rest in peace.

*Photo: Caroline Scallon*





# Obituary

## Dr. John Fayek



*Bishop Mouneer Anis writes:*

*"The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1.21)*

With heavy hearts full of the pain of separation, the church commits Dr. John Fayek to the faithful hands of the Lord. Dr. John passed away from our world to the eternal resting place to be with Christ, and this is much better.

Dr. John Fayek was a surgeon who worked at Harpur Memorial Hospital in Menouf. He was sent to one of the hospitals in Cameroon for further surgical training. During his time there, he fell down from one of the mountains while he was taking some photographs. He lost his life instantly.

I did not know Dr. John closely. However, I knew about his strong faith and witnessing life through the words and the tears of his colleagues at the hospital. Let us pray for his brothers, sisters, and parents, and his wider family of the hospital and the Diocese of Egypt.

May he rest in peace.

## Attention! Data Protection Matters...

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Full details of our data protection policy are available at <http://jmecca.org.uk/about-us/GDPR>

## Grant from the Williamson Family Trust

The Summer 2016 issue of *Bible Lands* included an obituary of Colin Williamson, Trustee of JMECA from 1976 to 1999 and Director from 1987, who had served in Iran in the 1940s in the oil industry. He administered a small family trust which the remaining trustees, including his son Roger, decided to wind up and distribute the capital.

They generously made a grant to JMECA of £10,000 specifically for the development of the JMECA website which includes making it tablet and mobile phone friendly. It was given in memory of Colin who had a particular interest in communication and would have supported its availability on new media platforms. JMECA is extremely grateful to the Trustees for this timely gift.

## Shifting Identities. Changes in the Social, Political and Religious Structures in the Middle East

Edited by Mitri Raheb

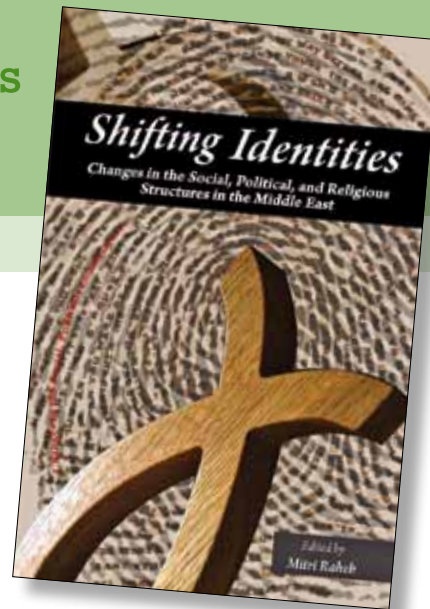
(Bethlehem: Diyar Publisher, 2016)

Bishop Samir Kafity used to introduce himself as 'an Anglican / Episcopal, Arab, Palestinian Israeli (though not necessarily in that order!) testifying to the multiple layering of identity in the Middle East. Identity is complex enough at the best of times with its interplay of race/ethnicity, language, religion, history and location. But the word needs to be used carefully of today's Middle East, nuanced and attentive to many changing factors within the complexity of a region marked by struggle and conflict in the wake of the so-called Arab Spring.

Hence the title of the present volume, which derives from a conference in Cyprus in 2015 sponsored by Diyar (Arabic for 'homelands'), a Lutheran-based organization in Bethlehem. The conference focussed on changes in the Middle East and their impact on the Christian communities, their quest for citizenship and identity formation. The book's reference to 'shifting identities' is a double one: there are valuable historical perspectives on changes in recent centuries, as well as incisive analyses of contemporary issues related to the self-understanding of the often-vulnerable Christian community.

This interdisciplinary volume brings together diverse contributions from fourteen scholars encompassing biblical scholars, social scientists, anthropologists and experts in religious, political and economic research. Papers cover such topics as narratives / counter-narratives of the Christian presence in the contemporary Middle East; the shifting acculturation orientation of Palestinian Christian adolescents in Israel; Palestinian Christians and the IDF; an ecclesiological anthropology of Levantine Christian belonging; transcultural processes through American missionary work in Lebanon; and psychological profiles of the Arab people. The reader is taken on a thought-provoking journey of encounter, meeting the Christians of Iran, Syria and Armenians in the Middle East. The chapter on the desired status of Jerusalem in the eyes of local Palestinian Christians – essential reading in the light of recent US decisions on this subject – reports research showing overwhelming support for an international governing authority consisting of representatives of Israel, Palestine, the UN and of Islam, Judaism and Christianity.

An opening paper by Mitri Raheb, a widely-published Palestinian theologian, reminds the reader that the very term 'Middle East' is a nineteenth century



Eurocentric term that describes the location of Arab lands / the Holy Lands in relation, say, to London or Paris. It reminds me that western Christians need to approach those who live in this region, not from a haughty distance shaped by colonialist outlooks (an attitude still lingering in parts of the Anglican psyche) but as neighbours in the global village who are our sisters and brothers in the human family.

For me, the challenge of this book is that the Other becomes the Brother. Sylvie Avakian of the Near East School of Theology in Lebanon writes in prophetic vein: 'A genuine turn to the Other breaks the prison walls of one's pride so that it is possible to make a place for the Other, regardless of different religions or ethnicities. Such a turn, from both sides, will contribute greatly to the resurgence and the revival of Arab thought' (p 238). In a creative rereading of Genesis 15, Nicolas Abu Mrad notices that Abraham emerges as the archetypal figure in transition – and it is in the midst of transition in wilderness journeys, not in the settled life of a city, that he encounters God.

When I was Course Director at St George's College Jerusalem, I often recommended to students the now classic work by Bernard Lewis, *The Multiple Identities of the Middle East*. The present volume deserves wide readership too as we seek to understand one another more sensitively in today's complex and ever-changing world. It will be of special relevance to those who work in the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. Certainly, this is no book with easy answers but with plenty of questions to stimulate, challenge and ultimately inspire.

Andrew Mayes  
 – the newly-appointed Chaplain to  
 St. Barnabas' Church, Limassol  
 with St. Lazarus' Church, Pissouri  
 and Spirituality Adviser to the Diocese of  
 Cyprus and the Gulf

## A Palestinian Theology of Liberation. The Bible, Justice, and the Palestine-Israel Conflict

Naim Stifan Ateek

New York: Orbis, 2017

The author of this book was a Canon at St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem for many years and is the Founder of the Sabeel Palestinian Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem. Originally from Beisan (Bet Shean) in Israel, Ateek is a Palestinian Christian who was driven from his home by the military in 1948 when the new state was established. Two other books of his are the predecessors of this one: *Justice and only Justice. A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis, 1989) and *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation* (New York: Orbis, 2008). The Foreword to this new book is by the well-known bible scholar and theologian Walter Brueggemann.

Ateek's Palestinian Liberation Theology has its roots deep in the recent history of the Middle East: in Zionism and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, in the 1967 War when the Israelis occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and in the first Intifada during the 1980s. It was in the late 80s that the Palestinian congregation at St. George's Cathedral in Jerusalem began to gather after the Sunday morning Eucharist to discuss the meaning of their faith in the face of what was happening to them. The discussions (often with the New Testament Scholar Kenneth Bailey present) addressed issues such as how Palestinian Christians were to understand the Old Testament, as well as who Jesus really was for them. They began to take Jesus' humanity and his historical context – a land occupied by Rome – more seriously than ever before.

The basic principles of Palestinian Liberation Theology which are outlined and discussed in this book emerged from the discussions at St. George's: it is contextual, grassroots, inclusive (for Israelis as well as Palestinians), ecumenical, interfaith and humanitarian. It suggests a non-violent resistance which is prophetic and ultimately Christological, ie based on Jesus' own life and example. Jesus himself is the hermeneutical key focusing on the love of God and neighbour. Gradually, the St. George's meetings evolved into the organisation called Sabeel (meaning 'the Way' or 'a fountain' in Arabic) with its annual conferences, publications and worldwide groups of Friends.

A key figure in Ateek's Liberation Theology is the Old Testament prophet Jonah (the famous one who was swallowed by a large fish). Jonah is called by God to go to Nineveh, the land of the Assyrians. He is reluctant to go but after the incident with the fish ends up making the journey. He hates the Assyrians and thinks God should punish them. But God changes his own

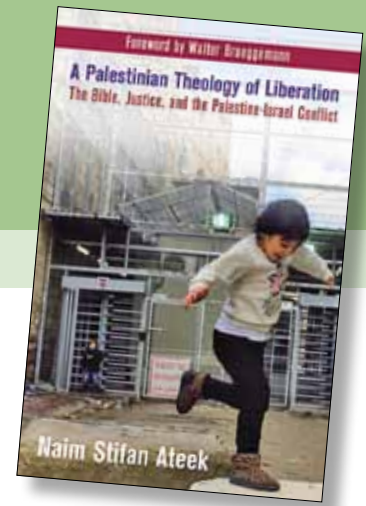
mind and shows that he loves the Assyrians as well. For Ateek the Jonah saga is the paradigm

story showing that God loves everyone and includes everyone in his purposes. Throughout the book there is a strong emphasis on God as 'inclusivist' rather than 'exclusivist'. The theology of the book of Jonah, seen also in some of the prophetic books such as Ezekiel, points forward to Jesus.

The question of how to read and interpret the Bible is a key concern in this book. Zionist readings have emphasised exclusivity. But Ateek shows that we must reject the exclusivist parts of the Bible and filter everything through the other strand of inclusivism. Jesus is the ultimate key for interpreting biblical texts. One surprise to readers will be Ateek's suggestion that we should sometimes say, 'This is NOT the word of the Lord' after reading an exclusivist passage from the Bible in church!

Ateek's new book is a handbook of Palestinian Liberation Theology. In addition to the main text, there are details of resources such as the Purpose Statement of Sabeel, the Sabeel Prayer, details of Friends' groups, publications and bibliography. Clear, engaging and extremely challenging, this book is easier to read than its predecessors but would lead nicely into them. Ateek's overall suggestion is that Christians should practice what they preach and love even their enemies, as Jesus said. Taking this seriously could change everything!

Stephen Need



### The Sabeel Prayer

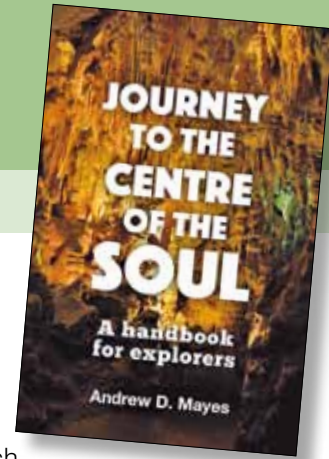
Merciful and loving God, we give you thanks for the many blessings you have so graciously given us. Thank you for your presence and guidance as we walk the way of peace. Bless the work of Sabeel and its friends, local and international. Guide its ecumenical, and justice ministries. Grant us all the courage to confront oppression. Strengthen our commitment to the work of justice, peace, and reconciliation among all people and especially between Palestinians and Israelis. Help us all to see your image in one another. Empower us to stand up for truth and to respect the dignity of every human being. And to you alone be glory and honour now and forever. Amen.



## Journey to the Centre of the Soul. A handbook for explorers

Andrew D. Mayes

Oxford: Bible Reading Fellowship, 2017



Andrew Mayes was the Course Director at St. George's College, Jerusalem several years ago and has led numerous pilgrimages to the Holy Land. He has also written several books using the Holy Land to spur ideas in spirituality. This latest one provides an exciting opportunity for an underground adventure of the soul. The basic idea is this: a number of metaphors from underground in the Holy Land provide ways into thinking about the life of the soul: caves, water, tunnels, cisterns, hidden rivers and buried treasure. Just as you descend into caves, tunnels and cisterns, so these metaphors help you descend into the deeper experiences of your soul. The book is a handbook for explorers, an 'odyssey of the soul'.

Each chapter takes you to a location in the Holy Land to start you off. So, for example, the chapter on caves takes you to the cave of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and the caves of desert monasteries. Then you're invited into the 'cave of the heart'. This leads to an examination of inner spiritual realities and stages of development.

Mayes draws on the Bible as well as on a wide variety of spiritual writers from across the Christian centuries, including the Cappadocian Fathers, Teresa

of Avila, John of the Cross, Catherine of Siena and the less well-known Angela of Foligno.

Modern writers such as Matthew Fox, Richard Rohr and Rowan Williams also feature.

This book will help re-shape your spiritual life. Considering the importance of metaphors in our experience and understanding of God, Mayes asks questions such as: 'What does God taste like?', 'What colour is your soul?' and 'Is my heart getting bigger?'. The final chapters take you into a 'prophetic spirituality' which leads the soul into a greater connectedness with creation, and then to a commitment to political action.

Mayes' book is an exploration of the 'geology of the soul', reaching out in every direction. There are questions for discussion and Prayer Exercises help you delve deep underground! You're bound to come away challenged and changed. Try it and see!

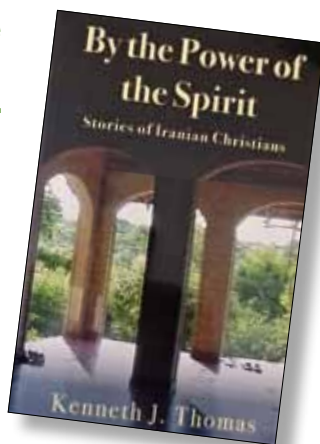
Jill Need

## MORE BOOKS...

### By the Power of the Spirit. Stories of Iranian Christians. Kenneth J. Thomas

(Association of Iranian Presbyterian Churches and Fellowships in North America, 2015)

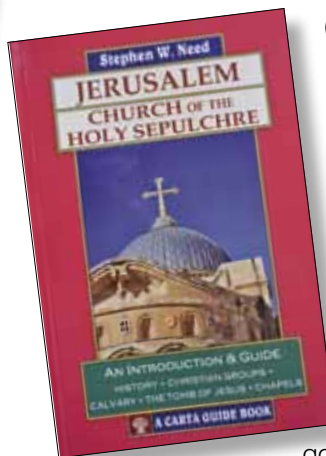
This interesting little book is about Iranian Christians across the centuries and is aimed at Iranian Christians living around the world today. But it will be of interest to anyone who wants to understand Iranian Christians more. The author is a member of the Iranian Presbyterian Churches and Fellowships in North America. And the book gives a flavour of the spirit of Iranian Christianity. There are sections covering the history of Christianity in Iran from the second century onwards and sections



on individuals from Tatian in the second century to contemporaries. There's a short bibliography for further reading. A good introduction.

### Jerusalem. Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Stephen W. Need

(Carta: Jerusalem, 2016)



If you're going to Jerusalem you will surely visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre containing the traditional places of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. This guidebook will help you find your way around. The first part is for use before you go, covering material relating

to the death and burial of Jesus in the gospels and history. The second part takes you on a walk around the church itself pointing out Calvary, the tomb and other areas of the church. Useful and informative.

# 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 Suheil Dawani.

## **THE DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM**

- 2nd The Archbishop, Most 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, Dean of the cathedral.
- 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 of healing: The Jerusalem Princess Basma Centre, The 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, Kids4Peace, Sabeel and the people from all sides who seek peace and pursue it.
- 9th The international courses at St George's College Jerusalem, the Interim Dean, Revd Richard LeSueur and the Course Director, Revd Dr Hector Patmore.

*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 Clergy, Revd Christopher Edgar and others who take leadership roles. Wisdom for those who seek the new bishop.
- 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, Shiraz and Julfa. 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. His Administrative staff.
- 16th The Dean of St Paul's Cathedral Nicosia, Very Revd Jeremy Crocker.  
The Dean of St Christopher's Cathedral Bahrain, Very Revd Christopher Butt.
- 17th The Archdeacon in the Gulf, Ven Bill Schwartz and his wife Edith.  
The Archdeacon in 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 Father Paul Davies, who leads the mission of the Epiphany Centre.
- 21st The congregation of Baghdad, led by 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

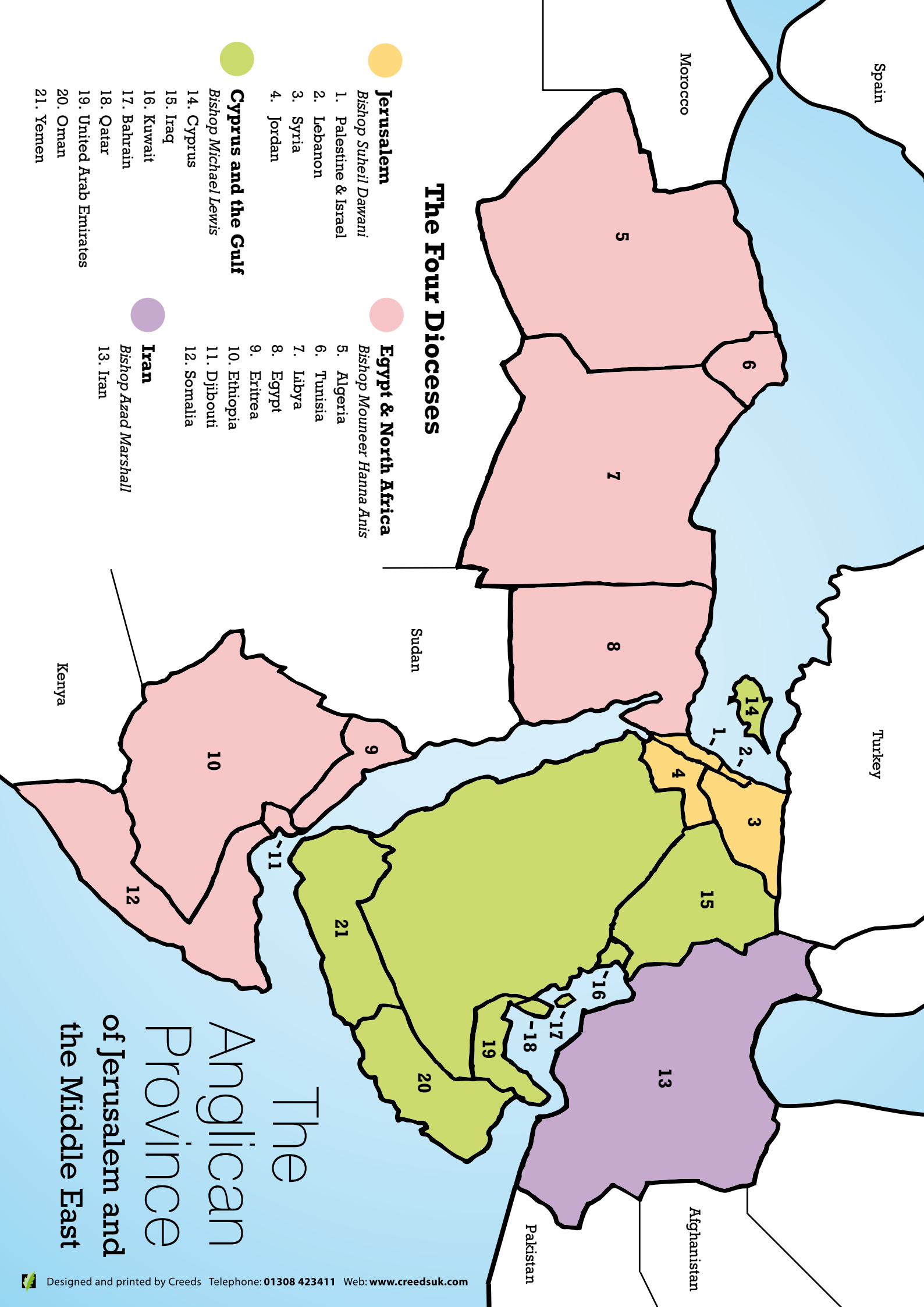
- 23rd The Bishop, Most Revd Dr Mouneer Anis and his wife, Nancy.
- 24th North Africa, for all those who have borne brave witness in Libya.
- 25th The Ethiopian mission, the Bishop in the Horn of Africa, Rt Revd Canon Dr Samy Fawzy Shehata and his wife and all who seek to build a serving church.
- 26th 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, Rt 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.*

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- 30th The Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association, its Chairman Mr Huw Thomas, the chair of Standing Committee Mr John Clark, the Administrator Mrs Shirley Eason and all whose gifts, past and present, sustain it.





## 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