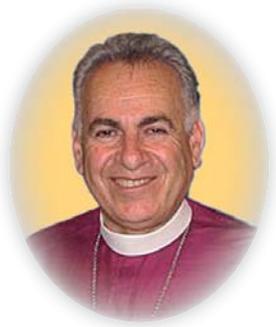


Bible Lands

Advent 2009

Magazine of the Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association

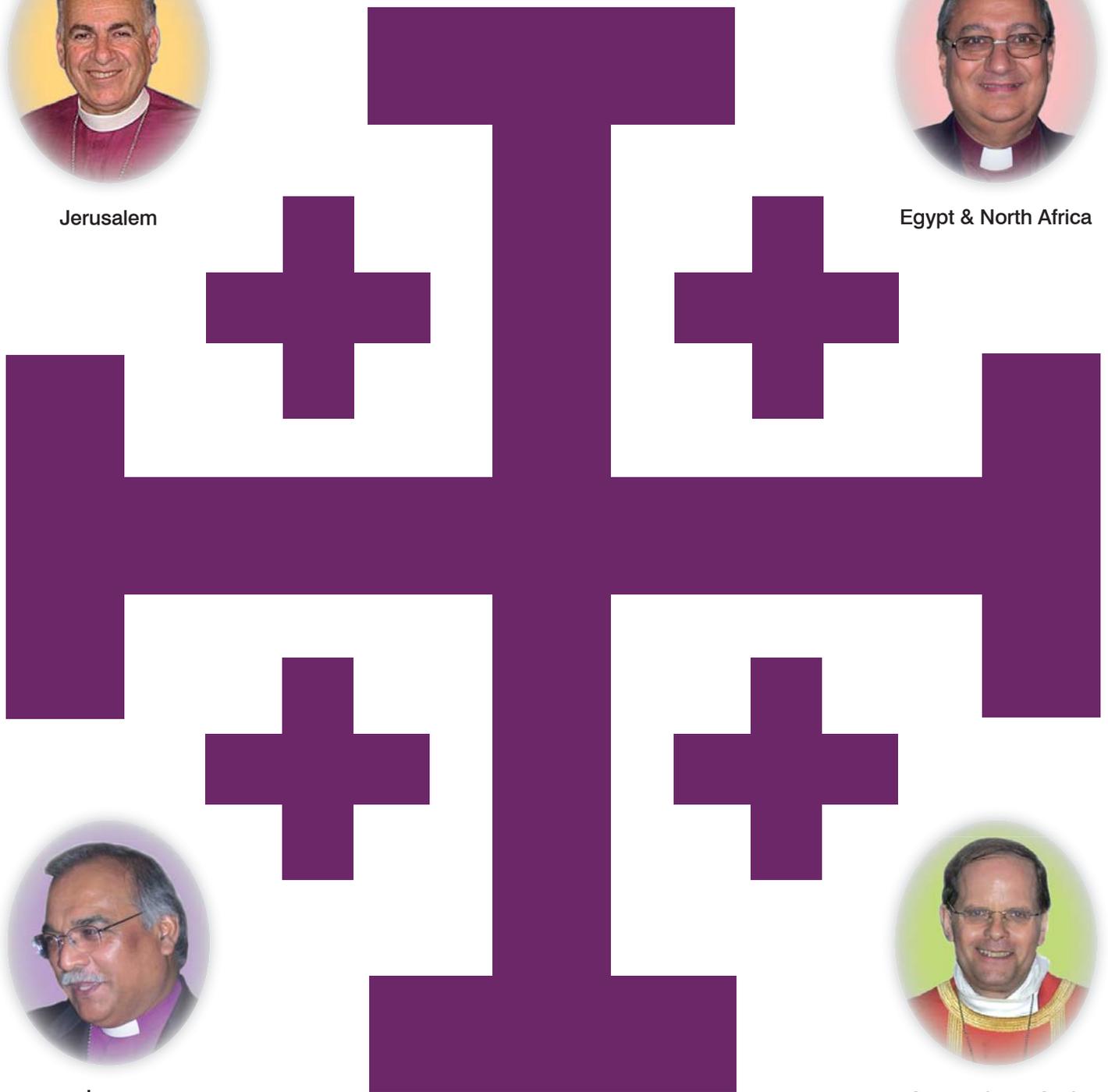
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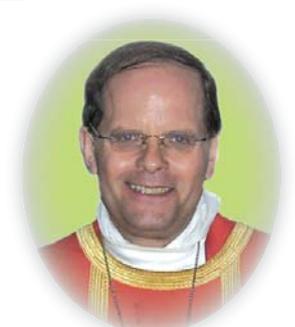
Jerusalem



Egypt & North Africa



Iran



Cyprus & the Gulf

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'.

Reg. Charity no. 248799

www.jmecca.org.uk

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The next issue will be published in Pentecost 2010.

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

JMECA Website

The site has an information page for each of the four Dioceses with links to the websites of each one.

www.jmecca.org.uk



John Clark

Chair of the Trustees, comments...

Recently, I have had a number of opportunities to meet with some of the bishops and clergy of the Anglican Church in the Middle East. It has been impressive to learn of the creative ways in which they are responding to the demands of the very different and often dangerous situations in which they are set.

This magazine provides some highlights. The situation in Baghdad is extremely demanding so it is good to have news from St George's (page 13) and to learn of the disturbing effect of the conflict in Iraq on the Syrian Churches by a researcher supported by a grant from JMECA (pages 18-19). The hospital in Gaza carries on its ministry of healing in a highly stressful situation. We include news here as over £10,000 in your donations and a JMECA grant were sent to support it after the Israeli invasion (page 12).

In the Diocese of Egypt, for example, to which JMECA makes substantial grants from Trusts and general income, there are many developments in social outreach through the social service centres in Cairo, the hospital in Menouf and in the refugee work among the many Sudanese who have settled in Egypt (page 15).

Another role is that of hospitality to Christians of other traditions. This is particularly true in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf. In Doha, the development of the Church of the Epiphany (www.epiphany-qatar.org) to which JMECA made a grant of £30,000, is making steady progress. Three temporary meeting halls have been erected for use while funds are raised for the full building and already more than twenty different congregations meet in them during the week and particularly at the weekend (page 8).

There are many challenging examples of Christian presence and witness in the Middle East. Only a few can be featured in Bible Lands. But they should stimulate us in our own Christian discipleship and calling in the UK, particularly in the Christmas season as we celebrate the coming of God among us in human form.

I conclude with an item of internal news. Mary Knight, our Secretary, who has brought so much to the work of the Association has given notice that family circumstances mean that she will have to step down as Secretary next summer. So we will be looking for a successor in the New Year and details will be on the JMECA website (www.jmecca.org.uk) by mid January. We will pay tribute to Mary in our next issue but in the meantime do pray for us as we seek a successor and for Mary as she looks to the future.

Mr. John Pringle, the Association's Hon. Treasurer, adds:

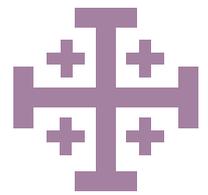
At their meeting in September your Directors approved the accounts of the five registered charities for the year ending 30th June 2009. They all support the religious, educational, medical and other needs of the Episcopal Church in the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East. In difficult economic times it is pleasing to report that grants paid during the year increased by 20% to £276,000 pounds. This was possible because income from our investments increased by £12,000 and donations by £7,000. All the dioceses received more financial support than in 2008.

That our investment income has continued to grow is due to the sound advice we receive from our Investment Managers. We follow the policies of the Church of England Ethical Investment Advisory Group unless there are exceptional reasons for not so doing. This means the companies must demonstrate responsible employment and best corporate governance practices, be conscientious with regard to environmental performance and human rights, and act with sensitivity in the communities in which they operate.

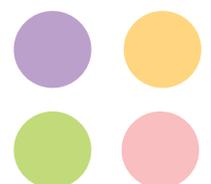
This financial year will be challenging but there are early indications that we will be able to at least maintain our levels of regular support. Your help and encouragement will underpin our efforts!

An Appeal to users of Amazon from the webmaster

Did you know that amazon.co.uk are offering free delivery on everything purchased from their website before the start of 2010? Readers planning to use Amazon in the run up to Christmas can support the work of JMECA by using the link to the Amazon site on the home page of JMECA's site (www.jmecca.org.uk). Using this link will not change the shopping 'experience' BUT will help JMECA gain affiliate fees. So, please think JMECA before you visit Amazon and click from the banner on www.jmecca.org.uk Thank you, Peter Chapman, Webmaster.



Editorial



Introducing the Diocese

The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, a diocese of the worldwide Anglican Communion, extends over five countries--Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Israel. It has 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 in the diocese, 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.

Deepening ties Worldwide

BISHOP SUHEIL HOSTS RAMADAN CELEBRATION

Bishop Suheil Dawani hosted Mr. Ali Ayed, the Jordanian Ambassador to Israel and Sheik Azam Khattib, head of the local Islamic Waqf at an *iftar* held in their honour at the St. George's Cathedral Guest House. This was part of the Bishop's policy of solidarity and good relations between faith communities in his diocese. Each day during the month of the Islamic Ramadan, Muslims abstain from all food, drink and smoking during the day, humbly focusing on purifying body and soul. The evening dinner (*iftar*) breaks the daily fast for the Muslim community during this holy month.



Bishop Suheil warmly welcomed the Ambassador and the Sheik, among a variety of other local Muslim leaders who were joined by the leadership of the Arab-speaking congregation at the Cathedral. Both the Ambassador and the Sheik shared their perspectives on the importance of the holy city of Jerusalem and the current political situation.

Sharing in this special occasion were diocesan clergy, the headmaster of St. George's School, and men of the Arabic speaking congregation at the Cathedral. The event was well-received by all involved and stresses the importance of the Christian minority amidst the Muslim majority in this region. The dinner also emphasised the cordial relations of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

BISHOP SUHEIL and ARCHBISHOP OF CANADA

Archbishop Fred Hiltz, the primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, ended his eight day visit to the diocese with a strong commitment to deepen ties with the Episcopal diocese of Jerusalem. He has invited Bishop Suheil to attend the Canadian General Synod in 2010 and he has promised him 'a good block of time to address the General Synod on the life and witness of the church in the Holy Land.'

The Anglican Church of Canada and the diocese of Jerusalem are exploring ways to enhance their relationship in the areas of theological education, parish-to-parish and diocese-to-diocese companion relationships, volunteers in mission, and support for particular projects. The hope is to launch some initiatives at the General Synod. There are also plans to arrange a meeting in Ottawa between Bishop Suheil and the Canadian Foreign Minister Lawrence Cannon.

During his visit to the Jerusalem diocese Archbishop Hiltz learned how the local church bears witness to the Gospel in a situation that is highly politicized, that always has the potential to be volatile, and where Christians are clearly in the minority. The evidence of Israeli occupation in the Holy Land is "painfully real," he said. He affirmed Bishop Suheil's policy of advocating for peace and reconciliation among the three Abrahamic faiths.

"Bishop Suheil's belief is that there is room in Jerusalem for everyone; we just have to find a way for that to be a reality," said Archbishop Hiltz. "When we met with Beatitude Theophilos III the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, he talked about the need for a continuing Christian presence, for Christians to be a kind of bridge between Judaism and Islam."

The Archbishop visited Gaza, and experienced

mixed emotions after seeing bombed-out buildings on one side of the road and a huge refugee camp on the other, while in other areas, life appeared to be relatively normal, with markets open, children playing and people roaming the streets. He also visited the diocese-run Al Ahli Arab Hospital, and took communion on site, at St. Philip's Church. "It was amazing to hear the deep, deep commitment to the people's healthcare," he said. The primate was moved by the story of one doctor who was in the middle of a surgery when told that his son, who also worked in the hospital, had been killed on an ambulance route. "He said, 'What could I do? I couldn't leave to save him, so I stayed to save another life. "

The Archbishop was impressed that Bishop Suheil is "committed to bringing about change" primarily through healthcare and education being accessible to anyone regardless of religion or race.



Archbishop Fred Hiltz, primate of the Anglican Church of Canada (back row, fourth from right) and Bishop Suheil Dawani, diocese of Jerusalem (fifth from right) at St. Luke's Hospital, Nablus with all the staff.

BISHOP SUHEIL and EX PRESIDENT CARTER.

Bishop Suheil was a guest of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter at a conference in Atlanta. The bishop presented a paper urging political and spiritual leaders to help preserve the presence of Christianity in the Holy Land and he outlined a series of positive steps that can be taken as interim measures until a permanent peace is established.

The Bishop, whose paper is titled "*Traditions of the Christian Community in the Land of the Holy One and Threats to its Continuing Presence,*" noted that while the situation in the Middle East is complex, "Christians



have historically played an important role in the spiritual leadership and politics of the region, as well as in the various public and private sectors of the economy." In the past decade, however, the percentage of Christians in the Holy Land has declined dramatically, from about 18 percent to less than 2 percent. "The education and values of local Christians help create a respectful and constructive dialogue among people of different faiths and economic conditions," said the Bishop." The urgency to preserve an indigenous Christian community is crucial to its ability to continue to serve as a moderating and reconciling element in the social and cultural fabric of the Middle East."

In his paper, the Bishop laid out a series of initiatives to provide temporary bridges for conciliation until the peace process is resolved.

BISHOP SUHEIL and THE AMERICAN CONVENTION

The Bishop and Mrs. Dawani were among the special invited guests of the Presiding Bishop, the Most Rev'd Katharine Jefferts Schori, at the 76th General Convention



of the Episcopal Church, which included the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Primates of several Anglican Provinces and Ecumenical and Interfaith dignitaries.

Bishop Suheil spoke at several meetings, including the Coordinating Group of the Jerusalem Diocese Partners, chaired by the Presiding Bishop. At that meeting, Presiding Bishop Katharine presented Bishop Dawani with a generous cheque from the annual Good Friday Offering of the Episcopal Church. She also designated the Partnership Group among her Executive Staff at the Episcopal Church Headquarters in New York City to coordinate the work of American church partners involved with Jerusalem and its institutions.

Bishop Dawani also spoke of the historic continuity of service among more than 7,000 Anglicans in the Diocese of Jerusalem. He explained that the Diocese covers five countries in the Middle East, with 27 congregations and 33 institutions in the important areas of education and health care. "These grassroots institutions provide a safety net of necessary social services, especially through our work in providing scholarships and educational opportunity for the young," said Bishop Suheil. "Through these programmes we also seek to stem the tide of emigration of the historic Christian community from the Holy Land to Western countries, given the complexity and challenges faced in our region. We remain a community of hope, a hopefulness that comes from our Blessed Lord's imperative in St. John's Gospel, "I have come that you may have life and have it abundantly."

In the Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East there are no less than 33 Institutions serving the whole community. Here, we feature the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf, based in the ancient Jordanian city of Salt. It began as a small school in 1964, and has been growing ever since and now offers Rehabilitation, Education, Vocational Training and other services for deaf and physically or mentally challenged people.

Government Recognition:

At the behest of the King, the Jordanian government established a Higher Council for the Affairs of People with Disabilities, to support and develop the various national services for the handicapped. The Institute received generous grants for its work with the Deaf and in the outreach programmes. The Ministry of Education offered all the children a new warm jacket before the cold started. The children were very happy to be allowed to choose the colour they liked. Even deaf-blind Mohammed tried to feel which jacket he liked best. One of the onlookers, who didn't know the children, was dumbfounded about Mohammed's ability to move independently, talk in sign language and chose by himself.



Many blessings

In spite of a sudden increase in the cost of living of, at times, between 50% and 100%, it was neither necessary to decrease the quality of the care for the children nor to put a squeeze on the salaries. On the contrary for the first time in the history of the Institute every member of staff received last Christmas an extra bonus of £120.

One day in the spring, Mrs Samawi from Jordan came to announce the gift of the new vocational training building. That very same day a new friend in England, Mr. Urwick jr., donated out of the blue from his company's charitable trust the amount of £25.000 for where most needed..



WOULD YOUR PARISH LIKE A LINK WITH THE HOLY LAND?

PARISH PARTNERSHIPS ARE POSSIBLE

Bishop Suheil Dawani is encouraging ecumenical partnerships between international and diocesan parishes. These partnerships are based on the strong belief that churches in other regions can share and learn from diocesan parishes, assisting local congregations while at the same time benefiting from the rich cultural and biblical history imbedded in Christians who have roots dating back to the first Pentecost.

Some parishes of the Diocese of Jerusalem have had parish relationships for years, but most do not. Bishop Dawani has asked his Chaplain, Canon Robert Edmunds, to coordinate the building of new and much needed relationships. In the past year, Canon Edmunds has matched inquirers from the Church of England and the Episcopal Church USA with parishes recommended by the Bishop, and is receiving encouraging responses from all involved. The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem invites your parish to explore this idea, understanding that such commitments require a generosity of exchange and an openness to learn. Many Diocesan churches in this region are increasingly isolated, given the emigration of Christians in search of full employment. The benefit to those who reach out in solidarity to Christian brothers and sisters in the birthplace of Christianity is local hospitality and the desire to share traditions and biblical understanding with other Christians who will walk with them through the current challenges.

Canon Edmunds may be contact by email at: bishops.chaplain@j-diocese.org

IN THE STEPS OF JESUS... A pilgrimage, led by the editor of this magazine, Canon Tim Biles and his wife Joan, will visit the Holy sites of yesterday and the holy people of today. The pilgrims will be based at church Guest Houses in Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem and will see some of the Diocese's work during a twelve day tour. MAY 2011. Brochure from Tim Biles, telephone 01935 816247 or email tim@tjbiles.freemove.co.uk

Introducing the Diocese – Cyprus and the Gulf

by BISHOP MICHAEL



We're pretty unusual, to the point of uniqueness, yet we could be on the way to being how a diocese ought to be. We serve the people of ten political jurisdictions. Our worshippers are of a wide range of nationalities. In Iraq virtually all were born in the country and are citizens but elsewhere we're mostly expatriates. Or should that be migrant workers? In popular usage there's something of a class or at least an economic distinction that is made between those two terms. Yet every Nepalese or Pakistani labourer, and every Sri Lankan or Filipina maid, is an expatriate, with a proud personal and family history and a culture and a heritage deriving from another land; while very many who normally and quite correctly describe themselves as expatriates - from Britain, America, South Africa, India, and elsewhere - are also and in fact migrant workers: they've moved to this or that country, far from their own, to work.

It's humbling that both rich and poor and middling, all migrant working expatriates, are to be found together in many of our congregations, along with those who have migrated in order to retire. Also strongly present in our congregations, in some places forming the backbone of church life, are those who moved because the person they share, or shared, their life with got a job here. It's a rich mix.

How else are we distinctive?

We're on the cusp of East and West. In nine of the ten jurisdictions we serve, Muslims are hugely in the majority. In none of the jurisdictions are we in any sense an Established Church; on the contrary, we're one Christian tradition among several. As Anglicans and especially in the countries of Arabia and the Gulf, we're looked to for practical hospitality by Christian groups with fewer connections: rooms to rent for worship, advocacy and help and advice. English is our main language, even though for many of us it's not our native speech. Yet there is also Anglican worship in Arabic, Urdu, and Aramaic, and more besides; and, in the services of the huge number of guest congregations using our premises, a thousand tongues. Finally, several of our countries, and our Middle East region certainly, are under the spotlight of world attention, and what happens in the area we serve may affect universal history.

I said we could be on the way to being how a diocese ought to be. To get there, we shall need to see all these features for what they are: God-given opportunities, and blessings not burdens.

Serving ten jurisdictions is eye-opening, not confusing,

It is a call to use our intelligence and to expand our knowledge.

Being multi-national should stiffen our resolve to combat racism and challenge narrow prejudice, both inside and outside church life. Living close to blatant evidence of the yawning gap between the poor and the rest of society ought to fire us up for mission service. The fact that some of us are working for money and others are retired can sharpen a Christian understanding of what gives value to human beings.

Being in the East but right next to the West, and having as neighbours Muslims in some places and Eastern Christians, especially Orthodox, in others, is a heaven-sent chance to get behind stereotypes and challenge assumptions by gaining personal experience and friendships. Not being given automatic superiority as Anglicans should stop us behaving as if we were superior, and start us off on a journey of real ecumenical learning. Finding ourselves called to hospitality, we must make sure our relationship is truly that of hosts to guests and not simply commercial. And living in the region where God was made flesh and Christ lived and died and rose for the whole of the universe, we have a duty and a joy to tell out that truth and good news, and transcend petty disputes and mundane worries, however absorbing and real they feel, in sheer delight at being where and who we are.

New Dean Appointed

The Bishop in Cyprus and the Gulf, the Right Reverend Michael Lewis, is pleased to announce the appointment of the Reverend John Tyrrell, formerly Archdeacon of the Klondike and Rector of Dawson City in the Diocese of Yukon, Church of Canada, and latterly a locum and interregnum chaplain in the Diocese of Gibraltar in Europe, to be Dean of St Paul's Cathedral, Nicosia, Cyprus.

Please pray for him and for his wife Carol.

GROWTH OF THE CHURCH IN QATAR



In May 2006, following the generous gift of land by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al Thani, representatives from Christian Churches in Qatar signed an agreement with the government for a fifty year lease on a large area of land on the outskirts of Doha. Six churches were to be erected, at their own expense.

Marie Norton up-dates us on progress:

So the story of the building of the Church of the Epiphany in Qatar began, under the able leadership of Archdeacon Ian Young, and continued since Autumn 2007 by Archdeacon Bill Schwartz and his wife Edie.

The groundbreaking ceremony in May 2008 led by Bishop Michael Lewis was a moving occasion, the singing of "The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord" was a firm reminder that this is to be to the Glory of God. A few months later the work began.

During construction we are thankful to God for the provision of three temporary buildings on one side of the site, at present we can accommodate 22 congregations for worship. When the permanent building is complete we will serve the 50 congregations who have come forward with requests for space. Hosting so many groups is a blessing but hard work for those who organize it, but the rental generated is helping in some small way with much needed funds.

The total area of "Church City" is shared by the Egyptian Coptic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church and a group of 28 Indian Christian Churches as well as the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches. We are in negotiation with some of the Churches sharing boundary walls and a positive attitude prevails. Parking may become a real issue in the future when all of these Churches are completed, especially at the great festivals of Christmas and Easter.

We are thankful to God for good relationships amongst the whole breadth and scope of Christian traditions here in Qatar.

We are building as quickly as funding allows and in the fairly near future we will face a stage when funding will become quite critical. Please pray for our fundraising Committee, they have a difficult task, especially in the current financial downturn.

We praise God for all that is happening here in Qatar and we are thankful for the prayers and support from friends all over the world

We give thanks for the witness that this project gives and we are thankful to God for the co-operation and practical assistance enjoyed with the various Government departments here in Qatar.

Please join with us in praying for increased opportunity for dialogue in everyday relationships. We give praise to God for the openness that was evident here in Qatar when they hosted the 7th Doha Muslim/Christian dialogue Conference in October. See www.epiphany-qatar.org

Archdeacon Bill Schwartz adds:

"It would be remiss to speak only of the building project. The congregation continues to grow. Friday mornings always have more than 200 people, and the mix of nationalities and languages, and the way our congregation transcends the economic stratification in Doha is a special joy to us all. It is also a joy to see almost 25% of the Friday congregation as participants in our Friday school. We are averaging about a wedding per week, and some of the couples are attracted to the church community through the marriage ministry. Bishop Michael confirmed four young people and two adults, and baptized one, when he was with us. We are also pleased to welcome an additional non-stipendiary priest into our midst; the participation of three non-stipendiary clergy ensures that services in the different locations are covered no matter which of us might be travelling at any given time.

As I often say, our biggest problem is the vast opportunity for ministry that we find here in Qatar. We move forward with the grace of God and the empowerment of his people."

Editor's note: The Chairman comments on page 3 that the largest single donation by this Association in 2009 was £30,000 to the Qatar Building Fund.

CHRIST CHURCH, ADEN

The new Chaplain, Nigel Dawkins writes:

We would be most grateful for your prayers and would ask you to pray for the following things: for all Christians in Yemen that we will grow in our relationship with God; for the staff at the Family Department of Ras Morbat Clinic, that through God's love they will heal the sick and bring sight to the blind; for all seafarers who pass through the Gulf of Aden-with God's protection they may remain unharmed; for the Somali refugees who live in Yemen, that they will find hope for the future; for the congregation of Christ Church gathering to worship God, that we will be bound by the Spirit of Fellowship; for the President of Yemen, Ali Abdullah Salih, that God will guide him and his government.

ST. PAUL'S, KUWAIT.

The Chaplain Andy Thompson writes:

"It's hot, sometimes 50 degrees. When the dust storms hit, all you can taste is sand and grit. It gets everywhere. The last two months has seemed to be a blur of services, sermons, writing articles for the local media, pastoral visits, counselling, dealing with politics in the local churches, and within Kuwait. Interfaith dialogue seems to be a trend at the moment. I have participated in events organised by the British Embassy, the Spanish Embassy and the Australian Embassy. There was an interesting night organised by an Islamic group trying to find common ground between Islam and Christianity. It was a well meaning effort which served only to highlight the glaring difference. Loving Jesus as a prophet is good, but tragically they miss his main message of love and forgiveness through his work on the cross. It makes one weep with frustration at their blindness. People are coming to faith and growing in the love and grace of Jesus Christ. It is this which inspires us and encourages us and reminds us of why we are here. Pray that we will be inspired and encouraged by the Spirit of God.

ST. MARK'S CHAPLAINCY, FAMAGUSTA AND THE KARPAZ.

The Chaplain, Robin Brooks writes:

Three adults were confirmed by Bishop Michael on his visit which was a great encouragement. Weekly Services have been established in Famagusta and in the Bogaz Hotel, Karpaz. Val Brooks, organises the Sunday School. Two of the young people run a weekly children's club in their flat and the Oasis Cafe continues to reach out to many students, those from Iran seem especially receptive.

THE RESOURCE CENTRE HOLY TRINITY, DUBAI

Tim and Anthea Fawdry write to give news of incredible sales of Bibles and other Christian materials in many different languages. They have sold over 2400 copies of "The Purpose Driven Life"; Hundreds of "Where is God when it hurts?" They have just supplied the Mission to Seafarers in Fujeriah with 1,600 copies of "The Seafarers Chart" which is an excellent introduction to the Gospel in the New Life version.

The Late Archdeacon Linley

Archdeacon Ralph Linley's daughter, Daphne Smith, appreciated the Obituary notice of her father in the Pentecost magazine. She writes: On behalf of the family I would like to thank all the kind people who sent such lovely messages of support to us after my father's death. I am especially grateful to those who managed to come to the funeral (in particular Barry Simmons who spoke so eloquently of Ralph's work in the Gulf). It was an uplifting celebration of Ralph's life and work. The village church was full to overflowing with family, friends, colleagues, villagers and no fewer than 6 clergy officiating! I know he would have been so proud and pleased.

Several people regretted there had not been a photograph of the Archdeacon, we are grateful to Daphne for providing this picture of her father, early in his ministry. Editor



St George's College, Jerusalem

INTRODUCING THE COLLEGE

The Dean of the College, Revd. Dr. Stephen Need writes:

Jerusalem is one of the most exciting cities on earth and St. George's College is situated at its heart, just a few minutes from the Damascus and Herod Gates of the Old City. In moments you can be on the Via Dolorosa or in the Church of the Resurrection, on the Mount of Olives or in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Situated alongside the Anglican Cathedral of St. George, the College provides a peaceful haven for study and refreshment right at the centre of town.

Courses at St. George's aim to provide Christians of all denominations and people of all faiths with an opportunity to explore the riches of the area.

- Study the Bible and archaeology; the history of Judaism, Christianity and Islam; and meet the different peoples of the Holy Land today.
- See Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Galilee, the Dead Sea and many of the sites associated with Jesus' ministry.
- Visit Qumran and Masada; Jericho and the Jordan Valley and get an overview of the Holy Land that will stay with you for ever.

- Travel to Greece and Turkey in the footsteps of St. Paul; to Cyprus, Rome, Petra and the Sinai in search of monasteries, icons and desert spirituality.

St. George's courses will transform your life; rehabilitate your faith; and expand your understanding of the Bible and history.

2010 Courses

Course Name	Cost	Days	Start
Palestine of Jesus	\$ 2640	14	01/06/10
Palestine of Jesus	\$ 2640	14	01/27/10
Palestine of Jesus	\$ 2640	14	02/24/10
Risen with Christ: (Eastern Holy Week)	\$ 2200	10	03/29/10
The Bible and its Setting	\$ 2750	14	04/14/10
Palestine of Jesus	\$ 2640	14	05/05/10
St. Paul and the Early Church	\$ 4400	14	05/26/10
Palestine of Jesus	\$ 2420	10	06/22/10
Youth Course	\$ 1320	8	07/13/10
Palestine of Jesus	\$ 2640	14	08/04/10
Abraham, Yesterday and Today	\$ 2200	12	09/02/10
Ways in the Wilderness	\$ 3960	14	09/22/10
Preaching Festival	\$	14	10/13/10
Palestine of Jesus	\$ 2640	14	11/10/10
Palestine of Jesus	\$ 2640	14	12/02/10



The Licensing of the Rev'd Canon Dr. Andrew Mayes as Course Director

(Left to right): The Right Rev'd Allen Bartlett, (USA), the Rev'd Canon Dr. Andrew Mayes (England), the Rev'd Stephen Need (England), St. George's College Dean; The Right Rev'd Dr. Suheil S. Dawani, Chair of the College Foundation and Diocesan Bishop; the Rev'd Canon William Broughton (USA); the Right Rev'd Keith Slater (Australia); the Rev'd Canon Hosam Naoum (Jerusalem); the Right Rev'd Robin Smith (England); the Rev'd Canon Dr. Samir J. Habiby (USA).



COURSE RECOMMENDED

'Risen with Christ': Holy Week in the Holy City

with Canon Hugh Wybrew

The 'Risen with Christ' course at St George's College, Jerusalem, introduces participants to the Eastern Orthodox Churches in Israel/Palestine, and to their Holy Week and Easter liturgies. Course members attend services in Coptic, Armenian, and Syrian Orthodox churches, as well as Greek, Russian and Romanian Orthodox services in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre – known to local Christians as the Church of the Resurrection – and other churches in Jerusalem. The climax of Holy Week is the ceremony of the holy fire at 1.00 pm on Holy Saturday in the Church of the Resurrection. Israeli security restricts entry severely and there is unfortunately no guarantee that course members will be able to witness the ceremony directly. The course includes lectures on the Eastern Christian communities in Jerusalem, the development of their Holy Week and Easter liturgies, and relations between Christians of East and West. The visiting lecturer in 2010 will be Canon Hugh Wybrew, formerly Vicar of St Mary Magdalen, Oxford and who was Dean of The Cathedral in Jerusalem, for several years in the '80s.



The Ethiopian Easter Ceremonies

St George's College is part of St George's Anglican Cathedral Close, a few minutes' walk from the Old City. It has very good accommodation, with en-suite facilities, and the Palestinian chef provides excellent local cuisine in the college dining room. Those interested should be aware that the course involves a good deal of walking and standing. Next year Eastern and Western Easters coincide, and course members will be able to attend the cathedral Eucharist on Easter Day and some of the other services.

In 2010 the course begins on 29th March, and finishes on 7th April. The cost is US \$2,200 excluding air fares. Details can be found on the College website at www.sgcjerusalem.org or obtained from the Registrar, whose email address is: registrar@stgeorges.org.il. The postal address for air mail letters is: St George's College Jerusalem, PO Box 1248, Jerusalem 91000, via Israel. 'Risen with Christ' is a unique opportunity to experience the life and worship of the Eastern Christian communities in the city and land where Christian faith was born.

COURSE REVIEWED

The Palestine of Jesus.

My wife and I with 25 'pilgrims' from Australia, England, The United States, Canada and Nigeria took part in the popular course run by St. George's College Jerusalem, "The Palestine of Jesus'. It was a most humbling, affirming and wonderful experience for all of us – to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, to hear our hosts Fr. Stephen Need and his wife Jill explain the geography, times and places Jesus lived and taught in, and to worship at these Holy sites. However while our faith and ministry was affirmed, it was also disturbing and sad to see firsthand the suffering and degradation many Palestinians are subjected to, to see the Wall – a wall that separates many Palestinians from living a normal life, to experience the security that's in place throughout the country. Just a few days after we arrived home we read and saw on our TV screens the bombing of Gaza. As someone said, "Why can't we build bridges of reconciliation rather than a wall of separation?" But we are people of hope and must remember that "Christ has died, Christ is risen and Christ will come again!"

The highlights included walking the Via Dolorosa and taking part in a very moving Stations of the Cross, worshipping at the Mount of Beatitudes and on Mt. Tabor and walking along the shore of Lake Galilee, near where Jesus fed the 5,000 – surrounded by Australian Gum trees! Here we shared the Lord's Supper together on a simple basalt altar by the Sea of Galilee, very moving with the water in the background surrounded by olive and eucalyptus trees. (*Pictures opposite*)

But there were many other faith affirming experiences – reflecting at the Garden of Gethsemane and at the many Churches throughout Israel/Palestine that were places of significance in Jesus' life. We also worshipped at St. George's Cathedral and met the mother of Fr. George Kirreh – now ministering in Jerusalem diocese. He had been part of our Parish community at The Church of the Good Shepherd Plympton in South Australia prior to his ordination earlier this year in Jerusalem.

Reading the Bible, hearing the familiar Gospel stories and events now have a far deeper meaning for us after our pilgrimage.

Rosemary and Peter Miller. Plympton South Australia.

Gaza still struggling amid the ruins



CAU II CONP

by Gerald Butt Middle East Correspondent

Part of an article first published in the Church Times and reprinted with permission.

The Anglican Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City

is appealing for international support, as it seeks to maintain normal services in the aftermath of the Israeli assault on the territory earlier this year. Nine months after the attack, in which some 1500 Palestinians were killed, the Gaza Strip remains under Israeli siege. Against a background of worsening economic and social conditions, doctors are treating psychological as well as physical wounds. The diplomatic fallout from the conflict, meanwhile, could endanger efforts to reunite Palestinian ranks and restart peace talks with Israel. For the inhabitants of Gaza, the machinations of the politicians are less pressing than the need to cope with the results of the widespread destruction caused by the war. Because of the continuing siege, little reconstruction work has been possible, and basic services face significant disruption.



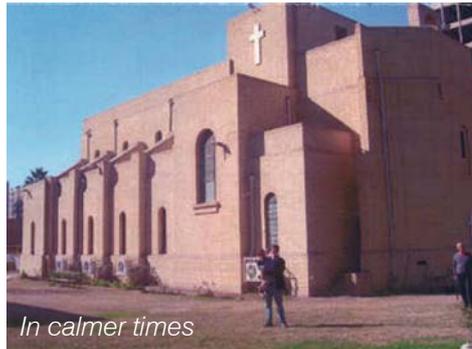
Suhaila Tarazi, director of the Ahli Hospital, says: "We are still suffering because of the siege. We have shortages of medical supplies and medicines because of bureaucratic delays at the crossings from Israel." Fuel shortages have forced the hospital to minimise the use of generators. As in other institutions in Gaza, Ahli Hospital has postponed building work because of the difficulty of securing materials. "The price of cement is three times higher than it was a year ago," Ms Tarazi says. Another recent trend is a large increase in the number of burn injuries that the Ahli Hospital is treating. Children are particularly affected, because families have to "use kerosene stoves for cooking. Sometimes they even have to use blocks of wood." Physicians are also dealing with psychological problems. Hassan Zeyada, a psychologist and head of the Gaza Community Health Centre, finds that children were terrified by their experiences. Their symptoms include 'sleep disorders, nightmares, and aggression... Many will not sleep alone, and are reluctant to leave their families to go to school.' The atmosphere in Gaza, Dr Zeyada says, is one of "insecurity and helplessness among the people. They are powerless to do anything to end the suffering."



The bishop, Rt. Revd Suheil Dawani says...

Thanks to the many donations received from the Anglican community, the Ahli Arab Hospital of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem has been able to increase health, medical and social support for the residents of Gaza.

Funds donated to the hospital and the diocesan Gaza Medical Emergency Fund are used to run the vital programs provided by the Ahli Arab Hospital to address the hardships faced by patients and their families. Among other services, the hospital also runs a mobile clinic for first aid and basic medical care, which travels to areas where limited services and transportation make it difficult or impossible for patients to reach the hospital.



St George's Church Baghdad

St George's Church, Baghdad is the only active Anglican Church in Iraq. It was built in 1936 as a memorial to the many soldiers of the British Empire who lost their lives in Mesopotamia in the First World War. For part of its history, St. George's functioned as a church for expatriates but the Church stopped functioning after the first Gulf War.

Following the 2003 invasion, the church was mainly used for services by diplomats and the military. However, following the outbreak of the insurgency, the situation soon became too dangerous and military and political figures could no longer leave the Green Zone to enter the church. Meanwhile, the decrease in Coalition presence was supplemented by an increasing number of Iraqis who started coming to the church chiefly because it became too dangerous for them to travel to their own services. The security situation in Iraq continues to affect the congregation and currently several armed guards keep watch over the building and safeguard the people during services. A bus collects most members and brings them to the church hoping to avoid the threat of kidnapping. Despite preventive efforts, the reality of violence remains. The US Army surrounded the church with huge concrete barriers and announced that everybody who comes in must be searched. Occasionally all services in Baghdad are cancelled because of security concerns. In September 2005 all of the lay church leaders were kidnapped and killed yet, despite the loss, the congregation continued to grow under the leadership of Canon Andrew White.

The Present Situation

On August 9th and October 25th. The people of Baghdad suffered more bombings, directed at the centres of government. On both occasions St. George's church suffered in the attacks. As we go to press news is coming from the bishop of the latest horrors. Rt. Revd Michael Lewis writes:

"Canon White, currently in England for preaching engagements but due to be back in Iraq soon, is examining photographs of the widespread damage to the church compound. The dental and general medical clinics and the Mothers' Union kitchen and food-aid facility have apparently suffered terribly, with equipment destroyed beyond use. Church vehicles, vital for transporting worshippers, have been wrecked. The lovingly landscaped and tended grounds, in which many children play, are a wilderness. While the church building itself stands, windows, both glass and frames, have been blown out entirely. At present it is unclear whether church members were among the dead and wounded."

Bishop Michael and his wife Julia paid their most recent visit to St George's at the start of the summer, where well over a thousand people greeted them at the principal eucharist. "The faith and love of the people of St George's is powerful and extraordinary. So is their resilience," he said. "It's heartbreaking to think that the clinics, which I opened last year and have been in constant use since then by Baghdadis irrespective of creed or affiliation, have suffered so badly. But the impressive Iraqi leadership team, together with Andrew White, will be determined to carry on witnessing to the unstoppable compassion of God in that great, battered city."

Egypt & North Africa

INTRODUCING THE DIOCESE

Anglicans first established a church in 1839 in Alexandria. The Diocese was formed in the early twentieth century and grew to incorporate North Africa and the Horn of Africa. The current Bishop of Egypt is The Most Rev. Dr. Mouneer Hanna Anis, who is also the President Bishop of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East.

Since the beginning, the Anglicans have always been involved in community services.

The creation of the Episcopal/Anglican Diocese of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa has helped to further enhance these services to reach more people and provide greater hope for many of those living under the poverty line.

Therefore, our vision is four-fold:

1. Reaching the Unreached
2. Serving Holistically
3. Building Bridges
4. Training Leaders

With this vision in mind, our focus is primarily directed towards women, children, young adults and involves community development, education and health. The work of the ministries and institutions of the Diocese of Egypt aims to develop the abilities of those in need and to break the cycle of poverty and suffering for both Muslims and Christians so that they and successive generations may have a better life.

FOCUS ON: The fourth theme 'Training the Leaders' at Alexandria School of Theology in Alexandria:



This academic year, we welcomed around fifty students into our various undergraduate programs as well as two new faculty members, Bill Nikides and Rev. Matthew Anderson, who are teaching the fourth year courses on Christian Ethics and Early Church History respectively. At Villa Pathy Conference Centre near Alexandria around 160 of us gathered for an intensive programme of lectures and good fellowship for our bi annual residential conference. Late into the evening students were playing football and team games until the lights went out! We now have the makings of an AST Cairo and an AST Alex football team for some friendly branch matches!



This was a historic, blessed, and joyous occasion celebrating the graduation of seventeen students with a Bachelor in Theology and seven students with a Diploma. It was a very significant moment in the life of AST, one that we had set our hearts on from the beginning and achieved by God's grace. Thank you for your messages of congratulations. We were honoured to have Dr. Grant LeMarquand, Trinity School of Ministry Pittsburgh as our guest speaker and also Canon Huw Thomas, Chairman of Egypt Diocesan Association and Senior Fellow of Liverpool Hope University join us.

The Refuge-Egypt education system consists of three programmes: Happy Child Preschool, Primary Education Programme and Adult English Education.

Adult English Education

The programme has been of great value to hundreds of students looking to bolster their chances of economic stability and, subsequently, resettlement. These classes are taught by teams from around the world who volunteer their time on a weekly basis.

The focus is on comprehension, rather than the standard Egyptian educational focus on rote learning. This gives students greater confidence and competence in the language, a greater interest in learning and a lot of fun in the exchanges of conversation.

Primary Education Programme

Last year, five children enrolled. This year, thirty and growing! The facilities are limited. Space is provided for classrooms in the Cathedral compound. The 'fee' to cover all costs is kept low at 50LE (\$10) a year, this is to enable the refugees facing greatest economic difficulties to be included but it means heavy subsidy from well-wishers.

The school functions Monday to Thursday, 8am to 2.30pm. It covers English, maths, music, good playground behaviour and prayer. Refuge-Egypt director Jonathan Lee identifies English teaching as the most attractive quality of the programme. One current student, Tito, disagrees. His favourite part of the program is outdoor game time!

The principal teacher is eager to emphasize, the education program is much different from standard Egyptian schools. "We teach for understanding," he said, "not rote memorization." In addition, the programme encourages creativity and self-discovery in its students. One technique he describes involves having the students inventively construct objects. Once finished, the students are then asked to take them apart and build something entirely different. Besides the uniqueness of this approach, compared to most Egyptian schools, the evidence is that the children love it! Homework is only given before the weekend, so that students will have plenty of time to devote to it and will have the opportunity to ask parents for help if needed (students do not have books that they can bring home with them). The teaching principle is that parent involvement is where the programme begins, continues, and ends.

Unfortunately, fees can never meet the costs. Rooms need renovating, expansion is necessary, there are only two teachers and no books. With increased resources and support, within Egypt and abroad, further expansion of this exciting programme could be possible in future school years.

The relief work of the Episcopal Church among refugees has grown

The figures for 2009 available to the end of September show:

- 396 new refugees have been registered with the Emergency Team, 80% of them Sudanese.
- 1,049 people have received urgently needed clothing.
- 5,515 people have received much-needed food packages.
- 164 trainees have completed the Domestic Cleaning Training Programme.
- 364 people, 80% of them women, have found work through the Employment Centre.
- 1,726 infants have been monitored at the Well Baby Clinic.
- 275 new clients have enrolled at the Well Baby Clinic.
- 228 clients have enrolled at the Well Child Clinic which only opened in July.
- 3000 consultations have been completed at the Refuge-Egypt's clinic in Arbaa W Nus.
- 7140 consultations have taken place at the Zamalek Clinic.
- The Youth Department has hosted a conference for teens and youth.
- Registration at the Happy Child Preschool has increased to 60 children.



Ethiopia

BISHOP ANDREW and CLIMATE CHANGE

The bishop sees with his own eyes the effect of climate change on the poorest people:

"In the Gambella, the far west of Ethiopia, it usually rains a lot at this time of year. It's now the end of August and it has hardly rained at all. The soil here is rich and fertile and could produce a magnificent yield. But the maize planted in April sprung up only to wither and dry on the stems under the relentless sun. In the heat, tempers flare, too. Fights break out, often with fatal results, and cattle raiders start to slip over the border from South Sudan. They burn homes, steal the few remaining cattle and, in a recent and chilling development, even stole some of the children. They say the children are sold as slaves in Khartoum, which means there must be a developed market there. If the rain does eventually come there will be so much of it at the wrong time that the newly planted crops will be simply washed away in the floods...as happened last year.

In the north and east, the topography is harsher, more spectacular. The rugged mountain peaks of the north give way to vast stretches of empty, rocky desert in the east. Here, pastoralists roam for hundreds of miles, to graze their cattle or camels. In the markets, women sit over small bundles of twigs that they've gathered somewhere in the vast landscape outside the town, tied with bark and offered for sale as kindling. In one place, it hasn't rained for several years now. For the past three years, there has been no harvest, of any kind. Someone offers food for work – a common enough relief strategy – the people laugh, "Look at us. We're too weak to work."

LITURGY AND LANGUAGE

From Reformation times Anglicanism has been committed to worship in the vernacular. But this is not always straightforward. Bishop Andrew and the Local Assembly have difficult decisions to make. Bishop Andrew writes:

"The Local Assembly also marked the use of a new liturgy. Prior to the Local Assembly, teams had been finalising the translations of Holy Communion and Morning Prayer services into seven local languages: Nuer, Anuak, Dinka, Mabaan, Opo, Amharic and Somali. A common liturgy will allow regular patterns of worship in all the churches in the region. Previously if translations existed, they were either antiquated or not available in published form. Few people speak English and for many this was the first liturgy that they had experienced, let alone in their mother tongue. Worshipping together emphasises Christian Unity over tribal differences and helps to build a common life. Having the same liturgy in different languages enabled almost everyone present at the Local Assembly to participate in the final Holy Communion service. The communal responses were said simultaneously in eight languages! It is thought that the liturgy is the first ever written document in the Opo language."

THE CHURCH CENTRE IN GAMBELLA

The bishop reports the building progress.

"Despite the difficulties we are making good, steady progress on building our Anglican Centre in Gambella. And despite a general shortage of cement in the country (there is none, anywhere) and the elephant grasses that have shot up all over the vast compound in the last few months, the office is nearly finished, the Guest House is well under way and the footings for the Library/Reading Room are firmly in place. But a huge, unresolved question hangs over everything. With the Irish economy in steep decline, Irish Aid has had to cut its support to Christian Aid in Ethiopia by as much as 33% this year. We are waiting to see if our second and third year grants will be cut, too. But there is some good news. The Anglican Relief and Development Fund in the US is seriously considering our application for top-up funding, to allow as much of the build to be completed as possible and then roll out the programmes. And we think we may have found a Project Director, from London, to replace the Addis-educated Project Director who left earlier in the year when his life was threatened in the tribal conflicts that we live with."



CONGRATULATIONS

Revd Nigel Dawkins and Miss Catherine Lewis-Morris were married at St. Mary Caterham in Southwark diocese on 17th October. Nigel is chaplain of the Yemen at Christ Church, Tawahi, Aden, Catherine is a chartered accountant and has been a tax consultant. She has recently completed three years of training and formation for ordination at Ridley Hall Theological College, Cambridge. The bishop asks us to pray for Nigel and Catherine and for the wide-ranging and demanding work of the Yemen chaplaincy in all its variety.



HONOUR: THE REVEREND PETER CROOKS

It is a pleasure to record that the Revd Peter Crooks, who served as chaplain in the Yemen at Christ Church Aden, has been made an MBE (Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire). The citation is for "services to seafarers and the community in the Yemen". Those services, as many will know, were quite outstanding, involving the supervision and development of the general medical and eye clinics, outreach healthcare work in remote locations, and ministry with refugees and the destitute, as well as hospitality, sustaining the life of the church and worshipping groups and individuals, and maintaining a diligent port chaplaincy.

In a varied ministry covering both the UK and the Middle East, Peter, with Nancy, served in the Lebanon and Syria as well as Palestine/Israel, where he was Dean of St George's Cathedral in Jerusalem, and Iran. Peter's chaplaincy in the Yemen was from 2004 to 2009.

He is currently parish priest of Arthog with Fairbourne with Llangelynnin (Llwyngwriil) with Rhosfelain in Wales.

SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL and AFRICAN STUDIES (SOAS)

The seventh annual Christianity in Iraq Seminar Day will be held at the Brunei Gallery Lecture Theatre, SOAS, London on Saturday 24th April 2010.

The theme will be the Churches of Iraq, with academic speakers including Dr. Robert Carter (London), Prof. Amir Harrak (Toronto, Canada), Dr. Alain Desremaux (Paris). In addition to the academic speakers, members of the Iraqi communities and clergy are encouraged to present papers. This affords a most valuable insight into the real state of affairs, and the situation of the Christians both in Iraq and in the diaspora (England and Syria) These papers often provide insights not covered by the media.

Details from Erica C.D. Hunter Lecturer in Eastern Christianity, SOAS, University of London, Thomhaugh Street, Russell Square, London. WC1H 0XG.

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www.cypgulf.org

and click on Retreat House

Email: retreats@spidemet.com.cy

Tel: 22-671220 Mobile: 99-155092

RETREATS is a self-funding office. A guide for donations will be suggested.

THE INVASION OF IRAQ

And hidden consequences for Christians...



Joshua Kassanis

The Iraqi Christian refugees who came to Hassake, Syria during the years 2003-2008 have found everything they need to survive. In Hassake, the Iraqi Christian refugees find a sympathetic population who still remember the persecution of their own community during the

time of their grandparents. The Churches provide aid, especially the Syrian Orthodox Church which is the wealthiest in Hassake and as such the most able. This is in addition to the support provided by the UNHCR, which set up a base of operations in Hassake due to the large numbers of refugees who came there, alongside the Red Crescent and Caritas.

With the savings brought with them or with the aid which they receive from the Churches and the other charitable organisations they rent flats, and houses, often sharing with one or two other families. This has driven up rents and property prices. This is in addition to the general inflation which has been caused by the presence of the Iraqi refugees.

The protracted stay of the Iraqi refugees has induced a harder financial situation for all, and particularly for the Syrian poor who have to cope with greater competition for work in addition to inflation. Among the Syrian poor there is a widespread resentment of the aid specifically given to the Iraqi refugees, as they feel that they themselves are just as deserving of aid. By necessity, even though it is formally forbidden, the Iraqi young men take up work in the lower-paid end of the labour market because these are the only jobs for which they are accepted. This means that the poorer sections of the Syrian communities of Hassake, who would usually

provide the work-force for the lower paid jobs, have found it harder to secure employment.

The Syrian government allows the Iraqi children to enter state schools, and, once certificates of education were found, or schools provided internal assessments, the classrooms saw a mixed Syrian and Iraqi population. The influx of Iraqi children to Syrian schools seems not to have impaired the quality of the education provided or created an environment in which it is more difficult to study.

Similarly, the presence of the Iraqis has had no discernible effect on the price or availability of medicines or medical care in Hassake. The only effect of the Iraqi refugees being in the Syrian

schools which I observed was that the Syrian children sometimes bullied their Iraqi classmates because the latter were from a different country.

Spiritually, the Christians of Hassake are robust. They consciously bear the heritage of the faith of their grandparents who underwent persecution in Tur 'Abdin and Mardin in what is now southern Turkey. The Syrian Orthodox Church has at least two services every day and sees over a thousand people attend its morning service on Sunday. For them the faithfulness of the Iraqi Christians in not disowning their religion during the persecution they suffered is something 'usual', to quote the head of

the Syrian Orthodox Church in Syrian Mesopotamia. However, even if there were to be any mutual spiritual encouragement there is very little contact between the Iraqi Christian refugees and the Syrian Christians for this to happen.

The Iraqi Christian refugees are accommodated by the Syrian Christian communities of Hassake and are largely amiably tolerated, by them. They are able to survive, even if it is precariously, due to the availability of support from the NGOs and the

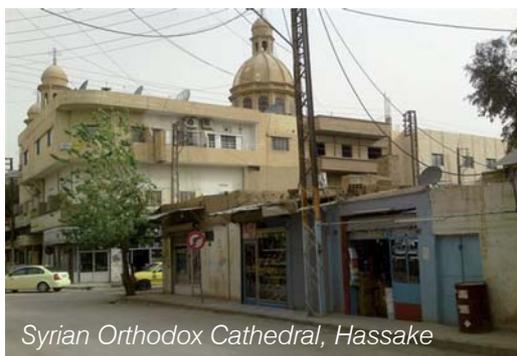
The US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 resulted in protracted conflict within the country by many different protagonists --Sunni and Shi'a Islamic groups, Kurds and Ba'athist loyalists as well as criminal individuals and groups. The Christians, along with the rest of the population, found themselves subjected to kidnappings, eviction from their homes, threats to make them close their businesses, and other forms of intimidation. Many fled the country but the Christians became a disproportionately large section of the refugees- approximately 25% - although they were only 3-5% of the Iraqi population as a whole. The greater number of these Christian refugees came to Syria. JMECA has partly sponsored an academic research by Joshua Kassanis into their situation. He has produced a 76 page analysis based on field studies with the families who settled in the city of al-Hassaka. His study reveals harrowing details of their changed circumstances. Here, we reproduce his conclusions:

Churches. They are not, however, able to make Hassake a permanent home. This is ultimately because they are not able to save money to support themselves in old age. Their visas still officially forbid them from work and so working at a professional level, as many of the Iraqi Christian refugees are qualified to do, is impossible. They cannot return to Iraq because of the security situation which sees no sign of improving, in addition to personal threats by terrorists to individuals' lives in Iraq. The hope which was presented to me by every Iraqi family whom I met was to attain asylum in the West.

The UN facilitates Iraqi asylum to the West but ultimately will not be able, nor does it aim to, evacuate every Iraqi Christian refugee. A confederation of German Churches managed to secure asylum for 2,500 Iraqi Christian refugees from Syria in 2008. These programmes, however, are very rare. This means that there is a distinct possibility that an Iraqi Christian remnant could stay in Syria permanently. If they remained without the legal right to work they would find it even more difficult to live as the current generation grows old and becomes increasingly dependent on their children who cannot work

in jobs higher-paid than service in shops and restaurants and hairdressing.

The effect on the Syrian Christian population of a remnant of Iraqi Christians could possibly take two courses.



Syrian Orthodox Cathedral, Hassake

One would be that the Iraqis would eventually be permitted to work officially, taking professional jobs as appropriate. Then they would just become, in the Syrian Christian eyes, another neighbouring community, given the minimal contact that occurs between the Syrians and the Iraqis in Hassake. Very few Iraqis I met entertained any thought that the situation in Iraq might improve.

The other possibility would be if the Iraqis never received the legal right to work and simply could not survive if NGO support ceased, given the passage of time and the Syrian Churches were not able to bare this burden. They might turn to crime in this hypothetical situation, and so become a menace to the Syrian communities of Hassake. However, that they should be allowed to remain and never be officially permitted to work, considering that Palestinians are permitted to hold professional and even government posts within Syria, seems very unlikely.

Joshua Kassanis



BALFOUR AND WEIZMANN

The Zionist, the Zealot and the Emergence of Israel.

Geoffrey Lewis

This review by Owen Chadwick, formerly Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge University was first published in The Tablet and is reprinted with permission. www.thetablet.co.uk

CONTINUUM, 203PP. Hardback £20

In a world troubled by Gaza, history asks whether two states in a divided Palestine were ever possible: was there a flaw in what the powers organised in the Near and Middle East when they won the First World War? This book is a first-class examination of the origins of the state of Israel: it considers whether it was possible to create from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire a state which could satisfy its Arab inhabitants and, simultaneously, Jews who felt persecuted in Europe and longed for a home of their own in their sacred land around Jerusalem. Many Jews thought the idea of a Jewish state mistaken: they were a religion, not a state, and so could be Jewish in Britain or France or the United States.

The book approaches the arguments by studying two leaders: the Gentile Zionist ex-prime minister of Britain for whom coping with persecuted Jewry was an urgent problem and the dedicated Jewish zealot who was a naturalised British chemist, outspoken on the need for a Jewish state in the Holy Land.

Arthur Balfour passionately believed that anti-Semitism was a curse and the cause of crime among the nations. Zionists, he was convinced, might cure the disease. He seemed almost blindly to believe that a Jewish state in Palestine could not possibly offend the Arabs because the Jews would bring with them education and science.

Chaim Weizmann was a man of strong conviction and skill in diplomacy. He did not understand those who pleaded the cause of the Arabs or those Jews who thought it wrong to make Jewry an independent state.

Balfour was an upper-class Scot with a first-class education. Weizmann was one of 12 children born in the Pripet Marshes, now in Belarus, to a father who was a logger in the forests. The career which turned this Yiddish-speaking boy into a first-class chemist at a Western university is a dramatic moment in the book.

When the First World War came, Britain wished to smash the Ottoman Empire. As a consequence, its attitude to Palestine changed. In the summer of 1917, Zionists drafted for Balfour a declaration: "His Majesty's Government accepts the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home of the Jewish people." In the next months two vital clauses were added: not 'the home' but 'a home'. And later was added: "it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine". This became the Balfour Declaration of 31 October 1917, greeted with ecstasy in places like Odessa and Cracow. Several English newspapers carried the headline, "Palestine for the Jews". But Arabs felt that they were to be invaded by an unknown number of foreigners.

For Weizmann and the Zionists nothing was adequate unless the new state gave dominance to the Jews. For most British civil servants, all inhabitants must be given equal rights: "most", because a few were convinced that westernised Jews were more likely than Arabs to create a workable state. Yet without Weizmann's moderation, the continued backing of the Jewish case by non-Jews could hardly have continued.

Pogroms against Jews in Eastern Europe were a recurring reminder of the need for somewhere which Jews could call their sanctuary. Balfour was convinced that in the end all would come right. He died in 1930, so never saw the coming of Hitler and the deepening need for sanctuary and the other consequences with which we are now familiar.

MIRIAM'S LEGACY

Patricia Rantisi

Published by Author House. ISBN 978-14343-0412-4

The author, Patricia Rantisi, spent 38 years living and working in Ramallah, married to a Palestinian priest. Together they ran an orphanage where she lived and worked with children traumatised by their experiences. After the death of her husband she returned to her home in England and has turned the tales she heard and the things she saw into an historical novel full of the powerful emotions expected from a people who have known the loss of home and family and the degradation of life as an exile or a refugee. The inspiration of the book probably arises from the young people she had 'mothered' in Ramallah where she obviously sensed a spirit of courage and pride. It is this spirit which finally makes the terrible tale not only readable but gives it nobility.

The book's characters may be fictitious but the events, locations and dates are all too real. The author shows how the lives and fates of Palestinian Christians and Muslims are intertwined, making it clear that it is the Israeli occupation, not Islam, that threatens Christians in the land that was Palestine. Her story also explodes the myth that Palestine was ever 'a land without a people'.

The story covers almost a century and is told through four generations of one family. The two stars are Farres of the present generation and his great-grandmother Miriam through whom the life and times of an earlier and happier generation is revealed. The story begins in 1982 in the refugee camp at Shatila, not far from the capital of Lebanon. Hundreds of Palestinian refugees were attacked and murdered by Lebanese militias as Israeli soldiers stood by, including Ariel Sharon, later to become Prime Minister of Israel. As a young boy, Farres is witness to this massacre and the horrors that followed. His father has already been deported, and Farres finds himself responsible for his mother and sisters. His great-grandmother, Miriam, just before she dies, hands over a string of glass worry-beads, the 'legacy' that gives the book its title. He receives it from her and understands her wish that he must never, never forget Palestine their homeland and that if he ever is able to return, to bury the legacy there.

The author then flashes back to a village in Northern Palestine, during the dying days of the Ottoman Empire, where Miriam grew up as a simple peasant girl. She marries very young and she and her husband Amin start to raise a family in a farming community. They are Muslims, but it was a time when Jews, Christians and Muslims lived and worked together in relative peace and harmony, hence the close friendship between Miriam and Majida, a Christian girl. But storm clouds gathered, the events of 1948 are described in graphic detail, the incursion of Zionist forces into Haifa and northern Palestine, the forced evacuation of the indigenous population to southern Lebanon and the refugee camp of Shatila, which became home for Amin and Miriam and their extended family. Having lost home and belongings, they are determined not to lose their dignity and they are always living in the hope that it will not be long before they can return to their beloved homeland.

The story reverts to modern times and to the young Farres caught up in the violence of the '80s and the times of siege, deprivation and near starvation. He is critically wounded but his life is saved by a British doctor who later enables him to travel to England and undertake medical studies. It would spoil the story for readers to tell what happens to him in England, suffice to say humour and pathos are well mixed and the excesses of modern British culture do not always compare favourably with the austerity of his culture. It is not giving away too much of the story to say that Farres is eventually able to fulfil his great-grandmother's dying wish. The story has an emotional and challenging conclusion, and yet it is not a conclusion because for the Palestinians still in exile nothing is concluded, the tragedy is unresolved.

This is a very clever book, the literary device of 'flashbacks' to Miriam's earlier age works well and enables the author to carry the reader through the best part of a hundred years, all the way with the hopes and fears of one family. This book could only have been written by someone who has absorbed herself in the Palestinian story. Readers will see a history unfold, but in the most readable way and with the tragic elements balanced by dignity and heroism.

Timothy Biles

Praying round the Province



The Middle East, home to the three Abrahamic faiths,
heart of the worlds political conflicts, needs your prayers.

We offer this monthly cycle:

1st The Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East and The Most Revd. Dr. Mouneer Anis, Presiding Bishop

The Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East

2nd The Bishop, Rt. Revd Suheil Dawani and his wife, Shafeeqa. For wisdom and courage as he leads the church in five troubled countries.

The Cathedral staff led by Canon Bob Edmunds and the Rev Emad Daibes chaplain to the Arab congregation.

3rd The clergy serving 27 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 teach the young: 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 Theodore 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 work of the guest houses, St. George's Jerusalem and St. Margaret's Nazareth that they may be centres of hospitality and refreshment for pilgrims and all guests.

8th The Kids 4Peace work, the Peace and Reconciliation Movement, Sabeel and the people from all sides who seek peace and pursue it.

9th The leaders of the nations: King Abdullah II of Jordan, Mahmoud Abbas of Palestine, Dr. Bashar Assad of Syria, Fouad Siniora of Lebanon and Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel.

For the healing of the nations, Lord we pray with one accord,

For a just and equal sharing of the things that earth affords

To a life of love in action help us rise and pledge our word.

The Diocese of Iran

10th The Bishop, Rt. Revd. Azad Marshall and his wife, Lesley and for his pastoral visits to Iran.

11th 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 wisdom and strength of those who worship in Ishafan, Tehran and Shiraz that they may contribute well to Iranian society.

13th That plans to develop an Inter-faith Centre for dialogue in Tehran may be fruitful.

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

We find thee, Lord, in other's need

We see thee in our brothers

By loving word and kindly deed

We serve the Man for Others.



Praying round the Province

Day by day take a break. To focus prayer.
For some of the world's bravest people and some of the most troubled.

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.
- 18th** The clergy of Cyprus serving the people of Kyrenia, Larnaca, Limassol, Ayia Nape, Paphos, Famagusta and for the faithful who serve those churches. Also for 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 building of the church in Qatar, and for Archdeacon Bill Schwartz who leads the work and the appeal for funding.
- 21st** The Ecumenical congregation of Baghdad, led by Canon Andrew White, the people of Iraq, of all faiths, and all the Christians who are sheltering in other lands.
- 22nd** The political leaders of the ten jurisdictions, in Cyprus, in Iraq and in the Gulf States, seeking just and stable government.

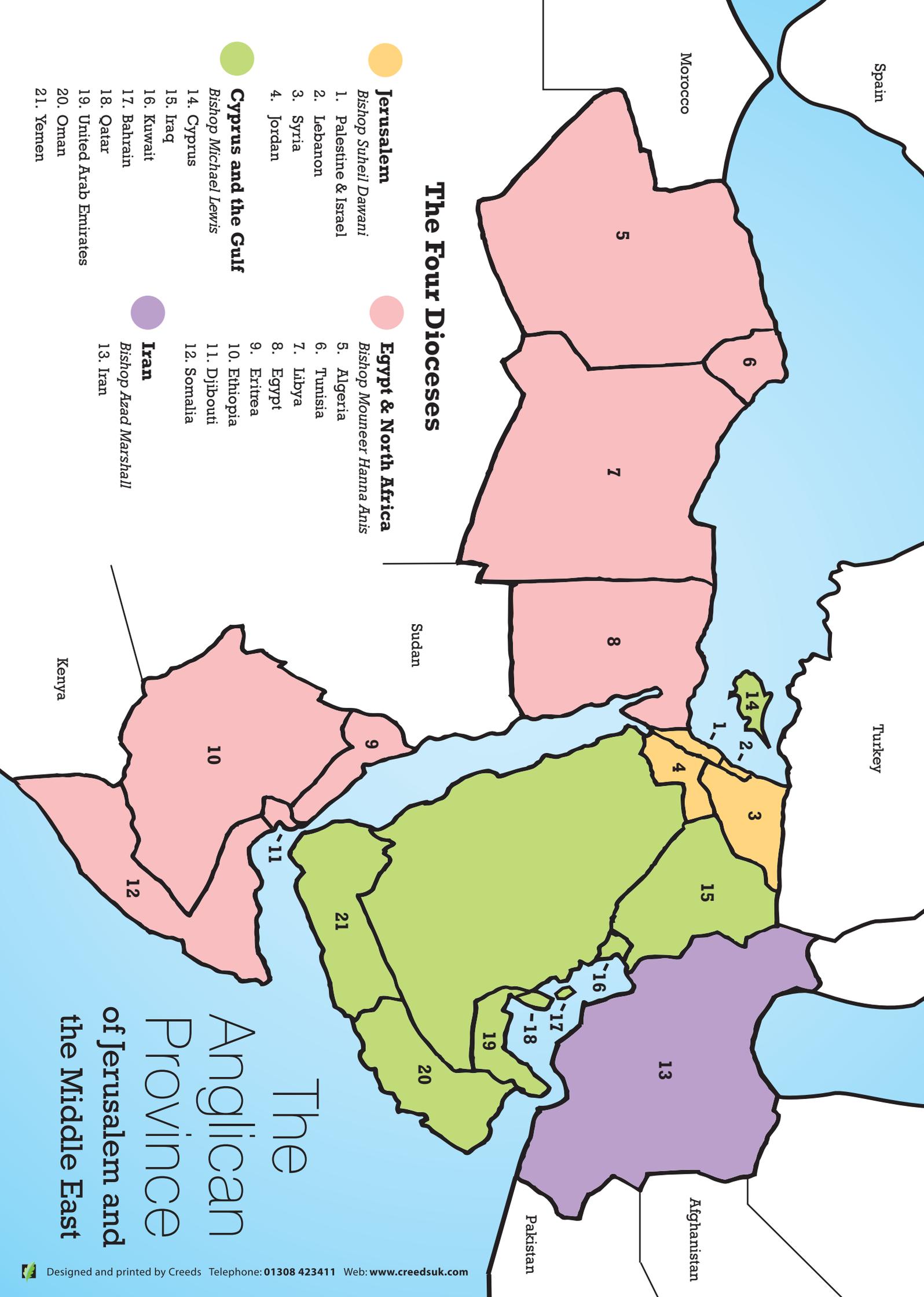
*Speak to us and every nation, bid our jarring discords cease
To the starving and the homeless may we bring a full release.*

Diocese of Egypt with North 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 the Horn of Africa, Rt. Revd Andrew Proud and his wife, Janice, with those who are establishing a centre at Gambella.
- 25th** The Bishop in North Africa, Revd Bill Musk and his wife, Hillary.
- 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 and in 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 leaders of the many and diverse nations that form the diocese, that Government may be just and sound.

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

*Bring to our world of strife
The sovereign word of peace
That war may haunt the earth no more
And desolation cease*



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