

Bible Lands

Winter 2016/17

Magazine of the Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association

www.jmecca.org.uk



Jerusalem



Egypt & North Africa



Cyprus & the Gulf



Iran



Inside Syria – an alternative view p20
Persecution – Prince Hassan and Dr Kessler p4
Inside Gaza – House of Lords Debate pp10/11

THE JERUSALEM AND THE MIDDLE EAST CHURCH ASSOCIATION

(JMECA)

Founded in 1887

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

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

JMECA Website www.jmecca.org.uk

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

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Editorial

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

At the time of writing Middle East news in press and television focus on the devastation of eastern Aleppo in Syria, the preparation in northern Iraq for the assault on Mosul (formerly a great centre for Assyrian Christians) and the parlous situation of the people of Yemen, where starvation threatens alongside the effects of bombing. The situation in parts of the Middle East in recent decades has rarely been so tragic and the ultimate outcomes so uncertain. The effects of the various conflicts will last for generations on the communities of the region, not least the Christian minorities. The words of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Ignatius Ephrem, in the interview later in this issue (page 20), reflect the desires of so many – ‘We want to be helped to stay here, not to leave. We want our Churches to have a better life. We want as Syrians to be able to choose our own life and our own future.’ They need our prayers and support.

Although the Episcopal Church in Syria is closed, our editor has been able to include interviews with two religious leaders in Damascus, drawn from the report of a delegation that visited Syria in early September and it is important to be able to read their views and their concerns for religious diversity which is so under threat (page 20). Orthodox Churches have developed from the early Churches of the Christian era so Canon Hugh Wybrew’s article (pages 14-15) on the great Orthodox Council is an important reflection on a significant gathering

The Episcopal Church is a member of the Middle East Council of Churches and of the World Council – so it is good to have a report from two of our trustees. Dr William Taylor, who represented the Archbishop of Canterbury, reports on the MECC Assembly in Amman (page 12). Dr Clare Amos, a noted biblical scholar with much experience of the Middle East and interfaith work and a welcome addition to our Board writes about the World Council of Churches and the Middle East (page 13). It is not often that we are able to feature the important work of these two ecumenical bodies.

Alongside these reflective articles there are the regular news items from the four dioceses which highlight the day to day presence of Episcopal parishes and the witness and service to the wider communities that they and their institutions provide. The role of Al-Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza was featured by the Bishop of Southwark in a debate on Gaza in the House of Lords and text of his speech is included in this issue (pages 10-11) – a reminder of the way in which

continuing contact with the Churches of region can inform significant parliamentary occasions.

Donations at Christmas

As usual this Christmas we will be sending out a Christmas appeal for support of the churches of the province. Your generous gifts are much appreciated and, with prayer, is an important expression of solidarity with the Church in the region.

Our Editor

After more than ten years as honorary editor of Bible Lands, Canon Tim Biles has indicated that he wishes to step down. He originally only agreed to edit the magazine for three years, but has kept going. A published author, frequent traveller to the Middle East, a skilled and patient editor and valued consultant to the JMECA Board, he has transformed the magazine into a colourful, reflective journal of record, which is widely valued and appreciated. Although the internet and websites grow in significance and use there is nothing like a good printed magazine that can be picked up and read from time to time and *Bible Lands* under his editorship has more than fulfilled that purpose. Tim we are more than grateful and wish you and Joan much blessing in the next phase of your retirement.

John Clark

EDITOR VACANCY

We are looking for a new honorary editor for this twice-yearly journal *Bible Lands* (back copies available online www.jmeca.org.uk). Journalistic or published writing experience and some knowledge of the Middle East would be helpful.

Expressions of interest should be sent by email to secretary@jmeca.eclipse.co.uk or in writing to the JMECA office by Tuesday January 3 (from where further information can be obtained).

Interviews will be held in London on January 11.

www.jmeca.org.uk

Moslem and Jewish Leaders Condemn Persecution of Christians

Prince Hassan of Jordan, a Muslim, has teamed up with Dr Ed Kessler, the Jewish interfaith expert, to issue a joint denunciation of the persecution of Christians in the Middle East. They denounce as “incredible” claims that Christianity is a western import to the region.



Prince Hassan



Dr Kessler

“Christianity has been part of the essential fabric of the Middle East for two thousand years”, they say, “it was born here and exported as a gift to the rest of the world. Christian communities have been intrinsic to the development of Arab culture and civilisation. This central role in our region and civilisation is why it is abhorrent to us, as a Muslim and a Jew, to see Christianity and Christians under such savage assault across our region.”

They say that they are appalled by attacks on Christians and add that “to lose Christianity from its birthplace would be to destroy the richness of the tapestry of the Middle East and a hammer blow to our shared heritage. The reality is that we are all one community, united by shared beliefs and history. But this is increasingly denied, with Daesh (so called Islamic State) taking the lead both in justifying and carrying out these attacks.”

They describe Daesh’s “apocalyptic vision” as harking back to a “mythic golden age which is solely the creation of the warped minds of today’s jihadists”; and say that it comes from “the same mould as those whose misguided zeal turned Christian Europe in the Middle Ages into a byword for fanaticism and oppression.

“Daesh want to take us to a new Dark Age, an age made even darker by the dangers that the gifts of science and technology pose in their hands.” They acknowledge that it is not just Christians who face oppression at the

hands of Daesh. The organisation “has shown itself as prepared to slaughter indiscriminately other Muslims as it has Jews, Christians and others, whatever their nationality: Jordanian or Egyptian, American, British or European.”

They say that improved inter-faith dialogue is key to “helping to end this dangerous slide towards hatred, self-destruction and fratricidal conflict”

They call for “an honest recognition” that the Jewish, Christian and Islamic scriptures – the Old and New Testaments and the Qur’an – “contain texts which are divisive and include attacks on other groups. Throughout history, they have been used to justify the most appalling actions in the name of God, These texts, which carry weight and authority, cannot be deleted or ignored”. They stress that when studying them the importance of interpretation is vital.

“It is time to call a halt to the hate and atrocities that are causing convulsions throughout our immediate region and beyond. Peace and humanity itself hang upon the success of this interfaith exercise. It is that important.”

The two writers are active in the field of inter-faith dialogue. Dr Kessler is the founder-director of the English-based Woolf Institute, the University of Cambridge-linked global institution. Prince Hassan is the founder and president of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies in Jordan, which focuses on the “interdisciplinary study and rational discussion of religion and religious issues, with particular reference to Christianity in Arab and Islamic society.”

From the Anglican Communion News Service, 24 August 2016

Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf

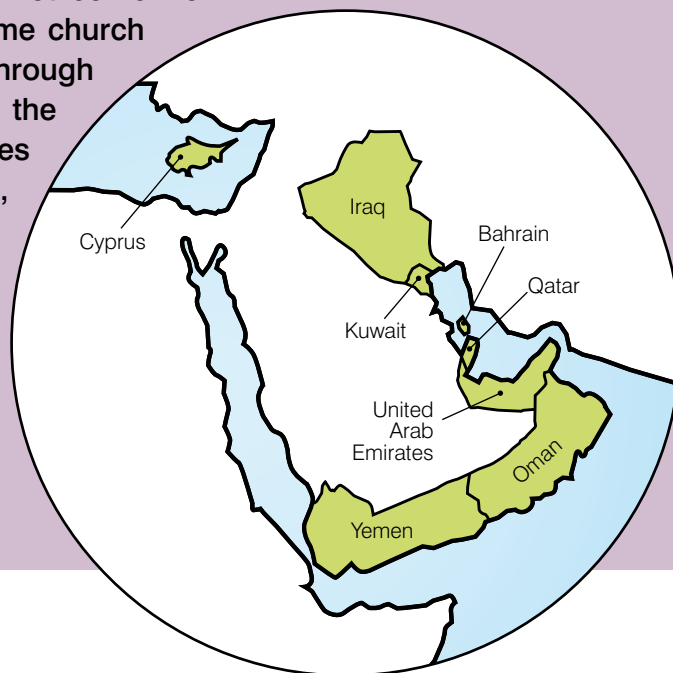
www.cypgulf.org

Cyprus and the Gulf Bishop Michael Lewis



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

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



Staff Changes

Holy Trinity Dubai

The Revd Harrison Chinnakumar, formerly parish priest of Kuwait, as parish priest of Holy Trinity Dubai in the Chaplaincy of Dubai and Sharjah with the Northern Emirates. Please pray for Fr Harrison, his wife Selvarani, and their children Gracia and Samuel, as well as for the people of Holy Trinity Dubai and St Paul Kuwait. The licensing eucharist took place at Holy Trinity in September.

The Revd Joanne Henderson

The Revd Jo Henderson, assistant priest of St Andrew Abu Dhabi, has been appointed team vicar in the Knaresborough Team Ministry, North Yorkshire, in the Province of York. Her ministry there began in October. We congratulate Jo warmly on her appointment and wish her, Ralph, and their family all blessings in the future.

The Revd Chris Mann

Previously chaplain of St Thomas Al Ain in the UAE, Father Chris has been appointed Priest in Charge of St Mary the Virgin Shenfield in the Diocese of Chelmsford. We give thanks for his ministry in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf and pray for him and for Heather in their new life and home.

A Culture of Vocation



The Archdeacon in Cyprus, the Ven. Professor John Holdsworth, who is also the Director of Ministry, believes that ever since the Synod agreed, two years ago, to back a new approach to ministerial development, a culture of vocation has taken hold of the diocese.

He reports that forty people are currently following the *Exploring Faith* course. New groups in Kuwait, Nicosia, Bahrain and the Canterbury Group have joined the courses already running. Three people have been ordained in the past year and three more have been selected for training. He says the diocese may have to place a cap on the additional numbers seeking training for lay ministry because of the pressure on available funding. He says the success of the plan is such that "We have unleashed something it is difficult to contain".

Note: JMECA is planning with the Archdeacon what support it can give the diocese for this training project. Watch this space!

Iraq – Signs of Hope

Nearly 500 displaced Iraqi children made their First Communion in a refugee camp in Erbil, providing a silver lining to an otherwise bleak situation.

5,500 people now live in the Erbil Camp for the displaced and the majority of them – more than 2000 – are children. Of these 470 made their first communion during May and June.

The number of children receiving the sacrament is up from last year's class, which numbered about 400. Since this year's number of recipients is so high, the children were divided into three groups who made their communion in consecutive weeks.

All of the children were from the Syriac-Catholic rite, and most fled the city of Qaraqosh, the former Christian capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, with their families when ISIS militants attacked on the night of August 6th, 2014.

The Eucharists were celebrated by the Syriac-Catholic Archbishop of Mosul Yohanno Petros Moshe in the camp's large, prefabricated church. With a capacity for roughly 800 people, the church started out as a tent when the Christian refugees first poured into Erbil two years ago, asking for a place to pray. Now it serves as the main parish for the city's Aishty camp, which is the largest in Erbil and is divided into three smaller camps: Aishty 1, 2 and 3.

The majority of people in the camp are from Qaraqosh, which is where the former See of their Church had been located before the ISIS assault. After moving the official See of their Church from Mosul to Qaraqosh several years ago due to security concerns and the fact that most of the faithful resided in the city, Syriac-Catholics have now been left without any official diocese or headquarters. Now residing in a largely Chaldean dominated Erbil, they have been welcomed by the local Church and are working daily to keep up the spirits of their faithful, who face an uncertain future in the country. For nearly 500 children to receive their first Communion in the camp is a sign of hope in a place where the flame of Christianity is flickering and growing dangerously closer to burning out. Another sign of hope for Iraq's Christians was the March ordination of four deacons in the same prefabricated parish. They are now working with refugees around the clock, and will likely be ordained priests by the time this is published.

Three of the deacons, alongside the Dominican Sisters of St Catherine of Siena - who largely make up the backbone of Erbil's extensive

displaced Christian community – have been in charge of teaching the children's catechesis in scripture and liturgy.

Edited from The Olive Branch, published by the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, May 2016.



Fr. Faiz, the Priest in Charge of St George's Baghdad, with one of the camp children, displaced in their own land.



The Archdeacon in The Gulf, the Ven. Bill Schwartz, in St George's Baghdad where he was welcomed by a capacity congregation when he celebrated and preached on the Feast of Pentecost.



St George's Baghdad

Aden and the Clinic

Archdeacon in The Gulf, the Venerable Bill Schwartz, sends this update from the Yemeni war zone as at September 2016

The clinic staff continue to devote their time and expertise to address a myriad of eye problems, from simple cataract to wounds from the violence, to extraordinary conditions resulting from accidents etc. Cooperation with MSF continues and the patients continue to come to the clinic in large numbers. Mansour tells me that the compound is safe, and that the staff feel safe working there.

Just this week Mansour told me that the police service is coming back in function, and that civil authority is beginning to take shape. This is strongly supported by aid and expertise from the UAE, who have also been instrumental in restoring electricity supply back to the capacity the people enjoyed before the fighting started. (That means four hours on and four hours off most days.) The regularity of electric supply is a great benefit to the people. Diesel, water and other basics are no longer so scarce, though prices are still very high in respect to people's ability to pay.

Aden airport (Yemenia) services two flights to Cairo and two to Amman every week, though because of the limited space passengers need a permit based

on a significant reason for them to travel. Priority is given to aid workers and government passengers. Radicals continue to attack the airport just to maintain their destabilising influence. It is widely believed that Ali Abdullah Saleh is funding those who are identifying themselves as IS or Al Qa'eda in Aden. The going 'reward' for suicide bombers is \$15,000.

Those who attacked the Sisters of Charity compound some months ago have been captured. In their confessions they said they were supposed to have killed only the foreigners, but they got carried away and that they didn't mean to kill Muslims. There is no word about the whereabouts or safety of Fr Tom, the Catholic priest who was kidnapped during that attack.

There is no indication of when it might be possible or safe for people to visit, much less place foreign staff in Aden. Kidnapping is still a major worry, with big money involved for those who engage in the kidnapping industry. Life there is still a long way from what normal used to be, but it is encouraging to know that order is slowly being reestablished. One can only imagine how education will pick up once it is time for schools to open.

Much to give thanks, for; and much to pray for.

Bill Schwartz, Sep 5 2016

Obituary

REVD JIM WAKERLEY R.I.P.

We are saddened with the news of the death of Revd Jim Wakerley, who served in our diocese in the 80's and 90's. Jim and Carol, fondly known as 'Kiwis', were members of the Chaplaincy in Dubai, Sharjah and Northern Emirates first, where Jim was hugely instrumental in the construction of the Christ Church complex in Jebel Ali. During this time he was accepted as one of the first ordinands of our diocese. Jim studied for ordination through the non-stipendiary course based in Bath and Wells, in a special arrangement for our diocese worked out by Bishop John Brown. Jim and Carol moved to Oman where Jim worked as the administrator and manager of the Ruwi compound for the Protestant Church in Oman. It was challenging work to coordinate the many congregations there, while also helping with plans and construction of the new PCO worship compound in Ghala.

After Jim was ordained Bishop John asked him to move to Aden to direct the formation of the new

ministry there after the re-acquisition of the Christ Church property. Jim worked with the government and a local contractor to obtain permissions, design and build a primary health care clinic on the church compound. He also redesigned the large Victorian church building to facilitate worship and Eucharistic ministry while the west part of the building was re-structured to provide a church hall and a hostel above for Christian workers and visitors. The compound became a very busy site with the Yemeni medical staff seeing many patients a day in the clinic and a congregation was formed from the small expatriate population in the city of Aden.

Jim and Carol had to leave Aden when civil war broke out in 1994. Jim served at St Luke's, RAK from 1999 to the end of 2002 and at Christ Church Jebel Ali from December 2002 to January 2004. They returned to New Zealand and eventually retired. Please remember Carol and other members of their family in your prayers, and give thanks for their pioneering ministry in laying foundations (figuratively and literally) for much of the ministry which characterises our work in the Gulf today.

Diocese of Jerusalem



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

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



ST. GEORGE'S COLLEGE – Revd Dr. Hector Patmore appointed Director of Studies

St George's College is pleased to announce that the Revd Dr Hector Patmore has accepted the Dean's invitation to serve as the Director of Studies from the beginning of 2017.

Dr Patmore is currently Lecturer in Hebrew Bible and Judaism at the University of Cardiff, Wales.

He will be joined in Jerusalem by his wife, Lydia, and their 4 year old son, Bertie.

Hector and Lydia are no strangers to the Anglican community in Jerusalem. While Hector was serving as a Visiting Research Fellow at the Hebrew University in 2011, Lydia worked as a volunteer in the diocesan



offices. In many ways they both feel this is an opportunity for them to return 'home' to Jerusalem.

Hector completed has a MTh in Applied Theology from Oxford University and Ripon College, Cuddesdon as well as a BA (Hons), MA and PhD from the University of Durham. He is a leading international Aramaic scholar and among his academic credits is serving as co-editor for *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*. Second Revised Edition (Leiden: Brill, in press).

As Director of Studies, Dr Patmore will be responsible for the development and delivery of the College's programs, including our online learning resources. He will contribute to the development of strong links with seminaries and universities around the world, and especially in the UK. Hector will also continue his research in Aramaic Jewish texts, as well as the use of the Old Testament in early Jewish demonologies.

Hector and Lydia joined us for the recent *Palestine of Jesus* program when Hector served as a Visiting Professor on the course. They were warmly received by the course members, who were delighted to learn of Hector's appointment as the course concluded.

Gregg Jenks, Dean

A year of transition



During the past twelve months the College has embraced many changes under the leadership of Dean Gregory Jenks.

The biggest change has been a new focus on serving the local church in the Holy Land, and the regional church across the Middle East, as well as the worldwide Anglican Communion. While continuing to offer wonderful opportunities for people to visit the Holy Land on pilgrimages and study tours, the College seeks to be a centre for mission and reconciliation.

In March 2017 the College will host the second of the Mission Theology conferences under the leadership of Bishop Graham Kings, Mission Theologian for the Anglican Communion. The conference topic, *Reconciliation and Mission*, is close to the core vision of the College as it prepares for its centenary in 2020.

As it pursues this mission, the College has embraced social media, with regular blogs and a monthly digital newsletter. Technology is also enabling change in the way that courses are delivered, with online learning replacing the armful of paper handouts that students once took home with them after a program. The experience starts well before the opening lecture and extends as long afterwards as people wish to stay connected.

The Edmond & Patricia Browning Library is central to the College's new vision. As a first step, the catalogue has gone online so people can discover the rich resources already in the library. The next stage is to offer ebooks and ejournals, so that the library becomes a digital portal for clergy and lay leaders right across the Middle East. In fact, all alumni of the College will have free access to the digital resources of the library.

The Jerusalem Ministry Formation Program to be offered in January and July each year, will offer a transformative experience for ordinands and recently ordained clergy from around the Anglican Communion. Participation from Western countries will be capped at 35% and priority for scholarships will be given to people from the Global South to ensure a diversity of participants that reflects the diversity of our global church.

Biblical and theological scholars from colleges and universities around the world are being invited to spend up to three months as Scholars-in-Residence so the College becomes a hub for research that

enriches our study and pilgrimage programs but also serves the mission of the global church. Time spent at the College will enrich their own teaching and research once they return to their home institutions.

The College is seeking gifts from supporters across the world to underwrite these new developments, and enable it to serve as much more than a wonderful pilgrimage opportunity. It seeks to empower and support local ministry in the Holy Land and across the Middle East. It aspires to be a place for encounter between people of different faiths, and especially Christian dialogue with Muslims and Jews. It wants to play a constructive part in the renewal of the Anglican Church across the world, and contribute to reconciliation within our global community.

Your prayers and your gifts can help make this happen. Within the UK, gifts may be made via the St George's College Jerusalem Trust (Registered Charity Number: 1001873): www.stgeorgescollegejerusalemtrust.org.uk/courses.html

2017 Schedule

Introduction to the Bible Lands (8 days)

February 6 – 13
March 27 – April 3
June 19 – 26
November 23 – 30

Palestine of Jesus (14 days)

February 28 – March 13
May 16 – 29
September 5 – 18
November 7 – 20
December 5 – 18

Jerusalem Ministry Formation (14 days)

January 10 – 23
July 18 – 31

Bible and Archaeology (21 days)

June 18 – July 7

Short Courses (mostly 10 days)

Abraham and his Children: April 19 – 28
Easter Fire! April 8 – 17
Holy Land and the Arts: October 2 – 13
OT Landscapes & Narratives: October 17 – 26
Parables of Jesus: October 28 – November 4
Sharing Perspectives:
Jews and Christians February 3 – 12
Sharing Perspectives:
Muslims and Christians: March 16 – 23
St Paul and the Early Church: September 13 – 26
Ways in the Wilderness: October 2 – 13
Women of the Bible: June 2 – 11

Jordan Study Tour (5 days)

May 9 – 13
July 10 – 14
September 19 – 23

House of Lords Debate on Conditions for Children in Gaza

On 21st July 2016 Lord Warner led a debate to highlight “the conditions in which Palestinian children are living and the impact on their health and wellbeing.” The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, Bishop of Southwark, spoke in the debate, drawing on his experiences of visiting Gaza and the West Bank. Baroness Mobarik responded for the Government.

The Bishop of Southwark, who is patron of the charities Embrace the Middle East and Friends of the Holy Land has visited Gaza, the West Bank and the Palestinian refugee camps in partnership with the Vatican’s Holy Land initiative. He said:

“Part of the inescapable context for this debate, is that the state of Israel has a legitimate expectation of security and pressing reasons to express that. What many of those who would count themselves as her friends would argue is that such a focus to the exclusion of all else is counter-productive.

The children of the West Bank, and in particular Gaza, suffer from a long-term failure to achieve a just settlement with the state of Israel and from more recent and specific conflicts, particularly the 51-day conflict focused on Gaza in the summer of 2014. We all lament the loss of 2,100 Palestinians killed, including 551 children, as we do 66 Israeli soldiers and seven civilians. The numbers speak for themselves.

Even before the 2014 conflict, the infrastructure and economy of Gaza was driving poor outcomes, exacerbated by the sealing off of the territory in 2007 by Egypt and Israel in response to the Hamas takeover. In 2009, the Lancet reported a two-year study indicating:

- *an increase in the stunting of growth of children since the mid-1990s*
- *as well as increased rates of tuberculosis.*



- *Infant mortality is rising, not least in Gaza, from 12 per 1,000 within a month of being born in 2008 to 20 per 1,000 in 2013—an increase of 70%.*

The bombardment in 2014 left 10,000 homes uninhabitable, more than 500 schools damaged and many health facilities likewise. Some 8,000 and more of these homes remain in ruins. Much-needed building materials are inhibited by the effective closure of Gaza.

The coastal aquifer water supply for Gaza is now in such a state that 95% of it is unsuitable for drinking, which has massive and obvious implications for public health. There is an urgent need to accelerate construction, economic activity and medical provision, not least for the 3,500 children who were injured during those 51 days in 2014. I wish to pay tribute to the Anglican Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza, which last year provided psychosocial support to some 2,400 children, yet in 2014, UNICEF calculated that those requiring such support numbered, as we have heard, around 373,000—about half the child population. It is no surprise that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East reported last year that pupils in its schools were suffering from intra-student violence, trauma and despair.

I have a number of requests to make of Her Majesty’s Government –

That they recognise at last the state of Palestine. There was a very convincing vote to this end in the other place last year; the Vatican has done so, and it seems a strange use of the prerogative to persist in gainsaying Parliament on the matter.

Will they make representations to the Government of Israel on the use of ammunition when dealing with situations involving children and their being tried by military courts?

Will Her Majesty’s Government press partners to open the borders in Gaza through the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, notwithstanding the need for scrutiny and effective border controls which enable security needs to be addressed?

The Department for International Development should seek to enhance medical facilities in Gaza and the West Bank, particularly for neonatal and psychosocial health; there is a pressing need for this, as we have heard.

Finally, we should commend to all parties and model ourselves the way of peace; of building bridges, not walls; of encouraging the peoples of Israel and Palestine to build up and not tear down; of providing a love strong enough to break down accumulated

resentments, and providing practical support for those who even in desperate straits would not forget the law of hospitality were they to greet us.

Above all, let us not forget the children, for Jesus never did."

Baroness Mobarik (Minister) [extract]: The Right Reverend Prelate the Bishop of Southwark made a point on the use of live fire. The UK is very concerned about the high numbers of Palestinians killed by Israeli defence forces across the Occupied Territories. We have raised those cases with the Israeli Ministry of Strategic Affairs, with the relevant Israeli authority for the Occupied Territories and with the National Security Council...

...UK aid is making a positive difference in the Occupied Territories to the lives of men, women, boys and girls – first, by supporting stability and growing the economy; secondly, by delivering basic services; and, thirdly, by protecting the most vulnerable. That said, the long-term protection of the rights and opportunities of Palestinians can come only through a negotiated two-state solution. I mention again the point made by the Right Reverend Prelate the Bishop of Southwark about recognising the state of Palestine. We will recognise a Palestinian state when we judge that it can best bring about peace, but bilateral recognition in itself will not end the occupation. Without a negotiated settlement, the occupation and the problems that come with it will continue. UK aid will continue to help, but for the sake of children in both Israel and the Occupied Territories, we need a just resolution that ends the occupation and delivers lasting peace.



Gaza: International Criminal Court to visit Israel

A delegation from the International Criminal Court in The Hague will be allowed to visit Israel to assess whether the country could be put on trial for alleged war crimes during the 2014 Gaza War, the Israeli Foreign Ministry has confirmed on 4 September. This is a step that could dramatically increase the risk of Israeli officials being tried for war crimes. The aim of the visit from the ICC office would be to engage in a dialogue about the prosecution's work, Israel's legal system and the preliminary inquiry process, the officials said. The officials stressed that the delegation would not gather any evidence or look into the Palestinian complaints. Their goal, instead, was what the prosecutors call "outreach and education."

Several human rights groups and organisations have documented Israel's unwillingness to investigate violations of international law in the Gaza Strip two years after Operation Protective Edge.

Approval of new settlements in the West Bank

Israel approved on 31 August the construction of hundreds of new housing units in West Bank settlements and retroactively legalized dozens more. The EU reiterated its "strong opposition" to Israel's settlement policy and all actions taken in this context. It recalled that the Quartet Report published last July identified such action as undermining the prospects for peace and steadily eroding the viability of the two-state solution and recommended that any expansion of settlements be frozen. EU Member States such as the UK, France, Germany, Spain and Belgium have joined the EU in condemning this decision, which is illegal under international law and "fundamentally calls into question Israel's commitment to the two state solution"

From the newsletter of EuroMed Rights, September 2016

The Anglican Contribution to Gaza

Al Ahli Arab Hospital: located in Gaza City and occupies a beautiful campus in the city center. With well-tended grounds, it is a haven of peace in the middle of one of the world's most troubled places. The political status of Gaza affects all aspects of life here because of restrictions on movement of materials and people in and out. Electricity, medicines, food, fuel, and personnel are all restricted to some extent. However, Al Ahli Arab Hospital continues to provide some of the finest medical care available in the region. For example, Ahli runs completely free of charge a program for early detection of breast cancer among women above 40 years of age. Two programs deserve special mention: the center for elderly women and the mobile clinic program which twice weekly provides free medical care and food to people from surrounding towns and villages. In a land where hardship is commonplace, the conditions in Gaza stand out, but Al Ahli Arab Hospital generates a beacon of peace and hope for the people it serves.

Mission: The Ahli Arab mission is to glorify God and bear witness to His love as manifested in the life of Jesus Christ. Ahli Arab Hospital is doing this through the provision of high quality patient centered health care services, and maintains the financial viability of its operation. The hospital offers to serve all who seek treatment without prejudice to any religious or ethnic community and irrespective of social class, gender and political affiliation. These services are delivered in a spirit of love and service

O God of wholeness and healing, we lift up the staff and patients of the Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza. Strengthen and guide the Management and all the staff as they treat the poor and injured. Bless the patients who receive care with Your healing touch. Give us a renewed awareness of the blessing of health and grant us the courage to support the caregivers in their work.

MIDDLE EAST COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

XI General Assembly, Amman,
6-9 September 2016

Revd William Taylor

The Revd William Taylor, formerly the Anglican chaplain at the Jordanian chaplaincy, and now a Director of JMECA, was asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury to represent him at the Council Assembly. He writes:

The Assembly came at a critical time for Christians in the Middle East, and the tangible sense of solidarity was increased by the uniform threats to their existence which they all face in one form or another. The theme of the Assembly was *"Give thanks to the Lord for He is good. His mercy endures forever."* Psalm 136:1.

I was unable to be present for the first day because of the Orthodox Round Table meeting at Lambeth, but most of the first day was taken up with more internal organisational matters – formation of different Committees, etc, but I was present from early morning on the second day, having travelled overnight via Cairo. I took with me, and delivered, messages from the Archbishop and from the Prince of Wales. Both were greeted with warm applause from the Assembly.

On the Archbishop's behalf, I greeted in person:

- Pope Tawadros II.
- Catholicos Aram I.
- Patriarch Mor Ignatius Aphrem II.
- Patriarch Theophilus III of Jerusalem.
- Patriarch John X of Antioch.
- Archbishop Chrysostomos II of Cyprus.
- Patriarch Mar Louis Raphael Sako of Babylon

The Patriarch of Babylon told me how much he appreciated the Anglican visits made to Iraq, and encouraged future visits.

Anglicans from the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East were represented by Archbishop Suheil Dawani, Bishop Michael Lewis, and Archdeacon Bill Schwarz.



The meeting had a high profile in the Jordanian media, especially on the third day when Heads of Churches had an audience with His Majesty King Abdullah II. The formal business of the Assembly in plenary had simultaneous translation in Greek, Arabic, and English, but the working groups were all conducted in Arabic. I was in the ecumenical relations working group.

As always at Conferences, much of the most important business and conversations took place in the margins. Moving accounts were given from church leaders from Aleppo and other parts of Syria, but (strangely) there was only one representative from Iraq - Patriarch Louis Sako, and only one from Iran, Archbishop Sebouh Sarkissian. The fact that the Archbishop of Canterbury had sent a representative was important to them, and they told me this often, which I believe was genuinely more than diplomatic *politesse*. There is a genuine expressed desire to work more closely together, and many church leaders were quite direct in saying to me that our own internal Anglican debates were of less importance to them than the existential threats they face. In this, there is a clear division within the communities – between those who believe that the only pragmatic viable future is outside the region in the diaspora, and those who strongly advocate the importance of the continuing Christian presence in the region. I witnessed this for myself (more sharply) in an earlier visit to Erbil and Dohuk. (December 2014).

In terms of practical outcomes, the MECC has reformed and changed some of its structures to make itself more responsive and able to co-operate more effectively with other ecumenical bodies and donor agencies. Patriarch Louis Sako spoke to me of the importance of Anglican visits to Iraq – especially the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). There was a general sense that an Anglican visit to the KRG in the fairly immediate future would be of importance, given the present instability of the future of Mosul.

In essence, Archbishop Justin's decision to send a representative to stand in solidarity with Christians of the Middle East at this critical time was deeply appreciated, and I hope that the momentum of the contacts I was able to renew, both formally and informally will be of future and continuing use.

THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Dr Clare Amos

Not surprisingly the Middle East – the cradle of Christianity – has been an area of particular interest for the World Council of Churches (WCC) since its own foundation in 1948. Indeed I could say that my own life has been profoundly shaped by the willingness of the WCC to engage with the region. For back in 1973 it was a WCC scholarship that initially took me to study in Jerusalem, at the Roman Catholic Ecole Biblique – which in turn eventually led to my being appointed in 1975 as Course Director of St George’s College, Jerusalem. Quite separately my-husband-to-be Alan Amos had, in 1967, received a WCC scholarship to study at the Near East School of Theology, Beirut, which then led to him returning in 1973 to work in Lebanon for the following decade. When Alan and I eventually met in Jerusalem in 1977 it was directly as a result of the generosity of the WCC in enabling our initial experiences of Jerusalem and Lebanon. So now there feels a certain serendipity that my final position before retirement should be working for the WCC in interreligious dialogue.

I would suggest that there are three important and complementary aspects to the World Council of Churches involvement in the Middle East, though they overlap to a considerable extent.

1. Supporting and offering solidarity to Christians and churches in the region

The establishment of the Jerusalem Interchurch Centre a decade or so ago is a practical expression of the commitment of the WCC to supporting the life and witness of the Christian churches in Jerusalem, Israel and Palestine – in often difficult circumstances. In February this year the Jerusalem Interchurch Centre moved into renovated offices owned by the White Fathers based at St Anne’s. It is a generous gesture of ecumenical hospitality offered by this Roman Catholic Order.

In light of the extraordinarily difficult circumstances currently faced by Christians in Iraq and Syria, the WCC has been working, with financial support offered by the government of Norway, to undertake research and analysis and to generate recommendations for the better protection, in both the short-term and the longer-term, of religious minority communities in northern Iraq and Syria. The overall aim of this project is to promote conditions that would enable

a greater proportion of the affected populations to make a reasonable choice to stay in or return to the region in a post-ISIS context, rather than leaving permanently. The initiative is a response to the accelerating loss of religious and social diversity in the societies of the region, and to the current trajectory towards “geographic sectarianization”.

In the context of the Middle East today ecumenism is not an optional extra. There is indeed a need for Christians and churches to be willing to work together and with other communities in multi-religious societies, on the basis of equal citizenship and rights, in order to survive and thrive.

2. Working for justice and peace

A flagship initiative of the WCC is EAPPI (Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel) which brings groups of volunteers to Jerusalem and Palestine for a three month period, to monitor locations of tension such as checkpoints, in such a way as to assist the Palestinian population, enabling for example, workers to cross from the West Bank into Israel for their work, or children to get safely to and from their schools. More can be found out about EAPPI at <https://www.eappi.org/en>

As part of its ongoing advocacy for peace with justice in Israel and Palestine the WCC, jointly with the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA (NCCCUSA) recently issued a strongly worded plea at the end of a meeting held in Washington DC <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/wcc-general-secretary-reflects-on-peace-in-palestine-and-israel> In 2017 WCC will convene a conference with the involvement of the churches of the region, marking the 50th anniversary of the occupation of Palestine and East Jerusalem in 1967 and the 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration.

Over the long years of the Lebanese civil war the WCC was frequently involved (often working alongside the regional ecumenical organisation the Middle East Council of Churches) with relief and rehabilitation work in the country, and offering support to peace-building initiatives. Similarly today, in relation to Syria, the WCC continues to work discretely seeking to bring together representatives of different interest groups for regular intercommunal dialogue meetings which feed in to the work that the UN Special Envoy for Syria is doing.

(Continues on page 15) ►

The Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church

In June 2016 the Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church met in Crete. It was the first such meeting for over a thousand years. First mooted in 1902, its serious planning began in 1961. The Reverend Canon Hugh Wybrew, a former Dean of St George's Cathedral in Jerusalem and a Director of JMECA, summarises the Council's meeting:

As with the Anglican Communion, the Orthodox Church is made up of independent ('autocephalous') churches. Most of them are national: the Patriarchates of Russia, Georgia, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria, and the Churches of Cyprus, Greece, Poland, Albania and of the Czech lands and Slovakia. The ancient patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem are minority churches in predominantly Muslim countries. The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in Istanbul, also under Muslim rule since 1453, has only a few thousand members in Turkey itself, but includes several million Orthodox mainly of Greek and Cypriot origin in North America, Europe, and Australia. But the Ecumenical Patriarch has retained the role of *'primus inter pares'* which he held in earlier times as Patriarch of the capital of the East Roman Empire. Like the Archbishop of Canterbury, he has no jurisdiction over other churches but is responsible for calling and chairing inter-



Orthodox meetings.

Since 1961 a series of inter-Orthodox meetings had gradually prepared the Council's agenda, consisting of issues affecting the whole of Orthodoxy. Before the meeting topics which had proved contentious were dropped. Six remained: the mission of the Orthodox



Church in the modern world; the Orthodox diaspora; autonomy and how it might be declared; the sacrament of marriage; fasting; and the relation of the Orthodox Church with the rest of the Christian world. This last was also contentious. The traditional Orthodox belief is that the Orthodox Church is the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church of the creed. The status of Christian communities outside Orthodoxy is at best unclear. However, a preliminary document spoke of other Christian Churches. That was one reason why the Georgian and Bulgarian Patriarchates decided not to participate in the Council. The Patriarchate of Antioch also declined to participate: it is in dispute with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem over jurisdiction in Qatar.

At the last minute the Moscow Patriarchate also withdrew, alleging that since three churches would not be represented, the Council could not be said to be pan-Orthodox. There was perhaps an unspoken reason: the Patriarch of Moscow's reluctance to take part in meetings chaired by his brother of Constantinople. In the early 16th century a Russian monk declared that Russia had replaced the East Roman Empire as the leading Orthodox country. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the Moscow Patriarchate has revived the ideology of 'Moscow the Third Rome'. As the largest of the Orthodox Churches, it claims that the Patriarchate of Moscow rather than that of Constantinople should enjoy primacy within Orthodoxy.

The Council was nevertheless held, though in Crete

rather than Istanbul. The Moscow Patriarchate had declared Istanbul unacceptable after Turkey shot down a Russian plane. Contentious items having been removed from the agenda, discussions were free of serious disagreements. Existing Orthodox relations with other churches were endorsed, the traditional discipline of fasting and the traditional understanding of marriage were both commended, and regular meetings of bishops of the various Orthodox jurisdictions in the diaspora were encouraged. The existence of more than one Orthodox bishop in the same place, contradicting the Orthodox doctrine of the church, was not directly addressed.

The documents approved by the Council have still to be accepted by the four churches not represented at it. It seems however to be generally agreed that the Council was a positive first step. One participant later remarked that the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church had lasted for four years and met in sessions lasting several months. The Council in Crete, the first pan-Orthodox Council since the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787, lasted for ten days. He was disappointed that the Council had done no more than endorse current practice, when in his view the present situation of Orthodoxy required a new approach in several significant areas. But the very fact that the Council met was itself an important achievement. There is wide agreement that similar councils need to meet regularly in the future.

Hugh Wybrew

THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND THE MIDDLE EAST (Continued from p.13)

3. Interreligious dialogue and cooperation

A long-term bilateral dialogue relationship exists with the government backed Centre for Interreligious Dialogue in Tehran (Shia Muslim) and another such relationship with Sunni Muslims is now being established with Al Azhar Al Sharif, as the result of a visit to the WCC made by Dr Ahmed al-Tayyeb, Grand Imam of Al Azhar at the end of September 2016. A similar relationship exists with an international Jewish group. Such high level bilateral meetings often have spin offs, enabling for example interreligious gatherings

between young Christians and young Muslims (as recently happened in Cairo) or developing links between the University of Religions and Denominations in Qom and the WCC's Ecumenical institute at Bossey, near Geneva which regularly runs an interreligious course for young Jews, Christians and Muslims.

Clare Amos

The writer, who is a director of JMECA, was awarded a Lambeth degree, Doctor of Divinity, for her contribution to interfaith and ecumenical engagement and to theological education and learning.

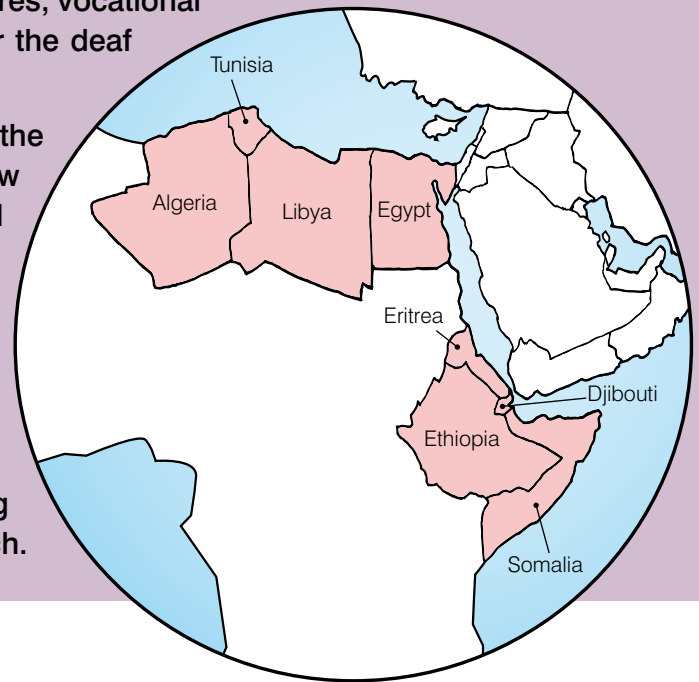
The Diocese of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa



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.



Egyptian hospitality from Biblical times to now

Throughout history, Egypt has a rich tradition of welcoming the people of God. Egypt welcomed the great Patriarch Abraham and his wife Sarah. Egypt also welcomed Joseph, his brothers, and their father Jacob. It is here on this land where God revealed himself to his people as the great "I Am." Here in Egypt, Moses encountered God at the burning bush. It was here in Egypt that God guided and directed his people on their way to the Promised Land, revealing himself as a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. It was also here at Mount Sinai where Moses received the Ten Commandments and again met with God.

Two thousand years ago, Egypt welcomed God himself: Jesus Christ and the Holy Family. Although only a small child, Jesus was a blessing to Egypt and through his visit, the prophecy of "Out of Egypt have I called my son" (Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:15) and "blessed be Egypt my People" (Isaiah 19:25) were fulfilled.

It is here where St Mark the Evangelist established

the first church in Egypt, in the city of Alexandria. Here in Egypt the Ancient Egyptian, Roman, Greek and Coptic civilizations merged together and where the traditions and cultures of Africa, The Middle East, Europe and Asia meet. It is here in Egypt, where over the centuries, the Church Fathers in Alexandria as well as in the desert were able to shape the Christian mind. It is here the church was founded upon the blood of the martyrs – of those who shed their blood to preserve the faith once received from Jesus Christ through the apostles.

It is here in Egypt, in the midst of this great history and spiritual heritage that the Anglican Church of Egypt started. In the early 19th century, Mohammed Ali Pasha the governor of Alexandria granted a piece of land to establish the first Anglican Church in Alexandria. Since its conception, the Anglican Church in Egypt has been committed to serving the community and working for the welfare of our beloved country Egypt.

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

Moslem applies to build a church

New law in Egypt helps Church

A Muslim MP has submitted the first request under a new law for a new church to be built in a village in the Assiut Governorate, in the birthplace of the late Coptic Orthodox Pope, Shenouda III

The law, passed at the end of August, orders local governors to pass a decision on a building application for a church within four months. If the application is rejected, they have to give clear reasons for doing so. Although there have been criticisms that some of the legal clauses are too vaguely worded, the Coptic Catholic Church has welcomed the new law. A spokesman for the Church, Fr Rafic Greiche, said: "There've been some criticisms, but the government has tried to resolve any problems, and we now have a law which meets modern needs."

The independent MP, El-Badri Ahmed Deif, said he "wanted it recorded in history that a Muslim was the first to submit a request for building a church in Egypt following the passing of the new landmark law".

*Edited from the Church Times
Sept 9th 2016*

Prison Ministry

Embassies should provide support and advice to any national who gets into difficulty in a foreign country, but unfortunately such action is not initiated in most cases. Prisoners with long sentences might feel that their life is over, especially those who have no families or friends to care for them. To love and walk with the inmates through challenging times, is the heart of our Prison Ministry's mission. The Prison ministry team has been considering how best to meet the challenges of supporting prisoners' material, emotional and spiritual needs.

On a weekly basis, members from the Diocese of Egypt and volunteers visit primarily foreign inmates at El Kanater Prison on the outskirts of Cairo.

Prisoners who encountered many setbacks and pain in the past, now have the hope to make a difference in the future, achieve new goals and tackle challenges courageously. Unfortunately, most prisoners do not have a valid travel document and they must pay the fee for the travel document, as well as for the flight tickets in order to be released.

Therefore, with God's grace and people's generosity, we need a total of \$8,777 (including \$5,067 USD) from the total amount to support the prisoners in obtaining a valid passport and air tickets before deportation can be arranged.

Obituary

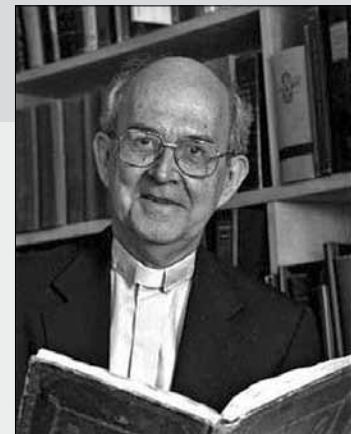
The Reverend Dr Kenneth Bailey – RIP

Archbishop Mouneer writes:

Dr. Kenneth Bailey, a great friend to the Christians of the Middle East, died on May 23 in Grove City, Pennsylvania, surrounded by his immediate family and some close friends. Ken was a good friend to many and a mentor for some. He served as Canon Theologian to the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf during the early 90's while he lived in Cyprus, and was active among the Anglican primates at various ACC gatherings.

Ken was raised in Egypt and after education in the USA and ordination in the Presbyterian Church he lived and taught in Lebanon, Israel and Cyprus until eventually retiring at age 65 to live in the USA. Ken's prolific publications and his teaching at NEST, Tantur, and at various synods and other gatherings of clergy and laity in the province have been an inspiration to many of us in our study of theology and understanding of the Bible. His particular focus on Middle Eastern cultural insights is highly regarded by theological scholars around the world.

The Service of Witness to the Resurrection was held on June 3, at Trinity Presbyterian Church, Mercer, Pennsylvania.



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

Growth in Ethiopia...the refugee story of Gambella



Dr Wendy and Bishop Grant LeMarquand.

Bishop Grant LeMarquand tells the story:

"The world has focused on refugees arriving in the EU from the Middle East but there is a story seldom told about refugees in Ethiopia – and how God is moving through them. Gambella is a two-day drive from Addis Ababa. Everything from cars and roads to clothing and money are new there. This is the first generation that's had any of those things. People live in houses made with mud and sticks and thatched roofs. The temperatures are harsh; it can be easily up to 40s, 50s or even 60s Celsius in the dry season – it's one of the hottest places on earth. The power goes off most days, water supply is not constant and the internet only works sometimes. Most people live by subsistence farming. Healthcare is minimal. Ethnic violence and squabbles over land and local politics present frequent challenges".

Massive migration

Yet against this backdrop, the Anglican Church in Gambella is growing rapidly, thanks in large part to the influx of Sudanese refugees. For a long time, there was only one Anglican church in Ethiopia, in Addis. When the bishop and his wife Wendy first arrived in Gambella in 2012 there were 53 Anglican churches, which were mostly set up by refugees who fled conflict between Sudan and South Sudan in the 1980s and 1990s and shared their faith among other refugees and local Ethiopians.

Today, with a further 300,000 South Sudanese refugees who have crossed into Gambella since December 2013 (doubling the population) there are about 90 Anglican churches, including about 40 in refugee camps, while others are in villages and towns.

As area bishop for the Horn of Africa, Bishop Grant is responsible for the Anglican churches in Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia and Ethiopia. Most of the area's

churches are in Ethiopia and a majority of those are in Gambella, where currently over half the population are refugees based in large camps each hosting about 40,000 people.

The Bishop traces the background to the refugees' arrival: *"Sudan's civil war between the north and south began in the 1950s, there was a break in the 1970s but until South Sudan became independent in 2011 there was a war going on in the southern part of Sudan for decades. When that war ended in 2005 and South Sudan formed there was a short period of peace until December 2013 when a civil war began which quickly became ethnically charged. The Nuer and Dinka people were fighting for control and power. Many Nuer people fled into Gambella, while some of the Dinka had to leave and flee into Kenya or Uganda. Most of the refugees in Gambella are Nuer people. There are also Anuak, Opo, some Dinka, Mezhenger, Murle and Mabaan people among the displaced."*

Rapid church growth through refugees

The rapid growth of the Anglican Church in Gambella is thanks largely to the Sudanese refugees who fled Sudan and South Sudan and brought their faith into the refugee camps. As the Sudanese Christian refugees started evangelising in the area, the local Ethiopians of traditional African religion became interested in the gospel, which spread from the camps to the surrounding villages and more churches were planted.

Building the chapel in Gambella

Bishop Grant says *"People in this part of Africa have believed in one God but have always thought that God was distant from them; now they hear about a God who has come to them in Jesus. The story of Jesus fits into their faith in God and they see that as a completion of what they have known before. Church draws people into community and also draws people together across ethnic divisions. Whereas traditional African religion is ethnically based the Church is not ethnically based – it's a global family of people from every tribe, people and language."*

A church Bishop Grant visited recently demonstrates this unity. Bishop Grant: *"This church is in a camp in the southern part of Gambella, near the town of Dima. The camp is ethnically mixed: Nuer, Dinka, Anuak and Murle – all traditional enemies. When I went there they told me they did not want separate churches. They wanted to show their people that it was possible to live together. So I called the church **Holy Family**, both because Mary, Joseph and Jesus were refugees*

and because this church was demonstrating what holiness means.”

The LeMarquands are based at the Gambella Anglican Centre and have been there for four years. They were missionaries in Kenya in the 1980s and Bishop Grant taught at St Paul’s Limuru Theological College, outside Nairobi. He has travelled regularly to Africa over many years, directing the academic work of African church leaders. A graduate of Wycliffe College in Toronto, Canada, he most recently taught at Trinity School for Ministry in Pennsylvania, USA – where he was a professor and academic dean. Dr Wendy is a medical general practitioner with more than 30 years’ experience.

Gambella Anglican Centre opened in November 2010 when the first bishop, Bishop Andrew Proud, was in office. Today it provides a central gathering place for the 90 Anglican congregations in the region. It hosts clergy training, a chapel, library facilities, sports programmes and also hosts literacy workshops and Mothers’ Union meetings. It’s also where St Frumentius Anglican Theological College is based. Bishop Grant serves as chair of the board of this new college and teaches courses there.

The need for theological training

The churches in Gambella are currently served by just 17 clergy, only one of whom has a theological degree. The congregations worship in a variety of languages – including Anuak, Dinka, Nuer, Mabaan, Jum-Jum and Opo. The need for theological training for the current and next generation is something that Bishop Grant and Dr Wendy are passionate about; this is what led them to take up the post four years ago.

Wendy explains: *“This is one of the few areas in the world where there has been almost no opportunity for people to access education. The Church is growing rapidly. The pastors have said that they know how to plant churches, they know how to bring people to Christ but they don’t know how*



Constructing the chapel at St Frumentius Anglican Theological College.

to make disciples, they don’t know the Bible.

“When Bishop Mouneer Hanna Anis, the Bishop of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa, travelled to Gambella in 2011 and asked the Gambella clergy what they wanted in a new area bishop, they asked for someone who can teach theology and empower people. This helped us to say ‘yes, we would like to be part of that process of empowerment.’”

Bishop Grant says: *“When we got here four years ago we had a group of clergy who were keen to lead their churches but had virtually no training. So our priority has been to do this.”*

It was a great answer to prayer when, with the help of many people around the world, St Frumentius Anglican Theological College began its first year of operation in September 2015. Frumentius was the first missionary and the first bishop in Ethiopia in the early fourth century. Nine full-time students at the college have just completed their first academic year and will go on to do another two years. A further eleven students joined at the beginning of this academic year. The dean of the college is Johann Vanderbijl from Namibia.

Edited from the Anglican Communion News Service, Sept 6th 2016

Extracts from a letter by Bishop LeMarquand to JMECA Administrator:

“St Frumentius College has just admitted its second class of full time students and we are off to a very good start. We have nine full time students in the second year and ten in the first. In addition we have about a dozen part time students who come in to the college for 1 to 2 week long intensive classes. Most of the part time students are clergy in full time ministry, some are lay leaders in our churches. These intensives are together with the full time students so that those in ministry and those full time in college can benefit from each other’s experience. Most of our students come from the major ethnic groups in our region - Nuer and Anuak – but 3 of our new full time students are Mabaan-speaking and one of our part time students is an Opo-speaker. These classes are all held in English – we have another programme (outside of the college itself) which gives training to clergy and lay leaders in their own languages, for those who cannot handle the English.

I will have a budget prepared which will detail how we intend to allocate the £1,500, but the main costs for our intensive courses would include: honoraria for instructors; transportation cost for instructors; printing costs for course materials; transportation and accommodation costs for the instructors, housing costs and meals for part time students. I will send details to you as soon as our treasurer can get the costs to me.

Once again, thanks so much for your help and may God bless you in all that you do.”

+ Grant LeMarquand Area Bishop for the Horn of Africa. August 10th

Report on visit to Syria

A recent church visit to the beleaguered state of Syria has produced a report with findings which are disturbingly different from the accepted political and media views.

The invitation to visit came from the Grand Mufti of Syria, Dr. Hassoun; the Armenian Archbishop of Damascus, Archbishop Armash Nalbandian; Bishop Audo of the Chaldean Catholic Church in Aleppo; and Revd. Harout Selimien, President of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Syria.

The group was led by The Revd. Andrew Ashdown who was accompanied by Revd. Dr. David Clark, Baroness Caroline Cox, Dr. Simon Fisher, Lord Raymond Hylton, Rt Revd. Michael Nazir-Ali and Ms Jo Simister

Here we publish two extracts from the Report, the interviews with the Grand Mufti and the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch

Meeting with the Grand Mufti – Dr. Hassoun

It is always a joy to meet with the Grand Mufti of Syria, Dr Hassoun. A Sunni Muslim scholar of renown and a spiritual leader of stature. Yet he is vilified for two reasons: firstly that he is an appointee of the government (as all Grand Muftis in the region are); and secondly because of his liberal views towards people of other faiths. The Mufti is passionate about the importance of Syria's religious diversity and he believes in the theological as well as political significance of the religious minorities. A few years ago he was cynically accused of 'threatening' Europe with suicide bombers. This is very far from his character and he has explained time and again that his words were not a threat, but rather a warning of what would happen if Europe continued with its policies. Of course his prophetic prediction has come true. The Mufti told us: "Christ summarised his teaching in 'God is love'. Any religion not based on love is made by man...God is not in temples, churches or mosques, but in human hearts." He lamented the rise in Islamic extremism and said we should be wary of its growth in the UK. He could not understand why our Government allies with the country where the worst kind of extremist ideology is nurtured and supported. Dr. Hassoun told us that after his son was murdered by 'rebels', he publicly forgave them and asked them to talk to him. The reply they sent was that they would kill him too. He was very clear that terrorism has been imported into Syria by many countries. Of the government he said: "I do not stand against Assad and his government because we are secularists who separate religion from politics. It shouldn't be for others to tell us what to do. We should decide our own future." He continued: "If there is a God, we will be asked one question at the day of judgement: Did you love one another? As a Muslim I love Jesus and I

call you brothers. Please let us stop fighting. Let's give our children the flower of love, not the seeds of hatred, or they will ask us; 'why didn't you teach us to love?'"

Meeting with Syrian Orthodox Patriarch – His Holiness Ignatius Aphrem

It was a joy and a privilege to meet the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Syria, His Holiness Ignatius Aphrem, and also with him the Bishop of Hassakeh. As we gathered at the Patriarchate, a wedding was taking place in the Church and in a hall next door a family were receiving condolences on the death and funeral of their mother in a terrorist attack in Hassakeh eight days previously. The son of the deceased came in to meet us. Visibly distressed he told us how when terrorists were bombing the town, his parents had hid in a basement but a rocket had landed above them filling their basement with flames and smoke. The mother had 60% burns and all the flesh burned from her legs. His father had 50% burns and was still comatose. They were transferred by military helicopter to a hospital in Damascus but his mother died a few days later.

As he spoke, children were playing in a neighbouring Hall. The Patriarch commented on the cycle of life and death: a Wedding; children playing; a funeral all surrounding us. He said: "Five years ago Syria was not like this. We are a pluralistic society with freedom of religion. Do you think Saudi or Qatar will bring us 'democracy'? Is it 'democracy' that the international community do not allow us to choose our own leader and want to impose another? If the regime is toppled it will be the mullahs ruling like Iran or Egypt. There is no secular opposition; any 'moderate' group will only be used by the Muslim Brotherhood. Bashar may be a dictator but he is secular. Christians in this country are siding with those who are defending them. We do not support Bashar as a person but as a representative of the government that is defending us. You say Christians are supporting the regime. But I am not ashamed to support the government that is protecting us, whilst western policies are helping to empty the region of Christians."

His message to the Churches in Europe was this: "We greatly appreciate you coming here to see us. My message to our Christian brothers and sisters is: 'please try to understand and come and see for yourselves'. We want to be helped to stay here, not to leave. We want our Churches to have a better life. we want as Syrians to be able to choose our own life and our own future. I hope we will see churches in the West come to visit, and especially the World Council

of Churches who haven't even asked if we are OK. Please support us. God bless you all."

And to conclude with a comment from myself: Everywhere we went in Syria, everyone expressed such gratitude for our going to visit and listen; especially the Christian communities in Damascus, Maaloula and Aleppo. Why is it that I am one of just a handful of Christian leaders to have made a Pastoral

visit to the country, and why is it that the Christian leadership in this country are so profoundly critical of that engagement? Would Jesus stay silent? Would he follow the politically expedient path? If I believed he would, I would not be a priest.

Andrew Ashdown, September 2016

The full Report may be seen on the JMECA website.

Diocese of Iran

**Vicar General:
The Rt. Revd. Azad Marshall**

John Clark writes:

The Diocese of Iran is one of the most isolated in the Anglican Communion. Few Christians have been able to visit since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. Following the revolution all the church's social outreach institutions – schools, hospitals, hostels – were expropriated. But congregations continued to meet every week in Tehran, Isfahan and its suburb of Julfa, and Shiraz. Those congregations, though small in number, continue to meet to this day. In 2015 three men were ordained deacon to lead worship in Tehran, Isfahan and Shiraz.

Since the retirement of Bishop Iraj Muttahedehe in 2004, Bishop Azad Marshall has provided episcopal oversight through regular pastoral visits every two months or so. In January 2016 he was elected Co-Adjutor Bishop for the Diocese of Raiwind in Pakistan, which means he will succeed the present diocesan bishop on that bishop's retirement. Consequently Bishop Azad had to resign as Bishop in Iran. While a successor is sought Archbishop Mouneer asked Bishop Azad to continue as Vicar- General.

In May 2016 Archbishop Mouneer, President Bishop of the Province, to whom ultimate oversight of the Church falls in the absence of a diocesan bishop visited Iran to take soundings from the church members and from the Iranian authorities about the next stage in the life of the diocese.

He sent a message of greetings to the Friends of the Diocese of Iran, meeting for their annual Conference in September which included the following:

"I am hopeful in regard to the church of Iran. I say this after my visit in May. We need to look at the future of the church there using the eyes of Caleb Ben Jephunneh and Joshua Ben Nun who saw the Promised Land as theirs.

There is a great potential there... We need to pray earnestly so that the Lord may call a bishop who can reside in the midst of the faithful remnant there and disciple new Iranian leadership."

Friends of the Diocese of Iran Conference – September 2016

The 1998 Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops was attended by Bishop Iraj Muttahedehe and his wife, Minoo, on only the second visit they had been able to make to Britain since the revolution. So the Friends of the Diocese of Iran (a group originally formed in the 1920s to support the ministry of the diocese) seized the opportunity to meet with him at a residential conference. The aim was to gather together those who had worked and worshipped in Iran to hear news, share experience, information and prayer.

The conferences have continued although the content, shape and attendance has changed with the years. This year 45 attended, including a good number of Iranian Christians. Prayer was offered for the four small congregations in Iran itself, but news of what was happening to other Churches in Iran and among the growing community of Iranian Christians scattered across the world was also shared. At this September's Conference, along with news of the four Episcopal congregations there were reports from the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian Churches in Iran, which now only have small congregations worshipping in Armenian and Assyrian (the languages of the recognised ethnic Christian communities) and no longer have their former social outreach institutions.

The Revd Bassi Mirzania, who has pioneered ministry among Iranians in Britain, spoke of developments in her work of advising the growing number of clergy and churches who had been approached by Iranians. A major session was given over to hearing about ministerial formation for Iranian Christians across the world. The conference concluded with a Communion service in Persian and English at which Bishop Iraj (now an Assistant Bishop in Lichfield and Birmingham Dioceses) presided.

A significant feature of the Conferences is that the Religious Communities of the Church of England are asked to remember the Conference in their daily cycle of prayer over that weekend.

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. Archbishop Dr. Mouneer Anis.

● **THE DIOCESE OF JERUSALEM**

- 2nd **The Archbishop**, Most Revd Archbishop 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** that give hope to the hurt: Princess Basma Centre for Disabled Children Jerusalem, Holy Land Institute for the Deaf Salt, The Jofeh Community Rehabilitation Centre Jordan Valley, The Father Andeweg Institute for the Deaf Beirut, St. Luke's Centre for the Mentally Disabled Beirut, the Home for the Elderly Amman, The Episcopal Home for Children Ramallah.
- 7th **The guest houses** that provide hospitality and refreshment for pilgrims and all visitors, St. George's Jerusalem, St. Margaret's Nazareth, St. Andrew's Ramallah, Schneller Institute Amman and Christ Church Jerusalem.
- 8th **The peace work** the Peace and Reconciliation Movement, The Kids4Peace programme, Sabeel and the people from all sides who seek peace and pursue it.
- 9th **The international courses** at St George's Jerusalem, the Dean Revd. Dr Gregory Jenks, and the Course Director, 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, and 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.

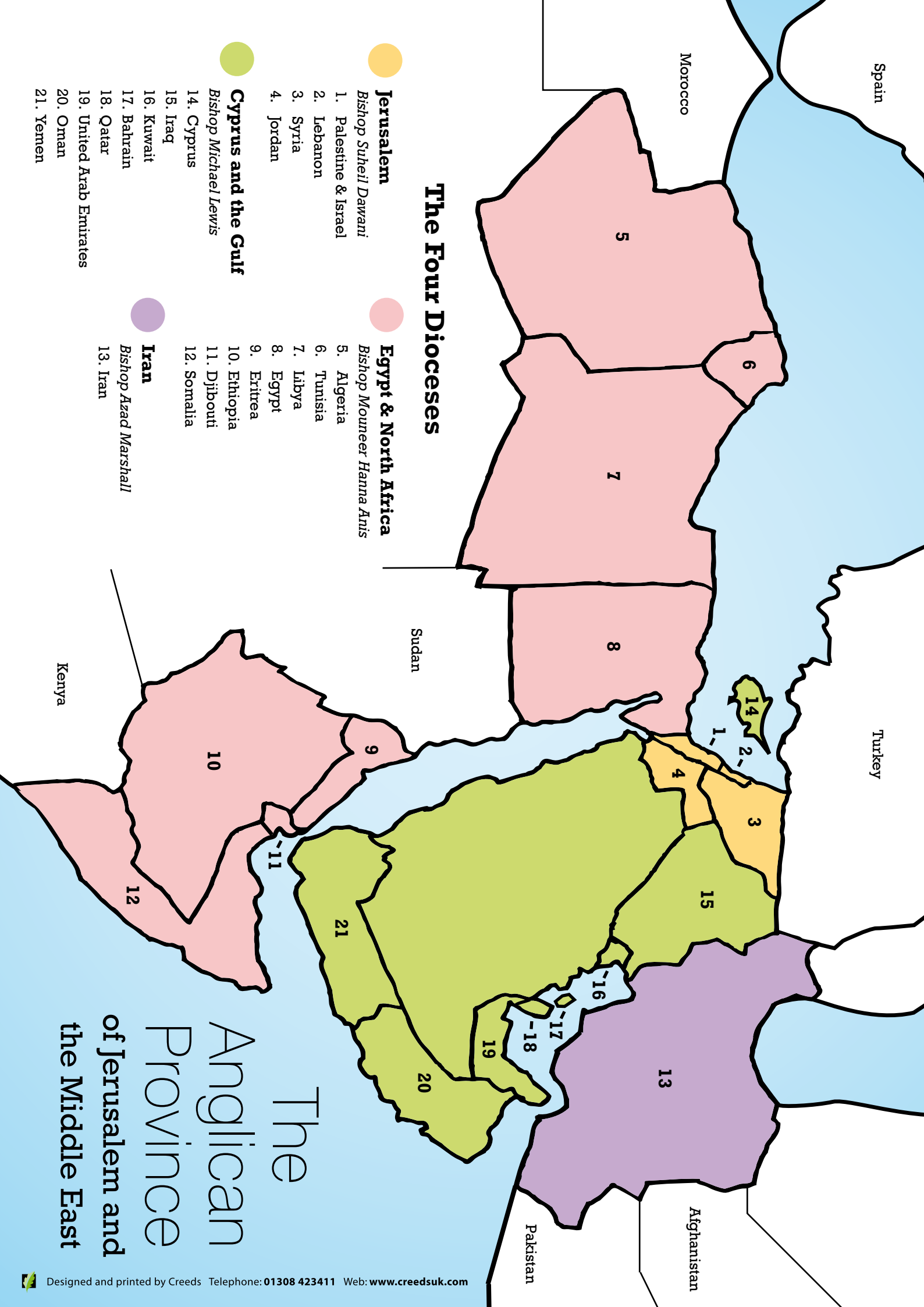
*Almighty and everlasting God, creator and giver of all good gifts, mercifully hear our prayers
and grant to this diocese all things needful for its welfare*

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

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

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

- 30th **The Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association**, its Chairman Mr 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