



Egypt Diocesan Association

Dear members and friends of the Egypt Diocesan Association (EDA);

The image of God – more “grace” than we might think?

I remember studying Athanasius’ *Incarnation of the Word* at the institution in London that became the London School of Theology. It was the early 1970s and I had just returned from spending a year in Turkey with Operation Mobilization, a strongly evangelical mission organisation. I was trying to work through my on-field realisation that Muslims both needed personally to come to know a forgiving, redeeming Christ and yet were able also, in varying degrees, to illumine to me aspects of humanity as made in the image of God that were perhaps hidden or contradicted within my own culture and/or particular brand of Christian perspective. Athanasius, in his focus on Christ’s incarnation, somehow brought cohesion to my strands of thought:

What else could [God] possibly do, being God, but renew His Image in mankind, so that through it men might once more come to know him? And how could this be done save by the very Image Himself, our Saviour Jesus Christ? ... The Word of God came in His own Person, because it was He alone, the Image of the Father, Who could recreate man made after the Image.¹

The Word, the true ikon of the Father, took our broken image and re-imagined it according to His own Image! “Broken image” is a reality shared by all of humanity – both the “broken” bit and the “image” bit, as I had been discovering in a rather focused manner in Turkey. So what might a re-imagined Muslim individual or Muslim community look like under the recreative grace of God? This, surely, must be one of the potentially costliest and most challenging questions to find answers to in the current life and ministry of the Diocese of Egypt with North Africa & the Horn of Africa. Thank you, Athanasius.

Enough of the theologising!

It was lovely to see many of you at the EDA Annual Gathering in London a month ago. Thank you to all who managed to get to the centre of London then. We appreciated very much the venue at St Michael’s, Chester Square and are very grateful to their parish team for accommodating us. We have booked time and space at St Michael’s on Thursday, 25th June, 2020 for our Annual Gathering next

¹ *De Incarnatione Verbi Dei*, chapter 3:13. I also found extremely helpful Lesslie Newbigin’s perspectives on what faithful faith might look like in a pluralist, relativist, diverse, Western culture such as ours was becoming.

year. Please make a note now of the date then.² It was a privilege to meet, and hear from, Archdeacon Rajan; we appreciated his vision and commitment to the growth and guidance towards maturity of the rapidly expanding church in Gambella Ethiopia.

The Trustees of the EDA meet in early October. One of our goals for this year is to find strategic ways to grow the EDA – especially through recruiting some of the more recent visitors to/workers in the wide-flung Diocese to become part of our charity back here in the UK. We would also like to engage more UK churches in supporting the Diocese through the EDA – maybe beginning with appealing to the churches of EDA members(?). After joining us for the EDA Annual Gathering this year, Ven Rajan visited our Honorary Treasurer’s church in Croydon and shared some of his experience with church members there. We have produced attractive leaflets (GDPR-proof!) that are available for use and are arranging for these to be made available to UK and other visitors to the diocese, in situ (and especially in Cairo). If you could also use some of these leaflets, please get in touch with Canon Chris Andrews (candrews3007@gmail.com) or me (billamusk@gmail.com). Any other ideas you may have on this subject, please share them with Sibella (sl519@cam.ac.uk) and myself.

We continue to pray over various critical matters in the Diocese, especially the sad situation in which the Presbyterian/Protestant *majlis* (representative council) continues to seek to subsume the Anglican denomination in Egypt under its auspices, and therefore control, in representation to the Egyptian government, and in various legal matters over property ownership, financial resources, etc. The vision for transforming the diocese into a province continues to be explored. Meanwhile many churches and institutions organise camps/refreshment time for their members during the summer period, especially in Egypt. Campuses of the Alexandria School of Theology around the diocese continue to offer courses to students, whatever the temperature!

Thank you for your ongoing interest in the diocese, and your support of many ministries and people within it. I hope, for those of you with access to the internet, that you keep in touch directly through the diocesan website (<http://dioceseofegypt.org>) as well through our own website (<http://edaegypt.org.uk/>). Churches/ministries in various places also post news on their own websites – most of these are accessible via links from the diocesan website.

Along with this letter please find a copy of the draft Minutes for the 2019 AGM, and of Bishop Mouneer’s then-greeting to us all.

*Creator God,
you made us all in your image:
may we discern you in all that we see,
and serve you in all that we do;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

In Christ,

+Bill

² Subject to confirmation after the appointment of a new vicar at St Michael’s.