



Friends of the Anglican Province of Alexandria
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FAPA NEWSLETTER – Autumn 2021

Dear members and friends,

It was lovely to “see” many folk, with various interests in and links with the new Province of Alexandria at the FAPA Annual Gathering by Zoom in June. Thank you to all who managed to participate, especially recently joined members of FAPA.

The Zoom element did allow us to have the privilege of Archbishop Samy graciously joining us from Egypt and (despite some communication problems) speaking to us, sharing – with power point included – his “Vision for the Province of Alexandria”. He highlighted the areas of ministry, ecumenical relations, dialogue and service as major components of that vision.

We were privileged also to listen as Bishop Michael Ipgrave (new Patron of FAPA) introduced himself before needing to join an alternative zoom session with the House of Bishops in the UK! We hope next year to hear also from our other new Patron – Bishop Mouneer!

It was lovely to catch up with Shady Anis, son of Bishop Mouneer, who has successfully got himself accepted as a PhD candidate with the Faculty of Theology at Cambridge University. He is focusing on an aspect of Luther’s contribution to Christian theologising.

The (re)elected Trustees of FAPA are seeking to move forward the various items discussed and approved at the AGM. I am pleased to report already that we are in conversation with a few potential new trustees; we hope to invite them to join us informally in forthcoming trustees’ meetings with a view to agreeing to be elected trustees at our 2022 AGM.

I am also delighted that a sub-group of trustees under Canon Richard Hibbert’s chairing is pursuing possibilities of organising potential visits/”pilgrimages” from the UK to various parts of the Province. Please be in touch with him (vicar@cbedford.org) or with our Honorary Secretary Michael (secretaryfapa@gmail.com) if you are in any way interested in such an idea. Included in this exploration is the idea of organising “lecture”- type events to share, in more depth, some of the history and contributions to the Anglican world today by Christians from various areas of the Province of Alexandria. We have much to learn and appreciate!

At Archbishop Samy’s installation as Archbishop of the Province of Alexandria, Archbishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon (Secretary General of the Anglican Consultative Council), challenged the Episcopal/Anglican church in Egypt - in its maturity and history of experience of developing church and community - to expend itself in giving support to the developing into functioning dioceses of the three “new” dioceses of North Africa, Horn of Africa, Gambella. The potential and the obstacles in each of these areas of the Province are both exciting and threatening. Can we pray with our brothers and sisters for all four dioceses of the Province to see some

good growth and blossoming into healthy maturity in terms of Archbishop Samy's vision – in the areas of ministry/mission, ecumenical relations, dialogue with others, and service.

Kindly pray for FAPA trustees as we meet by Zoom in October. We need wisdom over several important matters, including how we will seek to organise our Annual Gathering for 2022.

Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)



Bishop Bill FAPA Chair

STOP PRESS Please pray for the Inauguration of the Anglican Province of Alexandria which will be celebrated on Friday 8th October, at 6pm, in All Saints Cathedral, Cairo. The Archbishop of Canterbury - The Most Reverend and Honourable Justin Welby will be the celebrant and speaker..... Egypt having just been lifted from the Red Zone.

Theological Education in the Province of Alexandria - an update from Trustee Helen Fraser



Helen served in Egypt for 17 years under the auspices of the Church Mission Society, initially as PA to Bishop Mouneer Anis, and then as the Development Officer for the Alexandria School of Theology and Funding Training Manager for EpiscoCare. In 2020 she moved back to England, and she is now development manager at Christ Church, Guildford.

Recovering the original name and vision for Christian Education in the ancient African patriarchy, the Alexandria School of Theology (AST) is a multi-level and non-residential multi-site education system for theological training in the Anglican Province of Egypt, North Africa, Gambella and the Horn of Africa. The AST consists of: i) St. Athanasius Seminary (Alexandria and Cairo, Egypt) which offers certificates, diplomas, a BTh and a MTh; ii) St. Cyprian Diocesan Theological College (Tunis, Tunisia) which offers diplomas and a BTh; iii) St. Frumentius Diocesan Theological College (Gambella, Ethiopia which offers certificates and diplomas; iv) Menya Theological Extension Site (Menya, Egypt) which offers diplomas and a BTh; and v) Nuba Mountain Bible Institute (Cairo, Egypt) which offers a diploma in basic Bible literacy.

The AST vision is to teach, train and form lay leaders, ordinands and clergy of the Province, members of the worldwide Anglican Communion, and any other students who wish to learn of Christ with us, in theological, missional and leadership skills, with a focus on mission in a pluralistic context.

AST was established in Cairo and Alexandria, Egypt's two largest cities, in 2005, because of the tremendous shortage of contextually trained and equipped workers in the Anglican

Church, as well as other churches, to teach, counsel and meet the needs in a Muslim majority context, that could not be achieved by sending students to the West, because of the financial cost, as well as the very different context. The classes are taught in Arabic, mostly by well qualified Egyptians, but also by a few Westerners resident in Egypt, and scheduled to enable Christians to continue in their full time ministry or secular work thereby allowing to actively participate in their workplaces and communities and apply the teaching.

The first students graduated with a Bachelor in Theology in 2009, and under the tutelage of faculty members, four began teaching on the programme, whilst studying for a Masters in Biblical Studies. At this time, AST Cairo started receiving students from Menya, a city with a high concentration of Christians in Upper Egypt.

From 2011 to 2014, Egypt was in great turmoil, and AST re-scheduled classes, avoiding the demonstrations, curfews and power cuts! The number of students coming from Upper Egypt continued to increase, and in 2015, we launched a programme of courses taught intensively. More recently, the Province has bought land, establishing an AST campus as well as outreach ministry in the Upper Egypt.

During this time in Ethiopia, the Province also opened St. Frumentius Theological College in Gambella, to provide training for the current leadership, and new lay and ordained leaders to serve the growing church, and in 2018, AST launched the Bachelor in Theology Programme at St. Cyprian Campus in Tunis, and enrolled sixteen students from Algeria and Tunisia as well!

During the pandemic, AST has developed its online delivery of courses by filming classes and uploading these and assignments onto an online platform, as well as offering live classes on Zoom, in conjunction with on campus classes when viable.

Currently, AST is working on being accredited by 'The Middle East Association for Theological Education', forming a 'Christian and Islamic Centre of Studies' as well as a 'Study Tour offering, and long term having its own Masters Programme.



Best Books - Secretary, Michael recommends: **Generation Revolution: On the Front Line Between Tradition and Change in the Middle East** by Rachel Aspden

Generation Revolution is an excellent social history of Egypt's persistent pathologies, as well as a universal story about the difficulties of changing deeply ingrained societal attitudes.- - **New York Times Book Review** A sobering but necessary education - **Publishers Weekly**

In 2003, Rachel Aspden arrived in Egypt as a 23 year old trainee journalist. She found a country on the brink of change. Of Egypt's 80 million citizens, two-thirds were under 30. The new generation were stifled and frustrated - caught between a dictatorship with nothing to offer them and autocratic parents clinging to tradition and obedience after a lifetime of fear.

In January 2011, the young people's patience ran out. They thought the revolution that followed would change everything for them. But as violence escalated, the economy collapsed and as the united front against Mubarak shattered into sectarianism, many found themselves wavering, hesitant to discard the old ways.

Following the stories of four young Egyptians – Amr the atheist software engineer, Amal the village girl who defied her family and her entire community, Ayman the one time religious extremist and Ruqayah the would be teenage martyr – '**Generation Revolution**' unravels the complex forces shaping the lives of young people caught between tradition and modernity, and what their stories mean for the future – Where will the next generation take the Middle East?

Rachel Aspden spent several years travelling and writing about Islam and politics across the Middle East . After a period as literary editor of the New Statesman, in 2010 she was awarded a Winston Churchill fellowship to research Islamic education. Following the Arab Spring uprising in 2011 she moved back to Egypt. She has written for the Guardian, New Statesman and Prospect Magazine.

Memory Lane Secretary, Michael remembers:- Sinai.... being shown around St Catherine's Monastery by a resident brother: 'I am called Shadrach, but when I put my hand



in the fire it burns!' the burning bush (it has the appearance of a bramble)..... the magnificent ancient icons, and the amazing mosaics. Sharing sunrise on Jebel Mousa with a party of Coptic priests... descending on the Steps of Repentance ... and the magical shadows which transform the desert landscape as dusk falls being (silently) joined by Bedouin around the campfire..... a truly blessed place.

Members are invited to make a 'Memory Lane' or 'Best Book' contribution to our newsletters ALSO.... Members are invited to let me have Prayer Topics that they would like added to the Prayer Room list on our website www.fapa-egypt.org/prayer-room

emails to secretaryfapa@gmail.com