

MECO's partnership with Cairo Cathedral strengthened



The Cathedral brings many cultures together



Showing warmth and welcome to visitors



MECO's Middle East Director, **Mike** and his wife, **Helen**, recently moved to Cairo, Egypt.

Helen shows what working with a local church can look like practically.

MECO aims to partner with local churches, seeking to support them as they reach out to their communities in love.

We (Mike and Helen) recently moved to Cairo, Egypt to fill the role of Senior Pastor at All Saints Anglican Cathedral, and in so doing hope to further strengthen MECO's relationship with the Cathedral and be a blessing to the community.

At least six congregations worship in the Cathedral during the week. There are English-speaking services on Fridays and Sundays and Mike is responsible for these. Egyptian, Sudanese, Habesha, Bari and Dinka congregations also meet, with their own pastors. It's Mike's job to mentor these men and organise staff meetings and training.

In the past, we were the local church for many embassies and businesses, but as the city has expanded, many have moved to the outskirts. Nowadays All Saints Anglican Cathedral reflects the cosmopolitan nature

of the city. Our services are in English, but our members come from Malta, Armenia, Syria, Sudan, Nigeria, Malawi, Lebanon, India, Switzerland, Germany, Eritrea, Kenya, Myanmar, Canada and Egypt, as well as Australia, the USA and the UK. Not everyone is fluent in English.

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Numbers in our Friday and Sunday services are about 120 in total - and we are conscious of being a small minority in a twenty million megacity. This gives us fascinating access to many communities and areas of working life.

Many touched by Cathedral ministries

The Cathedral compound buzzes with life day and night. Dozens of people work here: guards, gate-keepers, cleaners, pastors, drivers, administrators ... The basement houses Refuge Egypt, a project offering

medical care, child education, youth clubs, instructions and employment in crafts - a place of friendly acceptance to hundreds during the week. Previous MECO members have worked here.

Our bishop, Mouneer, is Bishop of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa. Our flat is directly above his. (We've given up tap dancing ...) It's a privilege to gain from his international, thoroughly Biblical wisdom, and to be amongst his main supporters in his demanding and stretching ministry. Our experience of church life and leadership combined with our connectedness in the region is, we believe, an asset to him and to the congregation here.

After a succession of interim pastors, the Cathedral members seem pleased to accept us on a longer-term basis. So, what have we been doing? Setting in place twice-weekly church structures: rosters of readers, prayer leaders, musicians, children's club

leaders and helpers and Bible study groups; preparing sermons and staff meetings, funerals (not much notice here - once

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it was 40 minutes!), hospitals visits, hospitality, meeting ambassadors, welcoming Rowan Williams and Philip Yancey to the Cathedral (though not at the same time!), meeting the MECO team at a lovely retreat centre in the desert, board meetings in Cyprus and the everyday struggle of shopping and trying to keep the sooty dust at bay.

Each day we are summoned to Morning Prayer by a bell cast in Helen's home town, Loughborough. As we serve with national leaders here, and fulfil MECO's vision of equipping local congregations for mission and witness, our aim is to make the Cathedral compound 'a place of peace for all people; and a place of prayer for all nations.' Please join us in praying for church leaders working in the Middle East seeking to bring glory to Christ's name. ■