

New Geneva

THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



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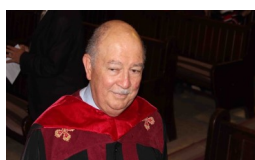
Dr. Aquila's Report on Ministry in Egypt and Tunisia

On March 29 the first graduation ceremony for New Geneva Seminary in Egypt was held at the Presbyterian Church in Nasr City, a suburb of Cairo. Twenty-two graduated before a full church. I gave the commencement address and then participated in awarding the graduates their diplomas. This was a significant event for these graduates and for our ministry in Egypt.



The next morning we drove to the conference grounds of the Presbyterian Church of Egypt near Alexandria. There were 65 students enrolled in 3 courses, Romans, Eschatology, and Reformation History, taught by John Leaf, Jim Fitzgerald, and me. There were 25 new students from all parts of Egypt; on average they were younger than past classes. This is indicative of a change taking place in many Muslim countries: a growing move to Christianity by young people.

One of the special times was sitting with different students at meals and breaks. I asked them to share their testimonies and heard wonderful accounts of God's grace. Fouad shared one of these testimonies: He came to faith in Christ about a year and a half ago after realizing that he was at a spiritual dead end that Islam wasn't filling. He began attending the church in Nasr City and came to faith in Christ. He told me that he hasn't been able to tell his family for fear they may kill him. He is 27 and not yet married; he told me that because he was born a Muslim, he was not permitted by law to marry a Christian, and it would place him in jeopardy of being killed. There are some ways around this, but he would have to be creative. Pray for Fouad as he grows in Christ and trusts Him for his future.



We had our first student from the Coptic Church. Maher has been Coptic all of his 50+ years. A number of years ago he was asked to oversee an administrative role in his church. He had about 6 people reporting to him. Although Maher had never led a Bible study, he sensed he should do something to lead his group. So he began a weekly study, stumbling along at first, and over time it grew as others heard about it, eventually reaching upwards of 300 people attending. The priest stepped in and said he couldn't continue the study, but no good reason was given. So Maher left his church, the only one he had ever known, and began looking for something else. Five years later he is still looking. He saw a brochure on New Geneva

Seminary in Egypt and asked to attend. He told me with tears in his eyes that this is what he wants to be involved with. An amazing story of God's grace!

After the classes were completed I presented a lecture at the Nasr City Presbyterian Church in Cairo. The pastor asked me to speak on the intermediate state between death and Christ's coming. He said there is confusion on this partly because of the influence of Islam's views of death and the afterlife. The church was packed.

From Cairo I flew to Tunisia, a different atmosphere than in Egypt. There's not the same history with the church there as in Egypt. The church is growing, with many coming to faith in Christ out of Islam. The members of the group I spoke at are mainly leaders of house churches who themselves are fairly recent converts. I spoke on the basics of Christianity, the ABCs of the faith. These lectures were well received as indicated by the questions the class asked.

What made this class so interesting is that there were at least four present who had come to know Christ within the last year. This made much of what I was teaching very new to them, but they were grasping the concepts. The new women converts were still wearing hijabs, the scarfs covering their hair.



Another interesting thing was that two of the women brought their mothers with them. These mothers were dressed in full Muslim garb. What this signifies is that these daughters have been speaking with their mothers about their trust in Christ, something usually not shared with family for fear of being placed on a hit list. Of course, the mothers were well received and amazed at what they saw and heard.

We estimate the costs this year for scholarships, facility rentals, travel, and other administrative needs at \$15,000-\$20,000. If you would like to be a part of the support team for this educational and church planting ministry in Egypt and Tunisia, make your check to New Geneva Seminary and put "Egypt/Tunisia" on the memo line. If you have questions, you can contact Dr. Aquila at 719-237-2708 or daquila6@aol.com.

Graduation Will be May 15

New Geneva's graduation will be on Sunday, May 15, at 4:00 p.m., at Village Seven Presbyterian Church. An Egyptian pastor and four students from the Egypt extension will be in attendance. Please join us for this special time in the lives of our graduates.