



## Coming Together

*A message from our president*

Although the eastern and western church calendars have us celebrating Easter one week apart this April, the community of ETSC is always working diligently to bring east and west together to glorify our Lord. This academic year we have more than 170 students registered in our different programs including students from Iraq, Sudan, Norway, Philippines, Uganda and USA as well as Egypt. We celebrate both the growth in numbers and in diversity of our student body and the richness of our community.



*The ETSC community*

As you may know, ETSC's academic programs are characterized by mixing theory with practice. This year we created new non-traditional ministry opportunities for our first year students. They were sent to serve in orphanages, hospitals, among the mentally disabled, in a Christian home for elderly people and places beyond Egypt such as Sudan.

Most exciting in the life of ETSC is the inauguration and development of the Center for Middle Eastern Christianity. We expect and hope that this center will attract researchers

and students from all over the world to learn about Egyptian Christianity, which dates back to the first century CE. We in Egypt are blessed with such a great heritage of Pharaonic, Greco-Roman, and Coptic history that can shed a lot of light on our understanding the world of the Bible and the birth and development of the Church in our Middle Eastern context.

This newsletter celebrates just a few of the many stories of how ETSC is reaching out in new and exciting ways to bring East and West together, as Jesus describes in Matthew 8:11. We hope you enjoy our news and we praise the Lord for your friendship and partnership with ETSC in our mission to equip quality leaders to the church in Egypt and the Middle East.

*Dr. Atef M. Gendy*  
*President of ETSC*

## Visiting Scholar from India

In March Dr. M.T. Cherian, Director of Academic Affairs at New Theological College in Dehra Dun, India, arrived at ETSC to teach for 6 weeks. In addition to teaching New Testament Theology in the Biblical Studies section of ETSC's MATS program, Dr. Cherian is also offering two seminars on the origins and history of the Indian Church and its relationship with Middle East Christianity. Dr. Cherian, originally from Kerala in southern India, is married to Mercy and has two children: Thomas (8 years old) and Koshy (5 years). Dr. Cherian is very interested in the connections between Indian and Egyptian Christianity, and is spending his weekends visiting various churches and even preaching on several occasions.



*Dr. M.T. Cherian preaches with MATS student Rev. Nassif Faltas*

## New Models of Partnership...East meets West!

This term ETSC has expanded our horizons by engaging in new models of partnership and interaction with our brothers and sisters from abroad. In February, six pastors from the American Baptist Church (ABC) joined six pastors from the Egyptian Church in a Continuing Education Event. Together these twelve pastors learned from one another about pastoring in different cultures and traditions, ecumenical challenges, and ministry in urban and rural areas. The Egyptian and American pastors reflected together about pressing pastoral issues and exchanged ideas and strategies. The event, an initiative of the Center for Middle East Christianity, is a pilot project that we see as a model for future pastoral encounters.

In March, a team from First Presbyterian Church (FPC) of Colorado Springs, Colorado joined our student and faculty community for an evening seminar and round table discussions. The event began with bilingual worship, an introduction by President Atef and a meditation by Rev. Nancy Fox of FPC. Later, the FPC team members joined ETSC faculty to co-lead round table discussions in Bible study, discipleship, conflict resolution, and ministry and outreach strategies. The evening ended with a time of food and fellowship. Everyone who participated found it to be a wonderful opportunity for interaction and exchange of ideas. In the future, it is hoped that such seminars could be held for several days and give a chance for everyone to know each other better and explore the conversations more deeply.



Left: Lisa Lucas and Emad Yassa converse with students.  
Below: Members of Colorado Springs Presbyterian Church worship with the ETSC community.



## ETSC Students Learn Ancient Coptic

For the first time, ETSC Masters students are currently studying the Coptic language, thanks to the presence of visiting faculty member Dr. Chrysi Kotsifou (who also taught Greek in the Fall Term). Dr.



Chrysi hopes that students will be able to read some passages from the Coptic translation of the Bible and the works of Shenoute (theologian and



Dr. Chrysi Kotsifou

founder of the White Monastery in the 4-5th Century) and to be able to sing some of the liturgical hymns of the Coptic Orthodox Church by the Egyptian Easter season.

Coptic is the ancient Egyptian language which was spoken and written before Arabic was introduced in the 7th century and slowly disappeared through the centuries as Arabic gained in importance. Our students are focusing on the written script of Coptic which was a primary medium of communicating the Gospel in the early centuries of the Church in Egypt. The Bible was translated into the Coptic language by the 2nd century and many early theologians wrote in Coptic, making it a key language for the study of Middle East Christianity.



Ancient Coptic document

## Lay Pastor Training Begins

In February, 14 new students joined ETSC's community as the first class of the Lay Pastor Training Program. The program is a collaborative effort with the Synod of the Nile of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt (EPCE) to confront the problem of churches lacking in pastoral leadership, especially in rural areas. Their main areas of training are in practical and pastoral studies, Biblical study, mission, community development, and historical studies. Besides this training they will also be prepared to assess the needs of their communities in the areas of health, literacy, and economic development. On February 6th at 7pm, ETSC commemorated the commencement of the program with a special gathering for worship and celebration. The Lay Pastor trainees have offered a new richness of perspectives and experience to the ETSC community.



To support the work of ETSC, checks may be made payable to  
Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo, 8 El-Seka El-Beda Street,  
Abbassia, Cairo, Egypt. Online donations may be made through PCUSA at  
[www.pcusa.org/give/online](http://www.pcusa.org/give/online); search "Cairo Evangelical Seminary."

