

Spiritual Journey
Samy Estafanos

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4 In a small village in Minya, 200 miles south of Cairo, I was born to a poor family. My father
5 was a farmer and mother was a house keeper. For many years, despite my family faced a lot
6 of life challenges, they insisted to find a place for me in the Egyptian schools, where
7 everyone has recognized my cognitive and intellectual skills. During this time, at the
8 “Sunday” school of the Presbyterian Church in my home village in Egypt, which used to run
9 every afternoon, the foundation of my Christian faith was established. Almost at age 8, I
10 dream was to be a doctor; yet, few years later, influenced with my Sunday school teacher
11 who told me that God called him to studying theology, another dream has begun in my heart.
12 Indeed, the two dreams have developed and kept growing in my life for years and years later.
13 After high school, for sake of family, I joined the medical school; yet, studying theology
14 remained burning my heart.

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16 During collage and despite the challenge of time of medical study, I had been involved in
17 several kinds of ministries and church activities: Sunday school, youth ministry, mercy
18 ministries, discipleship, and preaching. In 1990, I was elected deacon in my home church. In
19 2000, I joined the medical team serving God at a Christian hospital in Lower (North) Egypt.
20 For five years, I served the Lord by offering practical love through medicine and through the
21 word of God. During these 5 years, though it was a huge challenge, God helped me to
22 complete my Bachelor of Theology studies at ETSC.

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24 In October 2005, I joined the Evangelical Theological Seminary (ETSC) in Cairo as an
25 instructor of Christian Education. Besides my teaching duties, I shared in all aspects of the
26 Seminary’s activities and also have a small health clinic inside the Seminary for students and
27 staff.

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29 In 2008, I completed a master of theology program Th.M. in Princeton Theological seminary
30 (PTS), New Jersey in Christian Education. Once I am back to Egypt, I was ordained as a
31 teaching pastor in the ETSC. In 2015, I completed a Ph.D. program in practical theology and
32 Christian education. Again, despite the huge challenge of studying PhD in a second language,
33 having my family, and the challenges of finding financial recourses, I was called to pastoral
34 ministry in the Arabic American Evangelical church in Jersey City, NJ for five years during
35 my PhD study.

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37 Being back to my country Egypt, I have joined again the Evangelical Theological Seminary
38 in Cairo (ETSC), where I lived among students inside the campus and continued my teaching
39 and caring ministry. Sept. 2016, I was appointed a chairman of practical theology department
40 and the head of the formation counsel, which focuses mainly on the formation of the students,
41 personally, socially, psychologically, and spiritually.

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43 Along years of this journey, it has become clear for me that my pastoral passion has never
44 existed apart from my teaching passion. Using both medical care and theological teaching
45 opened up a wide door for pastoral care and counseling of students, administrative staff of the
46 ETSC, and many others youth and young adult in Egypt and many Arabic countries. And
47 Through multiple Christian tv programs, social media, teaching ministry at the ETSC in
48 Egypt, I had the chance to build a wide net of friends in the Arabic world. Now, I came to a
49 clear fact that the Arabic Presbyterian church, especially youth and young adults, faces the
50 same challenges, inside and outside Egypt, no matter. The Impact of the Islamic cultural

51 background, the corrupted education system in Egypt, and lack of theological and spiritual
52 training are some of these challenges. Indeed, the immigrants are suffering more challenges
53 of double identity, isolation from the American community, and significant lack of officially
54 trained Presbyterian pastors.

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56 In January 2016, I was invited by Rev. Dr. Magdy Girgis to visit the Arabic community in
57 Nashville in order to help them to have a pastor. We spent three days in discussion and
58 prayers. Being back to Egypt, some of the friends of the group kept communicating with me
59 seeking my help. During this time, I have started to feel a deep sense of call to help them to
60 establish a true Presbyterian church. I shared the group with my dream, then, in January
61 2018, I spent about a week in Nashville with them, meeting every day, organizing a main
62 committee, multiple small committees, and determining a specific role for everyone. After
63 long discussion with the holy spirit, I made my mind and left the seminary in Cairo,
64 promising to keep support and participating in its teaching ministry in some intensive course
65 in January and online course.