

The **FEBI** Project Goes Global

LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS

October 2010

In a world where some Moslems want to blow themselves up, to terrorize and kill Christians and Americans, and some American Christians want to burn the Koran or prevent the building of a mosque....we find hope for humanity in a ray of light shining through the eye of a blind baby.

FEBI Hanna was officially blinded by retinopathy of prematurity but in reality she lost her vision due to the lack of proper eye care in her country, Egypt.

Her story inspired the creation of the *Fellowship, Education, Best Practices and Integration (FEBI) Project*.

The Project started in Morgantown with help from the Mon Health Systems, WVU (especially the eye department and the department of special education) and attracted friends, supporters and partners from around the globe.

Most recently in Egypt, an official agreement for cooperation was signed between the FEBI Project, represented by Dr. Nabil Jabbour; the *Anglican Diocese* of Africa, the Horn of Africa & Jerusalem, represented by the Most Rev. Bishop Dr. Mouneer Anis; and *Misr El Khair*, represented by His Eminence, the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Dr. Ali Goma.

The event took place at a Christian mission hospital in Manouf (*Harpur Memorial Hospital*) on the 15th of September 2010. It was covered by local, national and regional media outlets (press, radio and TV, including *Al Jazeera network*).

Dr. Jabbour thanked the two partners for their dedication to charity in general, and to the *FEBI Project* in particular. He then encouraged everyone to celebrate the historic meaning for this cooperation between Christianity, Islam and science to help those in need. He concluded that such display of unity was made possible by denouncing aggression and apathy and by celebrating, rather than merely tolerating each other.

Bishop Mouneer then explained why the hospital has been serving the needy patients of all backgrounds for 100 years: "We are following in the footsteps of our master who commanded us to love even our enemies". He went on to say, "I and the Grand Mufti have enjoyed a wonderful friendship and dialog for many years, but it was academic until we put it into action in the FEBI Project".

The Grand Mufti insisted on using the chapel's podium with a large cross on it to address the standing room crowd and the media with these wise words: "We don't believe in aggression, we don't believe in apathy, we don't believe in mere tolerance, and we are not afraid to put our hands in your hands to help our suffering people and extend our gratitude for those who came all the way from the United States to help us".

Dr. Charbel Fahd (the Chief of Ophthalmology at the *Lebanese American University* and one of the FEBI Project volunteers) had by then trained 4 local ophthalmologists to perform this surgery using a machine graciously loaned to him, and material he personally donated as he donated his time and travel expenses.

In addition an ENT team (Professor James Smith and Dr. Noel Jabbour) had been busy teaching residents and seeing patients in consultation with other physicians.

As if all of this was not enough, the Grand Mufti announced that as the chairman of the board of the charity organization *Misr El Khair*, he was donating \$40,000.00 to the Christian mission hospital (*Harpur*) to buy a phako machine to perform modern cataract surgery (not available in the region).

What a statement for world peace: The blind will see and the deaf will hear...but also the politically and religiously blinded and deafened will also see and hear.

The largest Egyptian newspaper “Al Ahram” published an article about what happened and recognized the help from the “Americans”, in what was touted to be a great display of cooperation (instead of fighting) between Christians and Moslems. (see below)

So, as some radical Moslems are trying to recruit would-be suicide bombers, the Grand Mufti has successfully recruited many friends for Islam and the Bishop has successfully recruited many friends for Christianity and Drs. Jabbour, Fahd, Smith and Jabbour have recruited many friends for “America”.

And, as some radical Christians are busy plotting a Koran burning or a mosque bashing, the FEBI Project was building bridges between religions and cultures that don't have to be alienated by fear, aggression or apathy, but can be aligned for charity and hope.



Several of the *FEBI project* Partners gathered on the 16th of September, in the presence of Febi and her parents, to celebrate the Inauguration of the program

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Campaign for Prevention and Treatment of Blindness

By Hala El-Sayyed

Dr. Ali Goma, the grand mufti of Egypt and the president of *Misr El-Khair*, is leading a campaign in cooperation with the *Anglican Church* for the prevention and treatment of blindness.



The grand Mufti hands Dr Jabbour a copy of the agreement while the Bishop looks on

This campaign was made possible in partnership with the *FEBI project* that brought a team of experienced American surgeons led by Dr. Nabil Jabbour. The doctors performed more than 40 eye surgeries, starting in the *Manufiah* District. The mufti asserted that such cooperation in this campaign, dubbed *the love campaign*, proves that doing good is a trademark of all heavenly religions and that Egypt is one country in which all kinds of people can live together. The mufti added that while the campaign started in *Manufiah*, this cooperation will benefit the whole country. Representing *Misr El-Khair*, the mufti signed an agreement of cooperation with the *Anglican Church* and the *FEBI project*. He also announced that he was making a donation to *Harmel hospital* in the amount of 200,000 Egyptian pounds to purchase a Phako machine for cataract surgery. The mufti concluded by saying that what we are witnessing today is the fruit of dialogue and peaceful living between Muslims and Christians resulting in good for all humanity through cooperation between the civic and religious (Muslim and Christian) social institutions. In addition, Mr. Sami Aamara, the governor of *Manufiah*, stressed the importance of such cooperation which benefits the average person and he also promised his support.

